

The Mechanics of Being a Merit Badge Counselor (MBC)

1. To lead a merit badge you must be a registered adult with the troop and fill out a Merit Badge Counselor application (both available on the troop website). **In addition you must be current with respect to your BSA Youth Protection Training (YPT).** Suzanne Woolner or Suzanne Rudi will take the forms to the Council Office.
2. Go online and Google “XXXXX merit badge worksheet” and print out a copy for each scout. Have them **WRITE THEIR NAMES AT THE TOP.**
3. Get blank (but already signed by the scoutmaster) blue cards from the back of the blue box—one for each scout. At the first badge meeting, have the scouts fill out the blue cards with their and your names and addresses, on all segments of the card. File the blue cards back in the blue box, behind the tab with the badge name on it.
4. You can either take the blue cards to each session and track requirements progress right on the blue cards before re-filing, or you may choose to make an aggregate grid (like a spreadsheet) to track each requirement for each scout, and then when convenient transfer the dates of each completion to the blue card grid along with your initials—your choice.
5. Get a merit badge book (color cover, if possible—those are the latest versions) from the plastic bins in the scout closet for each scout and pass them out.
6. Read the handbook and plan out which requirements you’ll do together and which you’ll just discuss together. By you reading the handbook, you will be comfortable with the material—it is really not scary!
7. **Merit badge sessions may meet at SOTH or at the counselor’s home, or wherever appropriate, but The Guide to Safe Scouting and the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety must always be followed. Scouts must not meet one-on-one with adults. Meetings must take place where others can view the interaction, or there must be another scout, a friend, or a parent present.**
8. Tell the boys to **read the handbook**. There are a number of requirements for which they can answer the questions just by reading the book. If they choose, they may write their answers as they read, and then bring their worksheets to discuss answers in a group. However, you need to have each scout answer the questions and be sure he has done the work, not a group exercise.
9. Encourage scouts to read ahead and come prepared to demonstrate requirements at the meeting, after preparing at home. For a badge taught during troop meetings, often scouts will not finish during the session window, and will have to follow up on their own with you. Your job is not to drag them through the badge. But let them know it is up to them to come to you when they are ready to finish up.
10. If a scout started a merit badge with a counselor who is no longer available, he may finish the remaining requirements with another counselor. The new counselor only initials and dates the requirements demonstrated to him. Once all requirements are complete, the new counselor may do final sign-off on the blue card.
11. Once a scout has demonstrated each requirement, be sure that you initial and date each requirement on the blue card. Make sure the blue card is completely filled out. Sign and date on all counselor spots on the blue card. Tear the blue card into its 3 segments and keep the “Counselor’s Record” segment. Give the other two segments to the scout, with the instructions: **“Give the “Application for Merit Badge” section directly to Advancement Records Coordinator, into his/her hot little hands.”** The scout keeps the “Applicant’s Record” segment. The scout will then be presented his merit badge at the next Troop Court of Honor.