

# SCOUTING

## Special Needs and Disabilities

### A. Alternate Requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class Ranks

A Scout who has a permanent physical or mental disability and is unable to complete all of the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class rank may submit a request to the council advancement committee to complete alternate requirements.

To keep Scouts with disabilities involved in the advancement process, some advancement accommodations may be required. For example, a Scout who uses a wheelchair can meet the requirements for hiking by making a trip to a place of interest in his community.

Giving more time and permitting the use of special aids are other ways leaders can support Scouts with disabilities in their efforts to advance. The substitute should provide a similar learning experience to the original requirement. Bear in mind that the outcome of the Scouting experience should be one of fun and learning, and not of simply completing the requirements for rank advancements, which might place unrealistic expectations on the Scout with a disability.

**Listed below are the procedures for applying for alternate requirements.**

Step 1— Do as many standard requirements as possible.

Before applying for alternate requirements, the Scout must complete as many of the standard requirements as his ability permits. He must do his very best to develop himself to the limit of his abilities and resources.

Step 2— Secure a medical statement.

A clear and concise medical statement concerning the Scout's disabilities must be submitted by a licensed health-care provider. It must state that the disability is permanent and outline what physical activities the Scout may not be capable of completing.

In the case of an intellectual or developmental disability, an evaluation statement should be submitted by a certified educational administrator relating the ability level of the Scout.

Step 3— Prepare a request for alternate requirements.

A written request must be submitted to the council advancement committee for the Scout to work on alternate requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks. The request should include the standard requirements the Scout has completed and the suggested alternate requirements for those the Scout cannot complete. This request should be detailed enough to give the advancement committee enough information to make a decision. The request should be prepared by the Scout, his parents, and his Scoutmaster. A copy of the medical statement in step 2 should be included.

Step 4— The advancement committee reviews the request.

The council advancement committee should review the request, using the expertise of professional persons involved in Scouts with disabilities. The advancement committee may want to interview the Scout, the parents, and the leader to fully understand the request and to make a fair determination.

The decision of the advancement committee should be recorded and delivered to the Scout and the Scoutmaster. There is also an appeal process for situations where the advancement committee turned down the request. The council can share the process with the Scout and the Scoutmaster at that time.

\*In order for a Venturer to be an Eagle Scout candidate, he must have achieved First Class rank as a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout.

### B. Application for Alternate Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges

#### 1. Instructions

The Application for Alternate Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges, No. 58-730, includes the necessary information to properly apply for alternate merit badges on the route to Eagle Scout. Below, you will find the steps to follow from the initiation of the application to the awarding of the Eagle Scout rank.

1. The unit leader (Scoutmaster, Coach, or Advisor) initiates this application on behalf of a Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or qualified\* Venturer (candidate).
2. Follow the instructions on this application to determine the alternate merit badge(s).
3. Secure a clear and concise medical statement from a physician licensed to practice medicine, or a school administrator, concerning the candidate's disability.
4. The unit leader and unit committee chair hold a conference with the candidate and his family present. They determine the alternate merit badges for those requirements which physical or mental disability prevents him from completing.
5. The district or council committee then reviews the proposed alternate merit badges. (If approved by the district, its recommendations would be forwarded to the council committee for final approval.)
6. After council approval, the candidate begins to work on approved merit badges.

7. Upon completion of the Eagle Scout rank requirements using the alternate merit badges, the candidate appears before the board of review.

The application should be attached to the Eagle Scout rank application.

8. Following a successful board of review, the council processes both applications and forwards them to the national Eagle Scout Service.

The local council action on the use of alternate merit badges for the Eagle Scout rank does not require National Council approval.

## **2. Guidelines for Advancement to Eagle Scout Rank for Scouts With Disabilities**

1. The Eagle Scout rank may be achieved by a Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or qualified\* Venturer (candidate) who has a physical or mental disability by qualifying for alternate merit badges.

This does not apply to individual requirements for merit badges. Merit badges are awarded only when all requirements are met as previously stated.

2. The physical or mental disability must be of a permanent rather than a temporary nature.

3. A clear and concise medical statement must be made by a physician licensed to practice medicine, or a school administrator, concerning the Scout's disability.

4. The candidate must earn as many of the required merit badges as his ability permits before applying for an alternate merit badge.

5. The form, Application for Alternate Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges, must be completed prior to the candidate's qualifying for alternate merit badges.

6. The alternate merit badges chosen must be of such a nature that they are as demanding of effort as the required merit badges.

7. When alternates chosen involve physical activity, they must be approved by the physician if the Scout has a physical disability.

8. The unit leader and the board of review must explain that to attain the Eagle Scout rank a candidate is expected to do his best in developing himself to the limit of his resources.

9. This application must be approved by the council committee responsible for advancement, utilizing the expertise of professional persons involved in Scouting for the disabled.

10. The candidate's application for Eagle Scout must be made on the Eagle Scout Rank Application,

No. 58-728, with the Application for Alternate Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges and the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook attached when submitted to the council for his Eagle Scout board of review.

*Scouting for Youth with Disabilities Manual, Boy Scouts of America, 2007 Printing*