

## The Advancement Process

Because Boy Scouts is Scout-led, Scouts themselves identify and work on their own advancements and merit badges with the help and guidance of other Scouts, assistant Scoutmasters, and merit badge counselors. The process of advancement follows the Scout's own initiative: after working on and getting requirements for rank advancement signed off, the Scout will request a conference with the scoutmaster. After that, if the Scout has met the requirements for a rank advancement and the Scoutmaster is satisfied, the Scout himself will ask the advancement coordinator to have a board of review.

Boards of review (BORs) are groups of at least three troop community members who hear from a Scout seeking an advancement in rank. Generally, BORs are held once a month, during a troop meeting, and are scheduled by the advancement coordinator once a Scout has had a Scoutmaster conference and fulfilled the new rank requirements (and then has asked the advancement coordinator to hold a BOR).

BORs review the Scout's progress and accomplishments as part of that advancement in rank and the Scout's role in the troop. BORs do NOT test a Scout or otherwise interrogate him about his competence—rather, a BOR is a friendly and open-ended conversation between a Scout and troop adults about the Scout's accomplishments and progress and how the Scout sees his role in the troop.

Once the BOR approves his advancement, the Scout receives his new rank immediately and will be recognized for it at the next court of honor.

Courts of honor are formal ceremonies to recognize Scouts, achievements, and activities of the troop. Troop 500 holds three courts of honor every scouting year: fall (October), winter (January), and spring (June). Because Scouts can miss deadlines like adults do, the Troop 500 calendar lists some scheduled BORs before upcoming courts of honor, to ensure Scouts plan accordingly.

That said, not all BORs are scheduled, because not all Scouts are ready for BORs at the same time—but BORs are generally held during a regularly scheduled troop meeting.

Troop 500 has plenty of time and opportunities for Scouts to achieve and advance. Both regular troop meetings as well as scheduled outings and whole-troop service projects provide great opportunities for learning new skills. At every stage, advancement is up to the Scouts themselves. Some Scouts move very quickly through ranks, and others not so much or as fast—and it's ALL good because every Scout is different in terms of what they want to achieve and how they get there.

What \*does\* matter is that each Scout brings his own energy, abilities, and leadership to scouting. The interactions of the boys and their own leadership provides the engine for any and all achievement and advancement in the troop—which is really great, because they have so much fun working together and learning from each other.