Summary of Significant *Guide to Advancement* Changes

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National Capital Area Council
Advancement and Recognition Committee

Guide to Advancement (GTA)

- **Implementation Date –**
  - **Can use now but mandatory January 1, 2012**
  - **GTA available in PDF and on-line**
  - **NEW Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook**
    - **512-927, 2011 printing**
  - **NEW Eagle Scout Rank Application**
    - **512-728, 2011 printing**

Why Did The BSA Do This

- **Started shortly after the 2010 book disaster**
- **Started a rewrite but the book had a history of multiple writers and conflicting guidance**
- **Restarted in April 2010 with a 20-page outline**
- **Groups inside and outside BSA participated in an interactive and lively exchange of ideas**
  - All thoughts were consolidated and opinions adjudicated by a single editor
- **Decisions more directly tied to BSA Mission, Aims, and Vision**

The High Points – 1

- **Policy and Procedures changed to Guide - doesn't connote flexibility**
- **Committee responsibilities updated, revised, or added at all levels**
- **Must and Shall vs Should vs May and Can**
- **Expansive text to cover many problems; common sense rules!**
- **Awards and Recognition Guide and Awards Website**
- **Active Participation and Position of Responsibility Definition – reasonable and within reason**

The High Points – 2

- **Added Venturing and Sea Scout coverage**
- **Cub Scouting material updated - brings together the GTA and the *Den and Pack Meeting Resource Guide***
- **Merit Badges – more definitive, new merit badge counselor qualifications for select badges**

The High Points – 3

- **Boards of Reviews – practices clarified, wearing of uniform, disputed circumstances**
- **Appeals – well-defined procedures, Appeal form**
- **Time Extensions – what is reasonable and why**
- **Working with Scouts with Disabilities – more explanation**
- **Eagle Scout Process**
  - Service Project requirements detailed, clarified and updated
  - Eagle Scout Rank Application Process clarified and updated
  - New Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook

Eagle Scout Service Project

- **Revised focus on the project proposal**
  - During proposal approval the Eagle Scout candidate should expect questioning and probing in a helpful, friendly, courteous, and kind-hearted manner!
  - No requirement to do more than what is in the workbook
  - Guidance should maximize the opportunity for completion
  - Fearing mistreatment or wrongful rejection a candidate will always have a method of redress
- **Give Leadership to Others…**
  - "Others" means at least two, age appropriate, to get the work done
- **Detailed Planning by Scout and Coach (new optional position) - lots of responsibility, lots of explanation**
- **Fundraising - very specific guidance**
- **Addresses common misconceptions - 9.0.2.12**
- **All Eagle Scout Service Projects constitute official Scouting activity and thus subject to BSA policies and procedures (e.g., Guide to Safe Scouting, insurance, etc)**

Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook

- **Complete rewrite implementing many items we already do**
- **On-line implementation using Scout's BSA ID**
- **Contact Information Page – auto-loading**
- **Turbo Tax interface which prompts the Scout for information**
  - Project proposal, project details, and project report sections very intuitive
- **Electronic signatures – Scoutmaster, Committee Chair, Benefiting Organization, District Eagle Representative**
- **Detailed Planning section optional by highly recommended**
- **Fundraising Application link**

New 512-927

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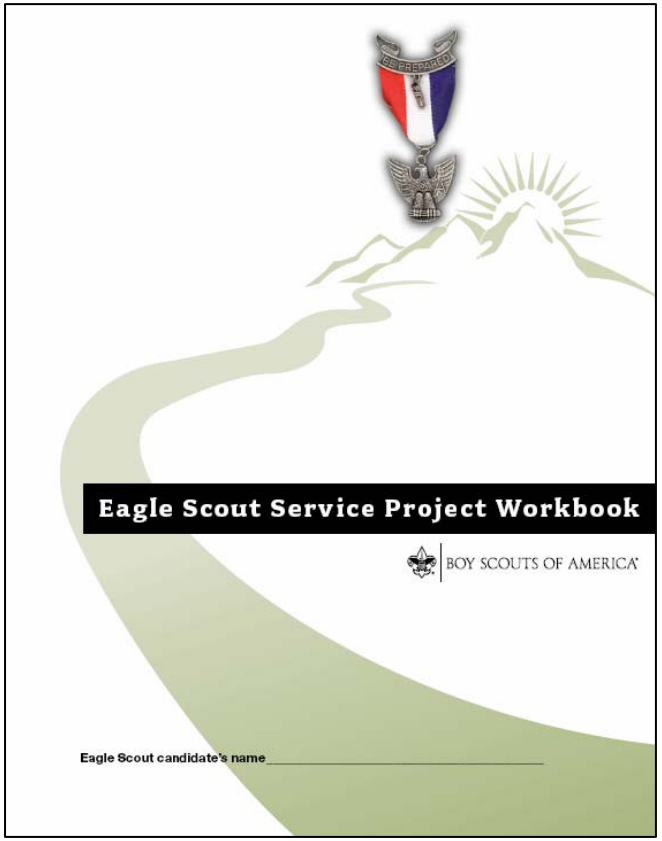

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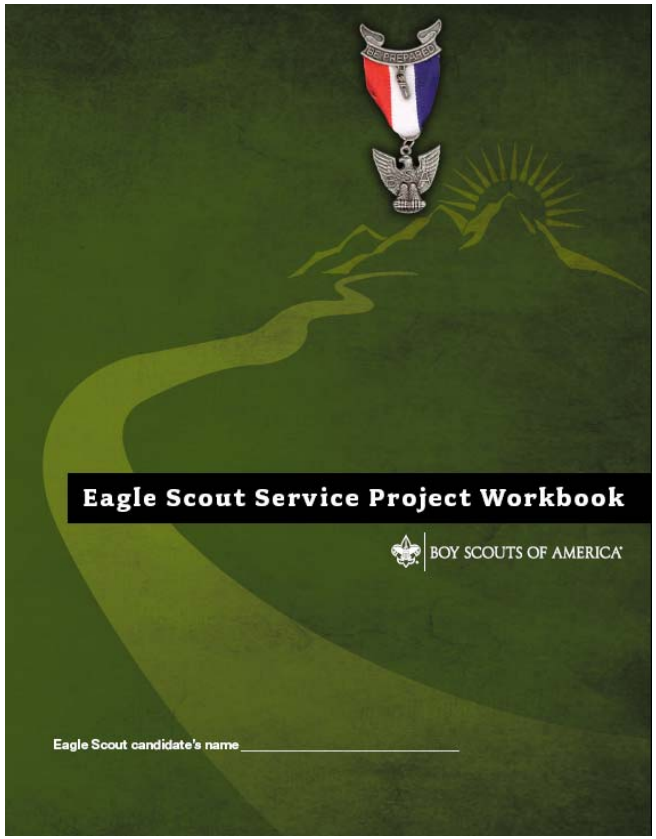


What Else is New!

- When "online" version is available; full set of links to www.scouting.org resources
- Reporting advancement allows all methods - paper, Internet Advancement, unit management software
- Unit Leader (Scoutmaster) Conferences tied directly to *Scoutmaster Handbook*, No. 33009
- New chapter on Internet Advancement
- Frequently Asked Questions section in the back

What’s Not There!

- **The 12 Steps From Life to Eagle**
- **Discussion of Awards and Recognitions – moved to a new website and a separate Guide**
- **Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing Requirements matrices**
- **Dated photos**

Minimal Changes

- **Advancement in Camp Settings**
- **Lone Scout Program**
- **Extended Absences from Scouting**
- **Youth From Other countries**
- **Religious Principles**
- **Posthumous Awards**

Summary

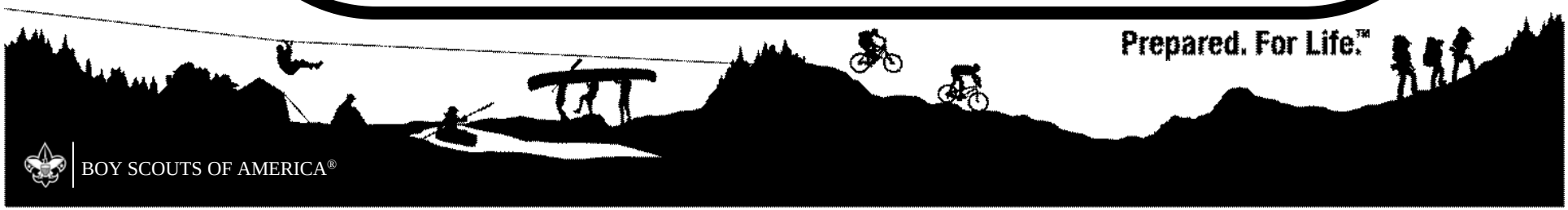
- Many additional topics were discussed at the Philmont Training Center with the lead author revising the GTA daily
- We were reminded that the GTA will drive numerous changes to other documents (e.g., merit badge pamphlets, training lesson plans, etc)
- Further procedural guidance will be provided by the next meeting

DETAILED DISCUSSION

Mandated Procedures and Recommended Practices

This publication clearly identifies mandated procedures with words such as "must" and "shall." Where such language is used, no council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to deviate from the procedures covered, without the written permission of the national Advancement Team.

Recommended best practices are offered using words like "should," while other options and guidelines are indicated with terms such as "may" or "can." Refer questions on these to your local district or council advancement chairs or staff advisors. They, in turn, may request interpretations and assistance from the national Advancement Team.



Must and Shall versus Should versus May and Can

- **Must and Shall – clearly identifies mandated procedures that no council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to deviate from the procedures covered, without the written permission of the National Advancement Team**
  - Shalls: 22
  - Musts: ~220
- **Should – recommended best practices**
- **May and Can – other options and guidelines**

“Active” and “Position of Responsibility”

- Registered and in good standing
- BSA uses the words “reasonable” and “within reason” to assist unit leadership and boards of review in gauging the fairness of expectations
- Units are allowed to establish expectations acceptable to its chartered partner and unit committee
  - Ultimately a board of review shall make the decision as to what is reasonable and what is and what is not - must use common sense
- There is an alternative is expectations are not met

Positions of Responsibility Meeting Unit Expectations

- **If a unit has established expectations for positions of responsibility, and if, within reason based on his personal skill set, the Scout meets them, he passes the requirement**
- **When a Scout assumes a position something related to the desired results must happen**
- **It is a disservice to the Scout and to the unit to reward work that has not been done**
  - **Holding a position and doing nothing, producing no results, is unacceptable**
  - **Some degree of responsibility must be practiced, taken, or accepted**

Merit Badges

- **Clarified, improved, and expanded to solve numerous problems, including:**
  - **Merit Badge Counselor recruiting, training, and registration**
  - **Counseling process**
  - **Working on discontinued merit badges**
  - **Handling accomplishments before joining, or while a Cub Scout**
  - **Meeting merit badge requirements while registered**
  - **Once it is earned, it's earned!**
- **Merit Badge Counselor Qualifications**
  - Canoeing, Climbing, Lifesaving, Rifle Shooting, Rowing, Scuba Diving, Shotgun Shooting, Snow Sorts, Swimming, Whitewater

Boards of Review Practices

- **Regardless of unit expectations or rules, boards of review may not reject candidates dressed wearing as much of it as he owns**
  - The uniform should be as correct as possible
  - With the badges worn properly
- **Neither may a unit require the purchase of uniforming, or clothing such as coats and ties**
- **Recording minutes not required, but a good idea**
- **For Eagle Boards, the unit leader and committee chair signatures represent approval for the candidate to move on to a board of review**
  - If either approval is withheld, the Scout, if he desires it, must still be granted a board of review
- **Differences between Eagle and other ranks/palms**

Rank Appeals Limited to Board of Review Rejections

- **If a board of review does not recommend a candidate for rank advancement, only the Scout or his parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the local council**
- **Star and Life can be appealed to the local council but not to BSA**
- **The National Council reviews appeals only for Eagle Scout rank**
  - The lower ranks, and palms, are not appealable
- **Process for filing and processing an appeal spelled out!**
  - New position - Council-designated Appeals Coordinator
- **New process for refusing to sign the ESRA**
  - See “Initiating Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances,” 8.0.3.2

Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances

- **Instituted when a unit leader or committee chair do not sign rank application**
- **When a disagreement occurs, a unit leader or committee chair should meet with Scout and parents and reach understanding of all viewpoints**
  - If unresolved then Scout or parent/guardian may request a BoR
  - Request is attached to ESRA and routed through District and Council Advancement Committee processes
- **District or Council level board consists of volunteers not from the candidate's unit**
- **Remainder of process is similar to regular Eagle Boards of Review**
  - If approved for advancement, the application remains unsigned, a letter is attached indicating approval to process

New Process For Requesting Time Extensions for Earning Eagle - 1

- **There's a form!**
- **Requests are based on the following tests:**
  - Member joined/rejoined – all time requirements must be met
  - A circumstance came to exist that now precludes completion before the deadline
  - The circumstance is totally beyond the control of the youth member
  - The circumstance is severe and not the norm of the Scout's life
  - The circumstance could not have been planned for, or anticipated
- **Not a precise test - each case considered individually**

New Process For Requesting Time Extensions for Earning Eagle - 2

- **The local council does not grant or deny extensions. These are granted only through the National Advancement Team after consideration of local council recommendations**
- **The council advancement committee must review the evidence and prepare a position statement**
- **The Scout then makes a decision whether or not to pursue the extension with the National Advancement Team**
  - If affirmative, the Scout executive must complete the “Request for Extension of Time to Earn the Eagle Scout Rank”

Special Needs Youth

- **Active Beyond the Age of Eligibility**
  - A developmentally disabled adult of any age may be considered for youth membership
  - Men over age 18 properly approved by the council executive board may apply for the Eagle Scout rank
  - If ranks can be earned, but it takes longer, then this option is not warranted
- **Assembled and Submitted Registration Requirements**
  - A letter from parent or guardian, a complete youth application, a complete Annual BSA Health and Medical Record Form, a signed statement from a qualified health professional, a letter from the unit leader, and other supporting documentation
- **There is no time requirement to complete any rank**
- **Alternative rank requirements still apply**

Eagle Scout Rank Application Process

- Many of our standard problems are covered
- As you read this section, the District Eagle Representatives will act on behalf of the NCAC
- A copy should be made of the application, service project workbook and anything else to be submitted
- Once copies are in safe keeping the originals are delivered promptly to the council service center
- Councils may suggest service project workbooks (only) be sent or taken to a different person or location, such as a district advancement committee member