

National BSA Policies Related To Boards Of Review

Boards of Review

A periodic review of the progress of a Scout is vital in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Scouting program in the unit. The unit committee can judge how well the Scout being reviewed is benefiting from the program. The unit leader can measure the effectiveness of his or her leadership. The Scout can sense that he is, or is not, advancing properly and can be encouraged to make the most of his Scouting experience.

Not only is it important to review those Scouts who have learned and been tested for a rank, but also to review those Scouts who have shown no progress in their advancement over the past few months.

The members of the board of review should have the following objectives in mind when they conduct the review:

- ☀ To make sure the Scout has done what he was supposed to do for the rank.
- ☀ To see how good an experience the Scout is having in the unit.
- ☀ To encourage the Scout to progress further.

The review is not an examination; the board does not retest the candidate. Rather, the board should attempt to determine the Scout's attitude and his acceptance of Scouting ideals. **Scout spirit is defined as living the Scout Oath (Promise) and Scout Law in a Scout's everyday life.** The board should make sure that good standards have been met in all phases of the Scout's life. A discussion of the Scout Oath and Scout Law is in keeping with the purpose of the review, to make sure that the candidate recognizes and understands the value of Scouting in his home, unit, school, and community.

The decision of all boards of review is arrived at through discussion and must be unanimous.

When a boy satisfactorily completes his board of review for a rank or an Eagle Palm, tenure for his next rank or Eagle Palm begins immediately.

Scouts 18 or older. Scouts who have completed all requirements for a rank prior to their 18th birthday should submit their application and be reviewed and recognized within three months after that date. **For Eagle Scout boards of review conducted between three and six months after the candidate's 18th birthday, a statement explaining the reason for the delay must be attached to the Eagle Scout Rank Application when it is submitted to the Eagle Scout Service.** If an Eagle Scout board of review will be held after the six months following the candidate's 18th birthday, the Eagle Scout must petition the National Boy Scout Committee for an extension of time to hold the board of review. The petition must be processed through the local council, detailing the extenuating

circumstances that prevented the board of review from being held within the six-month period following the candidate's 18th period, and be accompanied with a copy of the Eagle Scout Rank Application.

For the composition of boards of review for Varsity Scout teams and Venturing crews, see "[Varsity Scout Advancement](#)" and "[Venturing Advancement](#)."

Review for Tenderfoot Through Life Ranks and Eagle Palms. After a Scout has completed all requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, and Life ranks, or an Eagle Palm, he appears before a board of review. This board of review is made up of at least three and not more than six members of the **troop committee**. One member serves as chairman, usually the committee member responsible for advancement. **Unit leaders, assistant unit leaders, relatives, or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's board of review.**

The review shall be conducted at a convenient time and location, such as a meeting, summer camp, or the home of a member of the troop committee.

The review has three purposes:

- ☀ To make sure the work has been learned and completed.
- ☀ To check to see what kind of experience the boy is having in his patrol and troop.
- ☀ To encourage the Scout to advance to the next rank.

Because many boys are ill at ease when talking to adults, it is important that the board be held in a relaxed atmosphere. A certain amount of formality and meaningful questioning should be used during the review.

The Scout should be neat in appearance and his uniform should be as correct as possible, with the badges worn properly. It should be the desire of the board to encourage the Scout to talk so that the review can be a learning experience for the candidate and the members of the board.

The review is not an examination. The Scout has learned his skill and has been examined. This is a review. The Scout should be asked where he learned his skill, who taught him, and the value he gained from passing this requirement.

The Scout reviews what he did for his rank. From this review, it can be determined whether he did what he was supposed to do. The review also reveals what kind of experience the Scout is having in the troop. With that knowledge, the troop leaders can shape the program to meet the needs and interests of the Scouts.

The board should attempt to determine the Scout's ideals and goals. The board should make sure that a good standard of performance has been met. A discussion of the Scout Oath and Scout Law is in keeping with the purpose of the review, to make sure the candidate recognizes and understands the value of Scouting in his home, unit, school, and community.

The board of review members should feel free to refer to the *Boy Scout Handbook*, *Scoutmaster Handbook*, or any other references during the review. The *Troop Committee Guidebook* contains examples of questions that could be asked during a review.

The review should take approximately fifteen minutes. At the conclusion of the review, the board should know whether a boy is qualified for the rank or Palm. The Scout is asked to leave the room while the board members discuss his achievements. The decision of the board of review is arrived through discussion and must be unanimous. If members are satisfied that the Scout is ready to advance, he is called in, congratulated, notified as to when he will receive his recognition, and encouraged to continue his advancement or earn the next Palm.

If the board decides that the Scout is not ready to advance, the candidate should be informed and told what he has not done satisfactorily. Most Scouts accept responsibility for not completing the requirements properly. The members of the board of review should specify what must be done to rework the candidate's weaknesses and schedule another board of review for him. A follow-up letter must be sent to a Scout who is turned down for rank advancement, confirming the agreements reached on the actions necessary for advancement. Should the Scout disagree with the decision, the appeal procedures should be explained to him. (See "[Appealing a Decision](#)" below.)

After the board of review is completed, the Scoutmaster is informed of all of the decisions that were made by the board of review.

Remember, after a Scout satisfactorily completes a board of review, he cannot be recognized until that action is reported to the council service center on an Advancement Report. A monthly report keeps unit records current and is a good practice. The troop scribe should also keep a record in the *Troop/Team Record Book* for easy reference by the Scoutmaster and use by other boards of review.

Eagle Scout Boards of Review. The Boy Scouts of America has placed the Eagle Scout board of review in the hands of either the troop, team, crew, or ship committee or the district or council committee responsible for advancement. The council will decide and promulgate which method or methods may be used.

The board of review for an Eagle candidate is composed of a minimum of three members and a maximum of six members, 21 years of age or older. **These members do not have to be registered in Scouting, but they must have an understanding of the importance and purpose of the Eagle board of review.** At least one district or council advancement representative shall be a member of the Eagle board of review, when conducted at the unit level, and may serve as chairman if requested to do so by the unit.

Because of the importance of the Eagle Scout Award, a unanimous decision must be reached as to the Scout's qualifications. If a unanimous decision is not reached, a new review may be conducted at the request of the applicant, the unit leader, or the unit committee. The review should take approximately thirty minutes.

The Twelve Steps from Life to Eagle. The following twelve steps have been outlined to ensure a smooth procedure for the Scout, the unit leadership, the local council, and the volunteers who are to conduct the board of review. Share these steps with each Eagle candidate so that he can fully understand the procedure that must be followed by the Scout, the district, and the council.

1. In order to advance to the rank of Eagle, a candidate must complete all requirements of tenure; Scout spirit; merit badges; positions of responsibility; while a Life Scout, plan,

develop, and provide leadership to others in a service project; and the Scoutmaster conference.

2. Using the [Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#), the candidate must select his Eagle service project and have the project concept approved by his unit leader, his unit committee, and the benefactor of the project, and reviewed and approved by the council or district advancement committee (see "[Service Projects -- Eagle Scout Rank](#)"). The [Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#), No. 18-927, must be used in meeting this requirement.
3. It is imperative that all requirements for the Eagle Scout rank except the board of review be completed prior to the candidate's 18th birthday. When all the requirements except the board of review for the rank of Eagle, including the service project, have been completed, an Eagle Scout Rank Application must be filled out and sent to the council service center promptly. (See "[Advancement for Youth Members with Special Needs](#)" and the section titled "[Time Extensions](#).")
4. The application should be signed by the unit leader at the proper place. The unit committee reviews and approves the record of the Eagle candidate before the application is submitted to the local council. If a unit leader or unit committee fails to sign or otherwise approve an application, the Eagle candidate may still be granted a board of review. The failure of the unit leader or unit committee to sign an application may be considered by the board of review in determining the qualifications of the Eagle candidate.
5. When the completed application is received at the council service center, its contents will be verified and the references contacted. The council advancement committee or its designee contacts the person listed as a reference on the Eagle Scout Rank Application either by letter, form, or telephone checklist. The council determines the method or methods to be used. The candidate should have contacted those individuals listed as references before including their names on the application. The candidates should not be involved personally in transmitting any correspondence between persons listed as references and the council service center.
6. The [Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#), properly filled out, must be submitted with the application.
7. After the contents of an application have been verified and appropriately signed, the application, [Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#), and references will be returned from the council service center to the chairman of the Eagle board of review so that a board of review may be scheduled. Under no circumstances should a board of review be scheduled until the application is returned to the chairman of the Eagle board of review. Reference checks that are forwarded with the application are confidential, and their contents are not to be disclosed to any person who is not a member of the board of review.
8. The board of review for an Eagle candidate is composed of at least three but not more than six members. One member serves as chairman. Unit leaders, assistant unit leaders, relatives or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's board of review. The board of review members should convene at least thirty minutes before the candidate appears in order to review the application, reference checks, and service project report. At least one district or council advancement representative must be a member of the Eagle board of review if the board of review is conducted on a unit level. A council or district may designate more than one person to serve as a member of Eagle boards of review when requested to do so by the unit. It is not required that these persons be members of the advancement committee; however, they must have an understanding of the importance of the Eagle board of review.

9. The candidate's unit leader introduces him to members of the board of review. The unit leader may remain in the room, but he does not participate in the board of review. The unit leader may be called upon to clarify a point in question. In no case should a relative or guardian of the candidate attend the review, even as a unit leader. There is no set of questions that an Eagle candidate should be asked. However, the board should be assured of the candidate's participation in the program. This is the highest award that a boy may achieve and, consequently, a thorough discussion of his successes and experiences in Scouting should be considered. After the review, the candidate and his unit leader leave the room while the board members discuss the acceptability of the candidate as an Eagle Scout. **The decision must be unanimous.** If the candidate meets the requirements, he is asked to return and is informed that he will receive the board's recommendation for the Eagle Scout rank. If the candidate does not meet the requirements, he is asked to return and told the reasons for his failure to qualify. A discussion should be held with him as to how he may meet the requirements within a given period. Should the applicant disagree with the decision, the appeal procedures should be explained to him. A follow-up letter must be sent to the Scout confirming the agreements reached on the action(s) necessary for the advancement. If the Scout chooses to appeal, provide the name and address of the person he needs to contact. (See "[Appealing the Decision](#)" below.)
10. Immediately after the board of review and after the application has been appropriately signed, the application, the service project report, references, and a properly completed Advancement Report are returned to the council service center.
11. When the application arrives at the council service center, the Scout executive signs it to certify that the proper procedure has been followed and that the board of review has recommended the candidate for the Eagle Scout rank. The [Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#) and references are retained by the council. The [Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#) may be returned to the Scout after council approval. **Only the Eagle Scout Rank Application is forwarded to the national Eagle Scout Service.**
12. The Eagle Scout Service screens the application to ascertain information such as proper signatures, positions of responsibility, tenure between ranks, and age of the candidate. Any item not meeting national standards will cause the application to be returned for more information. If the application is in order, the Scout is then certified as an Eagle Scout by the Eagle Scout Service on behalf of the National Council. Notice of approval is given by sending the Eagle Scout certificate to the local council. The date used on the certificate will be the date of the board of review. The Eagle Award must not be sold or given to any unit until after the certificate is received by the council service center. The Eagle Scout court of honor should not be scheduled until the local council receives the Eagle Scout rank credentials.



Appealing a Decision

Two sets of circumstances may lead to the appeal of a decision.

First, if the unit leader or unit committee does not recommend the Scout for a board of review, or if the unit leader or unit committee does not sign the Eagle Scout application, the Scout or other interested party may appeal the decision at the next level.

Second, if the appropriate board of review does not recommend the applicant for the rank advancement, the decision may be appealed to the next higher level. The Scout, his leader, or his parents may appeal the decision. With all appeal applications, the final decision rests with the national Boy Scout Committee. In ascending order, levels are unit, district, local council, and national Boy Scout Committee.

On receipt of an appeal, the district or council committee responsible for advancement will provide for a prompt review to determine the facts. All parties must be interviewed either individually or as a group, but a confrontation should be avoided. A written report with all details must be prepared for the committee responsible for a decision or for forwarding to the national Boy Scout Committee, if necessary.

All appeals to the national Boy Scout Committee must be processed through the Scout's local council. A **copy** of the Scout's Eagle Scout Rank Application must be included when petitioning at the national level.



Courts of Honor

Each time a Scout advances in rank, he should be recognized on two occasions. The first should be as soon as possible after a Scout has been approved by a board of review and an Advancement report has been filed with the council office -- preferably at the next unit meeting. This ceremony should be dignified but simple, involving not much more than presenting the Scout with his new badge of rank.

The second occasion is a court of honor, a public ceremony to recognize Scouts for successful achievement and to describe the importance of the program. The main purposes of the court of honor are to furnish formal recognition for achievement and to provide incentive for other Scouts to advance.

Formal courts of honor should be conducted at least four times a year. All Scouts who have advanced since the previous court of honor are honored. Their parents and friends should be invited to attend the ceremony.

When a Scout has earned the Eagle Scout rank, he deserves a special recognition. The Eagle Scout ceremony may not be conducted until the action of the board of review has been approved by the national Eagle Scout Service.

Procedures for conducting courts of honor and Special First Class and Eagle Scout courts of honor are described in *Woods Wisdom: Troop Program Features*.

Badges of rank, merit badges, and Eagle Palms are restricted items. These items may not be sold or distributed unless the Advancement Report, No. 34403A, has been properly filled out and has been submitted to the local council office. To do otherwise will jeopardize individual youth members' record of achievement.

Source: *Advancement Committee Policies and Procedures*, #33088B, revised 1999

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