

TROOP 211

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

TROOP GUIDEBOOK

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Welcome Scouts and Parents!

Welcome to Boy Scout Troop 211! We are excited to have you join us and become part of the brotherhood of Scouting.

This guide is intended as a supplement and not as a replacement to the official Boy Scout Handbook and other official BSA publications. The information in this guide is meant to provide you with specific information on Troop 211 and will answer basic questions about our policies, uniforms, equipment, camping trips, advancement, merit badges and participation. Please familiarize yourself with this guide. As a member of Troop 211, you will be responsible for carrying out these policies.

One of the major factors in the success of Troop 211 is the active participation of Scouts and parents. Experience has taught us that a Scout's interest and accomplishments are directly proportional to the parent's participation. The time spent in Scouting can be quality time between a parent and son.

A Scout Troop, with the programs, outings, advancement, and service that Troop 211 provides, requires the support of many families and friends. No single person can do it all. It is expected as an obligation of membership that each family in Troop 211 will support the activities of the Troop in some way during each year. Please think about how you can best help.

Troop 211 At-a-Glance

Chartering Organization	St. Mark's Episcopal Church generously sponsors our BSA Charter. We were chartered as a Troop in 1940. We are part of the Golden Arrow District in the Sam Houston Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Church membership is not required to join the Troop. 25 Scouts and 16 adults are currently registered with the Troop.
Meeting Schedule	<i>Troop meetings:</i> Monday nights at 7:30 pm in Hauser Hall at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. <i>Scoutmaster / ASM meetings:</i> Held at Troop Meetings or Campouts <i>Troop Committee meetings:</i> Monthly <i>Green Bar Meetings:</i> As called by the Senior Patrol Leader. <i>Courts of Honor:</i> The Troop holds three Court of Honor meetings (September, January and June) each year. These are held on a Monday night and begin at 7:00pm.
Troop Camping Activities	We camp each month during the school year, including campouts focused on: - Backpacking and climbing - Canoeing - Nature Hiking - Skill development
Summer Camp & High Adventure	We have been to Summer Camp at Camp Daniel Boone in North Carolina, El Rancho Cima in San Marcos, Texas, and Camp Isabel in Colorado. Our High Adventures include BSA Seabase, Philmont and Boundary Waters.
Registration Fees	<i>Scouts</i> - \$50 per year per Scout and includes Boy's Life subscription, Sam Houston Area Council fees, BSA insurance premium, and award fees. <i>Adults</i> - \$20 per year per adult and includes Sam Houston Area Council fees.
Other expenses	<i>Uniform:</i> Approximately \$80; <i>Campouts:</i> \$15 per campout for food. <i>Summer Camp:</i> \$200-\$350 for the week of summer camp (excluding transportation).
Email	The Troop makes extensive use of email to plan and organize its activities. Questions about Troop 211 can be sent to scoutmaster@troop211houston.org for a quick reply.

What Is Scouting About?

Purpose, Goals & Methods of Scouting

The purpose of Scouting is, "... to prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law." The Scouting program has three specific objectives, commonly referred to as the "Aims of Scouting." The first goal is growth in *moral strength and character*. We define this as what the boy is himself: his personal qualities, his values and his outlook. The second goal is *encouraging citizenship*. The Scout learns of his obligation to other people, to the society in which he lives and to his government. The third goal is *development of physical, mental, and emotional fitness*. Fitness includes the body (well tuned and healthy), the mind (able to think and solve problems), and the emotions (self-control, courage, respect for others and self-respect). These goals are the foundation of Scouting and are summarized in both the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. The eight methods for achieving these aims are listed below.

Ideals - The ideals of Boy Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout motto, and the Scout slogan. The Boy Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high, and as he reaches for them, he has some control over what and who he becomes.

Patrols - Scouts are assigned to patrols. The patrol method allows Scouts an opportunity to experience group participation and learning, and responsibility to others. It places responsibility on young shoulders and teaches boys how to accept it. The patrol method allows Scouts to interact in small groups where members can easily relate to each other. These small groups determine Troop activities through elected representatives.

Outdoor Programs - Boy Scouting is designed to take place outdoors. It is in the outdoor setting that Scouts share responsibilities and learn how to interact and work together. The skills and activities practiced at Troop meetings are put to use during outdoor activities. Outdoor programs assist the Boy Scout in gaining an appreciation for the beauty of the world around us. The outdoors is the laboratory in which Boy Scouts learn ecology and practice conservation of nature's resources.

Advancement - Boy Scouting provides a series of goals and advancement opportunities by learning skills, responsibility and leadership. The Boy Scout plans his advancement and progresses at his own pace as he meets each challenge. The Boy Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps him gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help a Boy Scout grow in self-reliance and in the ability to help others.

Interaction with Adults - Boys can learn a great deal by watching how adults conduct themselves. Scout leaders can be positive role models for the members of the Troop. In many cases a Scout leader who is willing to listen to boys, encourage them, and take a sincere interest in them can make a profound difference in their lives.

Personal Growth - As Boy Scouts plan their activities and progress toward their goals, they experience personal growth. The Good Turn Daily concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Boy Scouting. Boys grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others. The religious emblems program also is a large part of the personal growth method. Regularly scheduled Scoutmaster conferences will help each Boy Scout determine his growth toward the aims of Scouting.

Leadership Development - The Boy Scout program encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Boy Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership situations. Understanding the concepts of leadership helps a boy accept the role of leading others and guides him toward the citizenship aim of Scouting.

Uniform - The uniform makes the Boy Scout Troop visibly consistent and creates a positive youth image in the community. Boy Scouting is an action program, and wearing the uniform is an action that shows each Boy Scout's commitment to the goals and purposes of Scouting. The uniform provides the Boy Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth that believe in the same ideals. By wearing the uniform, Scouts give each other strength and support. Beyond accenting the common bond between Scouts, by wearing the uniform Scouts are declaring their faith and commitment to some important beliefs that bind them to all people. It is a way of making visible their belief in God, their loyalty to our country and their commitment to helping other people who need them.

The uniform is practical attire for all Boy Scout activities and provides a way for Boy Scouts to proudly wear the badges that show what they have accomplished. Please encourage your son to wear his uniform as it benefits the Troop.

- When correctly worn, the uniform can help build good Troop spirit.
- By investing in a uniform, a Scout and his parents are making a commitment to take Scouting seriously.
- The uniform makes the Troop visible as a force for good in the community.
- When properly worn on the correct occasions, it can attract new members.
- Scouts in uniform create a strong, positive, youth image in the neighborhood, thus helping to counteract the negative feeling some adults have about youth.

Joining Troop 211

Membership in Troop 211 is open to all boys between the ages of 11 and 18. The Scoutmaster will assign each boy to a patrol after joining the Troop. Full participation in Patrol activities from the outset is expected of each Scout. A complete application for membership to Troop 211 consists of the following paperwork and should be returned to the Scoutmaster. All paperwork with proper signatures must be current and on file with the Troop before a Scout can attend any activity or campout

Scouts

1. BSA Youth Application form – This is a bluish, multicopy, 8 ½” x 11” form titled “BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA YOUTH APPLICATION” available from either the Scoutmaster or Advancement Committee Chair.

2. Personal Health and Medical Record Form – This form is required for insurance and safety purposes for each Scout. A Class 1 form can be used initially as it does not need a doctor’s signature. A Class 2 and Class 3 form will be required within 90 days of application. It is needed for camping events and requires a doctor’s signature.

3. Medication Form – This form is required as a supplement to the Personal Health and Medical Record Form if the Scout takes and prescribed or over-the-counter medications that may be administered during a Troop activity.

4. Participant Statement of Understanding and Code of Conduct for BSA Troop 211 – This form must be read, understood, and signed by Scout and parent.

5. Fees – Please pay the registration fee as shown on page 3 payable by check to *BSA Troop 211*.

Adults

1. BSA Adult registration form – This is a bluish, multicopy, 8 ½” x 11” form titled “BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA Be a Scouting Volunteer” available from either the Scoutmaster or Advancement Committee Chair.

2. Personal Health and Medical Record Form – This form is required for insurance and safety purposes for each Adult. A Class 3 form is needed prior to participation in any activity and requires a doctor’s signature.

3. Medication Form – This form is required as a supplement to the Personal Health and Medical Record Form if the Scout takes and prescribed or over-the-counter medications that may be administered during a Troop activity.

4. Participant Statement of Understanding and Code of Conduct for BSA Troop 211 – This form must be read, understood, and signed by Scouter.

5. Fees – Registration fee as shown on page 3 payable by check to *BSA Troop 211*.

Uniforms

The following is the official uniform of Troop 211.

The Class “A” uniform consists of:

1. BSA short or long-sleeved khaki Scout shirt
2. Appropriate patches and insignia properly attached to the shirt
3. Scout shorts or pants with BSA approved belt
4. Scout socks that have red elastic top

The Class “B” uniform consists of:

1. Scout related or solid plain-colored or BSA T-shirt
2. Scout shorts or pants with BSA approved belt
3. Scout socks that have red elastic top

Class “A” uniforms will be worn at each meeting and all Courts of Honor and Boards of Review during the year. A complete uniform should be worn to all Troop meetings and must be worn when traveling to and from all Scout functions. The Scribe does not consider Scouts without a complete uniform as present. The Troop holds inspections periodically to ensure proper standards.

Class “B” uniforms may be worn on certain trips and events.

Uniform Items Provided by Troop 211

The following items are provided to Scouts by Troop 211 upon successful registration with the Troop.

Neckerchief & Slide
Epaulets
Rank badge
Patrol emblem
Office emblem
Merit badges
Camping badges

Troop neckerchiefs are given only to the Scout once and there is a \$5 charge for replacement.

Uniform Items Provided by Registering Scouts

The following items will be procured by the Scout upon successful registration with the Troop.

Shirt (official tan short sleeve)
Council & Troop 211 patches
Belt (official khaki web belt)
Pants/Shorts (official khaki/green)

Socks (official khaki/green)
Merit Badge Sash
Purple World Crest emblem
Patrol emblem
Arrow of Light, if earned in Cub Scouts
Religious knots, if earned in Cub Scouts

Correct placement of uniform insignia is shown on the inside cover of the Boy Scout Handbook and in the BSA Insignia Guide. Merit badges are worn in three columns on the merit badge sash, in no particular order and not on the Scout shirt. Other awards (World Conservation, Paul Bunyan, 50 miler, etc) may also be worn on the merit badge sash. Prior rank badges **ARE NOT** to be sewn on the sash. Other awards should only be worn at ceremonies related to those awards. For example, religious awards should only be worn to events related to that award and should not be worn on the Class "A" uniform to Troop meetings.

Scout Handbooks & Cover

Each Scout should safeguard his Handbook by clearly marking his name on the outside edge protecting it from "the elements." The Troop recommends purchasing a protective cover for the Boy Scout Handbook.

Troop Communication

Announcements at the Troop meeting: Announcements are at the end of every Troop meeting. Come in for a few minutes before the end of the meeting, join the campfire circle and hear the announcements, from the Boy Scout and adult leaders.

Email: Email is a big communication tool for the Troop. Please provide your email to the Troop Committee Chairman and notify him of any changes. Many families give mom's, dad's and the Scout's email so all can be informed of the Troop activities. It is very important that you check your email the day of Troop activities, as there may be last minute updates. Watch for messages from adult leaders. We try not to have many last minute changes but they do occur.

Website: We do have a website: www.troop211houston.org, but it is not as current as information available on email.

Troop Meetings

Troop meetings are held regularly each Monday from 7:30pm to 9:00pm at St. Mark's in Hauser Hall. Rarely, but occasionally, the meeting is held in the gymnasium. Please arrive a few minutes early so we can begin all meetings promptly at 7:30. Also, please arrive early for pick up so you can hear the announcements (around 8:45) and for punctual pick up of Scouts.

Scouts need to always bring their Scout Handbook and be fully dressed in "Class A" uniform at each meeting. Class A is required at all Courts of Honor and Boards of Review. We know meeting attendance is sometimes in conflict with sports or other commitments. If your son is arriving directly from or going directly to a sports activity, sports uniforms are acceptable. We would rather have Scouts there for all or part of the meeting than taking time to go home and change.

Behavior & Discipline Policy

Any Scout who behaves in a way that has the potential to cause harm to himself or others or which reflects negatively upon Troop 211 and the BSA will be disciplined. If the infraction is relatively minor, e.g. a messy tent or failure to wash dishes when it's the Scout's turn, the idea will be for discipline to originate at the Scout level.

If a Scout is abusing the Code of Conduct, adults will be selected to review the incident and correct the situation within the Troop. It is the ultimate responsibility of the Scoutmaster, or the adult leaders in charge, to discuss and resolve the situation. Every effort will be made to make the consequences fit the offense, to cause the Scout not to repeat the offense and to send a message to the rest of the Troop that such behavior, whatever it may be, will have consequences.

The appropriate adult leaders will be kept informed. The Troop Senior Patrol Leader may also be included in this process. More serious infractions will be dealt with as appropriate. Examples of consequences can range from a discussion with an adult leader to extra duty to the extreme of expulsion from the Troop, depending on the nature of the problem. Adult leaders also reserve the right to call the Scout's parents to come get him from the activity immediately.

The Scoutmaster or adult leader in charge may, at his or her discretion, find it necessary to advise the Senior Patrol Leader and/or other adults present of the situation and seek their advice. The severity and number of incidents will determine the course of action.

Scouts are greatly influenced by the behavior that takes place around them. All adults are expected to comply with the Code of Conduct and to conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner.

BSA Published Reference Material

Advancement Policies and Procedures Committee Guide, BSA pub num 33088
Boy Scout Handbook, BSA pub num 33105 3rd edition
Boy Scout Requirements, BSA pub num 33215E
Den Chief Handbook, BSA pub num 3211A
Guide to Safe Scouting, BSA pub num 34416C

Insignia Guide, BSA pub num 33066B
Junior Leader Handbook, BSA pub num 33500A
Rules and Regulations of the BSA, BSA pub num 57-492
Scoutmaster's Handbook, BSA pub num 33009
Troop Committee Guide Book, BSA pub num 34505B

Scouting Contacts & Information Sources

Boy Scouts of America: www.scouting.org
Sam Houston Area Council: www.shac.org
Golden Arrow District: www.goldenarrow.org
Troop 211: www.troop211houston.org
National Eagle Scout Association: www.nesa.org
Order of the Arrow (national): www.oa-bsa.org
Colonneh Lodge #137 (local): www.colonneh.org
US Scouting Service Project: www.usscouts.org
Traditional Scouting Network: www.kudu.net
Eagle Scout Resource Center: www.eaglescout.org

New Scout Parent FAQs

1. What are my son's obligations as a Boy Scout?

As a Boy Scout, your son should:

- Obey the Scout Oath and Law
- Come to the meetings, in uniform, as often as possible.
- Participate in Troop and patrol activities
- Work on advancement and merit badges

2.. Where do I get a uniform for my new Scout?

Scout uniforms are available at the Scout Shop. The Troop maintains its own supply of used uniforms that are available during Troop meetings. The Scout shop is located at:

2225 North Loop West, Suite A
Houston, TX 77008
(713) 865-5190
Mon.-Fri.: 9am - 6 PM
Sat.: 10am - 5:00 PM

3. What are my options if I want to help the Troop?

- Offer to lend a hand with the indoor- and/or outdoor adult work that's necessary to keep the Troop running.
- Become an active member of the Troop Committee
- Sign up to be a merit badge counselor for an area you're interested in – you don't have to be an expert, merely willing to help the boys teach themselves.
- Take the BSA's courses for New Leader Essentials, Youth Protection Training, Outdoor Skills, and Assistant Scoutmaster training and come camping with us.

4. Can my son be in the same patrol as his friends?

More than likely, but that's determined by the Scoutmaster on a case-by-case basis as our overall goal is for each patrol to have an even balance of more and less experienced scouts.

5. Does my son have to attend all the weekly Troop meetings?

No, but more is better. Scouts who miss a lot of meetings also miss out on the fun. They start falling behind their peers in skill development, are slower in building relationships with fellow scouts and may eventually drift away from Scouting entirely.

6. What should my Scout do when he has a schedule conflict?

He should advise his Patrol Leader of the schedule conflict so that the Patrol Leader can advise the Senior Patrol Leader.

7. Do I have to go on the campouts with my son?

No. But if you want to pitch in and abide by the Troop's campout rules, your participation is beneficial to the program and your son's growth as a Boy Scout.

8. What do I do when my Scout needs help?

Quietly let Patrol Advisor or Troop Guide know. Please resist the natural parental instinct to "make it better" for your son (unless it's an unsafe situation). Scouting is designed to allow boys to learn by doing for themselves, and to provide them with a safe, recoverable place to foul up.

9. My Scout has special needs. To whom do I talk?

Make sure that the Scoutmaster and your Scout's Patrol Advisor are made aware of your son's special needs. Rest assured that your son will not be the only one in the Troop having special needs.

10. Does my son have to go to summer camp?

No, but it's highly encouraged – Scouts have fun, build their relationships with each other, earn advancement and merit badges, and literally grow up at summer camp. In terms of advancement, a week of summer camp is worth a year of other Troop activities.

11. Can I go to summer too?

Yes. We welcome adults who are willing to go to summer as Assistant Scoutmasters. To do so, you will have to take the Assistant Scoutmaster training courses as well as Youth Protection Training.

12. Who keeps track of my son's advancement, merit badges, etc.?

When a Scout completes a requirement for rank advancement or a merit badge, it's his responsibility to make sure that his book (or merit-badge card) is signed off. When a Scout advances to the next rank or completes a merit badge, the Troop's Advancement Chair records that in our electronic database. If a Scout completes a "partial" on a merit badge, that too gets recorded in our database. But to repeat, it is the Scout's responsibility to make sure this happens.

13. How long does it take for a new Scout to become an Eagle Scout?

Each Scout advances at his own pace. If a Scout participates regularly in the Troop's activities and takes reasonable advantage of the advancement and merit badge opportunities that are offered, then he should have no trouble making Eagle well before his 18th birthday.

14. What advice do you have for me as a new Scout parent?

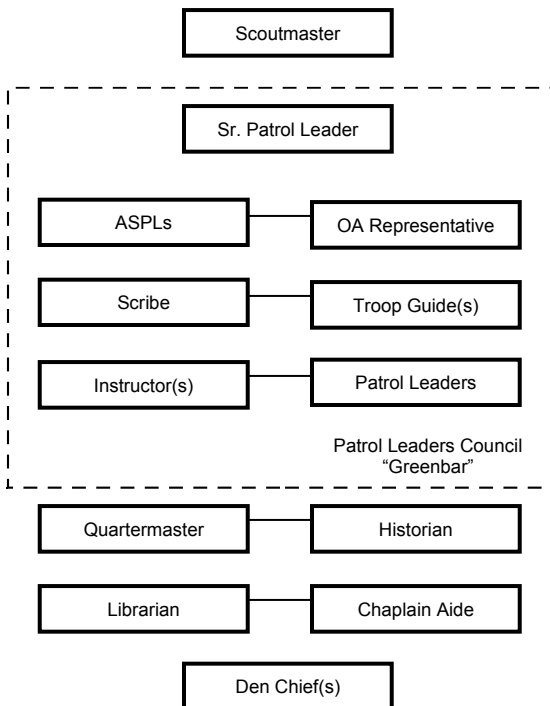
- Give your Scout some room to make mistakes (except if there's an unsafe situation). Let the Scoutmaster, Asst. Scoutmaster and Senior Patrol Leader decide if more coaching is needed – and then let them do the coaching.
- Recognize that we strive for a boy-run Troop. If you think that the Scouts aren't running things the way they should be, feel free to say something, but (except in an unsafe situation) say it to the Scoutmaster.
- Experience shows that the more involved a Scout's parent is in the adult leadership of the Troop, the more

likely the Scout is to remain in Scouting and someday to make Eagle Scout.

- Read this Guidebook thoroughly and ask questions if you something is not clear to you.

Troop 211 Organization & Description

Troop 211 is a boy-run Troop using the Patrol Method. The Troop organization chart below outlines the organization of the Troop. Leadership is one of the methods of Scouting. Every boy will have an opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership. The meetings are planned and carried out by the Patrol Leaders' Council or "Greenbar". All duties for patrol activities are assigned by the patrol leader. Understanding the concepts of leadership helps the boy accept the leadership of others and helps him to grow into a more responsible adult.



Patrols

A patrol is a group of 6-10 Scouts led by a Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader. The Patrol Leader is elected for a period of twelve months, generally at Summer Camp.

The incoming Webelos Scouts who crossover to Troop 211 in the spring form an introductory temporary patrol (or patrols) that stays together through Summer Camp. A temporary patrol is led by a Troop Guide, who is an experienced scout, selected by the Scoutmaster, and his role is to introduce the new scouts to Troop 211.

After Summer Camp, the incoming Webelos Scouts and any boys new to scouting are assigned to existing patrols. The Troop has many patrols. The use of patrols partitions the Troop into smaller, more personal and manageable groups. It further allows friends to camp and do activities together, as well as groups the boys in a balanced

distribution according to age and rank. A boy usually remains in the same patrol throughout his scouting years. The Patrol Leader is responsible for his patrol's attendance, compliance with uniform requirements, and duty roster. Patrols pick their own patrol name, emblem, yell, and flag. A new patrol is assigned at least one Assistant Scoutmaster to serve as Patrol Advisor.

Patrol Leader's Council (Greenbar)

A Patrol Leader's Council or "Greenbar" meeting is held when called by the Senior Patrol Leader. If your son's rank patch has green bars on it, then your son should attend the Green Bar Meeting. The Senior Patrol Leader leads all Troop meetings. The Greenbar is used to plan the Troop activities and provide leadership skills to the Patrol Leaders and Troop Staff. These meetings are informal and uniforms are not required.

Youth Leadership

The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) conducts the Troop meetings. Troop 211 follows the BSA "boy led" concepts. The SPL is not "picked" by the Scoutmaster or the Troop committee. The Scouts in the Troop vote on the elected position. Adults monitor the elections, but do not vote. The SPL appoints his assistants and directs their activities in running the Troop.

The boys within each patrol elect their Patrol Leader. The Patrol Leader appoints his assistants and together they conduct the patrol meetings under the supervision of the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters. The Patrol Leader leads his patrol in planning for campouts, helping with advancement, and ensures good communication with other members of the patrol and Troop. The Scoutmaster appoints Troop Guides and Instructors.

SPL and Patrol Leader elections are held immediately following Summer Camp, usually on the journey back to Houston.

The following is an outline of the duties of the key leaders within the Troop:

Senior Patrol Leader (SPL): The senior patrol leader is the elected top boy leader in the Troop. He leads the patrol leaders' council (Greenbar) and, in consultation with the Scoutmaster, appoints other junior leaders and assigns specific responsibilities as needed.

Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL)*: The assistant senior patrol leader fills in for the SPL in his absence. He is also responsible for training and giving direction to the quartermaster, scribe, historian, librarian and instructors.

Patrol Leader (PL): The patrol leaders are responsible for giving leadership to the members of their patrols. They are their representation on the patrol leaders' council.

Quartermaster (QM)*: Manages and maintains Troop equipment.

Troop Guide**: Assists in guiding new patrols through the First Class Rank

Historian*: Collects and maintains continuing history of activities

Scribe*: Records minutes at Green Bar meetings and handles other secretarial duties for the Troop

Chaplain Aid*: Provides prayer at various Troop functions

Librarian*: Maintains Troop library mainly consisting of Merit Badge booklets

Den Chief**: Provides assistance to den leaders at the Cub Scout level

Instructors**: Provides assistance to the Troop as part of a Scoutmaster assigned project

Order of the Arrow Representative**: Represents the Troop to the Order of the Arrow Lodge.

* appointed by SPL

** appointed by Scoutmaster

SPL Election

SPL elections are held once a year on the journey back to Houston from Summer Camp. All registered Scouts are eligible and encouraged to participate in the elections.

The Scoutmaster, with the assistance of the Advancement Chair and current SPL, will determine the eligibility of the Scout candidates interested in serving as SPL. In general, higher ranked, more experienced, trained Scouts are better suited for the rigors of the SPL leadership role. Troop Candidates for SPL will be presented to the Troop for election by popular vote. A Scout must be in attendance to be elected as SPL. The SPL candidates for elections are required to give a brief speech to the Troop and:

- Describe why they are running for office
- Describe how their leadership will improve the Troop
- Outline their qualifications for the position they seek
- Describe how they will inspire Scout Spirit

Elections will be held in the following manner. Upon the closing of nominations for office, a secret ballot will be cast by all Scouts who are current registered members of Troop 211. The secret vote will be tabulated by two adults who are not the Scoutmaster or his Assistants. The results will be announced immediately.

Candidates for all other positions shall be submitted to the newly appointed SPL for approval. The SPL shall

prepare a draft organization chart for review by the Scoutmaster. Following approval by the Scoutmaster, the new Greenbar will convene at the next regularly scheduled Greenbar meeting.

The Scoutmaster and/or the Senior Patrol Leader (after consultation with the Scoutmaster) have the authority to remove any Scout elected or appointed to office at anytime for failure to perform his duties or meet expected responsibilities.

Outdoor Program

Scouting is effective whenever we take advantage of this truth: The place where Scouting works best is also the place that boys want the most: the outdoors. There are a number of good reasons why the outdoor program is so special.

1. The outdoors is the best place for learning outdoor skills. How could it be otherwise?
2. The outdoors is a great place for learning about living with others. When Scouts walk on the same trail, cook and eat together, and share triumphs and troubles together, they are going to find out some important things about patience, respect for other points of view, doing their full share, making a friend more easily, and saying no without losing one. Skills like these are among the "personal growth" skills we want from every Scout. The outdoors is where they grow up best.
3. On the trail or in camp, the boy's leaders will be challenged by the real thing - getting their patrols fed and sheltered, keeping them warm and safe, solving the problems they can solve, and knowing how to get help for those they can't. It's a time when leadership skills can deepen, patrols grow closer, and the Troop grows stronger.
4. The outdoors is also a place where a Scout can get closer to the natural world around him - the land, the forests and their wildlife, the lakes and rivers, the mountains and the seas. Here, in the outdoors, he will learn of the "land ethic" - the understanding and respect for the environment we all share, and he will develop an active concern for its health and a willingness to work to keep it healthy.

The Troop has about ten weekend outings during the year and in addition schedules one-week sessions at Summer Camp and High Adventure Expedition. Our outings fall into several classifications. There are campouts where the main theme is to work on advancement -- particularly for the ranks leading up to First Class. Then there are the fun type outings that tend to repeat themselves each year to campsites that become familiar to the boys.

All activities are scheduled in advance with a majority planned at the annual meeting in August. Signup deadlines are usually a week prior to any trip but may be longer based on the type and destination of the trip. The normal cost of a trip is \$15.00 per Scout payable to the Transportation Chair to cover the costs of food. The cost may be higher depending on the type of trip and activity planned. Cancellation by a Scout after the cutoff date may result in a loss of money. Refunds, if any, are at the discretion of the outdoor coordinator and Troop committee.

A permission slip, signed by the parent, is required on each outing. The Troop website has a link to the current permission slip used for the outings. A Scout is not permitted to participate in the outings without an approved permission slip. Camping procedures, suggested camp gear, and restricted activities are included in the Reference Section.

Camping Opportunities

Monthly Campouts: A Troop's outdoor program is a main attraction for most boys. Troop 211 strives to provide a variety of outdoor camping experiences, approximately one per month, regardless of weather, which are often coordinated with the advancement and merit badge programs. At camp outs, every Scout learns to be responsible for himself, his own gear and the Troop's gear.

Summer Camp: Summer camp is usually in June. Troop 211 alternates between El Rancho Cima (San Marcos, Texas) and an out-of-state camp. These camps provide great opportunities for Scouts to advance, learn new skills, practice leadership, grow as Scouts and generally, have fun! Dates for camps are reserved well in advance. Mark the calendar early so that conflicts can be avoided. Scouts who attend Summer camps usually progress better than boys who do not and these camps provide all the fun and excitement that boys look for in their camping experiences.

High Adventure: Troop 211 generally provides a High Adventure activity per year. These activities consist of challenges such as mountain backpacking, canoeing or sailing. Requirements for participation will vary depending on the activity, but participation is usually limited to: Scouts who are 14 years and older and have completed 8th grade and who have reached the rank of First Class; who show Scout Spirit; who, in the opinion of the Scoutmaster and the adult leader for the High Adventure, are physically capable of participating. The adult leader will set a training schedule for each activity. The Scout must participate in these special preparation assignments. If he does not meet the requirements, he cannot go on the trip. Money paid for the trip likely cannot be refunded since it is paid in advance to the High Adventure base or outfitter.

Camping FAQs

1. What gear does the Troop provide?

Troop 211 maintains its own inventory of camping equipment which includes: tents, cooking utensils, coolers, dutch ovens, grills, camp stoves, water buckets, cordage, saws, axes, water cans, patrol boxes and dining flies. This equipment is stored at the church for the exclusive use of the Troop and is used only for planned Troop activities.

2. My Scout has personal gear that he'd like to bring along. Is that acceptable?

The use of personal equipment already provided by the Troop is discouraged. All patrols need to learn the proper use, care and responsibility for Troop equipment. Scouts holding the Star, Life, and Eagle ranks can tent alone and in their own tents unless Troop tents are required by the event (camporee). All other Scouts must share Troop tents on campouts.

3. What gear does my Scout need?

The basic equipment for each Scout is listed below. This equipment should be brought on every campout.

- Scout uniform
- Sleeping bag (should be sufficient for occasional below freezing temperatures)
- Lightweight ground pad for sleeping bag, or inflatable Thermarest®
- Backpack, duffel bag, or Action Packer
- Water bottle(s) to carry a minimum of 2 liters of water
- Reusable cup, plate/bowl, knife, fork and spoon – the Troop does not use paper plates, plastic utensils, etc., except on rare occasions
- Folding knife up to 4" blade – no sheath knives with proper certification
- Sturdy rain jacket and pants (ponchos do not provide sufficient protection, especially in wet winter weather)
- Small 2 AAA battery head lamp (preferred) or flashlight
- Waterproof or water resistant boots (not typical athletic shoes or sneakers)
- Scout Handbook, pen, notebook
- Small towel, toiletries (soap, toothbrush, non-aerosol insect repellent and sunscreen)
- All synthetic or wool hiking socks
- Synthetic t-shirts or shirts
- Synthetic fleece jacket or pullover
- Synthetic pants, either fleece or nylon, with pockets
- Synthetic walking shorts with good pockets
- A warm hat (not just a baseball cap) that will shed water
- Extra underwear
- Swim trunks

Cotton clothes are a very poor choice for camping, as cotton is bulky, cold and slow to dry when wet. When possible, one or two light layers, made of quick drying synthetic materials, such as Supplex®, should be used. Polartec®, or a similar synthetic fleece, is excellent for layering and remains warm even when wet. More information on gear is available at Troop meetings.

4. Do you have any guidelines and thoughts on equipment?

Most of the personal equipment that is needed is available in the home. Items can be purchased at Academy, Sports Authority, REI, Target and Wal-Mart. Better quality and lighter weight gear costs more money than lower quality and heavier gear. Scouts do not need to buy the most expensive gear, but neither should they have the least

expensive. For the Scout to have a quality camping experience, he will need adequate gear (to stay warm, dry, light enough to carry, and comfortable to wear). When buying equipment, inferior brands are often not a bargain. Quality merchandise will go a long way in the boy's Scouting adventures. **As always, please put your Scout's name on all of his equipment. It will prevent end of campout heartache and confusion.**

The following is intended to give you guidance in purchasing gear for your Scouts. Brands and models suggested are ones that have worked well and you can use them for comparing features. Others may work just as well. Pricing may range depending on where you shop.

Backpacks: Backpacks come in two types, external frame and internal frame. An external frame is easier to pack, more adjustable as a Scout grows, and generally less expensive than an internal frame pack. Many backpackers feel an internal frame pack is more comfortable. Since you don't attach sleeping bags to the outside of an internal frame pack, they must have a larger capacity. One suggestion is that a Scout begins with an external frame pack and in a few years when he has grown, moves up to an internal frame pack if necessary. Most important, make sure the hip belt will comfortably fit the Scout. The weight of a pack rides on the hips, not on the shoulders.

Rain Suit: A rain suit is used worn over regular clothing to keep you dry and can also keep you warm when used as a top layer over other clothes. Do not get heavy PVC rain suits. They are too heavy for camping. Do not get a poncho as it is nearly impossible to be active and dry with a poncho as your only protection. Breathable rainwear is better.

Sleeping bags: Sleeping bags come in a variety of materials. Most are a nylon shell with a fill of manmade fibers or down. Down bags are lighter for a comparable degree of warmth, but when wet, they do not keep you warm and do not dry quickly. For Scouts we suggest a bag with polarguard, hollowfill, or quallofill. Bags come in mummy or rectangular shapes. Mummy bags are warmer and lighter than rectangular and are the preferred bag for Scouts. Bags come in a wide range of temperature ratings. A bag rated at 15 to 20 degrees is a good choice for Scouting in this area, as we do camp year round. The total weight of the bag should be less than 4 lbs. The bag should include a stuff sack that will compress the bag for packing. A sleeping bag should not be stored in this sack, as storing compressed will reduce the insulating quality of the bag. A sleeping bag should be hung for storage. You can expect to spend \$60-\$90 on a good sleeping bag.

Sleeping pad: A sleeping pad is a must for comfort and keeping warm. Choices are inflatable, open cell foam, closed cell foam, and self-inflating (best known brand Thermarest). We strongly recommend closed cell foam or a self-inflating pad. Open cell foam does not provide good

padding and inflatable air mattresses are heavy and frequently leak. ¾ length pads 48" to 54" long are fine for Scouts. This reduces overall weight and bulk.

Water bottle: A Scout should always bring a water bottle (two or three if backpacking). Nalgene bottles are great as they don't leak and are very tough.

Hiking Boots: Boots should be comfortable, waterproof and well broken in. Wear hiking socks when sizing hiking boots. Wear them for a short period to break in prior to wearing on a hike. Scouts will generally outgrow a pair of boots before wearing them out so you don't need to purchase expensive boots. Treat the boots with a waterproofing spray or liquid.

Mess Kit: A full mess kit is not needed. A plastic bowl (margarine tub), plastic cup (insulated is nice for hot chocolate), and a plastic or metal spoon will suffice for most camping meals. For purchased kits, lexan bowls and spoons are better as they stand up to heat and are almost indestructible.

5. What and how do the Scouts eat on camping trips?

The Scouts always cook by patrols. They are responsible for their own meal planning, food shopping, and cooking. Likewise, the adult leaders shop and cook their own food. Sometimes it's the same menu as the Scouts, other times it is very different. In order to "leave no trace" on the environment, the Scouts most always cook with either propane gas two burner camp stoves; or on backpacking trips, fueled backpacking stoves. Cooking kits are provided by the Troop as are cooking utensils.

6. My son never tells me when the trips are until he is walking out the door and never asks me to chaperone. Any thoughts?

This is a common occurrence among all Scouts. Here are a couple of suggestions for you to find out the information ahead of time and determine which event you might want to chaperone.

1. Attend the last 15 minutes of any Monday night Troop meeting. Important announcements are made at this time and up-coming activities are discussed.
2. Attend a Troop committee meeting. They are open to all
3. Obtain a Troop calendar of events. If you do not have access to the Troop web site, ask one of the Scout Leaders for a copy. The updates throughout the year are posted on the web site.

We often hear parents tell us that they don't get involved with camping trips because "my son doesn't want me to go." Don't believe it! Look at the weekend as quality bonding time with your teenager. No phones, computers, radios, CD's, or television, makes for some great conversations. You will be surprised at the diversity of subjects discussed in one weekend. You will also learn a very important lesson for yourself. Teenagers are very

similar and yours is more similar than he is different. They all almost always give you a blank stare when asking them a question and they automatically answer "what" when they actually do hear you! The best thing you will learn from your son after one weekend is what a great kid he really is and he really did appreciate you being there!

7. As a Mom, I think camping is such a "guy thing" especially with a Boy Scout Troop. I will be out of place on a camping trip with the boys and the male leaders.

We will admit there could be, and are, some awkward moments, but Scouting is about providing opportunities and determining solutions all within the Patrol framework. On most camping trips, the boys and adults are apart more than you think. We think we can show the Scouts that women can be as effective as a role model in the back woods as they can be in the kitchen, home, or office. It is great to show the Scouts first hand that a woman can put up a tent, start a fire, hike ten miles, or tie a square knot and Moms are always welcome on campouts.

Other Scout Programs

Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow (OA), originated in 1915, is a national brotherhood of Scout campers formed to strengthen Troops and encourage outdoor experiences. The purpose of the Order of the Arrow is fourfold:

- To recognize those Scout campers who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives
- To develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit
- To promote Scout camping
- To crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others

Troop members stand for election if they satisfy the OA's eligibility requirements by

- being a registered member of a Boy Scout Troop.
- holding at least the First Class rank.
- completing fifteen days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election.

The fifteen days must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America with the balance being overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps under the direction of either the Troop or Patrol. In the event that a Scout has completed multiple long-term resident camps, these will be counted as two days and nights of camping, regardless of actual duration. The sole exceptions are patrol and Troop high adventure camping when tenting and cooking, where the actual number of days and nights will count to the tally. Non-Boy Scouting family camping events will not count toward the tally.

This same standard will apply to the Camping Merit Badge days and nights camped requirement.

Troop 211 holds an election once a year under supervision of the Colonneh Lodge 137. The number of Scouts a Troop may elect depends on the number of potential candidates. All registered Scouts under the age of 18 in the Troop may vote for as many candidates as they believe represent the OA spirit. The Scout is then required to attend a ceremony ("tapout") at a specified date and then participate in a camping ordeal to officially join the lodge. Two adults per year from the Troop may also join OA to serve as advisor to youth members who lead the lodge program. Lodges conduct youth-led meetings, plan and carry out activities, organize council service projects and develop summer camp promotion plans.

For members of the Order of the Arrow (OA), the sash is to be worn at OA functions such as elections, camp promotion and OA tap outs. The OA sash is not worn with the merit badge sash at a Court of Honor, nor is it to

be worn folded over the Scout belt since these are not OA functions. At Eagle Scout ceremonies, if requested by the candidate, the OA sash maybe worn by eligible members provided the candidate is an OA member in good standing.

Other Activities

Religious Awards: Troop 211 participates in the various religious awards offered by BSA and supported by the Troop. Each Scout is encouraged to complete the religious award offered by his denomination.

Service Projects: Participating in service projects helps a Scout understand his responsibility as a citizen to his community. Special Community, Council, District, and Troop projects and Good Turns are held at least quarterly. Attendance at and participation in Troop service projects are expected as part of showing Scout spirit

Fundraisers: During the year the Troop will conduct various fundraising projects. Annual dues cover only a small part of our total expenses. Parents are expected to help with these fundraisers. Attendance at and participation in Fundraising events are mandatory.

ADVANCEMENT

Every Boy Scout activity strives toward the three main goals of Scouting: building character, fostering citizenship and developing mental, moral and physical fitness, all while having fun! Scout advancement is based on learning and demonstrating a series of skills, participating in the Troop, working on service projects, demonstrating Scout Spirit, earning merit badges, and providing leadership.

The Scout advancement program includes steps in ranks leading to the Eagle Scout. Qualification for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class Scout is obtained by the completion of specific requirements as described in the Scout Handbook. Rank advancement is only earned after a skill is learned and demonstrated to an adult Scout Leader who will then initial and date the Scout's Scout Handbook. Scout skills cannot be mastered by performing them just once. Scouts will have many opportunities to practice each skill, and will be thoroughly tested on each requirement before it is "signed off". In addition, they should expect to practice each skill repeatedly, even after it has been signed off. As they progress, they will also have opportunities to teach these skills to less experienced Scouts, which will further reinforce their knowledge and skill.

Star, Life, and Eagle Scout awards require completion of various Merit Badges, leadership positions, and special projects at each level. Those requirements are also described in the Scout Handbook. Boards of Review will be held as necessary for those Scouts advancing. Formal

presentation of Badges of Rank, Merit Badges, and other awards will be at Courts of Honor scheduled three times during the year in September, January and June.

As each requirement is completed, the Scout will be tested and signed off in the **BACK SECTION OF THE HANDBOOK** by the Scoutmaster or by someone he designates. This person may be an Assistant Scoutmaster, a Troop Committee Member, or another, more experienced, Scout. **Parents may not sign off their own Scout's advancement.** Scouts need to take advantage of the advancement opportunities available and to take initiative to ask for someone to test them when ready. They are responsible for keeping their own personal advancement record in their Handbook, including service hours, campouts, Troop activities, and leadership positions. In all cases, it is the Scout's responsibility to get his advancement recorded in his Handbook.

Scout Spirit (demonstrated by application of the Scout Oath and Scout Laws in daily life and during all Scouting functions) and Troop participation is a requirement for rank advancement. Scouts participating in cooperative and leadership roles within the Troop along with the outdoor program will find that advancement is a natural result of their Scouting experience. Each registered Scout of Troop 211 is expected to be an active participant in Scouting.

Scouts not meeting the above requirements will not be permitted to advance in rank within the Troop structure. The Scoutmaster or Advancement Chairman shall review each case for the ability to advance and further participate in the Troop.

Advancement Through First Class

Scouts new to Boy Scouting can be involved in a program called Trail to Eagle at Summer Camp. This program is designed to meet the specific needs of first year Scouts by providing structure, supervision and specialized skill instruction.

An Assistant Scoutmaster is appointed to give overall adult supervision of the Trail to Eagle program.

Responsibilities of the position include:

- Teaching key Scouting skills leading to the First Class rank
- Providing counseling and guidance through the early challenges of Scouting
- Acting as a parent/Troop liaison to coordinate information and promote active parental involvement towards a comfortable relationship with the Troop, its leaders and its program
- Motivating and encouraging the new Scouts in their rank advancement with the goal being to pilot the boys to their First Class rank within a year

Advancement Through Eagle Scout

After the rank of First Class, the Scouts work on Merit Badges, some of which are required for the Eagle Scout rank. Other requirements for advancement include tenure in rank (time interval at a given rank to acquire Scouting experience), leadership experience, service hours, Scoutmaster conference, and Board of Review. The Scout drives his progress through these ranks with guidance from the adult leadership.

After reaching the rank of Life Scout, the Scout will meet with the Eagle Coordinator. At this meeting he will receive his Life to Eagle packet and discuss concepts related to the Eagle Scout Service Project. This project must conform to special guidelines that have been outlined by the Boy Scouts of America. The Scoutmaster, Eagle Coordinator, Troop Advancement Chairman, and District Advancement Committee representative, as well as the benefiting organization, must approve the project before it can be carried out.

Completing a Rank

The following steps should be performed after a Scout completes the rank requirements listed in the Scout Handbook, except for the last two items.

1. Complete the requirements for each skill for the rank, as evidenced by sign-off by an ASM or the Scoutmaster.
2. The Scoutmaster conference can then be scheduled. Be sure to bring Scout Handbook, proof of previous rank, proof of completed merit badges, and dress in proper uniform.
3. When the Scoutmaster approves the rank advancement, the Scout can sign up for a Board of Review.
4. Participate in a Board of Review.
5. Upon satisfactory completion of the Board of Review, notify the Scoutmaster.
6. The Troop will acknowledge advancement and the rank can be worn from that point forward.
7. At the Court of Honor, a formal presentation will be made of the mother's pin and the rank card. Keep this card in a safe place for the Eagle Scout application.

Scouts must earn the ranks in order, but may complete any requirement for Tenderfoot through First Class at any time. (For example, a Scout may complete a First Class requirement before finishing Tenderfoot requirements, but must earn Tenderfoot rank before being awarded Second Class and First Class ranks.)

Scoutmaster Conferences

Each of the six ranks in Scouting contains the requirement "Participate in a Scoutmaster Conference." The purpose of the conference is to develop a trust and understanding

between the Scoutmaster and the Scout. This conference helps the Scoutmaster get to know the Scout better by giving him a clearer idea of what individual Scouts can contribute to their patrol and to the Troop. The conference assists the Scoutmaster in discovering what the Troop can do to bring a quality program to the Scouts. Each Scoutmaster's Conference is an opportunity for the Scout to learn more about the Scoutmaster and his expectations, bring up any concerns and discuss anything not understood about the Scouting program. The Scoutmaster and Scout will also talk about goal setting and achievement. This conference is informal and can also be given by an Assistant Scoutmaster approved by the Advancement Committee.

Scouts do not have to wait until they have completed the requirements for a rank in order to ask for a Scoutmaster conference. However, for a Scoutmaster conference to count toward rank advancement it must take place after all other requirements are complete and before the Board of Review. A Scout may request a Scoutmaster Conference with the Scoutmaster upon completion of all the requirements for a rank and sign-off in the Scout Handbook. At the agreed time, the Scout is responsible for showing the Scoutmaster that he has proficiency in all requirements for the current and previous rank. The leader will not pass the Scout until proficiency is shown. The Scout should be prepared, wear his uniform, and bring his Scout Handbook. At this required conference the Scoutmaster will also help determine whether or not the Scout is ready to go before the Board of Review.

Boards of Review

After completing the Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout must personally advise the Advancement Chairman that he is ready for a Board of Review and sign up for an appointment with the Board of Review. **The Board of Review meets on the second Tuesday of every month.** Additional Boards of Review are scheduled during the two weeks prior to Courts of Honor. Scouts need to work their schedules around the Board of Review schedule. The Scout should be neat and clean in his appearance and in full uniform with badges properly worn. The Scout must bring his Boy Scout Handbook to the Review.

A Board of Review has four main purposes:

1. To assess the Scout's subject matter knowledge required for that particular rank and previous ranks
2. To find out what kind of experience the Scout is having in his patrol and in the Troop
3. To encourage the Scout to continue on the Scouting trail
4. To determine the Scout's attitude, spirit and his acceptance of the Scouting ideas
5. To assess how the troop is doing

The Board of Review is composed of at least three members with one member serving as the chairman. At no

time may the Scoutmaster or an assistant Scoutmaster serve as members of a Scout's Board of Review. The Board of Review can be staffed with members of the Troop Committee, current and former Eagle Scouts, and parents of Scouts not being reviewed.

In general, during the Board of Review, the Scout will introduce himself and tell the rank for which he is to be reviewed. The Board members will ask questions about his experiences in the Troop and knowledge of certain information, and may ask the Scout to demonstrate something from the requirements for rank. At the end of the Review, the Scout will be asked to leave the room while the Board discusses his qualifications and reaches a unanimous decision. The Scout will be called back and told that he has qualified, or what additional action he must take to qualify. Once a Scout has qualified, he will be awarded his new badge of rank as soon as possible, usually at the next regular Troop meeting. If the Board determines that the review process needs to be continued, the Scout will be told which requirements need to be reviewed and a date and time will be scheduled for that re-review.

Eagle Scout Boards of Review are conducted separately from other rank advancement reviews and, in accordance with Sam Houston Council policy; at least one member of the Eagle Scout Board will be a district or council advancement representative. All requirements for the Eagle Scout rank must be completed before a candidate's 18th birthday. The BSA makes no exceptions to this rule. Council can hold an Eagle Scout Board of Review after a Scout's 18th birthday upon special approval. However, if a Scout is found to be deficient in any of the requirements, he then has no recourse for correction and will not be approved for the Eagle Scout rank.

Courts of Honor

After passing the Board of Review, the Scout will be recognized in front of the Troop as soon as possible. He will receive his new rank patch shortly after, usually at the next Troop meeting. He will be formally recognized for rank advancements and merit badges in front of family and friends during a ceremony at a Court of Honor. These events are held three times per year. The dates are on the Troop Planning calendar. At this time he will be presented with a wallet-sized certificate card and a rank pin ("mother's pin"). Scouts must be in Class A uniform. The Court of Honor takes place on a regular meeting night. Assigned patrols provide refreshments which are served following the ceremony.

When a Scout achieves the Eagle Scout rank, a special ceremony is held just for him. It is held by invitation and focuses on his advancements, achievements, character, and years in Scouting. It is also his opportunity to thank those who have helped him achieve his goals. This event is organized by the Eagle Scout's family and the Troop

will provide any requested assistance. The Troop has prepared a Court of Honor Guidebook to help the Eagle Scout organize his ceremony. This event is the Eagle Scout's responsibility.

Merit Badges

Currently BSA offers a variety of different merit badges to challenge a Scout and introduce new areas of interest. To receive a merit badge, certain steps must be followed in specific order. A merit badge counselor must be registered with BSA as an adult volunteer and approved to conduct the desired badge.

Currently, there are over 110 different merit badges approved by the BSA for Scouts to earn. All merit badge conferences are to be conducted in a group of two or more Scouts and in the presence of two or more adults. The Troop provides merit badge opportunities through its monthly campout programs. In addition, encourage your Scout to go to Summer and Winter Camps, as well as Merit Badge Fairs. These are ideal opportunities to earn many exciting merit badges. **Scouts should not try to complete too many badges at one time. We ask that scouts actively work on no more than two at one time until they reach the rank of first class, and no more than five at one time thereafter. Please note that there is no time limit for completion of merit badge requirements other than age 18.**

The steps involved in receiving a merit badge are described below. Failure to follow these steps may result in the requirements having to be repeated.

The following is the procedure for Scouts wishing to earn merit badges on their own (other than at camps):

1. Pick a badge of interest.
2. Ask the Scoutmaster or ASM for a merit badge card, fill it out and have him sign it.
3. Read the particular Merit Badge Book (available through the Troop library or Scout Shop).
4. Ask the Patrol Advisor or Scoutmaster for the name of a qualified merit badge counselor.
5. Contact the counselor and ask if he/she is willing to help. Make an appointment before fulfilling any of the merit badge requirements. Counselors may be associated with Troop 211 or other Troops. Use the Buddy System to insure that there is two deep leadership available,
6. As each badge requirement is met, the Scout should have the counselor sign and date the appropriate place on the card.
7. When all requirements are met, the completed card must be returned to the Advancement Chairman. The Scout will receive his badge at the next Court of Honor.

In general, the Troop asks Scouts to abide by the following rules with respect to Merit Badge Counselors. Scouts should not earn (i) more than three Eagle-required merit badges with any one counselor, nor (ii) more than five total merit badges with the same counselor, nor (iii) any merit badge with the Scout's parent unless the Scout is part of a merit badge class of five or more Scouts being counseled by the parent.

Popular Merit Badge Choices by Rank

Scout to Second Class

First Aid
Swimming (best at Scout summer camp)
Emergency Preparedness (First Aid MB required)
Cooking
Basketry/Woodcarving/Leatherwork
Climbing
Mammal Study

First Class to Star

Camping
Citizenship in the Nation / Citizenship in the Community
Environmental Science
Personal Fitness
Pioneering
Canoeing
Geology/Nature
Medicine/Law/Scholarship/Reading
Photography/Radio

Star to Life

Communications
Citizenship in the World
Personal Management
Lifesaving
Family Life
Backpacking /Wilderness Survival
Rowing /Whitewater

Record Keeping

Each Scout is responsible for maintaining a record of all merit badges, rank advancement and participation in Scouting events. This is particularly important when applying for the Eagle Scout rank. The Troop will maintain records as well, but all original proof of advancement and merit badges are provided to the Scout and it is the Scout's responsibility to keep those records. **Merit Badge Cards and Cards of Rank Advancement (all received at the Court of Honor) must be saved. They are the proof of Scout awards in the event the award itself is lost. Do not lose them!** Make sure all of them are signed or initialed by the appropriate Scout leader. All of the cards are the same size and can be safely kept in a notebook with plastic protector pages designed for baseball and other sports cards. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THESE DOCUMENTS ARE KEPT IN A SAFE PLACE. DO NOT LOSE THEM!!!** A notebook is an excellent organization tool for this information. **This notebook should also include copies of the signed pages of the Scout Handbook for all completed ranks.** This notebook may also be requested at a Board of Review. Scouts will need this detailed information for the Eagle Scout rank application. If it should happen that there is a discrepancy or missing records, the personal records are the most important ally in proving what was completed and when.

Troop Organization

Chartered Organization

The Boy Scouts of America, or BSA as referenced throughout this guide, was incorporated on February 8, 1910. BSA was chartered by Congress on June 15, 1916, with the express purpose "...to promote, through organization and cooperation with other agencies, the ability of boys to do things for themselves and others, to train them in scout craft, and to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues". You have joined a Troop with a long history, beginning in 1940. Our roster of Eagle Scouts stands at 148 and is growing all the time.

The Charter for Troop 211 is held by St. Mark's Episcopal Church at 3816 Bellaire Boulevard. Troop 211 is in the Golden Arrow District (GAD) of the Sam Houston Area Council (SHAC). The church provides meeting rooms and storage space for Troop equipment. Troop 211 funds its own activities, including all transportation. Church membership is not required to join the Troop.

Troop Adult Leadership

Scoutmaster (SM): The Scoutmaster is the adult leader responsible for the image and program of the Troop. The Scoutmaster and his or her assistant Scoutmasters work directly with the Scouts and report to the Troop Committee. The general responsibilities of the Scoutmaster include:

- Train and guide boy leaders.
- Work with other adult leaders to bring Scouting to boys.
- Use the methods of Scouting to achieve the aims of Scouting.

Assistant Scoutmasters (ASM): Assistant Scoutmasters are recruited by the Scoutmaster and approved by the Troop committee to assist the Scoutmaster in the operation of the Troop and guide the patrols. Assistant Scoutmasters are assigned program tasks by the Scoutmaster and provide guidance to the boy leadership. He or she also provides the required two deep leadership (two adult leaders present at every Boy Scout activity).

Troop Committee

The Troop Committee Functions as an administration and support organization for the Troop. The Troop Committee takes care of the non-program issues surrounding the Troop. For example: newsletters, Troop funds, fund raising activities, membership drives and Pack coordination, activity permits and coordination, advancement records, and procurement and maintenance of Troop equipment. The key adult leader positions include:

Chartered Organization Representative - The charter organization shall designate a person to serve in this capacity. This person is the liaison between the Troop Committee and the Chartered Organization, providing help in areas such as rechartering, leadership recruiting, planning service projects and representation at the district and council level.

Troop Committee Chairman - The primary responsibility of this position is to obtain and retain adult volunteers, assist with the operation of the Troop, and conduct Troop Courts of Honor.

The Committee meets monthly to discuss Troop direction, vision and activities. The meetings are open and attendance is encouraged for all parents and other interested adults. A separate document covers the organization activities of the Troop Committee and is available from the Troop Committee Chairperson.

Meetings

ASM Meeting: The Assistant Scoutmaster Meetings are held as needed. These meetings are chaired by the Scoutmaster and focus on activities and the Scouts themselves. Again, parents are welcome and encouraged to attend

Troop Committee Meetings: Troop Committee Meetings are held monthly, as scheduled by the Troop Committee Chair, generally at 5:30 pm on a Sunday. See the Troop Calendar for the exact dates of the 2009-2010 Troop Committee meetings. Led by the Troop Committee Chairman, these adults establish and approve the policies and procedures under which the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders operate and provide a framework for the management of Troop fundraising, advancement, recognition and program development. Parents are encouraged to attend these meetings.

Annual Planning Meeting: Scouting is considered to be a family affair. For a boy to get the most from his time in Boy Scouts, he needs encouragement from his parents, both in words and actions. One major way that parents can help is by planning the family calendar so that it does not conflict with Troop activities. This allows the Scout maximum opportunity to participate in Troop events. Troop 211 has a very active camping program and schedules many events throughout the month. Each August great care is taken to prepare the calendar and list of outings for the upcoming year. These events are chosen based on feedback from the Scouts on the activities conducted in prior years and interests for the upcoming year. At this meeting, all outings, meetings, service projects and merit badge workshops are scheduled. The current calendar is available from the Scoutmaster or Troop Committee Chair

Adult Training

The adult leaders are NOT responsible for running the Troop. Adult leaders are mentors, supervisors and merit badge counselors. All adults working with the Troop are volunteers and must be registered with Boy Scouts of America.

Position Specific Required Training

Scoutmaster & Assistant Scoutmaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Youth Protection Training- Fast Start Training- New Leader Essentials- Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills- Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training
Troop committee member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Youth Protection Training- Fast Start Training- New Leader Essentials- Troop Committee Specific Training
Merit badge counselor, or Any parent desiring to attend (i) more than two weekend campouts during the year, or (ii) any summer camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Youth Protection Training- Fast Start Training- New Leader Essentials

Course Descriptions

Fast Start Training: Fast Start training is the first step for any new volunteer. The Boy Scout Fast Start video includes segments on how to run a troop meeting; how to plan, organize, and execute outdoor activities; and how a Scout troop is organized.

New Leader Essentials: This initial session is for all new leaders and is approximately 1.5 hours in length. After this orientation course, participants go on to training specific to the leader's new Scouting position.

Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills: Outdoor skills are critical to the success for the Scouting program and this course provides leaders with the basic outdoor skills needed to start a program right. The skills taught are based on those found in The Boy Scout Handbook. The course has an initial orientation session which is held in Houston and then a weekend campout held a week or two later at a camp near Houston.

Scoutmaster Specific: For Scoutmasters, assistant Scoutmasters and others interested. Training time is in three sessions of approximately 2.5 hours each.

Troop Committee Specific: For committee chairs and members and parents. Training time is in a single session of approximately 3 hours.

University of Scouting: A major one-day training fair held for Boy Scout and Venturing leaders from all over the Sam Houston Area Council. University of Scouting is usually held in early February.

Wood Badge: Wood Badge is the most advanced training available for adult leaders of the Boy Scouts of America. Wood Badge graduates will be able to view Scouting as a family of interrelated, values-based programs that provide age-appropriate activities for youth; to recognize the contemporary leadership concepts utilized in corporate America that are relevant to our values based movement; to apply the skills they learn from their participation as a member of a successful working team; and to revitalize their commitment by sharing in an overall inspirational experience that helps provide Scouting with the leadership it needs to accomplish its mission on an ongoing basis.

Other Skills Requiring Trained Adults

The Troop also needs as many adults as possible to be trained in the following skills to support our outdoor program:

- Safe Swim Defense / Safety Afloat
- Flatwater / Whitewater Canoe Certifications
- BSA Lifeguard or American Red Cross Lifesaving
- CPR / AED Training
- Red Cross First Aid

Merit Badge Counselors

(taken from usscouts.com)

Merit badge counselors are the key to success in the merit badge plan. They offer their time, experience, and knowledge to help guide Scouts in one or more of the merit badge subjects. Merit badge counselors provide the means for Scouts to explore many subjects that may not be available to them otherwise. The Scout who has earned a number of merit badges gains confidence, finds greater purpose in life, and becomes a better person from his experience. This cannot happen without the service of thousands of merit badge counselors expert in particular subjects and interested in helping Scouts grow into men of character who are ready to take their place in the world of work as participating citizens. The number of Scouts requesting help is usually no burden to the counselor, since the number of counselors is normally determined by the popularity of the badge. Counselors schedule appointments at their convenience.

Requirements For Merit Badge Counselors

To qualify as a Merit Badge Counselor, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be proficient in the merit badge subject by vocation or avocation.
- Be able to work with Scout-age boys.
- Be registered with the Boy Scouts of America.
- Be prepared to complete Youth Protection Training, Fast Start Training, and New Leader Essentials Training.

What's My Responsibility?

The counselor's responsibility is to

- Assist the Scout as he plans the assigned projects and activities to meet the merit badge requirements.
- Coach Scouts through interviews and demonstrations on how to do the required skills of the craft, business, or hobby.
- Certify the Scout after determining whether he is qualified for the merit badge.

Your task is to satisfy yourself that each Scout who comes to you meets all the requirements for the merit badge. In this sense you are an examiner, though your larger opportunity lies in coaching-helping the Scout meet the challenge of the requirements and making him aware of the deeper aspects of the subject through your knowledge and experience.

What Do I Agree to Do?

As a merit badge counselor, I agree to

- Follow the requirements of the merit badge, making no deletions or additions, ensuring that the advancement standards are fair and uniform for all Scouts.
- Have a buddy present with each Scout at all instructional sessions.
- Renew my registration as a merit badge counselor annually if I plan to continue serving as a merit badge counselor.

How the Merit Badge Counselor Helps

1. The Scout contacts you, probably by phone. You may tell him what is expected of him over the phone, or you may want to make an appointment to discuss this with him face-to-face. Personal contact will make earning the badge a better experience for you both.
2. The Scout should bring a merit badge application signed by his Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach on his first visit. He must always be accompanied by a buddy.
3. In your discussion of what is expected, you may want to start by finding out what the Scout already knows. Spend some time helping him learn the remaining requirements, or give guidance in completing projects. You can set up additional meetings with the Scout-not only for the purpose of passing him on the requirements, but rather to help him understand the subject.
4. The Scout, along with his buddy, should make another appointment with you when he thinks he is prepared to prove his ability. You set the date, time, and place.
5. This review session might be approached by the Scout with some apprehension. He is familiar with final exams in school and may see this meeting with you as another such experience. You can help a great deal by putting him at ease. Talk with him rather than grill or examine him. There is a big difference, yet you can still find out what he knows. Express honest enthusiasm for the things he has done, particularly if projects are involved. Your approval will give the Scout confidence.
6. When he meets you, he should bring with him the projects required for completion. If these cannot be transported, he should present satisfactory evidence, such as a photograph of the project or adult certification. His Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach might, for example, certify that a satisfactory bridge or tower has been built for Pioneering, or that the required meals were prepared for the Cooking merit badge. Your job, in addition to coaching, is to satisfy yourself that the requirements have been met. Question the Scout and, if you have any doubts, contact the adult who signed the statement.
7. When you are satisfied that the Scout has met the requirements, you sign his merit badge application.

More or Less?

The Scout is expected to meet the requirements as stated—no more and no less. Furthermore, he is to do exactly what is stated. If it says "show or demonstrate," that is what he must do. Just telling about it isn't enough. The same thing holds true for such words as "make," "list," "in the field," and "collect, identify, and label."

On the other hand, you cannot require more of a Scout than stated. You must not, for example, say, "I want to be sure you really know your stuff, so instead of the 20 items in your collection, you must have 50 to get my signature." You can suggest, encourage, and help the Scout to get 50 things, but you must not require it.

Where Do You Meet?

If the merit badge subject relates to your job or profession, then your place of work might be the best place to meet with Scouts. Hobby related subjects usually are handled in your home. Here you will have the proper materials for use in coaching Scouts. For a few subjects, coaching will happen in the field or where special equipment is at hand. Rowing, Swimming, and Astronomy are good examples.

How Many at a Time?

Frequently the skills of a subject can be taught to several Scouts at one time. This has a time advantage for you. However, completing the requirements must always be done on an individual basis. A Scout may not qualify for merit badges by just being a member of a group that is instructed in skills.

Scouts must qualify by personally satisfying their merit badge counselor that they can meet all the requirements. This may be hard to do in a group. When one Scout in a group answers a question, that can't possibly prove all the other group members know the answer. Then, too, each Scout learns at his own pace. No Scout should be held back or pushed ahead by his association with a group.

So remember—you can coach more than one at a time, but only one Scout at a time can satisfy you that he has met the requirements.

Radio Silence?

If you stop hearing from a Scout who has started but not finished a merit badge, follow up periodically (e.g., once a month or so) to check on his progress and on his plans for completing the requirements. Again, the Scout should be setting goals; the counselor's job is simply to help the Scout achieve those goals and confirm that he has done so. Be supportive, not critical – but make sure the Scout has indeed satisfactorily completed each requirement.