
“Keep on Scouting”
Temporary Amended Advancement Guidelines for COVID-19 disruptions

In response to closures, cancellations, or other issues caused by the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), several advancement guidelines have been temporarily amended.

For Cub Scouts (Ages 5 to 11)

Q: May parents sign off on Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements?

A: During this period, and lasting until July 31, 2020, parents and other adults in the Cub Scout’s family, may sign off on Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements. Parents will need to use the [Scouting App](#) or [ScoutBook](#) to record completion of their child’s requirements. You can search for “Scouting BSA,” or click these direct links to download from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

Q: If my den is behind in advancement due to COVID-19, can my Cub Scout continue to work on advancement through the summer?

A: Yes. Cub Scouts can continue to work on their current den’s advancement through July 31, 2020. This is to provide any additional time a Cub Scout needs to complete their badge of rank; if they earn their badge of rank prior to July 31, 2020, they may advance to the next rank.

Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts (Ages 11 to 20)

Today, there are many digital choices to facilitate virtual merit badge meetings and the exchange of documents between the Scout, parent/guardian, and the merit badge instructor. Both parties are to seek out and agree on common sense ways to facilitate advancement while adhering to the Guide to Safe Scouting and following the rules of Youth Protection training. A few virtual meeting app choices are; Zoom, Duo, Facetime, Skype, Slack, and Google Hangouts.

NOTE: In many of the answers, you will see the acronym GTA and a series of numbers. That refers to a BSA document called [Guide to Advancement \(GTA\)](#) and the numbers correspond to a detailed explanation of the subject matter.

Q: May merit badge requirements or rank requirements be modified?

A: No. All requirements must be completed as written. If meetings or activities are canceled or limited, youth should continue to work on requirements as far as possible. By employing common sense and creative solutions, many requirements—even Scoutmaster conferences—can be fulfilled through videoconferencing or telephone calls.

Q: Can merit badge counseling or Nova/Supernova counseling be done using digital technologies like Zoom or WebEx?

A: Yes, registered merit badge counselors or Nova counselors/Supernova mentors may work with youth using digital platforms, ensuring that all youth protection measures noted in the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#) and [BSA’s social media guidelines](#) are in place. In addition to youth protection, the advancement guidelines in GTA Section 7 are required.

Q: May time missed due to canceled unit meetings count toward active participation requirements?

A: Yes. If youth are registered and in good standing, a disruption from COVID-19 virus can be the “noteworthy circumstance” that prevents participation. This policy has been in place for many years.

Q: May time missed due to canceled unit meetings count toward position of responsibility requirements?

A: Yes. If youth are registered and unable to meet the expectations of their positions because of COVID-19 disruptions, then units may need to waive or rethink the expectations. Just as youth must not be held to *unestablished* expectations, they must not be held to expectations that are impossible to fulfill.

Q: Does the National Council grant extensions of time to complete rank requirements beyond the 18th birthday for the Eagle or 21st birthday for Summit or Quartermaster?

A: Yes, but only for the Eagle Scout rank as described in GTA Topic 9.0.4.0 or for Venturing Summit or Sea Scout Quartermaster as described in GTA Topic 4.3.3.0. Unit leadership must become familiar with the five tests under 9.0.4.0. The tests were designed to accommodate such obstacles as those presented by COVID-19 disruptions.

Q: Will youth who are not yet Life Scouts be allowed to apply for an extension to earn the Eagle Scout rank?

A: Extensions are considered only for Scouts who are Life rank. If, once a Scout achieves Life rank, it turns out that COVID-19 disruptions along the way have left them with insufficient time to complete Eagle requirements, then this may be cited when the time comes to submit an extension request.

Q: May the Greater St. Louis area council grant extensions?

A: Normally, that is not allowed. However, due to the current situation - effective immediately and through September 30, 2020 - local council Scout executives may grant extensions, or delegate authority to the Council Advancement Committee to grant extensions under the following limitations:

- It can be established that COVID-19 disruptions were the only circumstances that delayed work on Eagle Scout/Summit/Quartermaster advancement requirements, such as the service project or merit badges. If any other causes were involved, the extension request must go to the National Council following the process outlined in the Guide to Advancement (GTA)
- Extensions shall only be granted to youth in Scouts BSA who have already achieved Life rank.
- When the council receives a COVID-19-related request for a time extension, the council reviews the request and approves it if appropriate. A written response stating the outcome of the extension request must go to the youth. If approved, the notification must be attached to the youth's Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster rank application.
- For Eagle, the extension must not exceed 3 months from the youth's 18th birthday; for Summit/Quartermaster, the extension must not exceed 3 months from the youth's 21st birthday.
- Upon turning 18, the Scout must submit a completed adult application and successfully complete YPT; their participant code will now be UP for SBSA or VP for Venturing and Sea Scouting.
- Extension requests for more than 3 months beyond the youth's 18th/21st birthday must be sent to the National Service Center following the process outlined in the Guide to Advancement (GTA)

Note: A "month" in BSA advancement is defined as a day from one month to the next. For example, March 5 to April 5.

The Greater St. Louis Area Council has been given authority to grant extensions lasting through September 30, 2020 and not beyond.

Q: If youth have already received an extension, can they request additional time due to COVID-19?

A: Yes. Local Council Scout executives may grant extensions, or delegate authority to the local Council Advancement Committee to grant extensions under the limitations listed above.

Q: What should be done while an extension request is being considered?

A: Youth should continue to work on advancement in so far as they are able—e.g., independently, or over the phone or videoconference—and at Scouting activities once they resume.

Q: Are extensions required when an Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster board of review must be delayed?

A: No. Local Councils may grant Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster boards of review up to six months after the youth's 18th/21st birthday. See GTA Topic 8.0.3.1, "Eagle Scout Board of Review Beyond the 18th Birthday." See also, GTA Topic 8.0.1.6, "Boards of Review Through Videoconferencing."

Q: Are electronic or digital signatures acceptable for rank advancement or for the Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster packets/applications?

A: Yes. Electronic or digital signatures will be accepted through September 30, 2020.

Q: How can a youth continue to work on advancement requirements if they don't have internet or high-speed internet for videoconferencing?

A: Youth may take a picture of their completed activity/requirement and share the work with unit leaders. In keeping with Youth Protection Training policies, all communications from youth should be sent to at least two adults. Parents or guardians may send advancement work on behalf of their child.