

NOVI TROOP 407 MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR INFORMATION

- A "Scouter" is an adult involved in Boy Scouts.
- Novi Troop 407 is in the **Ottawa District** of the **Clinton Valley Council** (CVC) of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA.)

With that in mind, a merit badge counselor is a council-level Scouter position. Prospective merit badge counselors apply to, and are approved by, the Clinton Valley Council. After approval, a counselor becomes a Boy Scout training resource for our local Ottawa District which serves southeastern Oakland County (Novi, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield, Commerce, Milford, South Lyon, Walled Lake, etc.).

FORMS: You may get these forms from the troop or from the CVC Service Center (address below.)

1. Adult Application



For administrative purposes, BSA requires all merit badge counselors to register with their local council, by submitting an Adult Registration Application, No. 28-501. If you are registering solely to serve as a merit badge counselor, there is no fee. (You may also become a full member of the Boy Scouts of America by paying the \$10.00 annual registration fee, which includes a subscription to Scouting magazine. This bimonthly publication will keep you updated on developments in the merit badge program and many other aspects of Scouting.) Please note that when registering as an adult member of BSA, you must authorize a criminal

background check of yourself, which will be made from public records. The Adult Application is valid for one year only and must be renewed annually. To register as a merit badge counselor, mark the box labeled "Council/district position" in the upper right-hand block with "merit badge counselor." Fill in the "Position Code" with code "42," and fill in the "Position (Description)" with "merit badge counselor."

2. Merit Badge Counselor Information form



Local councils, like our own CVC, use the information from the Merit Badge Counselor Information form, No. 34405, to identify merit badge counselors, the merit badges they are willing to coach, and other pertinent information. This form also includes the merit badge counselor's agreement to follow the merit badge requirements, and other BSA policies. This form, available online in PDF format, should be submitted to the BSA local council along with the Adult Application.

Once a counselor is approved, the council advancement committee will contact the counselor either by email or phone to let them know they have been approved and may start working with the Scouts.

TRAINING

Merit badge counselors must complete the online Youth Protection Training (YPT) course within 90 days of their approval to be a counselor. The course is available at <http://olc.Scouting.org/> Click on the Youth Protection Training box under E-Learning Courses. When you finish the course, print out the certificate and let our troop training manager know.

Ottawa District provides merit badge counselor training several times a year. Check the district calendar at <http://ottawa.cvc-bsa.org/> Click on "Calendars: Clinton Valley Council." If you read the counselor guides listed below, you will be well prepared to be a merit badge counselor.

There are also links to these sites on our www.novitroop407.org website

BSA MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR GUIDES

Please Read This: Guide for Merit Badge Counselors at:

<http://www.Scouting.org/Scoutsource/boyScouts/guideformeritbadgescounselors.aspx>



This web page includes links on the left side for Frequently Asked Questions, Resources, and Merit Badge Review. Please read the information in those links. The Frequently Asked Questions are particularly valuable. Also, near the bottom of the Merit Badge Review page there is a link to a page with a list of all merit badges and their requirements.

Also available online from BSA is:

Merit Badge Program

<http://www.Scouting.org/Scoutsource/Media/FactSheets/02-500.aspx>

This is a broad overview of the merit badge program

Introduction to Merit Badges

<http://www.Scouting.org/Scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges.aspx>

This is for the boys, and has good pictures of all offered merit badges.

OTTAWA DISTRICT GUIDELINES For *APPROVING* Merit Badge Counselors

While there are no official limitations, the Ottawa District follows and recommends these guidelines for approving applications:

1. The counselor must have some experience or expertise in the area subject of each merit badge they wish to counsel. The application to be a counselor must include a statement of the person's qualifications.
2. Counselors are not normally authorized for more than 5 to 6 Merit Badge subjects.

OTTAWA DISTRICT GUIDELINES For Merit Badge Counselors

1. Every counselor is expected to counsel any Scout who approaches him with the proper credentials (blue card signed by a Scoutmaster), within the limits of his reasonable availability. The option to restrict counseling to boys only from within a single unit is available but discouraged. Historically, counselors are not inundated or overloaded by being generally available, and it is important to the growth process of the boys to be required to contact people they do not know. It can also be a great enjoyment to counselors to work with boys from other troops.
2. Counselors should attend the merit badge counselors training offered periodically throughout the year. Ottawa District recommends renewing that training every two years to be alerted to changes that may have taken place.
3. A counselor should **NOT** normally counsel his own son, a close relative, or someone to whom he has close personal ties. (BSA says: Merit badge counselors can coach their own sons or close relatives, but only if the young man is part of a group of Scouts who are all working on the same merit badge.)
4. Earning of merit badges is the responsibility of the Scout. As such, the Scout must make the contact with the counselor. Most counselors will refuse to talk to parents until after the initial contact has been made by the Scout and an appointment has been made. Scouts should have a copy of the Merit Badge Pamphlet prior to meeting with a counselor.
5. Counselors must follow the "buddy system" when meeting with Scouts. This means that there must be a parent, another Scout, or a Scout leader authorized by the parent, present at any meetings. (BSA says: This third person may be any other adult familiar to the Scout such as his parent or guardian, or the Scout's "buddy," such as a friend, sibling, or other relative.) Since peer competition and camaraderie are valuable aids to advancement, counseling two or more Scouts together facilitates that advancement and meets the goal of this requirement.
6. Scouts and counselors are to use the specific Merit Badge Pamphlet for information on that subject. The summary Boy Scout Requirements booklet (33215), which includes only the requirements, is not an acceptable substitute. The Requirements booklet is issued to provide annual updates to requirements prior to the individual booklets being reprinted. Where requirements differ between the Merit Badge Pamphlet and the Requirements book, the latest publication date takes precedence.

7. Counselors must follow the requirements of the particular merit badge. They must not amplify or add to the requirements, nor are they allowed to diminish or waive requirements. This is not to say that they can't include knowledge beyond that covered in the Merit Badge book, based on their own experience and knowledge. Many boys have been guided into life careers by counselors who make their counseling interesting, and who go beyond simply teaching and testing on facts

NOTES FROM OTTAWA DISTRICT TRAINING

The District Advancement Committee (DAC) recommends that no counselor be approved for more than six merit badges.

The DAC advises that a Scout earn no more than 2 or 3 merit badges from the same counselor.

The DAC recommends that parents NOT counsel their own sons or relatives except in certain circumstances.

If you are already registered in a troop position you must still register again with another adult application to be a merit badge counselor.

A Scout **MUST** have a blue card to begin a merit badge. It is your only verification that the boy is a registered Scout, and that he has the approval of his Scoutmaster to begin the merit badge.

A Scout buddy must always remain in sight of the Scout and counselor. The buddy does not have to be in hearing range.

Two-deep leadership is not required. The buddy system is required. The buddy can be another Scout, a friend, a relative, a parent, or other parent-authorized adult accompanying the Scout.

A Scout should not begin work on a merit badge until after he contacts the counselor.

Scoutmasters assign merit badge counselors to Scouts. Scouts don't get to choose, although they may put in a request with the Scoutmaster.

There is no time limit for merit badges.

Partial completions are valid until the Scout reaches the age of 18.

The current edition of the BSA Requirements Book is the definitive source for requirements for a merit badge. The Scout should, however, be using the latest published edition of the Merit Badge Pamphlet for one of his resource materials.

Counselors should have a copy of the Merit Badge Pamphlet for the each merit badge they counsel.

Adding a merit badge to a counselors approved list is done through the DAC with a Merit Badge Counselor Information form, No. 34405.

Dropping a merit badge from the approved list should be done by notice to the DAC.

Registration as a merit badge counselor is good for one year. Every year the council will send out a re-registration notice that must be returned on time in order to be good for another year. Expired registrations will require a new adult application form to be filled out.

Scouts can learn merit badge information as a group, however, each Scout must individually complete or demonstrate each requirement to earn the merit badge. This includes the "discuss with your counselor" requirements. The discussions must be done individually, but within sight of a buddy.

A merit badge counselor should possess: Knowledge, Skill, Character, and Personal Interest

CONTACTS

Clinton Valley Council (Offices and Service Center)
1100 County Center Drive West
Waterford, Michigan 48328-1903
Phone: 248-338-0035 Fax: 248-338-0039
(Carolyn Raup is the contact for registration issues at CVC.)

Ottawa District Merit Badge Training Coordinator (District Advancement Committee):
Wallace Murray
248-685-8485
email: wallace.w.murray@att.com