**Rank Advancement FAQ**

Unit leaders and other Scouters often ask the same questions about the rank advancement program and board of review process. Here is a quick reference guide of answers to some of those frequently asked questions.

**Question:** What is rank advancement, and what role does it play in Scouting?  
**Answer:** Education and fun are functions of the Scouting movement—as is the growth of our youth members—and make up the basis of the rank advancement program. As the Scouts meet certain requirements, they may advance in rank. The Scouting program is designed to help young people have an exciting and meaningful experience. A quality Scouting program strives for the following:  
• Every young person achieves personal growth.  
• Each individual learns by doing.  
• Youth members progress at their own rate.  
• All young people receive recognition for their individual accomplishments.  
• Youth participants are encouraged to embrace Scouting ideals.

**Question:** Rank advancement requires a Scout to demonstrate Scout spirit. How is Scout spirit defined and determined?  
**Answer:** Scout spirit applies to how a Scout lives and conducts their daily life. A Scout shows Scout spirit by being a role model to their peers, living by the Scout Oath and Law. The concept of Scout spirit is not based on how many Scouting events or outings a Scout attends, but rather by how the Scout helps bring out the best in others as a reflection of the Scoiut’s own character and attitude in the Scout’s daily life.  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 4.2.3.2)

**Question:** In the Scout Oath, what does the phrase “duty to God” imply?  
**Answer:** Scouting has an ongoing commitment to encourage moral, ethical, and spiritual growth. While the Boy Scouts of America remains a nonsectarian organization, in the Scout Oath, “duty to God” reminds everyone that a Scout is reverent, and Scout leaders are expected to be a positive religious influence. The BSA believes that, to be the best kind of citizen as possible, a Scout must recognize their obligation to God. However, religious instruction is the responsibility of the Scout’s family and their religious institution.

The Boy Scouts of America has a comprehensive religious recognition program, and Scouts are encouraged to earn the religious emblem of their faith. (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 5.0.5.0)

**Question:** For the Star, Life, and Eagle Scout ranks, how is “Be active in your troop and patrol” defined?  
**Answer:** A Scout is considered to be active in their unit if:

1. They are registered in his unit (registration fees are current).  
2. They have not been dismissed from their unit for disciplinary reasons.  
3. They meet the units reasonable expectations, or if not, a lesser level of activity is explained (other positive endeavors). (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 4.2.3.1)

Serving actively in a position of responsibility is covered in “Guide To Advancement” para. 4.2.3.4

**Question:** What is a board of review, and what is its primary purpose?  
**Answer:** The troop committee conducts a Board of Review to periodically review each Scout’s progress, from Tenderfoot through Life ranks (or Palms), to encourage them, to learn whether they are enjoying their Scouting experience, and to evaluate the unit’s effectiveness in conducting the Scouting program to benefit them. The review presents a good opportunity to monitor the Scout’s advancement and keep them on track. It also gives unit leaders a chance to measure the effectiveness of their leadership. The troop committee appoints three to six adults (21 years of age or older) to conduct the Board of Review.  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.0.1 & 8.0.2.0)

**Question:** How often is a board of review held?  
**Answer:** Whenever a Scout completes all the requirements for any rank, from Tenderfoot through Life (or Palms), they appear before a Board of Review. The do so after having a conference with their Scoutmaster. Note that when a Scout has completed all the requirements for a Board of Review they then request to have a Board of Review.  They may not be denied a Board of Review.  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.0.2)

**Question:** What is an Eagle board of review?  
**Answer:** The Eagle Board of Review is a bit different from other boards of review because it is the last major step for an Eagle Scout candidate. All their efforts peak at the Eagle Board of Review. It’s akin to a job interview, but it allows the panel to determine whether the candidate is worthy of the recognition. The interview focuses on the Eagle candidate’s attitude and their acceptance of Scouting’s ideals. The Eagle Board of Review is not a test; nor is it used to review the Scout’s rank or Scouting skills.  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.3.0)

**Question:** When must an Eagle board of review be held?  
**Answer:** Once an Eagle candidate has fulfilled all requirements of tenure, Scout spirit, merit badges, positions of responsibility, the Eagle Scout Service Project, and the Scoutmaster Conference, arrangements must be made for the Eagle Board of Review to take place. The Eagle Board of Review does not need to be completed before the Scout’s 18th birthday.

The Board of Review can be conducted up to 90 days after the Scout’s 18th birthday. A Board of Review held between 90 and 180 days after that date must be pre-approved by the local Council; a Board of Review that falls after the 180 days have passed must be pre-approved by the BSA National Council (Eagle Scout Service). When submitting the Eagle Scout Rank Application to the Eagle Scout Service, the candidate must include a statement by an adult explaining the reason for the delay.

Without this last important step, the candidate cannot advance to the Eagle Scout rank. To make this happen, it is important for unit leaders and others to get involved with this process and have a clear idea of what is required of the Scout to pass the Eagle Board of Review. (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.3.0)

Exceptions (alternate rank requirements) are permitted in certain cases of Scouts with disabilities.  
(See “Guide To Advancement” para. 10.0.0.0)

**Question:** Who decides how the Eagle board of review will be conducted?  
**Answer:** Each local Council decides at which level the Eagle Board of Review will be conducted (unit, District, Council). Then the unit committee or the District or Council committee responsible for the Eagle Board of Review decides how reviews will be conducted. The Board of Review for an Eagle candidate must have at least three members and no more than six members, all of whom must be at least 21 years of age. These members do not have to be registered in Scouting, but they must have an understanding of the importance and purpose of the Eagle Board of Review. However, the board must have at least one District or Council advancement representative when conducted at the unit level. At the unit’s request, this individual may serve as chair. Unit leaders, assistant unit leaders, relatives, and guardians may not serve as members of a Scout’s Board of Review.  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.3.0)

**Question:** How is the information from the Eagle Scout Rank Application assessed by the board of review?  
**Answer:** The unit committee reviews and approves the Eagle candidate’s record before their application is submitted to the local Council. If a unit leader or unit committee member does not sign or approve their application, the Eagle candidate may still be granted a Board of Review. However, the failure to secure such a signature may be considered by the Board of Review in determining the Eagle candidate’s qualifications.  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.3.2

**Question:** How are the references of an Eagle candidate checked?  
**Answer:** The references on the candidate’s Eagle Scout Rank Application are contacted by the Council advancement committee or a designated representative either by letter, form (the local Council may have one for this purpose), or telephone. The Council determines the method(s) to be used. The Scout is not responsible for collecting or returning any completed reference responses to be used by the Board of Review.

Before listing references on the Eagle Scout Rank Application, the candidate should secure the approval of those individuals the Scout wants to include. (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 9.0.1.7)

**Question:** About how long does an Eagle board of review last?  
**Answer:** While a regular Board of Review will take about 15 minutes, an Eagle Scout Board of Review may last 30 minutes or more. At the review, each board member should have an opportunity to share a meaningful discussion with the Scout about important matters such as the Scout’s goals, personal growth, and living up to the Scout Oath and Law in the Scout’s everyday life.  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.3.0)

**Question:** Is the Scout’s unit leader allowed to attend an Eagle board of review?  
**Answer:** Yes. The Scout’s unit leader introduces the Scout to the members of the Board of Review and may remain in the room, but the unit leader may not participate in the Board of Review. The Board of Review members may call on the unit leader to clarify a point in question. However, in no case should a relative or guardian of the Eagle candidate be allowed to attend the review, even as a unit leader.  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.3.0)

**Question:** How many votes must a Scout receive from an Eagle board of review?  
**Answer:** Because of the importance of the Eagle Scout Award, a vote to approve must be a unanimous decision.  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.1.4)

**Question:** What happens when a Scout does not pass the Eagle board of review?  
**Answer:** If the Eagle Board of Review does not recommend the candidate for advancement to Eagle, the board members tell the candidate why he has not met the requirements and explain why the candidate does not qualify. They discuss with the candidate how the candidate might meet the requirements within a given period. If the Scout disagrees, they explain the appeal procedures to the Scout. A follow-up letter is sent to the Scout confirming the agreements reached on the actions necessary for the Scout’s advancement. If the Scout chooses to appeal, the Scout is provided with the name and address of whom to contact. The Scout’s unit leader, parents, or guardian also may appeal the decision on the Scout’s behalf. (All appeals to the National Boy Scout Committee must be processed through the Scout’s local Council. A copy of his Eagle Scout Rank Application must be included when the appeal reaches the national level.)  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.1.5)

**Question:** What is the appeals process for a Scout who is denied the Eagle Scout rank?  
**Answer:** In ascending order, appeals are made at the unit, District, and local Council levels. The final decision rests with the National Boy Scout Committee. Upon receipt of an appeal, the District or Council advancement committee promptly reviews the request to determine the facts. This is done by interviewing all parties either individually or as a group. Any confrontation should be avoided. A written report containing all details must be prepared for the committee responsible for a decision or for forwarding to the National Boy Scout Committee, if necessary.  (See “Guide To Advancement” para. 8.0.4.0)

**Question:** What kinds of resources are there for more information about the advancement process?  
**Answer:** A number of helpful items are available to anyone who wants to more fully understand the Boy Scouts of America advancement process. Here are the most practical ones.  
1. Every aspect of rank advancement procedures is discussed in the “Guide To Advancement” (No. 33088), which is updated and reprinted periodically.  
2. The Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook (No. 512-927) is required for completion of the Eagle Scout leadership service project. This workbook can be downloaded from the Internet.  
3. The Eagle Scout Rank Application (No. 512-728) is available online.  
4. The Application for Alternate Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges (No. 512-730) is available online.

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**Youth Protection Training** [***~~Youth Protection Training.~~***](http://www.scouting.org/Training/youthprotection.aspx)

**Cyber Chip** [***~~BSA Cyber Chip.~~***](http://www.scouting.org/cyberchip.aspx)