

Troop 4's Guidelines to Advancement and Boards of Review

For Boy Scouts, Board of Review Members and T4 Parents

These guidelines have been prepared in conjunction with and are based upon the BSA's Guidelines to Advancement (<https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>).

What is Advancement?

Refer to the BSA definition of advancement (<https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/advancement-defined/>). Advancement is the process by which youth members of the Boy Scouts of America progress from rank to rank.

What is a Scoutmaster Conference?

The purpose of the conference is for the Scoutmaster (SM) to ascertain if the Scout is ready for a Board of Review. It is not necessarily a dry run, but a reexamination of the basics a Scout should know. The conference is not a retest of the requirements upon which a Scout has been signed off. It is a forum for discussing topics such as ambitions and life purpose, goals for future achievement, and also for obtaining feedback on the unit's program. In particular, for Scouts above 2nd class, it is an opportunity to review their leadership development. In some cases, work left to be completed (and perhaps why it has not been completed) may be discussed just as easily as that which is finished. Ultimately, conference timing is up to the unit. If the SM conference does its job, the Board of Review will run more smoothly.

What is a Board of Review (BOR)?

Refer to the BSA Board of Review Policy (<https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/boards-of-review/>). The Board of Review (BOR) occurs after a Scout has had his Scoutmaster conference. It is the final step towards earning the rank under review.

Who Can Sit on a Board of Review?

A Board of Review shall consist of at least three members, who must be over the age of 21 years and should have a connection to T4 or the Scouting Movement. It is recommended that the BOR include Committee members, parents or community members. If there aren't enough Committee Members, parents or community members available, then Assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs) can sit on the BOR. However, the Scoutmaster must not sit on a Scout's BOR.

What is the value of a Board of Review?

The troop BOR is a method for adult leaders to get to know the Scout on an individual and personal basis. It's an opportunity for the Scout to receive praise and encouragement, as well as receive advice and a third-party objective review of the Scout's current standing. If a Scout aspires to achieve the Star and Life ranks, the purpose of the BOR is to strengthen his future performance and preparation for the Eagle rank. The BOR level of expectation naturally increases as a Scout pursues the ranks of Star and higher. Only the district Board of Review can finalize advancement to the rank of Eagle.

How does a Scout request a Board of Review?

When a Scout is ready for his BOR, the Scout will contact the designated Advancement Chair (regularly announced at meetings, or ask an ASM or the Scoutmaster for the current designee) to request a review date. The BOR should not be requested until all requirements have been completed and verified during the Scoutmaster Conference. The Advancement Chairs will make every effort to schedule the BOR at the next regular troop meeting provided three adult leaders are available.

When should a Scout request his Board of Review?

All Scouts recommended by the Scoutmaster can immediately request a date for a BOR from the Advancement Chair. However, there are several circumstances that can be taken into consideration: 1) if a Scout is turning 18 in the near future both the Scoutmaster conference and BOR must take place at least 6-1/2 months prior to his birthday to serve the Life leadership requirement of six months; 2) if an upcoming Court of Honor, both the Scoutmaster Conference and BOR must take place at a minimum of 3-4 weeks before the scheduled Court of Honor date. Announcements are made as to when the last BOR can be scheduled for an upcoming Court of Honor.

Additionally, each Scout must check with the Committee's Advancement Chair to determine that he has successfully met the following obligations prior to requesting a BOR. This will ensure that the BOR can go forward without any delays or disruptions resulting from failure on the part of the Scout to have completed rank requirements:

- Any rank-required service hours have been recorded in Scoutbook. Unless the Scout verifies this, the sign ins at a service project may not have been submitted or recorded.
- Leadership position sign-off by the Senior Patrol Leader and Scoutmaster. The Scout needs to keep track of the hours/activities/projects completed and provide updates to the SM as well as to the Advancement Chair.
- All camping nights and hiking miles have been properly recorded into T4's records.
- All rank required Merit Badges are to be managed by the Scout, who is required to submit all Blue Cards to the Scoutmaster when all work on the MB has been completed.

What does a Scout need to know for his Board of Review?

In preparation for his BOR, a Scout needs to memorize and understand the meaning of the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan and Outdoor Code. Some leeway will be given to Scouts at the Tenderfoot rank, but for Second Class rank and higher, memorizing these is a troop requirement.

How does a Scout dress for his Board of Review?

A Scout is required to be in full Class "A" uniform at his Board of Review (See Chapter One in the Boy Scout Handbook). For T4 this means wearing a complete clean and pressed uniform with shoulder loops and epaulets, and up-to-date rank badges, pants, socks, belt and T4 neckerchief with proper slide. A merit badge sash is required for Scouts seeking Star rank and higher.

How can a Scout prepare for his Board of Review?

- Memorize and understand the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan and Outdoor Code

- Understand the purpose of Scouting (Building Character; Developing Leadership, Personal Fitness)
- Make sure as much of the uniform that you own is clean, pressed, complete, and up-to-date
- Review Chapter 1 of the Boy Scout Handbook
- Bring the Boy Scout Handbook to the BOR to check that requirements have been fulfilled and have the Board of Review panelists sign the book upon completion of the BOR
- Review Individual Advancement and Activity reports in Scoutbook, the database of troop records, to ensure that the troop's records match the completed requirements in the Handbook. Parents have access to Scoutbook and can grant their Scout access. Troop leaders cannot grant Scouts access to Scoutbook.
- Be ready to talk about any earned Merit Badges.

Purpose of the Board of Review:

The purpose of the BOR is **not to retest** a Scout's skills, but rather to ensure that the Scout has a good understanding of the completed requirements and leadership responsibilities; to determine the quality of the T4 experience; and to encourage advancement toward the next rank. Each review should also include a discussion of ways in which the Scout feels he lives up to the Scout Oath and Law in his everyday life.

How to ensure a Scout is prepared for a Board of Review:

- Verify that all requirements for the given rank have been fully signed off in the Boy Scout Handbook
- Verify that leadership and merit badges earned fulfill the requirement of the completed rank
- Engage in a meaningful and positive conversation with the Scout about his T4 scouting and life experiences as they relate to issues of character and the Scout Oath, Laws, Motto, Outdoor Code and Slogan

What the Board can do to help a Scout during a review:

- Make every effort to put the Scout at ease
- Smile and create a friendly and non-threatening atmosphere
- Offer praise for work already accomplished
- Offer advice and steps required that need to be done to advance to the given rank
Provide guidance as to when the Scout should request his next BOR or Scoutmaster's Conference

Suggestions for questions that can be asked and topics that can be discussed

- Ask the Scout to recite the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan and Outdoor Code
- Ask open-ended questions about the Scout's recent scouting adventures
- Ask the Scout about his school and family activities
- Discuss the Scout's leadership responsibilities, what he learned, and how he contributed to the troop
- If you were Scoutmaster for a day, what one thing would you change about the troop?
- Talk about the requirements that will need to be met in order to achieve the next rank

- What do you like most about Troop meetings/outdoor activities?
- What new things did you do/learn on your latest campout/service project/troop meeting?
- What did you learn/feel in giving service to others?
- Why is being a Boy Scout important to you?
- What are your goals in Scouting?
- Find out what he likes about scouts and what he does not like about scouts so we can clue into what's going on. We do this to keep the Scouts engaged in the program and make adjustments as we need to. If you hear something from a Scout at a BOR that can help us adjust the program, let the Scoutmaster know.

The decision of the Board of Review:

Upon completion of the BOR, the Scout will leave the room while the board discusses their decision as whether to advance the Scout to the next rank. The decision of the board must be unanimous; if the board cannot reach a unanimous decision, the board needs to immediately contact the Advancement Chair who makes a final decision.

Can a Board of Review decline to advance a Scout?

This circumstance is very rare. If the board is hesitant to advance a Scout at the moment, it may give the Scout a few minutes to correct the deficiency. If this does not solve the issue, then the BOR may be suspended and reconvened at a later date. Upon suspension, the board must detail the precise nature of the deficiency (ies) and the Scout must specifically be told what steps must be taken in order to be successful at his next BOR. A member of the BOR will notify the Advancement Chair or Scoutmaster of the required course of action. In addition, the Scout's parents may be notified of the reason for the delay if the Scout is younger than 12.

Examples of why a board of review may be suspended/deferred:

- Scout is not wearing as much of his uniform as he owns.
- Scout's uniform is not up-to-date, clean and neat.
- Scout does not have his Boy Scout Handbook for the Board to review.
- Scout has not memorized the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Motto, Slogan, Outdoor code and cannot recite them to the Board. Recitation does not need to be perfect.
- Requirement(s) have not been signed off in the Boy Scout Handbook.
- Scout treats the BOR frivolously, is disrespectful toward the board, or is not prepared to answer even the most basic questions asked.

Note: In keeping with the Boy Scouts of America objective of encouraging our Scouts, the BOR does not "fail" Scouts. Rather, the BOR points out what needs attention or to be fixed, and is empowered to suspend the BOR to be reconvened at another time. The Advancement Chair will determine when the Scout and BOR should reconvene.

Eagle Boards of Review:

The troop Board of Review process for all ranks up to Eagle is the responsibility of the troop. The Council runs the Eagle Board of Review.

Eagle Palms:

Scouts may earn Palms after they have achieved the Eagle Scout rank. The requirements can be found in the Boy Scout Handbook. All of the requirements except for Board of Review must be completed before age 18, and time extensions are not available. Merit badges earned at any time since becoming a Scout may be used. Palms must be earned in sequence, one at a time (Bronze, Gold, Silver), with the time requirement observed for each one. Palms are not considered ranks, but rather degrees of the Eagle Scout rank.