



Eagle Issues

Revised Eagle Palm Requirements Became Effective August 1, 2017

Eagle Palms are bronze, gold, and silver awards presented to young men who earn 5, 10, 15, or more merit badges beyond the 21 required to become an Eagle Scout. The BSA has announced significant changes to the way Scouts earn these Palms, which took effect on August 1, that will bring Eagle Palm requirements in line with the needs of older Scouts.

The National Boy Scouting Subcommittee has expanded the definition of active participation and eliminated unnecessary obstacles, such as the Eagle Palm board of review, for Eagle Scouts pursuing Palms. For young men who have not yet completed their Eagle Scout requirements, beginning August 1, all of the Palms they already have earned may be awarded to them immediately at their Eagle courts of honor.

Here are some notes about these changes:

1. **A new Eagle Scout can simultaneously receive, alongside his Eagle medal, all Eagle Palms he has earned for merit badges completed before he became an Eagle Scout.** These Palms recognize additional merit badges earned before completing the Eagle board of review. Previously, an Eagle Scout needed to wait three months between each Palm — even if he earned the extra merit badges before becoming an Eagle. This meant that, under the old rules, a young man who became an Eagle Scout at 17 years and 10 months, was mathematically unable to earn any Eagle Palms.
 - For example, Glenn, a 16-year-old Life Scout, has 36 merit badges at the time of his Eagle Scout board of review — 15 more than required. Previously, he would have needed to wait three months after his board of review to receive his Bronze Palm, another three months for his Gold Palm, and another three for his Silver Palm. Now, he can get that Silver Palm (representing 15 additional merit badges) along with his Eagle medal at his Eagle Scout court of honor.

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- After becoming an Eagle Scout and receiving the Palms already earned, Glenn may earn additional Palms by completing the revised requirements, including the three-month tenure between awarding each Palm.

2. **The three-month tenure requirement has been expanded** to allow active participation in any BSA program — not just the troop and patrol. This change recognizes that as some Scouts get older, their Scouting participation may shift away from the troop to other activities, e.g., the Order of the Arrow, summer camp staff, etc.
3. **The leadership requirement has been broadened** to include “accepting responsibility,” as well as “demonstrating leadership.”
4. **The Eagle Palm board of review has been eliminated.** Eagle Palms are not ranks, so the Eagle Palm board of review was seen as an unnecessary step. A unit leader conference is deemed to be sufficient and may be conducted at any time during the tenure requirement.

“The current policy regarding Eagle Palms is any Eagle candidate having a board of review on or after August 1, 2017, is eligible to receive the appropriate number of Palms based on the total number of merit badges earned prior to his board of review. However, due to concerns from the Scouting family, this policy is currently under review. All points of view are being carefully, respectfully, and thoughtfully considered. However, that does not guarantee that any changes will be made to the policy. When the review is complete and a decision is made, a notice will be sent out to announce that decision.”

