

The Boy Scout Angle

Revised Campout Requirements Became Effective August 1, 2017

Why the change?

With the January 2016 publication of the 13th Edition Boy Scout Handbook (BSHB) and the Boy Scout Requirements book, revised rank requirements were also introduced which doubled the number of overnight camping activities required to achieve the rank of First Class from three to six.

Does this change reflect a decreased focus on outdoors or on camping?

Definitely not. The new requirements maintain the increased focus on being outdoors, while recognizing that not all outdoor activities need to include overnight camping. Outdoor activities such as hikes, service projects, and geocaching, add to the adventure of being a first-year Scout. Further, the Camping merit badge requirements remain unchanged; therefore, the total number of camping nights required to attain the rank of Eagle Scout are unchanged.

When do the changes take effect?

The requirement changes took effect August 1, 2017.

Can I still use the old requirements?

Generally, yes. When there are requirement changes after the release of the Boy Scout Requirements publication or the Boy Scout Handbook, the Scout has until the following January 1 to decide what to do (please refer to the *Guide to Advancement* topic 4.0.0.1). However, in this case, any activities that would meet the old requirement also meets the new requirement.

What's the Change?

Rank	Previous Requirement	New Requirement
2nd Class	1a. Since joining, participate in five separate troop/patrol activities, three of which include overnight camping. These five activities do not include troop or patrol meetings. On at least two of the three campouts, spend the night in a tent that you pitch or other structure that you help erect (such as a lean-to, snow cave, or tepee).	1a. Since joining Boy Scouts, participate in five separate troop/patrol activities, at least three of which must be held outdoors. Of the outdoor activities, at least two must include overnight camping. These activities do not include troop or patrol meetings. On campouts, spend the night in a tent that you pitch or other structure that you help erect, such as a lean-to, snow cave, or tepee.
1st Class	1a. Since joining, participate in 10 separate troop/patrol activities, six of which include overnight camping. These 10 activities do not include troop or patrol meetings. On at least five of the six campouts, spend the night in a tent that you pitch or other structure that you help erect (such as a lean-to, snow cave, or	1a. Since joining Boy Scouts, participate in 10 separate troop/patrol activities, at least six of which must be held outdoors. Of the outdoor activities, at least three must include overnight camping. These activities do not include troop or patrol meetings. On campouts, spend the night in a tent that you pitch or other structure that you help erect, such as a lean-to, snow cave, or tepee.

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What about Star, Life and Eagle?

There aren't camping requirements for those ranks, because to become an Eagle Scout a young man must earn the Camping merit badge, which has its own camping requirements.

Requirement 9a for the Camping merit badge states:

Camp a total of at least 20 nights at designated Scouting activities or events. One long-term camping experience of up to six consecutive nights may be applied toward this requirement. Sleep each night under the sky or in a tent you have pitched. If the camp provides a tent that has already been pitched, you need not pitch your own tent.

All campouts since becoming a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may count toward this requirement, including those used to fulfill the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class.

Executive Board approves Limited Exceptions for Certain Swimming Requirements

Swimming has been an important part of the BSA program for more than 100 years. For many years, it was necessary for a Scout to complete certain swimming-related requirements or merit badges to advance in rank. Today, advancement to both Second Class and First Class ranks requires completion of several swimming related requirements without allowing for exceptions. Unfortunately, in a few limited cases those requirements have become barriers to advancement rather than the challenges they were meant to be.

Of all the individual requirements from Scout to First Class, only the swimming requirements have a resource requirement that can become a barrier to advancement and retention. To complete the swimming requirements a Scout needs access to a swimming pool or a safe outside body of water, which in some locations may not exist or be available within a reasonable travel distance.

Geography often makes it difficult for Scouts to get to a place for safe swimming instruction or to be tested for rank requirements. Consequently, those youths have been hindered from advancing and may drop out of the program. Early last year a volunteer task force was established to review the current requirements and make a recommendation to improve advancement opportunities for Scouts in remote locations.



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