



COVID-19 Updates

8-26-20

Advancing in Rank

The coronavirus pandemic has slowed many Scouts from advancing to Second Class or First Class because of the inability to complete the associated swimming requirements. Swimming remains a major health and safety concern and cannot be abandoned by Scouts BSA. With that in mind, the Swimming rank requirements for Second Class (5b) and First Class (6a) may be deferred until each Scout's next rank, as necessary (through Life, but not Eagle).

Second Class requirement (5b) *Demonstrate your ability to pass the BSA beginner test: Jump feet first into water over your head in depth, level off and swim 25 feet on the surface, stop, turn sharply, resume swimming, then return to your starting place.*

First Class requirement (6a) *Successfully complete the BSA swimmer test.*

This temporary deferment will allow Scouts to advance in rank up to, and including Life Scout, but not beyond. All other rank requirements must still be earned to advance. When conditions warrant and upon direction from the National Council, these requirements will be reinstated with 30 days' notice to our Scouting family via Workplace, Bryan on Scouting, Scouting Wire, social media, and any other means determined appropriate.

For clarity, the following swimming requirements can be completed on dry land and are not a hindrance to advancing:

Second Class requirement (5c) *Demonstrate water rescue methods by reaching with your arm or leg, by reaching with a suitable object, and by throwing lines and objects.*

First Class requirement (6e) *With a helper and a practice victim, show a line rescue both as tender and as rescuer. (The practice victim should be approximately 30 feet from shore in deep water.)*

Rank advancement requirements identified in the COVID-19 FAQ may continue to be completed by Scouts by using video conferencing through December 31st, 2020. We will reevaluate the COVID-19 policies before the end of the year. Please continue to monitor the COVID-19 FAQ found on [Scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org) for any updates.

Camping Merit Badge

The coronavirus situation has also resulted in Scouts being unable to complete the Eagle-required Camping merit badge, specifically requirement 9b.

Requirement (9b) On any of these (Scouting) camping experiences, you must do TWO of the following, only with proper preparation and under qualified supervision.

- (1) Hike up a mountain, gaining at least 1,000 vertical feet.*
- (2) Backpack, snowshoe, or cross-country ski for at least 4 miles.*
- (3) Take a bike trip of at least 15 miles or at least four hours.*
- (4) Take a nonmotorized trip on the water of at least four hours or 5 miles.*
- (5) Plan and carry out an overnight snow camping experience.*
- (6) Rappel down a rappel route of 30 feet or more.*

Although this requirement adds “Scout fun” to a camping experience, it will be temporarily suspended as a requirement for Scouts to earn this badge. All other Camping merit badge requirements must still be completed to earn this badge. Upon direction from the National Council, requirement 9b will be reinstated with 30 days’ notice to our Scouting family via Workplace, Bryan on Scouting, Scouting Wire, social media, and any other means determine appropriate.

Eagle Scout Extension Process

The Guide to Advancement (GTA) continues to serve and guide Scouts, adult leaders, and councils on the proper reasoning and procedures for extending the deadline for competing all work toward the rank of Eagle Scout beyond the age of eligibility. Currently, Scouts may apply to the National Council for extensions as outlined in the GTA (section 9.0.4.0).

To assist Scouts during the ongoing pandemic, local councils have been twice granted the authority to extend the timeframe, for up to three months each time (now totaling a possible 6-month extension) to complete all work only for the rank of Eagle. This was done to eliminate any potential delays in the normal process. The authority for councils to grant these extensions is currently scheduled to expire September 30, 2020.

Local councils will now be given authority by the National Council to grant an additional three-month extension, which will end December 31st, 2020. During this time, the National Council will evaluate permanently allowing councils the ability to approve Eagle/Summit/ Quartermaster extensions beyond the age of eligibility of up to six months. This would make it no longer necessary for local councils to forward those requests to the National Council.

If it is determined to permanently grant councils the six-month extension authority, and having our Scout’s best interest at heart, Scouts would still be able to appeal to the National Council should their local council not approve their extension request.