

# The Path to Eagle

A Guide to Help You  
Become An Eagle Scout



Long Beach Area Council  
*Boy Scouts of America*



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Dear Scout:

You are moving toward a very great thing in your life. Becoming an Eagle Scout is one of the most rewarding, yet challenging things that you can do. You can excel at sports or shine in the arts. Hobbies that grab your attention at one age don't always remain interesting.

But working through the requirements to become an Eagle Scout gives you invaluable experience in such a wide variety of fields of study and most of them allow for a hands-on interaction, not just a lesson from a book. And it will become an important part of your life that will remain so forever.

Within the Long Beach Area Council we have established procedures which help us follow the policies & guidelines as prescribed by the Boy Scouts of America.

The intent of this guide is to give guidance to both the Scout and the Scout leaders as they prepare to travel down the path toward the attainment of the Eagle Scout rank. We aren't trying to retell the requirements. We want to share some of the words of wisdom that we have learned and that will help you on your journey. We want to give you all the greatest help possible for your success.

Let us know if we can help in any other way.

Best Wishes,  
The Council Advancement Committee  
& The Eagle Scout Boards of Review

## The Biggest Issue

Let's start up front with a quick discussion about the biggest issue that seems to cause the biggest problem in the whole Eagle Scout process.

Whenever there appears to be a problem with a Scout working towards Eagle, it usually seems to come down to the issue of time. Over and over again we get Scouts who are pressured into trying to finish the process at the last minute.

There is one almost totally unbendable rule in the process - all the requirements must be completed by the Scout's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. There are exceptions made for handicapped Scouts and circumstances that are beyond your control, but those are rare.

Recently Scouts have come to us at a point about a month away from their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday wondering how they can get an extension on time. They have made decisions to be involved in other school activities and now, as the deadline loomed ahead, they were trying to get past the time restrictions.

We were unable to justify getting an extension of the deadline from National. And at least two Scouts who were so close, lost the opportunity to become Eagle Scouts.

### **Take this as a warning plain and simple.**

Look at how much time is left before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and work with your Scout leaders to determine what needs to be done and plan on how it can be accomplished in the time remaining.

Do whatever you need to do to work out your schedule to make it work. Look ahead and take steps now to get to where you want to be.



## Basic Eagle Scout Requirements

The requirements for Eagle Scout are spelled out very clearly in the Boy Scout Handbook. Of course, the prerequisites for the Eagle Scout rank includes attaining the rank in succession through Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star & Life. All of the requirements for these ranks are, therefore, requirements for Eagle.

The basic requirements for Eagle Scout include having 21 merit badges (some are required & some are elective), the six months of leadership in the troop after becoming a Life Scout, and an Eagle Scout service project that is planned & executed while a Life Scout.

Chances are, by now, that you have determined which merit badges you plan to finish between now and the end. Don't forget that additional merit badges after you become Eagle can qualify you for Eagle Palms.

Find the requirements for all ranks ahead of you and read them. Become familiar with what you need to do so that you can make effective plans to get there. Work with your parents and Scout leaders to clarify anything that isn't clear and to set plans in motion toward success.



## Merit Badge Basics

Two areas of concern come up about merit badges. A couple of the required merit badges have time restrictions (3 months in Personal Fitness, Family Life, & Personal Management). Make sure you know what needs to be done & plan ahead so you have enough time to get it done before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

If you have all the blue cards that came when you earned the merit badge, keep them all together. It would be most helpful when you finally submit your application if you have copies of all the merit badge cards to turn in at the same time it will speed up the process that the council must go through. Sometimes records are not as complete as

what would be preferred and the council needs help in verifying information. Whatever can speed up the paperwork process is helpful to you.

## Service Project Basics

An Eagle Scout Service Project is supposed to be a **step higher** than other service projects. This is the opportunity for the Scout to demonstrate leadership in planning and executing a project that helps an organization in the community.

Restrictions are very simple. The project selected cannot be for an individual or for a business. It must benefit a community organization other than the Boy Scouts. There are no minimum number of hours required only the amount needed to do the project well.

The only other restriction is that the project cannot be a fund raiser. You may have to do some fund raising to get funds to do the project but fund raising cannot be the point of your project.

Two Warnings to Consider:

1. Don't start your project until after you have attained Life Scout rank.
2. Make sure it is approved at the council level before starting work.

Be sure to understand that as you are selecting a project, you are admonished to **go beyond** projects that are primarily maintenance in nature. Painting walls for an organization is not normally acceptable. Cutting the grass or weeding a garden may be part of your project. But the scope of your project should go beyond these types of maintenance and normally make some significant impact on the organization.

The great part of these ambiguous terms is that the Scout is challenged to define the concepts of how they plan to impact an organization. It may be harder to sell the project to the council's review board than actually doing the project. The review board

has two considerations. They want to make sure the project meets the high expectations of an Eagle Scout project. They also want to make sure that the Scout hasn't made more plans than he can handle.

## Getting Your Project Approved

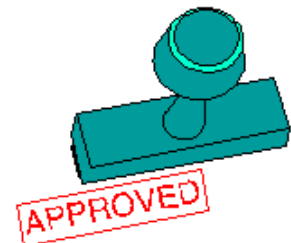
Once you have selected what you would like to do as a service project, you must follow the guidelines to get it approved **before** you can start work on it. The key elements of approval are your unit leader and the organization which will benefit from the project. Subsequent to their approvals is the approval you must obtain from the council.

On the third Wednesday of each month, the council conducts Eagle Scout Boards of Review. Your interaction with these boards will start by your meeting with them to present your proposed project for their review and approval. You may schedule a time in the upcoming boards by calling the Registrar at the Scout Service Center. She will help you set an appointment. Under special circumstances you may request a special board to review the project. This can also be arranged through the Registrar.

At the appointed time you may come to the Board of Review with your Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook already completed and signed by those identified above. Bring this along with any photos, drawings, plans, expectations, and frustrations to the board for discussion. You must use the Eagle Project Workbook or a document in that format. The book is available from the Scout Service Center or at the official BSA website ([www.bsa.scouting.org/boyscouts/eagleproject/html](http://www.bsa.scouting.org/boyscouts/eagleproject/html)).

Experienced leaders are a part of helping you through this process and will give freely of their wisdom and knowledge to help you be successful. Their expectations are high, and their only intent is to be helpful to you.

Sell them on what you plan to accomplish. Overwhelm them with ideas and details that you have worked out. If necessary, they will advise you about enhancements or counsel you to cut back so that your project is manageable and successful. You are



reaching a high mark and everyone who works with you along the way is only interested in your success.

Once approved by the board you may proceed in working with your unit in getting the project done. Notice: If you find it necessary to make substantial changes in your project, you must get them approved at all levels before continuing.

## The Leadership Requirements

One requirement to be an Eagle Scout is that during the time you are a Life Scout you must hold a leadership position for at least six months. No leadership time before becoming a Life Scout counts toward this requirement.

The tenure of the leadership position must be six months long but it doesn't have to be all in one position. If you serve as Senior Patrol Leader for two months after you become Life plus serve as Junior Assistant Scoutmaster for four months; this all adds up to needed six months. Look at the positions that qualify for this requirement and don't be surprised.

## Statement of Life's Ambitions & Resume

Requirement #6 of the application form asks you to write a statement concerning your ambitions and life purpose. You are also asked to provide a resume listing your involvement in your religious institution, school, camp, and other community organizations where you have demonstrated leadership skills. You are also asked to share any honors and awards that you have received.

This requirement gives you an opportunity to share about your life. You can tell us what you want to do next and what your plans in life might be. Your values and ambitions indicate who you are and the impact Scouting has had on your life. Sharing your achievements helps the Board of Review see you outside Scouting and how well you are involved in other organizations.

Tell your story! Let the Board of Review know all about you. We can't learn all about you in the short time we have. We know you are a great guy but we look to your references and to this requirement to learn about the real you. Tell us all about yourself so that we know what has happened to make you who you are.

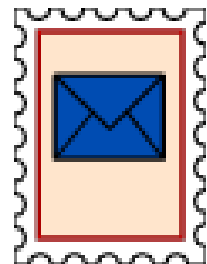
Take this seriously. Please don't just whip out a quick "what do I want to be when I grow up" statement. Share with us in a reasonable amount of time what's going on in your life and where you plan to go from here. The Board of Review would really like to know about your life. Take this chance to share with us what we can't know first hand.

## Reference Letters

On the Eagle Scout application you are asked to list several references from work, school, church, and the community. Also, don't forget your parents.

We all know that people only list those individuals as references who will give them good feedback. Don't worry about that. People who agree to provide references love to tell the glowing story of their friends—they feel honored to have been asked. Usually they do so without any concern.

When your application is received at the Scout Service Center a standard reference letter form will be sent to each of the people listed. It is important that you clearly share the names and addresses of the references. If it would be better I'd suggest typing the names and addresses on a separate piece of paper. Please include zip codes.



We don't mind if they use a computer to reply rather than filling out the boxes on the form. We just ask that they follow the format and answer all the questions.

The completed reference letters are to be sent directly to the Scout Service Center, not returned to the Scout. Sometimes a reference simply does not want the Scout to know what they wrote. We will give you the letters afterwards if they allow.



When there are three letters back from references (not including parents), the council will begin the process of scheduling your Board of Review.

## The Board Of Review

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday evening of each month the council schedules Eagle Scout Boards of Review. The Registrar at the Scout Service Center does the scheduling based on the paperwork being processed.



This is the only part of the Eagle Scout process that can take place after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Normally the Board of Review can take place without any question during the first three months past age 18. Another three months can be used if necessary but then we have to explain to National why there was a delay and assure them it had nothing to do with the Scout holding things up.

The biggest reason for delays is because the reference letters don't arrive back at the Scout Service Center in a timely manner. Remember, we don't schedule the Board of Review until after we receive three letters back. We try to watch and make sure that we make the deadlines.

At the scheduled time the Scout shall come to the Scout Service Center. Bring your parents and your Scout leader. Only your Scout leader will be allowed inside the board session with you. He should take you inside and introduce you to the board members. If your parent happens to also be your Scout leader, they may introduce you and then will be excused to wait nervously outside.

The board members have already read your application, your references, and your personal resume.

Be prepared to share with the board all about your service project. They will ask you questions about what you did and how it went. They will also want to know what you learned through the experience. Bring pictures and anything else that tells the story of how well your project went. You worked hard on the project tell us all about it.

They will also ask you questions about your overall Scouting experience. Various board members will ask questions about your merit badge likes and dislikes. They also may ask about your future involvement with Scouting.

Nervous? You probably will be. But remember that the Board of Review's primary function is to affirm what you have done and recommend you to National for the Eagle Scout award. They really are on your side and want you to successfully complete this process.

At the end of the interview session you will be asked to step outside while the board discusses your application. Within a few minutes you will be called back inside and be congratulated as the newest Eagle Scout in the council. You are an Eagle Scout that day, even though it hasn't been approved yet by National.

Take special note of how you are dressed when you come for your Board of Review. If you don't have a proper Scout uniform, you might want to invest in one - you will want one for your Court of Honor anyway.

Come spit-polished. Let your uniform tell the board that you are proud to be a Scout and want everyone to know it. Wear your merit badges and all your awards. Make sure your badges are current, and have the Scout belt on. You might want to reconsider wearing those favorite tennis shoes or sandals.

## What's After The Board of Review?

When the Eagle Scout Board of Review has approved an application, the next steps are primarily paperwork. After the Board of Review another internal council review of the paperwork takes place to make sure all the paperwork is correct.

Then the paperwork is forwarded to the National Eagle Scout Division of the Boy Scouts of America. They review the submitted application and, assuming there are no problems, they approve it!

If there are any problems, National will communicate with the Scout Service Center. We will have ten days to correct them or clarify questions about the application.

When National approves the application they then issue the award and return it to the Scout Service Center. This normally takes between 6 and 8 weeks.

When the Scout Service Center receives the award back, a letter is sent to the unit leader so that they can pick up the award and proceed with a Court of Honor.

## Your Court of Honor

While the application process and Board of Review take place at the council level, the award is presented to the new Eagle Scout by the Scouts unit.

When the unit receives the award they will work with the family to conduct a Court of Honor. Materials are available in the Scout Service Center for conducting a Court of Honor if there are no unit traditions. Work with the unit and others to make this a great celebration.

Enjoy the event and make it a memorable one. You worked hard to get there and everyone is proud of your accomplishment. This is a great reason to celebrate.

## Need More Help?

If things are still unclear, please feel free to ask for help. The Scout Service Center has a full staff of people committed to helping you. There are volunteer leaders all over the place who spend countless hours each week putting together a program that is beneficial to you.

All of us want to help, you just need to ask. Anywhere along the line where you feel slowed down or you are not sure where to go, your Scout leaders are standing by to help. Nothing will mean more to us than to help you succeed.

## A Summary of the Ten Steps Through the Process

- (1) After attaining the Life Scout rank, you begin planning a project. When planning the project, work with your unit leader. Use the BSA workbook as a guide.
- (2) When ready to have your project approved, contact the Registrar at the Scout Service Center (562-427-0911) to schedule an appointment with a review board so that you can present your project for council approval.
- (3) After the council approval you may proceed with doing your project.
- (4) After the project is completed write your report and prepare it to share with the board.
- (5) Complete all other requirements for leadership, merit badges, etc.
- (6) When all is completed - by your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday - turn in your Eagle application to the Scout Service Center. (This is National's recommendation to insure that all requirements were met by the deadline.)
- (7) The Scout Service Center verifies all the data regarding dates and merit badges earned.
- (8) The Scout Service Center sends out forms to the reference list. When **three** letters are received back from references, the Scout Service Center contacts the Scout to schedule a Board of Review.
- (9) The Board of Review is conducted and the approved application is forwarded to National for approval.
- (10) When the award is received from National the unit is notified.

**Then you celebrate with a Court of Honor!!**