

Virtual Merit Badge Guidelines

The following are guidelines for participating in virtual merit badge sessions in lieu of personal face-to-face instruction due to special circumstances. Each circumstance should be considered by the Council Advancement Committee and unit leader.

As a Counselor:

- I agree to follow all BSA's Youth Protection Policies to ensure the safety of the Scouts in my virtual merit badge(s) sessions, including BSA Social Media Guidelines and Guide to Safe Scouting.
- I agree to follow the BSA Guide to Advancement, Guide for Merit Badge Counseling and Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide while counseling Scouts doing the merit badge program virtually.
- I agree that when communicating with my Scouts virtually, I will ALWAYS ensure that at least one other adult and/or Scout are present in those communications; whether it be via video conference, email, text, phone call or any other form not specifically listed here.
- I agree that merit badge requirements will be done 'as stated', no more, no less. If requirements cannot be completed 'as stated', encourage the Scouts to wait until the Scout can complete the requirement 'as stated' .
- I agree that I "must know that every Scout—actually and personally—completed the requirements and there must be attention to each individual's projects and fulfillment of all requirements".
- I agree that I will enter requirement information of completions and partials in the registration system, as well as communicating them to the Scouts.
- I agree that any questions, concerns, issues, information sharing, feedback and etc. will be brought to the Virtual Merit Badge Team ASAP so they can be addressed, explored, looked at, and etc.
- I agree that upon reading the information expressed in this "Virtual Merit Badge Guidelines" and "Important excerpts from the Guide To Advancement - 2019, No.33088", that upon joining the Virtual Merit Badge Team that I as a counselor, I am communicating that I agree to follow these guidelines.

As a Scout:

- I agree that in order for me to begin any merit badge in a virtual setting, I must request and obtain my unit leader's (Scoutmaster's) permission.
- I agree that I will only work and connect with a merit badge counselor virtually with my parent's permission.
- I agree that I will complete the current Cyber Chip appropriate to my age.
(<https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/cyber-chip/>)
- I agree that when communicating with my virtual merit badge counselor, I will ALWAYS ensure that at least one other adult is present in those communications; whether it be via video conference, video chat, email, text, phone call or any other form not specifically listed here.
- I promise that I will actually and personally complete each project and fulfill all requirements for the merit badges that I request instruction and counseling in a virtual setting.
- I agree to wear my uniform to all video conference/chats merit badge sessions.
- I understand that if a requirement uses action words like "show," "demonstrate," "tell", "explain" or "discuss" and etc., I agree that I must be prepared to exhibit said action word(s) through the use of electronic or digital technology when fulfilling requirements. If I am unable to do so, I must wait until such a time as I can present those requirements to the merit badge counselor or my unit leader in person.
- I promise that I will not abuse the privilege that I have been given to conduct a merit badge in a virtual setting. I will not bully, or otherwise disparage, any scout that may be in a virtual setting with me, and understand that if I do so this privilege may be revoked and I may not be allowed to continue in this setting.

As a Parent:

- I agree to allow my scout to engage with youth and adults in a virtual setting while working on a virtual merit badge.
- I understand that my scout will be required to interact and communicate with an adult in a virtual setting and that I will monitor such interaction as necessary to ensure the safety of all individuals involved in those activities.
- I agree to ensure that my scout actually and personally completes all projects and requirements for the merit badges which are requested to be performed in a virtual setting.
- I agree that upon reading the information expressed in this "Virtual Merit Badge Guidelines" and "Important excerpts from the Guide To Advancement - 2019, No.33088", that upon registering, I am communicating that both my scout and I agree to follow these guidelines with the merit badge counselor and my scout's unit leader.

Special Considerations for Parents: Please consider strongly the following as a precaution for your Scout's safety and youth protection to prevent future contacts of one-on-one by allowing your Scout to use your email and phone numbers as they roam the virtual merit badge world.