



Life to Eagle ~ Helpful Hints for Scouts

Revised 15 Jul 09

Your trail actually began the day you became a Boy Scout. Now that you've entered the home stretch, these suggestions can make the rest of the trail a bit smoother.

We Haven't Changed The Scout Oath!

It still begins, "On my honor I will do my BEST..." It has not been changed to: "On my honor I will do only that which is absolutely necessary, or just a little bit less if I can get away with it." The Eagle rank symbolizes the best of Scouting, be sure your effort reflects this. Be proud of what you have accomplished so far, but make sure your further accomplishments reflect your best effort, not just the bare minimum to get by. If you attempt the bare minimum, you may fall short. If you put forth your best, you won't have to worry about failure.

Timing

- "All requirements for Eagle Scout must be completed before the candidate's 18th birthday. The Eagle Scout board of review can be held after the candidate's 18th birthday." (*The Boy Scout Handbook*). Don't wait until the last minute – if you do, you may run out of time. While time extensions may be granted for permanent physical and mental disabilities and for extremely extenuating circumstances, delay won't qualify. See the Scout Oath section of these hints.

Paperwork

- See the Scout Oath section of these hints.
- Your merit badge cards are important! If you don't already have them organized, it may prove prudent to do so now. In the event that any are missing from the council record when your application is reviewed, the completed card or the troop copy of the advancement report will serve to get the error corrected.
- You **MUST** use the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook to have your project approved. The preferred method is to download the Workbook file from link on the Advancement page of the District website. Do not download other versions – not all are up to date. Other versions will not be accepted.
- FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!!! If doing it by hand, all pages must be neatly printed in black or blue ink or typed. Forms that are sloppily filled out or in pencil will not be accepted. *Do not cross out or white out anything on your original copy...start over.* If you are doing it electronically (the preferred method): spellcheck!

Getting Your Project Approved

- **First – note that your project must be approved before starting any work on the project!**
- **Second – reread the requirement!** Note that this project is different from those required for the Second Class, Star and Life ranks (and note how).
- **Third – read the planning workbook!** Then, reread it. Be aware that all sections/questions must be completely addressed before seeking approval. If there are deficiencies, you will either be required to come back at a later date or to fill in those deficiencies on the spot.
- **FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!** Address all issues as stated in the project workbook.
- **See the Scout Oath section of these hints.** Plan a project that you will be able to look back on in ten years and say, "I'm glad I did that ... I really proved to myself just what I could do."
- Select a project you're interested in. Sounds pretty obvious, but if you really don't have an interest in what your project is about, it will be much harder to motivate yourself to do everything necessary to be successful in a timely manner. You'll be tempted to settle for a "that's good enough" effort.
- This is your chance to demonstrate what you have learned over your Scouting experience. Stretch yourself...put your leadership into action! Use your imagination...do something different...think "out of the box"!
- At every Eagle Board of Review we ask the candidate what advice he would give a Scout just starting to plan his project. The most common answer is: "Don't procrastinate." You don't have to wait until you have finished all your merit badges. Start looking around for ideas as soon as you complete your Life board of review. Procrastination may eliminate your opportunity to complete your project if something goes wrong.
- Do your planning so that you can seek approval of your project **at least 30 days** before you plan to begin the project. If you have to make changes, this will allow time to do so without causing the project to be delayed. Remember that procrastination on your part does not necessarily translate into a crisis for those whose approval is required before you can start.
- **Ensure that your planning is complete.** Your plan should be so complete that you could hand it to a stranger to execute and they could do so just like you see it in your mind. If you are building something, drawings, measurements and materials lists are a must. Be sure you address safety; how will you prevent accidents and what will you do if there is an accident? And don't forget about food, water and shelter for your workers if required. Tools and equipment needed should be listed; there is no excuse for showing up on the job site and not having the 50-foot extension cord which you forgot to load. That is ***poor planning!***
- Your unit leader, the group benefiting from the project and your unit committee, must approve it. **After** those approvals are signed in your project workbook, then you must seek the district's approval. Call the district advancement chair to set a time your workbook can be reviewed for approval.
- Be sure all sections in the planning workbook before the approval phase have been completed. If additional space is needed, note that and attach sheets. Have those approving the project initial the attached text so there won't be any undue questions at a later time.
- Note that fundraising is permitted *only* for the purpose of securing materials or supplies needed to carry out the project. The project itself cannot be a fundraiser, no matter how worthy the cause may be.
- Note also that the project cannot be to benefit Scouting specifically – it is to be done outside the sphere of Scouting. A project in a park may qualify; a project in a Scout camp would not.
- The project may not be performed for a business, or be of a commercial nature.

- Routine labor, a job or service normally rendered, should not be considered.
- While there is no minimum number of hours that must be spent on carrying out the project, the time spent must be sufficient for the Scout to clearly demonstrate leadership skills.
- Approval is not automatic. The candidate must be able to show **how** the project will benefit **what group** and how he will **demonstrate leadership** of others. He also must show that he has a viable plan of action and the ability to muster the resources to complete the project. Remember, this must be done **before** beginning work on the project.
- Note also that pre-project approval does not necessarily guarantee that the Eagle Board of Review will approve the way the project was carried out. The board is required to examine the manner in which the project was completed. How did the candidate demonstrate leadership of others? Did he indeed direct the work rather than doing it all himself? Was the project of real value to the school, religious institution or community group? Who from the benefiting group may be contacted to verify the value of the project? Did the project follow the approved plan or were modifications needed?
- Answers to these questions will be much easier if you document, document, document. Take pictures of pre-project conditions, project in-progress work, and project completion; be sure to record time spent by the candidate (planning and implementing) and others working on the project (a sign-in/out sheet is helpful); Keep track of materials used and their value (**even if donated**).
- Many Scouts compile all this in a notebook, using page protectors.
- The Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project is an individual matter; therefore, two Eagle Scout candidates may not receive credit for working on the same project.

Completing Your Eagle Scout Application

- You MUST use only the latest version of the BSA nationally approved Eagle Scout application. This form is available for download from District website. Other versions will not be accepted. Note that it MUST be printed out in color!
- FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!!! All sections must be neatly printed in black or blue ink or typed. Forms that are sloppily filled out or in pencil will not be accepted. *Do not cross out or white out anything on your original copy...start over.*
- Fill in all blanks. If you are not employed, enter N/A.
- Enter your religious leader's full name, address, and phone number without abbreviations. You may not enter your parents name since a religious leader is not optional on application. If you do not have a religious leader, you then *must* attach a letter to your application stating your own religious beliefs and how you live up to the Scout Oath and the 12th point of the Scout Law.
- There are step-by-step, line-by-line Application Completion Directions available on the District website.

Your Life Statement

- On the back side of the Eagle Scout Rank Application, Requirement 6 reads, "Attach to this application a statement of your ambitions and life purpose and a listing of positions held in your religious institution, school, camp, community, or other organizations during which you demonstrated leadership skills. Include honors received during this service. Take part in a Scoutmaster conference with your unit leader." Be sure all parts of this requirement are addressed. Your application cannot be processed without this complete statement!
- This is your chance to paint a word picture of yourself, so put your best out there to be seen! Most Scouts will have a higher ambition than "to graduate from school and get a

good job.” Put some real thought into this – what do you really want to do with your life? Now, sit down and think – what is your life purpose – why are you here? Write a paragraph about your activities, your leadership roles and the honors and recognitions you have received. (Here’s where you mention the OA.)

- While there is no set length expected, this really should be more than just a couple sentences – although writing a book is probably not a good idea either. Most Scouts are able to address the items pretty completely in about 2/3 to a full page.
- Remember, neatness is important!

Your Board of Review

- **See the Scout Oath section of these hints.**
- When all requirements have been fulfilled and certified with unit leader and committee signatures, the application verified at the council service center and returned to the unit, the **UNIT LEADER** contacts the district advancement chair to arrange for the board of review. If possible, the board will be held at the unit’s meeting place and time. At least one member of the unit committee is to serve as a member of the board - more if the unit wishes. Neither the unit leader/assistants nor relatives/guardians may sit on the board.
- It is appropriate for the unit leader to introduce the candidate to the members of the board. The unit leader may remain in the room, but does not participate other than to provide clarification of a point in question if asked.
- **What to wear:** your uniform, of course. Wear it properly. There is a Uniform Checksheet on the District website. It is impressive if the candidate is in *complete* uniform. Your shirt must be complete and correct. If you do not have uniform trousers or shorts, at least wear something that is olive green. How you wear your uniform tells the Board what you think of Scouting and how well you understand what it means to be an Eagle. You are, after all, aspiring to Scouting’s highest honor; you will be a role model for countless younger Scouts. Wear your merit badge sash. Don’t have a sash? Your merit badges are all in a drawer somewhere? Better get that fixed. Speaking of sashes...this is not an Order of the Arrow function...the OA sash is not appropriate, don’t wear it (and for heaven’s sake, don’t hang it on your belt!).
- **RELAX!** This is not a test! You won’t be asked to justify that you have passed your requirements; your unit leader’s signature has already certified that. The Board’s responsibility is to determine if you understand what it means to be an Eagle Scout and if the values of Scouting are the guideposts of your life. While it is an honor awarded for things done, it is also a huge responsibility which you will be assuming for the rest of your life. Do you understand that and how well will you represent the ideals of Scouting?
- While it is not a test, we will expect you to *think*. We will ask questions to get a feel for: a) what you have gotten out of the Scouting program, b) how you apply it to your life and c) how you view your future in the light of what you have learned. We will also discuss your project and your life statement. Come to the board with an attitude of putting forth your *best*, of full cooperation and participation and with reflection on your Scouting experience. If you do, it will be an enjoyable time.
- If, for any reason, the board determines that the candidate does not meet the requirements, he will be told the reasons for his failure to qualify. A discussion will be held as to how he may meet the requirements within a given period and receive a follow-up letter confirming what must be done. A second board will be scheduled at the request of his unit leader.