

Conducting a Board of Review

Purpose of a Board of Review

A periodic review of the progress of a Scout is vital in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Scouting program in the unit. The unit committee can judge how well the Scout being reviewed is benefiting from the program. The unit leader can measure the effectiveness of his or her leadership. The Scout can sense that he is, or is not, advancing properly and can be encouraged to make the most of his Scouting experience.

Not only is it important to review those Scouts who have learned and been tested for a rank, but also to review those Scouts who have shown no progress in their advancement over the past few months.

Participants in a Board of Review must keep these objectives in mind:

- Ensure the Scout has completed requirements for the rank.
- Evaluate the experience the Scout is having in the unit.
- Encourage the Scout to progress further.

The Board also provides an opportunity for the Scout to develop and practice skills needed in an interview situation, and it is an opportunity for the Scout to review his accomplishments.

The Board of Review is not a retesting of requirements - the Scout has already been tested on the skills and activities required for the rank. However, the chairman of the Board of Review should ensure that all the requirements have been signed off in the Scout's handbook. Additionally, the chairman should ensure that leadership and merit badge records are consistent with the requirements for the rank.

The Board of Review is a time to determine the Scout's attitudes, accomplishments, and acceptance of Scouting Ideals. Scout Spirit is defined as living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in a Scout's everyday life. The board should make sure that good standards have been met in all phases of the Scout's life. A discussion of the Scout Oath and Scout Law is in keeping with the purpose of the review, to make sure that the candidate recognizes and understands the value of Scouting in his home, unit, school, and community.

Members of a Board of Review

For all ranks (except Eagle) and Eagle palms, the Board of Review consists of three to six members of the Troop Committee. The Troop Advancement Chairperson typically acts as the chairperson of the Board of Review. Relatives or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's Board of Review. Unit leaders (Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters) may not participate in a Board of Review.

The Boy Scouts of America has placed the Eagle Scout board of review in the hands of either the troop, district, or council committee responsible for advancement. The local council will decide which method or methods may be used within its units. For the rank of Eagle, the Board of Review consists of three to six members drawn from Scouting and the community. The members of the Board of Review are selected by the unit, district, or council, depending on the council guidelines. At least one member of the District Advancement Committee must be a member of the Board of Review for Eagle, and normally serves as chairperson of the Board of Review. Unit leaders from the Scout's unit, relatives, or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's Board of Review for Eagle. A Board of Review for Eagle may contain members of the community who are not registered Scouters; however, they should be knowledgeable of the principles of Scouting. For example, a representative from a chartering organization, an adult Eagle Scout (even if not currently registered), or a religious leader are frequently asked to assist with an Eagle Board of Review. The Scout may request an individual to be a member of his Board of Review. As a general rule, no more than one member of an Eagle Board should be associated with the Scout's unit.

Workings of a Board of Review

The Scout should be in full uniform.

The Chairperson of the board greets the Scout and introduces him to the board members.

The chairman of the board should ask the Scout to recite one or more of the following:

- Scout Motto
- Scout Slogan
- Scout Law
- Scout Oath
- Outdoor Code

For Tenderfoot and Second Class ranks, typically just the Scout Oath and Law are asked. For higher ranks, more should be expected. One or two re-tries are appropriate, especially for younger Scouts.

The board members ask appropriate questions of the Scout. Open-ended questions are better, allowing the Scout to speak about his opinions, experiences, activities, and accomplishments.

If an answer is too brief, a good tool is to follow with a "Why?" or "How?" type question to prompt for more details. Questions regarding home, church, school, work, athletics, etc. are all appropriate, as well as scouting experiences.

A Board of Review should take from 15 to 30 minutes, with shorter time for lower ranks. When all board members have asked their questions, the Scout is asked to leave the room. The board members then decide if the Scout is ready for the next rank; the board's decision must be unanimous.

The Scout is asked back into the room and the Chairperson informs the Scout of the board's decision. When the Scout is approved for the next rank, there are general congratulations, and the Scout is encouraged to continue advancing. If there are issues which prevent the Scout from advancing, the board must detail the deficiencies so the Scout can correct them. The Scout must be told specifically what must be done in order to be successful at the next Board of Review. The Chairperson sends a written follow up to both the Scout and the Scoutmaster, regarding the deficiencies and the course of action needed to correct them.

A Board of Review for Eagle is similar to other Boards of Review, except that it lasts longer with more questioning and discussion. The Eagle Scout Rank application, Letters of Recommendation, and Eagle Project notebook are reviewed by the board. Questions can include asking about these documents as well as areas used in lower rank reviews.

Questioning

The following sections contain typical Board of Review questions for each rank. The questions for the lower ranks tend to deal with factual information about the Scout's participation in his troop, and his approach to applying the skills he has learned toward earning the next rank. The questions for the higher ranks explore how Scouting is becoming an integral part of the Scout's life. Questions like, "Where did you learn about ..." or "Why do you think it is important for a [rank] Scout to have this skill?" are valid, but don't retest skills.

If a Scout appears nervous or anxious about the Board of Review, it might be appropriate to ask one or two questions from the list for a lower rank, to make him more at ease. In general, within a rank, the questions are arranged from "easiest" to "most difficult".

The Board of Review will need to select the questions which are appropriate for the particular Scout and his experiences.

What Every Scout Should Know

Scout Oath:

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law:

As Scout is ...
Trustworthy,
Loyal,
Helpful,
Friendly,
Courteous,
Kind,
Obedient,
Cheerful,
Thrifty,
Brave,
Clean,
Reverent.

Scout Motto:

Be Prepared.

Scout Slogan:

Do a good turn daily.

Outdoor Code:

As an American, I will do my best to --
Be clean in my outdoor manners,
Be careful with fire,
Be considerate in the outdoors, and
Be conservation-minded.