

Conducting Boards of Review

A Troop or Outfit should conduct Boards of Review at least **once a month**. Mostly, those who are advancing in rank or have earned a merit badge are those who are subject to the review. I however (meaning it is my opinion) would recommend that even Scouts who are not earning a merit badge and not advancing in rank should also be reviewed. The purpose being is to review why the Scout didn't earn anything this month, which should be a concern.



The practice of some councils and districts of **conducting one Board of Review a year (mass Board of Review) should be discouraged!** Boards of Review should be conducted whenever at least one Scout is ready for review. I have at least six of my friends who never got their Eagle Scout because of this slight technicality that they turned 17 years of age before the next scheduled Board of Review. So as you can see, mass Boards of Review only causes delays on the Scout's advancement.

I discourage the one-on-one session where one adult reviews one Scout. More so, the one-to-many where one adult reviews two or more Scouts. This totally defeats the purpose of the Board of Review of being a panel of adults. It also gives room for the lack of objectivity of one adult towards a Scout or two. It is recommended that the Board of Review, as a panel, reviews one Scout at a time, so that the questions can be more specific to the Scout and the board can go into a little bit of detail.

Who is the Board of Review?

With the exception of the Eagle, Venturer, and sometimes the Outdoorsman Scout ranks, the Board of Review is composed of three or more members. It is recommended that the unit committee be used for this purpose. However, you can also invite some friends of Scouting like the parish priest of the Scout's church or even active parents.

The Scout's parent, relatives, and unit leaders are disqualified to become members of his Board of Review for obvious reasons.

For Eagle, Venturer, and Outdoorsman Scout ranks, the Board of Review is composed of people from the Scouting community in general. These reviews are conducted by the local councils and districts.

What Does the Board of Review Achieve?

It is to ensure that the Scout has met the requirements for the rank. But remember that this is not a re-test of his skill. The most common mis-conception about the Board of Review is that people think they are there to re-test the Scout on skills like knot tying and first aid. Well, if this was the case it should've been called the Board of Examination and not the Board of Review.

It is a common practice in some regions to re-test candidates for Eagle Scouts in swimming skills. This is strongly discouraged! It is not the place of the Board of Review to perform such a test. Such a test undermines the ability of Swimming Merit Badge Counselor and the entire Merit Badge counseling process.

The Board of Review is like a job interview -- we just talk. It is also the goal of the review to check what kind of experience the Scout is having in the unit (is he enjoying himself). Through these reviews, we can also determine if the unit leader is meeting the goals of Scouting through varied activities.



This will also be a venue to encourage (or even pressure) the Scout to achieve the next rank. If he is turning 17 years of age and is only being reviewed for the Venturer Rank, the Board of Review must make him realize that he is running out of time. Sometimes a little push is in order.

When Do I Conduct a Board of Review?

Boards of Review should be conducted at least once a month. It is recommended that you make it as part of your regular schedule for Scouting, like the first Saturday of each month. There are no set time-frame of when a Board of Review can be conducted. It is totally up to the unit when they want to schedule it, it is prudent however that the Board of Review does not conflict with district or council Boards of Review and activities.

For Eagle, Venturer, and Outdoorsman Scout ranks, turn in the paper works to the district or local council as soon as he is qualified. This preserves the boys right to be reviewed for the rank.

How Do I Conduct a Board of Review? -- Good Question.

Get a list of people willing to help out in the Board of Review. This list will help you out tremendously when the time comes and you need to call for volunteers.

As i mentioned earlier, have a regular schedule for your Boards of Review. This will become a habit that everyone will know that a Board of Review is coming because it is almost the first Saturday of the month for example. Call for volunteers at least a month or so ahead. This gives you and your volunteers enough time to place it on their schedules.

At least two weeks before the Board of Review, check to see how many Scouts you need to review. You may need to have two or even more panels to handle the volume, this gives you enough time to call for more volunteers.

Convene with your volunteers at least a week before with the list of Scouts undergoing the Board of Review. Have generic questions that will be based on the the rank requirements or merit badge requirements (but remember this is not a re-test, it is only an interview). Also, develop questions specific to some Scouts. You might want to tackle Joey's weakness, or might want to avoid questions about family for Henry, who just went through a family-related problem. Aside from these scripted questions, give your Board of Review a free-hand on questions as well, but inform them of questions that are hands-off (like Henry's family problem).

Questions should be open-ended to give the Scout the opportunity to practice his interview skills. Simple questions should be avoided as much as possible. Follow-up some answers with additional questions of why and how.

On the day of the Board of Review, conduct it normally. One Scout per panel at a time. I encourage the habit of having the unit leader be there and present the Scout to the Board of Review. May I present to the Board of Review Pathfinder Scout Henry Dela Cruz who is here to be reviewed on his First Aid and Ecology Merit Badges. In some cases, the Scout may even present himself to the Board of Review.

The Board of Review should last no longer than 15 to 20 minutes for an advancement rank and no longer than 10 minutes for one merit badge. The Board of Review then makes a decision of whether to award the Scout with the advancement rank or the merit badge.

The Board of Review must not be afraid to disqualify a Scout should they find out through the course of the interview that he did not meet the requirement. Example, when a candidate for Pathfinder Scout was asked where he went swimming and replied that they never went swimming at all. The Scout is disqualified because he did not obviously meet the requirement 9 of the Pathfinder Scout Rank:



Scout Advancement Resource

MeritBadgeCenter Philippines

9. *Demonstrate your ability to swim at least fifty (50) meters using any stroke. Float as motionless as possible in deep water for at least one minute. Explain the eight (8) point safe swim defense plan. Demonstrate three (3) non-swimming methods of rescuing the drowning person.*

Also, the Board of Review must be keen on particular items such as how long it took the Scout to earn a particular merit badge. For instance, a Scout who claims that it only took him one month to earn the Citizenship in the Home merit badge did not earn the merit badge at all because of requirement 7 of the merit badge:

7. *Make a budget and keep a record of your own income and/or allowances and expenses for two months. Explain why it is wise to live within one's means.*

Then again, it is only fitting that I remind you that the objective of the Board of Review is not to be a huge hurdle that a Scout must leap over of. The objective of the Board of Review is to ensure that each Scout is getting what he is expected to receive from the Scouting program.

After all has been said and done, don't forget to complete the Report of the Board of Review form in triplicate and to be submitted to the local district or council office.