MERIT BADGE SERIES

SEARCH AND RESCUE

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
SEARCH AND RESCUE

“Enhancing our youths’ competitive edge through merit badges”
Requirements

1. Do the following:
   a. Explain to your counselor the hazards you are most likely to encounter while participating in search and rescue (SAR) activities, and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.
   b. Discuss first aid and prevention for the types of injuries or illnesses that could occur while participating in SAR activities, including: snakebites, dehydration, shock, environmental emergencies such as hypothermia or heatstroke, blisters, and ankle and knee sprains.

2. Demonstrate knowledge to stay found and prevent yourself from becoming the subject of a SAR mission.
   a. How does the buddy system help in staying found and safe?
   b. How can knowledge of the area and its seasonal weather changes affect your plans?
   c. Explain how the Ten Essentials are similar to a “ready pack.”

3. Discuss the following with your counselor:
   a. The difference between search and rescue
   b. The difference between PLS (place last seen) and LKP (last known point)
   c. The meaning of these terms:
      (1) AFRCC (Air Force Rescue Coordination Center)
      (2) IAP (Incident Action Plan)
      (3) ICS (Incident Command System)
      (4) Evaluating search urgency
      (5) Establishing confinement
      (6) Scent item
      (7) Area air scent dog
      (8) Briefing and debriefing
4. Find out who in your area has authority for search and rescue and what their responsibilities are. Discuss this with your counselor, and explain the official duties of a search and rescue team.

5. Working with your counselor, become familiar with the Incident Command System. You may use any combination of resource materials, such as printed or online. With your counselor, discuss the features of the ICS and how they compare with Scouting’s patrol method.

6. Identify four types of search and rescue teams and discuss their use or role with your counselor. Then do the following:
   a. Interview a member of one of the teams you have identified above, and learn how this team contributes to a search and rescue operation. Discuss what you learned with your counselor.
   b. Describe the process and safety methods of working around at least two of the specialized SAR teams you identified above.
   c. Explain the differences between wilderness, urban, and water SARs.

A Note About Unauthorized and Restricted Activities
The BSA’s Guide to Safe Scouting states under “Unauthorized and Restricted Activities” that flying in aircraft as part of a search and rescue mission is an unauthorized activity for youth members. For complete information, see http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety.aspx.

7. Discuss the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) system, latitude, and longitude. Then do the following:
   a. Using a 1:24,000 scale USGS topographic map, show that you can identify a location of your choice using UTM coordinates.
   b. Using a 1:24,000 scale map, ask your counselor to give you a UTM coordinate on the map, then identify that location.
c. Show that you can identify your current location using the UTM coordinates on a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit and verify it on a 1:24,000 scale map.

d. Determine a hypothetical place last seen, and point out an area on your map that could be used for containment using natural or human-made boundaries.

8. Choose a hypothetical scenario, either one presented in this merit badge pamphlet or one created by your counselor. Then do the following:

   a. Complete an incident objectives form for this scenario.
   b. Complete an Incident Action Plan (IAP) to address this scenario.
   c. Discuss with your counselor the behavior of a lost person and how that would impact your incident action plan (for example, the differences between searching for a young child versus a teen).
   d. After completing 8a–8c, discuss the hypothetical scenario with your counselor.

9. Discuss with your counselor the terms hasty team and hasty search. Then do the following:

   a. Plan and carry out a practice hasty search—either urban or wilderness—for your patrol or troop. Include the following elements in the search: clue awareness, evidence preservation, tracking the subject, and locating the subject using attraction or trail sweep.
   a. When it’s over, hold a team debriefing to discuss the hasty search. Discuss problems encountered, successful and unsuccessful tactics, and ideas for improvement.

10. Find out about three career or volunteer opportunities in search and rescue. Pick one and find out the education, training, and experience required for this professional or volunteer position. Discuss this with your counselor, and explain why this position might interest you.
Search and Rescue Resources

Scouting Literature

Visit the Boy Scouts of America’s official retail website (with your parent’s permission) at http://www.scoutstuff.org for a complete listing of all merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.

Books


Setnicka, Tim J. Wilderness Search and Rescue, 1981.

Online Resources
ICS Forms
Website: http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/JobAids.shtm

National SAR Plan
New Mexico SAR Field Certification Study Guide
Website: http://nmsarc.org/resources/FieldCert_docs/StudyGuide.pdf

Search Urgency Chart

“Suunto on How Not to Rely on Luck & Compass and Map”
Website: http://www.crew572.org/resources/map_and_compass/Suunto.pdf

Urgency Determination Worksheet
Website: www.k7rdg.org/ICSforms

Wilderness Survival Guide
Website: http://www.wilderness-survival-skills.com/

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Organizations and Websites
Air Force Rescue Coordination Center
Website: http://www.1af.acc.af.mil/units/afrrc/

American Avalanche Association
Website: http://www.americanavalancheassociation.org

American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education
Website: http://avtraining.org

American Medical Response Reach and Treat Team
Website: http://www.summitpost.org/amr-reach-and-treat-who-we-are-and-what-we-do/172226

American Mountain Guides Association
Website: www.amga.com

Colorado Geological Survey
Website: http://avalanche.state.co.us

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Telephone: 202-566-1600
Toll-free telephone for literature requests only: 800-480-2520

Inland SAR School
Website: http://www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/ops/sar/inland/default.asp

Mountain Rescue Association
Website: www.mra.org

National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR)
P.O. Box 232020
Centreville, VA 20120-2020
Website: http://www.nasar.org/

National SAR School
Website: http://www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/ops/sar/default.asp

National Ski Patrol
Website: http://www.nsp.org

New Hampshire Fish and Game Department Specialized Search and Rescue Team
Website: http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Law_Enforcement/sar.htm

New Hampshire Outdoor Council
Website: www.nhoutdoorcouncil.org
New Mexico Department of Public Safety, Search and Rescue Resource Office
P.O. Box 1628
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1628
Website: http://www.dps.nm.org/index.php/search-rescue/

New Mexico Search and Rescue Council
P.O. Box 3396
Albuquerque, NM 87190-3396
Website: http://nmsarc.org/resources/certification.html

Urban Search and Rescue
Website: http://www.fema.gov/emergency/usr

U.S. Air Force Pararescuemen
Website: www.pararescue.com

U.S. Coast Guard
Website: http://www.uscg.mil

U.S. Geological Survey
Website: http://topomaps.usgs.gov

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Doug Palmer, chairman—retired, associate director of Program, Philmont Scout Ranch; New Mexico Certified Type II field co-coordinator/Incident Commander

Mark Anderson—Eagle Scout; director of Program, Philmont Scout Ranch; field coordinator, New Mexico State Police Search and Rescue

Mary Berry, D.V.M.—founder, Sandia Search Dogs, certified trainer, Search and Rescue dogs in trailing, area air scent, cadaver, and FEMA disaster dogs