

National Outdoor Badge Requirements

Do you enjoy camping under the stars, rafting a whitewater river, or hitting the trail afoot, on a bike, or even on a horse? Can you pitch a tent, find your way, and bandage an ankle using only materials in your pack? Are you prepared to do any of these in rain, snow, sleet, or heat? If so, the National Outdoor Awards are for you. There is nothing virtual about these awards—you can earn them only by demonstrating both knowledge and experience in the outdoors. So, if you are a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout and think you are tough and disciplined enough to hike or ride the miles, camp the nights, and run the rivers or lakes, then read on and see if the National Outdoor badges or possibly the National Medal for Outdoor Achievement could be for you!

National Outdoor Badges for Camping, Hiking, Aquatics, Riding, and Adventure

The five National Outdoor Badges recognize a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout who demonstrates both knowledge and experience in camping, hiking, aquatics, riding, or adventure. Scouts earning the National Outdoor badges have demonstrated that they are knowledgeable, safe, and comfortable in the outdoor activity covered by the badge.

National Outdoor badges may be earned in the following areas:

Camping: A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may earn the National Outdoor Badge for Camping upon successfully completing the following requirements:

1. Earn the First Class rank.
2. Earn the Camping merit badge.
3. Earn two of the following three merit badges: Cooking, First Aid, Pioneering.
4. Complete 25 days and nights of camping—including six consecutive days (five nights) of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America—including nights camped as part of requirements 1 through 3 above.

A gold device may be earned for each additional 25 nights of camping. A silver device is earned for each additional 100 nights of camping. The Scout may wear any combination of devices totaling his current number of nights camping.

Hiking: A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may earn the National Outdoor Badge for Hiking upon successfully completing the following requirements:

1. Earn the First Class rank.
2. Earn the Hiking and Orienteering merit badges.
3. Complete 100 miles of hiking or backpacking under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America, including miles hiked as part of requirement 2.

A gold device may be earned for each additional 50 miles hiked. A silver device is earned for each additional 200 miles of hiking. The Scout may wear any combination of devices totaling his current number of miles hiking.

Aquatics: A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may earn the National Outdoor Badge for Aquatics upon successfully completing the following requirements:

1. Earn the First Class rank.
2. Earn the Swimming and Lifesaving merit badges.
3. Earn the Mile Swim BSA Award.

4. Earn at least one of the following merit badges: Canoeing, Rowing, Small Boat Sailing, Whitewater. Complete at least 25 hours of on-the-water time, applying the skills that you learned in the merit badges.
5. Complete at least 50 hours of any combination of swimming, canoeing, rowing, small-boat sailing, or whitewater activity under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America, including time spent in requirements 2 through 4.

A gold device may be earned for each additional 25 hours of aquatic activity. A silver device is earned for each additional 100 hours of aquatic activity. The Scout may wear any combination of devices totaling his current number of hours of aquatic activity.

Riding: A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may earn the National Outdoor Badge for Riding upon successfully completing the following requirements:

1. Earn the First Class rank.
2. Complete at least one of the following:
3. Cycling merit badge and 100 miles of cycling; or
4. Horsemanship merit badge and 50 miles of horseback riding.
5. Complete 200 miles of riding activities, either on a non-motorized bike or a stock animal, under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America, including the miles in requirement 2.

A gold device may be earned for each additional 100 miles of riding. A silver device is earned for each additional 400 miles of riding. The Scout may wear any combination of devices totaling his current number of miles of riding.

Adventure: A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may earn the National Outdoor Badge for Adventure upon successfully completing the following requirements:

1. Earn the First Class rank.
2. Complete either the Wilderness Survival or the Emergency Preparedness merit badge.
3. Complete 10 of any combination or repetition of the following adventure activities under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America:
 - a. A backpacking trip lasting three or more days and covering more than 20 miles without food resupply
 - b. A canoeing, rowing, or sailing trip lasting three or more days and covering more than 50 miles without food resupply
 - c. A whitewater trip lasting two or more days and covering more than 20 miles without food resupply
 - d. A climbing activity on open rock, following Climb On Safely principles, that includes camping overnight
 - e. Earn the National Historic Trails Award
 - f. Earn the 50-Miler Award
 - g. Attend any national high-adventure base or any nationally recognized local high-adventure or specialty-adventure program

Items 3a-g may be repeated as desired. A single activity that satisfies multiple items in 3a-g may be counted as separate activities at the discretion of the unit leader. Similarly, a single activity that doubles an item in 3a-d may be counted as two activities at the discretion of the unit leader. A gold device may be earned for each additional five activities. A silver device is earned for each additional 20 activities. The Scout may wear any combination of devices totaling his current number of activities.

National Medal for Outdoor Achievement

The National Medal for Outdoor Achievement is the highest recognition that a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout can earn for exemplary achievement, experience, and skill in multiple areas of outdoor endeavor. In order for a Scout to earn the National Medal for Outdoor Achievement, the Scout must complete the following requirements:

1. Earn the First Class rank.
2. Earn the National Outdoor Badge for Camping with a silver device.
3. Earn any two additional National Outdoor Badges, each with two gold devices.
4. Earn the following merit badges: Backpacking, Emergency Preparedness, Nature, and Wilderness Survival.
5. Complete a 16-hour course in Wilderness First Aid from the American Red Cross, Wilderness Medical Institute, or other recognized provider.
6. Become a Leave No Trace Trainer by completing the 16-hour training course from a recognized Leave No Trace Master Educator.
7. Plan and lead, with the approval of your unit leader, an outing for your troop, team, patrol, or squad in two of the following activity areas: hiking and backpacking, aquatic activities, or riding. Include in each outing a service element addressing recreational impacts resulting from that type of activity. With the approval of your unit leader, you may plan and lead the outings for another Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, Sea Scout ship, or Venturing crew.
8. Complete at least one of the following:
 - a. Plan and lead, with the approval of your unit leader, an adventure activity identified in the National Outdoor Badge for Adventure for your troop, team, patrol, or squad.
 - b. Successfully complete a season on a council summer camp staff in an outdoor area, such as aquatics, Scoutcraft, nature/environment, climbing, or COPE.