

Three Fires Council – High Risk Merit Badge Counselor Policy

Guide to Advancement, Section 7, *The Merit Badge Program* specifies several merit badges that involve activities for which the BSA has implemented strategies to improve safety, improve the Scouts' experience, and manage risk. The requirements for training/certification for merit badge counselors (highlighted in **bold**) are identified below. The requirements **for conducting activities** are defined in Section 7.0.1.1 *Qualifications of Counselors*. Merit badge counselors must meet the requirements as specified below. In certain cases, TFC has established a higher minimum, reasonable level of skill and education for counselors as allowed by the Guide to Advancement.

General

- CPR instruction, wherever it is required, must be taught by instructors currently trained by a nationally certified provider.
- Existing merit badge counselors or new merit badge counselors who (a) have experience in the subject, (b) if previously certified as such, or trained by an instructor so qualified or (c) have certification from an equivalent organization not listed may submit a request to the respective committee for review and approval. For example, an individual who has been a swimming merit badge counselor with appropriate experience can submit a brief summary of his/her experience and qualifications to the Aquatics Committee.
 - For Aquatics Merit Badges an individual may contact the TFC Aquatics Committee for approval.
 - For Shooting Merit Badges an individual may contact the TFC Shooting Committee for approval.
 - For Climbing Merit Badges an individual may contact the TFC COPE/Climbing Committee for approval.
- All certifications and/or training must be current as specified by the organization providing the training/certification. Copies of required certifications/training or approval by the appropriate TFC Outdoor Committee (see above) must be included with Merit Badge Counselor applications.

Aquatics Merit Badges

Swimming and watercraft activities must be conducted in accordance with BSA Safe Swim Defense or BSA Safety Afloat, respectively, and be supervised by mature and conscientious adults at least 21 years old and trained in the program applicable.

Canoeing	Counselors must be trained as a BSA Aquatics Instructor, a BSA Paddle Craft Safety (PCS) instructor, or be certified as a canoeing instructor from the American Canoe Association, American Red Cross, or equivalent; OR the TFC Aquatics Committee may approve individuals previously certified as such, or trained by an instructor so qualified.
Kayaking	Counselor must be trained as a BSA Aquatics Instructor, a BSA Paddle Craft Safety (PCS) instructor, be certified as a kayaking instructor from the American Canoe Association, American Red Cross, or equivalent; OR the TFC Aquatics Committee may approve individuals previously certified as such, or trained by an instructor so qualified.
Lifesaving	Counselors must be certified in Red Cross (or equivalent) First Aid/CPR/AED and trained as a BSA Lifeguard or Aquatics Instructor, Red Cross Lifeguard or equivalent.
Rowing	Counselor must be trained as a BSA Aquatics Instructor, a BSA Paddle Craft Safety (PCS) instructor, a BSA Lifeguard or equivalent; OR the TFC Aquatics Committee may approve individuals previously certified as such, or trained by an instructor so qualified.
SCUBA	Counselors must be at least 21 years old and be certified as a diver by PADI, NAUI, PDIC, SDI, WRSC. All phases of scuba instruction are limited to instructors trained and sanctioned by one to the following agencies: PADI, NAUI, SSI, IDEA, PDIC, SDI or be a member of the World Recreational Scuba Training Council.

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Swimming Counselors must be **trained** as a BSA Aquatics Instructor or American Camp Association (ACA) equivalents including: YMCA Youth and Adult Instructor I or II, Starfish Swimming Instructor, Ellis & Associates Learn to Swim Program Instructor or equivalent **OR** the TFC Aquatics Committee may approve individuals previously certified as such, or trained by an instructor so qualified.

Whitewater Counselors must be at least 21 years old and be **certified** as a whitewater canoeing or kayaking instructor from the American Canoe Association **OR** the TFC Aquatics Committee may approve individuals previously certified as such, or trained by an instructor so qualified.

Shooting Merit Badges

All instruction or other activities involving the handling of firearms or live ammunition must be supervised by a certified BSA National Camping School shooting sports director, or National Rifle Association Shooting Instructor or Coach. That involving muzzleloaders must be supervised by an NCS shooting sports director, or NRA/National muzzleloader firearms instructor. Shooting must be supervised by a NRA-certified Range Safety Officer (RSO). If instruction and shooting are to occur at the same time, both the RSO and qualified instructor must be present. The supervisor and instructor may not be the same person. All instruction or other activities involving archery must be supervised by a certified BSA National Camping School shooting sports director, or USA Archery or National Field Archery Association instructor.

Rifle Shooting Counselors must at least 21 years old and be **trained** as a BSA National Camping School Shooting Sports Director or **certified** as a NRA Rifle or Muzzle Loading (as appropriate) Instructor or Coach.

Shotgun Shooting Counselors must at least 21 years old and be **trained** as a BSA Camping School shooting sports director or be **certified** as a NRA Shotgun Instructor or Coach.

Archery Counselors must at least 21 years old and be **trained** as a BSA Camping School shooting sports director or be **certified** as a USA Archery or National Field Archery Association instructor.

Climbing Merit Badge

All climbing, belaying and rappelling exercises and activities must be supervised by a qualified rock climbing instructor who is mature and conscientious adult at least 21 years old and who is trained in BSA Climb on Safety and understands the risks inherent to these activities. Someone with certification in Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED or equivalent must be present at these activities.

Climbing Counselors must be at least 21 years old and **trained** in BSA Climb on Safety.

Snow Sports Merit Badge

Snow sports must be supervised by a mature conscientious adult 21 years or older in accordance with BSA Winter Sports Safety as defined in the Guide to Safe Scouting.

Snow Sports Counselors must be at least 21 years old and be experienced in snow sport activities.

Welding Merit Badge

Welding must be supervised by a mature conscientious adult 21 years or older in accordance with safety as defined in the BSA Guide to Safe Scouting.

Welding Counselors must be at least 21 years old and be experienced in welding.