

Applying to be a Merit Badge Counselor

To become a Merit Badge Counselor in Three Fires Council complete the following:

1. BSA Adult Application (<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-501.pdf>)
2. Background Check Authorization form (from the BSA Adult Application)
3. Merit Badge Counselor Information Form (<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf>)
4. Proof of completion of Youth Protection Training (e.g. a copy of the completion certificate from my.scouting.org)
5. Any required certifications for high risk merit badges (see below).

All these forms are required, even for leaders registered in other positions. The forms may be mailed or dropped off at the Three Fires Council Norris Service Center, 415 North 2nd Street, St. Charles, IL 60174 (or they can be dropped off at the Naperville Scout shop for forwarding to Norris). They may also be faxed to 630-584-8598 or scanned (pdf preferred) and emailed to the TFC registrar: Darla Fink – darla.fink@scouting.org.

The BSA Adult Application must be filled out completely, although the “To be completed by the unit” section may be left blank. Use the position code of 42, and the description of “Merit Badge Counselor.” Be sure to sign and initial as appropriate (digital signatures are not currently accepted). No registration fee is required for merit badge counselors.

The qualifications listed on the Merit Badge Counselor Information form must be applicable to the badges requested. “General interest” is not acceptable. Review the requirements (<https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>) for the badges being requested to make sure you are qualified: cooking requires camping and backpacking cooking experience; painting is utility painting not artistic painting; bugling requires experience with a brass instrument and is a separate badge from music.

Three Fires Council does not recognize “troop-only” or “district-only” counselors. Unit leaders (scoutmasters, assistant scoutmasters, and committee members) have access to the list of all council merit badge counselors through Scoutbook (**My Dashboard**->select troop/crew->**MB Counselor List**). While it is possible for a counselor to choose not to counsel a particular scout, it must always be done respectfully.

A maximum of 8 badges is suggested for new counselors. The council limits the overall maximum for a counselor to 15.

Counselors for certain “high risk” merit badges (archery, climbing, snow sports, rifle and shotgun shooting, canoeing, lifesaving, kayaking, rowing, SCUBA, swimming, welding, whitewater) require certification. The TFC high risk merit badge policy may be found at http://threefirescouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/TFC-High-Risk-MB-Certification-Policy_06.15.16.pdf (from the threefirescouncil.org home page click on the advancement link – the link to the policy is at the bottom of the page.)

Processing for a new merit badge counselor application typically takes 1-2 months. Counselors will not receive notification when the process is completed, although they will be notified of a rejection. A counselor may use Scoutbook.com (same login and password as my.scouting.org) to verify they are registered and to list the badges they are registered for (**My Dashboard**->**My Account**->**My Positions**).

Counselors are strongly encouraged to take the Merit Badge Counselor Training Course available from the BSA Learn Center (ScoutingU) on my.scouting.org or through the annual Training Academy.

Counselors wishing to make changes to the badges they counsel must submit a Merit Badge Counselor Information Form (<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf>) to one of the locations noted above with the (A)dditions and (D)eleations indicated. The BSA adult application/background authorization/proof of YPT are not required to update badges for an existing counselor.