Mecklenburg County Council, Boy Scouts of America Merit Badge Multiple-Unit Workshop Policy Statement

The Boy Scouts of America "Guide To Advancement 2011" says, in part:

Group Instruction

It is acceptable—and sometimes desirable—for merit badges to be taught in group settings. This often occurs at camp and merit badge midways or similar events. Interactive group discussions can support learning. The method can also be attractive to "guest experts" assisting registered and approved counselors....

There must be attention to each individual's projects and his fulfillment of all requirements. We must know that every Scout—actually and personally—completed them. . . . Because of the importance of individual attention in the merit badge plan, group instruction should be limited to those scenarios where the benefits are compelling.

To the fullest extent possible, the merit badge counseling relationship is a counselor-Scout arrangement in which the boy is not only judged on his performance of the requirements, but receives maximum benefit from the knowledge, skill, character and personal interest of his counselor. Group experiences should be followed by attention to each individual candidate's projects and his ability to fulfill all requirements.

The Council Advancement Committee accepts that merit badge workshops beyond the troop level can utilize expertise and resources which may not be available on an individual basis. Workshop requests which are reviewed and meet the Council guidelines will be approved for group instruction.

<u>Council Advancement Committee Guidelines</u> <u>For Merit Badge Group Instruction (Workshops)</u>

Purpose: To provide guidance in preparing a request to the Council Advancement Committee to conduct a Merit Badge Workshop in accordance with the Mecklenburg County Council "Merit Badge Multiple-Unit Workshop Policy Statement".

- 1. Merit Badge counselors must be registered with the Boy Scouts of America and approved by the Advancement Chairman or designee. (If registration is solely to be a Merit Badge counselor, there is no charge or fee to the individual.)
- 2. The Merit Badge counselor must have completed the BSA Youth Protection Training within the past two years.
- 3. The counselor must have completed Merit Badge counselor training.
- 4. Only Merit Badge counselors are authorized to approve merit badge work, but they may be assisted by subject matter experts, or "guest experts" within guidelines established by the counselor.
- 5. Class size for the merit badge must be limited to a manageable number.
- 6. Scouts must register beforehand to provide the opportunity for the counselor to discuss any pre-requirements for the workshop. Methods of registration must conform to BSA requirements for youth privacy and safety.
- 7. Any pre-requirements must be listed so the scout has a written copy of what is required.
- 8. The official requirements for merit badges are the requirements published annually in *Boy Scouting Requirements*, No. 34765. Changes usually appear first in a revised merit badge pamphlet. Requirements can not be added, removed, or altered from those listed.
- 9. The scout must have unit leader approval to work on the merit badge (a signed *Application for Merit Badge*, No. 34124, commonly called the "blue card".)
- 10. Scouts must be told they will receive a "partial" merit badge approval when time requirements can not be met during the workshop. Full approval may be possible if the scout and counselor have met prior to the workshop and work started early enough to satisfy the time requirement.
- 11. If the merit badge workshop is open to scouts beyond a single troop, the scout leader in charge must submit a request for approval to the Council Advancement Committee two months prior to the date of the workshop. The request should state the date(s) of the merit badge workshop, merit badges to be offered, names of merit badge counselors recruited, and confirmation that all of these guidelines will be met.