

Fishing

Merit Badge Workbook

Merit badges are earned by doing: reading the pamphlet, practicing the skills, and showing your counselor what you have learned.
This workbook gives you a place to organize your notes and track your progress along the way.
Merit badge counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbook.
You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information.
Use the space under each requirement to note what you have done and what you want to talk about, not to write out full answers.
When a requirement says discuss, show, tell, explain, or demonstrate, that is what you must do.
No one may add to or subtract from the official requirements found on scouting.org (Guide to Advancement 7.0.4.8).
Scouting America last updated this badge's requirements page on December 31, 2025.
Requirements change from time to time. Double-check scouting.org before you start.

Scout's name: _____ Unit: _____ Date started: _____

Counselor's name: _____ Phone no.: _____ Email: _____

Links marked "Scouting America resources" are the ones Scouting America shares on its official badge page.
Links marked "ScoutSmarts" open the matching part of Cole's guide. This workbook is unofficial and not endorsed by Scouting America.

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1. Do the following:

(a) Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while participating in fishing activities, and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.
Scouting America resources: Fishing - Be Aware Of These Fishing Hazards (video) · Why is Fishing Dangerous? (website)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 1a explained

Fishing hazards

Hazard	How I anticipate and help prevent it	How I mitigate and respond

(b) Discuss the prevention of and treatment for the following health concerns that could occur while fishing: cuts and scratches, puncture wounds, insect bites, hypothermia, dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke, and sunburn.
Scouting America resources: How to Treat Cuts and Bruises (video) · Removing a Fishhook (video)
How to Treat an Insect Bite or Sting | First Aid Training (video) · Hypothermia (video) · What is Dehydration? (video)
Heat Exhaustion vs Heat Stroke (video) · Sunburn (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1b explained

Health concerns while fishing

Health concern	Prevention	Treatment
cuts and scratches		
puncture wounds		
insect bites		

Health concerns while fishing (continued)

Health concern	Prevention	Treatment
hypothermia		
dehydration		
heat exhaustion		
heatstroke		
sunburn		

(c) Explain how to remove a barbed hook that is lodged in someone's arm.

Scouting America resources: How to Remove a Hook (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1c explained

How to remove a barbed hook lodged in someone's arm

(d) Name and explain five safety practices you should always follow while fishing.

Scouting America resources: Fishing Safety Tips (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1d explained

Five safety practices

Safety practice	Why I always follow it

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Discuss the differences between two types of fishing outfits. Point out and identify the parts of several types of rods and reels. Explain how and when each would be used. Review with your counselor how to care for this equipment.

Scouting America resources: Types of Fishing Reels and How to Use Them for Beginners - Spinning vs. Spincast vs. Baitcasting (video) Cane Pole Fishing (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2 explained

Differences between two types of fishing outfits

Rods and reels I identified

Type of rod and reel	Parts I identified	How and when it's used

How to care for this equipment

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Demonstrate the proper use of two different types of fishing equipment.

Scouting America resources: How to Cast and Use a Spincast Push Button Rod and Reel - Fishing Reels for Beginners (video) Fishing 101 Made Easy with Simple Spinning Reel Casting (video) · How to Use a Baitcaster For Beginners! (video)

Equipment I demonstrated

Type of fishing equipment	Date	What I showed

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Demonstrate how to tie the following knots: improved clinch knot, Palomar knot, uni knot, uni to uni knot, and arbor knot. Explain how and when each knot is used.

Scouting America resources: Improved Clinch Knot (website) · Palomar Knot (website) · Uni Knot (website) Uni-to-Uni / Double Uni Knot (website) · Arbor Knot (website) · Animated Knots (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 4 explained

Fishing knots

Knot	Date tied	How and when it's used
improved clinch knot		
Palomar knot		
uni knot		
uni to uni knot		
arbor knot		

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Name and identify five basic artificial lures and five natural baits and explain how to fish with them. Explain why baitfish are not to be released.

Scouting America resources: Most Common Types of Fishing Lures (website) · Fishing Lures for Beginners (video)
What Are the Different Types Of Fishing Lures? (website) · Motivations and Risks of Illegal Baitfish Release (video)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 5 explained

Five artificial lures

Lure	How to fish with it

Five natural baits

Bait	How to fish with it

Why baitfish are not to be released

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. Do the following:

(a) Explain the importance of practicing Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code. Discuss the positive effects of Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code on fishing resources.

Scouting America resources: Seven Principles of LNT (website) · LNT Basics (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6a explained

Why Leave No Trace and the Outdoor Code are important

Their positive effects on fishing resources

(b) Discuss the meaning and importance of catch and release. Describe how to properly release a fish safely to the water.

Scouting America resources: How to Safely Handle Fish for Catch & Release Fishing (video) · Ethical Catch and Release Fishing (video)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 6b explained

What catch and release means and why it matters

How to release a fish safely to the water

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

7. Obtain and review the regulations affecting game fishing where you live. Explain why they were adopted and what is accomplished by following them.

Scouting America resources: Fishing Licenses, Rules, Regulations (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 7 explained

Where I got the regulations _____ Date reviewed _____

Game fishing regulations where I live

Regulation	Why it was adopted	What following it accomplishes

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

8. Explain what good outdoor sportsmanlike behavior is and how it relates to anglers. Tell how the Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code relate to a fishing sports enthusiast, including the aspects of littering, trespassing, courteous behavior, and obeying fishing regulations.

Scouting America resources: Understanding Basic Fishing Rules and Etiquette (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 8 explained

Good outdoor sportsmanlike behavior and how it relates to anglers

Leave No Trace and the Outdoor Code for anglers

Aspect	How they relate to a fishing enthusiast
littering	
trespassing	
courteous behavior	
obeying fishing regulations	

Requirement 8 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

9. Catch one fish and identify it.

Scouting America resources: Fish Identification Apps (app) · FishBase Identification (website)
How to Identify Common Freshwater Fish (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 9 explained

Date _____ Where _____ Kind of fish _____

How I identified it

Requirement 9 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

10. If regulations and health concerns permit, clean and cook a fish you have caught. If you are unable to catch a fish for eating, acquire a fish, clean the fish you acquired, and cook the fish you acquired. Note: It is not required that you eat the fish.

Scouting America resources: How To Clean and Care for Your Catch (video) · How To Fillet a Fish (video)
How To Cook a Fish (video) · 5 Easy Ways To Cook Fish (video)

Date _____ Kind of fish _____ Caught or acquired _____

- ☐ Cleaned the fish
- ☐ Cooked the fish

How I cleaned and cooked it

Requirement 10 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

Counselor sign-off

Your counselor signs your blue card or approves the badge in Scoutbook, and your unit records it. This line is for your own records.

Counselor's signature _____ Date completed _____

Official Scouting America resources

Scouting America resources: Fishing merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Fishing merit badge pamphlet (free PDF)
All merit badges · **ScoutSmarts:** Fishing Merit Badge Guide, Part 1 · Fishing Merit Badge Guide, Part 2

Made by Cole at ScoutSmarts.com, an Eagle Scout who loves helping Scouts.
Spot an error or a requirement change? Tell me at scoutsmarts.com/contact.
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