

Public Health

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:

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 1 explained

(a) Explain what public health is.

Scouting America resources: What Is Public Health?? (video) · What Is Public Health? Crash Course Public Health #1 (video) Why Public Health Matters (video)

What public health is, in my own words

(b) Explain how Escherichia coli (E. coli), tetanus, AIDS, encephalitis, salmonellosis, Lyme disease, and coronavirus (COVID-19) are contracted.

Scouting America resources: Food Safety: Avoiding E. coli (video) · What Is Tetanus and How Do You Get It? (video) Salmonella (video) · 5 Tips to Prevent Tick Bites and Getting Lyme Disease (video) · How the COVID-19 Virus Is Transmitted (video)

How each one is contracted

Disease	How it is contracted
Escherichia coli (E. coli)	
tetanus	
AIDS	
encephalitis	
salmonellosis	
Lyme disease	
coronavirus (COVID-19)	

(c) Choose any four of the following diseases and explain how each one is contracted and possibly prevented: gonorrhea, West Nile virus, botulism, influenza, syphilis, hepatitis, emphysema, meningitis, herpes, or lead poisoning.

Scouting America resources: West Nile Story (West Nile Virus Prevention Rap) (video)
6 Types of Botulism: Food, Infant, Wound & More Explained! (video) · How Does the Flu Spread? (video)
Emphysema, Explained in 90 Seconds (video) · The Signs and Symptoms of Meningitis (video)
Why Lead Poisoning Is a Danger to Your Child's Health | UNICEF (video)

The four diseases I chose

Disease	How it is contracted	How it can possibly be prevented

(d) For all 10 diseases from 1(c), explain the type or form of the disease (viral, bacterial, environmental, toxin), any possible vectors for transmission, ways to help prevent exposure or the spread of infection, and available treatments.

Scouting America resources: How West Nile Virus Is Transmitted (video) · What Is Botulism? (video) · Flu Virus 101 (video)
About COPD or Emphysema (website) · Meningitis (website) · Lead Poisoning (website)

All 10 diseases from 1(c): type and vectors

Disease	Type or form	Possible vectors
gonorrhea		
West Nile virus		
botulism		
influenza		
syphilis		
hepatitis		
emphysema		
meningitis		
herpes		
lead poisoning		

All 10 diseases from 1(c): prevention and treatment

Disease	Ways to help prevent exposure or spread	Available treatments
gonorrhea		
West Nile virus		
botulism		
influenza		
syphilis		
hepatitis		

All 10 diseases from 1(c): prevention and treatment (continued)

Disease	Ways to help prevent exposure or spread	Available treatments
emphysema		
meningitis		
herpes		
lead poisoning		

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Do the following:

(a) Explain the meaning of immunization.

Scouting America resources: Vaccines 101: How Vaccines Work (video)
How mRNA Vaccines Actually Work | Inside the Vaccine (video)

What immunization means

(b) Name eight diseases against which a young child should be immunized, two diseases against which everyone should be reimmunized periodically, and one immunization everyone should receive annually.

Scouting America resources: What You Need To Know About Childhood Immunizations (podcast)
Vaccines for Children Program: 30 Years of Protecting Children (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2b explained

Eight diseases a young child should be immunized against

#	Disease
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Reimmunized periodically, and every year

When	Disease or immunization
Periodically 1	
Periodically 2	
Every year	

(c) Using the list of diseases and conditions in requirement 1(b), discuss with your counselor those which currently have no immunization available.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 2c explained

Diseases and conditions from 1(b) with no immunization available right now

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Discuss the importance of safe drinking water in terms of the spread of disease. Then, demonstrate two ways for making water safe to drink that can be used while at camp. In your demonstration, explain how dishes and utensils should be washed, dried, and kept sanitary at home and in camp.

Scouting America resources: Waterborne Diseases | Waterborne Pathogens | Public Health and Water Safety | Prevention & Control (video) · The Best Way to Filter Water While Backpacking (video) · How to Wash Dishes at Camp (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 3 explained

Why safe drinking water matters in the spread of disease

Date I demonstrated _____ Where _____

Two ways to make water safe to drink at camp

Way	Method	How I did it
1		
2		

Keeping dishes and utensils sanitary

Where	Washing	Drying	Keeping them sanitary
At home			
In camp			

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Explain what a vector is and how insects and rodents can be controlled in your home, in your community, and at camp. Tell why this is important. In your discussion, explain which vectors can be easily controlled by individuals and which ones require long-term, collective action.

Scouting America resources: WHO Vector Borne Disease Animation (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 4 explained

What a vector is

Controlling insects and rodents

Where	Insects	Rodents
In my home		
In my community		
At camp		

Why this is important

Who can control which vectors

Easily controlled by individuals	Need long-term, collective action

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. With your parent or guardian's and counselor's approval, do ONE of the following:

☐ **(a)** Visit a municipal wastewater treatment facility or a solid-waste management operation in your community.

Facility I visited _____ Date _____

(1) Describe how the facility safely treats and disposes of sewage or solid waste.

How the facility safely treats and disposes of sewage or solid waste

(2) Discuss your visit and what you learned with your counselor.

Discussed with my counselor on _____

What I learned

(3) Describe how sewage and solid waste should be disposed of under wilderness camping conditions.

Disposing of sewage and solid waste in wilderness camping

☐ **(b)** Visit a food service facility, such as a restaurant or school cafeteria.

Facility I visited _____ Date _____

(1) Observe food preparation, handling, and storage. Learn how the facility keeps food from becoming contaminated.

What I observed

Area	How the facility keeps food from becoming contaminated
Preparation	
Handling	
Storage	

(2) Find out what conditions allow microorganisms to multiply in food, what can be done to help prevent them from growing and spreading, and how to kill them.

Scouting America resources: Food Safety: Meet Bacteria (video)

Microorganisms in food

Question	What I found out
Conditions that let them multiply	
How to help prevent growth and spread	
How to kill them	

(3) Discuss the importance of using a thermometer to check food temperatures.

Scouting America resources: The Importance of Cooking to a Safe Internal Temperature and How To Use a Food Thermometer (video)

Why using a thermometer to check food temperatures matters

(4) Discuss your visit and what you learned with your counselor.

Discussed with my counselor on

What I learned

Requirement 5 completed on counselor initials

6. Do the following:

(a) Describe the health dangers from air, water, and noise pollution.

Scouting America resources: Breathe Life—How Air Pollution Impacts Your Body (video)
8 Effects of Water Pollution on Our Health (video) · Noise Pollution Is Much Worse for You Than You Think (video)

Pollution and health

Pollution	Health dangers
Air pollution	
Water pollution	
Noise pollution	

(b) Describe health dangers from tobacco use and alcohol and drug abuse.

Scouting America resources: Teen Substance Use & Abuse (Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping, Marijuana, and More) (video)
Electronic Cigarettes and Vaping (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6b explained

Tobacco, alcohol and drugs

Substance	Health dangers
Tobacco use	
Alcohol abuse	
Drug abuse	

(c) Describe the health dangers from abusing illegal and prescription drugs.

Scouting America resources: Drug Abuse, Causes, Signs and Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment (video)

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 6c explained

Abusing drugs

Kind of drug	Health dangers
Illegal drugs	
Prescription drugs	

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

7. With your parent or guardian's and counselor's approval, do the following:

(a) Do ONE of the following:

☐ **(1)** Visit your city, county, state, or federal public health agency.

Scouting America resources: Find Your Health Department (website)

Agency I visited _____ Date _____

☐ **(2)** Familiarize yourself with your city, county, state, or a federal health agency's website.

Agency website _____ Date _____

(b) After completing either 7(a)(1) or 7(a)(2), do ALL of the following:

(1) Compare the four leading causes of mortality (death) in your community for any of the past five years with the four leading causes of disease in your community. Explain how the public health agency you visited is trying to reduce the mortality and morbidity rates of these leading causes of illness and death.

Scouting America resources: National Vital Statistics System (website)

Year I looked at _____ Where I found the data _____

Leading causes in my community

Rank	Leading cause of death	Leading cause of disease
1		
2		
3		
4		

How I compared them, and how the agency is trying to reduce these rates

(2) Explain the role of your health agency as it relates to the outbreak of diseases.

Scouting America resources: How Does Public Health Tackle Outbreaks? (video)

My health agency's role in disease outbreaks

(3) Discuss the kinds of public assistance the agency is able to provide in case of disasters such as floods, storms, tornadoes, earthquakes, and other acts of destruction. Your discussion can include the cleanup necessary after the disaster.

Scouting America resources: FEMA's Role in Disaster Relief (video)

Public assistance the agency can provide in disasters, including cleanup

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

8. Pick a profession in the public health sector that interests you. Find out the education, training, and experience required to work in this profession. Discuss what you learn with your counselor.

Scouting America resources: Career in Public Health| Everything You Need to Know Public Health Careers| Healthcare Management (video) · Public Health Careers at the CDC (video) · Why Study Public Health? | College Majors | College Degrees (video)

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 8 explained

Profession I picked _____ Discussed on _____

What it takes

Requirement	What I found out
Education	
Training	
Experience	

What I learned to discuss with my counselor

Requirement 8 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: Public Health merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Public Health merit badge pamphlet (free PDF) All merit badges · **ScoutSmarts:** Public Health Merit Badge Guide, Part 1 · Public Health 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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