

Wilderness Survival

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. Hazards and First Aid. Do the following:

(a) Show or explain first aid for, and prevention of, injuries and conditions that could occur in backcountry settings, including:

(1) Dehydration
Scouting America resources: Dehydration: Hiking in the Desert (video) · Symptoms, and Treatment of Dehydration (website)

(2) Heatstroke
Scouting America resources: Diagnosis and Treatment of Heat Stroke (video)

(3) Hypothermia
Scouting America resources: Recognize the "Umbles" and Avoid Hypothermia (video) · Hypothermia (video)
C.O.L.D. Guidelines for Staying Warm (website)

(4) Shock
Scouting America resources: Shock (video) · Shock and Bleeding (video)

(5) Blisters
Scouting America resources: How to Prevent and Treat Blisters (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1a5 explained

(6) Eye injuries
Scouting America resources: 5 Ways To Safely Remove Something Stuck In Your Eye (video)

(7) Ankle and knee sprains
Scouting America resources: First Aid for Ankle Sprains (video) · Knee Sprains (website)

(8) Bug bites of chiggers, ticks, mosquitoes, and biting gnats
Scouting America resources: Chiggers 101 (video) · Preventng and Treating Tick Bites (website)
Preventing and Treating Mosquito Bites (website) · Biting Gnats (video)

(9) Bee stings
Scouting America resources: How to Treat a Bee Sting (video)

(10) Bites of spiders
Scouting America resources: Black Widow and Brown Recluse Spider Bites (video)
Black Widow vs. Brown Recluse Spider Bites (video)

(11) Sting of a scorpion
Scouting America resources: Scorpion Stings—Symptoms and Causes (website)

(12) Bite of a wild mammal
Scouting America resources: Treatment of Animal and Human Bites (video)

(13) Bite of a venomous snake

Scouting America resources: Venomous Snake Bites (website)

First aid and prevention in the backcountry

Injury or condition	How to prevent it	First aid
Dehydration		
Heatstroke		
Hypothermia		
Shock		
Blisters		
Eye injuries		
Ankle and knee sprains		
Bug bites of chiggers, ticks, mosquitoes, and biting gnats		
Bee stings		
Bites of spiders		
Sting of a scorpion		
Bite of a wild mammal		
Bite of a venomous snake		

More room for my first aid and prevention notes

(b) Explain how the Scout Basic Essentials address hazards of survival situations and are basic to a survival kit.

Scouting America resources: The 10 Scout Basic Outdoor Essentials (website) · Checklist for a Wilderness Survival Kit (PDF)

The Scout Basic Essentials

Item	Survival hazard it helps with, and why it belongs in a survival kit

(c) Explain how a trip plan could help prevent a wilderness survival situation.

Scouting America resources: How to Plan an Adventure | Plan a Camping Trip (video) · Importance of a Float Plan (website)

How a trip plan could help prevent a wilderness survival situation

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Priorities for Survival. Explain the importance of each of the seven priorities of survival in a wilderness location.

Scouting America resources: Seven Priorities of Survival (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2 explained

The seven priorities of survival

Priority	Why it is important

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Avoiding Panic. Describe ways to avoid panic and to maintain a high level of morale when lost, and explain why this is important.

Scouting America resources: Lost? Stop Panic & Think Clearly. (video)
Box Breathing | The Breathing Exercise Used By Navy SEALs (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 3 explained

Ways I could avoid panic and keep my morale high when lost

Why this is important

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. First Aid Kits. Put together a personal first aid kit and a personal survival kit. Show how items in the kits are used.

Scouting America resources: Personal Family Troop First Aid Kit Checklist (PDF) · First Aid Kit Checklists (website)
Scout Basic Essentials for Wilderness Survival (website) · Survival Kit List (PDF)

My personal first aid kit

Item	How it is used

My personal survival kit

Item	How it is used

Kits shown to _____ Date _____

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Shelter. Do the following:

(a) Describe the steps you would take to survive in the following exposure conditions:

(1) Cold and snowy

Scouting America resources: Cold Weather Survival Skills (video) · Winter Survival Skills (website)

Steps I would take

(2) Wet

Scouting America resources: Building Fire in the Rain (video) · Staying Warm and Dry in Wind and Rain (video) Camping in the Rain (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 5a2 explained

Steps I would take

(3) Hot and dry

Scouting America resources: 10 Desert Survival Tips (video)

Steps I would take

(4) Windy

Scouting America resources: Danger of Wind Chill (video) · Wind Chill Safety: 5 Tips to Prevent Frostbite (video)

Steps I would take

(5) At or on the water

Scouting America resources: What to do if Your Boat Capsizes (website)

Steps I would take

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(b) Show that you know the proper clothing to wear while in the outdoors during extremely hot and cold weather and during wet conditions.

Scouting America resources: Packing Lists for Hot and Cold Weather Camping (website)

Proper clothing for the outdoors

Conditions	What I would wear, and why
Extremely hot weather	
Extremely cold weather	
Wet conditions	

Shown to _____ Date _____

(c) Explain how to protect yourself from bears and raccoons.

Scouting America resources: Preventing and Managing Bear Encounters (video) · Keeping Raccoons Away from your Campsite (video)

Animal	How to protect myself
Bears	
Raccoons	

(d) Describe how to build or find survival shelters in a forest or in snow.

Scouting America resources: Tree Well Shelter (video) · A Quick Shelter under a Tree (video)

Survival shelters in a forest: how to build or find one

Survival shelters in snow: how to build or find one

(e) Improvise a natural shelter. For the purpose of this demonstration, use techniques that have little negative impact on the environment. Spend a night in your shelter.

Scouting America resources: How to Build a Survival Shelter (video)

Night I spent in it _____ Where _____ Type of shelter _____

How I built it with little negative impact on the environment

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. Fire Building. Using three different methods (other than matches), build and light three fires.

Scouting America resources: 4 Emergency Fire Starters (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6 explained

My three fires

Method I used (not matches)	Date	Where	How it went
Fire 1			
Fire 2			
Fire 3			

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

7. Signaling. Do the following:

(a) Explain and show how lost or stranded Scouts could send signals to attract the attention of ground, airborne, or water search teams.

Scouting America resources: How To Signal for Ground Rescue (video) · Master the Art of Wilderness Rescue Signals (video) Distress Signals for Water Emergencies (video)

Signals to attract search teams

Search team	Signals that could attract their attention
Ground	
Airborne	
Water	

Shown to _____ Date _____

(b) Demonstrate how to use a signal mirror.

Scouting America resources: How to Use a Signal Mirror (video)

Signal mirror demonstrated to _____ Date _____

(c) Describe from memory five ground-to-air signals and tell what they mean.

Five ground-to-air signals

Signal (draw it)	What it means

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

8. Water. Demonstrate three ways to treat water found in the outdoors to prepare it for drinking.

Scouting America resources: Purifying Water (video) · Melting Snow for Water (website)

Three ways I treated water

Method	How I did it	Date

Requirement 8 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

9. Food. Explain why it usually is not wise to eat wild plants or wildlife in a wilderness survival situation.

Why it usually is not wise to eat wild plants or wildlife when trying to survive

Requirement 9 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

10. Careers. Do ONE of the following:

☐ **(a)** Explore careers related to this merit badge. Research one career to learn about the training and education needed, costs, job prospects, salary, job duties, and career advancement. With permission of your parent or guardian, your research methods may include an internet or library search, an interview with a professional in the field, or a visit to a location where people in this career work. Discuss with your counselor both your findings and what about this profession might make it an interesting career.

Scouting America resources: Wilderness Jobs (website) · Unusual Careers in the Wilderness (video)

Careers I explored

Career	What the job involves

The one I researched _____ How I researched it _____

What I learned about it

Topic	What I found
Training and education needed	
Costs	
Job prospects	
Salary	
Job duties	
Career advancement	

What might make it an interesting career for me

☐ **(b)** Explore how you could use knowledge and skills from the Wilderness Survival merit badge to pursue a hobby or to serve as volunteer. Research any training needed, expenses, and organizations that promote or support it. Discuss with your counselor what short-term and long-term goals you might have if you pursue this.

Scouting America resources: Ultralight Backpacking (website)

Hobby or volunteer role I explored

Topic	What I found
Training needed	
Expenses	
Organizations that promote or support it	

Goals	If I pursued this
Short-term	
Long-term	

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: Wilderness Survival merit badge page (requirements and resources)
Wilderness Survival merit badge pamphlet (free PDF) · All merit badges · **ScoutSmarts:** Wilderness Survival Merit Badge Guide

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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