

Rank Advancement Changes due to COVID-19

Q: What changes have been made to rank advancement/camping requirements given the need to maintain social distancing during this time?

We have implemented temporary changes to allow Scouts to complete rank requirements by video conferencing through December 31, 2020. This deadline will be re-evaluated as needed.

The goal when using video conferencing must be to preserve the ideals and intent of each requirement as best as possible. Scoutmasters or their designee(s) should remain mindful of the Methods of Scouting, such as the Patrol Method, before implementing the modified requirements listed below. Some advancement activities can be completed by video conferencing but not all. For example, virtual visits to a city council meeting, national historic landmarks, museums, and art galleries may be acceptable, but swimming, rifle shooting, and motorboating merit badges cannot be completed virtually. Even when using video conferencing, all virtual campouts and activities should consist of as many elements found on a normal outdoor campout or activity as possible. The most significant difference is that patrol or troop members are not all in the same location. All existing youth protection policies and digital safety guidelines must be followed.

Tenderfoot rank requirements

- 1b. – Virtual patrol or troop campouts via video conferencing will be permitted.
- 2a. – During the same day as your virtual patrol or troop campout, assist in preparing one meal with the help of those with whom you live. Tell your patrol or troop why it was important for each person to share in meal preparation and cleanup.
- 2b. – During the same day as your virtual campout, demonstrate the appropriate method of safely cleaning items used to prepare, serve and eat a meal.
- 5a. – Explain the importance of the buddy system as it relates to your personal safety on outings and in your neighborhood. Verbally commit to following the buddy system on your next troop or patrol outing.
- 7a. – Tell how to display, raise, lower, and fold the U.S. flag.

Second Class rank requirements:

- 1a & 1c. – Virtual patrol or troop activities via video conferencing will be permitted.
- 3b. – Using a compass and map together, **plan** a 5-mile hike approved by your adult leader.
- 4. – Evidence of wild animals can be demonstrated with information or photos of your local area found online.
- 5c. – May be completed virtually via video conferencing on dry land.
- 7c. – Learn about the dangers of using drugs, alcohol and tobacco and other practices that could be harmful to your health. Discuss what you learned with your family and explain the dangers of substance addictions. Report to your Scoutmaster or other adult leader in your troop about which parts of the Scout Oath and Scout Law relate to what you learned.
- 8a. – May be completed virtually using video conferencing.
- 8d. – May be completed by comparing costs at three (3) online sites or locations.

First Class rank requirements:

- 1a – Virtual patrol or troop activities via video conferencing will be permitted.

- 2e. – On the same day as your virtual campout, serve as the cook. Supervise your assistant(s) in using a stove or building a cooking fire. Prepare the breakfast, lunch, and dinner planned in First Class requirement 2a. Supervise the cleanup.
- 4a. – By drawing, computer software, or other virtual methods, plan an orienteering course that would cover at least one mile. Explain why measuring the height and/or width of designated items (tree, tower, canyon, ditch, etc.) is helpful. Explain how you would complete your course using a real map and compass.
- 4b. – Scouts do not need to follow their route.
- 5a. – Evidence of native plants can be demonstrated with information or photos of your local area found online.
- 6e. – May be completed on dry land.
- 9a. – Visit may take place virtually or by phone.
- 9c. – Outings can include past or future plans.
- 10. – Invite the potential new member to a **virtual meeting or future activity using video conferencing.**

◆**Q: Will virtual camping count toward Order of the Arrow nights camping?**

Virtual camping (i.e., backyard or solo camping) may be counted toward the required nights of camping for OA election eligibility if all the following stipulations are met:

- To be counted, all virtual camping nights should be a direct result of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and be part of a BSA unit-organized unit camping event (i.e., multiple members of the unit are involved and camping simultaneously at remote locations).
- Some form of unit-organized communications should occur either during or immediately following the event.
- All existing youth protection policies and digital safety guidelines must be followed.
- No more than 3 nights of virtual camping are to be credited in any month in which government- or council-imposed COVID-19 restrictions are in place.

This change is in effect until further notice. Please see [https://oa-](https://oa-bsa.org/coronavirus/temporary-camping-night-policy-due-covid-19)

[bsa.org/coronavirus/temporary-camping-night-policy-due-covid-19](https://oa-bsa.org/coronavirus/temporary-camping-night-policy-due-covid-19) for further details.

Units that have already held an election between March 1, 2020 and April 30, 2020 are authorized to hold one additional election for any individuals who were ineligible at the time of the election due to the camping requirement, but would have been considered eligible at the time if this temporary policy had then been in effect. This second election must be completed no later than July 1, 2020. Those who were previously considered for election in the first election may not be reconsidered on this second ballot (i.e., no one can be considered for election more than once in a year).