



Boy Scouts of America

JPL Troop 509

Est. 1952

La Cañada Flintridge, CA

jpltroop509.org



Scoutmaster Conferences

A scout is eligible for a scoutmaster conference after he has completed all the requirements for a rank. After passing the scoutmaster conference, the scout qualifies for a board of review.

There are seven ranks in scouting and a scoutmaster conference is required for every rank.

Scout. The first scoutmaster conference is for the entry rank of Scout, and checks to see that the boy is ready to join scouting by knowing and understanding the aims and ideals of scouting as expressed in the oath, law, motto, slogan, outdoor code, uniform and insignia.

Tenderfoot, Second Class & First Class. The scoutmaster conference for the next three ranks - Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class - checks to see that the scout is gaining proficiency at outdoor skills, self-sufficiency and citizenship. Because the scout has been tested by his upper rank peers it is important to check his knowledge, skills and confidence, to ensure that he is ready to demonstrate his competence of the rank requirements before a board of review.

Star, Life & Eagle. The scoutmaster conference for the upper three ranks - Star, Life and Eagle - checks to see that the Scout has earned the required merit badges, worked the minimum required hours on service projects approved by the scoutmaster, and provided leadership that helped other scouts advance. The overall purpose of this scoutmaster conference is to verify that the scout has fulfilled all of the requirements for the rank and is competent at the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are defined in those requirements.

Note that all rank requirements must be signed off by someone with the authority to approve it. The rank requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class or First Class must be approved and signed off by a scout who is Star, Life or Eagle rank, and that scout cannot be his patrol leader.

In our troop the mechanics of a scoutmaster conference are:

- The scout requests a scoutmaster conference in advance.
- The scout comes in uniform with a filled out Scoutmaster Conference - Board of Review form and his Scout Handbook.
- The scout is asked to recite the scout oath, law, motto, slogan and outdoor code.
- The scout is asked what he did that week that demonstrates he is living the scout oath and law in his daily life.
- The scout is asked how active he has been in the troop and in his patrol.
- The scout presents his Handbook showing he has completed all the requirements.
- The scout is asked about the merit badges he has earned since the last scoutmaster

conference.

- The scout is asked to describe his work and hours on community service projects (if applicable).
- The scout is asked how he has served actively in a position of responsibility (if applicable).
- They discuss what the scout needs to do after passing the board of review, and they develop a plan for completing the requirements for the next rank.
- If the scout passes, the scoutmaster signs the Scout Handbook and the Scoutmaster Conference – Board of Review form and returns them to the scout.

A scoutmaster conference can be brief, or quite long, depending on how well the scout is prepared, and how he is doing in the troop.

Serving Actively in a Position of Responsibility

It is up to the scoutmaster to determine if the scout has served actively and fulfilled the duties for his position of responsibility. Boy Scouts does not prescribe measures for this, but our troop expects a scout to participate in at least two troop meetings and/or outings a month on average to be considered active, and to serve actively by performing his duties at least as many times as the minimum number months for his rank. For example, a troop guide who is First Class should serve on at least four boards consistent with the minimum four months to be at First Class rank. A troop instructor who is Star should lead at least six advancement sessions consistent with the minimum six months to be at Star rank. For a patrol leader to fulfill his duties he must not only select and train an assistant patrol leader, but must also help his patrol members advance before he is eligible to pass a scoutmaster conference.

These expectations should have been discussed with and understood by the scout at his prior scoutmaster conferences as part of goal setting for the next rank. Some scouts have legitimate reasons for not participating in all activities and this should be taken into account. But others don't take their responsibility seriously enough, or simply haven't yet realized their behavior should exemplify the words in the scout oath and law. Consider these extreme cases:

What about a First Class scout who is a patrol leader and during his first four months he frequently shows up late or not at all, doesn't call his patrol members or sit with them at troop meetings, doesn't appoint and train an assistant patrol leader, doesn't hold patrol meetings or do much to help scouts in his patrol advance, nor provide leadership on outings. When four months is up and he asks for a scoutmaster conference does he pass?

What about a Star scout who is a troop guide or instructor and during his first six months is often late or absent, has led only led advancement groups, or served on only two boards of review, and is not really doing much to help other scouts advance. At troop meetings he is not helpful, is often disruptive, doesn't behave as described in the scout oath and law, is not making a positive impact on meeting, and seldom participates and/or doesn't help run outings. When six months is up and he asks for a scoutmaster conference does he pass? Is he ready for Life rank? Is he ready to plan, organize and lead an Eagle Scout leadership service project?