

## Changes in the way Scouts earn Eagle Palms beginning 1 August, 2017

**Overview:** A new Eagle Scout can instantly receive, alongside his Eagle medal, all Eagle Palms he has earned for merit badges completed before he became an Eagle Scout. These Palms recognize additional merit badges earned before completing the Eagle board of review. Previously, an Eagle Scout needed to wait three months between each Palm — even if he earned the extra merit badges before becoming an Eagle. This meant that, under the old rules, a young man who became an Eagle Scout at 17 years and 10 months, was mathematically unable to earn any Eagle Palms.

**Example:** Glenn, a 16-year-old Life Scout, has 36 merit badges at the time of his Eagle Scout board of review — 15 more than required. Previously, he would've needed to wait three months after his Eagle board of review to receive his Bronze Palm, another three months for his Gold Palm and another three for his Silver Palm. Under the new rules, he can get that Silver Palm (representing 15 additional merit badges) along with his Eagle medal at his Eagle Scout court of honor. No wait required.

1. **The three-month tenure requirement has been expanded** to allow active participation in any BSA program — not just the troop and patrol.
  - This recognizes that as some Scouts get older, their Scouting participation shifts to the Order of the Arrow, summer camp staff or elsewhere
2. **The leadership requirement has been broadened** to include “accepting responsibility” as well as “demonstrating leadership.”
3. **The Eagle Palm board of review has been eliminated.**
  - Eagle Palms are not ranks, so the Eagle Palm board of review was seen as an unnecessary step. A unit leader conference is deemed to be sufficient and may be conducted at any time during the tenure requirement.

## Eagle Palms: the official requirements, annotated

Here are those same requirements annotated.

- The new requirements are in **green**. Remember, these take effect Aug. 1, 2017.
- The old requirements are in **red**.
- Notes in **orange** explain why each change was made. The text comes from the National Boy Scouting Subcommittee.

After successfully completing your Eagle Scout board of review and being validated as an Eagle Scout by the National Service Center, you will be entitled to receive an Eagle Palm for each additional 5 merit badges you have completed before your Eagle Scout board of review. For these Palms only, it will not be necessary for you to complete any of the requirements stated below.

By implementing this proposal, a Scout can be recognized with an Eagle Palm(s) for the extra work he has put into earning merit badges and acquiring additional education prior to earning the rank of Eagle Scout regardless of his age at the time he earns the rank of Eagle Scout. If the Eagle Scout has sufficient time remaining before his 18th birthday, he can then continue to earn additional Eagle Palms by completing the following proposed requirements.

After becoming an Eagle Scout, you may earn additional Palms by completing the following requirements.

1. Be active in the Boy Scouts of America for at least three months after becoming an Eagle Scout or after the last Palm was earned.

1. Be active in your troop and patrol for at least three months after becoming an Eagle Scout or after award of last Palm

Requirement 1 has been changed to include being active in the “Boy Scouts of America” instead of just “troop and patrol.” This allows a Scout to receive active participation time credit for programs such as the OA, Venturing, serving on camp staff, NYLT and NAYLE staff etc. In addition, participation in positive non-Scouting activities can be given consideration, as explained in topic 4.2.3.1 of the Guide to Advancement. This significantly broadens the opportunity for Scouts to stay involved in Scouting or other character-building activities and receive consideration toward earning additional Palms after earning the rank of Eagle Scout.

2. Since earning the Eagle Scout rank or your last Eagle Palm, demonstrate Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Tell how you have done your duty to God and how you have lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law in your everyday life.

Requirement 2 is unchanged.

3. Continue to set a satisfactory example of accepting responsibility or demonstrating leadership ability.

3. Make a satisfactory effort to develop and demonstrate leadership ability.

Requirement 3 has been updated to include accepting responsibility as well as demonstrating leadership ability. This is not as restrictive as the current requirement, which focuses only on leadership. It is reasonable to make this change because Scouts can achieve Eagle Scout rank by serving in a position of responsibility rather than just serving in a leadership position. Accepting responsibility or demonstrating leadership should be sufficient. If a young man demonstrates leadership, we can assume that at some point he developed it.

4. Earn five additional merit badges beyond those required for Eagle or last Palm.

Requirement 4 is unchanged.

5. While an Eagle Scout, participate in a Scoutmaster conference.

Requirement 5 is unchanged, expect for the addition of this footnote: For Varsity Scouts working on Boy Scout requirements replace “Scoutmaster” with “Varsity Scout Coach.” For Venturers working on Boy Scout requirements replace “Scoutmaster” with “crew Advisor.” For Sea Scouts working on Boy Scout requirements replace “Scoutmaster” with “Skipper.”

*6. There isn't a No. 6 under the new requirements.*

**6. Successfully complete your board of review for the Eagle Palm.**

Requirement 6 has been eliminated. A Palm is an award to recognize achievement beyond the rank of Eagle Scout. It is not a rank itself, so it is not necessary to have a board of review. It also generates confusion, becomes a barrier to recognition because delays can result in a Scout being short of time to earn another Palm, and is one more duty for a unit advancement committee which should be devoting more attention to building advancement throughout the unit. These are Eagle Scouts; they've already reached the pinnacle. They represent youth with whom we have most likely already achieved our aims. Approval of the unit leader is sufficient.

**Q:** Can a Scout who completed his Eagle Scout board of review before Aug. 1 go back and receive Palms for merit badges he has already completed?

**A:** No, the change to allow awarding Palms as described above is not retroactive. If the Scout still has eligibility remaining, he may continue to earn Palms by completing the new requirements.

**Q:** Other than having completed at least five additional merit badges before his Eagle board of review, does a Scout have to complete any additional requirements for a Palm to be awarded immediately after he is validated as an Eagle Scout?

**A:** No, there are no additional requirements to complete if a Scout is to receive Eagle Palms based on the merit badges he earned before his Eagle Scout Board of Review.

**Q:** How does the Scout apply to obtain any Palms he might be entitled to receive?

**A:** Eagle Palms may be reported by the unit leader submitting an Advancement Report No. 34403, making the appropriate entry via Internet Advancement, or via Scoutbook once the option is available. The Eagle Scout Palm Application, form # 58-709, was previously discontinued since it is not necessary for Eagle Palms to be processed or approved at the council level.

**Q:** Why was “... be active in your troop and patrol” replaced with “... be active in the Boy Scouts of America...”?

**A:** This requirement was broadened to recognize that Eagle Scouts have many positive character-building activities that they can participate in both in and out of Scouting. Those

activities should be considered when reviewing this requirement. See *Guide to Advancement* topic 4.2.3.1 “Active Participation” for an in-depth explanation of active participation.

**A:** A Scout can meet this requirement by accepting responsibility or demonstrating leadership in many ways in or out of Scouting. For example, he could perform a Scoutmaster-assigned project or be an active leader in district or council activities, serve as a lodge officer in the Order of the Arrow, or even serve on camp staff. A Scout could also meet this requirement by accepting responsibility or serving in a leadership position on their sports team, as a student council officer, accepting responsibilities in other youth or church organizations, or in a myriad of other positive activities outside of Scouting.

**Q:** Four months before his 18th birthday a Scout successfully completed his Eagle board of review with a total of only 21 merit badges although he had numerous partials he was working on. After his board of review he completed 10 additional merit badges. Can he receive a Bronze and a Gold Palm at the end of the three months?

**A:** After the Eagle board of review, the Scout must meet all the requirements, including three months tenure between each Palm. In this case he is only eligible to receive a Bronze Palm.

**Q:** If a Scout who has earned 25 merit badges has passed his 18th birthday but has not yet had his Eagle Scout board of review, can he complete one more merit badge before his board of review to receive a Palm.

**A:** All merit badge work must be completed before the Scout’s 18th birthday.

**Q:** Why was the board of review requirement for Eagle Palms eliminated?

**A:** Eagle Palms are not a rank and thus don’t need a formal board of review. Also, in some cases, scheduling boards of review had become a barrier to earning additional Eagle Palms. The Scoutmaster’s conference is deemed sufficient since it can be conducted anytime during the three-month tenure period.

### **Proper Wearing of Eagle Palms:**

There are three options:

1. On the Eagle Scout square knot, which is worn by adult Scouters.
2. Attached to the ribbon of the Eagle Scout medal, which is worn on special occasions by youth and adults.
3. On the Eagle Scout rank emblem (patch), which is sewn on the youth field uniform.