



## **May 2, 2020 UPDATE** **Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update**

With both Alabama and Florida entering phase one of reopening, we still want to remind units to continue following your state's, counties', and CDC guidelines to large group meetings, including (but not limited to, depending on where you live):

- Keeping gatherings under 10 people
- Follow all social distancing guidelines
- Follow your charter organizations guidelines on meetings
- If you are sick, stay at home

Spanish Trail Scout Reservation (STSR) will remain close until Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. We will reevaluate the current situation at that time and will make a decision on when camp will be open and what guidelines will be put in place to use camp.

## **May 1, 2020 UPDATE** **Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update**

### **Scout Office and National Scout Shop Update**

Under the new PHASE ONE plan of re-opening Florida, and still a concern for the safety of our members, families, and staff, the Scout Service Center and Scout Shop will remain closed to visitors until Friday May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Staff is still working and available through cell phone or email. Please reach out to us if you need anything related to scouting. We will continue to provide service as best as possible. We are still processing mail daily and there is a drop container at the front door of the office that we are clearing daily as well. If you need to drop off something you can place it there for afternoon pick up.

The Boy Scout National Scout Shop will remain closed until at least May 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **National Camp-in**

Don't forget about the National Camp-in tomorrow, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, starting at 9:00am Central. For more information, schedule of events, and to register go to

<https://www.scouting.org/campin/>

Gulf Coast Council, BSA  
9440 University Pkwy  
Pensacola, FL 32514

<http://www.gulfcoastcouncil.org>

### **Gulf Coast Council's Program Update**

- Fam Camp scheduled for May 8-10 has been cancelled

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- Wilderness First Aid and CPR are still scheduled for May 8-10. We will be notified the people who are registered for this event if there are any changes.
- We will be hosting a Virtual Webelosree on Saturday, May 16. For more information and to register go to <http://www.gulfcoastcouncil.org/event/2671282>
- Yustaga Lodge's Spring Fellowship has been rescheduled tentatively for May 16-17. OA members can register at <http://www.gulfcoastcouncil.org/2733>
- We are still assessing summer camp, resident camp, and day camp programs. We will be making announcement shortly

### **National OA Update**

#### **Temporary Camping Night Policy Due to COVID-19**

In light of the extended period of camping restrictions attributable to COVID-19, the following temporary modification is being made to the camping requirements for OA eligibility:

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 should 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 September 1, 2020

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## April 16, 2020 UPDATE Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update

### Program Updates-

- Scout Executive Spencer Page did a Facebook live presentation yesterday. If you did not have chance to view it live, you can view it at <https://www.facebook.com/GulfCoastCouncilBSA/>
- The Gulf Coast Council has started the 4 Point Challenge. An opportunity for scouts to have some fun and earn a special patch during these times. You can find more information and the requirements on the council Facebook page or the website at [www.gulfcoastcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcoastcouncil.org)
- Webelosree scheduled for May 15-16, will become a virtual event on May 16. Please look for more information to be posted shortly on the council website at [www.gulfcoastcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcoastcouncil.org)
- **As of today, there are no other changes to programs scheduled in the Gulf Coast Council.**
- There has been one clarification on counting nights of camping and the Order of the Arrow from the FAQ we sent out on April 13.  
**Q: Will virtual camping count toward Order of the Arrow nights camping?** No, virtual camping will not count toward the 15 nights camping required for membership in the Order of the Arrow.

As Scouts temporarily moves to virtual and online platforms, we offer the following reminders to help keep kids safe. The below guidance applies to all online Scouting activities and meetings.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Follow all youth protection policies.**
  - All youth protection policies still apply in an online environment. Ensure you always have two-deep leadership for online activities and meetings. Our ban on one-on-one contact between an adult leader and youth applies to all interactions – whether in person, online, through a web conference, over the phone, via text, or in any other form.
  - All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents, and the BSA suggests parents take part in online activities and meetings.

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- **Use business-oriented conference platforms** instead of platforms with other primary purposes (such as gaming).
  - Examples of business-oriented conference platforms: Zoom, Skype, GoToMeeting.
  - **Examples of platforms that are not recommended: Discord, Roblox, and Twitch.**
  - Please review the terms of service, safety and privacy features, and data collection policies of any platform you use, and review the BSA Digital Privacy and Social Media Guidelines linked below.
- **Do not record online activities/meetings**
  - Call recording is subject to various legal requirements under U.S. law and the laws of individual states, some of which require all parties to a call consent to recording. Considering those potential regulatory risks, the BSA does not authorize the recording of online meetings/activities.
- **Safeguard personal information.**
  - If you collect a person's personal information online—for example, through web forms used to register people for online meetings—then you should post a notice or disclosure at the point of collection describing how you will use the information. The notice should be conspicuous and written in plain English.
  - Meeting organizers must keep such information private and not share a youth's personal information with anyone except that youth's parent or guardian or the unit leader responsible for tracking advancements. **For example, a merit badge counselor should not publicly post or otherwise show a roster with personal information of Scouts the counselor has worked with.**
- **Collecting personal information from youth under 13 is not recommended.**
  - Do not collect personal information directly from youth under 13 years of age due to the parental notice and consent requirements under the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA"). You should collect any data needed from the parent or legal guardian only.

<https://www.scouting.org/coronavirus/covid-19-faq/>

**For questions not answered by the COVID-19 FAQ, please email [Program.development@scouting.org](mailto:Program.development@scouting.org)**

[Visit the website](#)

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## **April 13, 2020 UPDATE** **Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update**

National has added to the FAQs published on April 8, 2020.  
To read the original April 8, 2020 FAQ, please page down to April 8<sup>th</sup> update

Here are the additions:

**Q: Since many overnight camping trips are being cancelled due to COVID-19, will camping requirements for rank advancement or merit badges be altered?**

No, not at this time. Hopefully, the current pandemic situation will be resolved soon, and regular camping experiences will resume. Although camping with friends or family can be a fun, it does not replace the knowledge and experience gained from working under the “Patrol Method.”

**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, detailed below, to allow Scouts to complete rank requirements, detailed below, by video conferencing through September 1, 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.

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### **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: Can merit badge requirements be adapted since some elements can't be completed as stated right now?**

The published guidelines for the methodology of the merit badge program and the role of the merit badge counselor is found in the [Guide to Advancement](#), Section 7.0.0.0. It is important to remember that leaders and merit badge counselors must not make additions or deletions to requirements. The Scout is expected to meet the requirements as stated; however, in some cases, virtual “visits” may fulfill the intent of a requirement. When the requirement’s intent cannot be reached virtually, the requirements cannot be completed, and the Scout must wait to complete that badge/requirement. Merit badge counselors signing off on requirements must determine to the best of their ability if the Scout has demonstrated the intended outcome.

All existing youth protection policies and digital safety guidelines must be followed.

**Q: Does a Scout need a hard copy of a Blue Card when working on merit badges?**

No. Since the introduction of Scoutbook, the BSA has offered Scouts two ways of recording merit badge requirement completion: The Blue Card and Scoutbook. Both remain authorized methods to record merit badge work. Scoutbook is a part of the BSA Internet Advancement system, which means that entering an advancement record in Scoutbook is the same as entering it in Internet Advancement. Anyone with a BSA member ID automatically has access to a Scoutbook account through their my.scouting account.

**April 8, 2020 UPDATE**

Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update

**Program update-** The Cub Scout STEM day scheduled for May 2nd has been postponed. We will announce a new date ASAP.





Below you will find a current FAQ from the National Council dealing with issues that have come up.

## **COVID-19 FAQs From the National Council**

### **In-Person Unit Activities**

#### **Q: Should we hold in-person Scouting meetings, outings, or activities?**

With safety in mind and based on guidance from national health officials, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is strongly advising that in-person meetings, activities, events and gatherings be suspended through the end of April. This applies to youth and adults out of an abundance of caution. Please also follow any restrictions outlined by your state and local health department or other local officials.

#### **Q: What do we do about Scouts' fundraising activities?**

The BSA is strongly advising that in-person activities be suspended through the end of April so any in-person fundraising should be postponed. If fundraising activities can be facilitated using digital methods while still adhering to applicable rules, then those activities may continue. For plans beyond that date, the BSA will continue to monitor the guidance as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves and will further update guidance accordingly.

#### **Q: What is BSA's policy on social distancing in a tenting environment when camping?**

With safety in mind and based on guidance from national health officials, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is strongly advising that in-person meetings, activities, events and gatherings be suspended through the end of April. This applies to youth and adults out of an abundance of caution. Please also follow any restrictions outlined by your state and local health department or other state and local authorities.

Beyond this timeframe, tent buddies should not participate if ill. There is no formal policy on social distancing in tents, just as there is no prohibition on tenting alone if logistics can accommodate that request.

#### **Q: If council and district events are cancelled, how should units decide whether to cancel or postpone their own events?**

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With safety in mind and based on guidance from national health officials, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is strongly advising that in-person meetings, activities, events and gatherings suspended through the end of April. If you council has cancelled events based upon local restrictions, then units should follow that guidance.

**Q: What are the refund policies if I have already paid for an event that has been cancelled?**

Event organizers typically set refund or cancellation policies. Please reach out directly to those organizers. In the case of attendance at a national high adventure base, contact them directly about your crew.

**Camping this Summer**

**Q: What if I cannot get a new Part C, pre-placement exam because my healthcare provider is not taking well care exams now?**

We are evaluating all options while being mindful of those who have valid exams as well as those new members and adults who may have never completed a Part C exam, state and local authority requirements, and the special review required by high adventure programs. In the interim, we recommend that council health supervisors, camp staff, and volunteers begin a conversation on local availability of well exams and alternatives that could be put in place.

**Q: My Wilderness First Aid Course has been cancelled; can I still go on my trek?**

Current Wilderness First Aid (WFA) certification will continue to be required for all backcountry adventures. As a reminder, a current CPR/AED certification is a pre-requisite for a WFA course.

We are working with our partners at the American Red Cross and the Emergency Care and Safety Institute to look for solutions in response to the current situation.

Note: Online-only WFA courses do not meet the WFA requirement. As we review the issue, we suggest you begin working with your council's WFA trainers to develop a plan for classes during the month of May or early June.

**Advancement**

**Q: How can advancement be tracked remotely?**

Scouting units should use Scoutbook to record and track advancement.

To track advancement remotely, parents should:





- Connect with their child's member profile via an invitation that the unit leader sends within Scoutbook. You may also connect to your youth via the Scouting app "Add a Parent connection."
- Once a connection is made, the parent should use the Scouting app, found in both the App Store and on Google Play, to stay connected with their unit.
- The Scouting app provides parents the ability to report any advancement that was completed at home.

Learn more about how to start using Scoutbook and how to connect parents to their Scouts at Scoutbook.com.

### **Advancement - Cub Scouts**

#### **Q: May parents sign off on Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements?**

Yes. Through July 31, 2020, parents and other adults in the Cub Scout's family, may sign off on Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements. We strongly encourage that parents use the Scouting App or ScoutBook to record completion of their child's requirements.

#### **Q: If my den is behind in advancement due to COVID-19, can my Cub Scout continue to work on advancement through the summer?**

Yes. Cub Scouts can continue to work on their current den's advancement through July 31, 2020. This is to provide any additional time a Cub Scout needs to complete their badge of rank; if they earn their badge of rank prior to July 31, 2020, they may advance to the next rank.

#### **Q: Can the Arrow of Light (fifth-grade dens) requirements fulfill the requirement to visit a troop or attend a troop outing to function as a patrol?**

Yes. Two things to keep in mind, the standard of completion for Cub Scout advancement is "Do Your Best," so given the circumstances, we want to look at the purpose behind the requirements. Remember that doing nothing is never doing your best.

Dens can visit a virtual troop meeting to see the patrol method and youth leadership in action. Since the den cannot attend a troop campout or outing, the idea is for the den to function as a patrol while attending the virtual troop meeting. During this time, a virtual den meeting where the den functions as a patrol can be done. Elect a patrol leader, pick a patrol name, play a virtual game together as a patrol. Plenty of opportunities to Do Your Best to meet the intention of the requirement. Remember to maintain all youth protection standards online.

### **Advancement - Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts**

#### **Q: May merit badge requirements or rank requirements be modified?**

No. All requirements must be completed as written. If meetings or activities are canceled or limited, youth should continue to work on requirements as far as possible. By





employing common sense and creative solutions, many requirements-even Scoutmaster conferences-can be fulfilled through videoconferencing or telephone calls.

**Q: Can merit badge counseling or Nova/Supernova counseling be done using digital technologies like Zoom or WebEx?**

Yes, registered merit badge counselors or Nova counselors/Supernova mentors may work with youth using digital platforms, ensuring that all youth protection measures noted in the Guide to Safe Scouting and BSA's social media guidelines are in place. In addition to youth protection, the advancement guidelines in Guide to Advancement (GTA) Section 7 are required.

**Q: Are merit badge counselors allowed to provide online instruction?**

Yes. Merit badge counselors should follow the guidelines in the Guide to Advancement 7.0.3.2 and ensure you are adhering to all youth protection requirements and online communications guidelines. It is acceptable-and sometimes preferable-for merit badges to be taught in group settings, including online instruction. We currently allow group instruction at camp and merit badge midways, fairs, clinics, or similar events. These can be efficient methods, and interactive group discussions can support learning. Gathering a group online can also be beneficial. Guest experts and speakers that assist registered and approved counselors may be more willing to speak to a larger online audience. Slide shows, skits, demonstrations, panels, and various other techniques can also be employed, but as any teacher can attest, not everyone will learn all the material. Therefore, the standards we use to verify that each Scout has fulfilled requirements must not be relaxed. Merit badge counselors must be sure that each Scout has individually gained the knowledge intended. When accomplished, counselors can easily sign off requirements via ScoutBook.

**Q: Can I connect directly with my Scouts/Venturers/Sea Scouts if I am a merit badge counselor?**

Yes. In ScoutBook, merit badge counselors can now connect directly with the Scouts they are counseling; see <https://discussions.scouting.org/t/march-23-2020-scoutbook-updates/165970> NOTE: Scouts still must get approval from their leader, according to Guide to Advancement 7.0.3.0, prior to starting work on a merit badge.

**Q: How will I know if a Scout/Venturer/Sea Scout has obtained approval from their leader to work on a merit badge?**

In the member profile, you will see if the leader has signed off with their approval.

**Q: What if my member profile shows that my merit badge counselor status has expired?**





Check with your council. Local councils may need to upload their latest list of approved merit badge counselors.

**Q: Will unit leaders know that a merit badge counselor has connected with one of their Scouts/Venturers/Sea Scouts?**

Yes. The unit Key 3 will receive an email that includes the name of the merit badge counselor, the Scout, and the name of the merit badge.

**Q: What if I have other merit badge/ScoutBook questions?**

See <https://help.scoutbook.com/knowledge-base/scoutbook-merit-badge-counselor-council-upload-faq/>

**Q: May time missed due to canceled unit meetings count toward active participation requirements?**

Yes. If youth are registered and in good standing, a disruption from COVID-19 virus can be the “noteworthy circumstance” that prevents participation. This policy has been in place for many years and is explained in GTA Topic 4.2.3.1.

**Q: May time missed due to canceled unit meetings count toward position of responsibility requirements?**

Yes. If youth are registered and unable to meet the expectations of their positions because of COVID-19 disruptions, then units may need to waive or rethink the expectations. Just as youth must not be held to unestablished expectations, they must not be held to expectations that are impossible to fulfill. See GTA Topic 4.2.3.4, “Positions of Responsibility,” with its six subtopics.

**Q: Does the National Council grant extensions of time to complete rank requirements beyond the 18th birthday for the Eagle or 21st birthday for Summit or Quartermaster?**

Yes, but only for the Eagle Scout rank as described in GTA Topic 9.0.4.0 or for Venturing Summit or Sea Scout Quartermaster as described in GTA Topic 4.3.3.0. Unit leadership must become familiar with the five tests under 9.0.4.0. The tests were designed to accommodate such obstacles as those presented by COVID-19 disruptions.

**Q: Will youth who are not yet Life Scouts be allowed to apply for an extension to earn the Eagle Scout rank?**

Extensions are considered only for Scouts who are Life rank. If, once a Scout achieves Life rank, it turns out that COVID-19 disruptions along the way have left them with insufficient time to complete Eagle requirements, then this may be cited when the time comes to submit an extension request.





**Q: May local councils grant extensions?**

Normally, that is not allowed. However, due to the current situation-effective immediately and through September 30, 2020-council Scout executives may grant extensions, or delegate authority to the Council Advancement Committee to grant extensions under the following limitations:

1. It can be established that COVID-19 disruptions were the only circumstances that delayed work on Eagle Scout/Summit/Quartermaster advancement requirements, such as the service project or merit badges. If any other causes were involved, the extension request must go to the National Council following the process outlined in the GTA.
2. Extensions shall only be granted to youth in Scouts BSA who have already achieved Life rank.
3. When the council receives a COVID-19-related request for a time extension, the council reviews the request and approves it if appropriate. A written response stating the outcome of the extension request must go to the youth. If approved, the notification must be attached to the youth's Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster rank application. For Eagle, the extension must not exceed 3 months from the youth's 18th birthday; for Summit/Quartermaster, the extension must not exceed 3 months from the youth's 21st
4. Upon turning 18, the Scout must submit a completed adult application and successfully complete YPT; their participant code will now be UP for SBSA or VP for Venturing and Sea Scouting.
5. Extension requests for more than 3 months beyond the youth's 18th/21st birthday must be sent to the National Service Center following the process outlined in the GTA.

Note: A "month" in BSA advancement is defined as a day from one month to the next. For example, March 5 to April 5.

The authority for councils to grant extensions is temporary, lasting only through Sept. 30, 2020.

**Q: If youth have already received an extension, can they request additional time due to COVID-19?**

Yes. Council Scout executives may grant extensions, or delegate authority to the Council Advancement Committee to grant extensions under the limitations listed above.

**Q: What should be done while an extension request is being considered?**





Youth should continue to work on advancement in so far as they are able-e.g., independently, or over the phone or videoconference-and at Scouting activities once they resume.

**Q: Are extensions required when an Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster board of review must be delayed?**

No. Councils may grant Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster boards of review up to six months after the youth's 18th/21st birthday. See GTA Topic 8.0.3.1, "Eagle Scout Board of Review Beyond the 18th Birthday."

See also, GTA Topic 8.0.1.6, "Boards of Review Through Videoconferencing."

**Q: Are electronic or digital signatures acceptable for rank advancement or for the Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster packets/applications?**

Yes. Electronic or digital signatures will be accepted through September 30, 2020.

**Q: How can a youth continue to work on advancement requirements if they don't have internet or high-speed internet for videoconferencing?**

Youth may take a picture of their completed activity/requirement and share the work with unit leaders. In keeping with Youth Protection Training policies, all communications from youth should be sent to at least two adults. Parents or guardians may send advancement work on behalf of their child.

**April 2, 2020 UPDATE**

Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update

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TO PURCHASE ADVANCEMENT  
MATERIALS OR PRODUCTS, PLEASE  
FOLLOW THE FOLLOWING STEPS:



1. Unit Leaders: email the Advancement report to [NDCSupply.Orders@Scouting.org](mailto:NDCSupply.Orders@Scouting.org) (Be sure to include a contact phone number for our Customer Service team to contact for payment!)

2. Customer Service will contact the Unit Leader for payment/billing and shipping info. They will also verify the Council and Advancement.

3. Advancement materials and products will be shipped once a week via FedEx to the Council's Registrar.

**March 31, 2020 UPDATE**  
Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update

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Out of abundance of caution; the Gulf Coast Council office, Scout Shop, and Spanish Trail Scout Reservation will be closed until further notice.

All face to face district and council meetings have been cancelled until further notice as well.

Units, please follow your local authorities' and your charter organization's recommendations and policies about face to face meetings.

The staff will be working remotely until the office is reopened.

If you need assistance, please contact one of the staff members at

Scout Executive, Spencer Page  
[spence.page@scouting.org](mailto:spence.page@scouting.org)  
850-207-8516

Field Director, Billy Egan  
(serving Pensacola Bay, Lake Sands, Long Leaf Pine Districts)  
[william.egan@scouting.org](mailto:william.egan@scouting.org)  
850-207-5038

District Executive, Wayne Myers  
(serving Choctaw District)  
[wayne.myers@scouting.org](mailto:wayne.myers@scouting.org)  
850-683-0330

Program Director, Jim Boksa  
[jim.boksa@scouting.org](mailto:jim.boksa@scouting.org)  
850-266-3911

**March 30, 2020 Update**  
Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update

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## SCOUTING AT HOME

To our Scouting community,

In Scouting, we always vow to help other people. Now, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, our Scouting community must do its part to slow the spread of the virus, which will save lives and avoid overwhelming our local healthcare infrastructure. Please follow all the guidelines and suggestions from your local authorities.

The safety of the Gulf Coast Council scouts, volunteers, employees and our communities are our top priority. The Gulf Coast Council supports Scouting at home, with stay-at-home activities for any Scout rank, and tips for continuing to work on advancement.

There are many opportunities for scouting to continue during this time. If you see any great ideas, please post them on the [GCC Scout Leaders and Parents Facebook page](#). Check back regularly and let your friends know about these great options for at-home fun and learning for Scouting families and non-Scouting families alike.

### **Scouting Resources:**

Here are a couple of great links

<http://svmbc.org/svmbc/activities/scouting-at-home/>

Here you will find a resource hub for parents and leaders to help support Scouting at home, with stay-at-home educational activities for any Scout rank, tips for continuing to work on advancements and kid-friendly content that connects Scouting with their daily lives.

[Bryan on Scouting Blog](#)

### **Service Opportunities**

Throughout our history, "to help other people at all times" has been a central tenet of the Boy Scouts of America. From World War I to the most recent hurricanes, Scouts have

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been there to help during difficult times. We look forward to participating in the mobilization that will take place to bring back normalcy in our communities. We are utilizing our connections to community leaders to see the needs. If you have any ideas on how we can safely serve, please contact Jim Boksa at [email](#). Obviously, the safety of our youth and leaders are paramount in our future efforts.

**March 20, 2020 Update**  
Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update

## Questions and Answers

### **Cub Scouting/Scouts BSA/Venturing/Sea Scouting Rank Advancement and the Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

The following questions regarding advancement have arisen as we deal with closures, cancellations, or other issues caused by the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Although there are difficulties and constraints, advancement can continue. Youth, parents, and leaders should work together to implement creative, common sense ways to facilitate advancement while adhering to the Guide to Safe Scouting and following the rules of Youth Protection training.

Please follow this link to the [Guide to Advancement \(GTA\)](#), which remains the primary source for information related to Scouts BSA advancement. It is referenced throughout the answers provided here.

Please send additional questions to [advancement.team@scouting.org](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org)

#### **All Scouting Programs**

**Q: How can advancement be tracked remotely?**

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A: Scouting units should use ScoutBook to record and track advancement.

To track advancement remotely, parents should:

- 1) Connect with their child's member profile via an invitation that the unit leader sends within ScoutBook.
- 2) Once a connection is made, the parent should use the Scouting app, found in both the App Store and Google Play, to stay connected with their unit.
- 3) The Scouting app provides parents the ability to report any advancement that was completed at home.

Go to <https://help.scoutbook.com> to learn more about how to start using ScoutBook and how to connect parents to their Scouts.

### **Cub Scouts**

#### **Q: May parents sign off on Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements?**

A: Yes. Through July 31, 2020, parents and other adults in the Cub Scout's family, may sign off on Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements. We strongly encourage that parents use the Scouting App or ScoutBook to record completion of their child's requirements.

#### **Q: If my den is behind in advancement due to COVID-19, can my Cub Scout continue to work on advancement through the summer?**

A: Yes. Cub Scouts can continue to work on their current den's advancement through July 31, 2020. This is to provide any additional time a Cub Scout needs to complete their badge of rank; if they earn their badge of rank prior to July 31, 2020, they may advance to the next rank.

### **Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts**

#### **Q: May merit badge requirements or rank requirements be modified?**

A: No. All requirements must be completed as written. If meetings or activities are canceled or limited, youth should continue to work on requirements as far as possible. By employing common sense and creative solutions, many requirements—even Scoutmaster conferences—can be fulfilled through videoconferencing or telephone calls.

#### **Q: Can merit badge counseling or Nova/Supernova counseling be done using digital technologies like Zoom or WebEx?**

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A: Yes, registered merit badge counselors or Nova counselors/Supernova mentors may work with youth using digital platforms, ensuring that all youth protection measures noted in the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#) and [BSA's social media guidelines](#) are in place. In addition to youth protection, the advancement guidelines in GTA Section 7 are required.

**Q: May time missed due to canceled unit meetings count toward active participation requirements?**

A: Yes. If youth are registered and in good standing, a disruption from COVID-19 virus can be the "noteworthy circumstance" that prevents participation. This policy has been in place for many years and is explained in GTA Topic 4.2.3.1.

**Q: May time missed due to canceled unit meetings count toward position of responsibility requirements?**

A: Yes. If youth are registered and unable to meet the expectations of their positions because of COVID-19 disruptions, then units may need to waive or rethink the expectations. Just as youth must not be held to *unestablished* expectations, they must not be held to expectations that are impossible to fulfill. See GTA Topic 4.2.3.4, "Positions of Responsibility," with its six subtopics.

**Q: Does the National Council grant extensions of time to complete rank requirements beyond the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday for the Eagle or 21<sup>st</sup> birthday for Summit or Quartermaster?**

A: Yes, but only for the Eagle Scout rank as described in GTA Topic 9.0.4.0 or for Venturing Summit or Sea Scout Quartermaster as described in GTA Topic 4.3.3.0. Unit leadership must become familiar with the five tests under 9.0.4.0. The tests were designed to accommodate such obstacles as those presented by COVID-19 disruptions.

**Q: Will youth who are not yet Life Scouts be allowed to apply for an extension to earn the Eagle Scout rank?**

A: Extensions are considered only for Scouts who are Life rank. If, once a Scout achieves Life rank, it turns out that COVID-19 disruptions along the way have left them with insufficient time to complete Eagle requirements, then this may be cited when the time comes to submit an extension request.

**Q: May local councils grant extensions?**





A: Normally, that is not allowed. However, due to the current situation—effective immediately and through September 30, 2020—council Scout executives may grant extensions, or delegate authority to the Council Advancement Committee to grant extensions under the following limitations:

1. It can be established that COVID-19 disruptions were the only circumstances that delayed work on Eagle Scout/Summit/Quartermaster advancement requirements, such as the service project or merit badges. If any other causes were involved, the extension request must go to the National Council following the process outlined in the GTA.
2. Extensions shall only be granted to youth in Scouts BSA who have already achieved Life rank.
3. When the council receives a COVID-19-related request for a time extension, the council reviews the request and approves it if appropriate. A written response stating the outcome of the extension request must go to the youth. If approved, the notification must be attached to the youth's Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster rank application. For Eagle, the extension must not exceed 3 months from the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; for Summit/Quartermaster, the extension must not exceed 3 months from the youth's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.
4. Upon turning 18, the Scout must submit a completed adult application and successfully complete YPT; their participant code will now be UP for SBSA or VP for Venturing and Sea Scouting.
5. Extension requests for more than 3 months beyond the youth's 18<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> birthday must be sent to the National Service Center following the process outlined in the GTA.

Note: A "month" in BSA advancement is defined as a day from one month to the next. For example, March 5 to April 5.

The authority for councils to grant extensions is temporary, lasting only through Sept. 30, 2020.

**All requests for extensions must sent in writing to Scout Executive Spencer Page at [spence.page@scouting.org](mailto:spence.page@scouting.org) by September 30, 2020**

**Q: If youth have already received an extension, can they request additional time due to COVID-19?**

A: Yes. Council Scout executives may grant extensions, or delegate authority to the Council Advancement Committee to grant extensions under the limitations listed above.

**Q: What should be done while an extension request is being considered?**

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A: Youth should continue to work on advancement in so far as they are able—e.g., independently, or over the phone or videoconference—and at Scouting activities once they resume.

**Q: Are extensions required when an Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster board of review must be delayed?**

A: No. Councils may grant Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster boards of review up to six months after the youth's 18<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> birthday. See GTA Topic 8.0.3.1, "Eagle Scout Board of Review Beyond the 18th Birthday."

See also, GTA Topic 8.0.1.6, "Boards of Review Through Videoconferencing."

**Q: Are electronic or digital signatures acceptable for rank advancement or for the Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster packets/applications?**

A: Yes. Electronic or digital signatures will be accepted through September 30, 2020.

**Q: How can a youth continue to work on advancement requirements if they don't have internet or high-speed internet for videoconferencing?**

A: Youth may take a picture of their completed activity/requirement and share the work with unit leaders. In keeping with Youth Protection Training policies, all communications from youth should be sent to at least two adults. Parents or guardians may send advancement work on behalf of their child.

March 19, 2020 UPDATE

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## Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update

### Camp Card Update

The sale will end when scheduled on May 15th so all units must close their accounts out by May 15th. Due to the current loss of time/locations to sell, any units that wish to continue selling after May 15th will be able to check out additional cards after closing out their invoice. This will be with no risk to the unit and still earning \$3.25 per card sold! If you have any questions, contact Billy Egan at [william.egan@scouting.org](mailto:william.egan@scouting.org)

### From National Council

We have approved that all Cub Scouting requirements for all ranks, including Webelos and Arrow of Light may be approved by the parent, legal guardian, or other adult family member. In addition Cub Scouts may continue to work on their badge of rank and adventures for that rank through June and July. They are not required to, we just want to provide additional time for those who may need it.

**March 18, 2020 UPDATE**

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## Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update



### To: All BSA Volunteers and Employees

To our Scouting community,

In Scouting, we vow to help other people at all times. Now, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, our Scouting community must do its part to slow the spread of the virus, which will save lives and avoid overwhelming our local healthcare infrastructure.

The safety of Scouts, volunteers, employees and our communities is our top priority.

With safety in mind and based on guidance from national health officials,

**the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is strongly advising that in-person meetings, activities, events and gatherings of 10 or more people be suspended through the end of March.** Please also follow any restrictions outlined by your state and local health department or other state and local authorities. This applies to youth and adults out of an abundance of caution.

In accordance with national guidelines, please focus on the following through the end of March:

- Avoid in-person gatherings; instead, utilize available digital and online resources, such as video conferencing, to continue Scouting meetings, projects and advancement, adhering to the current youth protection guidelines already in place for digital communications.
  - If you must meet, limit participants to fewer than 10 people and remain at least six feet apart.

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- Follow BSA blogs and social channels, as well as #ScoutingAtHome, for great examples and ideas of how to continue Scouting.
- If you or any member of your family feel sick, DO NOT go into the office or attend any gatherings. Contact your health professional to get care and notify your supervisor so they can take the appropriate measures while you focus on recuperating.

We will continue to evaluate the ongoing situation and prioritize the safety of everyone involved in Scouting – youth, families, volunteers, employees and our communities – is our number one priority.

We realize these decisions are not without their challenges, and we thank you for helping meet the needs of our communities in difficult times.

The steps we are taking reinforce the many ways – big and small – that Scouting empowers character and leadership today and for generations to come.

Yours in Scouting,

Roger C. Mosby

President and CEO

Boy Scouts of America

**March 17, 2020 UPDATE**  
Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update

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With the CDC guideline change of recommending groups of only 10 or less, the Gulf Coast Council will be making the following changes

- The Wilderness First Aid and CPR classes that were scheduled this weekend have been **POSTPONED**. If you are registered for these classes, please check your e-mail for more information.
- The Spanish Trail Scout Reservation Alumni Association Weekend has been **POSTPONED**. Alumni Association President Jacob Somers will be sending an e-mail to the association's members with more information.

### **March 16, 2020 UPDATE**

#### Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update

With the new guidelines set by the CDC, the Gulf Coast Council will be making the following changes:

- The following events have been **cancelled**
  - All roundtables in April
  - Fam Camp scheduled for April 17-19
  - BALOO Training April 18-19
- The following events have been **postponed**
  - Order of the Arrow Conclave-make-up date to be determined
  - Pensacola Bay District Camporee- make-up date to be determined (Troop 3 are not quitters, and they are still planning a great camporee)
- The Scout Office and Scout Shop will be closed March 17, 2020 to March 31, 2020 to customers. If you need to drop something off, there will be a box at the front door where you can drop it off. If you need to talk to somebody, the staff will be available by phone and/or e-mail.

Unit leaders, you need to have discussions with your unit's committee and charter organizations about continuing having meetings and events during this time period.

### **MARCH 13, 2020 UPDATE**

#### Gulf Coast Council Coronavirus Update

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### **What is the Coronavirus?**

The coronavirus is one of the family of viruses that can cause symptoms like the common cold and/or flu virus. Although the immediate health risk is low according to the Center of Disease Control (CDC), we are taking precautions.

### **What do symptoms of Coronavirus look like?**

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) can cause mild to severe respiratory symptoms such as cough, runny nose, sore throat, congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath, and fever.

We will continue to monitor the latest updates of COVID-19 with our local and state health departments, and the CDC.

**The Gulf Coast Council (GCC) will announce any cancellations of district and council events/meetings after considerations of current local school system cancellation decisions.**

### **What precautionary measures is the GCC taking at council and district events.**

1. **Adult Volunteer/Parent Choice:** Any adult/parent currently signed up for any district or council event between March 13-April 30 may request a refund if the request is received in writing (email: jim.boksa@scouting.org) **prior** to the event **only**.
2. The GCC has currently enacted the mandatory long term camp **BSA Pre-Event Medical Screening Checklist** verification for all youth and adult district/council activities.

### **BSA Pre-Event Medical Screening Checklist**

**Has the participant had any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours?**

- Fever (100.4 F or greater)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

**If the participant has fever, vomiting, OR diarrhea- HE OR SHE SHOULD STAY HOME**

**Has the participant had any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours?**

- Unexplained, extreme fatigue or muscle aches

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- Rash
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Open Sore

If the participant has any two (or more) of these symptoms- **he or she should stay home**. If the participant has one of these symptoms, discuss any limitations and restrictions and consider having him or her stay home.

Participants who become ill should not return to the activity until they are cleared by a health-care provider.

3. Several mobile wash stations are being placed in key traffic locations around events during larger district and council events.
4. Increased sanitation efforts in common areas, buildings, and dining facilities.

### **What precautionary measures are suggested for local scout units**

1. Based on meeting patterns, location, and meeting space consideration each charter partner should locally determine any potential change in regular meetings.
2. The GCC suggests units use the BSA Pre-Event Medical Screening Checklist for youth-parent activities and **prior to departing** for unit overnight campouts.

### **What can Parents do to protect their family?**

Parents should take the same precautions they would for any common cold or flu

- Family members need to wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Alcohol based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol content can work in a pinch)
- Hands should be washed before eating, after using the bathroom, and when you come inside from outdoor activities that caused hands to get dirty.
- Teach children not to touch their mouth, eyes, or noses unless they just washed their hand
- Cough and/or sneeze into your elbow and not your hands
- Distance yourself from anyone coughing or sneezing.
- Encourage healthy habits, like eating healthy diet, exercising, and getting enough sleep.
- Get the flu vaccine to help prevent the flu, which is more common and can be dangerous
- **Do not send your child to school or Scouts when they are sick.**
- If you have any symptoms of the virus, seek medical attention immediately and follow the advice of your medical professional.





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For additional information on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) from the CDC, visit this page:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

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