



Boy Scouts of America

JPL Troop 509

Est. 1952

La Cañada Flintridge, CA

jpltroop509.org



The Scoutmaster Conference

Scouts are eligible for a Scoutmaster Conference after they have completed all the requirements for a rank. After passing the Scoutmaster Conference, scouts qualify for their 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 Scout is ready to start the Scouting journey. The Scout must know and understand the aims and ideals of the program 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 checks to see that scouts are gaining proficiency at outdoor skills, self-sufficiency, and citizenship. Because the scouts have already been tested by upper rank peers and troop adults on the requirements, the Scoutmaster Conference does not review these. Instead, the discussion focuses on how they are following the Oath and Law in their life, their thoughts on their Scouting journey and ensuring that they are ready to demonstrate their competence of the rank requirements before a Board of Review.

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

Eagle: For the highest rank in Scouting, the Scoutmaster Conference will review the candidates' Scouting journey, what they have learned, and how they think Scouting will affect their future. The goal is to prepare them for the Eagle Board of Review.

All rank requirements must be signed off by someone with the authority to approve them before the scout may request a Scoutmaster Conference.

Scouts authorized to approve rank requirements for Scout through First Class ranks are:

- Senior Patrol Leader
- Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders
- Jr Asst Scoutmaster
- Instructors
- Troop Guides
- Troop 509 Eagle Scouts
- **509G ONLY:** New Scout Patrol Leaders (for the scouts in their patrol only)

Adults authorized to approve requirements for all ranks (Scout through Eagle) are:

- Scoutmasters
- Assistant Scoutmasters

In our troop the mechanics of a Scoutmaster Conference are:

- Scouts request and schedule their Scoutmaster Conferences.
- Scouts come in full Class A uniform (including neckerchief and sash) with a filled-out Scoutmaster Conference - Board of Review form and their Scout Handbook.
- Scouts are asked to recite the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan and Outdoor Code.
- Scouts are asked what they did that week that demonstrates they are living the Scout Oath and Law in their daily life.
- Scouts are asked how active they have been in the troop and in their patrols.
- Scouts present their Handbook showing they have completed all the requirements.
- Scouts are asked about the merit badges they have earned since the last Scoutmaster Conference.
- Scouts are asked to describe their work and hours on community service projects (if applicable).
- Scouts are asked how they have served actively in a position of responsibility (if applicable).
- Scouts and the Scoutmaster discuss what the scouts need to do after passing their Boards of Review, and develop a plan for completing the requirements for the next rank.
- If the scouts pass, the Scoutmaster signs the Scout Handbooks and the Scoutmaster Conference – Board of Review forms and returns them to the scouts.

A Scoutmaster Conference can be brief or quite long, depending on how well the scouts are prepared, and how they are doing in the troop.

Serving Actively in a Position of Responsibility

It is up to the Scoutmaster to determine if scouts have served actively and fulfilled the duties for their position of responsibility. Scouts BSA does not prescribe measures for this, but our troop expects scouts 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 their duties at least as many times as the minimum number months for their rank. For example, for patrol leaders to fulfill their duties they must not only select and train assistant patrol leaders but must also help their patrol members advance before they are eligible to pass a Scoutmaster Conference.

These expectations should have been discussed with and understood by the scouts at their 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 the first four months frequently shows up late or not at all, doesn't call 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 the patrol advance, nor provide leadership on outings. When four months is up, and the scout asks for a Scoutmaster Conference does the scout pass?

What about a Star scout who is a Troop Guide or Instructor and during the first six months is often late or absent and is not really doing much to help other scouts advance, is not helpful at troop meetings, is often disruptive, doesn't behave as described in the scout Oath and Law, is not making a positive impact on meetings, and seldom participates and/or doesn't help run outings. When six months is up, and the scout asks for a Scoutmaster Conference does the scout pass? Is the scout ready for Life rank? Is the scout ready to plan, organize and lead an Eagle Scout leadership service project?