

Revised campout requirements for Second Class, First Class

July 11, 2017 Bryan Wendell Advancement, Boy Scouting, Camping 121

The number of overnight campouts required for a young man to earn the Second Class and First Class ranks will be reduced under new requirements that take effect Aug. 1, 2017.

But the total number of camping nights a Boy Scout will experience in the program as he progresses toward the rank of Eagle Scout will not change.

In 2016, alongside the release of the 13th edition of the *Boy Scout Handbook*, the BSA increased the number of campouts required for Second Class to three since joining from two. It increased the number of campouts required for First Class to six since joining from three.

The Aug. 1, 2017, revisions return the number of overnight campouts to pre-2016 levels but preserve the amount of time spent outdoors. The change, the BSA says, maintains a focus on life-changing outdoors experiences while recognizing that not all outdoor activities need to include overnight camping.

Hikes, service projects and outdoor-heavy merit badges like Geocaching and Orienteering add to the adventure of being a first-year Scout.

The changes leave untouched the Eagle-required Camping merit badge, which calls for at least 20 nights of camping. Because all camping nights since becoming a Scout can be used for this requirement — even those that count toward Second Class and First Class — the effect is that the total number of camping nights required to become an Eagle Scout is unchanged.

And of course these are minimum overnight campout requirements. Many Scouts will choose to camp more frequently.

What's the change?

Rank	Current Requirement	New Requirement as of Aug. 1, 2017
Second Class	<p>1a. Since joining, participate in five separate troop/patrol activities, three of which include overnight camping. These five activities do not include troop or patrol meetings. On at least two of the three campouts, spend the night in a tent that you pitch or other structure that you help erect (such as a lean-to, snow cave, or tepee).</p>	<p>1a. Since joining Boy Scouts, participate in five separate troop/patrol activities, at least three of which must be held outdoors. Of the outdoor activities, at least two must include overnight camping. These activities do not include troop or patrol meetings. On campouts, spend the night in a tent that you pitch or other structure that you help erect, such as a lean-to, snow cave, or tepee.</p>

Rank	Current Requirement	New Requirement as of Aug. 1, 2017
First Class	<p>1a. Since joining, participate in 10 separate troop/patrol activities, six of which include overnight camping. These 10 activities do not include troop or patrol meetings. On at least five of the six campouts, spend the night in a tent that you pitch or other structure that you help erect (such as a lean-to, snow cave, or tepee).</p>	<p>1a. Since joining Boy Scouts, participate in 10 separate troop/patrol activities, at least six of which must be held outdoors. Of the outdoor activities, at least three must include overnight camping. These activities do not include troop or patrol meetings. On campouts, spend the night in a tent that you pitch or other structure that you help erect, such as a lean-to, snow cave, or tepee.</p>

When do the changes take effect?

Aug. 1, 2017.

Can I still use the old requirements?

Generally, yes. Whenever there are requirement changes after the release of the *Boy Scout Requirements Book* or the *Boy Scout Handbook*, the Scout has until the following Jan. 1 to decide what to do (see Guide to Advancement topic 4.0.0.1).

It is the Scout's decision.

In this specific case, a Scout choosing to use the old requirements would, in doing so, fulfill the new requirement.

What about Star, Life and Eagle?

There aren't camping requirements for those ranks, because to become an Eagle Scout a young man must earn the Camping merit badge, which has its own camping requirements.

Requirement 9a for the Camping merit badge states:

Camp a total of at least 20 nights at designated Scouting activities or events. One long-term camping experience of up to six consecutive nights may be applied toward this requirement. Sleep each night under the sky or in a tent you have pitched. If the camp provides a tent that has already been pitched, you need not pitch your own tent.

All campouts since becoming a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may count toward this requirement, including those used to fulfill the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class.