

Revised Eagle Palm Guidance

October 25, 2017

All current Boy Scouts — even those who completed their Eagle Scout board of review before Aug. 1, 2017 — are now entitled to receive Eagle Palms for merit badges earned before their Eagle board of review.

Previously, only those Scouts with an Eagle board of review date on or after Aug. 1, 2017, were eligible for these Eagle Palms. Now all current Eagle Scouts can receive Palms for additional merit badges earned before their board.

This is a revision to the change announced on this blog on July 10, 2017. The move comes in response to passionate feedback from volunteers and was approved by the BSA's National Executive Board.

Here's what changed and why.

What was previously announced

On July 10, I wrote about the debut of certain changes to Eagle Palm requirements.

The change means that, as of Aug. 1, 2017, a new Eagle Scout can receive, alongside his Eagle medal, all Eagle Palms he has earned for merit badges completed before he became an Eagle Scout.

This allows all that merit badge work to be rewarded right away. It recognizes the Eagle Scout's extra effort regardless of his age at the time he earns Scouting's highest honor. If the Eagle Scout has sufficient time remaining before his 18th birthday, he can then continue to earn additional Eagle Palms by completing the five requirements below.

For example: Glenn, a 16-year-old Life Scout, had 36 merit badges at the time of his Eagle Scout board of review on Aug. 15, 2017. That's 15 more than required. Before the change announced on July 10, 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 revised requirements, 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.

Glenn's example is still valid even after the revision being announced here.

What's new now

What's new affects young men who became Eagle Scouts and who had not passed their 18th birthday before Aug. 1, 2017. Now those current Eagle Scouts can immediately apply for and receive Eagle Palms for merit badges earned before their board of review.

Let me reiterate: Only those merit badges earned before the Scout's Eagle board of review count, assuming those merit badges have not already been applied to a previously awarded Palm.

For example: David had 41 merit badges when he became an Eagle Scout on July 29, 2017. That's 20 more than required. Under the revision, he's entitled to receive and wear a Silver Palm (representing 15 additional merit badges) and a Bronze Palm (representing five additional). Under the previous rule, it would've taken David a year to earn those Palms — three months for every five merit badges.

What about any merit badges David earns *after* his board of review on July 29, 2017? The five requirements below apply.

The official requirement, as of October 2017

Effective August 1, 2017 (Revised October 2017).

After successfully completing your Eagle Scout board of review on or after Aug. 1, 2017, and being validated as an Eagle Scout by the National Service Center, you will be entitled to receive an Eagle Palm for each additional five merit badges you have completed before your Eagle Scout board of review beyond those required for Eagle. In addition, all current Scouts who completed their Eagle board of review and who had not passed their 18th birthday before Aug. 1, 2017 are entitled as well. For these Palms only, it will not be necessary for you to complete the requirements stated below.

After becoming an Eagle Scout and receiving the Eagle Palms you were entitled to, 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 Eagle Palm was earned.
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.*
3. Continue to set a satisfactory example of accepting responsibility or demonstrating leadership ability.
4. Earn five additional merit badges beyond those required for Eagle Scout or your last Eagle Palm.
5. While an Eagle Scout, participate in a Scoutmaster conference.**

Notes: 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."

**Eagle Palms must be earned in sequence, and the three-month tenure requirement must be observed for each Eagle Palm.*

***Merit Badges earned any time since becoming a Boy Scout may be used to meet this requirement.*

FAQs about the change

Following are some questions and answers regarding this revision to the Aug. 1, 2017, requirements. Additional questions and answers regarding the original change can be found in my earlier post.

These answers were provided by the National Boy Scouting Subcommittee.

Q: Can an Eagle Scout who successfully completed his board of review before Aug. 1, 2017, but turned 18 on or after Aug. 1, 2017, apply for Palms under the new provision?

A: Yes, any Eagle Scout who completed his board of review before Aug. 1, 2017, but had not turned 18 before Aug. 1, 2017, is eligible to receive Palms under the revised requirements. Example: Bruce had earned 26 merit badges when he completed his Eagle board of review on July 1, 2017. He turned 18 on Aug. 2, 2017. Even though he is now 18, he is eligible to receive a Bronze Palm to represent the five additional merit badges he earned before his board of review.

Q: If a Scout earned Eagle rank before Aug. 1, 2017, and then turned 18 years old *before* Aug. 1, 2017, can he apply for Palms under the new provision?

A: No. Any Eagle Scout who turned 18 before Aug. 1, 2017, is not eligible to receive Eagle Palms under the new provision.

Q: Can merit badges earned *after* an Eagle board of review but before Aug. 1, 2017, be applied toward receiving Palms under the new provision?

A: No. Only merit badges earned before a Scout's Eagle board of review can be used in applying for Eagle Palms under the new provision. Any merit badges earned after a Scout's Eagle board of review can only be used to earn Palms by completing the five requirements listed above.

Q: How many additional Palms would a Scout be entitled to under the new provision if he earned Eagle rank at the age of 16 on Feb. 1, 2016, and had completed 50 additional merit badges at the time of his board of review?

A: Assuming he had remained continuously active and earned Palms in the normal manner under the previous requirements, he would be eligible to immediately receive four more Palms. That is based on counting 30 merit badges toward six Palms during the 18 months from Feb. 1, 2016 to July 31, 2017.

Q: Using the previous example, if a Scout had earned an additional 20 merit badges *after* his Eagle board of review, how many Palms would he be eligible to receive on Aug. 1, 2017?

A: He would still only be eligible to receive four more Palms. The 20 additional merit badges he earned could be applied toward additional Palms by completing the five requirements listed above.