

FAQ – Central Florida Council Online Merit Badges

Can two (or more) Scouts use the same computer?

Yes! Each should register separately so we can track each Scouts progress, but they may share a computer for each day's session. They will each have a chance to mark themselves "present" during daily attendance.

Do we need a camera and microphone?

No. You simply need a computer with speakers. The sessions are hosted through a standard web browser (chrome, explorer, etc.); you will be able to see and hear the instructor. You will also be able to type questions using a "chat" field. There will be other interactive opportunities throughout the sessions, but none of them require a camera/microphone.

Are there any prerequisites?

No, not really. Scouts with no prior work complete can participate. However, there will be a few tasks that we encourage Scouts to complete as they prepare during the days before the badge sessions begin. Scouts are also encouraged to get a start on any requirements they would like; Scouts must also understand that there are some requirements that will NOT be covered by the sessions (such as cooking camping meals in Cooking Merit Badge.)

How will they get their "blue card" Merit Badge Applications?

Our registration system (through BlackPug Software) helps us track everyone's progress and provides printable "blue cards" that we will e-mail to each family after the Merit Badge is complete. There are also Scoutbook and Troopmaster files that can be downloaded for easy update of your Unit records.

How will Youth Protection and "no one-on-one contact" be maintained?

Through a partnership with stemCONNECT, a local Florida company that connects schools with science experts around the globe, we are able to create a virtual classroom. That classroom, and its instructor, will be monitored by the stemCONNECT staff, guaranteeing a second adult overseeing all interactions. Youth will be in "view only" mode with limited interaction with each other.

I don't live in Florida. Can I still participate?

Of course! The internet makes this possible for EVERYONE!

Speaking of Florida, that means the sessions are in EASTERN time, right?

Yes, all times listed are in EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME (EDT). Please plan accordingly for Scouts in other time zones.

What about Scoutmaster approval? Scouts should have their approval before beginning a merit badge, right?

RIGHT! Scoutmaster approval will happen through an online form. On Friday (and each day after until the end of the sessions) registered participants will get a link to an online form. They must send that to their Scoutmaster to get approval. Basically, it asks the SM to provide their name and e-mail and check a box authorizing the Scout to participate. The completed (or partial) blue card will then be e-mailed to the Scoutmaster after sessions are completed, along with a Scoutbook/Troopmaster upload file for their convenience.

Will we complete the ENTIRE Merit Badge?

Probably not. While it is possible for a Scout to complete these badges in a week or so, that would be a very busy week. Our intent is to present content each day that gets the Scout STARTED on a set of requirements. It is then up to them to complete an additional task, study project, or activity OFFLINE and provide confirmation of that completed task at the start of each day's session. Confirmation is completed through a variety of methods, including document uploads, photo sharing, and quizzes that will review and test important content. The goal is to help Scouts potentially complete 80% - 90% of the necessary requirements. In some rare cases, Scouts may complete 100% of Public Health Merit Badge and/or Safety Merit Badge; it will be impossible for a Scout to complete Cooking Merit Badge in this manner, due to requirements relating to camping trips.

What about the trips required?

We will host a virtual tour of our camp's Waste Water Treatment Plant to help with requirements in Public Health Merit Badge. That tour will get a Scout STARTED on that, but in order to COMPLETE that requirement, they will need to complete two additional tasks explained in the online sessions. Scouts who pay attention and complete those tasks will get as much (or more) out of this virtual visit than possible on an in-person trip.

Wait! They'll get MORE out of it than they would IN PERSON?! NO WAY!

Way! Think about it...when a Patrol or Troop goes on a trip or tour, there is almost no way of guaranteeing everyone gets to ask a question, and rarely can a leader or counselor confirm 100% that each participant learned. But online, by requiring each Scout to submit a question before the tour, and provide a reflection paragraph after the tour, it gives us a 100% feedback loop to ensure learning and retention. Pretty cool, huh?

Will you be offering MORE badges?

Yes, we hope to offer at least 5 additional badges beginning March 30. The same registration link (www.scoutingevent.com/083-onlineMB) will provide those opportunities and more as we continue to add more learning opportunities for Scouts!