

Occoneechee Council Advancement Committee

November 29, 2011



*** **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** ***

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CHANGES TO THE EAGLE SCOUT REQ. 5 – THE SERVICE PROJECT

The National office has reworded the Eagle Scout rank requirement 5 and, in support of that change, a new Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook has been created. As with any change, questions arise concerning implementation.

We understand that the new workbook is mandatory effective January 1, 2012. What does "mandatory" mean? Does this mean all projects started, approved, in process, or completed must use the new form? For example, if a boy turns in the old workbook for district approval on December 31st will it be accepted even though the approval may not come until after January 1, 2012? (from a unit leader via email)

Through December 31, 2011, Scouts have a choice to use either the new workbook or the one it is replacing. Scouts whose Eagle Scout service project has already been approved by the council or district under the former wording of requirement 5—and using the former workbook—should continue with the same workbook. If their project has not yet been approved by the council or district, they may elect to use the revised requirement 5 and the new workbook. Starting Jan. 1, 2012, Eagle Scout candidates—unless they have already submitted a plan for approval by the council or district under the former requirement—will be expected to fulfill the revised service project requirement 5 using the new workbook.

[Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, No. 512-927](#)  (New)

[Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook, No. 512-927](#)  (Old)

National has created the position of project coach to serve as a resource for a scout who may need a little extra help. Two of the larger units in my district have had coaches/mentors for some time now for their Eagle candidates. Can I let them continue that process for the scouts in their respective units? (from a district volunteer)

Yes, but we need to make sure that the troop coach / mentor has a full understanding of the new project requirements.

Once the project proposal is approved by the district, the scout then goes forward and completes his final project plan. Do you see any problem with the scout beginning the fundraising portion of his project before he completes his final project plan? (from a district volunteer)

This is not necessarily a problem, and may actually be a good thing. For instance, a candidate may propose building three to six benches for his school, with the actual number contingent on how much money he raises to fund his project. In that example, it would make sense that the scout would fundraise first before planning out his detailed material list, work schedule, etc...

The new workbook has an Eagle project fundraising application that must be completed. Who approves this at the district or council level? (*from a district volunteer*)

The fundraising application is approved by the same district volunteer who approved the project plan and signed the workbook on page 10. He or she has already met the candidate, already has an understanding of the scout's project plan, and is in the best position to grant a knowledgeable and prompt approval. If the scout has the fundraising application (page 17 of the new workbook) completed and approved by the project beneficiary and his unit leader when he meets with the district to get his proposal approved, he can get both district approvals at the same meeting.

I have met with our Council VP for Finance, Jim Whitlock, to discuss this new National requirement, and with Johnny Glover in our Council Service Center. We are all on board with having this approval made by the district project approver.

All my Eagle candidates have to raise funds to pay for their projects. Does this mean they all must file an application? (*from a unit leader*)

That depends on where the funds are being raised. On page 18 of the new Eagle workbook, the following sources are specifically exempted from requiring a fundraising application:

- contributions from the candidate, his parents or relatives;
- contributions from his unit, its chartered organization, parents or members of his unit;
- contributions from the project beneficiary.

In my home district, we have approved ninety (90) Eagle projects so far in 2011 and all 90 required funds to complete. Of those ninety, fewer than five (5) would have required a fundraising application. The vast majority of the projects are funded by the scout through his personal savings, or by his parents, or out of his troop popcorn money, or by the project recipient such as the church, PTA, etc...

Page 6 of the new workbook requires a lot more information than did Page 1 of the old workbook. Is all this really needed? (*from a unit leader*)

Yes, it is needed. While page 6 looks busier than did page 1 of the old workbook, let's take things step by step. Of the first five sections, four were on Page 1 of the old workbook, with unit committee chair being the only addition. The project beneficiary and beneficiary representative were on page 6 of the old workbook, so this isn't a new item, just a shifting from one page to another. The Council Service Center is new, but easily provided. The District Project Approver is new, but already provided to the candidate so he can make his appointment for a project approval.

*Since National no longer prints hard copies of the Eagle Service Project Workbook – meaning all candidates are working from an electronic version – **the National Advancement Committee recommends that each unit customize Page 6 before distributing the workbook to its scouts.** Pre-complete all the sections that will be the same from candidate to candidate: Unit information, unit leader, unit committee, unit advancement coordinator, council service center and district project approval representative. Then all the candidate has to complete is the section for his personal information and the sections for the project recipient and project beneficiary representative for his unique Eagle Scout service project.*

I see that the new workbook also calls for a Tour Plan (formerly known as Tour Permit). I've always understood that Tour Permits were not needed for Eagle projects. Why was this added? (*from a unit leader*)

Page 13 of the new workbook has a section asking whether or not a Tour Plan (formerly Tour Permit) is needed. Frankly, there was great uncertainty as to whether or not an Eagle Service Project was a Scouting event subject to Tour Plan (Permit) requirements, or a personal undertaking of the scout that did not require a Tour Plan (Permit). National has now stated affirmatively that an Eagle project is governed by the Tour Plan provisions.

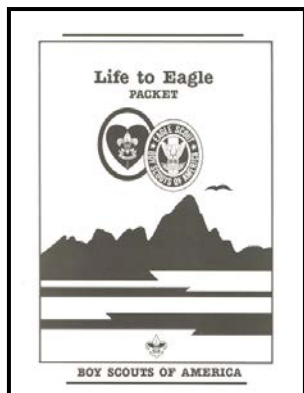
Please note that the conditions requiring a Tour Plan (Permit) were changed significantly earlier in 2011, and that most Scouting activities no longer require a Tour Plan.

As a matter of good planning and Safe Scouting, the more remote the project location, the more driving involved (especially by young drivers), the more it makes sense for a scout to file a Tour Plan. At this time, there are no Occoneechee Council requirements for a Tour Plan that exceed those established by the National office.

Do we still have a council policy concerning the use of power tools by youth under the age of 18? (*from a unit leader*)

We will maintain a "recommendation" until such time as the National office releases its next version of the Guide to Safe Scouting. It's important to note that our council policy concerning table saws, circular saws, and similar items has been, and would continue to be, a strong advisory statement reflecting our great concern for the health and well-being of all our scouts. Eagle workdays are very stressful, even for the best of candidates. With so much going on, it doesn't make sense to compound the opportunity for injury by allowing young scouts to operate hazardous equipment. When all is said and done, the conduct of the Eagle workday(s) is under the leadership and judgment of the Eagle candidate. If the candidate chooses to ignore our recommendation and allows a 12-year-old to operate a table saw with a tragic outcome, he and his family will bear the consequences of that action.

Why did National remove the word "Leadership" from the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook title? I've always understood that leadership was the most important part of the service project requirement? (*from a unit leader*)



Since the mid-1970's, leadership has been a fundamental aspect of the Eagle Scout Service Project. That hasn't changed. Prior to 2003, the title of the workbook had no specific connection to the wording of the requirement. For instance, if you had a scout completing an Eagle Scout service project during the 1990's through around 2002, he would have used a workbook like the one shown to the left. The word "leadership" didn't appear anywhere on the cover, but be assured that it appeared many times on the inside and was a key aspect of whether or not the project was approved by the candidate's board of review.

The most important aspect of an Eagle Scout service project is the positive impact the project has on the beneficiary organization. That positive impact must be derived through the leadership exhibited by the Eagle Scout candidate.

How much of the new workbook should a scout have completed in order to get his workbook approved (signed) by the district? (*from a unit leader*)

The scout should have placed his name on the cover (page 1). He should have completed page 6 (much of which should have been pre-filled by his unit before they gave him the workbook). He should have placed his name on page 7, the cover page of the proposal. He should have completed pages 8, 9 and 10. He should have signed the proposal on page 10 (On my honor... I have read this entire workbook ... I promise to be the leader of this project, and to do my best to carry it out for the maximum benefit to the beneficiary). He should have obtained the approval of his unit leader, his unit committee, and his project beneficiary as evidenced by their respective signatures in the workbook on page 10.

My son's troop is requiring him to prepare a notebook for his Eagle project, and to email the workbook back and forth so the unit leaders can make additions and changes. This process has been going on for months and they say it is still not ready for him to take it to the district for approval. Is this really necessary? (*from a parent of an Eagle candidate*)

We have a small group of parents that have commandeered the Eagle service project documentation for their sons. Any scratch-outs are re-printed; everything is placed in plastic page protectors; they've included a hundred photos already and the project hasn't even been approved. I like where the council is going with reducing the amount of paperwork we require, but what do I do with parents that are determined to go in the opposite direction? (*from a unit leader*)

Based on the information provided, it appears that each of these scouts is being failed by people who are very important persons in their lives. There is no reason for a workbook to be converted to a notebook, and no reason for it to take months for unit leaders to bounce it back and forth. The scout has not been allowed to demonstrate his ability to lead and contribute to his community, and his recipient organization has been denied the benefit of the project the scout is prepared to complete.

Equally sad is the scout whose parents will not let him plan, develop and lead his own project. Personal growth is one of the eight methods of Scouting; doing the work for their son contributes nothing to his personal growth.

In the first example, ask for a private meeting with your son's unit leaders and share your concerns. Make sure that there are no other issues that are affecting the unit leaders' reluctance to move your son's project forward. If that doesn't resolve the situation, you can ask your unit commissioner or district advancement committee for assistance.

In the second example, make clear to the parents that the Eagle workbook is a Scouting document to be completed by the scout. If the parents want to maintain a scrap book, let them do so with the understanding that they are doing so for their own benefit and not a part of the Eagle project workbook.

Please remind all parties that the Council Eagle Service Desk will not accept notebooks (three-ring binders): they are too bulky to store and too costly to mail. While it is important to complete the project workbook correctly, at the end of the day, it is only a workbook! No scout ever passed a board of review by completing a lousy project with a wonderful write-up, and no scout ever failed an Eagle board by leading a great project that wasn't documented in a huge binder.

Since we are now reviewing project proposals only, and no longer reviewing the actual plan itself, it seems like we are running the risk that projects will jump the track and that scouts are going to be turned down at their Eagle board of review as a result. Why would we not want to do as much as we can to ensure that the scout had everything he needs to successfully complete his Eagle project? (*from a unit leader*)

I hope that the changes announced in October by National will not lead to more projects "jumping the track". I would be surprised if that happened in Occoneechee as a result of these changes.

National is responding to places where the Eagle process had become a gauntlet through which most scouts were not willing to pass. Imagine what it must be like for a 16-year-old to have to appear at multiple meetings, to have to secure building permits and liability waivers, to secure highly detailed materials lists and workday schedules, all for a project that his district or council would not authorize. It's not right, and it drives boys and their families from the program with a bitter taste.

The new system is not a cake walk. The scout must still plan, develop and give leadership to others. He must still make an impact in his community. The workbook requires the scout to give detailed consideration to the task he is about to undertake. The smart scouts will still look to their unit leaders, to their district volunteers, and to the families for quality support, same as they have done for decades. Fortunately, Occoneechee is blessed with lots and lots of smart scouts!

If a scout lacks the support network at his unit and within his family, National has created the Project Coach. This is a person assigned by the district to be there for that young man, to answer his questions and give him the guidance he needs to successfully complete his project. We have volunteers in every district, and volunteers who will call, email or drive 100 miles if it will help a deserving young man reach his dream of becoming an Eagle Scout.

For that one scout in a 100 (or more) that doesn't take the Trail to Eagle seriously, or who manages his time poorly and slaps together a substandard effort as he races the clock, or who for whatever reason simply doesn't measure up to the standards of the Eagle Scout rank, it will fall to his board of review to so inform him. As an organization, it is a poor use of our time and a disservice to our scouts to place extra burdens on 100% of our Eagle candidates because we fear that 1% (or fraction thereof) might jump the track.

Will we have a write-up of the new requirements that we can share with the scouts and scoutmasters? (*from a commissioner*)

At this time, the only requirement that has changed is Requirement 5, and the change there is very subtle. The biggest change is the introduction of the new Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook. Most districts are already conducting training at roundtable as well as Eagle Seminars at the unit level. Check with your district advancement committee or district Eagle board for seminars in your district.



Please email your questions or concerns to me at EMillerBSA@aol.com. If they involve a specific unit or specific scout, please share that with me so I can bring the correct district advancement volunteers and correct district / unit commissioners to the matter. Thank you.