

# History of Wood Badge

In 1911, four years after Scouting began in Great Britain, Lord Baden-Powell began training Scouters through a series of lectures. This led to the first Wood Badge training course for Scoutmasters, held eight years later at Gilwell Park near London. In 1936, an experimental Wood Badge course was conducted in the United States at the Schiff Scout Reservation. Then, in 1948, the first American Wood Badge course was introduced in the United States as advanced training for trainers of Boy Scout leaders. Later, the program was extended to include troop committee members, commissioners, and Explorer leaders.

Experiments began in the late 1960s with a leadership development Wood Badge course emphasizing 11 leadership skills or "competencies." This program was launched in 1972 in support of a major revision of the Boy Scout phase of the program. In 1978, an evaluation of the Boy Scout Leader Wood Badge course revealed a need for greater emphasis on the practical aspects of good troop operation. The result was the development of a course that would provide a blend of Scoutcraft skills and practical troop operation, mixed with a variety of leadership exercises..

In 2001, the new Wood Badge for the 21st Century was introduced. It was developed for all Scouters: Cub Scout leaders, Boy Scout leaders, Venturing leaders, and council and district leaders. The focus is on leadership skills, not outdoor skills. The first part of the new Wood Badge course reflects unit meetings, while the second part of the course uses a troop camping activity as its delivery model.

The new Wood Badge course is administered nationally by the Boy Scout Division.

## Purpose

As a result of attending Wood Badge, participants will be able to

- View Scouting globally, as a family of interrelated, values-based programs that provide age-appropriate activities for youth.
- Recognize the contemporary leadership concepts utilized in corporate America and leading government organizations that are relevant to our values-based movement.
- Apply the skills they learn from their participation as a member of a successful working team.
- Revitalize their commitment by sharing in an overall inspirational experience that helps provide Scouting with the leadership it needs to accomplish its mission on an ongoing basis.

## Curriculum

Wood Badge courses may be conducted as a weeklong experience, or over two weekends with patrol meetings between each session. Experience has shown that either format produces satisfactory results. A staff guide is provided with a conversion guide for a weekend or weeklong course. An administrative guidebook outlines the procedures for administering the program.

## Qualifications

Each Scouter invited to participate in Wood Badge training must have completed the basic training courses for their Scout position and completed the outdoor skills training programs appropriate for their Scouting position.

## Conducting the Training

Wood Badge courses are authorized by regional service centers. When a local council feels it can guarantee enough participants from its own ranks, it may apply to the region to conduct a local council Wood Badge course. In a local council course, all participants, staff, and support come from the local council.

Two or more local councils may cooperate in conducting a cluster-council Wood Badge course. With regional approval, one of the participating councils acts as the host council. The host council normally coordinates the advance preparation, invitation procedure, and staff selection, and provides a site and basic equipment. The course director will participate in the selection of staff from the participating councils.

A minimum of 30 course members must be registered, with full fees paid, 30 days before the opening day of the course. This will ensure good patrol operation, full participation, and financial success. For efficiency of operation, there should not be more than eight patrols.

## Goals

The primary purpose of the Wood Badge experience is to strengthen Scouting in our units, districts, and local councils. The Wood Badge ticket represents the participant's commitment to complete a set of personal goals relating to that individual's Scouting position. These goals will significantly strengthen the program in which the participant is involved. In addition, the ticket gives participants an opportunity to practice and demonstrate a working knowledge of the leadership skills presented during the course. Participants should complete their Wood Badge ticket no later than 18 months after the course.

## Recognition

Upon successful completion of the ticket, the participant is entitled to receive the Wood Badge recognition. This consists of a parchment certificate, the Wood Badge beads (two wooden beads on a leather thong), a tan neckerchief with a swatch of MacLaren tartan, and a leather woggle or neckerchief slide.

The Wood Badge recognition not only identifies a Scouter who has completed advanced training, but also reminds the wearer of an ongoing commitment to continued service to Scouting.

## Summary

Since 1948, the Wood Badge course has served as a source of training and inspiration to thousands of leaders. These Scouters have affected the lives of millions of America's youth in a quality Boy Scout program of citizenship training, character development, and fitness.