

## Choice 2: The Requirements of an Eagle Scout

*Some of the people in the audience at the court of honor won't really know what it means to be an Eagle Scout. This piece should help them understand. It outlines many of the 325 or so requirements the Eagle Scout has completed. The requirements described here all come from Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, and the Eagle-required merit badges, as amended effective April 1999. Depending on which options the Scout took in a couple of areas (such as choosing Hiking instead of Swimming), he may have done slightly different things.*

We are here tonight to honor a young man as he becomes an Eagle Scout. As we do so, it's important to reflect on what it means to be an Eagle Scout. The 1938 Handbook for Scoutmasters put it this way:

The badges which accompany his advancement and which the Scout wears on his Uniform are not to show that he has "passed certain tests." There should be no past tense implied! On the contrary, each badge cries out

"I can, right now and here!"

So what can the Eagle Scout do? Let's take a look at some of the things he has done in preparing to be an Eagle Scout.

In terms of badges, he has earned the Scout badge and the ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and finally Eagle. Along the way, he earned 12 required merit badges and nine elective merit badges, served in troop leadership positions for a total of 16 months, and spent at least 13 hours on service projects, not including the many hours he spent on his Eagle Scout service project. In all, he has completed approximately 325 different requirements.

So what have these requirements taught him? Who is the Eagle Scout?

First and foremost, of course, he is an outdoorsman. He knows how to camp, swim, hike, use woods tools, build a fire, use a camp stove, and find his way with map and compass. He has spent at least 20 days and nights camping out in a tent he pitched on a site he selected. Many of those times he planned his own menu and cooked his own food.

The Eagle Scout is comfortable with nature. He can identify local animals and plants, including poisonous plants. He understands the causes of water, land, and air pollution and developed a project to solve an environmental problem.

He embodies the Scout motto, "Be Prepared." He knows how to treat fractures, head injuries, hypothermia, convulsions, frostbite, burns, abdominal pain, muscle cramps, even knocked-out teeth. He knows what to do in case of fire, explosion, desert emergency, motor-vehicle accident, mountain accident, food poisoning, gas leak, earthquake, flood, tornado, hurricane, atomic emergency, and avalanche.

The Eagle Scout is a good citizen. He's been to a city meeting and knows how the city government is organized. He knows who his U.S. Senators and Representative are and has written a letter to one of them about a national issue. He has read the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

He knows how to manage his money and understands the risks and benefits of putting his money in savings bonds, mutual funds, common stock, and real estate. He has set financial goals and worked toward achieving those goals.

The Eagle Scout has also set and worked toward fitness goals. He's competed against himself in tests of aerobic endurance, flexibility, and muscular strength. He knows what it means to be physically, mentally, and socially fit.

He's a good family member. He knows what things are important to the members of his family and has talked to his family about finances, drug abuse, and growing up.

All of these things he did in order to earn the merit badges required for Eagle. Beyond those, he earned nine elective merit badges, which introduced him to such subjects as: (list some of the honorees elective merit badges here)

So what is an Eagle Scout? Well, to quote that old *Handbook for Scoutmasters* again, he is a young man "who is qualified to help others as well as take care of himself." His badge is not "a decoration, but rather a symbol of knowledge and ability."