The purpose of the Merit badge program is “to enhance our youths’ competitive edge” by challenging scouts to approach and work with adults to get a better understanding of various careers, hobbies, and life skills. To ensure the benefits of this program, below are guidelines that scouts should consult before beginning any merit badge work. The Guide to Advancement topic 7.0.0.3 explains the process: “Before a Scout begins working with a merit badge counselor, they need to have a discussion with their unit leader. This discussion is meant to be a growth oriented and positive conversation. The unit leader should bring forth any concerns related to working on the merit badge and provide appropriate counseling. It is then the Scout’s decision whether or not to proceed with the merit badge.” This document is provided to help guide the scout through that process.

The following are guidelines for the merit badge program:

1. Merit badge work should not begin until first contacting your merit badge counselor. The merit badge counselor list is available by asking any Assistant Scoutmaster for assistance with reviewing the list. It may be found in the “ASM/ASM Merit Badges” secure document folder on our troop’s website: GTC MBC List 02Jan2019 PW GTCmbc2018.pdf
2. After contacting the merit badge counselor, the scout will ask the Scoutmaster for a merit badge “blue card” which is the scout’s confirmation that he may begin working on his merit badge.
3. Merit badge counselors reserve the right to accept or deny any work done on the badge that does not meet their satisfaction. They may not, however, add requirements.
4. No more than 2 Eagle required badges may be earned from the same counselor by a scout during his entire scouting career.
5. No more than 5 merit badges (including required and non-required badges) may be earned from any one merit badge counselor by a scout during his entire scouting career.
6. Parents, may not work with their own scout to earn an Eagle Scout required merit badge. Non-required badges may be earned with a parent under limited circumstances as decided by the scoutmaster. Such badges may, but are not limited to: limited anniversary badges, rare hobby or career badges where the parent is the only known counselor in a reasonable distance, etc.
7. Merit badge classes greater than 4 scouts are not allowed for badges earned outside of the troop program (there are exceptions for summer camp merit badges).
8. Eagle required merit badges at summer camp by the camp staff must be screened and pre-approved by the scoutmaster before summer camp and before beginning work on these badges. Such badges may be allowed on a limited basis.
9. Scouts are discouraged to earn merit badges until they have completed the rank of First Class. This is to encourage scouts to remain focused on the requirements to complete the ranks of Scout through First Class. Merit badges are not required for advancement until Star Rank. However, there may exceptional circumstances where a scout may have an opportunity to earn a unique badge or a badge that is available in association with a troop program.
10. Scouts may not “double dip” requirements, in other words requirements completed are either for the merit badge or for Rank advancement. Swimming and First Aid are the only exceptions and may be completed for the rank of First Class.