**Hiking merit badge requirements**

1. Do the following:
2. Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while hiking, and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.
3. Show that you know first aid for injuries or illnesses that could occur while hiking, including hypothermia, frostbite, dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke, sunburn, hyperventilation, altitude sickness, sprained ankle, blisters, insect stings, tick bites, and snakebite.
4. Explain and, where possible, show the points of good hiking practices including proper outdoor ethics, hiking safety in the daytime and at night, courtesy to others, choice of footwear, and proper care of feet and footwear.
5. Explain how hiking is an aerobic activity. Develop a plan for conditioning yourself for 10-mile hikes, and describe how you will increase your fitness for longer hikes.
6. Take the five following hikes, each on a different day, and each of continuous miles. These hikes MUST be taken in the following order:
7. One 5-mile hike
8. Three 10-mile hikes
9. One 15-mile hike

You may stop for as many short rest periods as needed, as well as one meal, during each hike, but not for an extended period (example: overnight). Prepare a written hike plan before each hike and share it with your Scoutmaster or a designee. Include map routes, a clothing and equipment list, and a list of items for a trail lunch.\*

1. Take a hike of 20 continuous miles in one day following a hike plan you have prepared. You may stop for as many short rest periods as needed, as well as one meal, but not for an extended period (example: overnight).\*
2. After each of the hikes (or during each hike if on one continuous "trek") in requirements 4 and 5, write a short reflection of your experience. Give dates and descriptions of routes covered, the weather, and any interesting things you saw. It may include something you learned about yourself, about the outdoors, or about others you were hiking with. Share this with your merit badge counselor.

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\* The required hikes for this badge may be used in fulfilling hiking requirements for rank advancement. However, these hikes cannot be used to fulfill requirements of other merit badges.

1. Do the following:
2. Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while hiking, and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.

M 45

Know before you go!

Stay in good shape so you are ready for the physical demands

Know where you are going and what to expect

Layer and pack clothing appropriate for the weather

Drink plenty of water

Environment – weather, terrain, navigation, maps, trail blazes

Self – proper planning, be in shape, stay hydrated, foot care and footwear, proper clothing

Others – people (courtesy), animals, insects

Getting lost – map and compass

Crossing Streams – unbuckle waist belt and loosen shoulder straps

1. Show that you know first aid for injuries or illnesses that could occur while hiking, including hypothermia, frostbite, dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke, sunburn, hyperventilation, altitude sickness, sprained ankle, blisters, insect stings, tick bites, and snakebite.

**Hypothermia** – body loses more heat than it can generate; S 141

Symptoms – cold, numb, fatigued, irritable, increasingly clumsy, uncontrollable shivering, slurred speech, poor judgment

Treatment – move person into a shelter and get them into dry, warm clothes, zip into a sleeping bag or wrap in a blanket, cover their head, drink small amounts of warm liquid (no caffeine), provide warm water bottles to hold in armpit and groin areas

**Frostbite –** painful and numb ears, nose, fingers, or feet; S 140-141

Symptoms – grayish-white patches on skin (frostnip), pain, numbness

Treatment – For frostnip, move to a shelter and warm affected area, ear or cheek with palm of bare hand, hands under clothing against armpit, toes by putting bare feet against warm skin of your belly

**Dehydration** – body loses more water than it consumes; S 137-138

Symptoms – dark urine, weariness, headache, body aches, confusion

Treatment – drink plenty of water, POPC

**Heat Exhaustion –** body is getting too hot; S 139

Symptoms – pale, clammy skin, nausea, headache, dizziness, fainting, muscle cramps, weakness, lack of energy

Treatment – move to shade, drink small amounts of fluids, apply cool, wet cloths to skin and fan them

**Heatstroke** – person’s core temp rises to life-threatening levels (>105 F); S 139

Symptoms – hot, sweaty red skin, confusion, disorientation, rapid pulse

Treatment – move to shade location, loosen clothing, fan the person and apply wet towels, apply wrapped ice packs under armpits, neck and groin, drink small amounts of cool water

**Sunburn** – result of overexposure to the sun; S 136-137

Symptoms – red or bubbling skin

Treatment – shade, clothing to protect from the sun, cool, wet cloths

**Hyperventilation** – abnormal loss of carbon dioxide from the bloodstream; S 135

Symptoms – victim feels suffocated, dizzy, and disoriented

Treatment – speak calmly and encourage slow breathing, breathe into a paper bag

**Altitude Sickness** – lack of oxygen to the bloodstream; M 50-51

Symptoms – headache, nausea, tiredness, loss of motivation

Treatment – rest, hydrate, eat, stay hydrated, ascend gradually, and otherwise descend

**Sprained Ankle** - the joint is twisted or bent far enough to overstretch the ligaments; S 142

Symptoms – the ankle will be tender and painful when moved and might be swollen and discolored

Treatment – RICE: Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation; if you need to keep moving, leave your boot on for support and reinforce by wrapping it with a triangle bandage

**Blisters** - pressure and friction cause sublayers of the skin to separate and fill with plasma; S 125-126

Symptoms – hot spots, tenderness

Treatment – use moleskin or molefoam immediately when the area becomes tender, change socks if wet, wear gloves, wear a pair of thin synthetic socks under regular hiking socks, do NOT pop!

**Insect Stings -** can be painful, may cause infection; S 132

Prevention – long sleeves and long pants when in woodlands and fields, button your collar, tuck in your pants, insect repellent

Treatment – for bee or hornet stings, scrape away the stinger with the edge of a knife blade, do NOT squeeze the stinger, apply an ice pack to reduce pain and swelling

**Tick Bites -** small blood suckers that bury their head in the skin; S 131

Prevention – long sleeves and long pants when in woodlands and fields, button your collar, tuck in your pants, inspect yourself daily

Treatment – use tweezers to grasp the tick close to the skin and gently pull, do NOT squeeze or twist, may use heat; wash with soap and water and apply antiseptic

**Snakebite -** venomous snakes in the US are pit vipers (rattlesnakes, copperheads, and cottonmouths) and coral snakes; S 129

Symptoms – sharp, burning pain

Treatment – Nonvenomous: treat the same as a puncture wound, wash with soap and water, apply antibiotic ointment, and cover with a sterile bandage

Venomous: keep calm, wash, remove jewelry, keep limb level with the heart, do NOT apply ice or cut or suck the wound, carry out, call 911, treat for shock

1. Explain and, where possible, show the points of good hiking practices including proper outdoor ethics, hiking safety in the daytime and at night, courtesy to others, choice of footwear, and proper care of feet and footwear.

S 225-226, 245-246, 250-255; M 26-29, 32-33, 41

Leave a good impression wherever you go. Greet people along the way. If you have a dog, keep it on a leash and properly dispose of pet waste. Obey traffic signals in urban environments. Walk single file on the left shoulder. Wear reflective clothing. Cross as a group in a line.

Stay on the trail so you don’t trample small plants or compact the soil. Do not cut across switchbacks.

Follow the principles of Leave No Trace

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
   1. Pack it in, pack it out
   2. Cathole 200 ft from camps and water 6-8 inches deep
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
   1. Use established fire rings
   2. Keep fires small
   3. Make sure ashes are cool, then scatter them
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors
   1. Riders – step downhill and wait quietly while animals pass
   2. Hikers – give uphill hikers the right of way

Footwear

Lightweight boots or shoes with uppers made of nylon are fine for most hiking in good weather. Leather boots will add support and protection for your feet and ankles as well as from rain or snow, but may be too heavy for regular use. Any hiking shoe needs to fit well with room in the toe box when the feet swell.

Clean your footwear after a hike, especially if caked with mud. Treat leather with boot dressing to keep it flexible and water-repellent.

When hiking in athletic shoes, cotton socks may be fine. With boots, wear wool or synthetic blends. Carry extra socks on long hikes.

1. Explain how hiking is an aerobic activity. Develop a plan for conditioning yourself for 10-mile hikes, and describe how you will increase your fitness for longer hikes.

M 31-32

Aerobic means “with oxygen.” Aerobic activities increase the rate of breathing and your heartbeat. They push the body to use oxygen more efficiently. Condition yourself by building up to the distances required. Take part in aerobic activities for at least 30 minutes at a time 3 days a week as a minimum. The rank specific requirements for physical fitness aim to meet this goal.

1. Prepare a written hike plan before each hike and share it with your Scoutmaster or a designee. Include map routes, a clothing and equipment list, and a list of items for a trail lunch.\*

See Hiking Trip Plan at the end of the syllabus.

1. After each of the hikes (or during each hike if on one continuous "trek") in requirements 4 and 5, write a short reflection of your experience. Give dates and descriptions of routes covered, the weather, and any interesting things you saw. It may include something you learned about yourself, about the outdoors, or about others you were hiking with. Share this with your merit badge counselor.

**Notes**:

S – Scout Handbook 2017 printing

M – Hiking Merit Badge pamphlet 2017 printing

How I plan:

1. Check the weather (sunrise, sunset, forecast, temperature range)
2. Check the map (determine route, expected distance)
3. Check websites for road and trail closures (erosion, downed trees)
4. Photocopy the map (write all notes on copy)
   1. Estimated departure time from starting point (home, tent)
   2. Estimated travel time (trailhead)
   3. Estimated start time
   4. Estimated return time (distance/2mi/hr for day hike)
   5. Estimated travel time
   6. Estimated time back to starting point (home, tent)
   7. Weather
   8. Highlight starting point
   9. Highlight egress routes in case of emergency
5. Photocopy map with notes and leave with an adult
6. Discuss when to call for help if the plan is not followed
7. Prepare pack the day before
   1. Water 2.5-3 liters in hydration pack
   2. Lunch and snacks
   3. First aid kit
   4. Pocket knife
   5. Flashlight
   6. Fire starter
   7. Hiking pole
   8. Rain gear
   9. Sunblock and bug spray
   10. Hat
   11. Cell phone (airplane mode at trailhead)
   12. Launch GPS app prior to leaving
   13. Map of route to trail
   14. Compass
8. What I plan to wear (all synthetic) laid out the night prior
   1. Long cargo pants
   2. Wicking shirt
   3. Light trail hiking shoes
   4. Wool socks
   5. Bandanna
   6. Hat
   7. Sunglasses
9. Healthy breakfast
   1. Oatmeal with honey, banana, and yogurt
   2. Water

**Hiking Trip Plan**

A trip plan prepares you for the challenges of a hike. Take a copy of your trip plan with you and leave one with your parents or other adult. The parts of a trip plan are:

**WHERE** are you going? Decide on your destination and the route you will travel to reach it and return. For backcountry trips, include a copy of the map with your route marked in pencil.

**WHEN** will you return? If you are not back reasonably close to the time on your trip plan, someone can take steps to locate you and provide assistance if needed.

**WHO** is going on the hike? List the names of your hiking partners. Write down who will transport you to the trailhead, if required.

**WHY** are you going? Going fishing, climbing a mountain, exploring a new area are all good reasons for a hike. Write a couple sentences about the purpose of your trip.

**WHAT** are you taking? Carry the Scout outdoor essentials and list other equipment and clothing you will need.

**HOW** will you respect the land by using Leave No Trace hiking skills?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Weather Forecast: Lo:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Hi:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Sky:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Departure Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Return Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Destination: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Route: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Distance: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Others on Hike: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Purpose of Hike: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Permits Needed/Closures: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Sources of Drinking Water: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Equipment Needed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Clothing Needed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Food for a Trail Lunch: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

After each of the hikes (or during each hike if on a continuous “trek”) in requirements 4 and 5, write a short reflection of your experience. Give dates and descriptions of routes covered, the weather, and any interesting things you saw. It may include something you learned about yourself, about the outdoors, or about others you were hiking with. Share this with your merit badge counselor.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Hike #\_\_\_\_ 1 (5 miles), 2-4 (10 miles), 5 (15 miles), 6 (20 miles)**

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Description of routes covered\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Any interesting things you saw\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Something you learned about yourself, about the outdoors, or about others you were hiking with

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Other: