

Eagle Scout Court of Honor Checklist

As you plan your son's Court of Honor, remember the motto "one step at a time". If you have any questions, feel free to talk to your son's Eagle Advisor. Also, there are many people in the troop who would be happy to help, so don't be afraid to ask.

As soon as the Scout has passed his Eagle Board of Review

- Schedule the date of the Court of Honor based on the troop and council calendar, the availability of the facility and the Mayor (see below), and what is best for you and your relatives. Allow at least 4-6 weeks for the paperwork to have come back from BSA National Headquarters. When scheduling the time, add in at least an hour before for setup and an hour after for take down (both take longer than you'd expect). As soon as you've decided on the date and time, let the Eagle Advisor know plus the Scoutmaster and the Committee Chairman so the Court of Honor can be added to the troop calendar.
- Reserve a location for the ceremony and reception, such as a church, school, banquet hall, or other place that is large enough to accommodate the number of people you expect to attend. You can also hold it outdoors if you want to take a chance on the weather. Visit the location to check out the facilities – is there a podium, microphone, table and chairs, coat room, kitchen, etc. Make sure you know all the fees upfront (i.e. banquet halls add on a restaurant tax to the total) and know when and who to pay. Confirm all the details in writing, and sign a contract if requested by the facility.
- Call the Mayor's office to see if the Mayor is free on the date of the Court of Honor. Let them know the date, time, and place, then send a formal invitation later.
- Ask the Eagle Scout's Eagle Advisor if there are items that belong to the district that you can borrow, such as a stage backdrop, Eagle Badge light box, banners, and other items for the ceremony. You should reserve these items as soon as you know the date and location. Find out when and where to pick these items up, and when and where to return them, as they will be needed for other Eagle Court of Honors.
- Check out the Eagle Court of Honor bin from troop storage. In it you will find *The Eagle Court of Honor Book* by Mark Ray and decorations from past Eagle Court of Honors. Feel free to borrow whatever you need. If you find you have items you don't need after your Court of Honor, please add them to the bin for the next person.
- It is a common practice to request letters of commendation from dignitaries (President, U.S. and State Senators and Representatives, Governor, Mayor, and others). Whether or not to request letters, and who to request letters from, is entirely up to you. Keep in mind that it is time consuming and costly in terms of postage and envelopes, and most of the commendation letters you receive will be form letters. If you decide to do this, allow 6-8 weeks for the majority of the letters to arrive, although a few may take 12-16 weeks, then place the letters in a binder with page protectors for display at the Court of Honor.

Four Weeks Before the Court of Honor

- You can request that a flag be flown over the U.S. Capital in the Eagle Scout's honor. You need to submit this request 3-4 weeks before the date you want the flag to be flown. Check your U.S. Representative's website for a request form that you can print off and mail in with the fee. On the form you specify the date the flag is to be flown and the type and size of the flag. The flag will be mailed to you with a verification certificate. There are many different types of shadow boxes you can buy to display the flag.
- Buy, print, and send out the invitations. Blank Eagle Court of Honor invitations are available at the Scout Store and online, or you can make your own. Include directions to the facility and ask people to RSVP so you will have a rough head count (most still won't RSVP – you can always ask people at troop meetings). The invitation list is up to you. Traditionally the following are invited: family, friends, teachers, community leaders (Mayor and state representatives), charter rep, council and district reps, previous scout leaders, Scoutmaster, Committee Chairman, all the families in the troop, people who helped with the Eagle project.
- Decide what type of ceremony you would like. The primary purpose of the Eagle Court of Honor is to honor the new Eagle Scout's accomplishments, so he should be the focus of attention. The ceremony should fulfill other purposes as well: to put the badge presentation into context for the people in the audience, to challenge the Scout with the question "now what?", to thank the leaders and parents who helped the Scout along the way, to set an example for the other scouts, and to inform and inspire people – to touch and involve the people who attend. The standard ceremony has an opening, Scouting segment, Eagle segment, Eagle Charge or Challenge segment, and Presentation of Eagle Award segment, and closing. Do some research on your own, then talk it over with the Eagle Scout.
- Prepare the scripts for the segments. You can find pre-written scripts for each segment in books and online; however, you don't have to say or do exactly what is in any of these scripts – you can pick and choose what you want or write your own. Once you are done, email the scripts to the people who are assigned each of the segments. They may want to enlarge the font size to make it easier to read the script during the ceremony.
- Discuss with the Eagle Scout who should participate in the ceremony. Choose people who were instrumental in his career or who he feels close to, along with the appropriate district reps. The Eagle Promise, Charge, and Oath should be given by another Eagle Scout – it doesn't matter how young or old he is, as long as he's an Eagle Scout. The Scout should contact each person to verify their availability and willingness to take part in the ceremony.
- If you would like a trumpeter to play at the ceremony, then contact one from the troop (or someone you know) to see if they are available and would be willing to play. Discuss when and what you would like played.
- If the Eagle Scout and/or his parents will be speaking at the ceremony, then they should make notes or write a speech beforehand. The Scout should thank everyone for coming to the ceremony, thank the people who helped him along the way, and thank everyone who helped

him with his Eagle project. The Scout can also give out gifts if he wants.

- Prepare a “ceremony script”. It should include everything that will happen during the ceremony so the participants will know where they fit in. Do not include the actual “segment scripts”– just make a reference to them. It’s easiest to start with a script from a previous Eagle Court of Honor and modify it for your use. Wait until the week before the Court of Honor to email it to the participants, as you may need to make some last minute changes.
- Create the program for the ceremony. Wait until the week before the Court of Honor to make copies, as you may need to make some last minute changes.
- Create a slide show with pictures of the Eagle Scout in various activities throughout his scouting career. This is often one of the most moving parts of the ceremony. The troop has several people that can help you with this if you need it. Make sure you will have the necessary audio/visual equipment at the facility and someone to run it during the ceremony.
- Create a display of the Eagle Scout’s Cub Scout and Boy Scout memorabilia for the reception. Pictures and mementoes can be displayed in a scrapbook or on a tri-fold board. Include the Scout’s Eagle project binder and letters of commendation.
- Buy a guest book, decorations, and gifts (all are optional). If you will be using candles, buy new ones. Florist clay may be needed for a proper fit in the candle holders.
- Create a box with a slit in the top to hold the cards people will be giving to the Eagle Scout.
- Order the Eagle Scout’s NESAs (National Eagle Scout Association) membership. New Eagle Scouts are offered a discount rate – look for an application form with the papers that come back from National.

Two Weeks Before the Court of Honor

- By now the Eagle Scout should have his Eagle book back from council. If not, call the Scoutmaster first, as council notifies the Scoutmaster once the book is back. If the Scoutmaster hasn’t been notified by council, then call council to find out the status.
- Make sure the Advancement Chair has the Eagle Presentation Kit from the Scout Store, and the troop’s Eagle hat and neckerchief. The Advancement Chair may give these items to you beforehand for safe keeping.
- Make sure that the Eagle Scout’s uniform is clean, the Eagle badge is sewn on the left hand pocket, and all the merit badges are sewn on the sash.
- Decide on the food for the reception. You could have a formal sit down dinner, buffet luncheon, or just desserts and finger food, with it all catered or homemade. Base your decision on the type of facility where you will be holding the reception, your budget, and how much time you have and what you feel most comfortable with. If you decide to have the food catered, get samples from various caterers until you find one you like. Place an order

with the caterer and ask if they can deliver the food to the Court of Honor so you won't have to spend time that day picking it up and keeping it warm. If the food is to be delivered, make sure someone will be available to meet the caterers when they arrive at the facility.

- Order the cake for the reception. One full sheet (or 2 half sheets) serves 92 (2" x 2" pieces). Give the bakery a description of how you want the cake to look. Typically the Eagle insignia is on the top of the cake (take clipart of the insignia with you to the bakery), although this may be expensive. A cheaper way to go would be to have writing (Congratulations Eagle Scout, etc.) on the top along with some simple decorations (i.e. red and blue stars). If you don't have a vehicle large enough to transport the cake, ask the bakery if it will deliver the cake for an extra cost. Don't forget to bring a knife or spatula to cut the cake.

One Week Before the Court of Honor

- Remind people of the upcoming Court of Honor at troop meetings or with a Yahoo email. Call or email those who were invited but did not RSVP. Confirm the attendance of all the participants, arranging for alternates if necessary. Email the "ceremony script" to each of the participants.
- Take home the troop flags from the last troop meeting before your Court of Honor. It's better to take them home than to not have access to them on the day of the Court of Honor.
- Have the Eagle Scout decide:
 - which scouts will take part in the Color Guard – they can be other Eagle Scouts, friends of the Eagle Scout, and other scouts in the troop.
 - who he will present with the mentor pin.
 - who will greet people as they come into the ceremony.
- Estimate the number of people expected. Call the caterer with the head count.
- Make sure you have someone who will take pictures of the ceremony and the reception.
- Check with the facility to make sure you will have access and that the heat or air conditioning will be on. Address any other concerns you may have.
- Complete and print the program for the ceremony. Program covers are available at the Scout Store or online, or you can make your own with card stock.

Day of the Court of Honor

- Pick up the cake and the food if it's not being delivered.
- Buy ice for the coolers.
- Bring to the facility:
 - check for the facility, if needed

- troop flags for the Color Guard
 - programs
 - extra scripts
 - slide show presentation and audio/visual equipment, if needed
 - Eagle Presentation Kit, Eagle hat, and Eagle neckerchief, if you have them
 - candles and matches, if being used during the ceremony
 - any other items being used during the ceremony
 - cake if it's not being delivered
 - food if it's not being delivered
 - drinks (such as punch, pop, water, coffee), ice, and coolers
 - dinner plates, cake plates, napkins, utensils, serving utensils, knife or spatula, tablecloths (optional), cups (if needed), racks and warming candles (if needed)
 - box for cards given to the new Eagle Scout
 - display items
 - Eagle project binder
 - Letters of Commendation binder
 - guest book (optional)
 - decorations (optional)
 - gifts (optional)
 - anything else scout related that you might need
 - camera!!
- For the ceremony, make sure:
 - the participants know when they are to speak and what they are to say – give them scripts if they forgot their copy.
 - the presenters know how to give the scout handshake using the left hand.
 - the clasps on the Eagle pin, mother's pin, father's pin, and mentor's pin are open and ready to be pinned on, and that the presenters know where to pin them on the receivers.
 - the trumpeter has his trumpet and knows when to play (make sure the other participants are aware of when he will be playing!).
 - the audio/visual equipment is set up and working.
 - the microphone works.
- In the ceremony area set up the troop flags and decorations. Place extra programs on a table right inside the door. Place the Eagle Presentation Kit and Eagle hat and neckerchief within easy reach of the podium. Place any other items needed during the ceremony (i.e. candles) near the podium. Reserve seats for the special guests, the presenters, and your relatives.
- In the reception area set up the tables and chairs, the buffet area with plates and utensils, the cake area with plates and utensils, the drinks area with coolers (put the pop and the water in the coolers so they will be cold later), the display table, and the decorations.
- Have a greeter at the door to hand people programs and ask them to sign the guest book.
- Once the ceremony starts take a deep breath, let everything else go, and just enjoy yourself. This is a once in a lifetime experience for your son, one of the proudest moments of his life,

so soak it all in so you'll be able to remember it for a long, long time.

- Clean up after the ceremony. Make sure the facility is in the same condition it was in when you arrived. Pay the facility.

After the Court of Honor

- Return any items you borrowed from the district. This needs to be done soon as other Eagle Court of Honors may need these items (sometimes the next day).
- Return the troop flags on or before the next troop meeting.
- Return the Eagle Court of Honor bin to troop storage.
- Have the Eagle Scout send thank you notes to the facility, to the participants in the ceremony, to people who helped with the Court of Honor, and to people who gave him gifts. You may want to give small gifts to those people who helped you the most.
- Write a letter to the local newspaper. Include information on the Eagle Scout (what his project was, major accomplishments, etc.), the ceremony (when, where, who came), a brief history of the troop, and a picture of the Eagle Scout in his uniform.
- Say good bye to your visiting relatives and take a well deserved vacation!