

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will the Internet Advancement application work through any browser?

Internet Advancement is supported by Microsoft Internet Explorer version 5.5 or greater and must be used regardless of the Internet service you are using. No other browser provides full functionality.

Q: Will Internet Advancement work with a 56K dial-up Internet connection?

Yes, the system works with a minimum 56-KB dialup modem connection to the Internet. Faster connections such as DSL and cable will speed up the process. There is a greater possibility that a browser will time out if a large amount of data is being accessed through a dialup connection.

Q: How does my unit get its unit ID number for Internet Advancement?

The Council will provide it. As long as a unit is renewed as a reregistered or separated unit, its unit ID will not change.

Q: Can the unit ID the council gives my unit be used to see another unit's data?

No. Each unit has a unique unit ID and it must be used in combination with the proper unit type (pack, troop, or crew) and a four-digit unit number to register the unit. (Note – DON'T use the District number in front of your unit ie. 8099 – use 0099) When a user first registers, they will create a password. (Note – Keep this simple – write it down – too many problems with complicated passwords for Internet Re-chartering.) This password and the unit ID will allow the user to log in as a returning user the next time they use Internet Advancement. The unit ID for Internet Advancement is the same as the unit ID used for Good Turn for America. Internet Advancement and GTFA are completely separate applications, however.

Q: Will the council provide advancement guidelines for its units as it has in the past?

Yes, the use of Internet Advancement does not change the need for units in the Revolutionary Trails Council to follow its advancement procedures. Advancement Reports from Internet Advancement must be turned into the Scout Shop and must have two copies. Reports that list merit badges must have the merit badge counselor name listed for each badge. A signature is required on all forms and 2 additional names are required, and can be written in, for ranks in Scouting. Scoutmasters can't sit on boards of review and assistants should not.

Q: What is the Revolutionary Trails Council's role for support and administration of Internet Advancement?

The council serves as the "help desk" for its units using Internet Advancement. The council staff will know how Internet Advancement works. They will answer questions from units, referring to a Help file designed especially for council support. The council will administer the process by providing units with their respective unit IDs, monitoring unit activity, changing passwords, resetting profiles, and unit data, and creating reports requested by council management for staff and volunteer use.

Q: What ranks, merit badges, and awards may be recorded through Internet Advancement?

Based on the unit type and program, each unit will have an appropriate pick list for the entry of ranks, merit badges, and awards to unit youth members. Packs may enter ranks and awards only. Troops and crews may enter ranks, merit badges, and awards. LFL Explorer posts may only enter awards. No nominated awards, including meritorious action awards, and awards controlled by other organizations, even if approved for uniform wear, can be recorded. Lapsed units may enter advancement only for dates prior to their unit expiration date. If a unit is dropped, the unit advancement processor will not have access to Internet Advancement.

Some commonly asked questions by unit advancement processors:

Q: Are there times when Internet Advancement is not available?

As an Internet application, it can be accessed on a 24/7 basis. When the BSA internal ScoutNET network is unavailable, it will not be possible to load the unit roster or to submit reports.

Q: How often is my roster refreshed?

Internet Advancement has a process which regularly resets the unit to load a roster if a roster is loaded but has no activity for 45 days. If a roster is loaded for seven days and no ranks or awards are entered, the process also resets this unit data. Upon log in, if the data was reset, you will load the roster or upload an advancement file to begin processing advancement. If you only want to view or print a report, do "Start Over" before you log out.

Q: How accurate will my roster be?

Your roster will be only as accurate as the membership you submitted at charter renewal time and correct additional enrollments you provided to the Council on a timely basis. Additional enrollments are usually processed within two weeks of receipt, provided they are correct and paid for.

Q: How often should reports be submitted?

It is recommended that units submit reports at least once per month. Each unit is to submit a final report each December with any advancements not previously submitted.

Q: What is the Unit Order Form and how is it used?

This feature permits a unit to enter quantities for advancement items that it needs to purchase, extend, and total the prices, and print the order or save it as a PDF file. The

order is available in a printer-friendly version, which lists only the items with quantities entered, or in a full list showing all items.

The quantities entered can be saved for future use or reset each time. It is not necessary to load the unit roster to reach the Unit Order Form. When an order is created, it does not connect to any online ordering system. Orders for the Revolutionary Trails Scout shop mailed or faxed to 315-735-9184.. Items and prices listed on the order form will change without notice.

Q: Does Internet Advancement provide the same record-keeping system as unit-management software (PackMaster/TroopMaster, Scoutmate, ScoutSoft, and Rank N' File)?

No, and it is not intended to serve as a substitute for this type of software. Internet Advancement is designed to automate the process for submitting the required unit advancement reports to the council. Only restricted ranks and merit badges and awards that are tracked by the council and BSA are recorded online. Supplemental programs, such as the Cub Scout Academics and Sports Program, are not entered as advancement. They can, however, be found on the Unit Order Form.

Q: Who provides support for questions on how to use PackMaster/TroopMaster, Scoutmate, ScoutSoft, and Rank N' File?

Support for these products is the responsibility of each vendor who sells the unit-management software. For example, if a unit needs to know how to create an advancement file for upload to Internet Advancement, they must consult the help for their software or contact the vendor.

Q: What items can be uploaded from unit-management software advancement files?

Only ranks and merit badges can be uploaded from an advancement file. You will need to add all other items to member records through the Internet Advancement application.

Q: When our troop or crew approves rank advancement, we hold a board of review. Since we can't enter the rank advancements for submittal and print the report until after the board, how do we obtain the signatures needed?

As stated earlier a troop or crew must have three (3) committee members sit on each board of review for ranks. The advancement chairman or unit advancement processor must sign the board of review form and then can print the names of the two others who were at the board and gave approval for the ranks being awarded. Scoutmasters/Crew Advisors CANNOT sit on boards of review and Assistants should not. Internet Advancement advises to make two (2) copies of the reports – you will need two copies to turn into the Revolutionary Trails Council Scout Shop, so if you wish one for your units records – make three (3) copies.

Q: Since Internet Advancement validates that ranks are earned in sequence, if an earlier rank is missing, must it be entered?

Yes, any missing rank must be entered with the date from the unit's records or from other evidence provided by the member or a former unit. Although each item entered for the first time will be listed on the Advancement Report as new, the council understands that these are being reported for the record only. Merit badges and awards previously earned should also be entered.

Q: If we find that a rank, merit badge, or award which appears on a member record is incorrect for that member, what should be done?

The council must be notified in writing of the incorrect information so that the council may correct the member record. The unit cannot remove any item on a member record.

Q: If a member was transferred into our unit and the member has no advancement information, should it be entered by our unit?

Yes, if the member's record is incomplete, your unit should update the record. If the member came from another council, use the information provided by the last unit or verify the advancement from the member's records.

Q: There are members of our pack now in Wolf, Bear, and Webelos dens who were Tiger Cubs and earned the Tiger Cub rank. Can this information be entered?

It is not possible for the unit to enter this information because the sequence for Bobcat and the Tiger Cub rank changed on June 1, 2006, and these members earned the rank prior to this change. Consequently only the council can enter the Tiger Cub rank to a member record.

Q: If our unit is lapsed, can we enter and submit advancement reports?

During the lapsed period (up to two months after unit expiration) you can submit reports, but ranks, merit badges, and awards must be dated before the unit expired. Once a charter renewal is processed and posted by the council for the unit, the unit can then obtain its new roster and enter current year dates. If a unit separates (drops), then no advancement can be entered.

WHAT SHOULD OUR UNIT DO NOW?

1. Appoint the unit advancement processor.
2. Give the unit ID code that was provided by the Council to your processor along with the other information that was given out at the training session.

3. The processor then needs to go to the council Web site www.minsitrails.com and click on Internet Advancement

4. We urge the processor to review instructions, help and frequently asked questions.

5. He/she will then register as a new user. Make sure the person registering writes down the codes that are used and keeps them. The biggest problem in Internet Re-chartering was complicated and lost codes and then not having the ability to finish the process.

6. Review Current Unit Advancement Summary

7. Gather youth advancement records and begin entry.