

Camping Night Policy

The Camping Merit Badge Camping Night Requirement (Requirement #9a):

9. Show experience in camping by doing the following:

- a. Camp a total of at least 20 nights at designated Scouting activities or events. One long-term camping experience of up to six consecutive nights may be applied toward this requirement. Sleep each night under the sky or in a tent you have pitched. If the camp provides a tent that has already been pitched, you need not pitch your own tent.

Troop 93 has historically recognized five nights for the first year that a Scout attends Boxwell, as we typically don't stay Friday night. We have then recognized a single night for second year that the scout attends Boxwell, which gives the scout the sixth camping night for a long-term camping experience. No camping nights are recognized for any long-term camping trips after that, regardless of type (e.g. Boxwell, week-long trip in Colorado, Philmont, etc.).

Here are some key points to help clarify the requirement*:

- The requirement begins with "Camp a total of 20 nights." That means **20 overnights**, so a weekend trip from Friday through Sunday is two nights.
- Next it says, "at designated Scouting activities or events." This means the experiences are **held under the auspices of some level of the BSA**, and that "Scouting" happens on them. For example, an individual family or a couple of Scouts and their parents heading off into the woods doesn't count.
- A long-term camping experience is defined as **at least five consecutive nights**. One of these experiences is allowed, and **up to six nights may count** toward the requirement. For example, Sunday through Saturday. If a Scout goes on a 10-night trek, only six of those nights count.
- If a Scout goes to summer camp twice for a total of 12 nights, only one of the summer camps will count — for up to six nights.
- The remainder of the camping nights **must be accumulated through short-term camping** — normally weekend troop campouts. The long-term camping experience must also be a "**designated Scouting activity or event**." This could be at a council summer camp or on a troop's own 50 miler, a Jamboree, high-adventure base, etc.
- All 20 nights **must be spent under the sky or in a tent**, so **nights in cabins don't count**.
- If camping is done at a camp that **provides tents that are already set up, then all is good**. If tents are not already pitched, the Scout must pitch his tent. If he is sleeping in a two-man tent, then it would be reasonable the he and his buddy set the tent up together. Sleeping in a tent that Dad or the Scoutmaster, etc., pitched doesn't count.
- I've heard feedback from parents with Scouts in troops that don't do very much camping. They can get in the long-term outing, but it takes a long time for their troop to get out on enough campouts to make up the other 14 nights. As a workaround, they suggest sending their son to summer camp but then **take him home after four nights** so that the experience will not count as a long-term camp. **This doesn't fulfill the requirement. The short-term campouts provide variety in both preparation and experience, and the Scouts are more likely to have to set up their own tent and take more responsibility for outdoor living skills.** A long-term summer camp is still a long-term camp even if the Scout is there for only a portion of the time. It's an entirely different adventure and usually doesn't call for the same level of self-reliance required for a short term camp.

*Reference Source: <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2012/06/07/ask-the-expert-interpreting-camping-merit-badge-requirement-9a/>