



Eagle Scout Court of Honor Ceremonies

Gold Country District, Greater Yosemite Scouting

An Eagle Court of Honor can be put on by the troop leadership or by the young man's family, as desired, and based on the unit's traditions and family preferences. The Eagle Court of Honor is a singular event in a young man's life. It needs to be memorable. It may be held indoors or outdoors, depending on the season and the recipient's wishes.

You can begin preliminary planning as soon as the youth is schedule to attend his Board of Review.

Basic Precepts

Elements of an Eagle Court of Honor usually include the following elements. In any case, the wishes of the recipient's override all other considerations.

- An up-beat, dignified, inspirational event that recognizes the young man's success and encourages other boys to follow his example.
- A stand-alone event. Don't piggy-back other courts of honor onto it, or this event onto other events like a troop dinner. However, depending on the preferences of the young man and his family, some troops choose to honor more than one Eagle Scout during a single court of honor. This may be suitable if the recipients are good friends and have shared Scouting experiences.
- As Scouting is a youth-led program, the Court of Honor master of ceremonies should be led by other youth, preferably from his unit. The recipient may choose otherwise, of course.
- Personal, highlighting the young man's accomplishments. The ceremony needs to be tailored to the individual. Don't use the same Court of Honor ceremony for every recipient.
- Focused on the young man, not the venue. The location and any decorations need to be purposeful, tasteful but not elaborate.
- Planned and prepared well in advance.
- Incorporate troop members and unit traditions.
- Feature individuals who have made a difference in the boy's life.
- Testify of the young man's character and growth through Scouting.
- Be a formal event. All Scouters ought to wear full Scout uniform. Dignitaries who may be unfamiliar with Scouting should be asked to dress appropriately so they don't make the mistake of dressing inappropriately.



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Location

Choose a location for the Eagle Court of Honor that is dignified but not expensive. Expensive locations may call attention to themselves and distract from the event. Since this is a Scouting event for youth, avoid locations that serve alcohol like a Country Club. But the family's preferences should come first.

Advance Preparations

90 Days Plus

- Select and reserve a location.
- Coordinate with any out-of-town guests, if any.

From 60-90 Days

- Seek the Scout's and parent's input on what they'd like incorporated into the program and event.
- Prepare first draft of the COH script.
- Order invitations
- Request commendation letters from state and federal representatives, if desired.
- Request Certificate of Recognition from U.S. Army, if desired
- Order a commemorative flag from the U.S. Capital, if desired.
- Order the Eagle Scout badge kit.
- Send invitations to public officials and any key individuals, if desired.
- Confirm availability of all those who will take part in the ceremony.
- Request participation of Order of the Arrow honor guard, if desired.
- Purchase membership in the National Eagle Scout Association, if desired.

From 30-60 Days

- Send invitations to friends and family, teachers, other related individuals
- Print and mail invitations
- Reserve U.S. and Troop flags, as needed.
- Order cake and flowers, if desired.
- Update troop Eagle plaque, if needed.
- Order gifts, plaque for recipient, if desired.

From 5-30 Days

- Send press release to local media.
- Complete the script.
- Prepare, finalize, and print the program.
- Verify availability of all participants in the Court of Honor.
- Give all participants a copy of their part of the program.
- If the program includes reading an Eagle Charge or other reading, give the person responsible a copy of what they will read.

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- Arrange for early access to the location and verify who will set up and take down the chairs, tables, etc.
- Make extra copies of the script for use during the Court of Honor.
- Verify availability of a podium, if desired.

Day of the Court of Honor

- Rehearsal
- Pick up cake or other food, if desired.
- Confirm the Eagle Badge Presentation Kit will be brought to the event.
- Arrive early to confirm setup
- Put out just enough seating; have more chairs available if needed.

Guests

This is the young man's event. He may consider inviting any of the following. Along with selecting his guests, he ought to select who he wants to take part in his ceremony.

- Friends
- Relatives
- Troop members (also past members of the troop that he knows)
- Eagles from previous years in the troop
- Scouts and Scouters from other troops whom your son knows
- The Charter Organization Representative from the troop's sponsor
- His bishop, past bishop, pastor and current and prior youth leaders
- Merit Badge counselors
- Summer camp personnel
- District and council leaders
- Principal and teachers from school
- Church friends
- Community leaders
- Business acquaintances and coworkers
- Neighbors

Elements of the Court of Honor

There isn't one right way to conduct a court of honor or a specific sequence or series of steps for the event. But most courts of honor include the following elements:

- Opening flag ceremony
- Invocation
- Trail of the Eagle
- Trail to Eagle
- Formation of the "Eagle's Nest"
- Parents escorted to front

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- Eagle Pledge or Oath
- Badge presented
- Parents receive pins
- Parents escorted back to seats
- Response by Eagle
- “Keynote” speech
- Benediction
- Closing flag ceremony
- Reception

Additional Elements in a Court of Honor

In addition to the elements listed above, an Eagle Court of Honor may include:

- Eagle roll call and/or Eagle's Nest
- Scoutmaster and or Coach's Minute
- Music, for example, *America the Beautiful* or *Scout Vespers*.
- Parent acknowledgment
- Reading of the Eagle Letter
- Eagle Scout Challenge or Trail to Eagle
- Family awards and presents
- Scouting biography:
 - Ranks and dates
 - Merit badges earned
 - Leadership positions held
 - Special Scouting events and trips
- Displays illustrating his Scouting history, including, for example:
 - Scouting photographs or slides
 - Cub Scout uniform
 - Merit badge projects
 - Scouting presents
 - Scrapbook
 - Letters from dignitaries
 - Board of Review papers
 - Certificates and Awards
 - Patch blanket or vest
 - Cub Scout awards and projects
 - Cub and Boy scout handbooks
 - Eagle project papers
 - Eagle project photographs
 - Eagle project Video
- Order of the Arrow team dance
- Guest book

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Decoration

Decorations should be dignified, simple, and appropriate to the occasions. They may include.

- Simple patriotic bunting
- Simulated campfire
- Lighting
- Plants or small trees

Program

The program can contain a variety of elements, but usually include the following:

- Illustration of the Eagle Badge
- Title page with the name of the Eagle Scout and event details
- Brief program outline
- Short biographical sketch of the Eagle Scout
- Lyrics of any songs that are included in the program
- Prior Eagle Scouts from the troop

Print the program on a higher-quality paper stock, if desired.

Reception

If the family desires, they may choose to host a informal reception afterward. This permits guests and dignitaries a chance to congratulate the Eagle Scout.

Additional Resources

For more information, here are a few resources:

- Gold District Eagle Scout Advancement
<http://www.yosemitescouting.org/districts/gold-country-district/eagle-scout-advancement/55919>
- EagleScout.org
<http://www.eaglescout.org/>
- Ideas for a memorable Eagle Court of Honor
<http://scoutingmagazine.org/2000/03/scouters-speak-ideas-for-a-memorable-eagle-court-of-honor/>