REQUIREMENTS BY SKILL

# Knots & Lashings Requirements by Rank

From the square knot to a lashed camp gadget.

Rope work is the one skill that appears at all four early ranks. Scout rank teaches the first three knots and rope care. Tenderfoot asks scouts to use those knots for real. Second Class adds the sheet bend and bowline. First Class moves to hitches and lashings, ending with a working camp gadget. Knots are forgotten quickly, so make rope practice a regular part of meetings rather than a one-time lesson.

> Requirements are paraphrased for planning, and numbers follow the current Scouts BSA Requirements book. Verify wording at scouting.org before signing off.

## How Knots & Lashings Builds Across the Ranks

### Scout

| | |
|---|---|
| 4a | Show how to tie a square knot. |
| 4b | Show how to tie two half hitches and a taut-line hitch. |
| 4c | Show how to whip and fuse the ends of a rope, and explain why rope ends need finishing. |

## Tenderfoot

**3a** Show a practical use of the square knot.

**Sign-off:** Use the knot for a real purpose, like tying a bandage or securing a bundle, not just tying it in the air.

**3b** Show a practical use of two half hitches.

**Sign-off:** For example, tying a line to a post or tree.

**3c** Show a practical use of the taut-line hitch.

**Sign-off:** The classic use is an adjustable tent guyline, done on an actual tent.

**8** Describe the Teaching EDGE method and use it to teach someone the square knot.

**Sign-off:** The person taught should be able to tie the knot afterward. That's the real test.

## Second Class

**2f** Tie a sheet bend and describe when you'd use it.

**2g** Tie a bowline and describe several uses.

**Sign-off:** Bonus check: can they tie it around their own waist?

## First Class

**3a** Discuss when lashings should and shouldn't be used.

**3b** Tie the timber hitch and clove hitch.

**3c** Join poles using square, shear, and diagonal lashings.

**Sign-off:** Check that the lashings are tight and frapped. A loose lashing isn't passed.

**3d** Use lashings to build a useful camp gadget or structure.

**Sign-off:** The gadget should hold up to use: a camp table, tripod, wash stand, flagpole.

## After First Class

Pioneering merit badge takes lashings to full-scale projects (bridges, towers, gateways) and is a favorite at summer camp.

**Pioneering** — The big-project version of First Class lashings.

**Camping** EAGLE — Eagle-required. Rope skills come up throughout.

**Can rank work count toward a merit badge?** Sometimes. Under the Guide to Advancement (4.2.3.6), one activity can count for both when the two requirements match exactly and have the same purpose, like camping nights for the ranks and the Camping merit badge. For safety skills such as first aid and CPR, the counselor should be satisfied the Scout still remembers what was learned. When requirements only look alike, the Scout still does each one's own work. The unit leader or merit badge counselor makes the call.

**Life rank tie-in:** First Class 3a–3d (lashings) is one of the Life rank Teaching EDGE choices. Tenderfoot 8 also uses EDGE to teach the square knot.

# Rope Night: Knots to Gadgets

A troop meeting with rope lengths for everyone, staves or poles, and binder twine. About 60 minutes.

1. **Warm-up knot relay (all)**
   Patrol relay: square knot, two half hitches, taut-line, sheet bend, bowline. Everyone ties what their rank needs, and newer scouts see where they're headed.

2. **Scout-rank corner**
   New scouts learn the three basic knots and whip and fuse a rope end (Scout 4a–4c). A Tenderfoot candidate teaches the square knot using EDGE (T 8).

3. **Practical uses**
   Tenderfoot candidates rig a guyline with a taut-line hitch, tie a line to a post with two half hitches, and tie a bundle or bandage with a square knot (T 3a–3c).

4. **Bowline and sheet bend**
   Second Class candidates tie each and explain real uses, such as joining two different ropes or making a rescue loop (SC 2f, 2g).

5. **Gadget build**
   First Class candidates (or a Life candidate teaching them) tie timber and clove hitches, practice the three lashings, then build a tripod or small camp table (FC 3a–3d). Use it at the next campout.

## Signing It Off

For Tenderfoot 3a–3c, look for a practical use, ideally at camp. Tying the knot on a rope in the air is Scout rank.

Ask the scout to tie each knot twice. One lucky tie isn't mastery.

Lashed gadgets built at camp count for First Class 3d. Take a photo for the scout's records.

## Common Mistakes

Teaching knots once and never revisiting them. Scouts forget them by the next rank.

Signing off Tenderfoot "practical use" requirements without any practical use.

Passing loose, unfrapped lashings for First Class 3c.