

BSA AQUATICS STAFF GUIDE

A GUIDE FOR THE
AQUATICS STAFF
MEMBER FOR:

- CUB / WEBELOS CAMPS
 - DAY CAMPS
 - RESIDENT CAMPS
- SCOUTS BSA CAMPS

A HELPFUL GUIDE TO GET
YOU STARTED ON A
SUCCESSFUL SUMMER,
INCLUDING:

- TRAINING,
- PROCEDURES,
- INSTRUCTIONAL HELP
- AND MORE.



Preface –

This **BSA Aquatics Staff Guide** is intended to serve as a guide for those serving on aquatics staff at camps at all levels of Scouting. It will guide the new staff members through their first summer and, at the same time, provide a valuable reference to more experienced staffers.

This publication supports and references [Aquatics Supervision, A leader's guide to youth swimming and boating activities](#) and [BSA Aquatics Management Guide](#) . available for download by clicking on their title.

The *Aquatics Staff Guide* is maintained and updated regularly by the BSA National Aquatics Subcommittee. Please provide comments and recommendations by email to outdoorprograms@scouting.org

The *Aquatics Staff Guide* is intended to be used digitally. It will be updated as needed and the most current version will be on scouting.org. While it can be printed locally the user will lose access to the many links in the guide. Also, the material will only be as up to date as the day it was printed.

Please work with your camp Aquatics Director and Program Director in using this guide. Council and camp aquatics programs and policies should be consistent with the guidance provided. Please share any best practices and procedures.

BSA National Aquatics Subcommittee
Terry Budd, Chairman

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BSA AQUATICS STAFF GUIDE

STAFF EXPECTATIONS

AQUATICS PROGRAM

AQUATICS PROCEDURES

TEACHING AQUATICS

HEALTH AND SAFETY

LESSON PLANS AND SYLLABI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STAFF EXPECTATIONS

General Expectations

Teamwork

Dress

Demeanor

Punctuality

Camp Traditions

Cliques

Romantic Relationships

Smoking and Tobacco

Cell Phones

Pets

Scout Sign

Staff Training

Pre-Requisite Training

Pre-Camp Training

In-Service Training



STAFF EXPECTATIONS
TEAMWORK

A few general items of discussion might be in order. Go over these with your Aquatics Director.

- You are a Scout. This should be evident in everything you do to all those around you. The example you set will be followed by campers, leaders, and younger staff members.
- You are part of a team. This extends past the aquatics area to the overall camp program, the council, and even beyond. Always carry your share of the load.
- Be unselfish. As any coach will tell you, there is no "I" in TEAM.
- Be Prepared. You've probably already completed some type of training, perhaps BSA Lifeguard. Again, you've only begun. Aquatic training is a constant effort. Constantly work to improve your aquatic skills and your teaching skills.
- Be flexible. You will be asked to participate in and maybe even direct a variety of activities. Camp staff members must be able to "go with the flow" as program needs change.



STAFF EXPECTATIONS
DRESS

Personal appearance of aquatics program personnel should not be matters of controversy but should be discussed briefly during pre-camp staff training to avoid later problems or misunderstandings. Swimsuits for aquatics staff should be comfortable, functional, and simple. Swimwear should not reflect personality, lifestyle, or politics. Questions arise most frequently regarding clothing and hairstyles. Swimsuits for instructors and guards should be comfortable, functional, and simple. Loud colors and wild patterns are distracting and inappropriate.

For many in aquatics, a hat is essential. The first requirement for headgear is utility - it should shade the eyes and protect the face against sunburn.

Additionally, hats should not be billboards for politics, personalities, or commentary on things to do, see, or consume. Scout visor caps with local camp identification are recommended and usually available from camp stores. (Essentially the same can be said for T-shirts and jackets.)

The Model Aquatic Health Code, put out by the CDC, stipulates that lifeguards should dress uniformly so that they are readily identifiable as lifeguards.

This often means a standard color for swimsuits and, perhaps, a bright staff T-shirt. Check with your aquatics director for guidance.

Additionally, whenever glare might be a problem lifeguards are required to have polarized sunglasses

(NCAP PS-201)

Finally, each lifeguard must be provided with a rescue tube and personal protection equipment.

(NCAP PS-201)



Simple utility requires that the hair be maintained in such a way that it does not interfere with or distract from the execution of demonstrations or other procedures or obstruct visibility. Loose long hair and some facial hairstyles can interfere with rhythmic breathing, for example, and may require tying back. Studs in body piercings may need to be removed to prevent loss and injury during certain activities. Provocative tattoos need to be covered. Beyond considerations of this sort, Scouting requires only that its leaders set the example by being clean and neat in their personal appearance and habits.

STAFF EXPECTATIONS
DEMEANOR



A staff member's demeanor, the way he/she acts, sends a vital message to scouts and leaders. All staff members, not just aquatics, should be friendly and businesslike at all times. Horsing around or "blowing off steam" has no place on a waterfront when scouts are present.

Think of yourself as an ambassador for the camp and for Scouting in general. A new scout or leader should be able to observe you and know what scouting is all about.



STAFF EXPECTATIONS
PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is also very important. You, the staff member, must be early - not merely on time. If scouts are expecting instruction to begin on the hour, that is when check-in should begin - not when the staff member comes walking down the path.



Punctuality also applies when releasing scouts from an activity in time that they aren't late to their next activity.



STAFF EXPECTATIONS
CAMP TRADITIONS

Traditions are vital to most camps. They are what make a camp unique. Camp lore is often something around which to build program elements.

Some "traditions" however are negative and should be eliminated. Any custom that makes even one scout uncomfortable has no place at camp -- initiations, hazing, even some ghost stories probably fall into this category.



STAFF EXPECTATIONS
CLIQUEES

We've all been exposed to cliques -- a group of people who "hang" together and don't really include others, don't make others feel welcome. Maybe at school or in the neighborhood you've noticed this or even been a part of a clique.

There is no place for cliques at scout camp. Returning staff members should do everything they can to help younger staff and to include them in their activities.

Cliques often form around program areas -- aquatics could be one of them. Don't allow this to happen. You are with those aquatics staff members all day during program. Make every effort to include others in your after-program time.



If possible, housing should not be assigned by program area -- this only makes this problem worse. You probably won't have much control over your housing assignment, but you can do everything possible to get out and socialize with other program areas



STAFF EXPECTATIONS
ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Many camps have co-ed staffs. It is only natural that there is sometimes a romantic attraction between male and female staff members.

These relationships must not distract from your job. Displays of affection must not make others uncomfortable. Scouts and leaders should not be able to tell that two staff members have special feelings for each other. Don't become a "clique of two."

Your camp will probably have policies or guidelines which you must, obviously, follow. Your camp management will discuss these with you.



STAFF EXPECTATIONS
CELL PHONES / ELECTRONICS

Cell phones have become an indispensable part of our lives it seems. The personal use of cell phones during program hours can be a problem. Using your phone while you are supposed to be supervising or guarding could put you and your director in a position of liability.



There could be times where use of an electronic device - cell phone, tablet, etc - is appropriate. Scheduling, lesson plans, emergency communications, for example.

Always check with your director to determine when it is appropriate to use your phone.



STAFF EXPECTATIONS
SMOKING / TOBACCO

An important way adult leaders can model healthy living is by following the policies on alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Leaders should support the attitude that they, as well as youths, are better off without tobacco in any form and may not allow the use of tobacco products at any BSA activity involving youth participants. This includes the use of electronic cigarettes, personal vaporizers, or electronic nicotine delivery systems that simulate tobacco smoking.

All Scouting functions, meetings, and activities should be conducted on a smoke-free basis, with smoking areas located away from all participants."

Guide to Safe Scouting

Your camp will have a tobacco policy. No matter what your camp's policy you should never use tobacco products in a program area or in the presence of scouts or leaders.

"



PETS

Domestic pets like dogs or cats should be left at home. There are health and liability issues that come into play when outside pets are allowed into camp. Even without those problems, pets are a distraction to providing a safe and meaningful program.



Don't make "pets" of critters you find in the woods either. Part of the allure of a scout camp is that scouts can observe the animals in their natural setting. Some animals simply beg to be picked up, though -- it's difficult to resist picking up a turtle crossing the path. A policy of observe-and-release is appropriate in these cases.





STAFF EXPECTATIONS
SCOUT SIGN



The Scout sign - two fingers in a "V" for Cub Scouts; three fingers together for Scouts BSA- is a commonly recognized signal for participants in an activity to quietly pay attention, and is therefore a handy way to convene a class or regain attention. Silently display the sign from a visible location and wait for participants to notice, as opposed to shouting "sign's up".



The BSA has many excellent training programs. This is a summary of training that a member of the aquatics staff should have. Some are mandatory, others are highly recommended.

BSA TRAINING

Youth Protection Training (required)
 Safe Swim Defense
 Safety Afloat
 Aquatics Supervision
 Swimming and Water Rescue
 Paddlecraft Safety - Flatwater, Canoe
 Paddlecraft Safety - Flatwater, Kayak
 Paddlecraft Safety - Moving Water, Canoe
 Paddlecraft Safety - Moving Water, Kayak
 BSA Lifeguard
 Aquatics Instructor BSA

The **AMERICAN RED CROSS** also offers training for aquatics staff:

- Lifeguard, CPR, AED, First Aid,

The **AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION** offers:

- Canoe Instruction
- Kayak Instruction
- Raft Instruction
- Safety and Rescue
- Stand Up Paddleboarding
- Surfski



There is a certain amount of aquatic and scouting training that is necessary for you to be considered for aquatics staff. What this entails is determined by your camp management and your aquatic director.

A strong scouting background is a reasonable pre- requisite for just about any staff job, but sometimes a candidate's strong aquatics background will overshadow a lack of scouting history. One might have affiliation with other aquatic agencies - American Red Cross, American Canoeing Association, etc. Those without a good knowledge of scouting should work to become familiar with the organization and ask for guidance whenever aspects of the program are not clear.





STAFF TRAINING
PRE-CAMP TRAINING

Your director will see that you are well versed in the topics you need to do an excellent job on the waterfront. Some of these topics will be covered by camp management in general sessions -- others will be specific to aquatics training. These topics include but are not limited to:

- Staff Roles and Responsibilities -- including Youth Protection
- Health and Safety -- your own as well as that of the scouts
- Lifeguarding -- also basic surveillance and supervision
- Basic Rescues -- both swimming and boating
- BSA Lifeguard -- 50% of the aquatics staff must be BSA LG
- Emergency Action Plans -- implementation of all recognized plans; practice and review
- Supervision of Aquatic Programs -- determined by your own camp's program
- Effective Teaching Strategies and Practice -- this can't be overemphasized
- Basic Skill Training -- again, determined by your camp's facilities
- Opening Day Procedures -- a smooth opening day makes the whole week easier.

STAFF TRAINING
IN-SERVICE TRAINING



Opportunities for staff training should extend beyond pre-camp training. Aquatics staff who have not yet qualified for BSA Lifeguard should continue to work on that program. Emergency procedures should be reviewed and practiced at regular intervals.

An interesting and challenging in-service training program promotes teamwork and enthusiasm and can help prevent burnout during a long camping season.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

AQUATICS PROGRAM

Aquatics Continuum

Aquatics Foundations

Cub Scout Aquatics

Scouts BSA Aquatics

Rank Advancement

Aquatics Merit Badges

Aquatics Awards

Venturing Aquatics

Sea Scout Aquatics

Aquatics Leadership

Aquatics Supervision

BSA Lifeguard / Aq Inst BSA

Council Aquatics

Aquatics Program Categories

Advancement Program

Instructional Program

Recreation Program



AQUATICS CONTINUUM OVERVIEW

Aquatics programs have been developed for every level of Scouting, from Tiger Cubs to Adults. A boy or girl can progress from the basic aquatic skills of the Tiger elective through a continuum of aquatic skills in swimming and boating and on to advanced skills of lifesaving, lifeguarding and supervision. This continuum continues into adult leadership and provides a life-long pattern of aquatic safety and physical fitness.

BSA AQUATICS PROGRAM CONTINUUM

AQUATICS FOUNDATIONS

Safe Swim Defense



Required training for supervision of swimming activities.
Provides knowledge of policies and procedures.
Available on-line or through council-approved instructor.

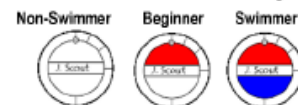
Safety Afloat



Required training for supervision of activities afloat.
Provides knowledge of policies and procedures.
Available on-line or through council-approved instructor.

Swim Classification Tests

Ensures consistency and safety
The same at all levels of Scouting



CUB SCOUT AQUATICS

Tiger Cubs Aquatics



Tiger Cub Elective Adventure

Floats and Boats



Wolf Aquatics



Wolf Elective Adventure

Spirit of the Water



Bear Aquatics



Bear Elective Adventure

Salmon Run



Webelos / Arrow of Light Aquatics



Webelos / Arrow of Light Elective Adventure

Aquanaut



SCOUTS BSA AQUATICS

2nd Class Aquatics



How to conduct a safe swim --
Safe Swim Defense
BSA Beginners Test
Reaching and Throwing Rescues
Can be checked off by knowledgeable adult leader
Procedures can be found in the Scout Handbook

1st Class Aquatics



How to conduct a safe boating activity -- Safety Afloat.
BSA Swimmers Test
Line and Tender Rescues
Can be checked off by knowledgeable adult leader
Procedures can be found in the Scout Handbook

Aquatic Merit Badges



Swimming MB
Lifesaving MB
Canoeing MB
Rowing MB
Motorboating MB
Small Boat Sailing MB
Water Sports MB
Whitewater MB
Scuba Diving MB
Kayaking MB



Aquatic Awards



Introduce specialized areas of aquatics
Available to Scouts and Venture Scouts
Can be earned by adults as well as youth
Tied to advancement or simply for recreation



VENTURING AQUATICS



Venturing Aquatics

The Ranger Award has aquatic electives -- Lifesaver, Scuba and Watercraft.
Normal Venture Crew activities could also be aquatic oriented.



SEA SCOUTS AQUATICS



Sea Scouts

Sea Scouts is a specialized segment of the BSA aquatics program.
Organized to address members' boating skills and promote knowledge of our maritime heritage.
Sea Scout units are called "Ships"



AQUATICS LEADERSHIP

Swimming and Water Rescue



Recommended training for supervision of swimming activities
Ties Safe Swim Defense to the advanced skill training of lifeguarding
Open to adults and older youth
Instruction must be provided by an SWR Instructor or an Aquatics Instructor BSA.

Paddle Craft Safety



Recommended training for supervision of boating activities
Can be earned in either a canoe or a kayak - also either flat or moving water
Open to adults and older youth
Instruction must be provided by a PCS Instructor or an Aquatics Instructor BSA.

BSA Lifeguard



Designed to meet the training requirements of government agencies for those in professional lifeguarding situations -- such as summer camp.
Open to adults and older youth.
Program is closely aligned with American Red Cross Lifeguarding.



National Camping School



Aquatics Instructor, BSA is the highest level of training available for adults in BSA Aquatics. This training is required for summer camp Aquatics Directors.
The training can only be earned at a National Camping School.
These national training schools are offered annually in each region.

COUNCIL AQUATICS



Council Aquatics Committee



Committee promotes aquatic activities, helps procure equipment and instructors, and provides guidance to unit leaders or council professional.
Committee has overall responsibility for the local council's aquatic activities in Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturing and Exploring.
Committee is made up of local volunteers and professionals and aligned with the council's committee structure.



Summer Camp Aquatics



Primary purpose is to support the unit's year-round aquatic program.
Can also provide aquatic opportunities not available elsewhere.
Program varies with a camp's facility, staff, and location.
National Camp Standards require 50% of a camp's aquatic staff to be certified as lifeguards.



BSA AQUATICS FOUNDATIONS

SAFE SWIM DEFENSE and SAFETY AFLOAT



Safe Swim Defense



Qualified Supervision

Responsible and informed, knowledgeable in accident prevention, prepared for emergencies*.

Personal Health Review

Activity adjusted to anticipate potential risks associated with health conditions*.

Safe Area

Safe water depths, quality, temperature, movement, and clarity*.

Response Personnel

Trained rescue team ready to recognize and respond to emergencies. Lifeguards at public venues satisfy need*.

Lookout

Identifies any departure from policy and monitors weather and environment*.

Ability Groups

Participants tested as Nonswimmers, Beginners, or Swimmers and assigned water depths consistent with ability*.

Buddy System

Every participant paired with another. Buddies always aware of each other's situation*.

Discipline

All participants should know, understand, and respect rules and procedures for safe swimming*.

*These are summary highlights.

Please see complete policy in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

"BSA groups shall use Safety Afloat for all boating activities. Adult leaders supervising activities afloat must have completed Safety Afloat training within the previous two years."

Guide to Safe Scouting

The complete text and the most current version of Safety Afloat can be found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss02/#>

Safety Afloat training may be obtained from my.scouting.com and at council summer camps and at other council and district training events.

"BSA groups shall use Safe Swim Defense for all swimming activities. Adult leaders supervising a swimming activity must have completed Safe Swim Defense training within the previous two years."

Guide to Safe Scouting

The complete text and the most current version of Safe Swim Defense can be found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss02/#d>

Safe Swim Defense training may be obtained from my.scouting.com and at council summer camps and at other council and district training events.



Qualified Supervision

Skilled in safe operation of the craft, knowledgeable in accident prevention, prepared for emergencies*.

Personal Health Review

Activity adjusted to anticipate potential risks associated with health conditions*.

Swimming Ability

Operation of craft limited to youth and adults who have completed the BSA swimmer classification. Exceptions allowed*.

Lifejackets

Properly fitted approved lifejackets worn by every boating participant*.

Buddy System

Every participant paired with another. Buddies always aware of each other's situation*.

Skill Proficiency

Everyone must have sufficient knowledge and skill to participate safely*.

Planning

Includes Preparation, Float Plan, Notification, Weather, and Contingencies*.

Equipment

All craft and equipment must meet regulations, be properly sized, and in good condition*.

Discipline

All participants should know, understand, and respect rules and procedures for safe boating*.

* These are summary highlights. Please see complete policy in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA



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BSA CUB SCOUT AQUATICS PROGRAM



Tiger Elective Adventure: Floats and Boats

Complete Requirements 1-4 plus at least one other.

1. With your den, say the SCOUT water safety chant.
2. With your den, talk about why it's important to have a buddy and then play the buddy game.
3. Show how to safely help someone who needs assistance in the water, without having to enter the water yourself.
4. Show how to enter the water safely, blow your breath out under the water, and do a prone glide.
5. Identify five different types of boats.
6. Build a boat from recycled materials and float it on the water.
7. Show that you can put on and fasten a life jacket correctly.



Bear Elective Adventure: Salmon Run

Complete requirements 1-4 plus two others.

1. Explain the importance of response personnel or lifeguards in a swimming area. Tell how the buddy system works and why it is important.
2. Visit a local pool or swimming area with your den or family. Go swimming or take a swimming lesson.
3. Explain the safety rules that you need to follow before participating in boating.
4. Identify the safety equipment needed when going boating.
5. Demonstrate correct rowing or paddling form. Explain how rowing and canoeing are good exercise.
6. Show how to do both a reach rescue and a throw rescue.
7. Demonstrate the front crawl swim stroke to your den or family.
8. Name the three swimming ability groups for the Boy Scouts of America.
9. Earn the BSA beginner swim classification.

NOTE: On the advancement trail, a Cub Scout progresses towards a badge of rank based on their grade. They need not have earned the previous rank in order to earn the next. Each of the ranks in Cub Scouting has its own requirements that are age appropriate, so earning a rank below a Cub Scout's current grade is not permitted. As a Cub Scout advances through the ranks, the requirements get more challenging, to match the new skills and abilities they have learned.



Wolf Elective Adventure: Spirit of the Water

Complete the following Requirements

1. Discuss how the water in your community can become polluted.
2. Explain one way that you can help conserve water in your home.
3. Explain to your den leader why swimming is good exercise.
4. Explain the safety rules that you need to follow before participating in swimming or boating.
5. Visit a local pool or public swimming area with your family or den. With qualified supervision, jump into water that is at least chest-high, and swim 25 feet or more.



Webelos/AOL Elective Adventure: Aquanaut

Complete Requirements 1-4 and at least two others.

1. State the safety precautions you need to take before doing any water activity.
2. Discuss the importance of learning the skills you need to know before going boating.
3. Explain the meaning of "order of rescue" and demonstrate the reach and throw rescue techniques from land.
4. Attempt the BSA swimmer test.
5. Demonstrate the precautions you must take before attempting to dive headfirst into the water and attempt a front surface dive.
6. Learn and demonstrate two of the following strokes: crawl, sidestroke, breaststroke, or elementary backstroke.
7. Invite a current or former lifeguard, or member of a rescue squad, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, or other armed forces branch who has had swimming and rescue training to your den meeting. Find out what training and other experiences this person has had.
8. Demonstrate how to correctly fasten a life jacket that is the right size for you. Jump into water over your head. Swim 25 feet wearing the life jacket. Get out of the water, remove the life jacket, and hang it where it will dry.
9. If you are a qualified swimmer, select a paddle of the proper size, and paddle a canoe with an adult's supervision.



2ND CLASS AQUATICS ADVANCEMENT



- 5a. Tell what precautions must be taken for a safe swim.
- 5b. Demonstrate your ability to pass the BSA beginner test: Jump feetfirst into water over your head in depth, level off and swim 25 feet on the surface, stop, turn sharply, resume swimming, then return to your starting place.
- 5c. Demonstrate water rescue methods by reaching with your arm or leg, by reaching with a suitable object, and by throwing lines and objects.
- 5d. Explain why swimming rescues should not be attempted when a reaching or throwing rescue is possible. Explain why and how a rescue swimmer should avoid contact with the victim.

1ST CLASS AQUATICS ADVANCEMENT



- 6a. Successfully complete the BSA swimmer test.
- 6b. Tell what precautions must be taken for a safe trip afloat.
- 6c. Identify the basic parts of a canoe, kayak, or other boat.
Identify the parts of a paddle or an oar.
- 6d. Describe proper body positioning in a watercraft, depending on the type and size of the vessel. Explain the importance of proper body position in the boat.
- 6e. With a helper and a practice victim, show a line rescue both as tender and as rescuer. (The practice victim should be approximately 30 feet from shore in deep water).

NOTE: These requirements may be checked off by a knowledgeable adult leader. Teaching / learning resources include *Scouts BSA Handbook, (#648103 or #648768)* and *Aquatic Supervision – a leaders guide to youth swimming and boating activities (#34346)*



SCOUTS BSA ADVANCEMENT

AQUATICS MERIT BADGES



SWIMMING MB (est. 1911) Rank #2 - 59,074* -- proficiency in several strokes as well as associated swimming and safety skills. A Scout must earn either Swimming, Hiking, or Cycling to qualify for Eagle Scout.



LIFESAVING MB (est. 1959) Rank #25 - 19,444* -- provides the Scout with a progression of water rescue techniques. Rescuer safety is a major emphasis of the program. A Scout must earn either Lifesaving or Emergency Preparedness to qualify for Eagle Scout.



ROWING MB (Est. 1933) Rank #67 - 7,198* -- covers basic rowing techniques applicable to both conventional and sliding seat rowing.



CANOEING MB (Est. 1927) Rank #24 - 22,734* -- designed to provide a Scout with both tandem and solo skills to safely and efficiently travel on flat water.



SMALL BOAT SAILING MB (Est. 1964) Rank #39 - 13,202* -- provides an introduction to basic sailing techniques and seamanship.



MOTORBOATING MB (Est. 1961) Rank #60 - 8,298* -- covers basic boat handling and safety. Scouts are not allowed to operate a motorboat without a counselor onboard and must adhere to state regulations which sometimes mandate additional age and skill requirements.



WATER SPORTS MB (Est. 1969/2007) Rank #116 - 2,762* -- has evolved from Waterskiing MB to include a wakeboard option. The MB requires basic proficiency on twin skis or a wakeboard.



WHITEWATER MB (Est. 1987) Rank #113 - 2,890* -- Whitewater merit badge extends skills learned in Canoeing merit badge to cover Class I and Class II flowing water. The requirements may be completed using kayaks or rafts as well as canoes. Specialized instruction is required for this merit badge.



SCUBA DIVING MB (Est. 2009) Rank #127 - 1,912* -- This exciting merit badge is oriented toward open water and associated safety procedures. The merit badge requires certification by an approved outside agency.



KAYAKING MB (Est. 2012) Rank #19 - 28,093* -- Emphasis is toward basic skills development and safety procedures. This MB can be earned in a variety of kayak types and requires basic skills

*2019 Stats



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BSA AQUATICS AWARDS

There are seven aquatics awards that are intended to be introductory and experiential for a given activity.

These include Mile Swim BSA, Snorkeling BSA, SCUBA BSA, Kayaking BSA, Boardsailing BSA, BSA Stand Up Paddleboarding, and Whitewater Rafting BSA.

These awards can be earned by Scouts BSA members, Venturers, Sea Scouts and Explorers, and adult leaders in these programs.

Aquatics Supervision is the guide for each of these awards and requirements and applications can be found in that book.

Counselors for Aquatics Awards should be approved by a council committee, preferably the Aquatics Committee.





AQUATIC SUPERVISION

Swimming & Water Rescue

Training for BSA Swimming & Water Rescue provides BSA leaders with information and skills to prevent, recognize, and respond to swimming emergencies during unit swimming activities. It expands the awareness instruction provided by Safe Swim Defense training.

Persons completing the training should be better able to assess their preparation to supervise unit swimming events. The BSA recommends that at least one person with this training is present to assist with supervision whenever a unit swims at a location that does not provide lifeguards.

This training is open to any registered adult leader, Scout, Venturer, or Explorer who is age 15 or older. A council approved instructor must directly supervise all training. The course takes approximately eight hours and is valid for three years.



Paddlecraft Safety

BSA Paddle Craft Safety expands Safety Afloat training to include the skills, as well as the knowledge, needed for a unit leader to confidently supervise canoeing or kayaking excursions.

The program contains four separate modules. Basic canoeing and basic kayaking options cover flat water skills. River canoeing and river kayaking options build on the basic programs to include moving water. Persons completing the training should be better prepared to supervise paddle craft activities.

The training is open to any registered adult leader, Scout, Venturer, Sea Scout, or Explorer who is age 15 or older. The training must be conducted by a council approved instructor and is valid for three years. Each module takes approximately eight hours.



BSA LIFEGUARD / AQUATICS INSTRUCTOR BSA



BSA LIFEGUARD

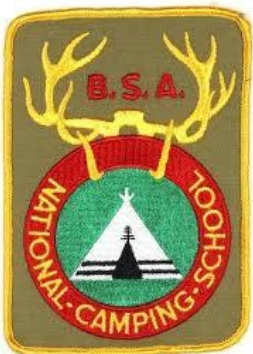
The primary purpose of the BSA Lifeguard training program is to provide professional lifeguards for BSA operated facilities, council aquatics committees, and year-round aquatics programming.

The program is open to all registered adults and youth, age 15 and older.



AQUATICS INSTRUCTOR BSA

BSA Aquatics Instructor is the highest level of training, achievement, and recognition for adults in Scouting aquatics. The training prepares adults for leadership roles in year-round aquatics programs and in summer camps.



BSA NATIONAL CAMPING SCHOOL

Aquatics Instructor BSA training is offered only in conjunction with a BSA National Camping School. The BSA typically conducts National Camping School sessions in the early spring.

BSA AQUATICS LEADERSHIP
COUNCIL AQUATICS

The recommended council-level leadership group is the formation of a Local Council Aquatics Committee.

The aquatics committee has overall responsibility for the local council's aquatics activities in Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Venturing, and Exploring. Within the local council organization, the aquatics committee reports to the vice president of program or to the vice president of health and safety.

Councils that do not have an active Aquatics Committee will perform these same responsibilities with another committee - the Camping Committee or Health and Safety Committee, perhaps.



AQUATICS PROGRAM CATEGORIES
ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

CUB SCOUT ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

Tiger , Wolf and Bear Elective

- Floats and Boats
- Spirit of the Water
- Salmon Run

District or Council Day Camps are a good opportunity for Tigers, Wolves and Bears to earn part or all of the electives for that rank.

Webelos (Aquanaut)

When Cub Scouts become fourth- graders or 10 years old, they join a Webelos den in their pack. Working toward the completion of requirements for the Aquanaut elective is a good activity for Webelos day camp or resident camp.

SCOUTS BSA ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

2nd and 1st Class Rank Requirements

Every BSA camp aquatics program should include an opportunity for completion of these advancement requirements. Ideally, the unit leader will give the tests. The summer camp personnel should encourage unit leadership to include swimming advancement in their unit program at camp.



Merit Badge Program

All merit badges are earned by Scouts working with a council approved counselor registered with the BSA.

Requirements and performance standards are provided by pamphlets for each merit badge. Counselors and instructors are expected to present and evaluate the skills as specified in those pamphlets.

Since special equipment is required for some of the aquatics merit badges, many of them are earned when the troop attends a weeklong summer camp with trained counselors on site. However, all may be earned year-round with a Scout and a buddy working with a counselor.



AQUATICS PROGRAM CATEGORIES
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

CUB SCOUT INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

Non-Swimmer Instruction

The BSA does not currently have an organized learn-to-swim program. Non-swimmer instruction, however, is still a vital part of a scout's aquatics progress.

Cub Scouts generally spend fewer days in camp; therefore, the number of swimming sessions is also fewer. For many Cubs this may be their only structured swimming time for the year. Every effort should be made to familiarize the Cubs with the progression of skills they will need to follow on their way to becoming a swimmer.

These skills are explained in detail in *Aquatic Supervision*.

Beginner Instruction

Beginner instruction for Cubs centers on the development of skills required for the Aquanaut Elective, specifically requirement #5 of attempting the BSA swimmers test and requirement #7 of demonstrating two swimming strokes.

Since Cubs' attention spans are shorter than older boys the instructor could break up instruction with other activities such as reaching rescues, life jacket use or surface dives.



Swimmer Instruction

Fewer Cub Scouts will be ready for advanced instruction in swimming than Boy Scouts; however, provision should be made for those who are ready.

Cubs who have passed the Beginners test should work toward those skills used in passing the Swimmers test.

Boat Handling Instruction

Rowing instruction should cover how to row, backwater, stop, turn, change places within the boat, and what to do if the boat capsizes. Before entering the boat, instruction should be given on proper use of life jackets. Staff members should check the life jackets the Cubs wear before allowing them into the boats. Provision must also be made to ensure that the Cubs' lifejackets are properly fitted.

All boating activities for cub scouts must be done on flat, still water.

SCOUTS BSA INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

Non-Swimmer Instruction

The importance of an effective non-swimmer program is emphasized in Scouts BSA camps since rank advancement is tied to the ability to pass the beginners test.



Convenient non-swimmer instructional sessions should be scheduled daily.

While the same progression of skills listed for Cubs applies to Scouts BSA, the instructor should keep in mind that these boys have gone 5 or more additional years without learning to swim. The reason for this could be as simple as lack of opportunity; however, there could be additional underlying causes.

Adult leaders should be encouraged to accompany their scouts to non-swimmer instruction. This not only helps with the camp instruction but also allows the leader to develop strategies that he/she can use throughout the year.

Beginner Instruction

Beginner instruction in Scouts BSA camps should focus on those aquatic skills necessary for advancement -- increasing distance for the swimmers test, back stroke, floating, and elementary rescues. Often 2nd and 1st Class advancement is encouraged by providing camp programs aimed specifically at those scouts - Trail to Eagle or EagleQuest programs, for example. Aquatics staff members should be actively involved in and supportive of those programs.

Swimmer Instruction

In a Scouts BSA camp, a scout who has passed the swimmers test will usually enroll in an aquatics merit badge rather than request additional swimming instruction.



This doesn't mean that the occasional scout or unit won't request swimming instruction separate from merit badge instruction. If possible, these requests should be honored.

Boat Handling Instruction

Boat handling demonstrations are a good idea for any camp where open boating is offered. Some topics that should be covered include:

- Use of life jackets
- Selection of equipment
- Launching and Landing
- Getting under way
- Basic maneuvers -- turning, stopping, backing up, moving sideways
- Emergency Procedures

These topics should be covered for each type of craft in camp. This can be done as a single session or in multiple short demos.

Troop Swim

Every unit should be encouraged to schedule a troop swim -- the troop conducts a swimming activity using its own adult leadership and response personnel. This is usually done separate from the regular program -- either at non-program times or, possibly in a remote location.

Unit leaders should have been trained in Safe Swim Defense. Staff instruction should be made available to units conducting troop swims.



AQUATICS PROGRAM CATEGORIES
RECREATIONAL PROGRAM

CUB SCOUT RECREATION PROGRAM

Theme Camp Activities

- Cub Scout resident camp programs are based on annual themes, such as Sea Adventures, Athlete, Folklore, The World Around Us, etc, that follow a minimum four year cycle. Aquatics program activities should support that year's theme.
- Participation in a "tournament" can be the culmination of a week of activities in which Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts in each ability group have learned new swimming skills and strokes and the importance of Safe Swim Defense. In planning a tournament, make time for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts to demonstrate reaching and throwing rescues or to participate in a capsized boat demonstration.
- Many day camps award beads, feathers, "gold" nuggets, or other incentives for daily activities. These can be used to reward the learning of new skills and participation in safety demonstrations. Everyone can demonstrate reaching and throwing rescues. Non-swimmers can earn a bead for a jellyfish float or a prone glide; beginners can receive the same bead by demonstrating a flutter kick or a back float; and swimmers can earn the bead by demonstrating a surface dive or a swimming stroke.



Open Swim

Open swims for Cub Scouts often involve a large percentage of non-swimmers. Care must be taken to maintain guard ratios.

Cubs also involve a large number of adults -- leaders and parents. These adults can be used effectively to help monitor areas or control traffic.

These adults can also be used to help with the check-in of their Cubs and to reinforce the buddy system.

Open Boating

Open boating for Cubs, if program permits, is more structured than for Scouts BSA. The high percentage of non-swimmers means that the craft they are allowed into is limited -- mainly to rowboats.

Some camps have extended the number of craft available to Cubs by securing two canoes side by side into a type of catamaran. By using a couple of 10-ft spars (2 x 4's work well) across the fore and aft thwarts the two canoes are far enough apart to make the craft very stable.

All boating activities for cub scouts must be done on flat, still water.



SCOUTS BSA RECREATION PROGRAM

Open Swim

Every Scout should be encouraged to take some time to just "go swimmin' ". Scouts BSA's often work so hard on advancement that this fun swim is overlooked.

Schedule open swim times whenever the swimming facility is not tied up with instruction, especially during the heat of the day.

If multiple activities are scheduled at the same time -- open swim and Swimming merit badge instruction, for example -- extra care must be taken to ensure proper check-in and buddy check procedures.

Open Boating

Just like for open swim Scouts BSA should be encouraged to participate in open boating. If staffing allows, the boating area should be open all the time during program hours, either for instruction or for open boating.

The goal of the aquatics staff should be to have all boats on the water during open boating.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

AQUATICS PROCEDURES

Rules and Procedures

Regulatory Hierarchy

Risk Management

Conflict Resolution

Working with Youth

Working with Adults

Scouts with Disabilities

Swim Classification Tests

Administering Swim Tests

General Operating Procedures

Check-in Procedures

The Buddy Tag

In-Board / Out Board

Gate Operation

Buddy Checks

Lost Buddy Tags

The Odd Scout

Boating Area Procedures

Check-In Procedures

Lifejackets

Buddy Boats



RULES AND PROCEDURES

The objective behind all aquatics rules and procedures has three parts:

- to assure that the **best possible program** is. . .
- delivered in a **safe Scouting environment** that. . .
- **encourages** the youth **members** and their units **to participate** in aquatics activity.

Before proceeding we should consider and fully appreciate the nature of the responsibility and where it rests.

For purposes of illustration, consider the rules and procedures pertaining to entry and exit from swimming areas at a summer camp waterfront or swimming pool.

Responsibility for operation of the check-in and checkout procedures rests with the aquatics program staff. If the gate and "in" board are properly managed, no camper will pass in or out of the area without a tag and a buddy.

It would be irresponsible to rely on Scouts -- many of whom are no more than 11 years old, first-time campers, and wholly unaccustomed to using a buddy tag -- to make the mechanics of the buddy system work.

The first point of the *Safe Swim Defense, Qualified Supervision*, recognizes that children who are having fun with friends in the water are not likely to be fully competent to protect their own health and safety.

We are serving the youth. We do not expect the youth to do our job. Certainly, we do not initiate punitive measures. Doing so may discourage enthusiasm for aquatics, camping, and Scouting.

Most of the rules and procedures that apply to Scouting aquatics are determined at the national level and will be uniform across the country, but a significant amount of policy will arise from the way in which the individual program is planned and conducted.

This local policy is necessary because of those concerns and circumstances that vary with each camp, but determination of this policy should be considered carefully in terms of the general policy objective.



Your Aquatic Director will work with Camp Management and Council Leadership to establish the rules and procedures for the local camp program.

Remember that rules and procedures are to serve the program, not the convenience of the staff



REGULATORY HEIRARCHY

There are three levels at which rules and procedures are established in the Aquatics area:

1. **Laws and Ordinances** -- this is usually established at the state level, often through the Health Department. Occasionally, a local ordinance will be in effect that is not covered by state law.
2. **BSA National Policies** -- The most obvious of these policies are Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat. Occasionally there are BSA policies that apply to specific activities -- SCUBA for instance. Your Aquatics Director will cover the BSA Policies with you.
3. **Local Camp or Council Policies** -- Each camp, being a unique facility, will have some policies and procedures that are in effect to make that particular facility operate more efficiently or for an added measure of safety. These local policies or rules should be written but are sometimes passed on verbally. If possible, specific rules for a given facility should be posted so that all participants can review them.

In cases where policies overlap, for instance BSA Policy and state law might cover the same topic. In these cases, go with the more stringent policy. This is a camp management / aquatic director decision.



RISK MANAGEMENT

The following section is taken from *Lifeguarding Manual*; © American Red Cross, 2012, 2016.

While the legal concepts discussed here apply specifically to lifeguards, they also pertain to other aquatic staff situations. You should discuss these concepts with your Aquatic Director.

"DUTY TO ACT"

While on the job, a lifeguard has a legal responsibility to act in an emergency

STANDARD OF CARE

Lifeguards are expected to meet a minimum standard of care, which may be established in part by their training program and in part by state or local authorities. This standard requires lifeguards to -

- Communicate proper information and warnings to help prevent injuries,
- Recognize a victim in need of care
- Attempt to rescue a victim needing assistance,
- Provide emergency care according to their level of training

NEGLIGENCE

If a lifeguard fails to follow the standard of care or fails to act, which results in someone being injured or causes further harm to the victim, the lifeguard may be considered negligent.

Negligence includes -

- Failing to provide care
- Providing care beyond the scope of practice or level of training
- Providing inappropriate care
- Failing to control or stop any behaviors that could result in further harm or injury"



Other legal considerations which are also discussed in lifeguard training include:

ABANDONMENT

Once you begin a rescue or care of a victim you must continue that care until someone with equal or greater training takes over.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is often necessary for aquatics staff members to have health information about scouts which might affect their well-being at the waterfront. This information must be kept in strict confidence and only shared with those who need to know.

DOCUMENTATION

Accidents and incidents involving the health and safety of scouts must be documented. Camp management will have instructions for you should this become necessary.

Bear in mind that questions about an incident might not arise until weeks or even months after the fact. It is always good practice to make notes that include scouts name, unit number, date and time of incident, witnesses, care given, events that led up to the incident, follow-up care and who took over from you. Keep a copy of these notes.

Always inform your director and/or health officer of any first aid or rescue given, no matter how simple it seems at the time. Even the application of a band-aid needs to be entered in the camp's first aid log.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION GENERAL

Conflict Is Inevitable

In summer camp, as in all other human situations, conflict is inevitable. We try to avoid it but, sooner or later, conflict will occur. Perhaps the conflict will be between scouts, staff members or even adult leaders. You should discuss with your director the ways you could handle the conflicts which occur.

An aquatic staff member's normal duties include teaching, active surveillance, rule enforcement, and emergency response.

During all these activities you will be interacting with scouts, leaders, and other staff members.

During this interaction you will inform, educate, provide correction, give advice, offer assistance, and, yes, resolve conflicts.

It is important that you do not cause or aggravate the conflict by your actions as a staff member

When you give instructions keep them simple and to-the-point. Check to be sure that your instructions are understood.

If necessary, explain the reason behind the instructions. "Because I said so.." or "That's just the way it is.." don't go very far when a scout truly doesn't understand why he is being asked to do something a certain way.

Always avoid causing conflict with unclear instructions or unprofessional demeanor.



Correcting Behavior

When it becomes necessary for you to correct the behavior of a scout be polite and positive. Explain the reason for your concern. If possible, offer alternatives.

Body Language

Your body language should convey an attitude of friendliness to all scouts and scouters. While there should be no doubt that you will follow all rules and procedures scouts should not be reluctant to approach you with questions or concerns.

- Smile -- this can't be emphasized enough.
- Eye Contact (Sunglasses) -- Get in the habit of removing sunglasses, if possible, when talking to small groups or individuals.
- Don't jab finger or move into personal space -
 - This can make the situation worse.
- Don't stand over a child -- This can be intimidating to a small scout or especially to Cubs.
- Kneel or sit to get at eye level --

When Conflicts Arise With Scouts Or Between Scouts

- Keep your voice and demeanor calm
- Ask the scout to explain the situation
- Show that you understand by paraphrasing or restating what he said
- Offer any apparent solution
- Suggest cooling off period . . . Then further discussion.
- Use the scout's adult leader if he or she is available

Rather than acting on impulse, you should first clarify the likely cause of the conflict and **determine an appropriate response**. Useful mnemonics, memory aids, to guide yourself through that evaluation include:

P.A.C.A.

- What's the **P**roblem?
- What are the **A**lternatives?
- What are the **C**onsequences?
- What's the **A**ction?

-- Source: YMCA

- Name Pro's and Con's of Each Solution
- **D**ecide Which Solution to Implement

-- Source: America Red Cross



Most scouts are well-behaved and respectful of authority . . .

However . . .

Have A Plan For Breaches Of Discipline

- Know what you will do if Scouts don't follow procedures
- Know how to avoid conflict and how to respond when it occurs
- Be Fair and Consistent

Levels Of Intervention

- Scouts
- Aquatic Staff
- Aquatic Director
- Unit Leaders
- Camp Management

E.A.P.'S

- Have an emergency action plan for extreme breaches of discipline or violations of procedure
- Safety must not be compromised
- De-escalate the situation to the point where it is "merely" a conflict



CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKING WITH YOUTH

This is why you are here. It is extremely important that you develop the ability to interact in a positive manner with scouts. You may already do this with members of your troop or crew but now you will be working with scouts you don't know and you only have them for a short time.

We can provide guidelines but when all is said and done it has to work for you. Always work to improve your ability to work with the scouts.

- Don't set yourself apart. You are a staff member but you're **just** a staff member. You are still one of them.
- Always be "on". As soon as you leave your quarters in the morning you must be ready to fulfill your important role. You can't say "I'm not a morning person". Those scouts you encounter on the trail won't understand that you didn't sleep well or that the staff showers ran out of hot water -- they simply want and deserve a positive experience from a chance encounter with a staff member.
- Acknowledge every scout. This is tough sometimes. You come across so many and often they are in groups. A friendly greeting is always appropriate. Always be on the lookout for the scouts who stand off to the side or hang back from the group --- they're the ones who could really benefit from a "How 'ya doin'?" or maybe a staff member noticing their cool walking stick.
- Adjust for age groups. See the following section
- Be sincere.



When working with youth it is very important to understand that different age groups act and react differently. This is true whether you are in a teaching situation or trying to resolve conflict.

AGE CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH

7, 8, 9, 10 Year Old's

- Usually in second through fifth grades
- Very enthusiastic, hardly ever bored
- Not self-conscious; will participate in activities easily. Enjoy dramatics, dressing up, storytelling.
- Short attention spans; 1/2 hour activities are best; longer projects should be spread over several days or weeks; short sessions in garden and berry picking can be productive
- Tires quickly and can get easily discouraged
- Curious; eager to learn about new things and explore; interested in animals, though may be a little frightened
- Usually have a large number of friends; friendships generally are not long-lasting
- Beginning to form clubs and groups
- Usually away from home for the first time; still very tied to parents
- Seeks out the companionship, direction, and approval of adults; will seldom take direction from peers; will do almost anything if it is with an adult; usually very helpful
- Coordination and skill development are primitive; has trouble doing fine muscle or precise tasks
- Developing self-reliance and self-confidence
- Learning through roles, observing adults; mimic the actions and roles of adults important to them
- Easily motivated through the fun approach
- Likes repetition; often enjoy the same songs, foods, and activities
- Not time conscious; has little concept of time
- Too much excitement or activity can make them nervous or feel overwhelmed
- Tend to believe, accept statements, stories as literally true; undeveloped ability to discriminate between fact and fiction; often believe that fantasy characters are real

11, 12, 13 Year Old's

- Usually in sixth through eighth grades
- Period of great physiological development
- Very peer oriented; like their own age group; cluster in same age, same sex cliques; prefer group activities to individual ones
- Beginning interest in opposite sex; consciousness of dress and grooming, fearful of actual interaction with opposite sex
- Developing fine motor skills and coordination
- Secrets and mystery are important; important to be in the "in" group
- Curious; eager for information; beginning to develop ability to discriminate truth and misinformation; able to evaluate; beginning to think logically; can understand the importance and responsibility of being a group member
- Beginning to be self-conscious about participating in some activities
- Enjoy physical activities
- Longer attention spans; can concentrate on activities for longer periods; can work on projects individually or with peers
- Conscious of fairness and equal division of work and adult attention
- Developing a sense of humor
- Able to plan and make decisions individually and democratically in a group; enjoy planning and organizing activities such as pow-wows
- Excited and enthusiastic about learning to care for themselves; enjoy cooking and other small camp activities
- Conscious of privileges of older campers
- Enjoy talking about themselves, homes, and families

14, 15, 16 Year Old's

- Usually in ninth through eleventh grades
- Can be tremendous differences between these ages
- Period of self-exploration - who am I? Where and how do I fit in?
- Peer relationships and acceptance are important - may try to conform to group
- Approach to opposite sex done in groups - security in numbers
- Slow physical pace
- Can be moody
- Want to experience new things; need to do routine things in different ways
- Want to be self-reliant and independent; often claim privileges but not ready for or willing to take on responsibilities
- Able to decide upon, plan, and organize group's activities
- Like to socialize, talk with other group members
- Value peer evaluation over parental/counselor evaluation
- Want to consider counselors as friends rather than parents; wanting to break away from parents
- Self-conscious, don't want to appear as if they don't know the answer; don't want to be embarrassed
- Able to evaluate selves/group/activities
- Able to participate in extended projects for longer periods of time
- Concerned with physical appearance, hair, clothes, etc.
- Tend to think that they can take care of themselves/know what is best for themselves



CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKING WITH LEADERS

WORKING WITH LEADERS

In working with unit leaders, it is important to remember that summer camp is only part of their program. They are the ones who work year-round with their scouts. Treat unit leaders with respect, much as you would a teacher or a coach. A few guidelines:

- Acknowledge unit leaders whenever you encounter them. Say "Hi" to them on the trail; ask how they're doing; is there anything you can help them with? When a unit leader approaches you, make it a practice to "Stand, Smile, and Shake." If you are seated, Stand. Standing shows respect and helps you to establish eye contact. Smile as you make eye contact. That will demonstrate your desire to be helpful. And finally, if you feel it's appropriate, extend your hand in a handshake, and introduce yourself. Welcome him or her to the program area or ask how you may be of assistance.
- Address unit leaders by title and last name -- Mr. Jones, Mrs. Smith. If you know them well or they request that you call them by first name that is OK.
- Keep unit leaders informed. Let them know if any of their scouts are struggling with merit badges or swimming skills. Also, let them know when you catch one of their scouts doing well.
- All aquatics staff should keep their Aquatics Director updated on any problems encountered with Scouts or Leaders. The Aquatics Director or Camp Management should deal with situations involving leaders who are upset with policy or procedure.

The aquatics program can always make good use of additional personnel. The unit leader's first responsibility is to the leader's own unit, of course, but frequently a unit leader will have some spare time and will express an interest in lending



assistance. Unit leaders should always be made to feel welcome in the program area even if just there to observe and encourage youth from their unit.

Some unit leaders have experience in Scouting aquatics and with a bit of review can help as skill instructors. But even without special experience a unit leader is usually a mature and responsible resource who can be used effectively for supervision. Such participation can also be a valuable learning experience for the adult responsible for the unit's aquatics activity year-round.

Unit leaders should always be asked and encouraged to participate in nonswimmer instruction with members of their own unit. Scouting aquatics has no higher purpose than teaching basic skills to youths who are nonswimmers. By participating in summer camp instruction for nonswimmers, the unit leader will develop knowledge and teaching skills for use throughout the year. Also, nonswimmer instruction is significantly enhanced by personal contact and attention. More instructors mean more learner self-confidence and more learning.

Occasionally a youth will need special consideration. In these circumstances, the unit leader (who knows the youth personally and is familiar with the background of the scout) should be asked to assist the aquatics program personnel.

Unit leaders are helpful in program planning and evaluation, and their suggestions always should be solicited. They are also frequently willing to help out (either individually or by organizing a unit project) with program area improvements, equipment repair, or maintenance of facilities.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION SCOUTS WITH DISABILITIES

The following section is excerpted from the BSA publication INTRODUCTION to WORKING WITH Scouts With Special Needs and Disabilities (#510-071). This publication is written for the unit leader but many of the guidelines are appropriate for the camp situation. Discuss these guidelines with your Aquatics Director.

"The best guide to working with Scouts who have special needs and disabilities is to use common sense. It's obvious that a Scout in a wheelchair may have problems fulfilling a hiking requirement, but it might not be so obvious when it comes to a Scout with a learning disability. Use the resources around you."

"The basic premise of Scouting with disabilities is that everyone wants to participate fully and be treated and respected like every other member of the unit."

"Many Scouts with disabilities can accomplish the basic skills of Scouting, but they may require extra time to learn them. Working with these Scouts can require patience and understanding on the part of unit leaders and other Scouts."

"II. Giving Instruction to Scouts With Disabilities

- *Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction (except when this is inappropriate in the Scout's culture or if this is not possible).*
- *Make directions clear and concise. Be consistent with instructions.*
- *Simplify complex directions. Give one or two steps at a time.*
- *Make sure the Scout comprehends the instructions before beginning the task.*
- *Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner, if needed.*
- *Help the Scout feel comfortable with seeking assistance.*
- *Encourage other Scouts to actively participate in helping disabled Scouts become enabled—it will be rewarding for both parties.*

III. Providing Supervision and Discipline

- *Listening is an important technique that means giving the Scout an opportunity to express himself or herself. Whether as a part of the*



group or in conversation, be patient, be understanding, and take seriously what the Scout has to say. Keep yourself attuned and use phrases like, "You really feel that way?" or "If I understand you right."

- *Address behavioral problems that radiate potential, undue criticism or bullying. Remember, often the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, and positive constructive responses are more effective.*
- *Remain calm, state the infraction of the rule, and avoid debating or arguing with the Scout.*
- *When a Scout is behaving in an unacceptable manner, try the "timeout" strategy or redirect the Scout's behavior.*
- *Administer consequences immediately and recognize proper behavior frequently.*
- *Make sure the discipline fits the offense and is not unduly harsh.*
- *Enforce unit rules consistently.*
- *Do not reward inappropriate behavior. Praise when the Scout exerts real effort, even if unsuccessful, and/or when he or she shows improvement over a previous performance. Never praise falsely.*
- *Do not accept blaming others as an excuse for poor performance. Make it clear that you expect the Scout to answer for his or her own behavior.*
- *Behavior is a form of communication. Look for what the behavior is saying (i.e., does the Scout want attention?)."*



SWIM CLASSIFICATION TESTS

Participation in most aquatic activities requires the scout or unit leader to pass a swim classification test. There is a test for *beginners* and a separate test for *swimmers*.

A scout need not take the beginners test before attempting the swimmers test. If he feels confident, he may take the swimmers test at the outset. However, the test administrator needs to confirm by verbal query and visual clues that the participant is truly experienced in deep water.

Swim classification tests are to be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of each swimming season.

SWIMMER TEST

The swimmer test demonstrates the minimum level of swimming ability required for safe deep-water swimming. Each test must be taken without aid or support (e.g. lifejacket, fins, wetsuit, etc.). Swim goggles may be worn to protect against eye irritation. The various components of the test evaluate the several different skills essential to this minimum level of swimming ability. A precise statement of the test is as follows:

Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth, swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; then swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be completed in one swim and include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating.



The test administrator must objectively evaluate the individual performance of the test and in so doing should keep in mind the purpose of each test element.

1. "Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth, ..."

The swimmer must be able to make an abrupt entry into deep water and begin swimming without any aids. Walking in from shallow water, easing in from the edge or down a ladder, pushing off from side or bottom, and gaining forward momentum by diving do not satisfy this requirement.

2.". ..swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; ..."

The swimmer must be able to cover distance with a strong, confident stroke. The 75 yards must not be the outer limit of the swimmer's ability; completion of the distance should give evidence of sufficient stamina to avoid undue risks. Dog-paddling and strokes repeatedly interrupted and restarted are not sufficient; underwater swimming is not permitted. The itemized strokes are inclusive. Any strong side or breaststroke, or any strong overarm stroke (including the back crawl) are acceptable.

"3. ..swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke. ..."

The swimmer must indicate ability to execute a restful, free-breathing backstroke that can be used to avoid exhaustion during swimming activity. This element of the test necessarily follows the more strenuous swimming activity to show that the swimmer is in fact able to use the backstroke as a relief from exertion. The change of stroke must be accomplished in deep water without any push off or other aid. Any variation of the elementary backstroke is acceptable. An overarm back crawl may suffice, if it clearly provides opportunity for the swimmer to rest and catch his or her breath.

"4. ..The 100 yards must be completed in one swim and include at least one sharp turn. ..."

The total distance is to be covered without rest stops. The sharp turn demonstrates the swimmer's ability to reverse direction in deep water without assistance or push-off from side or bottom.



"5. ..After completing the swim, rest by floating."

This critically important component of the test evaluates the swimmer's ability to maintain in the water indefinitely even though exhausted or otherwise unable to continue swimming. Treading water or swimming in place will further tire the swimmer and are therefore unacceptable. The duration of the float test is not significant, except that it must be long enough for the test administrator to determine that the swimmer is in fact resting and could likely continue to do so for a prolonged period. Drownproofing may be sufficient if clearly restful, but is not preferred. If the test is completed except for the floating requirement, the swimmer may be retested on the floating only (after instruction) provided that the test administrator is confident that the swimmer can initiate the float when exhausted.

BEGINNER TEST

A precise statement of the beginner test is as follows:

Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth, level off, and swim 25 feet on the surface, stop, turn sharply, resume swimming, then return to starting place.

The entry and turn serve the same purpose as in the swimmer test. The swimming can be done with any stroke, but no underwater swimming is permitted. The stop assures that the swimmer can regain the stroke if it is interrupted. The test demonstrates that the beginning swimmer is ready to learn deep-water skills and has the minimum ability required for safe swimming in a confined area in which shallow water, sides, or other support are less than 25 feet from any point on the water.



ADMINISTERING SWIM TESTS

ADMINISTERING SWIM TESTS

As an aquatics staff member, you will be asked to administer many swim tests over the period of the summer.

Some aspects of test administration are unique to the camp, such as how many lengths of the dock equals 100 yards. These will be covered by your director. Some things common to all swim tests – either Beginners tests or Swimmers tests -- include:

- The swimmer and the tester are a buddy pair. **All swim checks must be administered one-on-one.**
- The tester should have the swimmers buddy tag and mark it at the end of the test. If it is a single test the tester might color red and/or blue. If it is one of several tests the tester might mark a "B" or an "S" on the tag and send the scout to a central location on the beach for someone else to color it.
- The tester should make sure the scout understands the test. A quick review is a good idea even if someone else has already explained the test to the entire group. After you are sure the Scout understands the test say something such as "When you are ready you may jump in and begin."
- The tester should make an effort to determine the scout's confidence level. Asking something as simple as "Can you swim?" can go a long way in determining a scout's thoughts about the test. Many of the responses will be non-verbal.
- The tester should not hold things such as clipboards, water bottles, etc. during the test. Lifeguarding equipment such as a reach pole, ring buoy or rescue tube, if not carried during the test should be readily available.
- Assists when needed should be quick and discreet. Youths should swim parallel to the pier or pool edge, and they should be within 10 to 12 feet from the edge at all times. The buddy system is working -- the youth and the test administrator are buddies.



- As with all BSA requirements do not add to or omit any of the parts of the test -- every part is important. The tester has a certain amount of discretion in the process, such as if a Scout chokes on water and grabs the side momentarily the tester could make the decision that the scout was swimming strongly at that point and allow him to continue. The tester could also determine that the Scout used the side for support and to catch his breath and ask him to repeat the test later.

If a Scout does not pass the test, do everything possible to encourage the scout. Retakes should be made available at the earliest opportunity. The tester should use the test to recommend a type of instruction -- such as Beginner swimming instruction -- to the Scout.

Again, discuss the specific procedures for your camp with your Aquatic Director. More suggestions for administering swim test can be found in *Aquatic Supervision*.

PRE-CAMP SWIM CHECKS

Traditionally, the swim classification test is conducted at long-term summer camp, but there is no policy that restricts the camp from accepting unit swim classifications conducted prior to camp. Such an option offers the advantage of also testing those in the unit not attending camp, helps relieve some of the first-day burden on the troop and the camp, and helps the unit with swimming requirements for rank advancement.

For swim tests conducted outside of camp the following applies:

SWIM TESTS FOR COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Swim tests for ***council activities*** are conducted following procedures approved by a council-level committee, preferably the Council Aquatics Committee. The council committee should use the guidance contained in *BSA Aquatics Management Guide*.



REGARDLESS OF WHERE OR WHEN THE SWIM TEST IS GIVEN THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES APPLY:

- The test is given one-on-one. The test administrator and the swimmer are buddies during the administration of the test.
- Each component of the test is important. The test must not be changed either to assist the Scout or to expedite the process.
- The test must be completed without aid or support, such as lifejackets, wetsuits, fins, etc. Swim goggles may be used to avoid eye irritation.
- Swim tests must be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of the outdoor season.

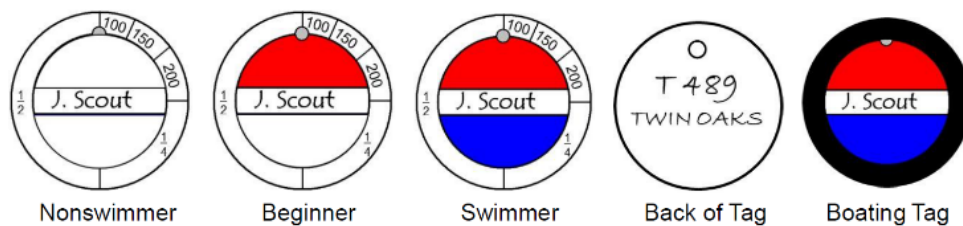


CHECK-IN PROCEDURES THE BUDDY TAG

For all aquatic activities in summer camp a check-in system must be developed. For temporary day camps with few campers this system could be rather simple -- popsicle sticks with the scout's name, even an adult leader with a check-in sheet.

Whatever system is used it must be clear which Scouts are checked in and which area they are check in to.

Most camps use the system of buddy tags placed on a board which has hooks arranged into groups that correspond to the swimming areas or the boating craft. This is the recommended system.



Buddy tags must be filled out with the Scout's name on the front and colored to reflect the Scout's swimming ability (all white, red, or red/blue).

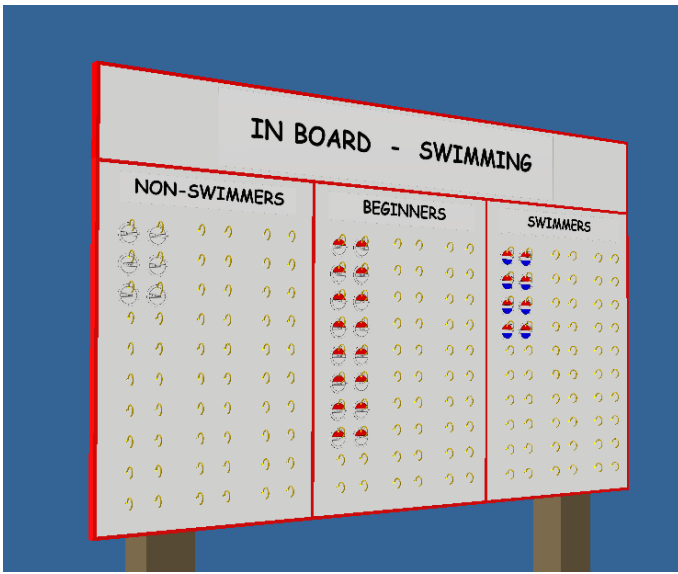
On the back the Scout's troop number and campsite must be listed. This information becomes vital when a tag is left on a buddy board after an activity or when a tag is found blown off the buddy board.

The information on the tag must be legible. In an aquatic environment it sometimes becomes difficult to even get the pen to write, let alone make it readable. Also, weathering and repeated use during the week make tags even more difficult to read. Tags that are illegible must be replaced.

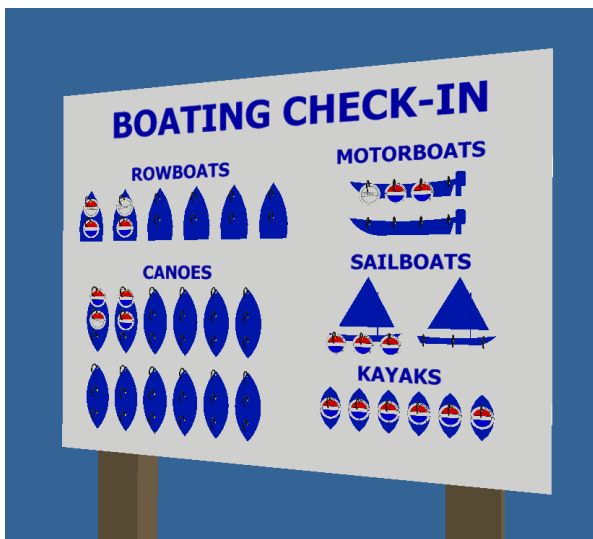
Most camps use one set of tags; however, if the boating area is separate from the swimming area a separate set of boating tags could be used.



CHECK-IN PROCEDURES IN-BOARD / OUT-BOARD

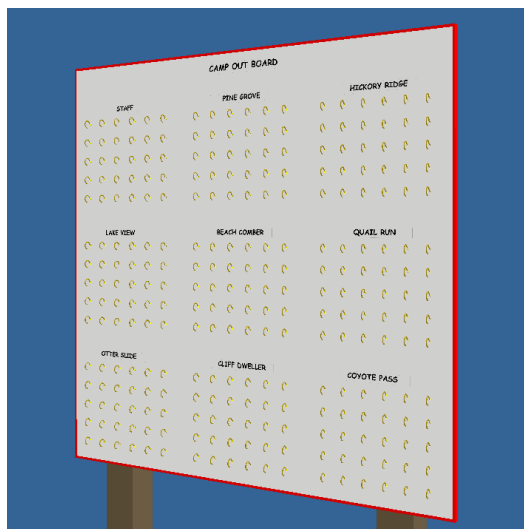


To hang tags, start with the backside facing out, then flip it over. Scouts will need to be shown the process. Otherwise you may find that a helpful Scout has turned all the hooks up. If the hooks are up, the tags will blow off in a breeze



Boating In-Boards usually have outlines of the available craft. The number of hooks on each craft should correspond with the maximum number of occupants allowed aboard each.

You could stretch a rubber band or a string around the hooks of adjacent boats to visually indicate buddy boats.



A convenient way to store tags when not in use is a camp wide "Out" board. Arranged by campsite this keeps the tags at the waterfront, so they are less likely to be misplaced.

It is OK for Scouts to keep their tags on their person or, especially for Cubs, for the adult leader to collect all tags for safe keeping.



CHECK-IN PROCEDURES GATE OPERATION

GATE OPERATION

Both the swimming area and the boating area will have a gate of some kind. The efficient and controlled flow of scouts through these gates is very important. These gates should be a visual, if not a physical barrier -- as simple as a rope spanning across the entrance or as complex as a gate with a latch.

The gate should always be manned when the area is open. If possible, this should be a dedicated assignment rather than doubling up with another assignment. This person's attention should always be on the check-in / check-out procedure.

The gatekeeper should consider the following:

- Ask groups that are waiting to congregate **away** from the gate. This applies to groups that are checking out as well as those checking in. Excited scouts in large groups tend to confuse the situation and often cause mistakes to be made especially by inexperienced scouts.
- Allow only one buddy group at a time to approach the board. Ask them to hold their tag up as they approach the board and as they leave. This simply provides the gate person with a visual confirmation.

Allow each scout (or leader) to handle **only his** own tag. Note that Cub leaders sometimes keep the tags for their den or pack with them and hand them out immediately before the Cubs enter the area. This is OK but it is important that the Cub check in himself.

The gatekeeper must be patient as scouts learn how to hang tags on a cup hook that is pointing down. The instructions of "Start it backward, flip it up and over" will be made over and over. An early explanation of why the hooks point down -- so the wind is less likely to blow them off -- will help.



If the gatekeeper is distracted, perhaps by a leader asking a question, he/she should stop traffic through the gate until done. This can be done discreetly but it is important that the gatekeeper's undivided attention be given to the gate.

At the end of a swimming or boating session all guards and supervisors should remain on duty in the area until the board is clear. When all scout and leader tags are off the board the gate keeper should call "Board clear!"

CHECK-IN SWIMMING

As swimmers approach the gate, either for open swimming or for instruction, they should already be in buddy groups. They should also know which area - nonswimmers, beginners or swimmers - they wish to check into.

The gatekeeper should show them where to place their tags, observe that they do so correctly and allow them into the area.



CHECK-IN PROCEDURES BUDDY CHECK

Periodically, especially during open swimming activities, buddy checks must be performed. These checks reinforce the concept of the buddy system to the scouts and confirm to the staff that all those checked into the area are accounted for.

The frequency of buddy checks is about 10 minutes or as the supervisor deems necessary. If only a few scouts are swimming and it is easy to visually confirm the count, then it might only be necessary a couple of times per swim period. If there are a lot of swimmers then the supervisor might call for more frequent checks.

- At the signal for the buddy check, usually a horn or a whistle, scouts are given a few seconds to get with their buddy and clasp hands overhead. At this time scouts should come to a stationary point, either standing or holding onto the sides. Some directors may even want them to exit the water.
- As soon as all buddy groups are stationary, guards should begin counting buddy groups in their area.
- The gatekeeper calls out "Non-swimmers, how many?" and the guard for that area responds with the number of buddy groups. The gatekeeper either calls out "Check!" or "Count again, please".
- If the non-swimmer count checks out the gatekeeper continues in the same manner for the Beginner and Swimmer areas. A successful buddy check should take less than a minute from start to finish
- If the number of buddy groups returned by the guard is not the same as the number checked in, then the guard is asked to recount. The gatekeeper should not provide the correct number. If the recount doesn't check the gatekeeper should probably go ahead and check the other areas' count but the supervisor or director should be notified. Miscounts are often simply a case of scouts swimming in an area different than they checked into.



- If miscounts aren't quickly remedied, then some type of emergency plan will be implemented. These plans are discussed in a later Unit of this guide.

Buddy checks for instructional sessions usually take place within that group and are the responsibility of the instructor.



CHECK-IN PROCEDURES LOST BUDDY TAG

A common problem on any waterfront is that of lost buddy tags. Scouts misplace them, the wind blows them, and sometimes they just seem to vaporize. Replacement of a lost tag involves two steps.

- **Confirmation of health check, and**
- **Confirmation of swimming ability**

If the aquatics staff maintains a troop roster for these items on day one it is usually a simple matter to check the roster and simply issue a new tag.

Unit records may suffice for health history and maybe even swimming classification, but the unit leader would need to be present to confirm those records.

Merit badge records could also be used for these checks after the first MB session.

The camp must develop a system of quickly confirming both health history and swimming classification so that time spent replacing lost tags is kept to a minimum



CHECK-IN PROCEDURES THE ODD SCOUT

Unlike the animals on the ark, scouts do not always come in two's -- they sometimes arrive in three's. How to accommodate these "odd" scouts is a very common situation facing aquatics staff members.

Two things that must NEVER be done in this situation are:

1. DO NOT allow him to swim or boat alone.
2. DO NOT send him away or make him wait or feel uncomfortable because he happened to arrive in an odd-numbered group.

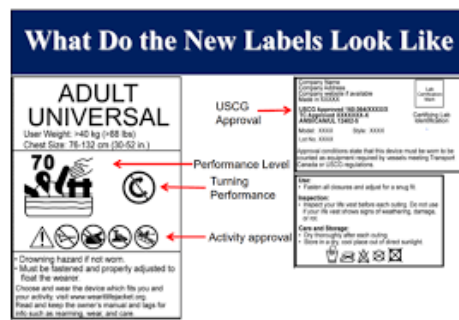
Your aquatics director will determine how your camp will handle the "odd scout" situation. Possible solutions include:

1. Pair him with a free staff member. This isn't always possible, but some staffing situations might allow it.
2. Pair him with an adult leader volunteer. Adult leaders often come to the waterfront to observe and most would be willing to help out as a buddy.
2. If it is an instructional situation, pair him with an instructor or an assistant. This is usually an easy fix.
3. Pair him with a guard. This sometimes creates problems because the guard can't actually swim with the scout and is unnecessarily distracted by having to keep an extra eye on his buddy.
4. Allow him to swim as part of a "triple". This is often the simplest solution. If triples are allowed, care must be taken to keep them to a minimum and that they check in without stacking tags.





There is a relatively new rating system for lifejackets, although the lifejackets themselves haven't changed very much. If your lifejackets are rated using the old designation, that is fine as long as they are in good condition and the label is still legible.



For more info on lifejackets try [Aquatic Supervision](#) or one of the boating merit badge pamphlets.



BOATING AREA PROCEDURES OPEN BOATING

Check in for boating is essentially the same as for swimming. Often on the check-in board there will be outlines of canoes or rowboats with hooks representing the maximum number of occupants allowed.

Scouts should check into the specific craft. If they change boats during the boating period they should come to the board and change their tags.



BOATING AREA PROCEDURES BUDDY BOATS

In all boating activities it is important to enforce the concept of buddy boats.

"All participants in an activity afloat are paired as buddies who are always aware of each other's situation and prepared to sound an alarm and lend assistance immediately when needed. . . All buddy pairs must be accounted for at regular intervals during the activity and checked off the water by the qualified supervisor at the conclusion of the activity. Buddies either ride in the same boat or stay near one another in single-person craft."

-- Guide to Safe Scouting / Safety Afloat



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEACHING AQUATICS

Overview

Formal / Informal Teaching
Creating a Learning Environment
Elements of Teaching

Objectives

Merit Badge and Rank Requirements
Informal Objectives

Methods

Planning
Syllabus and Lesson Plan
Class Organization
D.I.D.
KISMIF
Learning Characteristics of Youth
Age Groups
Skill Groups
Types of Learners
"EDGE" in Aquatics Instruction
Comfort Zones for Learners

Assessment

Merit Badge and Rank Requirements
Informal Assessment



TEACHING AQUATICS

OVERVIEW

The ability of every aquatics staff member to be an effective teacher cannot be overemphasized. One crucial element to having a safe aquatic environment is that skills and procedures can be explained, or taught, effectively.

The experienced aquatics staff member is able to teach multiple skill levels effectively, as well as being able to teach to multiple age levels - from Lion Cubs up to adults.

As a new staff member your Aquatics Director will assess your ability to teach various skills and procedures and should expect that you will work diligently to improve not only your own knowledge and skills but also your ability to teach.

Teaching - *Creating an environment in which learning can occur.* This "environment" is not only the physical environment but also an atmosphere which allows scouts to learn the many aquatic skills and concepts without the distractions and interference that sometimes occur.

This atmosphere could also be as simple as a staff member's attitude toward the scout or the situation. A scout will respond more readily to an enthusiastic, positive attitude than to a negative one - wouldn't you?

This is the challenge for an aquatics staff member. There must be enough structure to the area and program to ensure safety of the scouts, but still allow for a very positive learning experience.

FORMAL / INFORMAL TEACHING

Most people think of teaching as a **formal** process - a class of "students" being taught by a "teacher". This is true of much of the Aquatics program.

A lot of teaching, however, occurs **informally** as part of the day to day aquatic activity. How to hang a buddy tag or select a lifejacket, for instance.

Quite often we teach so that we can change the behavior of scouts.

A group may be horsing around on the deck of the pool, not realizing that they are acting unsafely.

Taking a moment to call the group aside and teach them that what they are doing may not be safe is probably more effective than punishment.

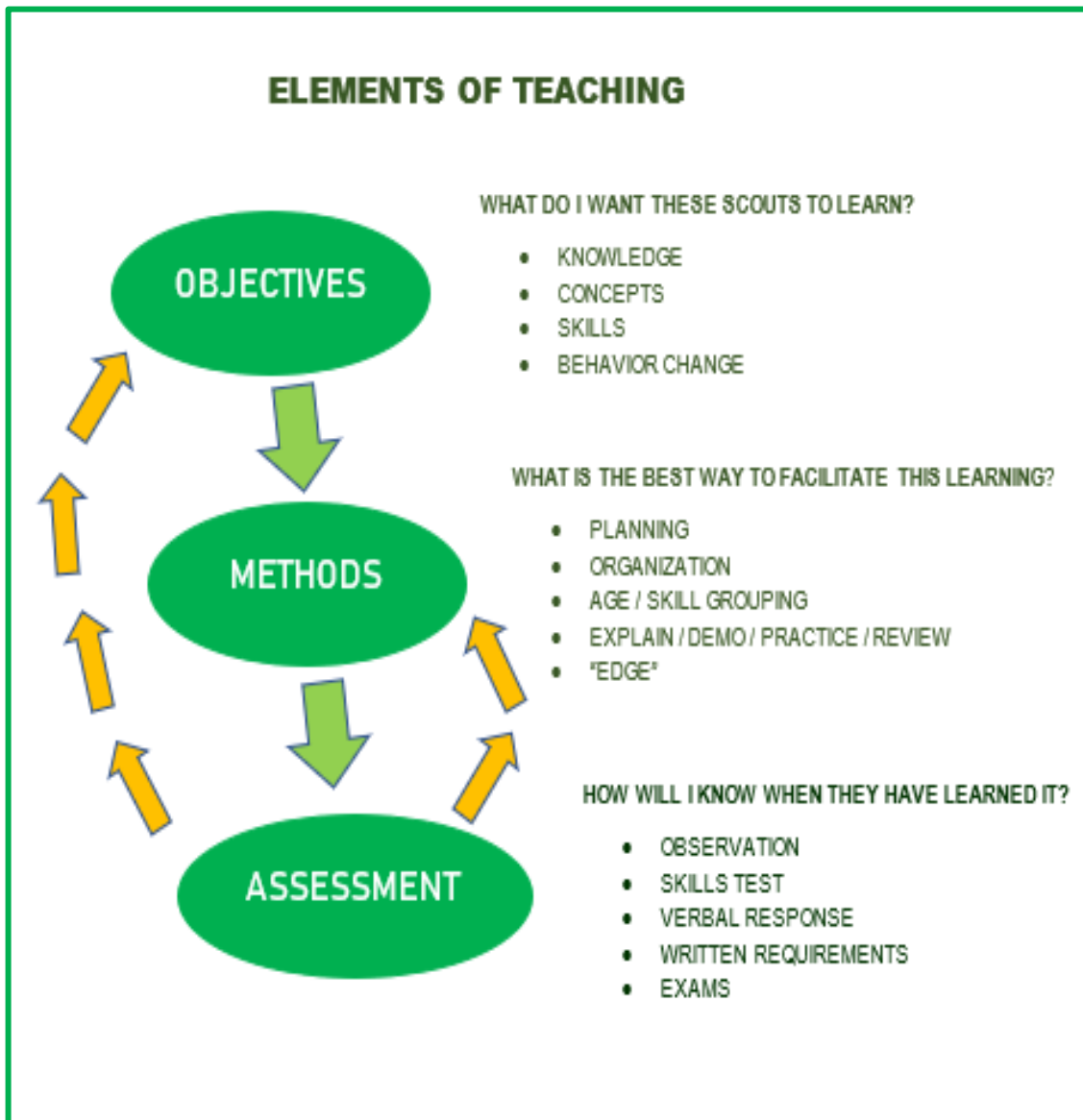


ELEMENTS OF TEACHING

No matter how simple the skill or lesson you are teaching, you must ask the following three questions:

1. What is it that I want these Scouts to learn? (Objectives)
2. What is the best method for getting this message to them? (Methods)
3. How will I know when they have learned it? (Assessment)

These three elements, depicted in the following chart, will be discussed in the following sections.



TEACHING AQUATICS OBJECTIVES

WHAT DO I WANT THESE SCOUTS TO LEARN?

This is one of the most difficult parts of teaching. Sometimes the lesson is pretty simple, such as correctly putting on a lifejacket. Other times the lesson is more complex -- the breaststroke, for instance. You, as the instructor, must be able to determine what the scout needs to learn in **this** lesson. You must be able to break skills or concepts down into manageable "chunks" so that the scout doesn't get bogged down or overwhelmed.

Don't try to do this by yourself. Your Aquatic Director and maybe your Program Director will be able to guide you as you develop lessons. They will have already developed standard procedures for the everyday, repetitive lessons. They will also be able to help you develop plans for the other teaching assignments you might receive.

MERIT BADGE AND RANK REQUIREMENTS

A very common teaching situation in scout camps is that of teaching a merit badge. While this can be challenging at times merit badge classes come with the advantage that **what** to teach has already been decided for you. This is also true of rank requirements and special activities such as Kayaking BSA.

You must still determine the skill level of the participants and how much teaching/learning must take place before assessment, or testing, takes place. Some participants will be at a skill level where they are ready to pass the requirements very early. Others will need a significant amount of teaching and practice before they are ready.

REMEMBER

**YOU MAY NOT CHANGE
WRITTEN REQUIREMENTS IN
ANY WAY -- DO NOT ADD
OR DELETE ANY PART.**

**THIS IS TRUE OF MERIT
BADGES AND AWARDS AS
WELL AS RANK
REQUIREMENTS.**

**BE SURE TO READ ALL
REQUIREMENTS CAREFULLY
AND DON'T MAKE IT EASIER,
OR HARDER, THAN IS CALLED
FOR IN THE REQUIREMENT.**



PRE-ASSESSMENT

As you determine what the scouts will be expected to learn it is important to know what they already know - what their skill level is. It would be silly to expect a group of Cub Scouts to learn the butterfly stroke when their skill level is that of the prone float.

As the instructor, you must be able to quickly determine where your scouts lie in their skill development. Sometimes this can be done verbally -- such as "How many of you have actually been in a canoe before?" More often it is better to actually give some type of preliminary skills test -- "Just to warm up a little, let's swim across the pool using the crawl stroke". Their reaction, verbal and non-verbal, to this statement will tell you a lot. Some will simply step forward and be ready to go. Some might be confused until they realize that the crawl is what they know as freestyle. Some might actually step back for whatever reason.

SKILL BREAKDOWN

Many skills, such as rowing, consist of multiple parts or actions. It is helpful if you can break these skills down into their various components. For rowing it is helpful to break it down into the catch, the pull, the feather and the recovery rather than simply demonstrating the entire stroke and assuming the scout was able to see the parts.

Sometimes it is useful to demonstrate and practice a single part of the skill. This is commonly done in teaching swimming strokes using a kickboard so that the scout can practice just the whip kick, for instance.



INFORMAL OBJECTIVES

While formal objectives are more easily definable, the everyday procedures that a staff member must teach are much more common. These objectives, while not as formal, are very important.

Selecting a Lifejacket
Selecting a Paddle
Where to Place your Buddy Tag
Buddy / Buddy Boat / Buddy Check
Line and Tender Procedure
Reaching Rescues
Check In /Out procedures
And Many More . . .

These are just a few of the many day-to-day situations that require a staff member to know the objective ahead of time and be ready to teach informally.

Even though you might encounter these situations many times a day, it is important to remain positive and enthusiastic each time.

BEHAVIOR CHANGES

Many times, informal teaching involves the need for a Scout to change his / her behavior. It is important, if possible, to treat these situations as teaching moments rather than punishment or embarrassing the Scout in front of the group.

Bear in mind the procedures for Conflict Resolution in developing ways to proceed with changing a Scout's behavior.

Always discuss these situations with your Aquatic Director.



TEACHING AQUATICS METHODS

There are many methods that can be used to teach scouts the skills and concepts of aquatics. Which methods you use will be determined by many different factors:

In the following sections we will talk about several methods or techniques that you might use. Be aware that there is no "magic formula" for teaching. You have to work at it.

Use these pages as a guide but remember that it has to work for you. Hang on to the things that work -- if it doesn't work, try something else.

TEACHING METHODS ARE DETERMINED BY . . .

- Time
- Facility and equipment
- Skill level of the scouts
- Age of the scouts
- Your own skill level
- Number of scouts
- Weather
- And on and on....



PLANNING SYLLABUS AND LESSON PLAN

The use of a syllabus will help you stay focused on what the scouts should accomplish each day in camp. A syllabus is an overall guide to the merit badge or instructional “class”. It differs from a lesson plan in that it usually doesn't include things like class organization, or notes on teaching methods. **Click [here](#) to view a guide for writing a syllabus.** Work with your director to use it as a guide to develop your own syllabus for the merit badge you might be assigned to teach.

This guide contains a sample syllabus for each of the aquatics merit badges. Because each of them was written for a particular camp, using that camp's equipment and facility it may not work for you. You can adapt any of them to work for you and your camp.

Whether adapting a sample syllabus or writing your own be sure to use the **current** requirements. Use the current requirement book or find current requirements at scouting.org.

Your lesson plan for each day will be based on the syllabus but will include things like check-in, equipment selection, safety notes and class organization. It will also include notes for assistant instructors.



PLANNING CLASS ORGANIZATION

How you organize your class will depend on many things—number of students and instructors, equipment, available space, age and experience of students, among other things.

Talk with other instructors to see what areas they plan to use. Obviously the lifejacket area and paddle racks will have to be shared, but it will be a problem if



the canoe instructor **and** the kayak instructor plan to use the same shallow water area to introduce strokes.

Visualize in advance how you plan to move the group from point to point. Is there enough shoreline or pool deck space to accommodate a group of ten -- how about twenty? Will you be in the way of other activities?

If possible, have rosters ready ahead of time. Many camps will have merit badge sign-up before the scouts get to camp. Printing these and having them ready will make things go more smoothly. For groups without rosters, non-swimmers for instance, try to learn names as early as possible.

If you plan to be in the water for instruction or demonstration try to have an assistant on shore to serve as an observer and a guard.

As in so many things in camp you will have to "go with the flow". Be prepared for things that don't turn out as you planned.



PLANNING EQUIPMENT

Be sure to have sufficient equipment ready for each learner. If you plan to use kickboards for swimming, they should be readily available rather than having to go to a storage room during class to get them.

All equipment should be properly sized to the learner. Cubs will need smaller lifejackets than Scouts and adults might have to have even bigger ones. Paddles, oars and even boats might have to be sized differently for different groups.

Equally important to having equipment ready for the learners is to have instructor equipment ready to go. Instructors should use equipment "off the rack" rather than having a special paddle or boat.

Other less obvious equipment is the emergency equipment for both swimming and boating. Talk with your director to ensure that things like rescue equipment are available to you.



PLANNING D.I.D.

There are three things you should avoid as much as possible - distractions, interference and discomfort.

Distractions -- Imagine trying to explain and demonstrate sculling to a group of 12-year old learners while behind you the beginner waterskiing class tries to "get up" for the first time. Plan your learning environment to avoid distractions that will steal the attention and interest of your learners. It may be as easy as facing the other direction.

Interference -- Have you ever had a luxury cruiser throw up a big wake just as you were about to demonstrate overboard procedures? What about the other class that needs to use the same limited dock space just as you begin your reach and rescue practice? Such interference may rob you of precious learning time and opportunity. Planning, coordination and careful selection of teaching sites will minimize interferences.

Discomfort -- What is your own level of concentration and comprehension when you are squinting into the sun, your body aches, dust is gagging you, you are shivering from exposure or immersion, your lower half is numb from kneeling, or your head is pounding and your stomach is growling from hunger and exhaustion? Learner discomfort can defeat even an inspired instructional effort. A conscientious instructor will ensure that students are not discomforted by avoidable circumstances. If someone must suffer discomfort, better you than the learner.

PLANNING KISMIF

Keep **I**t Simple - **M**ake **I**t Fun. This is one of the old rules of teaching. Albert Einstein once said, "Things should be as simple as possible but no simpler". It is a common mistake to make a lesson so complex that the scout is lost or, even worse, to make the lesson so boring that it isn't enjoyable.



TEACHING AQUATICS LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH

AGE GROUPS

It is extremely important to keep in mind the age of the group you are teaching. It isn't enough to simply know if they are Cub Scouts or Scouts BSA.

The maturity level of Tiger Cubs is much different than that of Webelos. Likewise with 1st year Scouts as opposed to more experienced campers such as Venturers.

Keep in mind things such as:

- Attention span
- Vocabulary
- Previous aquatic experiences
- Equipment size

When working with Cub Scouts it is important to remember that they are much younger than you and deserve special consideration

Characteristics of Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts

- They are shorter and smaller than Scouts BSA. Consequently, they need equipment scaled to their size --- lifejackets, rowboats, face masks, fins, etc.
- They have shorter attention spans. Explanations should be kept short and to the point.
- There will be more non-swimmers and beginners.
- They have great respect for Scouts BSA. Cubs and Webelos will look up to the Scouts BSA staff member much more than other Scouts BSA's do.



- Their sense of humor is not as developed as Scouts BSA. A joke that is hilarious to Scouts, may not be funny at all at this age. Cubs react well to physical humor, exaggerated facial expressions, riddles and simple jokes that emphasize ridiculous situations.
- Whatever is done, it must be FUN --- most new members of Scouts BSA come from Webelos dens. It is essential to the Scouting program that we keep the Cubs and Webelos excited about Scouting.

Another consideration that deals with the age of the scouts is that you may be put into a situation where you are teaching scouts who are your age or even older than you. This doesn't need to be a problem as long as you are confident in your teaching abilities and treat them with respect.



SKILL GROUPS

It is often the case, especially in learning to swim, that the skill-level of the various scouts in the group are very different. You might have a few scouts who are just able to put their face in the water while a few others might be almost ready for the Beginners test.

It is a common mistake to simply teach all of these scouts with the same methods, activities and expectations.

Ideally, you would be able to teach scouts individually. This isn't realistic, but it is usually possible to break the group down into smaller sets. Using assistants or leaders to help, you can work with scouts at different skill levels.



TYPES OF LEARNERS

It is important to realize that everyone has a different style of learning. While educators have, over the years, developed many models of learning the American Canoe Association has adapted one model for canoe instruction. It is appropriate to review that now.

"Instructors should also be alert to the needs of different kinds of student populations. For example, younger students are more likely to benefit from a fast-paced, hands-on workshop, whereas an older group might enjoy a hands-on program at a slower pace with more information presented verbally and visually."

Students are typically dominant in one or two ways of learning with other styles supporting the dominant preference. Someone may be a watcher, thinker, doer, feeler in that order of preference.

Learning styles often change with age and experience. The following are generalized descriptions of the four basic types of learners: "

'Watchers'

"These students need to develop a mental image of how the skill should look. This learning style tends to take time because the learner is observing as much as possible. Listening supports the watcher's mental imagery. The student then synthesizes the information and applies it. "

'Feelers'

"These students operate more instinctively. Analogies are very useful for these kinesthetic learners, especially if one already-familiar sport can be related to paddling meaningfully. These students benefit more from actually experiencing the sensations of paddling than from descriptions. "

'Thinkers'

"These learners need lots of detailed information describing how to do a skill, and they usually want to understand the fundamental principles behind paddling. They are more likely than the other kinds of learners to read books and magazines, watch videos, and browse web sites on the subject. They might be described as analytical in their approach, and they may inadvertently test the depth of the instructor's knowledge. "

'Doers'

"Give these learners a paddle and stand back. Lengthy explanations are lost to the doer. The doers will fidget, shuffle and squirm until it is time to do the activity. These intrepid individuals prefer to learn by doing first and to ask questions later, and they are the first to volunteer as "guinea pigs." Instructors who schedule long presentations first and defer practice time until later will lose the attention of doers."

-- American Canoe Association Instructor's Manual, Rev 2020



TEACHING AQUATICS
"EDGE" IN AQUATICS INSTRUCTION

BSA currently advocates the "EDGE" method of teaching skills. EDGE stands for Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, and Enable. Using the EDGE method is a requirement for Tenderfoot and Life Scout rank advancement. EDGE is taught in BSA's advanced leadership training courses (National Youth Leadership Training and Wood Badge) so many scouting adults and youth are familiar with the process.

EDGE is a four-step process for teaching a skill. First you tell them what you will be doing (Explain), then you show them (Demonstrate), then you coach them (Guide) and finally let them do it themselves (Enable).

FROM SCOUTS BSA HANDBOOK, 14TH EDITION

E_{xplain}

*"The first step is **explain**. The teacher carefully explains the skill, showing all the steps and keeping in mind that the learner is probably seeing this for the first time. Go slowly, make your actions deliberate, and use descriptive language, but don't stop to show the intricacies in detail yet.*

D_{emonstrate}

*After explaining the skill, you will **demonstrate** it. Break down each element, showing the step-by-step process and explaining the details of how each step is done and why. Here is where you allow the learner to ask questions, but not yet where he takes the reins for himself.*

G_{uide}

*Now, **guide** the learner as he makes his first few attempts at the skill. Be sure to let him be completely hands-on, and don't worry if he makes mistakes. Just tell him how to fix it or start again from the beginning. Keep at it and be careful not to lose patience. Remember how you were when you were learning!*

E_{nable}

*Lastly, the teacher **enables** the learner by allowing him to see that he can do it himself — and has! The Teaching EDGE method can be applied to teaching and learning any skill."*



TEACHING AQUATICS COMFORT ZONES FOR LEARNERS

Karl Rohnke, a well-known outdoor educator, has developed a model for learning progression. This model is a good way to visualize what is happening as we learn aquatic skills.

COMFORT ZONE - in this zone we are calm and comfortable. We also have little motivation to move forward in skill development. We might even be a little bored because as we repeat the same familiar skills we are not learning or developing.

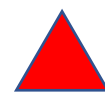
As an instructor, it is important to recognize where each learner's comfort zone lies. It will be different for each member of a learning group.

STRETCH ZONE - the instructor's responsibility is to move each learner from his/her comfort zone into the stretch zone. **This is where learning takes place.**

In this zone the learners are pushing themselves to try something new without becoming overwhelmed or fearful for their safety. The instructor should try to keep learning activities in each learner's stretch zone without pushing them into the panic zone or sliding back into the comfort zone.

PANIC ZONE - this is where we've gone a little too far. Either the learner feels unsafe or is overwhelmed with the amount or complexity of the skill. No learning will take place for those learners who push themselves or are pushed into the panic zone.

As an instructor, you should remember to view things from the perspective of the individual learner. A class of non-swimmer's panic zones will range from *wading without holding on* to *jumping into deep water* and everything in between. All of these will be well within your comfort zone so be careful that you don't lose patience with less experienced learners.



TEACHING AQUATICS ASSESSMENT

How will I know when they have learned it?

At some point you, the instructor, must decide that your scouts have, indeed, learned what you expect them to know or mastered the skill you expect them to perform. But how do you determine when they have reached that point?

In many cases this has been decided for you. Rank requirements and merit badge requirements are very specific and give definite levels of performance that are expected. Other times it isn't quite so clear. You must work with your director to determine when a skill has been mastered.

It is also important to note that even small successes should be celebrated in some way. The scout who finally puts his face in the water may be a greater success than the one who earns a merit badge.

LEVELS OF LEARNING -- The instructor must understand that mastery comes in stages. A common breakdown of these stages is:

- **Conscious level** -- The learner must consciously think through each component or part of the skill.
- **Automatic level** -- The skill has been learned but still requires conscious execution.
- **Reflex level** -- The skill is mastered and has become automatic.

WRITTEN REQUIREMENTS

As stated earlier some teaching assignments center around the written requirements already established in merit badges, rank requirements, swim classification tests, etc.

When working from established written requirements you must remember:

- Do not add to the requirement nor delete anything from it
- Don't change or paraphrase requirements -- if it says "discuss" you must have each participant discuss -- not simply sit quietly while the instructor discusses or lectures. Watch for the action verb in all requirements.
- Don't waive requirements because of facility, schedule or weather. Those are intangibles that the scout must live with.



- Don't sign off on requirements that you didn't personally witness

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS OR EXAMS

In summer camp you should keep written assignments to a minimum, only if a requirement states to write something or take an exam -- BSA Lifeguard or Aquatic Supervision, for instance.

Some requirements might have been passed outside of camp as part of the troop's program. Your camp may have procedures that allow this but you, as an instructor, may only check off requirements that you actually witnessed the scout perform.

You might have a tendency to "go easy" on a scout who has worked hard and is close to mastering the skill. This is one of those times where having predetermined levels of performance is extremely helpful. It gives both you and the scout a measurable benchmark to shoot for.

CUB SCOUT ASSESSMENT

Assessment for Cub Scouts is usually left up to the leader or parent. Much of Cub advancement is based on participation and effort rather than performance.

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

How do you assess the informal instruction that has been taking place the past few days? Hopefully, you'll gradually see that scouts are following procedures without being corrected, behaving as expected and your job of supervision is a lot easier.

Just remember - it all starts again next week.



**NOTE: THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE LINKED TO TOPICS IN
THE PREVIOUS SECTION. RETURN TO TABLE OF
CONTENTS.**



WRITING A SYLLABUS

Most staff members will be asked at one time to teach a merit badge class. Whereas a lesson plan is sufficient for quick topics or one-time instruction, merit badges require an instructor to get a number of scouts proficient in a number of skills in a limited amount of time and to assess them in those skills - hence, a syllabus.

Each syllabus will be different. There are many variables in merit badge instruction - some can be anticipated, some can't.

Your director will provide guidance in the writing of a syllabus for the merit badge you might be assigned. Understand that it takes time to write a good syllabus.

Some factors which must be considered in the writing of a syllabus include:

- Requirements of the merit badge.
- Facility and equipment
- Time frame (minutes / day x no. of days)
- Class size
- Proficiency of scouts (pre-requisites)
- Proficiency of instructors and assistant instructors.
- Contingencies (weather, equipment failure, emergencies, etc.)

A few guidelines in the writing of a syllabus:

- **Write the syllabus as if you were writing it for someone else to teach.**
Too often a syllabus is so cryptic that the only person who can understand it is the person who wrote it.
- **Break activities down by the minute.** A bulleted list doesn't keep an instructor on a time track to get everything done in the time allowed. Be realistic in what you can cover in a given amount of time.



- **Be specific.** Simply saying "Time for practice" is too vague. Be clear about what the scouts should be practicing as well as what the instructors should be doing -- supervision, correction, assessment, etc.
- Include **supervision** considerations, **guard-the-instructor** situations, etc. Also include **housekeeping** topics such as attendance, checking buddy tags, etc. Don't forget to allow for **wrap-up** and **check-out**.
- Address **how you will deal with "discuss / explain" requirements.** Ensuring that each scout actually completes these requirements is very important.
- Be sure to **include the logistics of the class** -- check-in, equipment selection, moving from area to area, check-out, etc. What will instructors and assistants do at any given time?
- **Consider what you will say**, not just what will be covered. Sometimes a script, although time-consuming at first, clarifies how material will be presented. It also avoids the awkward pause as we try to think of what to say next.
- **Be clear about assessment criteria.** Instructors and scouts should be very clear about the level of proficiency expected.
- **Type it if possible.** A hand-written syllabus should be transferred as soon as feasible to a computer file. This allows for easy sharing, quick corrections, and secure storage.
- In referencing requirements be sure to **include the requirement itself**, not just the number. This eliminates the need to have a separate sheet of requirements in order for the syllabus to make sense.
- Be sure to **cover the what-if's** - the contingencies. What if a scout shows up who is not a swimmer? What if a scout misses a day?
- **Allow for "either / or" requirements** that allow the scout to pass in one of



two ways or with different equipment (eg. *fixed-seat vs. sliding seat rowing*). If possible these decisions should be the scout's, not arbitrarily decided by the instructor. In situations where only one type of equipment is available (eg. only fixed-seat boats are available) this should be made clear in pre-camp literature.

- Avoid "blowing off" day one. Using day one to cover "discuss / explain" requirements or to read the requirements to the class sets a tone for the rest of the week. A good rule of thumb is **"In the water or on the water within 15 minutes"**. You can always go back on a rainy day and cover "discuss / explain".
- **Collaborate.** Work with your fellow staff members to proof each other's work. A second set of eyes will often see the problems that the original writer overlooked. Also work closely with your director as well as the camp Program Director to ensure quality and consistency.
- **Revise, revise, revise.** A syllabus should be a "living document" that is changed to reflect what actually took place during class. Constantly evaluate your own use of the syllabus. If you had to make changes during the session make a note on the syllabus.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

BSA AQUATICS STAFF GUIDE HEALTH AND SAFETY

HEALTH AND SAFETY

General Health and Safety

Physical Examinations

Swimming Periods

The Sunset Rule

Universal Precautions

Personal Health and Safety

First Aid Procedures

Aquatics Safety

Supervision

Surveillance

Lifeguarding

Emergency Action Plans

Camp-wide EAP's

Aquatics EAP's



PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

All persons at summer camp are required to submit evidence of a recent health history and to undergo a medical screening by medical personnel on arrival at camp. The medical screening serves to identify new conditions and to give notice to camp personnel of physical limitations or other special circumstances.



SWIMMING PERIODS

Swimming is strenuous activity and youth ages 11 to 13 should not be in the water for more than 30 to 40 minutes in a single swim period. With check-in and checkout time, 45-minute recreational swims are recommended. A total of approximately one hour of swimming per day is generally recommended as a maximum for the Scout-age group.

Swimming time can usually be safely extended if those in charge are alert and careful to bring individuals out of the water before problems of exhaustion or chilling develop.

Water temperature has a significant effect on stamina and resistance; 80°F is ideal. Safe time in the water is reduced by lower water temperatures. At 70°F, safe in-the-water time may be no more than 20 minutes. If low or variable water temperatures are common in an area, a water thermometer should be included in the waterfront equipment.

The same rules also apply to instructional activity, except that such activity as distance swimming must necessarily involve time in the water in excess of 30 minutes. The required preconditioning and extra safety precautions are intended to balance the risks in distance swimming. Early morning swims in cold water should be avoided.



THE SUNSET RULE

Aquatics activity after sunset is prohibited, except for swimming activity in a pool with proper deck and water lighting. However, pool swimming under these circumstances may still be limited by wind chill and lowered water temperatures.

The only other exception to the sunset rule would be the use of canoes or other craft by staff for ceremonial purposes. For such activity, special safety precautions should be strictly enforced and monitored by the aquatics director.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS



On occasion, members of the aquatics staff will provide first aid for cuts. Latex or vinyl gloves should be used to keep from contacting blood.

If blood is spilled, it can be disinfected by using a dilute solution of sodium hypochlorite (household chlorine bleach). The bleach should be stored in a tightly sealed container that is kept in a cool, dry place. The solution should be mixed fresh before each use. Adding two tablespoons (one ounce) of bleach to a cup of water will make the right strength for use as a disinfectant. Using gloves, wipe up any blood or other body fluid with a towel. Then wipe the bleach solution on the surface and let it dry. This solution is corrosive to aluminum.

The use of a mouth-barrier device is an appropriate precaution to reduce the risk of disease transmission during rescue breathing.

Council camps are required to offer all protections of the Bloodborne Pathogens standard, including the hepatitis B vaccine, to all employees with occupational exposure. Because the emergency response duties of occupationally exposed lifeguards are not considered to be collateral, the vaccine must be offered after training and within 10 working days of initial assignment.

Discuss the training for Universal Precautions with your Aquatics Director or your Camp Health Officer.



PERSONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

INFECTION

Sinus and ear infections are often associated with swimming. Their incidence can be reduced by minimizing high and deep diving, by not swallowing while swimming, by avoiding sudden exhalation of air underwater, by avoiding hard nose blowing during or after swimming, and by proper hygiene. Showering after swimming and thorough drying are recommended.

A few drops of commercial ear treatment in the outer ear canal help control fungus infections. (Check with your camp health officer before using any over-the-counter or homemade solutions.)

Persons with open sores should not be permitted to swim. Any symptoms of infection should be immediately reported to the camp health officer. A person complaining of illness or showing signs of fever or eye irritation should not be allowed to swim without medical diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

FOOT CARE

All persons are required to wear shoes to and from the aquatics program areas. All ground and surfaces that will be walked barefoot within the program areas should be raked and cleared periodically to be sure that all hazards are removed. This includes sharp rocks and stubs, and glass and metal litter.

To avoid fungal infection, feet should be rinsed and carefully dried after swimming, and socks should be clean and dry.

NOSEBLEEDS

A nosebleed is a minor but not uncommon injury in aquatics or any other active play or sport. The blood vessels in the nose lie very near the surface, and bleeding may occur with the slightest injury.



When bleeding occurs, squeeze the nose between the thumb and forefinger, just below the hard portion of the nose. The person should be seated and leaning slightly forward. Do not lean the head back, for this directs the flow into the head and throat. Apply pressure for at least five minutes. If bleeding does not stop within five to 10 minutes, consult medical personnel.

SUN PROTECTION

Most of us believe that sunburn is something to be avoided because it can spoil our fun at camp

for a few days. This is certainly true, but there is a much more important reason to avoid excessive sun exposure. Skin damage caused by the sun during the first 18 years of life is a major cause of skin cancer as an adult.

Sunlight contains several different types of light. Ultraviolet (UV) light, which is invisible, causes sunburn and increases the risk of cancer. While in most of the United States, the type of UV light that causes sunburn is present in significant amounts between 10 A.M. and 3 P.M., the UV light that causes aging changes of the skin and cancers is fairly constant during the whole day.

Protection from harmful effects of the sun can be accomplished by limiting one's exposure, wearing light-colored clothing, wearing sunglasses, and using sunscreens with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 15.

White clothing will reflect some of the sunlight, but will not always stop all of it, especially if it is loosely woven or wet. Aquatics staff members should use a visor to protect the face and eyes.

Sunglasses should be chosen to block UV light and a lot of visible light. Chemicals are added to glass and plastic lenses to make them block UV light. Tint does not necessarily stop UV light from passing through a lens, so look for a pair labeled UV safe.

The American National Standard Institute (ANSI) "general purpose" or "special purpose" classification is best for aquatics activities. In addition to blocking UV, sunglasses must block some of the visible light. An easy way to tell is to look at yourself in a mirror through the lenses. If you cannot see your eyes, the lenses are probably dark enough. Make sure the lenses cover enough of your eyes to keep light reflected from sand and water from interfering with your vision.



Polarized lenses preferentially reject reflected light from surfaces such as the water. Polarized lenses are recommended since reduction of glare not only offers additional eye protection, but also makes it easier to observe activity on or beneath the surface.

Sunblocks are made from talc, titanium dioxide, or zinc oxide and stop all sunlight from reaching the skin. These products are especially suited for tips of ears and nose.

Sunscreens are generally clear and only reduce the amount of sunlight that gets to your skin. They include a variety of chemicals and have the SPF listed on the container. This is a number that lets you compare the amount of sunlight that different products stop.

The SPF is figured in the following way: If conditions are such that with no protection you would start to sunburn in 30 minutes, an SPF of 2 would protect you from burning for one hour. Higher SPF values would let you stay out in the same conditions for longer periods before you got a sunburn. A product with a rating of SPF 10 will protect you twice as long as one with a rating of SPF 5. Sunscreens with a minimum SPF of 15 are recommended.

There are several important factors to consider when using a sunscreen:

- They work best if applied 1/2 hour before exposure so they can soak into your skin
- They need to be reapplied after sweating or swimming, EVEN IF they are listed as waterproof.
- Reapplying a sunscreen does NOT extend the period of protection. Depending on the person, one can burn even using SPF 50!

HYPERVENTILATION

Deliberate hyperventilation, defined as excessive respiration leading to abnormal loss of carbon dioxide, thus suppressing the breathing reflex, has been cited as a factor in numerous drowning incidents.

COLD WATER

Air or water temperature below 70°F may pose risks. If an adult of average weight is not comfortable in the water two minutes after immersion and without physical exertion, then the water should be considered cold and precautions should be taken. If goose bumps appear on the wet skin surface shortly after leaving the water, then the air temperature should be considered cold and precautions taken.

Moving water, as well as wind, substantially increases the loss of body heat and should be part of the chill-factor appraisal.

Remember that Scout-age children are unlikely to recognize or acknowledge thermal risks when anticipating or participating in aquatics activity. For this reason, assessment of environmental conditions and hazards, and the steps to ensure safety, is the responsibility of the aquatics staff member. In addition to relying on their own senses, adult supervisors should closely observe the children in their care. Scout-age youth have considerably less body weight than most adults and may, therefore, chill more quickly. Also, the susceptibility to chill and the visible symptoms of chill may vary widely among children.

Obviously, if conditions are such that any child in a group begins to shiver or show discoloration, then precautions should be taken for everyone.

The first precaution for cold-water activity is to reduce the length of time in or on the water. At 70°F, maximum safe, in-the-water time is approximately 20 minutes.

Competitive underwater swimming events are not permitted in Scouting. (Underwater swimming for any reason is not permitted in turbid water)

Contestants in underwater swimming events may be especially prone to this danger because, under the stress and excitement of competition, they may ignore their own built-in urge to breathe. The possibility of such an accident is increased by the common practice of overbreathing (hyperventilating) before swimming underwater.

Overbreathing depletes the body of carbon dioxide, which triggers the urge to breathe. Thus, the urge to breathe is delayed to the point where the oxygen supply is inadequate and the person loses consciousness. In such cases the swimmer may have little or no warning that he is about to pass out. He may even continue swimming for a few more seconds. As a result, observers or fellow swimmers may not realize he's in trouble until he loses all consciousness, automatically breathes, and, in the case of the underwater swimmer, drowns.



Open-water swimming in water temperature of 65°F or lower may pose substantial risks and should be avoided. In all swimming activities, precautions should include procedures and equipment for immediate warming of anyone showing symptoms of chill.

For all activity afloat on cold water or in cold weather, appropriate clothing should always be worn for warmth with the lifejacket worn, normally on top of the outermost garment. A dry change of clothes should also be available in case of a spill. As in swimming, activity afloat should include procedures and equipment for warming anyone showing symptoms of chill. Overboard activity should never be permitted in water temperatures of 65°F or lower, except for closely supervised capsized skill training in preparation for activity afloat.

Remember that some streams and northern lakes can be quite cold even on a warm, midsummer day. It is precisely these circumstances that may pose serious risks because of failure to recognize the risks and take appropriate precautions.

HYPOTHERMIA

All persons with responsibility for supervision of aquatics activity in or on cold water should be trained in the recognition, prevention, and treatment of hypothermia, which is a life- threatening drop in core body temperature.

Shivering is a symptom of the onset of hypothermia. As the core temperature drops, the body tries to defend the vital organs. The pulse rate slows and blood is shunted to the critical organs and away from the extremities. The effect is to keep the heart and lungs working at the expense of the hands and feet.

The problem is that in many situations the hypothermia victim needs the use of the extremities -- possibly to hang on to a capsized craft. The blood shortage affects the brain, and survivors of hypothermia recall a feeling of well- being sweeping over them as they begin to lose their mental grip. Often drowning occurs prior to the onset of fatal body temperatures.

In case of accidental immersion in cold water, remember that water (particularly moving water) conducts heat loss many times faster than air. Get in or on a capsized boat, or anything else available, to get as much of the body out of the water as possible.

Wear a lifejacket for warmth as well as flotation. Remaining still and assuming the fetal position, or **heat escape lessening posture (HELP)**, will increase the survival time. Since about 50 percent of heat loss is from the head, it is important to keep the head out of the water. Other areas of heat loss are the neck, sides, and groin. If several people are in the water, huddling close side-by-side in a circle (**huddle**) will help conserve body heat.

Signs of hypothermia include fatigue, drowsiness, weakness, slurred speech, and poor coordination. Victims may be confused and deny there is a problem. They may not feel they are cold and may even undress because they feel too warm. Oral and armpit temperatures are unreliable in deciding if a person has hypothermia.

Hypothermia victims must be handled very gently and should not be allowed to walk. Any rough or sudden movement of a hypothermia victim could cause the heart to go into a fatal rhythm disturbance (ventricular fibrillation).

Move the victim to shelter and warmth as rapidly as possible. Gently remove all wet clothing. Place the victim on a hard, flat surface to allow for administration of CPR, if needed. Apply heat to the central core of the body (head, neck, sides, and groin). If no other heat source is available, place the victim in direct bare-skin contact with another person to allow for transfer of body heat.

All cases of hypothermia must be followed up with a check by medical personnel.

HEAT REACTIONS

Heatstroke, heat cramps, and heat exhaustion are brought about by both internal and external factors. Harmful effects occur when the body becomes overheated and cannot eliminate the excess heat. Reactions usually occur when large amounts of water, salt, or both are lost through profuse sweating as a result of strenuous exercise in an extremely hot atmosphere. Small children are particularly susceptible to heat reactions.

Heat cramps (painful muscle spasms of the arms and legs following strenuous exercise) occasionally occur for people who otherwise seem to be in good condition. Very hot weather and prolonged sun exposure are not necessary for heat cramps to occur. The normal contraction and relaxation of muscles requires a rather strict water/salt balance in muscle tissue. When a person perspires excessively, both water and salt are lost and body reserves become depleted.

People normally interpret this depletion as thirst. If they satisfy their thirst by drinking large quantities of water without taking any additional salt, they deplete the body of salt. A result of this abnormality of salt and water concentration within the tissue is an involuntary, uncontrolled muscular spasm that causes the characteristic cramp. A normal intake of salt with meals will avoid problems for most people. Persons with persistent heat cramps should seek medical advice before attempting to supplement their salt intake.

Heat exhaustion (sometimes called heat prostration or heat collapse) is a fairly common result of extreme physical exertion in a hot environment. Under these conditions, the muscular mass of the body and the brain require an increased blood flow.

Similarly, an increased blood flow is required by the skin so that heat may be radiated from the skin and sweat may be made. Heat exhaustion is a manifestation of the fact that the vascular system is inadequate at that particular time to meet the demands placed upon it by skin, muscle, and organs. In essence, the victim is in a state of mild shock.

Symptoms include weakness, fainting, dizziness, headache, loss of appetite, and nausea. A victim of heat exhaustion should be made to rest in a cool location to allow the vascular system an opportunity to meet the demands placed upon it.

A sunstroke is more correctly called a heatstroke, for sun exposure is not necessary for this condition to develop. It is by far the least common of the heat reactions, and by far the most serious.

Normally, when a person is exposed to a particularly warm environment, the body automatically activates cooling mechanisms. Heatstroke occurs when these heat regulatory mechanisms of the body fail. Prolonged exertion in a very warm, humid environment can cause a cessation of sweating, a principal body mechanism for heat loss, and lead to heatstroke.

Victims show flushed red skin with high body temperature. Usually the skin is dry, but there may be some sweating. Pulse is rapid and weak.

Heatstroke is a life-threatening emergency and requires immediate treatment. Quick action must be taken to cool the body. Immersion, fanning, and sponging with cool water or rubbing alcohol may be effective first aid. **Emergency transportation and hospitalization must follow first aid.**



PROTECTION FROM INSECTS

Unfortunately, most aquatics program areas are not free of insects. Usually this is an inconvenience and does not pose a serious health threat; however, ticks can carry diseases that can make a person very ill.

Several easy measures can be taken to decrease the chance of a tick bite. The easiest is to make sure that the waterfront and all paths leading to it are free of undergrowth. If the trails are kept clear, and people stay on them, the chance of getting a tick bite is greatly reduced. If it is necessary to go into an area where there is no clear trail, wear long pants with the ends tucked in your socks.

Daily bathing and inspection for ticks can reduce the chances of problems. It is important to remember that the deer tick, which is one variety that carries human diseases, is no larger than the period at the end of this sentence. Removal of implanted ticks should be done at the health lodge.

Mosquitoes also can pose a health threat. The *Culex pipiens* mosquito (the common house mosquito of the United States) has been identified as the carrier of West Nile virus. This particular mosquito feeds on infected birds and then bites humans. The symptoms of infection often include rapid onset of headache, high fever, disorientation, tremors, and convulsions. In only the most severe and rare cases is paralysis or death a result.

The most common breeding environment for this mosquito is stagnant water found in old tires and metal drums or containers. All camps should be inspected for such conditions, and any found should be removed. Additionally, screened windows and doors of buildings should be repaired as necessary. To reduce the risk of mosquito bites, health authorities recommend

- Minimizing outdoor activities between dusk and dawn.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants whenever spending time in likely mosquito habitats such as woods or wetlands.

- Using an insect repellent containing DEET, according to label instructions. In no case should DEET be sprayed directly onto skin.

Some people have rapid, life-threatening allergic reactions to insect stings. If confronted with such a situation, aquatic staff should follow the camp's emergency first-aid procedures. People with known susceptibility may carry medications for emergency self-administration.

SUBMERSION INCIDENTS

Just as with hypothermia, **all submersion incidents must be followed up with a check by medical personnel.**

REST

Adequate rest is essential for peak performance whether the individual is a Staff member or a Camper.

Quiet times and Lights Out times must be established and enforced.



FIRST AID PROCEDURES

The aquatics program provides only preliminary first-aid treatment in anticipation of treatment to be given by camp personnel with primary responsibility for health and medical services.

This preliminary first aid includes stabilizing the injured for transportation, providing emergency transportation, and administering basic life support in critical circumstances.

National policy requires that all injuries be treated and recorded in council records by the camp health officer. Appropriate first-aid equipment should be available at each aquatics program area, but should only be used according to guidelines discussed with the camp health officer

According to National Standards at least 50 percent of the aquatics staff members must hold current American Red Cross CPR/AED for Professional Rescuers and Health Care Providers, or equivalent, as well as valid lifeguard certifications.

All program personnel should be trained and competent to give aid in the event of an emergency.



SUPERVISION

INTRODUCTION

You are probably already certified as a lifeguard - either BSA Lifeguard or American Red Cross Lifeguard. If not, you are hopefully working toward that goal.

While lifeguarding has its own special supervision techniques, this section will deal with the everyday task of supervising aquatic activities, either in the swimming area or the boating area.

SUPERVISION V.S. "QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR"

As mentioned earlier in this guide, the Qualified Supervisor for a camp aquatics area is the Aquatics Director, by virtue of his/her age and training. Occasionally, a unit leader may serve as the Qualified Supervisor defined by Safe Swim Defense or Safety Afloat when the camp Aquatics Director is not present, for example, during a troop free swim or an outpost canoe trip.

As we discuss the topic of supervision we will occasionally use the term "supervisor" to mean other staff members who the director has assigned to monitor or supervise a certain area or activity.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

This material has been covered under "Risk Management" but has special importance for supervision. Be certain that you understand the following legal concepts as they apply to supervision and monitoring of aquatics activity.

- DUTY TO ACT
- STANDARD OF CARE
- NEGLIGENCE

While the legal concepts discussed here apply specifically to lifeguards they also pertain to other aquatic staff situations. You should discuss these concepts with your Aquatic Director.

EYES ON THE WATER

If you watch an experienced aquatics person when he (or she) is near the pool or lake you'll probably notice that he is always looking toward the water, toward the activity. Even as he approaches the lake first thing in the morning, you'll notice that he scans the entire area to be sure that nothing is amiss.

The concept of "eyes on the water" is one that you should develop. If all staff members are always watching, even when they're not on guard duty, safeguards are enhanced with greater redundancy.



SURVEILLANCE

Any time scouts are checked into the area staff members should be assigned so that the entire area is always under visual surveillance . If possible, areas of responsibility should overlap. This applies to both the swimming area and the boating area.

The swimming area is a bit easier to cover because it is divided into three areas, has a uniform shape, and usually has nothing obstructing the view of the guard. Often the boating area has more challenges. It is much bigger in area, has an irregular shape and often has outcroppings or inlets that are shielded from view. It isn't unusual for a boating area to be totally separate from the swimming area. The supervisor of a boating area must be ever vigilant so that the normal distractions of the area don't compromise surveillance.

Supervision of a swimming area or pool would require one staff member watching the gate / in-board, the appropriate number of guards assigned to effectively cover all swimming areas and a lookout (either in a raised chair, a tower, or an elevated area of the shore). Your director will determine whether to use total coverage, zone coverage or combined coverage. This decision will be determined by the layout of your swimming area.

Proper supervision of a boating area would have one staff member monitoring the gate and at least one more watching the shore and dock area. If staffing permits or if the boating area is large, it is also a good idea for the boating area to have a staff member on the water in a rescue craft for surveillance.

The lookout for the boating area could be located anywhere that he can see the entire boating area and be close enough to communicate to the director when necessary. It is permissible for the boating and swimming areas to share a lookout if the areas are small and located close together.

As they scan their assigned areas guards and supervisors should constantly count heads - actually, pairs of heads. No participant in either swimming or boating should be alone at any time. Swimmers should be swimming with their buddy, or as a triple if allowed. Boaters should be with a buddy boat.

Ratios need to be maintained according to Safe Swim Defense or Safety Afloat. The director or area coordinator will assign guards and area supervisors based on the number of participants checked into an area.

Guards and supervisors remain on duty until the board is clear -- all participants are checked out and accounted for. If supervisors or guards change during an activity period, the change must be done in such a way that surveillance isn't interrupted.



LIFEGUARDING

VICTIM RECOGNITION

In your lifeguarding training you learned how to tell when intervention is necessary to prevent accidents or respond to someone in trouble, including how victim characteristics influence the type of rescue performed.

. You should review these with your director and know the proper response for each:

- Good Swimmer
- Poor Swimmer
- Misbehaving Swimmer
- Distressed Swimmer
- Active Drowning Victim
- Passive Drowning Victim

You should also review those behaviors that might place a scout in danger in a boating situation:

- Improper lifejacket use
- Poor boating or canoeing skills that result in an unstable craft
- Poor trim
- Inability to overcome wind or current
- Horseplay of any kind.

WHISTLE USE

Whistles should be used sparingly --- only when absolutely necessary. The whistle is a communication tool. Discuss with your director the protocols for the use of whistles.

GUARD PERSONNEL

Youth camps are typically regulated by state agencies, which mandate a ratio of trained lifeguards to patrons for swimming activities. Technically, those ratios, along with a lookout, satisfy Safe Swim Defense as applied when a unit swims at a regulated facility. However, camps should strive for the 1 to 10 ratio of responders to swimmers that applies when a unit provides its own coverage. Ideally, every part of a camp swimming area should have at least 100 percent overlap in

coverage, such that every person in the water is monitored by at least three sets of eyes: those of the buddy, those of at least one professionally trained lifeguard providing zone coverage, and those of a lookout providing total coverage. Staff personnel on guard duty for a recreational swim must have no other responsibilities during that activity.

AUXILIARY SAFETY TEAM PERSONNEL

Additional personnel such as unit leaders, youth with BSA Lifeguard, or BSA Lifeguard candidates may be used to supplement the aquatics staff by acting as spotters, buddy-board monitors, or response personnel. Such opportunities also strengthen unit abilities to conduct activities on their own. It is important for these volunteers to have adequate instructions. The director or the area coordinator should brief these helpers before they are assigned to monitor an area.

- Volunteers should not be placed in a situation that exceeds their experience.
- Volunteers should not have sole responsibility for any area. Experienced and trained staff members should be the primary guard or supervisor for an area.
- Volunteers should receive basic instructions from the director as to their role in an emergency. For example, they may be instructed to help clear the area.
- All staff members should help these volunteers as much as possible. They should be treated with respect and receive the thanks of the aquatics staff.

SUPERVISION FOR TROOP SWIMS ONSITE

Troops are encouraged to conduct their own recreational swims while at camp as part of Safe Swim Defense training. The unit leader serves as the Qualified Supervisor for such an event and appoints and instructs response personnel from

the troop. However, a professionally trained lifeguard should provide surveillance during the activity. Even if the unit has such a trained individual, it is prudent to provide a staff lifeguard who is familiar with camp emergency procedures.

SUPERVISION FOR TROOP SWIMS OFFSITE

Some camp programs include unit float trips off of council property. Typically, swimming activities under those situations are the responsibility of the unit leader following Safe Swim Defense.

However, state codes may require additional supervision, particularly if the unit is accompanied by a council employee serving as a trek advisor.

SUPERVISING SWIMMING INSTRUCTION

An instructor has primary responsibility for the safety of all class participants and shall conduct all training with safety a prime consideration, using assistants and/or lifeguards for support as needed.

If swim training is conducted by a single instructor, then there must be a trained lifeguard on duty providing surveillance of all in-water activities. A lifeguard may watch more than one activity, for example non-swimmer instruction in the Non- swimmer area, and instruction in 1st Class swimming skills in the Beginner area.

If swim training is conducted by two instructors with lifeguard credentials, and no other lifeguards are on duty, then it is not necessary to reassign one instructor to occupy a lifeguard stand provided the following safety procedures are observed:

1. When both instructors are demonstrating a skill, either with both instructors in the water, or one in the water while the other explains from the deck, then participants are out of the water, or arranged in formation in shallow water or holding onto the side.
2. When the majority of the participants are in the water, one instructor conducts surveillance for the group and does not critique individuals for skills.
3. Both instructors may simultaneously review participant performance only in rotating practice situations, such as a round-robin, wherein each instructor observes only one person or buddy pair in the water at a time while the rest of the participants remain in lines.
4. Neither an individual nor group shall be separated from the class and sent to a different portion of the swimming area unless accompanied by an instructor.
5. One instructor must guard the other during demonstrations in case participants assume an instructor's actions are part of the demonstration rather than an indication the instructor is in trouble.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

It is everyone's hope that all activities on the waterfront will proceed normally and without any incidents. You and your fellow staff members have worked hard with your Director to ensure this. However, as with all activities, it is possible that accidents or emergencies will occur. You, as a member of the Aquatics Staff must be prepared for these situations. Simply being able to perform rescues isn't enough -- you've got to have a plan and you must know your duties for each situation or emergency.

LEVELS OF EMERGENCY

Not all emergencies are life-threatening. Some only involve the person that it is happening to plus the staff member who is taking care of the situation. Other emergencies are more severe and require advance training and planning to handle. No matter the severity, it is important to recognize the situation and know how to solve the problem.

You must be able to recognize every time something happens that interrupts the normal activity and know the appropriate response. In some cases, a minor cut, for instance, you will be able to deal with the situation yourself. Other times, hopefully not often, the situation calls for immediate action on the part of several staff members and, possibly, emergency services.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

You might be asked to help formulate Emergency Plans. More likely the plans will have already been developed by your Aquatic Director working with Camp Management. In this case you will need to become familiar with the plan and know your role if it needs to be implemented.

As you develop plans of action the first step is to "*think it through.*" Create the scenario in your mind and list all the things that must happen to remedy the situation. Go through the components of an EAP (next section) and adapt each item to your scenario.



COMPONENTS OF AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Each plan should address the following basics:

- When and how the plan is activated
- Who takes charge of the overall response
- Who conducts the rescue or provides aid to the victim
- What equipment will be needed, and where it is located
- Communication between victim and rescuer
- Communication with and supervision of the rest of the scouts, who may assist with the effort or need to be removed from danger
- Who summons EMS, law enforcement, or other authorities, under what circumstances, and how
- After the victim is stabilized or removed from immediate danger, what follow-up care is needed, including (if necessary) how to evacuate the victim
- Notification of unit leader, camp management, or council office as appropriate
- Debriefing of staff members who participated or witnessed the event.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

It is imperative that there be communication between areas of the waterfront and between the waterfront and the camp office / health office. This communication could be radio, land lines or even cell phones.

It must be understood by all that communication between aquatic areas and camp office or health office is serious business. Communication should only take place to ensure the health and safety of scouts or staff. It should never be frivolous in nature.

The health officer must be available whenever aquatic program is taking place. The radio or phone in the health office must be manned during these times.

Communication on open channels should be short and to the point. While radio code is common in police or fire situations it is often best in camp to simply ask questions or supply information in plain language.

If information about specific scouts or leaders is transmitted over open channels, reasonable care is needed to maintain confidentiality. Follow your local camp protocols.

CAMP-WIDE EAP'S

Some emergency situations might involve the entire camp or large areas of the camp. These plans might include:

- Fire
- Severe Weather
- Lost Scout
- Intruder
- Accidents
- Cardiac Arrest
- Spinal Injury

These plans will have been developed by Camp Management and covered with the entire staff during staff training.

While we won't attempt to elaborate on these plans here it is important to remember that an aquatic emergency might evolve into one that involves the entire camp. For instance, a Wayward Buddy Tag plan that isn't resolved in a timely manner might become a Lost Scout drill.



AQUATICS EAP'S

Emergency plans for the aquatics area include but are not limited to:

- Submersion incident or drowning
- Wayward Buddy Tag
- Lost Swimmer
- Spinal Injury
- Severe Weather
- Boating Accident
- Collision
- Stranded Boat
- Water Contaminants
- Failure of electrical/mechanical systems

You and all your fellow staff members must know your responsibilities when any of these incidents occur. Proper preparation and quick action will make all the difference in an emergency.

SPECIAL EMERGENCY SITUATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- EAP's should be developed for situations which may arise through the normal course of program. EAP's should not be developed for outlandish or bizarre situations (meteor shower) - these tend to trivialize the entire process.
- Avoid confusing communication codes -- if secure channels are not available transmit only information that is necessary; staff should be cautioned to maintain confidentiality if secure information is overheard.
- Emergencies at remote locations (boating separate from swimming) or out on a lake (waterskiing accident) present situations where both locations must be secured while EAP's are implemented.
- EAP's that rely on coordinated efforts (lost swimmer search) or that have complex logistics (rescue boats) should be practiced often so that all who may be involved know their responsibilities.
- Local agencies (EMT's, Rescue Squads, Hospitals, DNR ... whatever is applicable) should be consulted ahead of time to ensure a coordinated effort.
- All staff should be forewarned that they are not to discuss, speculate or contribute to rumors regarding emergency situations - even with other staff members. The only discussion that is permissible is between a director and his staff (debriefing) and between directors and Camp Management. All inquiries from the media should be referred to Camp Management.

DEBRIEFINGS

The purpose of debriefings is to review and analyze the response of the staff to the situation. In the case of a serious injury or fatality. The Camp Director and Council Executive will implement standardized procedures. Staff members should not discuss the incident until directed to do so.

Emergency incidents involving serious injury or fatalities may be very traumatic for both campers and staff members. The council will arrange professional counseling as appropriate.

Incidents where a serious outcome was averted will be reviewed by the Aquatics Director to determine if additional safeguards or training are needed for prevention or improved response.

Debriefings should be short and to-the-point. Any further discussion of the event should only occur with the Aquatic Director.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSON PLANS AND SYLLABI

The following lesson plans and syllabi were developed in the field - at a Scout camp. They were developed for that camp's program, personnel, and equipment. You should use them as a guide in developing your own plans.

LESSON PLANS AND SYLLABI

SWIMMING INSTRUCTION

Merit Badge Plans and Syllabi

Swimming MB

Lifesaving MB

Rowing MB

Canoeing MB

Kayaking MB

Motorboating MB

Small Boat Sailing MB

Watersports MB

Scuba Diving MB

Whitewater MB



SWIMMING INSTRUCTION

The BSA does not have a formal learn-to-swim program; however, teaching Scouts to swim is one of the most important elements of a camp aquatics program. Proper instruction to non-swimmers will speed their progress to more advanced swimming and lifesaving skills.

A proven method for teaching basis swimming skills is covered in great detail in [Aquatics Supervision - a leaders guide to youth swimming and boating activities](#). The following is a brief outline.

1. Orientation and Adjustment to Water



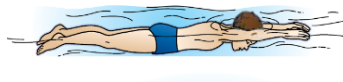
2. Breathing



3. Body Position and Buoyancy



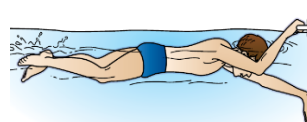
4. Prone Float and Glide



5. Back Float and Glide



6. Flutter Kick



7. Arm Movement



8. Coordination



9. Turning Over

10. Turns, Reverses, Stops, and Starts

11. Jump Entry Into Deep Water

When a scout has mastered all of the steps he/she will probably be ready to attempt the Beginners Test - maybe even the Swimmers Test.





SWIMMING MERIT BADGE

NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTOR

Please read the "Notes to the Counselor" in the merit badge pamphlet paying attention to the fact that the expectation that scouts will learn how to float on both their back and front and how body position impacts floating and buoyancy. It is expected that there will be significant amount of work during the course on stroke development and improved stroke mechanics. This includes performing appropriate rhythmic breathing during the stroke, proper body position through the stroke cycle and general ease while performing the strokes. This suggests that there must be sufficient time expended in ensuring the scouts understand rhythmic breathing in the context of swimming.



Typically, this course should require approximately 6 hours of instructor depending on class size and the skill level of the scouts. Note that Swimmer ability level is a requirement to take the course in that Swimmer ability is the minimal ability to have the confidence and capability to learn the skills in this merit badge.

This syllabus was primarily developed for use in the summer camp setting but could be adapted to most programs and schedules if careful note to timing is observed. At summer camp the most typical schedules are based on either 4 days or 5 days (with 1.5 h instruction per day for 4 days or 1.2 h instruction per day for 5 days, each equaling 6 hours). Less than 6 hours of instruction for this merit badge will almost certainly not produce the level of swimming ability we are striving for with scouts of typical swimming ability. Also, a class size greater than 8 per instructor is also likely not to give the results desired due to the limited instruction provided by a single instructor. These considerations should be shared and stressed to your camp Program Director so that proper schedule staff and times appropriately.

RATIONALE FOR THE MERIT BADGE

This merit badge will help scouts be safer around and in the water. The merit badge will help improve their swimming ability by virtue of improved stroke mechanics and swimming endurance. Better enable scouts to perform requirements in Lifesaving Merit Badge.

TAKEAWAYS FOR THE SCOUTS

- Understanding of what types of ailments or health concerns one may encounter at the waterfront or pool and common first aid for these.
- How body position affects floating on one's front and back.
- How floating can be a survival technique.
- How to minimize heat loss if found in cold water.
- Understand the meaning of rhythical breathing, good stroke mechanics and body hydrodynamics when swimming.
- How to correctly do the front crawl, back crawl, breast stroke, elementary back stroke, side stroke and trudgen.

RECOMMENDED SCHEDULE/SYLLABUS FOR A 4 DAY COURSE (1.5h/day)

Day One

1. Goals/Requirements Addressed

- a. Check/Recheck of Swimming Ability/#2. Conduct the Swimmer's test on each learner to better familiarize yourself with their abilities and weaknesses/make notes on each learner.
 - i. Time required - 20 min.
 - ii. Resources - Swimmer or Beginner Area.
 - iii. Sequence - If they come with their Swimmer the instructor can feel free to swim two learners at a time, since this isn't an actual swim check. If it is a formal swim check, it will be one swimmer at a time during the check.
- b. Effective body position and floating/#5
 - i. Time required - 40 min.
 - ii. Resources - Lifejackets. Beginner's Area is ideal for teaching; you need both waist deep and head deep water for this.
 - iii. Teaching sequence - First explain survival floating and then demonstrate face down, jelly fish floating with minimum motion/movement. Have each buddy pair practice for a few minutes. If all are OK, move to 5 min Survival Float. For floating on back, this will require more time. Explain how body position in the water affects buoyancy then demonstrate by adjusting feet (knee) positions, arm positions and head/back positions. Then demonstrate with a learner providing support to their back while



instructing them in their body position continuing until they are floating without your support. Have the buddy pairs practice with the instructor move around group providing guidance.

- c. Rhythmic breathing/Introduction of #3.
 - i. Time required - 30 min.
 - ii. Resources - Beginners or Swimmer Area, kick boards.
 - iii. Sequence - In waist deep water have all learners form a circle around instructor. Instructor explains what rhythmic breathing is and its importance in swimming. Then she demonstrates rhythmic breathing by bending over at waist, blowing bubble out of nose and mouth and when needing air rotating head to side (as in crawl stroke) and quickly takes a breath of air and rotates head back down. Following demonstration, all learners do this simultaneously with instructor moving around making corrections. The instructor then moves class to dock/pier and explains the purpose/value of the front crawl, describes the arm movement, leg movement (kick), body position and breathing. Then the instructor demonstrates in water. Class practices briefly with kick boards with corrections made to flutter kicks and rhythmic breathing and then buddy pairs (one on dock, practicing) practice with instructor move up and down dock giving tips and encouragement.
- d. Class ends with brief game, cheer or song and short verbal review of what they accomplished and what they will do during the next class. All learners congratulated and checked out of area. Complete daily record keeping for class.

Day Two

1. Goals/Requirement Addressed

- a. Brief review of what they did previous day and what they are going to do today.
 - i. Time required - 5 min.
- b. Practice back floats and rhythmic breathing.
 - i. Time Required - 10 min.
 - ii. Resources - kick boards. Beginner Area.
- iii. Sequence. Have buddy pairs practice floating on back with instructor offering help and individual instruction (7 min). With one buddy from each pair having a kick board practice flutter kick with rhythmic breathing (8 min).
- c. Review and practice front crawl (15 min).
- d. Introduce back crawl/Requirement #3
 - i. Time - 20 min.
 - ii. Sequence. Instructor explains function/purpose of stroke then explains the arm and leg movement and body position. Instructor demonstrates in water. Learners practice arm and leg movement on dock then as buddy pairs they work on stroke in water with instructor offering guidance and encouragement.
- e. Introduce breast stroke/Requirement #3.
 - i. Time - 30 min.



- ii. Resources - pool noodles, gallon or half gallon bleach bottles half filled with water (knee position in kicks).
- iii. Sequence - Instructor explains function/value of stroke, arm and leg movement and coordination, body position and rhythmic breathing on dock and the demonstrates the stroke in the water. With pool noodles/kick boards buddy pairs practice kicks without arm movement. With pool noodles practice arm movement w/out kicks. Then put it all together. Use bleach bottles to correct for frog kicks.
- f. Goals/Requirement #
 - i. Time - 15 min.
 - ii. Resources - Object to recover from bottom. For lakes it should be easily grasped in poor/no visibility.
 - iii. Sequence. Instructor explains purpose of surface dives and the types and then demonstrates. Buddies get into water and practice each type then recovers object from bottom as per requirement.
- g. Review
 - i. Time - 5 min.
 - ii. Sequence. Review what was done in the class on what requirements. Congratulate the class on their efforts and discuss next day. Dismiss class noting which learners may need extra help and discuss with Aquatics Director for guidance. Complete daily record keeping for class.

Day Three

- 2. Goals/Requirement Addressed
 - a. Introduce elementary back stroke/Requirement #3.
 - i. Time - 20 min.
 - ii. Resources - pool noodles, bleach bottles half filled with water. Beginners or Swimmers Area.
 - iii. Sequence - Instructor introduces the function/purpose of stroke, describes arm and leg movement, body position and coordination then demonstrates the stroke. Buddy pairs practice arm movement and leg movement on deck. They they use pool noodles under their shoulders and practice kick in water. Without noodle buddy pairs use arms and legs together.
 - b. Introduce dives from the dock/pier/Requirement #
 - i. Time - 20 min.
 - ii. Resources - dock or pier with sufficient deep water and appropriate water conditions.
 - iii. Sequence - Instructor explains purpose of head first dives from docks etc. and then demonstrates a dive. This is followed by the sequence of learning with the buddy pairs.
 - c. Introduce side stroke/Requirement #3.
 - i. Time - 20 min.



- ii. Resources - Pool noodles, Beginners or Swimmers Area.
- iii. Sequence - Instructor explains function/purpose of stroke, demonstrates arm and leg movements and coordination. Instructor demonstrates in water. On deck learner practice arm movement and kick (also can be done on side of pool deck or dock). Learners put it all together practicing as buddy pairs in the water with instructor offering guidance and encouragement.
- d. Introduce reaching, throwing and line and tender rescues/Requirement #
 - i. Time - 25 min.
 - ii. Resources - pool noodles, cooler, bleach bottles with/without heaving line, reach poles, heaving lines, line and tender lines.
- iii. Sequence - Instructor describes the "Order of Rescue" and why this is so important to follow and how they will not conduct any going rescues. Then instructor demonstrates various reaching rescues followed by buddy pairs practicing, then throwing rescues and practice then line and tender.
- e. Review and Dismiss.
 - i. Time - 5 min.
 - ii. Sequence - Review what was done and what they will be doing tomorrow (last day). Congratulate them on their efforts and escort to the gate. Discuss with Aquatics Director potential issues and those who may not pass. Complete daily record keeping for class.

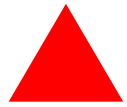
Day Four

1. Goals/Requirements Addressed

- a. Introduce the Trudgen Stroke/Requirement #3.
 - i. Time - 20 min.
 - ii. Resources - Beginner or Swimmers Area.
- iii. Sequence - Instructor explains purpose/function of the stroke, the arm and leg movement, rhythmic breathing and coordination then demonstrates the stroke in the water. The learners practice stroke on dock then the buddy pairs work on the stroke in the water under the guidance of the instructor.
- b. Requirement #3.
 - i. Time - 30 min.
 - ii. Resources - Beginners or Swimmers Area
- iii. Sequence - Using groups of two buddy pairs conduct requirement #3.
- c. Requirement #1.
 - i. Time - 20 min.
 - ii. Resources - Swimming and First Aid merit badge books



- iii. Sequence - Instructors queries class what they think can happen at a swimming area and the discuss how the Eight Point Safe Swim Defense of the scout program serves to mitigate those risks. Instructor queries class about what sorts of first aid issues they may encounter at a swimming waterfront then the Instructor goes through the elements described in the requirements.
- d. Review the merit badge with class and congratulate and dismiss. For those who may need another chance at Requirement #3 offer again.
- i. Time - 20 min.
- e. Complete appropriate record keeping for the merit badge as proscribed by your camp and submit to your Aquatics Director.



LIFESAVING MERIT BADGE



ROWING MERIT BADGE



NOTE: This syllabus is for the fixed-seat option for requirements 4 and 5. It is for a 5 day, 1 hour per day schedule.

ROWING MERIT BADGE SYLLABUS

MONDAY

- Check to make sure all scouts are swimmers. If they took the test and did not pass they may NOT participate. Direct them to talk to the Aquatics Director. If they have not had an opportunity to take the swimmer's test, tell them they may participate today; however, if they have not passed it by tomorrow, they will not be allowed into a boat.
- Remind scouts about First Aid requirement, and also about swim checks (if you have any who have not yet completed).
- Discuss proper use and sizing of lifejackets and go over Safety Afloat quickly.
- Gather equipment and launch from boat ramp.
- Demonstrate proper entry technique, using 3-points of contact at ALL TIMES.
- Demonstrate how to row in straight line, with particular emphasis on feathering.
- Demonstrate and teach scouts how to backwater.
- Demonstrate and teach scouts how to stop.
- Have scouts land and rack their boats.
- Go over knot tying: clove hitch, roundturn with two half-hitches, bowline, Wellman's knot, and mooring hitch. (These requirements can be held off and can be done another day if the instructor chooses).

Note: The goal of this day is to mainly practice rowing with correct feathering technique.

Requirements Completed:

TUESDAY

- Remind scouts about First Aid requirement, and that tomorrow is Wet Wednesday and to be prepared to be wet.

- Teach scouts how to scull.
- Let the scouts row around in the boats for awhile and practice more of what they learned the previous day.
- Teach pivots to the scouts.
- Test the scouts on their quarter mile.
- Test the scouts on their backwatering. (All scouts must be tested and passed on both quarter mile and backwatering to complete the requirement).
- Discuss the following talking requirements:
 - Types of craft used in commercial, competitive, and recreational rowing.
 - Four common boat building materials and positive and negative points of each.
 - Types of oarlocks used in competitive rowing.

Requirements Completed:

WEDNESDAY

- Remind scouts about First Aid and CPR requirements.
- Begin the class with a demonstration of a swamped boat drill.
- Have the scouts perform a swamped boat drill.
- Discuss the following talking requirements:
 - Explain why it is necessary to stay with a swamped boat.
 - Have scouts explain the advantage of feathering oars while rowing.
 - Precautions during rough water or weather conditions.
 - Storing and maintaining a boat in season and during the winter.

Requirements Completed:

THURSDAY

- Perform a dockside landing as specified in requirement 5a.
- Discuss the following talking requirements:
 - How to calculate the maximum weight a boat can carry under normal circumstances.
 - The differences between fixed-seat and sliding-seat rowing, and the different meanings of the turn sculling in fixed and sliding-seat rowing.
 - Discuss the health benefits from rowing for exercise.
- Continue to practice rowing skills.

Requirements Completed:

FRIDAY

- Demonstrate a rowing rescue Perform a row rescue.
- Explain the proper use of anchors for rowboats.
- If the scouts are proficient with fixed-seat rowboats, or with any extra time, the scouts can use the sliding seat rowboats.

Requirements Completed:



CANOEING MERIT BADGE



Sample Syllabus – Canoeing Merit Badge

Before the course

- Ensure Scouts are aware of course location and equipment requirements (what they need to bring, including health records)
- Ensure adequate equipment (boats, paddles, lifejackets) is available
- Ensure appropriate facilities and paddling venue are available
- Ensure adequate instructional staff is available

Session One

- Introduce staff and students (5 minutes)
- Review facility rules and policies, including life jacket wear rules (10 minutes)
- Conduct swim test; arrange alternative activities for Scouts unable to perform Swimmer skills in the training venue (30 minutes)
- Review Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat as risk management practices; focus on supervision, life jacket wear, discipline and the buddy system. (20 minutes)
- Introduce canoe equipment
 - Explain parts of the boat, how to carry the boat, and how to enter the boat (20 minutes)
 - Explain different types of boats and hull designs, and how to care for boats (5 minutes)
 - Explain parts of the paddle, how to hold the paddle, and how to select and care for a paddle (10 minutes)
 - Explain how to choose and don lifejackets and check fit (10 minutes)
- Put equipment away (10 minutes)

Session Two

- Review points from session one (5 minutes)
- Kit out and carry boats to water (10 minutes)
- Review getting in and out of boats and launching from shore (15 minutes)
- Introduction to paddling fundamentals (posture, balance and strong shoulder position), edging and bracing on the water (10 minutes)
- Introduction to strokes with chance for practice (60 minutes)
- Return to shore, put equipment away (10 minutes)



Session Three

- Review points from session one and two (5 minutes)
- Kit out and carry boats to water (10 minutes)
- Review and practice strokes (25 minutes)
- Introduce and practice controlled capsizes, deep water reentry, canoe-over-canoe rescue, and swim boat to shore (60 minutes)
- Return to shore and put equipment away (10 minutes)

Session Four

- Review points from sessions one, two and three (5 minutes)
- Kit out and carry boats to water (10 minutes)
- Solo and tandem performance assessment (merit badge performance element 11 and 12) (65 minutes)
- Discuss common on-water problems and equipment needed to manage them (bailer/pump/sponge, throw rope, first aid kit, signaling equipment including a whistle, extra paddle); provide examples of each (20 minutes)
- Return to shore and put equipment away (10 minutes)

Session Five

- Review points from sessions one, two, three and four (5 minutes)
- Review common first aid problems (20 minutes) and on-water hazards (10 minutes)
- Practice placing and securing canoes to racks (30 minutes)
- Discuss canoe tripping. Practice equipment storage (15 minutes)
- Return to shore and put equipment away (10 minutes)
- Wrap up class with suggestions for where to go next (kayak merit badge, whitewater merit badge, rafting award, SUP award) (10 minutes)



KAYAKING MERIT BADGE



Lesson Plan for Kayak Merit Badge

(intended for four blocks, each 110 minutes long, allowing 10 minutes to change and shift to the next merit badge session)

Instructional Block One

- I. Introduction (35 minutes)
 - a. Introduce instructional staff and students
 - b. Describe course, emphasizing that this program teaches entry level paddling skills
 - c. Describe site specific rules and procedures as appropriate (e.g., buddy tag system, length of program modules, restricted areas, ...)
 - d. Review Safety Afloat principles (requirement 1.3)
- II. Swim test (requirement 2, 30 minutes)
- III. Equipment introduction (45 minutes)
 - a. Review and fit lifejackets (requirement 3.1)
 - b. Describe and name major parts of a kayak and how they may affect performance; get in and out of kayaks on land (requirement 4.1, 4.2)
 - c. Describe parts of a paddle and how to hold paddle (requirements 5.1 and 5.2)
 - d. Demonstrate and practice carrying kayaks



Instructional Block Two

- I. On-water skills
 - a. Bring boats to water's edge, demonstrate on shore wet exits (10 minutes)
 - b. Bring boats into water, practice wet exits (20 minutes)
 - c. Allow students to hand paddle briefly (5 minutes)
 - d. Give students paddles, introduce paddling foundations (20 minutes)
 - i. Posture
 - ii. Cube (box, strong shoulder position)
 - iii. Balance (head over bottom), including J-lean and edging
 - iv. Traction (no splashing with the paddle)
 - v. Focus (look where you want to go)
 - e. Forward sweep, stern draw, forward stroke (20 minutes, requirements 7.1, 7.2 and 7.6)
- II. Rescue skills
 - a. Wet exit, demonstrate HELP position, and swim boats to shore, empty boats (20 minutes, requirements 6.1, 6.4 and 6.5)
- III. Maintenance skills

- a. Put boats away, discuss care for boats and paddles (15 minutes, requirements 4.3 and 5.3)

Instructional Block Three

- I. On-water skills
 - a. Bring boats to water's edge, review strokes (15 minutes)
 - b. Add reverse sweep, reverse stroke and draw stroke (20 minutes, requirements 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5)
 - c. Practice maneuvering (30 minutes, requirements 8.1 - 8.7)
- II. Rescue skills
 - a. Discuss and practice deep water wet exits, boat over boat emptying, and reentry (30 minutes, requirements 6.1-6.3)
- III. Maintenance skills
 - a. Put boats away, review care for boats and paddles (15 minutes, requirements 4.3 and 5.3)

Instructional Block Four

- I. Safety Skills
 - a. Discuss hazards and mitigation (30 minutes, requirements 1.1 and 1.2)
 - b. Review safety equipment (15 minutes, requirement 3.2)
- II. General knowledge
 - a. Review characteristics of kayaks (5 minutes, requirement 4.2)
- III. General practice
 - a. Complete any uncompleted topics, practice skills (40 minutes)
- IV. Wrap up
 - a. Reminder that this is an introductory class, continue to develop and practice skills, ideally working with mentors and more experienced paddlers (10 minutes)
 - b. Put gear away (10 minutes)



MOTORBOATING MERIT BADGE



NOTE: This syllabus is for a camp utilizing 16-ft, v-hull boats with small (5 hp) tiller control, outboard motors. Each boat has 4 scouts plus a trained, staff instructor. One of the instructors is designated as the "head instructor". It is designed around a 3-day time frame with additional time being scheduled on an as-needed basis.

Motorboating Merit Badge Syllabus

Special Notes

- Throughout the course of this merit badge whenever a motorboat is in operation, the instructor **MUST** have the kill switch attached to his or her person at **ALL TIMES**.
- Each motorboat **MUST** have a staff instructor.
- Scouts and Instructor **MUST** maintain 3 points of contact at all times when in the boats and must keep all limbs inside the boat at **ALL times**
- Safety is the priority in the motorboats. Because you are further away than most other merit badges, the head instructor should use his/her judgment regarding weather and other circumstances (If the weather is questionable discuss options with the Aquatics Director or Assistant).
- When starting the engines, make sure to pull pull-rope correctly. Otherwise the engine will become damaged. If there are any questions ask a coordinator or Aquatics Director.

*Note: If your class is so large that you do not have enough instructors and more instructors cannot be found, it is possible to split your class in half. This **MUST** be approved by the Aquatics Director.*

Day One

- Check to make sure all scouts are swimmers. If they took the test and did not pass they may **NOT** participate. Direct them to talk to the Aquatics Director. If they have not had an opportunity to take the



swimmer's test, tell them they may participate today; however, if they have not passed it by tomorrow, they will not be allowed into a boat.

- Remind scouts about First Aid and CPR requirements, and also about swim checks (if you have any who have not yet completed).
- Talk about PFD's. Show scouts how to put on PFD's and how to size them correctly.
- Acquire fuel and explain safety procedures and precautions involving handling fuel and fuel storage and fuel ventilation.
- Show proper entry technique and demonstrate how to run a safety check and how to set up and start the boats.
- An instructor should drive out of cove. Demonstrate proper handling of the boat and correct operation of equipment.
- Do talking requirements on the way out:
- Explain safety procedures and precautions involving passenger positions under way, procedures and precautions involving swimmers and boat wakes. **(Emphasize that when switching positions the boat must be in neutral, three points of contact must be upheld, and only one person may move at a time).**
- Go over the nautical rules of the road and aids to navigation.
- Discuss laws that apply to recreational boating.
- Discuss how BSA Safety Afloat applies to Motorboating.
- Under close guidance, allow scouts to take over operation of the boat.
- Each scout should complete the following:
- Run a course for at least a mile showing procedures for overtaking and passing craft, making turns, and reversing direction.
- Allow enough time for each scout to have ample time to operate the boat (This requirement will most likely need to be carried over to day two).
- Drive in - allow scouts to drive in.
- The instructor should explain and demonstrate docking.
- After docking, demonstrate how to tie up the boat. Each scout should dock and tie up once during the week. **(When docking, do not allow scouts to grab the dock! All limbs must stay inside the boat at ALL TIMES).**
- Show the scouts how to put everything away properly.

Requirements Completed:

Day Two

Note: Keeping scouts in the same boat with the same instructor will make checking off requirements easier.

- Have one scout get the gas can and start the boat.
- Drive out of the cove - Have scouts drive all day
- Do talking requirements on the way out:
- Discuss weather hazards and how heavy water conditions affect safety and performance in Motorboating.
- Explain the difference between inboard, outboard, inboard/outboard motors and the advantages of each. Discuss special features of a bass boat and ski boat.
- Explain how to winterize a boat motor and why it is necessary.
- Explain proper anchoring technique and have each scout anchor.
- Complete any remaining driving requirements.
- Have scouts drive into the cove and complete docking requirements.
- Tie-up and store gear.

Requirements Completed:

Day Three

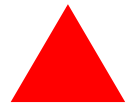
Finish remaining talking requirements

No one gets in boats unless there are requirements that still have not been signed off.

Requirements Completed:



SMALL BOAT SAILING MERIT BADGE



WATERSPORTS MERIT BADGE



SCUBA DIVING MERIT BADGE



Scuba Diving Merit Badge syllabus.

With the exception of the prerequisite requirement of earning the Swimming merit badge and a pre/post requirement of Scuba certification, the actual merit badge requirements could be accomplished in 1 one day setting.

Requirement #1a - Show that you know first aid for injuries or illnesses that could occur while scuba diving including the following:

- Hypothermia
- Hyperventilation
- Squeezes
- Decompression illness
- Nitrogen narcosis
- Dehydration
- Injuries by aquatic life
- Cuts and scrapes

Based upon a group size of 4 participants this should take about 1 hour. This could change based upon the counselor's knowledge of the subject and the questions posed by the participants. It is suggested that the counselor have some type of knowledge in Hazardous Marine Life injuries and diving maladies.

Requirement #1b -

- Identify the conditions that must exist before performing CPR on a person and how to recognize such conditions.
- Demonstrate the proper technique for performing CPR using a training device approved by your counselor

Based upon a group size of 4 participants this should take about 30-45 minutes. If the participants have not used their CPR skills in some time this could take longer.

Requirement #2 - Before completing any of the following requirements the participants must have completed the Swimming merit badge.

Requirement #3 -

- Discuss the Scuba Diver's Code with your merit badge counselor.

- Explain the importance of each guideline to a scuba diver's safety.

Based upon a group size of 4 participants this should take about 1 hour. This could change based upon the counselor's knowledge of the subject and the questions posed by the participants.

Requirement #4 - Earn an Open Water Diver Certification from a scuba organization recognized by the Boy Scouts of America scuba policy.

This requirement could be completed prior to the start of earning the merit badge or at some point prior to completing the requirements for the merit badge. Ensure that any scuba certifications that are earned for this requirement are issued by a scuba certification agency that is recognized by the Boy Scouts of America. A listing of these agencies may be found on the *World Recreational Scuba Training Council (WRSTC)* website at [wrstc.com](https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss02/#i) or in the on-line version of the Guide to Safe Scouting - <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss02/#i>

Requirement #5 -

- Explain what an eco-system is.
- Describe four aquatic ecosystems a diver might experience

Based upon a group size of 4 participants this should take about 1 hour. This could change based upon the counselor's knowledge of the subject and the questions posed by the participants.

Requirement #6 -

- Find out about three career opportunities in the scuba industry.
- Pick one and find out about the education, training and experience required for this profession.
- Discuss this with your counselor and explain why this profession might interest you.

Based upon a group size of 4 participants this should take about 1 hour. This could change based upon the counselor's knowledge of the subject and the questions posed by the participants.



WHITEWATER MERIT BADGE



WRITING A SYLLABUS

Most staff members will be asked at one time to teach a merit badge class. Whereas a lesson plan is sufficient for quick topics or one-time instruction, merit badges require an instructor to get a number of scouts proficient in a number of skills in a limited amount of time and to assess them in those skills - hence, a syllabus.

Each syllabus will be different. There are many variables in merit badge instruction - some can be anticipated, some can't.

Your director will provide guidance in the writing of a syllabus for the merit badge you might be assigned. Understand that it takes time to write a good syllabus.

Some factors which must be considered in the writing of a syllabus include:

- Requirements of the merit badge.
- Facility and equipment
- Time frame (minutes / day x no. of days)
- Class size
- Proficiency of scouts (pre-requisites)
- Proficiency of instructors and assistant instructors.
- Contingencies (weather, equipment failure, emergencies, etc.)

A few guidelines in the writing of a syllabus:

- **Write the syllabus as if you were writing it for someone else to teach.**
Too often a syllabus is so cryptic that the only person who can understand it is the person who wrote it.
- **Break activities down by the minute.** A bulleted list doesn't keep an instructor on a time track to get everything done in the time allowed. Be realistic in what you can cover in a given amount of time.
- **Be specific.** Simply saying "Time for practice" is too vague. Be clear about what the scouts should be practicing as well as what the instructors should be doing -- supervision, correction, assessment, etc.



- Include **supervision** considerations, **guard-the-instructor** situations, etc. Also include **housekeeping** topics such as attendance, checking buddy tags, etc. Don't forget to allow for **wrap-up** and **check-out**.
- Address **how you will deal with "discuss / explain" requirements**. Ensuring that each scout actually completes these requirements is very important.
- Be sure to **include the logistics of the class** -- check-in, equipment selection, moving from area to area, check-out, etc. What will instructors and assistants do at any given time?
- **Consider what you will say**, not just what will be covered. Sometimes a script, although time-consuming at first, clarifies how material will be presented. It also avoids the awkward pause as we try to think of what to say next.
- **Be clear about assessment criteria**. Instructors and scouts should be very clear about the level of proficiency expected.
- **Type it if possible**. A hand-written syllabus should be transferred as soon as feasible to a computer file. This allows for easy sharing, quick corrections, and secure storage.
- In referencing requirements be sure to **include the requirement itself**, not just the number. This eliminates the need to have a separate sheet of requirements in order for the syllabus to make sense.
- Be sure to **cover the what-if's** - the contingencies. What if a scout shows up who is not a swimmer? What if a scout misses a day?
- **Allow for "either / or" requirements** that allow the scout to pass in one of two ways or with different equipment (eg. *fixed-seat vs. sliding seat rowing*). If possible these decisions should be the scout's, not arbitrarily decided by the instructor. In situations where only one type of equipment is available (eg. only fixed-seat boats are available) this should be made clear in pre-camp literature.

- Avoid “blowing off” day one. Using day one to cover “discuss / explain” requirements or to read the requirements to the class sets a tone for the rest of the week. A good rule of thumb is ***“In the water or on the water within 15 minutes”***. You can always go back on a rainy day and cover “discuss / explain”.
- **Collaborate.** Work with your fellow staff members to proof each other's work. A second set of eyes will often see the problems that the original writer overlooked. Also work closely with your director as well as the camp Program Director to ensure quality and consistency.
- **Revise, revise, revise.** A syllabus should be a “living document” that is changed to reflect what actually took place during class. Constantly evaluate your own use of the syllabus. If you had to make changes during the session make a note on the syllabus.

