

DESERET PEAK DISTRICT
MARCH 2017 ROUNDTABLE
COMMITTEE SECTION - AQUATIC SAFETY
APRIL 2017 - SCOUT LAW: THRIFTY THEME: POWER UP!

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Safety is of paramount importance at any BSA water activity. During the annual pack planning meeting, leadership should address all proposed water activities to be certain all required trainings will be completed before each event, that all boys will have the opportunity to participate in some manner, and that BSA policies are understood and followed.

Use the most current BSA policies in the **Guide to Safe Scouting** regarding any water activities. This is updated every three months and is available on line (see resource section).

Review the training requirements before a water activity can be executed. (Safe Swim Defense Training, etc.)

Review administrative paperwork needs. (Tour plans, permission slips, etc.)

Review any policies specific to the local council regarding water activities.

Review the pack's buddy tag system and ensure that the necessary supplies are available to all units.

Review individual rank requirements pertaining to swimming. Allow time for questions and answers to ensure all participants understand the requirements.

Have the group share ideas for water activities that will include boys who do not swim.

Do council and district events provide opportunities for units to participate in water activities? How can you support your den with aquatic locations and park activities?

Guide to Safe Scouting – Aquatics Safety Section

This version of Aquatics Safety contains updates as of January 2017. Please refer to the online version for the most updated information. <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416.pdf> because snorkeling and scuba diving are not age appropriate for cub scouts those sections were removed to prevent confusion.

2016 Updates

July

- **V. Medical Information and First Aid:** A section called Medication Use in Scouting was added to this chapter.
- **VIII. Sports and Activities:** Information on orb activities was added to the Unauthorized and Restricted Activities section.
- **Inspections:** The entire Inspections chapter was deleted.
- **IX. Insurance:** The entire Insurance chapter was updated.
- **X. Transportation:** The section on automobiles, SUVs, and vans was updated for consistency with new insurance requirements.
- **XIII. Incident Reporting:** Information was added about the BSA's new series of Incident Review sheets.

December

- **Front Matter:** Scouter Code of Conduct added.
- **II. Aquatics Safety:** The Safety Afloat section was updated.
- **IV. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs:** The entire chapter was updated and renamed.
- **IX. Insurance:** The Automobile Liability Insurance section was updated.
- **X. Transportation:** The Automobiles, SUVs, and Vans section was updated.



Aquatics Safety

Aquatics Leadership Training Programs

Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat training programs are available online at my.scouting.org and may be offered locally by instructors approved by the council aquatics committee or other council authority.

Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue and **Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety** cover skills needed for Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat policies at the unit level. These training courses are provided locally by qualified instructors who are authorized by the local council.

BSA Lifeguard provides professional-level training for lifeguards at unit or summer camp swimming activities and is provided locally by qualified instructors who are authorized by the local council.

BSA Aquatics Instructor prepares adults for leadership roles in year-round aquatics programs and is recommended for a least one member of the council aquatics committee. Those with BSA Aquatics Instructor

training may serve as aquatics directors at Boy Scout or Cub Scout summer camps. The training is available at National Camping Schools.

Responsibilities of Supervisory Personnel

Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat govern BSA swimming and boating activities. Both specify that the activities are supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who

- Understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of youth members in his or her care
- Is experienced in the particular activity
- Is confident in his or her ability to respond appropriately in an emergency
- Is trained and committed to the nine points of BSA Safety Afloat and/or the eight points of Safe Swim Defense.

Unit leadership that accompanies the unit on an outing handles the first and last bulleted points above. However, under appropriate circumstances, the unit leader may delegate responsibility to trained individuals within the unit or to on-site professionals for the second and third bulleted points above. For example, a Scout troop at a water park with trained lifeguards on duty need not assign separate unit personnel to perform water rescue. A Venturing crew on a whitewater excursion may rely on a licensed outfitter to provide the necessary equipment and trained guides.

Every possible contingency will not be covered with a hard-and-fast rule, and rules are poor substitutes for experience. Ultimately, each responsible adult leader must personally decide if he or she understands the risk factors associated with the activity and is sufficiently experienced and well-informed to make the rational decisions expected of a “qualified supervisor.” The BSA training programs listed above help provide the skills, experience, and guidance for making such a determination.

Safe Swim Defense

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. Safe Swim Defense standards apply at backyard, hotel, apartment, and public pools; at established waterfront swim areas such as beaches at state parks and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes; and at all temporary swimming areas such as a lake, river, or ocean. Safe Swim Defense does not apply to boating or water activities such as waterskiing or swamped boat drills that are covered by Safety Afloat guidelines. Safe Swim Defense applies to other non-swimming activities whenever participants enter water over knee deep or when submersion is likely, for example, when fording a stream, seining for bait, or constructing a bridge as a pioneering project. Snorkeling in open water requires each participant to have demonstrated knowledge and skills equivalent to those for Snorkeling BSA in addition to following Safe Swim Defense. Scuba activities must be conducted in accordance with the BSA Scuba policy found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*. Because of concerns with hyperventilation, competitive underwater swimming events are not permitted in Scouting.

Safe Swim Defense training may be obtained from my.scouting.org, at council summer camps, and at other council and district training events. Confirmation of training is required on tour and activity plans for trips that involve swimming. Additional information on various swimming venues is provided in the *Aquatics Supervision* guide available from council service centers.

1. **Qualified Supervision**

All swimming activity must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of those in his or her care, and who is trained in and committed to compliance with the eight points of BSA Safe Swim Defense. It is strongly recommended that all units have at least one adult or older youth member currently trained in BSA Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue or BSA Lifeguard to assist in planning and conducting all swimming activities.

2. **Personal Health Review**

A complete health history is required of all participants as evidence of fitness for swimming activities. Forms for minors must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. Participants should be asked to relate any recent incidents of illness or injury just prior to the activity. Supervision and protection should be adjusted to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. For significant health conditions, the adult supervisor should require an examination by a physician and consult with the parent, guardian, or caregiver for appropriate precautions.

3. **Safe Area**

All swimming areas must be carefully inspected and prepared for safety prior to each activity. Water depth, quality, temperature, movement, and clarity are important considerations. Hazards must be eliminated or isolated by conspicuous markings and discussed with participants.

Controlled Access: There must be safe areas for all participating ability groups to enter and leave the water. Swimming areas of appropriate depth must be defined for each ability group. The entire area must be within easy reach of designated rescue personnel. The area must be clear of boat traffic, surfing, or other non-swimming activities.

Bottom Conditions and Depth: The bottom must be clear of trees and debris. Abrupt changes in depth are not allowed in the non-swimmer area. Isolated underwater hazards should be marked with floats. Rescue personnel must be able to easily reach the bottom. Maximum recommended water depth in clear water is 12 feet. Maximum water depth in turbid water is 8 feet.

Visibility: Underwater swimming and diving are prohibited in turbid water. Turbid water exists when a swimmer treading water cannot see his feet. Swimming at night is allowed only in areas with water clarity and lighting sufficient for good visibility both above and below the surface.

Diving and Elevated Entry: Diving is permitted only into clear, unobstructed water from heights no greater than 40 inches. Water depth must be at least 7 feet. Bottom depth contours below diving boards and elevated surfaces require greater water depths and must conform to state regulations. Persons should not jump into water from heights greater than they are tall, and should jump only into water chest deep or greater with minimal risk from contact with the bottom. No elevated entry is permitted where the person must clear any obstacle, including land.

Water Temperature: Comfortable water temperature for swimming is near 80 degrees. Activity in water at 70 degrees or less should be of limited duration and closely monitored for negative effects of chilling.

Water Quality: Bodies of stagnant, foul water, areas with significant algae or foam, or areas polluted by livestock or waterfowl should be avoided. Comply with any signs posted by local health authorities. Swimming is not allowed in swimming pools with green, murky, or cloudy water.

Moving Water: Participants should be able to easily regain and maintain their footing in currents or waves. Areas with large waves, swiftly flowing currents, or moderate currents that flow toward the open sea or into areas of danger should be avoided.

Weather: Participants should be moved from the water to a position of safety whenever lightning or thunder threatens. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or thunder before leaving shelter. Take precautions to prevent sunburn, dehydration, and hypothermia.

Life Jacket Use: Swimming in clear water over 12 feet deep, in turbid water over 8 feet deep, or in flowing water may be allowed if all participants wear properly fitted, Coast Guard–approved life jackets and the supervisor determines that swimming with life jackets is safe under the circumstances.

4. **Response Personnel (Lifeguards)**

Every swimming activity must be closely and continuously monitored by a trained rescue team on the alert for and ready to respond during emergencies. Professionally trained lifeguards satisfy this need when provided by a regulated facility or tour operator. When lifeguards are not provided by others, the adult supervisor must assign at least two rescue personnel, with additional numbers to maintain a ratio of one rescuer to every 10 participants. The supervisor must provide instruction and rescue equipment and assign areas of responsibility as outlined in Aquatics Supervision, No. 34346. The qualified supervisor, the designated response personnel, and the lookout work together as a safety team. An emergency action plan should be formulated and shared with participants as appropriate.

5. **Lookout**

The lookout continuously monitors the conduct of the swim, identifies any departures from Safe Swim Defense guidelines, alerts rescue personnel as needed, and monitors the weather and environment. The lookout should have a clear view of the entire area but be close enough for easy verbal communication. The lookout must have a sound understanding of Safe Swim Defense but is not required to perform rescues. The adult supervisor may serve simultaneously as the lookout but must assign the task to someone else if engaged in activities that preclude focused observation.

6. **Ability Groups**

All youth and adult participants are designated as swimmers, beginners, or non-swimmers based on swimming ability confirmed by standardized BSA swim classification tests. Each group is assigned a specific swimming area with depths consistent with those abilities. The classification tests must be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of the season even if the Scout has earned the Swimming merit badge.

Swimmers pass this test: Jump feet first into water over the head in depth. Level off and 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 without stops and must include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating.

Beginners pass this test: Jump feet first into water over the head in depth, level off, and swim 25 feet on the surface. Stop, turn sharply, resume swimming, and return to the starting place.

Anyone who has not completed either the beginner or swimmer tests is classified as a non-swimmer.

The non-swimmer area should be no more than waist to chest deep and should be enclosed by

physical boundaries such as the shore, a pier, or lines. The enclosed beginner area should contain water of standing depth and may extend to depths just over the head. The swimmer area may be up to 12 feet in depth in clear water and should be defined by floats or other markers.

7. **Buddy System**

Every participant is paired with another. Buddies stay together, monitor each other, and alert the safety team if either needs assistance or is missing. Buddies check into and out of the area together.

Buddies are normally in the same ability group and remain in their assigned area. If they are not of the same ability group, then they swim in the area assigned to the buddy with the lesser ability.

A buddy check reminds participants of their obligation to monitor their buddies and indicates how closely the buddies are keeping track of each other. Roughly every 10 minutes, or as needed to keep the buddies together, the lookout, or other person designated by the supervisor, gives an audible signal, such as a single whistle blast, and a call for "Buddies." Buddies are expected to raise each other's hand before completion of a slow, audible count to 10. Buddies who take longer to find each other should be reminded of their responsibility for the other's safety.

Once everyone has a buddy, a count is made by area and compared with the total number known to be in the water. After the count is confirmed, a signal is given to resume swimming.



8. **Discipline**

Rules are effective only when followed. All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for safe swimming provided by Safe Swim Defense guidelines. Applicable rules should be discussed prior to the outing and reviewed for all participants at the water's edge just before the swimming activity begins. People are more likely to follow directions when they know the reasons for rules and procedures. Consistent, impartially applied rules supported by skill and good judgment provide steppingstones to a safe, enjoyable outing.

BSA Aquatics Play Structure Policy

The BSA's Aquatics Play Structure Policy applies to all play structures operated in Scouting whether inflatable, floatable, or fixed structures. It includes, but is not limited to, slides, swings, mats, logs, rockers, and climbing or bouncing devices.

Program Hazard Analysis: A program hazard analysis must be completed at least annually for each aquatics play structure device in use. The unique risks associated with the device and the operational procedures and practices to mitigate the risks must be documented. The participant's age and swimming ability, which are appropriate for use of the device, must also be documented. The program hazard analysis must be approved by the council (Aquatics Committee and Enterprise Risk Management Committee).

Location: Aquatics play structures, used individually or in a group, must be isolated from other water activities to safely manage risks. A dedicated catch pool or roped-off area of water is required for each activity. A separate check-in and a single route to the start of the activity are often needed.

Operating Procedures: The activity must be conducted in accordance with Safe Swim Defense principles, and swimming ability must be appropriate for the activity.

Lifeguards must be specific to the activity and not be shared with other water activities. Appropriate guard ratios must be maintained, which includes a sufficient number of guards to scan the entire activity area with lines of sight not blocked by structures. Supervision of participants entering and leaving the activity must occur. Lifeguards must be positioned to maintain proper lines of sight for the risks associated with each type of device. Lifeguards must be provided with appropriate personal safety and rescue equipment.

Installation/Construction: Installation, including any anchoring systems, must be in accordance with manufacturing specifications. Construction of any fixed structures, towers, and ramps must be professionally designed, approved, and inspected by engineers/architects. All installations and construction must meet any state regulations on aquatics play structures.

Participant Safety Equipment: Safety equipment (such as properly fitted life jackets and helmets) must be provided to participants as appropriate for the activity.

Safety Checks: A safety check of the structure/device must occur in accordance with manufacturer specifications or at least daily. A safety check of the participant safety and lifeguard safety and rescue equipment must occur daily.

Emergency Action Plans: As part of the program hazard analysis, emergency action plans specific to the activity must be developed and approved. Emergency action plans must be practiced on a regular basis.

Classification of Swimming Ability

The swimmer and beginner classification tests defined in Safe Swim Defense may be administered at the unit level following procedures specified in *Aquatics Supervision*, No. 34346.

Swim classification tests for multiunit district and council aquatics activities, such as day or resident camps, are generally conducted on-site by supervisory personnel for those activities. Councils may arrange for swim classification tests conducted by council-approved aquatics resource people prior to camp as outlined in section V of *Camp Program and Property Management*, No 20-920. When swim tests are conducted off-site prior to the camp session, the camp aquatics director retains the right to review or retest any or all participants.

Distance and Competitive Swimming in Open Water

The following policies apply when distance swimming is conducted outside the confines of a normal Safe Swim Defense area.

- The environment for an open-water swim must conform to Safe Swim Defense guidelines regarding hazards such as submerged trees, currents, and boat traffic, as well as water quality, depth, and clarity.

- Each individual swimmer, or at most a buddy pair, may be accompanied by a rowboat with two people onboard—one skilled in controlling the boat and the other trained in basic water rescue—equipped with a reaching device and flotation aid, continuously watching the swimmers.
- Alternatively, a closed circuit may be established where all swimmers are constantly in reach of safety personnel strategically positioned at fixed points on anchored boats, the shore, or piers. Each participant swims with a buddy, and the number and spacing of the swimmers in the water should not exceed the capacity of the watchers to easily count the swimmers as they move from one zone to another.
- Some competitive swimming events, such as triathlons, also cover long distances. Long-distance swimming races are not approved for Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts, but Varsity Scouts and Venturers may participate in triathlon training and competitive events. All swimming activities conducted by Varsity Scout teams or Venturing crews must conform to Safe Swim Defense guidelines. Individual Varsity Scouts and Venturers may participate in outside triathlon events sanctioned by USA Triathlon.

Age-Appropriate Restrictions - http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416_Insert_Web.pdf

Youth members in Cub Scouting, including Webelos Scouts, are not authorized to use scuba in any activity.

Boy Scouts may participate in the introductory Scuba BSA program and may obtain open-water certification as part of Scuba Diving merit badge.

Varsity and Venturing groups may participate in introductory and certification scuba programs conducted by recognized agencies appropriate to their age and current level of certification.

Standards of the recognized scuba agencies require students for open-water certification programs to be at least 15 years of age but allow special certification programs for younger students. Since all instruction for BSA scuba programs must be conducted by professionals certified by a recognized agency, additional agency-specific, age-related restrictions and protocols apply to students under 15 years of age.

Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers may participate in recreational group dives as unit, district, or council activities, provided such dives are consistent with their certifications and under direct, on-site supervision of a responsible adult currently certified as a divemaster, assistant instructor, or higher rating from a recognized agency.

The divemaster or instructor supervising a recreational dive by a BSA group must implement the following policies for all divers under 15 years of age, as well as any additional junior diver restrictions and protocols adopted by that person's certifying agency:

- Depths are limited to 40 feet for divers under 12 years of age and to 60 feet for divers 12 to 14 years of age.
- Each diver under 15 years of age must have an adult buddy certified as an open-water diver who is either the junior diver's parent or an adult approved by the parent.
- Additional divemasters or instructors are present to maintain a ratio of one trained supervisor to four buddy pairs (eight divers) containing one to four divers under 15 years of age.

Medical Contraindications

Each scuba training agency recognized by the BSA requires a specific health history form prior to enrollment in a certification program. The BSA requires review and approval of the completed form by a physician even if the scuba agency itself does not require physician approval. Various risk factors identified on the forms may exclude a person from scuba training, either temporarily or permanently. Risk factors include, but are not limited to, ear and sinus problems, recent surgery, spontaneous pneumothorax, asthma or reactive airway disease (RAD), seizure disorders, diabetes, leukemia, sickle-cell disorder, pregnancy, panic disorders, and active psychosis.

The divemaster or instructor supervising a BSA recreational scuba activity must review the health information for each participant that is required annually of all BSA members and evaluate risk conditions using medical standards consistent with those used by his or her certifying agency. Additional tests or physician consultations may be required to confirm fitness for diving. Consultation with medical specialists knowledgeable about diving medicine also may be needed for participants taking psychotropic drugs for treatment of attention deficit disorder, depression, or other conditions.

Scuba diving is prohibited for the following conditions.

- Use of medication to control seizures or seizure occurrence within the past five years
- Use of insulin to control diabetes
- History of asthma or RAD unless resolution confirmed by methacholine testing (Persons who have been asymptomatic and medication free for the previous five years are exempt from the methacholine testing requirements.)

The scuba agencies recognized by the BSA may allow exceptions to general medical prohibitions based on individual diving fitness evaluations by a medical specialist who is knowledgeable about diving medicine. Scouts, parents, dive supervisors, and physicians with questions or concerns about diving with specific medical conditions should consult the Recreational Scuba Training Council (RSTC) Guidelines for Recreational Scuba Diver's Physical Examination and the Divers Alert Network (DAN) at www.diversalertnetwork.org. DAN medical professionals are available for nonemergency consultation by telephone at 919-684-2948 during business hours or via email.

Council Programs

When scuba diving is taught in connection with any local council program, instructors should provide the training on a contract basis. Such instructors should have dive store or other commercial affiliation that provides liability insurance coverage. Direct employment of scuba instructors is not recommended.

Local council programs may not compress or sell air for scuba use, or sell, rent, or loan scuba equipment (scuba cylinders, regulators, gauges, dive computers, weights, or BCDs). All air and equipment for local council program use must be obtained from professional sources (dive stores, resorts, dive boats, etc.) affiliated with a scuba agency recognized by the BSA.

Scuba equipment may be used by certified summer camp aquatics program personnel for installation and maintenance of waterfront equipment, or for search and recovery operations. Search and recovery could include lost equipment, as well as rescue efforts.

Recognized Agencies

Recognized agencies are:

- PADI: Professional Association of Diving Instructors
- NAUI: National Association of Underwater Instructors
- SSI: Scuba Schools International
- IDEA: International Diving Educators Association
- PDIC: Professional Diving Instructors Corporation
- SDI: Scuba Diving International
- YMCA Scuba Program (discontinued in 2008, but certification cards are still recognized)
- NASDS: National Association of Scuba Diving Schools (merged with SSI, but certification cards are still recognized)

In addition to the agencies listed by name, any current member of the World Recreational Scuba Training Council (WRSTC), which includes all RSTC members, is also recognized.

Other agencies wishing to be recognized by the BSA may contact the Outdoor Programs Team of the national office. Recognition by a certifying body such as the RSTC or EUF that the agency adheres to ANSI/CEN/ISO standards would be expected.

Safety Afloat

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. Cub Scout activities afloat are limited to council, district, pack, or den events that do not include moving water or float trips (expeditions). Safety Afloat standards apply to the use of canoes, kayaks, rowboats, rafts, floating tubes, sailboats, motorboats (including waterskiing), and other small craft, but do not apply to transportation on large commercial vessels such as ferries and cruise ships. Parasailing (being towed airborne behind a boat using a parachute), kite-surfing (using a wakeboard towed by a kite), and unit-level recreational use of personal watercraft (small sit-on-top motorboats propelled by water jets) are not authorized BSA activities.

Safety Afloat training may be obtained from my.scouting.org, at council summer camps, and at other council and district training events. Confirmation of training is required on tour and activity plans for trips that involve boating. Additional guidance on appropriate skill levels and training resources is provided in the *Aquatics Supervision* guide available from council service centers.

1. Qualified Supervision

All activity afloat must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of those in his or her care and who is trained in and committed to compliance with the nine points of BSA Safety Afloat. That supervisor must be skilled in the safe operation of the craft for the specific activity, knowledgeable in accident prevention, and prepared for emergency situations. If the adult with Safety Afloat training lacks the necessary boat operating and safety skills, then he or she may serve as the supervisor only if assisted by other adults, camp staff personnel, or professional tour guides who have the appropriate skills. Additional leadership is provided in ratios of one trained adult, staff member, or guide per 10 participants. For Cub Scouts, the leadership ratio is one trained adult, staff member, or guide per five participants. At least one leader must be trained in first aid including CPR. Any swimming done in

conjunction with the activity afloat must be supervised in accordance with BSA Safe Swim Defense standards. It is strongly recommended that all units have at least one adult or older youth member currently trained in BSA Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety to assist in the planning and conduct of all activities afloat.

2. **Personal Health Review**

A complete health history is required of all participants as evidence of fitness for boating activities. Forms for minors must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. Participants should be asked to relate any recent incidents of illness or injury just prior to the activity. Supervision and protection should be adjusted to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. For significant health conditions, the adult supervisor should require an examination by a physician and consult with parent, guardian, or caregiver for appropriate precautions.

3. **Swimming Ability**

Operation of any boat on a float trip is limited to youth and adults who have completed the BSA swimmer classification test. Swimmers must complete the following test, which must be administered annually.

Jump feet first into water over the head in depth. Level off and 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 without stops and must include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating.

For activity afloat, those not classified as a swimmer are limited to multi-person craft during outings or float trips on calm water with little likelihood of capsizing or falling overboard. They may operate a fixed-seat rowboat or pedal boat accompanied by a buddy who is a swimmer. They may paddle or ride in a canoe or other paddle craft with an adult swimmer skilled in that craft as a buddy. They may ride as part of a group on a motorboat or sailboat operated by a skilled adult.

4. **Life Jackets**

Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets must be worn by all persons engaged in boating activity (rowing, canoeing, sailing, boardsailing, motorboating, waterskiing, rafting, tubing, and kayaking). Type III life jackets are recommended for general recreational use.

For vessels over 20 feet in length, life jackets need not be worn when participants are below deck or on deck when the qualified supervisor aboard the vessel determines that it is prudent to abide by less-restrictive state and federal regulations concerning the use and storage of life jackets, for example, when a cruising vessel with safety rails is at anchor. All participants not classified as swimmers must wear a life jacket when on deck underway.

Life jackets need not be worn when an activity falls under Safe Swim Defense guidelines—for example, when an inflated raft is used in a pool or when snorkeling from an anchored craft.

5. **Buddy System**

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. When several craft are used on a float trip, each boat on the water should have a "buddy boat." 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 each other in single-person craft.

6. **Skill Proficiency**

Everyone in an activity afloat must have sufficient knowledge and skill to participate safely. Passengers should know how their movement affects boat stability and have a basic understanding of self-rescue. Boat operators must meet government requirements, be able to maintain control of their craft, know how changes in the environment influence that control, and undertake activities only that are within their personal and group capabilities.

Content of training exercises should be appropriate for the age, size, and experience of the participants, and should cover basic skills on calm water of limited extent before proceeding to advanced skills involving current, waves, high winds, or extended distance. At a minimum, instructors for canoes and kayaks should be able to demonstrate the handling and rescue skills required for BSA Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety. All instructors must have at least one assistant who can recognize and respond appropriately if the instructor's safety is compromised.

Anyone engaged in recreational boating using human-powered craft on flatwater ponds or controlled lake areas free of conflicting activities should be instructed in basic safety procedures prior to launch, and allowed to proceed after they have demonstrated the ability to control the boat adequately to return to shore at will.

For recreational sailing, at least one person aboard should be able to demonstrate basic sailing proficiency (tacking, reaching, and running) sufficient to return the boat to the launch point. Extended cruising on a large sailboat requires either a professional captain or an adult with sufficient experience to qualify as a bareboat skipper.

Motorboats may be operated by youth, subject to state requirements, only when accompanied in the boat by an experienced leader or camp staff member who meets state requirements for motorboat operation. Extended cruising on a large power boat requires either a professional captain or an adult with similar qualifications.

Before a unit using human-powered craft controlled by youth embarks on a float trip or excursion that covers an extended distance or lasts longer than four hours, each participant should either receive a minimum of three hours training and supervised practice or demonstrate proficiency in maneuvering the craft effectively over a 100-yard course and recovering from a capsize.

Self-guided unit trips on Class III whitewater may only be done after all participants have received American Canoe Association or equivalent training for the class of water and type of craft involved. Unit trips on whitewater sections of rivers rated Class IV are only allowed in rafts with a professionally trained guide in each raft. Trips above Class IV are not allowed.

7. **Planning**

Proper planning is necessary to ensure a safe, enjoyable exercise afloat. All plans should include a scheduled itinerary, notification of appropriate parties, communication arrangements, contingencies in case of foul weather or equipment failure, and emergency response options.

Preparation. Any boating activity requires access to the proper equipment and transportation of gear

and participants to the site. Determine what state and local regulations are applicable. Get permission to use or cross private property. Determine whether personal resources will be used or whether outfitters will supply equipment, food, and shuttle services. Lists of group and personal equipment and supplies must be compiled and checked. Even short trips require selecting a route, checking water levels, and determining alternative pull-out locations. Changes in water level, especially on moving water, may pose significant, variable safety concerns. Obtain current charts and information about the waterway and consult those who have traveled the route recently.

Float Plan. Complete the preparation by writing a detailed itinerary, or float plan, noting put-in and pull-out locations and waypoints, along with the approximate time the group should arrive at each. Travel time should be estimated generously.

Notification. File the float plan with parents, the local council office if traveling on running water, and local authorities if appropriate. Assign a member of the unit committee to alert authorities if prearranged check-ins are overdue. Make sure everyone is promptly notified when the trip is concluded.

Weather. Check the weather forecast just before setting out, and keep an alert weather eye. Anticipate changes and bring all craft ashore when rough weather threatens. Wait at least 30 minutes before resuming activities after the last incidence of thunder or lightning.

Contingencies. Planning must identify possible emergencies and other circumstances that could force a change of plans. Develop alternative plans for each situation. Identify local emergency resources such as EMS systems, sheriff's departments, or ranger stations. Check your primary communication system, and identify backups, such as the nearest residence to a campsite. Cell phones and radios may lose coverage, run out of power, or suffer water damage.

8. **Equipment**

All craft must be suitable for the activity, be seaworthy, and float if capsized. All craft and equipment must meet regulatory standards, be properly sized, and be in good repair. Spares, repair materials, and emergency gear must be carried as appropriate. Life jackets and paddles must be sized to the participants. Properly designed and fitted helmets must be worn when running rapids rated above Class II. Emergency equipment such as throw bags, signal devices, flashlights, heat sources, first-aid kits, radios, and maps must be ready for use. Spare equipment, repair materials, extra food and water, and dry clothes should be appropriate for the activity. All gear should be stowed to prevent loss and water damage. For float trips with multiple craft, the number of craft should be sufficient to carry the party if a boat is disabled, and critical supplies should be divided among the craft.

9. **Discipline**

Rules are effective only when followed. All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for safe boating activities provided by Safety Afloat guidelines. Applicable rules should be discussed prior to the outing and reviewed for all participants near the boarding area just before the activity afloat begins. People are more likely to follow directions when they know the reasons for rules and procedures. Consistent, impartially applied rules supported by skill and good judgment provide steppingstones to a safe, enjoyable outing.

Tow Sports

All participants in towed activity afloat (waterskiing, wakeboarding, kneeboarding, tubing, etc.) must have successfully completed the BSA swimmer classification test and must wear a life jacket with an impact rating consistent with the activity. Supervision must include both a skilled boat driver currently trained in Safety Afloat and a separate observer. Participants should observe the Water-skiers Safety Code and the Boat Drivers Safety Code found in *Aquatics Supervision*, No. 34346. Use only floats specifically designed for towing that provide secure handholds for each rider.

Cub Scout Water Adventures Loops

Tigers: 



Reason for Adventure

This adventure will teach Tigers about different types of boats, how to build a boat using recycled materials, and how to stay safe on the water.

Cub Scouts should learn -

- Safety
- Building skills
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Safety awareness
- Skill development
- A Scout is obedient, thrifty. [Tiger Character Compass]

ADVENTURE Requirements (Tiger Handbook, page 148)

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

Wolves:



Reason for Adventure

Water, water everywhere—water to drink, water to cook our food, water to clean our bodies and our teeth, and water to play in! In this adventure, Wolf Scouts will learn how to conserve water and keep it clean in their homes and neighborhoods. Then they'll have a chance to swim together, having fun and practicing aquatics safety.

Cub Scouts should learn-

- Water conservation
- Aquatics safety
- Skill development
- Physical fitness
- A Scout is loyal, obedient, and brave. [Wolf Character Compass]

ADVENTURE Requirements (*Wolf Handbook*, page 294)

1. Demonstrate 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. Show how to do a reaching rescue.
6. Visit a local pool or public swimming area with your family or Wolf den. With qualified supervision, jump into water that is at least chest-high, and swim 25 feet or more.

Bears:



Reason for Adventure

This adventure will introduce Bear Scouts to swimming safety, boating safety, physical development and fitness, skill development, and fun in the water. Bears in nature like to swim and play in the water, and so can Bear Scouts.

Cub Scouts should -

- Learn confidence, knowledge, and skills in and around bodies of water
- Gain knowledge and skills in boating safety
- Learn a Scout is obedient, brave. [Bear Character Compass]

ADVENTURE Requirements (*Bear Handbook*, page 250)

1. Explain the safety rules that you need to follow before participating in boating.
2. Identify the equipment needed when going boating.

3. Demonstrate correct rowing or paddling form. Explain how rowing and canoeing are good exercise.
4. Explain the importance of response personnel or lifeguards in a swimming area.
5. Show how to do both a reach rescue and a throw rescue.
6. Visit a local pool or swimming area with your den or family, and go swimming.
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. Attempt the BSA beginner swim classification.

Webelos/Arrow of Light:



Reason for Adventure

This adventure will introduce Webelos Scouts to the key principles of aquatics safety as they develop their swimming and boating skills.

Webelos should -

- Improve water safety knowledge
- Develop aquatics skills
- Learn a Scout is obedient. [Webelos Character Compass]

ADVENTURE Requirements (*Webelos Handbook*, page 228)

Complete 1–5 and any two from 6–10.

1. State the safety precautions you need to take before doing any water activity.
2. Recognize the purpose and the three classifications of swimming ability groups in Scouting.
3. Discuss the importance of learning the skills you need to know before going boating.
4. Explain the meaning of “order of rescue” and demonstrate the reach and throw rescue techniques from land.
5. Attempt the BSA swimmer test.
6. Demonstrate the precautions you must take before attempting to dive headfirst into the water, and attempt a front surface dive.
7. Learn and demonstrate two of the following strokes: crawl, sidestroke, breaststroke, or elementary backstroke.
8. Invite a member or former member of a lifeguard team, 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.
9. Demonstrate how to correctly fasten a life jacket that is the right size for you. Jump into water over your head. Show how the life jacket helps keep your head above water by swimming 25 feet. Get out of the water, remove the life jacket and hang it where it will dry.
10. If you are a qualified swimmer, select a paddle of the proper size and paddle a canoe with an adult’s supervision.

RESOURCES

• *Aquatics Supervision*, No. 34346, is the primary resource for aquatics at the unit level. Section V of *Camp Program and Property Management*, No. 20-920, contains additional information for aquatics activities conducted on council property. Aquatics activities at district and council day and resident camps should follow appropriate NCAP standards.

- Aquatics Safety, www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS/gss02.aspx
 - Safe Swim Defense, www.scouting.org/OutdoorProgram/Aquatics/safe-swim.aspx
 - Safe Swim Defense Pocket Certificate, No. 34243
 - Safety Afloat, www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/Aquatics/safety-afloat.aspx
 - Guide to Safe Scouting, <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416.pdf>
 - Tiger: <https://cubscouts.org/library/floats-and-boats/>
 - Wolf: <https://cubscouts.org/library/salmon-run/>
 - Bear: <https://cubscouts.org/library/spirit-of-the-water/>
 - Webelos & Arrow of Light: <https://cubscouts.org/library/aquanaut/>
- Pool Safety Word Search: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/df/36/4f/df364fbbe2a269b0dbe70f97fda739fd.jpg>
- Water Safety Scramble Pre-opener: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/21673641929849504/>
- Age appropriate Activities Chart: http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416_Insert_Web.pdf

IMPORTANT REMINDER!!!

Always file a Tour Plan with council if your event involves WATER!

Even a kiddie pool requires a tour plan.

As always—if there is a question about safety please consult the “Guide to Safe Scouting” and check with your chartered organization representative.

Other helpful Cub Scout ideas:

Swimming Pool Song

(Tune—“Sailing, Sailing”)

Swimming, swimming in my swimming pool,
When days are hot, when days are cold,
in the swimming pool.
Sidestroke, breaststroke, fancy diving too.
I’ll bet you wish you never had
anything else to do, but . . .

Sing the song seven times, each time replacing a phrase with one of the actions below:

- Swimming, swimming: Imitate swimming action.
 - In my swimming pool: Trace outline of pool.
 - Days are hot: Wipe hand across forehead.
 - Sidestroke: Do the sidestroke.
 - Breaststroke: Do the breaststroke.
 - Fancy diving: Imitate diving action.
- Always end the song with the word “but,” and then repeat the action silently.

Tips for Pack Activity

Practice filling out swim tags and buddy up. Divide the floor into three sections, and assign Scouters to non-swimmers, beginners, and swimmers. Have them pretend to swim and yell “Buddy up.”

Closing: Cub Scout Water Safety Chant

“S” is someone’s watching,
 never swim alone.
 “C” is check the rules,
 know where you can roam.
 “O” is only buddies
 should go far from the shore.
 “U” is know what you can do,
 don’t do any more
 “T” is tell a grown-up
 if someone’s in need.
 SCOUT shows safety.
 Now you take the lead.