Sea Scout



Swim Check

Background

Sea Scouts and the Boy Scouts of America have an exemplary safety regard, particularly when it comes to aquatics programs. Much of the success in these safety records is due to the BSA's high regard for your safety, and the policies that govern its aquatics programs. The BSA aquatics program has five basic objectives.

- To give youth self-confidence and skill in aquatics
- To instruct youth in self-preservation, the care and use of aquatics equipment and rescue methods
- To promote aquatics recreation
- To develop physical strength and coordination
- To aid units in planning and conducting a safe yearround aquatics program

BSA Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat

The BSA Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat programs are designed to give units and unit leaders a greater understanding of the BSA's policies and guidelines with regards to all activities afloat.

These valuable training programs teach leaders how to prepare for and run safe and fun aquatics and swimming programs. Unit members should review these programs in depth at least annually, and again before going on an aquatics adventure. The BSA has also provided online training courses that are available through your local council's web site or by visiting www.seascouts.us.

Please see the *Sea Scout Extras* in this packet for more information on both of these valuable programs.

Source: Boy Scouts of America, Guide to Safe Scouting: Aquatics Programs.

Buddys - For Life

Everyone has a best buddy - you know - the one person that you can rely on for nearly everything - the one you trust with your own life. When we participate in swimming and aquatics programs in Sea Scouts, we need to be sure that we have, and we are, the same kind of buddy for that program.

Buddys in our swimming and aquatics programs always know where there buddys are and what they are doing. They stick together always and are available to help each other in case of an emergency. When you prepare to go into the water, whether it is in smallcraft or to swim, you must always have your buddy with you. Follow your aquatics director's instructions and you'll enjoy fun and safe Sea Scout programs.

Administration of the Swim Check

The classification of individuals' swimming ability is required before Scouts can participate in certain Boy Scouts of America activities and is a key element in both Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat. The swim checks should be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of each outdoor season.

DID YOU KNOW?

You could qualify to be a BSA Lifeguard.



See the BSA Lifeguard application included with these Sea Scout Skills and contact your local council for more information.

www.seascouts.us



Swim Check

All persons participating in BSA Aquatics are classified according to swimming ability. The classification tests and test procedures have been developed and structured to demonstrate a skill level consistent with the circumstances. We have included the swim check requirements along with explanations of how each part of the swim check should be conducted.

The BSA Aquatics swim test classifies Scouts and Scouters into three swimming ability groups; Swimmer, Beginner and Learner.

1. **Swimmer** - demonstrates the minimum level of swimming ability required for safe deep-water swimming.

"Jump feet first 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.

"...level off and begin swimming. 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 show 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) is acceptable.

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

The swimmer must perform 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 may suffice if it clearly allows the swimmer to rest and regain wind.

"The 100 yards must be completed in one swim without stops and must 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.

"After completing the swim, rest by floating."

This critically important part of the test evaluates the swimmer's ability to maintain himself 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 therefore is 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 resting and likely could continue to do so for a prolonged period. Drownproofing may be sufficient if clearly restful, but it 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.

2. Beginner - demonstrates that the Scout is ready to learn deep-water skills and has the minimum ability required for safe instructional and recreational activity in a confined swimming area in which shallow waters, sides, or other support are less than twenty-five feet from any point on the water.

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

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My Notes on these Sea Scout Skills	Swim Check		

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Swim Check

You've studied the skills, now let's put them to use. Try your hand at the challenges you'll find on this worksheet. If you have questions or need help, be sure to ask your Ship's leaders.

Name the three classifications of swimmers in BSA Aquatics programs.	5. What are the nine points of the Safety Afloat program? Discuss these with an adult leader in your ship.
2. Describe the buddy system. Why do we use the buddy system in BSA Aquatics programs?	
3. What are the eight defenses in the Safe Swim Defense program. Discuss these defense with an adult leader in your ship.	
	6. Which is true about the buddy system.a. Buddys are required while swimmingb. You only need a buddy in water over 12' deep.c. Sea Scouts are exempt from the buddy system.
	7. Swim check should be conducted-a. Every six monthsb. Only when the water is REALLY cold!c. Annuallyd. Only if you are sailing small boats.

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SEA SCOUT SKILLS EXTRAS

Safe Swim Defense

Before a BSA group may engage in swimming activities of any kind, a minimum of one adult leader must complete Safe Swim Defense training, have a commitment card (No. 34243) with them, and agree to use the eight defenses in this plan:

- 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 youth members in his or her care, who is experienced in the water and confident of his or her ability to respond in the event of an emergency, 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 vouth member currently trained as a BSA Lifeguard to assist in the planning and conduct of all swimming activity.)
- 2. Physical Fitness. Require evidence of fitness for swimming activity with a complete health history from physician, parent, or legal guardian. The adult supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. In the event of any significant health conditions, an examination by a physician should be required by the adult supervisor. Those with physical disabilities can enjoy and benefit from aquatics if the disabilities are known and necessary precautions are taken.
- 3. Safe Area. When swimming in areas not regularly maintained and used for swimming activity, have lifeguards and swimmers systematically examine the bottom of the swimming area to determine varying depths, currents, deep holes, rocks, and stumps. Mark off the area for three groups: not more than 3 1/2 feet deep for Learners; from shallow water to just over the head for Beginners; deep water not over 12 feet for Swimmers. A participant should not be permitted to swim in an area where he cannot readily recover and maintain his footing, or

cannot maintain his position on the water, because of swimming ability or water flow. When setting up a safe swimming area in natural waters, use poles stuck in the bottom, or plastic bottles, balloons, or sticks attached to rock anchors with twine for boundary markers. Enclose Learner and Beginner areas with buoy lines (twine and floats) between markers. Mark the outer bounds of the Swimmer's area with floats.

Be sure that clear-water depth is at least 7 feet before allowing anyone to dive into the water. Diving is prohibited from any height more than 40 inches above the water surface; feet-first entry is prohibited from more than 60 inches above the water. For any entry from more than 18 inches above the water surface, clear-water depth must be 10 to 12 feet. Only surface swimming is permitted in turbid water.

Swimming is not permitted in water more than 12 feet deep, in turbid water where poor visibility and depth would interfere with emergency recognition or prompt rescue, or in whitewater, unless all participants wear appropriate personal flotation devices and the supervisor determines that swimming with personal flotation equipment is safe under the circumstances.

4. Lifeguards on Duty. Swim only where there are lifeguards on duty. For unit swims in areas where lifeguards are not provided by others, the supervisor should designate two capable Swimmers as lifeguards. Station them ashore, equipped with a lifeline (a 100-foot length of 3/8inch nylon cord). In an emergency, one carries out the line; the other feeds it out from shore, then pulls in his partner and the person being helped. In addition, if a boat is available, have two people, preferably capable swimmers, take it out—one rowing and the other equipped with a 10-foot pole or extra oar. Provide one guard for every 10 people in the water, and adjust the number and positioning of guards as needed to protect the particular area and activity.

- **5. Lookout.** Station a lookout on the shore where it is possible to see and hear everything in all areas. The lookout may be the adult in charge of the swim and may give the buddy signals.
- 6. Ability Groups. Divide into three ability groups: Learners, Beginners, and Swimmers. Keep each group in its own area. Learners have not passed a swimming test. These classification tests should be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of the season.
- 7. Buddy System. Pair every youth with another in the same ability group. Buddies check in and out of the swimming area together. Emphasize that each buddy lifeguards his buddy. Check everyone in the water about every 10 minutes, or as needed to keep the buddies together. The adult in charge signals for a buddy check with a single blast of a whistle or ring of a bell, and call "Buddies!" The adult counts slowly to 10 while buddies join and raise hands and remain still and silent. Guards check all areas, count the pairs, and compare the total with the number known to be in the water. Signal two blasts or bells to resume swimming. Signal three blasts or bells for checkout.
- 8. Discipline. Be sure everyone understands and agrees that swimming is allowed only with proper supervision and use of the complete Safe Swim Defense. The applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing, and should be reviewed for all participants at the water's edge just before the swimming activity begins. Scouts should respect and follow all directions and rules of the adult supervisor. When people know the reason for rules and procedures they are more likely to follow them. Be strict and fair, showing no favoritism.



Safety Afloat has been developed to

promote boating and boating safety and to set

standards for safe unit activity afloat. Before

a BSA group may engage in an excursion,

expedition, or trip on the water (canoe, raft,

sailboat, motorboat, rowboat, tube, or other

craft), adult leaders for such activity must

complete Safety Afloat Training, No. 34159,

have a commitment card, No. 34242, with

them, and be dedicated to full compliance with

SEA SCOUT SKILLS EXTRAS Safety Afloat

a lifeguard or a lifesaver by a recognized agency. In all other circumstances, the person must be a Swimmer to participate in an activity afloat.

- **4. Personal Flotation Equipment.** Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices (PFDs) must be worn by all persons engaged in activity on the open water (rowing, canoeing, sailing, boardsailing, motorboating, waterskiing, rafting, tubing, kayaking, and surfboarding). Type II and III PFDs are recommended.
- **5. Buddy System.** All activity afloat necessitates using the buddy system. Not only must every individual have a buddy, but every craft should have a buddy boat when on the water.
- Skill Proficiency. All participants in activity afloat must be trained and experienced in watercraft handling skills. safety, and emergency procedures. (a) For unit activity on white water, all participants must complete special training by a BSA Aquatics Instructor or qualified whitewater specialist. (b) Powerboat operators must be able to meet requirements for the Motorboating merit badge or equivalent. (c) Except for whitewater and powerboat operation as noted above, either a minimum of three hours' training and supervised practice or meeting requirements for "basic handling tests" is required for all float trips or open-water excursions using unpowered craft.

7. Planning.

Float Plan. Obtain current maps and information about the waterway to be traveled. Know exactly where the unit will "put in" and "pull out" and what course will be followed. Travel time should be estimated generously. Review the plan with others who have traveled the course recently.

Local Rules. Determine which state and local regulations are applicable, and follow them. Get written permission to use or cross private property.

Notification. File the float plan with parents or participants and a member of

the unit committee. File the float plan with the local council office when traveling on running water. Check in with all those who should be notified when returning.

Weather. Check the weather forecast just before setting out, and keep an alert weather eye. Bring all craft ashore when rough weather threatens.

Contingencies. Planning must identify possible emergencies and other circumstances that could force a change of plans. Appropriate alternative plans must be developed for each.

- 8. Equipment. All equipment must be suited to the craft, to water conditions, and to the individual; must be in good repair; and must satisfy all state and federal requirements. Spare equipment or repair materials must be carried. Appropriate rescue equipment must be available for immediate use.
- 9. Discipline. All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for safe unit activity afloat. The applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing, and should be reviewed for all participants at the water's edge just before the activity begins. When Scouts know and understand the reasons for the rules, they will observe them. When fairly and impartially applied, rules do not interfere with the fun. Rules for safety, plus common sense and good judgment, keep the fun from being interrupted by tragedy.
- 10. Note. For cruising vessels (excluding rowboats, canoes, kayaks, and rafts, but including sailboats and powerboats greater than 20 feet long) used in adult-supervised unit activities by a chartered Venturing crew/ship specializing in watercraft operations, or used in adult-supervised program activity in connection with any high-adventure program or other activity under the direct sponsorship and control of the National Council, the standards and procedures in the Sea Scout Manual may be substituted for the Safety Afloat standards.

- all nine points of Safety Afloat. 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 the children in his or her care, who is experienced and qualified in the particular watercraft skills and equipment involved in the activity, and who is committed to compliance with the nine points of BSA Safety Afloat. One such supervisor is required for each 10 people, with a minimum of two adults for any one group. At least one supervisor must be age 21 or older, and the remaining supervisors must be age 18 or older. All supervisors must complete BSA Safety Afloat and Safe Swim Defense training and rescue training for the type of watercraft to be used in the activity, and at least one must be trained in CPR. It is strongly recommended that all units have at least one adult or older youth member currently trained as a BSA Lifeguard to assist in the planning and conducting of all
 - 2. Physical Fitness. All persons must present evidence of fitness by a complete health history from a physician, parent, or legal guardian. Adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate any risks associated with individual health conditions. In the event of any significant health conditions, a medical evaluation by a physician should be required by the adult leader.
 - 3. Swimming Ability. A person who has not been classified as a "swimmer" may ride as a passenger in a rowboat or motorboat with an adult swimmer, or in a canoe, raft, or sailboat with an adult who is trained as

activity afloat.



APPLICATION FOR BSA LIFEGUARD

Name	, registered in _	No	of	City or Town	
who lives atStreet o	or R.F.D. Address	City or Town		State	Zip Code
has satisfactorily completed all requi	rements for BSA Lifeguard. Date of	of completion			
Training Counselor	s Signature		Type of Training		Expiration Date
Instructing Counselor	's Signature		Type of Training		Expiration Date
Instructing Counselor	's Signature		Type of Training		Expiration Date

BSA LIFEGUARD TRAINING PROCEDURE

- Only those persons currently trained as BSA Aquatics Instructor or as BSA Lifeguard Counselor may train the completion of BSA Lifeguard requirements.
- Training as BSA Lifeguard is valid for 3 years from the date of application.
- 3. All requirements must be met—no substitutions or omissions are permitted.
- The completed application is sent to the local council service center where BSA Lifeguard emblems may be purchased.
- 5. To qualify for BSA Lifeguard, the candidate must complete the BSA Lifeguard course consisting of a minimum of 30 hours under the direction of either a BSA Lifeguard Counselor or a BSA Aquatics Instructor. The course for the BSA Lifeguard is in the BSA Lifeguard Counselor Guide.

BSA LIFEGUARD RETRAINING

To be retrained as BSA Lifeguard, a person who previously has been trained can complete the regular BSA Lifeguard course, passing each of the requirements. Those whose BSA Lifeguard training is current or has expired

within the past 12 months can be retrained by demonstrating a current knowledge of and ability to perform the skills necessary to fulfill BSA Lifeguard requirements. It is not necessary to retake the BSA Lifeguard course.

COUNSELORS' RESPONSIBILITY

Scouts, Venturers, or adults who become trained BSA Lifeguards must be well qualified and able to use their knowledge in case of need without undue danger to themselves and with a reasonable chance of success. The counselors are responsible for the strict interpretation of requirements and the elimination of applicants who in their judgment are not qualified by strength, judgment, or ability to put their knowledge into practice.

The reputation of the counselors as experts depends to a great extent on the actual performance of those they qualify. Therefore, they should be certain that the candidates' ability is, without doubt, of the highest caliber. It is expected that the BSA Lifeguard emblem and certificate will always stand for a very high standard of skill. The counselors to whom this responsibility is entrusted are expected to maintain that standard. For interpretation of requirements, see *BSA Lifeguard Counselor Guide*, No. 34536A.

BSA LIFEGUARD REQUIREMENTS	Date	Counselor's Initials		Date	Counselor's Initials
1. Age Requirement. To enroll in the BSA Lifeguard course, you must either be at least 14 years of age or have completed the eighth grade.			B. Surface dive: Perform both a feet-first and a head-first (tuck or pike) surface dive in 8 to 10 feet of water, and recover a 10-pound weight		
2. Prerequisites. To enroll in the BSA Lifeguard			on each dive.		
course, you must:			C. Demonstrate the ability to rest by floating.		
A. Swim 400 yards: Jump feetfirst into water over your head and swim continuously, in a strong manner, 400 yards. The 400 yards shall include at least 50 yards each of the elementary backstroke, the breaststroke, the sidestroke, and either the crawl or trudgen.			D. Perform a long, shallow dive.		
			Aquatics Skills. Perform each of the following aquatics skills:		
			A. Perform a long, shallow dive into deep water and swim an approach stroke 25 yards in 20 seconds or less.		

BSA LIFEGUARD REQUI	REMENTS	Date	Counselor's Initials		Date	Counselor's Initials
in 1 minute. The lin	curacy 10 yards, three times e may be weighted, iched to a ring buoy.			Perform the following defense and escapes: (1) Wrist-grip escape (2) Rear head-hold escape		
	f a swimmer using a water-			(3) Front head-hold escape		
watercraft can be u Explain the advanta	our area. Explain how other used to perform a rescue. ages and disadvantages of			J. Remove the victim from the water using each of niques, in the appropriate circumstances:	the follow	ving tech-
different craft in ma D. Perform each of the aid of a rescue tube	e following rescues with the			(1) Lift from the water using a backboard and two lifeguards		
				(2) Walking assist		
Using a front ap tube 15 yards to extend the resco the victim grasp to the starting p	ming extension rescue. proach, swim with the rescue of a distressed swimmer, ue tube to the victim, have of it, and tow the victim back oint in the water.			(3) Beach drag K. Perform an ease-in entry in shallow water and approach a victim who is facedown on the surface and simulating a spinal injury. Turn the victim to a faceup position and support the victim at the surface.		
rescue. Using a rescue tube 15 but not strugglir the tube by usin and tow the vict	re drowning victim rear rear approach, swim with a yards to a conscious/active ng victim. Place the victim on g a "scooping" technique im back to the starting point.			L. Perform an ease-in entry in deep water and approach a victim who is floating facedown on the surface and simulating a spinal injury. With a rescue tube, turn the victim to a faceup position and, maintaining contact, swim with the victim to a corner of the pool or the shallow		
rescue. Using a the rescue tube victim; squeeze your chest and t victim face up a	ve drowning victim rear rear approach, swim with 15 yards to face down the rescue tube between the victim's back, role the and tow the victim back to			end of the pool. Repeat without a rescue tube. M. As a team member, participate in a backboarding procedure in shallow water. N. Demonstrate the proper use of mask, snorkel, and fins.		
the starting poir				4. First Aid and CPR		
Approach a factoring from the front. I	ng victim front approach. edown, unconscious victim Reaching across the rescue			A. Show evidence of the ability to perform the skills and knowledge of basic first aid. B. Show knowledge of the procedures for the		
victim into the r to the tube with	victim's wrist and rotate the rescue tube. Clamp the victim your other arm and tow the			universal precautions for bloodborne pathogens. C. Hold current certification in basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) from the American Heart		
(5) Perform a subm	he starting point. nerged victim rescue. you are over the victim and			Association, the American Red Cross, or the National Safety Council.		
do a feet-first s tube between y back, move the	urface dive. Using the rescue our chest and the victim's victim to the starting point.			5. Examination. Demonstrate an understanding of aquatics program and emergency management skills by correctly answering 80 percent of the questions in a written or oral exam on theory		
active victim using	ng rescue of a distressed or a flotation aid other than a nstrate an appropriate entry			and knowledge (standard BSA Lifeguard examination).		
the victim to the sta	• .			6. Suppervised Lifeguarding. Serve as a lifeguard, under supervision, for at least two swimming activities (2 to 3 hours total).		
	mp into water at least 9 feet ds to an unconscious victim,			BSA Lifeguard Retraining		
use a front surface for a wrist tow, and	approach, position the victim l use a wrist tow to return arting point in the water.			BSA Lifeguard training is valid for three years from training was successfully completed. To retrain as person who previously has been trained, may either:		
9 feet deep, swim	allow dive into water at least 15 yards to beyond the victim, in either a single- or double-			Again take the regular BSA Lifeguard course and plete each of the requirements	I successf	ully com-
armpit tow, and tow point in the water.	v the victim to the starting			(For those whose BSA Lifeguard training is currer longer ago than 12 months) Demonstrate a currer shill to perform the skills required by performing	nt knowled	dge of and
deep; using a rear a active victim, contac using a single- or do	jump into water at least 9 feet pproach, swim 15 yards to an at the victim and level the victim buble-armpit tow, position the est carry, and return the victim in the water.	l		ability to perform the skills required by performing Lifeguard requirements. (In this case, it is not net a BSA Lifeguard course over again.)		