



# Swimming

## Merit Badge Workbook

This workbook can help you but you still need to read the merit badge pamphlet (book). No one can add or subtract from the Boy Scout Requirements #33216. Merit Badge Workbooks and much more are below: [Online Resources](#).

Worksheet developer: [craig@craiglincoln.com](mailto:craig@craiglincoln.com). Requirements revised: 2008, Workbook updated: February 2009.

Scout's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Counselor's Ph #: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Discuss the prevention and treatment for health concerns that could occur while swimming, including

hypothermia, \_\_\_\_\_

dehydration, \_\_\_\_\_

sunburn, \_\_\_\_\_

heat exhaustion, \_\_\_\_\_

heatstroke, \_\_\_\_\_

muscle cramps, \_\_\_\_\_

spinal injuries, \_\_\_\_\_

and hyperventilation. \_\_\_\_\_

stings and bites, \_\_\_\_\_

and cuts and scrapes, \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do the following:

a. Identify the conditions that must exist before performing CPR on a person. Explain how to recognize such conditions.

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b. Demonstrate proper technique for performing CPR using a training device approved by your counselor. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Before doing the following requirements, successfully complete Second Class rank requirements 8a - 8c and First Class rank requirements 9a - 9c.

*Second Class Rank Requirements 8a - 8c*

(8A) Tell what precautions must be taken for a safe swim. \_\_\_\_\_

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(8B) Demonstrate your ability to 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. \_\_\_\_\_

(8C) Demonstrate water rescue methods by reaching with your arm or leg, by reaching with a suitable object, and by throwing lines and objects. Explain why swimming rescues should not be attempted when a reaching or throwing rescue is possible, and explain why and how a rescue swimmer should avoid contact with the victim. \_\_\_\_\_

*First Class Rank Requirements 9a - 9c*

(9A) Tell what precautions should be taken for a safe trip afloat. \_\_\_\_\_

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(9B) Before doing the following requirements, successfully complete the BSA swimmer test: \_\_\_\_\_

Jump feet first into water over your 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 swum continuously and include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating.

(9C) 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 fro shore in deep water. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Demonstrate survival skills by jumping feetfirst into deep water wearing clothes (shoes, socks, swim trunks, long pants, belt, and long-sleeved shirt). Remove shoes and socks, inflate the shirt, and show that you can float using the shirt for support. Remove and inflate the pants for support. Swim 50 feet using the inflated pants for support, then show how to reinflate the pants while still afloat.

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5. Swim continuously for 150 yards using the following strokes in good form and in a strong manner: front crawl or trudgen for 25 yards, back crawl for 25 yards, sidestroke for 25 yards, breaststroke for 25 yards, and elementary backstroke for 50 yards.

6. Do the following:

- a. Float faceup in a resting position for at least one minute.
- b. Demonstrate survival floating for at least five minutes.
- c. While wearing a properly fitted personal floatation device (PFD), demonstrate the HELP and huddle positions. Explain their purposes.
- d. Explain why swimming or survival floating will hasten the onset of hypothermia in cold water.

7. In water over your head, but not to exceed 10 feet, do each of the following:

- a. Use the feet first method of surface diving and bring an object up from the bottom.
- b. Do a headfirst surface dive (pike or tuck), and bring the object up again.
- c. Do a headfirst surface dive to a depth of at least 5 feet and swim underwater for 3 strokes. Come to the surface, take a breath, and repeat the sequence twice.

8. Do ONE of the following:

- a. Demonstrate snorkeling and scuba diving knowledge:
  - 1. Demonstrate selection and fit of mask, snorkel, and fins; discuss safety in both pool and open-water snorkeling.
  - 2. Demonstrate proper use of mask, snorkel, and fins for underwater search and rescue.
  - 3. Describe the sport of scuba diving or snorkeling, and demonstrate your knowledge of BSA policies and procedures relating to that sport.

-OR-  b. Demonstrate the following competitive swimming skills:

- 1. Racing dive from a pool edge or dock edge (no elevated dives from racing platforms or starting blocks)
- 2. Racing form for 25 yards on one competitive stroke (front crawl, back crawl, breaststroke, or butterfly)
- 3. Racing turns for the stroke that you chose in 8b(2), OR, if the camp facilities cannot accommodate the racing turn, repeat 8b(2) with an additional stroke.
- 4. Describe the sport of competitive swimming.

9. Following the guidelines set in the BSA Safe Swim Defense, in water at least 7 feet deep, show a standing headfirst dive from a dock or pool deck. Show a long shallow dive, also from the dock or pool deck.

10. Do the following:

a. Explain the health benefits of regular aerobic exercise, and explain why many people today do not get enough of the beneficial kinds of exercise. \_\_\_\_\_

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b. Discuss why swimming is favored as both a fitness \_\_\_\_\_

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and a therapeutic exercise. \_\_\_\_\_

c. Write a plan for a swimming exercise program that will promote aerobic/vascular fitness, strength and muscle tone, body flexibility, and weight control for a person Scout age. Identify resources and facilities available in you home community that would be needed for such a program. \_\_\_\_\_

d. Discuss with your counselor the incentives and obstacles for staying with the fitness program you created in requirement 10c. \_\_\_\_\_

Explain the unique benefits that could be gained from this program, and discuss how personal health awareness and self discipline would relate to your own willingness and ability to pursue such a program. \_\_\_\_\_

**Online Resources** (Use any Internet resource with caution and only with your parent's or guardian's permission.)

Boy Scouts of America: ► [scouting.org](http://scouting.org) ► [Guide to Safe Scouting](#) ► [Age-Appropriate Guidelines](#) ► [Safe Swim Defense](#)  
 ► [Scout](#) ► [Tenderfoot](#) ► [Second Class](#) ► [First Class](#) ► [Rank Videos](#) ► [Safety Afloat](#)

Boy Scout Merit Badge Workbooks: [BSA Troop 780](#) -or- [usscouts.org](http://usscouts.org) -or- [meritbadge.org](http://meritbadge.org) Merit Badge Books: [www.scoutstuff.org](http://www.scoutstuff.org)

### **Requirement Resources**

These resources and much more are at: <http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Swimming>

1-2: First Aid: See [http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/First\\_Aid](http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/First_Aid) for these links and more:

[First Aid Videos: Basics](#) - [Basics2](#) [Wilderness First Aid](#) [CPR Basics](#) [Venomous Snake Bite](#) [First Aid Kits](#)

Other First Aid Links: [Mayo Clinic First Aid Guide](#) [Class 1 Exam](#) [Class 3](#) [Warning Signs of Cancer](#) - [Heart Disease](#)

3-10: Swimming: See <http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Swimming> for these links and more:

[Swimming Lesson Videos: Stretching](#) - [Tread Water](#) - [Float](#) - [How to Swim](#) - [Survival Floating](#)

[Freestyle](#) - [Breaststroke](#) - [Backstroke](#) - [Trudgeon](#) - [Butterfly](#) - [Diving Safety](#) - [Racing Dive](#) - [Snorkeling](#) - [SCUBA Diving](#)

Other Links: [Swimming Merit Badge](#) - [Safe Swim Defense](#) - [Safety Afloat](#) - [BSA Swim Test](#) - [Buddy System](#) - [Trudgeon](#)

### **General Resources**

American Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org>

YMCA: <http://www.ymca.net/>

International Swimming Hall of Fame: <http://www.ishof.org>

United States Diving Inc.: <http://www.usdiving.org>

USA Swimming: <http://www.usswim.org>

## 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. One of the best opportunities for Safe Swim Defense training is in summer camp. The eight defenses are:

### 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 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 youth 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 nonswimmers; 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 nonswimmer 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 3/8-inch 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: Nonswimmers, beginners, and swimmers. Keep each group in its own area. Nonswimmers have not passed a swimming test. Beginners must pass this test: jump feetfirst 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 the starting place. Swimmers must 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. 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

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, floating in an inner 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 all nine points of Safety Afloat.

## **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 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 activity afloat. For Cub Scouts: The ratio of adult supervisors to participants is one to five.

## **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 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. Swimmers must pass this test:

Jump feetfirst into water over your head. 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 swum continuously and include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating. This qualification test should be renewed annually.

## **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.

## **6. 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. (d) Motorized personal watercraft, such as the Jet Ski? and SeaDoo?, are not authorized for use in Scouting aquatics, and their use should not be permitted in or near BSA program areas.

For Cub Scouts: Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and rafting for Cub Scouts (including Webelos Scouts) are to be limited to council/district events on flat water ponds or controlled lake areas free of powerboats and sailboats. Prior to recreational canoeing and kayaking, Cub Scouts are to be instructed in basic handling skills and safety practices.

## **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.

For Cub Scouts: Cub Scout canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and rafting do not include "trips" or "expeditions" and are not to be conducted on running water (i.e., rivers or streams); therefore, some procedures are inapplicable. Suitable weather requires clear skies, no appreciable wind, and warm air and water.

## **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.

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.