

MERIT BADGE SERIES



LIFESAVING



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
MERIT BADGE SERIES

LIFESAVING



"Enhancing our youths' competitive edge through merit badges"



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Requirements

1. Before doing requirements 2 through 17:
 - a. Complete Second Class rank requirements 5a through 5d and First Class rank requirements 6a, 6b, and 6e.

Second Class rank requirements 5a through 5d:

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

First Class rank requirements 6a, 6b, and 6e:

 - 6a. Successfully complete the BSA swimmer test.
 - 6b. Tell what precautions must be taken for a safe trip afloat.
 - 6e. With a helper and a practice victim, show a line rescue both as tender and as rescuer. (The practice victim should be approximately 30 feet from shore in deep water.)

- b. Swim continuously for 400 yards using each of the following strokes in a strong manner, in good form with rhythmic breathing, for at least 50 continuous yards: front crawl, sidestroke, breaststroke, and elementary backstroke.
2. Discuss and review with your counselor the principles of BSA Safe Swim Defense.
3. Explain the following:
 - a. Common drowning situations and how to prevent them.
 - b. How to identify persons in the water who need assistance.
 - c. The order of methods in water rescue.
 - d. How rescue techniques vary depending on the setting and the condition of the person needing assistance.
 - e. Situations for which in-water rescues should not be undertaken.
4. Demonstrate “reaching” rescues using various items such as arm, leg, towels, shirts, paddles, and poles.
5. Demonstrate “throwing” rescues using various items such as a line, ring buoy, rescue bag, and free-floating support. Successfully place at least one such aid within reach of a practice victim 25 feet from shore.
6. With your counselor’s approval, view in-person or on video a rowing rescue performed using a rowboat, canoe, kayak, or stand up paddleboard. Discuss with your counselor how effectively and efficiently the rescue was performed.
7. List various items that can be used as aids in a “go” rescue. Explain why buoyant aids are preferred.
8. Correctly demonstrate rescues of a *conscious* practice subject 30 feet from shore in deep water using two types of buoyant aids provided by your counselor. Use a proper entry and a strong approach stroke. Speak to the subject to determine his condition and to provide instructions and encouragement.
 - a. Present one aid to a subject, release it, and swim at a safe distance as the subject moves to safety.
 - b. In a separate rescue, present the other aid to a subject and use it to tow the subject to safety.

9. Discuss with your counselor when it is appropriate to remove heavy clothing before attempting a swimming rescue. Remove street clothes in 20 seconds or less, enter the water, and approach a *conscious* practice subject 30 feet from shore in deep water. Speak to the subject and use a nonbuoyant aid, such as a shirt or towel, to tow the subject to safety.
10. Discuss with your counselor the importance of avoiding contact with an active subject and demonstrate lead-and-wait techniques.
11. Perform the following *nonequipment* rescues for a *conscious* practice subject 30 feet from shore. Begin in the water from a position near the subject. Speak to the subject to determine his condition and to provide instructions and encouragement.
 - a. Perform an armpit tow for a calm, responsive, tired swimmer resting with a back float.
 - b. Perform a cross-chest carry for an exhausted, responsive subject treading water.
12. In deep water, show how to escape from a victim's grasp on your wrist. Repeat for front and rear holds about the head and shoulders.
13. Perform the following rescues for an *unconscious* practice subject at or near the surface 30 feet from shore. Use a proper entry and strong approach stroke. Speak to the subject and splash water on him to determine his condition before making contact. Quickly remove the victim from the water, with assistance if needed, and position for CPR.
 - a. Perform an equipment assist using a buoyant aid.
 - b. Perform a front approach and wrist tow.
 - c. Perform a rear approach and armpit tow.

14. Discuss with your counselor how to respond if a victim submerges before being reached by a rescuer, and do the following:
 - a. Recover a 10-pound weight in 8 to 10 feet of water using a feetfirst surface dive.
 - b. Repeat using a headfirst surface dive.
15. Demonstrate knowledge of resuscitation procedures:
 - a. Describe how to recognize the need for rescue breathing and CPR.
 - b. Demonstrate CPR knowledge and skills, including rescue breathing, consistent with current guidelines.*
16. Demonstrate management of a spinal injury to your counselor:
 - a. Discuss the causes, signs, and symptoms of a spinal injury.
 - b. Support a faceup subject in calm water of standing depth.
 - c. Turn a subject from a facedown to a faceup position in water of standing depth while maintaining support.
17. With your counselor, discuss causes, prevention, and treatment of other injuries or illnesses that could occur while swimming or boating, including hypothermia, dehydration, heat-related illnesses, muscle cramps, sunburn, stings, and hyperventilation.

*Your counselor may accept recent training in CPR by a recognized agency as completion of this requirement only if he or she feels your skills are satisfactory and need no additional reinforcement.

Lifesaving Resources

Scouting Literature

Aquatics Supervision; Boy Scout Handbook; Boy Scout Journal; Deck of First Aid; Emergency First Aid pocket guide; Fieldbook; Canoeing, Emergency Preparedness, First Aid, Kayaking, Motorboating, Rowing, Safety, Search and Rescue, Small-Boat Sailing, Swimming, Water Sports, and Whitewater merit badge pamphlets

Visit the Boy Scouts of America's official retail website at <http://www.scoutstuff.org> for a complete listing of all merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.

Books

American Red Cross. *American Red Cross Lifeguarding Participant Manual*. American Red Cross, 2012.

Graver, Dennis. *Aquatic Rescue and Safety: How to Recognize, Respond to, and Prevent Water-Related Injuries*. Human Kinetics, 2004.

Raatma, Lucia. *Water Safety*. Children's World, 2004.

U.S. Lifesaving Association. *Open Water Lifesaving: The United States Lifesaving Association Manual*, 2nd ed. Pearson Custom Publishing, 2003.

YMCA of the USA. *On the Guard II: The YMCA Lifeguard Manual*. YMCA of the USA, 2011.

Organizations and Websites

American Canoe Association

Website:
<http://www.americancanoe.org>

American Red Cross

Toll-free telephone: 800-733-2767
Website: <http://www.redcross.org>

American Whitewater

Website:
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org>

International Life Saving Federation

Website: <http://www.ilsf.org>

Lifesaving Society of Canada

Website: <http://www.lifesaving.ca>

National Safety Council

Website: <http://www.nsc.org>

Royal Life Saving Society of Australia

Website:
<http://www.royallifesaving.com.au>

Royal Life Saving Society of the United Kingdom

Website: <http://www.lifesavers.org.uk>

Safe Kids USA

Website: <http://www.usa.safekids.org>

Surf Life Saving Australia Ltd.

Website: <http://www.sls.com.au>

Surf Life Saving New Zealand

Website: <http://www.lifesaving.org.nz>

U.S. Coast Guard

Website: <http://www.uscgboating.org>

U.S. Lifesaving Association

Website: <http://www.usla.org>

YMCA of the USA

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

Acknowledgments

The Boy Scouts of America thanks the BSA Aquatics Task Force, in particular the following members who were instrumental in the development of this new edition of the *Lifesaving* merit badge pamphlet: to David Bell, Ph.D., for his indispensable assistance with the text, illustrations, and photography; to Calvin Banning for his assistance with text and photography; and to Patrick Noack (chair) for his input and guidance. These volunteers unselfishly spent many, many hours updating this major revision of the pamphlet.

The Boy Scouts of America is grateful to the men and women serving on the Merit Badge Maintenance Task Force for the improvements made in updating this pamphlet.

Photo and Illustration Credits

David Bell—page 24 (*low-head dam*)

Shutterstock.com, courtesy—cover (*caution sign*, ©Robert J. Beyers II; *ring buoy*, ©E.O.); pages 16 (©EML), 20 (©tonanakan), 21 (*swimmer falling into pool*, ©Zurijeta; *struggling swimmer*, ©Tomas Skopal), 22 (©Skynavin), 23 (*swimmer*, ©Orla; *sign*, ©ch.art), 25 (*swamped car*, ©Brisbane), 28 (*lifeguard in pool*, ©Hiper Com; *lookout*, ©lazyllama), 31 (©Steve Heap), 33 (©Skynavin), 45 (*ring buoy*, ©John Borda), 50 (©Alex Pix), 55 (©Marquisphoto), 58 (*swimmer on board*, ©sianc), 80 (*defibrillator*, ©Eric Gevaert), 82 (©India Picture), 85 (©Olena Herz), 86 (©Phil Hill), 87 (*man jumping into river*, ©Callahan; “no” sign, ©LVM), and 96 (©VanHart)

All other photos and illustrations not mentioned above are the property of or are protected by the Boy Scouts of America.

Roy Jansen—page 2

John McDearmon—all instructional illustrations