

# BSA Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety

## Purpose

Float trips are popular Boy Scout and Venturing activities. Safety Afloat awareness training provides guidelines for safe float trips and is required of unit leaders, but does not provide the skill training mandated by those guidelines. BSA Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety expands Safety Afloat training to include skills, as well as knowledge, to prepare a unit leader to confidently supervise canoeing or kayaking excursions on flat water. It is open to any registered Scout or Scouter who is age 16 or older. The training must be conducted by a council-approved instructor, takes roughly eight hours, and is valid for three years.

Adult and youth first aid training, including CPR, is an important safety consideration for all Scouting activities, not just boating. Specific first aid training is not included in the Paddle Craft Safety course, with the expectation that the leader has addressed that need separately, as noted in the course material and on the training card.

Float trips that last overnight also require camping skills. Because Scouting emphasizes outdoor skills in many programs, only items specific to canoeing or kayaking are reviewed in this course material.

## Requirements

1. Age and physical fitness:
  - A. Be age 16 years or older prior to training.
  - B. Submit written evidence of physical fitness.
2. Complete the BSA swimmer test: Jump feetfirst 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.
3. Personal safety skills:
  - A. Select a PFD of appropriate size and demonstrate proper fit.
  - B. Demonstrate the feet-up floating position used if caught in a current.
  - C. Demonstrate H.E.L.P. and Huddle positions.
  - D. Capsize and swim a boat to shore.
4. Basic boating skills: Demonstrate the following maneuvers on calm water using standard stroke techniques:
  - A. Transport boat from rack or trailer to water's edge.
  - B. Safely board and launch the craft.
  - C. Travel in a straight line for 50 yards.
  - D. Stop the craft.
  - E. From the stop, move the boat sideways, first to the right, then to the left.
  - F. From the stop, pivot the boat to the right, then to the left.
  - G. Return to shore along a curved course demonstrating both left and right turns while under way.
  - H. Land, safely exit, and store the craft.
5. Group safety skills:
  - A. Throw a rescue bag, laying the line within 3 feet of an object 30 feet away.
  - B. Demonstrate a boat rescue of a swimmer.
  - C. Demonstrate an on-water boat-over-boat assist.
6. Correctly answer 80 percent of the questions on the Paddle Craft Safety written exam covering Safety Afloat, trip preparation, emergency action plans, and basic boating knowledge. Review any incomplete or incorrect answers.

\*Skills may be demonstrated either tandem in a canoe or solo in a kayak. If a tandem canoe is used, each participant must demonstrate the maneuvers from both bow and stern positions.