

BSA Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue

Purpose

Training for BSA Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue provides BSA leaders with information and skills to prevent, recognize, and respond to swimming emergencies during unit swimming activities. It expands the awareness instruction provided by Safe Swim Defense training. The BSA recommends that at least one person with this training be present to assist with supervision whenever a unit swims at a location that does not provide lifeguards. This training is open to any registered adult leader, Scout, Venturer, or Explorer who is age 16 or older. A council-approved instructor must directly supervise all training. The course takes approximately eight hours and the training is valid for three years.

Although the training is consistent with training provided professional lifeguards, the Swimming and Water Rescue course is not a lifeguard training course and is not a substitute for BSA Lifeguard training for summer camp aquatics staff. However, this course addresses critical information not covered in typical lifeguard training programs, such as preventive measures including the buddy system and swim classification tests, how to set up a safe swim area in diverse situations, the use of nonstandard rescue equipment, and emergency action plans in remote settings. Therefore, BSA leaders with lifeguard training from other agencies are encouraged to complete this course before supervising unit swim activities in remote settings.

Prerequisites

1. **Age and physical fitness:**
 - A. Be age 16 years or older prior to training.
 - B. Submit written evidence of physical fitness.
2. **Swimming ability:**
 - A. 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, breast stroke, 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.
 - B. Recover a 10-pound weight from 8 feet of water.

Requirements

3. Administer **both** the BSA beginner and swimmer classification tests.

4. Demonstrate reaching assists from deck, side, and shallow water using items such as arms, legs, towels, rescue tubes, and poles.
5. Twice demonstrate throwing assists using items such as lines, ring buoys, throw bags, and free-floating supports. Successfully place at least one such aid within reach of a subject 25 feet from shore.
6. Demonstrate stride jump and compact jump entries into deep water.
7. Demonstrate an accompanied rescue for a conscious subject in deep water 20 feet from shore. Enter the water with a buoyant aid, present the aid to the subject, release it, and accompany the subject to shore. Speak to the subject throughout the assist to provide clear instruction and encouragement.
8. Demonstrate a contact rescue for an unconscious subject at or near the surface in deep water 20 feet from shore:
 - A. Approaching the subject from the front, use a wrist tow to move the subject to shore. During the approach, confirm that the subject is passive.
 - B. Approaching the subject from the rear, use an armpit tow to move the subject to shore. During the approach, confirm that the subject is passive.
 - C. With the assistance of one other person, and without the aid of a backboard, remove an unconscious subject from the water at the edge of the pool or pier and check for breathing and circulation.
9. Practice in-water rescues of both conscious and unconscious subjects using a variety of flotation aids.
10. Demonstrate the following defensive actions:
 - A. Front head-hold escape
 - B. Rear head-hold escape
11. Demonstrate a line-and-tender rescue as both the swimmer and the line tender.
12. Demonstrate in-line stabilization for a suspected spinal injury in shallow water:
 - A. For a faceup subject
 - B. For a facedown subject
13. Correctly answer 80 percent of the questions on the Swimming and Water Rescue written exam covering Safe Swim Defense, emergency action plans, surveillance, victim recognition, and water rescue. Review any incomplete or incorrect answers.