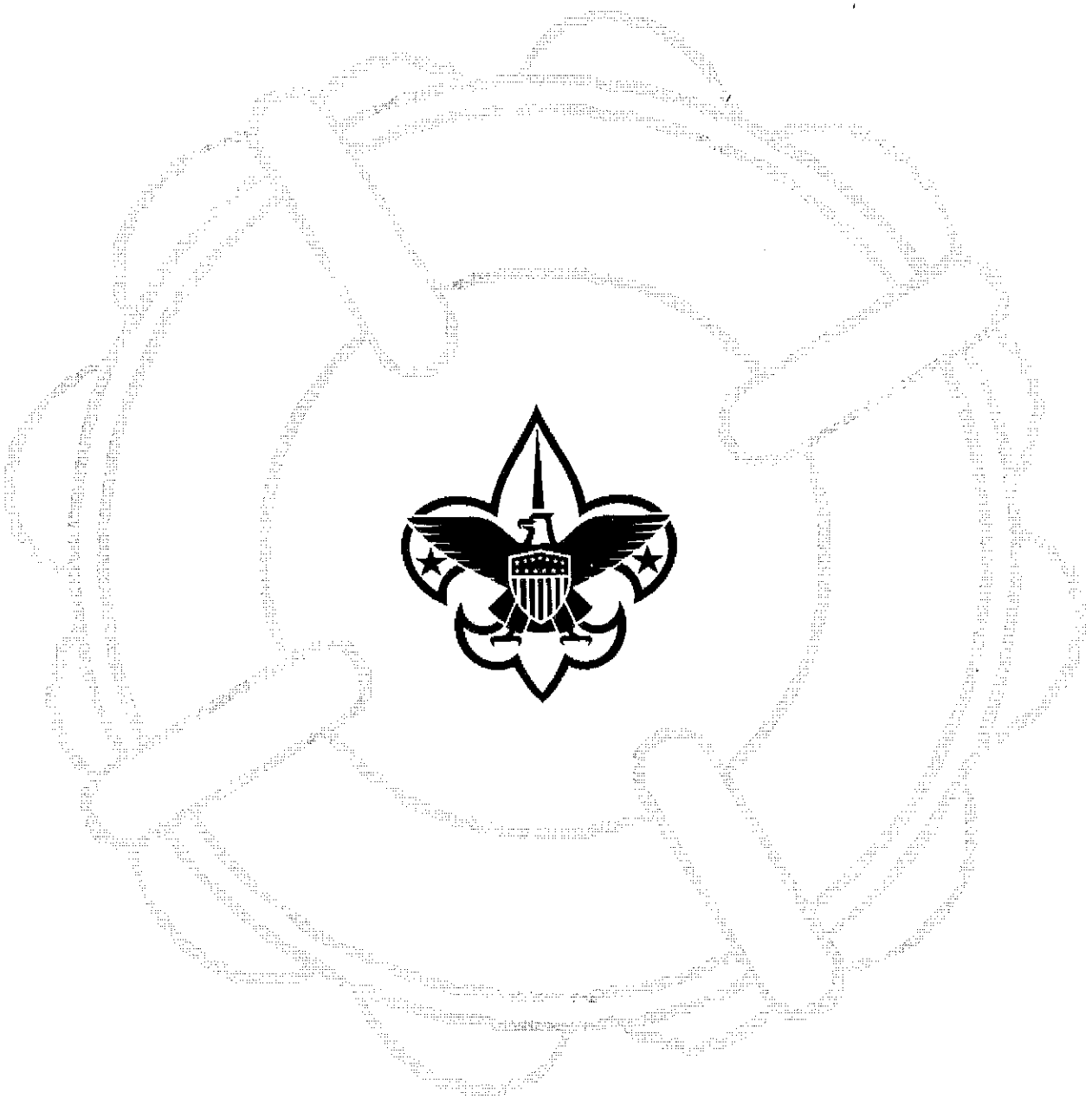
BSA Lifeguard Manual

Policies, How-To, Hints,
Tips & Tricks
for the BSA Lifeguard



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When you sew a Merit Badge on your sash, it is a sign of accomplishment in a particular area. But receiving the Merit Badge marks the end of the process.

The BSA Lifeguard patch is a little different. Earning it is a sign of accomplishment, but it is also a sign of the new duties which you will now perform.

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BSA Lifeguard Manual

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When you take lifeguard training, the primary emphasis is on lifesaving. As a lifeguard, your primary emphasis will be on safety (and prevention). The more we practice safety, the less need we will have for lifesaving.

BSA Policies

When you worked on Swimming & Lifesaving Merit Badges you learned about Safe Swim Defense. Likewise, when you worked on Rowing & Canoeing Merit Badges, you learned about Safety Afloat. Whenever you went on a Scout swim or float trip you probably noticed evidence of these rules being used.

You probably learned that these rules were devised to protect Scouts participating in aquatic activities. You may have even learned that BSA's water safety record is one of the best of any youth organization in the country.

Now, as a BSA Lifeguard, you will have a share in carrying out those rules and in maintaining BSA's water safety record.

These rules were created to protect Scouts involved in aquatic activities. Properly used, they will also make your job easier by controlling many of the risks to which you are exposed. (To fully comprehend the beauty and protection provided by these rules, you'd have to work for a while as a lifeguard at a public pool or beach.)

Let's take a closer look at the eight points of the Safe Swim Defense, and the nine points of Safety Afloat and what your duties will be for each.

Safe Swim Defense

Safe Swim Defense is BSA's set of rules for swimming safety. It will apply to any Scout swimming event whether it is at summer camp, or a unit activity at any public or private pool, lake, stream or beach.

The eight points of Safe Swim Defense are:

1. Qualified Supervisor
All swimming activity must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult over 21 years of age who understands and knowingly accepts his responsibility for the well-being and safety of the children in their care, who is experienced in the water and confident of their 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 certified as a BSA lifeguard to assist in planning and conducting all swimming activity.[1]

At summer camp the supervisor will

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[1]Note: Bold Italic type denotes BSA rules & policies.

have been hired by your Council. On a unit activity the supervisor will have been selected by the unit leadership.

The supervisor has the ultimate responsibility for conducting the swimming activity. The supervisor must be in the program area before the swim begins. If the supervisor must leave the program area, the swim ends.

If the activity is at summer camp, the supervisor will most likely be either a BSA Aquatics Instructor, a BSA Aquatics Supervisor, or an age 18 (or older) adult BSA Lifeguard. On a troop outing, the supervisor may have lifeguard training, or he might only have Safe Swim Defense training. If the latter is the case the supervisor may rely even more on you, the BSA Lifeguard, for conducting the swim.

Communication between the supervisor and lifeguards is essential. For instance, if the swim is at a lake and the water is not crystal clear, the supervisor and lifeguards might want to limit the area to shallower water than usual. All such special limitations should be agreed upon in advance.

A classic case for communication --- the irate leader (or parent) complains to the supervisor about how a lifeguard or another swimmer treated "Little Johnny" during the swim. Keep the supervisor informed of any problems you have (or see) during the swim. It makes life a lot easier for your supervisor (and ultimately, for you).

2. Physical Fitness (Medical Forms)
Require evidence of fitness for swimming activity with a complete health history from physician, parent, or legal guardian. 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 unit leader.

The supervisor or troop leader (in a troop activity) or Camp Medical Officer (at summer camp) will be responsible for collecting the medical forms.

Information on the medical form should be updated at least once a year. If a significant health change is diagnosed, it should be noted immediately.

Occasionally, information from the medical forms will be shared with lifeguards to alert you to special medical conditions (epilepsy, heart condition, etc.). This is privileged information for your use only. Do not pass it along as gossip.

3. Safe Area
Have lifeguards and swimmers crisscross the entire bottom of the swimming area to determine varying depths, deep holes, rocks, and stumps. Mark off the area for three groups; not more than 1 meter (3 1/2 feet) deep for nonswimmers; from shallow water to just over the head for beginners; deep water not over 3.5 meters (12 feet) for swimmers. For boundary markers use poles stuck in the bottom, or plastic bottles or balloons attached to rock anchors with

twine. Enclose nonswimmer and beginner areas with buoy lines (twine and floats) between markers. Put plastic jugs or balloons at outer corners of swimmer area.

In an improvised swimming situation, search for debris in the water --- rocks, metal fragments, and glass. Can the area be cleared sufficiently to prevent injuries? If this is an area frequented by fishermen, there is a possibility of finding fish hooks.

Another consideration is water clarity. If a 12" white disk is not visible at a depth of 3', water conditions are considered "turbid." Do not permit underwater swimming or diving in turbid water. You may also wish to limit the swimming area to shallower areas to minimize risks.

If your "safe area" is a swimming pool, the water should be clean and clear with chemicals properly balanced (as required by your State Health Department).

To keep your pool safe and clean you will want to outlaw all glass items (except eyeglasses). Glass has a tendency to break and a single experience cleaning broken glass from your pool deck, your pool bottom, or a swimmer's foot is generally quite convincing.

Do not allow diving into water less than seven feet deep. A minimum of ten feet of depth is required for a one meter diving board. BSA does not allow the use of boards higher than 1 meter. Do not allow swimming in depths exceeding 12'.

Water temperature will have a great effect on your swimmers. Water temperature of 80° is ideal. If the water temperature is only 70°, your swimmers may only last for 20 minutes. Watch for signs of chilling, especially shivering and discolored lips.

The smaller swimmers will usually show signs of getting cold first. When you see the first signs of chilling, it's time to end the swim. It is usually useless to ask swimmers if they are getting cold --- most of them won't admit it even if they are shivering uncontrollably. This is a decision that is up to the supervisor and lifeguards.

Forty-five minute swim periods are recommended, with a check-in and check-out of 15 minutes (for a total of 1 hr.).

All aquatics activity should end at sunset. The only exception would be swimming at a pool with proper floodlights which illuminate the pool such that all portions of the pool, including the bottom, may be readily seen without glare. A minimum illumination of 50 foot-candles on the water surface is commonly recommended.

All aquatic activity will end at the first sign of lightning or thunder. All participants should get out of the water and seek shelter.

No one should re-enter the water or come out from shelter until 15-30 minutes after the last sounding of thunder, or the last sighting of lightning. Furthermore, not one should re-enter the water unless there are evident signs of clearing and the sky is no longer dark and threatening.

4. Lifeguards on Duty
Appoint two capable swimmers as

lifeguards. Station them ashore equipped with lifeline (100-foot length of 3/8" nylon rope). In an emergency, one carries out the line and the other feeds it out from shore, then pulls his partner and the person being assisted. In addition, if a boat is available, man it with two capable swimmers, one rowing and the other equipped with a 10-foot pole or extra oar. Provide one guard for every 10 persons.

Lifeguard --- that's you! But your job is just a bit more than being appointed and stationed with a lifeline.....

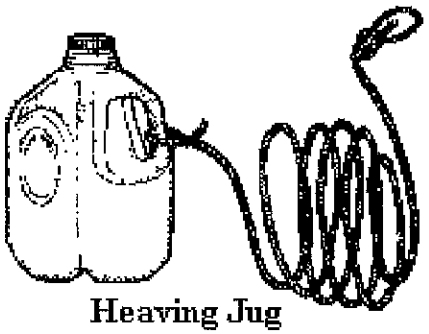
It is strongly recommended that at least one lifeguard have certified training --- BSA Lifeguard, American Red Cross Lifeguard, or YMCA Lifeguard. Ideally, all lifeguards should be certified.

Lifeguards should also have rescue equipment. The 100' of 3/8" nylon rope (with a generous bowline on each end) is used for the "line & tender" rescue. It should be "chain-stitched" to prevent tangling.

Reach poles and ring buoys are also helpful rescue equipment. Rowboats and canoes are useful rescue craft. In a lakefront situation, one rowboat or canoe should be reserved, equipped with rescue equipment and ready for use should an accident occur.

Reach poles can be inexpensively made from 10' sections of 1 1/4" PVC pipe with end caps glued in place on the ends.

An inexpensive substitute for a ring buoy can be made by attaching a 1 gallon plastic jug (securely capped) to a heaving line. Put about 1" of water in the bottom of the jug to give it enough weight to throw accurately.



Heaving Jug

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.

The lookout provides double coverage for the activity area. In the event of an emergency, the lifeguards should react to the situation while the lookout maintains his coverage of the entire area. The lookout may be either an adult or a youth, swimmer or even a non-swimmer. He must be an alert person with good eyes and good ears.

6. Buddy System

Pair everyone with another in his/her own 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. The adult in charge signals for a buddy check with a single blast of a whistle or a ring of a bell, calls "Buddies!" and counts slowly to 10 while buddies join and raise hands and remain still and silent.

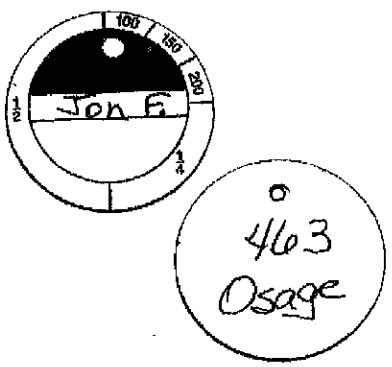
Guards check all areas, count the pairs, and compare the total with the number known to be in the water. Signal two blasts or bells to resume swimming. At the end of the swim make a final buddy check and account for everyone. Signal three blasts or bells for checkout.

The buddy board is an item you must have. It can be a fancy painted board with cup hooks and standard BSA buddy tags (Fig.1) such as at summer camp, or as simple as pop-sickle sticks arranged in the sand on a troop swim.

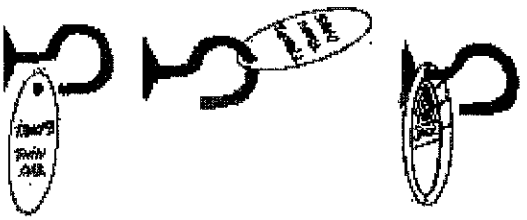
Buddy tags should be color coded to indicate swimming ability (blue for swimmers, red for beginners, and white for non-swimmers) as determined by the swim check.

There is a little "word trick" you can use to make beginners and non-swimmers feel a little bit better about themselves. Refer to the groups as "blue swimmers," "red swimmers," and "white swimmers." Everyone will be well aware of what the various colors actually mean, but the typical non-swimmer or beginner will appreciate your sensitivity.

Write the swimmer's name across the front of the tag. The back of the buddy tag should indicate the individual's troop number and campsite if summer camp.



If the standard plywood and cup



hook buddy board is used, instruct all participants to leave the cup hooks pointed down. (The buddy tags are much less likely to be blown off by the wind.)

To put a buddy tag on the board, turn the tag over so you are looking at the back side, slip it on the hook, and flip it. The name side of the tag will now be facing forward. To remove the tag from the board, reverse the procedure.

The buddy system emphasis should be on buddy pairs staying together. How close? Well, if a swimmer accidently loses his footing and slips underwater, his buddy should be close enough to reach a hand out to him and help him to his feet. That's how close.

It is also helpful that the buddy pairs get out of the water when a buddy check is called. In an emergency situation a buddy check can be called to quickly clear the pool.

At the end of the swimming session

when one group of swimmers is checking out of the pool, the buddy board should be completely cleared before the next group starts checking in (even if some of the previous group will be staying).

7. 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 feet-first into water over the head in depth, level off, swim 7.5 meters (25 feet) on the surface. Stop, turn sharply, resume swimming as before and return to the starting place. Swimmers pass this test: jump feet-first into water over the head in depth, level off and begin swimming. Swim 75 yards/meters in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; then swim 25 years/meters using an easy resting backstroke. The 100 yards/meters must be swum continuously and include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating. These qualification tests should be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of the season.

It will be a little less intimidating to the individuals who take the swim test if we refer to it as a "swim check." The term "test" is often interpreted as a "pass or fail" situation --- and no one wants to fail. When we use the term "swim check" we let them know we are checking out their abilities --- which is the whole point of the swim check!

Any individual who does not wish to take the swim check may be issued a white tag (non-swimmer) without testing. A youth who is a non-swimmer or does not wish to take the swim check should be given the opportunity to get wet before he leaves the pool. We do this so he'll look wet just like his friends on his way out the gate.

Some of the adults may wish to take this option when their sole reason for visiting the pool is simply to cool off in the shallow area on a hot day. Adults who wish to use the deeper areas of the pool should take the swim check.

The swim check should be set up to follow the edge of the pool. When you give a swim check, take one swimmer at a time and follow him along the edge of the pool as long as he is in the water. (While he is in the water taking his swim check, you will be serving as his buddy!)

Each person administering the swim check must carry a reach pole. Why? The swim check is the time when you will be most likely to perform a minor rescue. Scouts who take the swim check will attempt to perform to the best of their abilities and a few will attempt to perform beyond their abilities. **Be Prepared!**

The following five points are the critical parts of the swim check:

1. The swim check must start with the Scout jumping feet-first into water over his head, leveling off and starting to swim. Diving is not permitted --- nor is easing in from the

side, down a ladder, or wading in from shallow water. We are checking the Scout for the ability to go from a vertical position in the water to a horizontal position.

2. The 75 yard segment must be swum in a strong manner using sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl (underwater swimming is not permitted). Some Scouts will go the distance using "dog paddling." Classify them as beginners --- dog paddling is not a strong stroke.

3. The 25 yard segment of easy resting backstroke should be any variation of the elementary backstroke. Back crawl is acceptable if there is evidence that the swimmer is regaining his strength.

4. The 100 yards should be swum continuously and include at least one sharp turn. We are looking for the ability of the swimmer to change directions in the water without grabbing an object and pushing off.

5. At the end of the swim check, the swimmer is asked to rest by floating. We are looking for the ability to rest and recover while still in the water. The swimmer should do this by floating on his back. Drownproofing style of floating is acceptable if it is clearly restful. Treading water is not acceptable.

Since the swim check is one of the first things a camper does when he reaches summer camp, you can set the pace for how he feels about the camp. As he swims his swim check, look for something you can complement him on and tell him as he is getting out of the water. "Nice crawl stroke." "Great relaxation." "Good job." Quite often you'll hear him mention to his friends (with pride in his voice), "He says I have a really great back float!"

The swim check should be repeated on an annual basis. Sooner or later you will find a Scout who tests as a Beginner when he tested as a Swimmer the previous year. He will probably be frustrated. By taking the time to talk to him, you may be able to ease his frustration.

Ask him if he has had an injury or illness in the past year --- perhaps that has sapped his strength.

You can also ask him if he has grown in the past year --- perhaps his coordination simply has not caught up with his longer arms and legs. Both of these explanations give the Scout a place to "hang the blame" --- a helpful insight for facing what he feels is a failure on his part.

If at all possible, offer to give him another chance (if he wants to). Maybe he is just having a bad day....

8. Discipline

Be sure everyone understands and agrees that swimming is allowed only with proper supervision and use of the complete Safe Swim Defense. Advise parents of this policy. When everyone knows the reason for rules and procedures, they are more likely to follow them. Be strict and fair, showing no favoritism.

This can be difficult --- you are being

asked to treat your best friend in the same way you treat that "pain-in-the-neck Scout." Make sure your best friends realize in advance that there will be no preferential treatment.

So, how do we go about discipline when it is a "must"? That will depend on the severity of the infraction. In some cases you will find that the swimmer simply isn't aware of the rules. If that is the case, gently explain to him and ask his cooperation.

In the case where you know the swimmer is aware of the rules (and chooses to ignore them) a more stern warning or a "time out" is in order.

When **"time out"** is used the following should be observed:

1. The swimmer should be informed of the reason for his "time out." The purpose of "time out" is to give the individual time to think about his actions.

2. The swimmer should be positioned so that he is not entertained by the action in the pool --- usually, sitting in the corner facing the fence.

3. The swimmer should be put on silence --- he can't and won't think about his actions if he is chatting.

4. It is the duty of the lifeguard to keep track of how long "time out" lasts --- it is very easy to forget about the guy over in the corner. Ten minutes is usually about right.

5. When "time out" is over, have a brief discussion with the swimmer. Ask him why he was put on "time out" and what he intends to do about the rules in the future. Never omit this discussion. It does absolutely no good for him to sit there if he has no idea why.

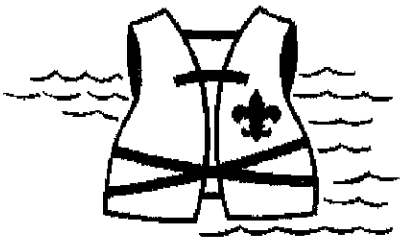
If all else fails, the swimmer can be requested to leave the pool. Get your supervisor involved when this happens. The swimmer's buddy will either have to leave with him or be re-aligned with another buddy.

SMALL-BAD

Did anyone notice that a couple of the Safe Swim Defense rules were not in their typical order? The reason for that is "SMALL-BAD" --- a simple little acronym to help us all remember the eight points of the Safe Swim Defense --- Supervision, Medical forms, Safe Area, Lifeguard, Lookout, Buddy system, Ability groups, and

Discipline.

If you can remember "SMALL-BAD," the rest is easy.....



Safety Afloat

Safety Afloat is BSA's set of rules for boating safety. Boating includes the use of canoes, rafts, sailboats, sailboards, surfboards, motorboats, rowboats, kayaks, and tubes. Safety Afloat rules apply to any excursion, expedition or trip on the water, whether it is a training session on a local pond or a multi-day wilderness high adventure.

Safety Afloat's nine rules are as follows:

1. Qualified Supervision

All activity afloat must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult over 21 years of age 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 ten people, with a minimum of two adults for any one group. All supervisors must complete BSA Safety Afloat and Safe Swim Defense training, and at least one must be certified in CPR. (It is strongly recommended that all units have at least one adult or older youth member currently certified as a BSA Lifeguard to assist in the planning and conduct of all activity afloat.) For Cub Scouts: The ratio of adult supervisors to participants is one to five.

The supervisor for a float trip is similar to the one required for a swim outing, but with a couple additional requirements. He must be skilled in the watercraft being used and at least one supervisor must have a current certification in CPR. For a wilderness trip, a first aid certification is also desirable.

2. Physical Fitness

All persons must present evidence of fitness assured by a complete health history from 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.

The requirement for a current medical form is the same as required for swimming.

3. Swimming Ability

A person who has not been classified as a "swimmer" may ride as a passenger in a rowboat or motor-boat with an adult "swimmer" or in a canoe, raft, or sailboat with an adult certified 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 the head in depth, 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; 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.

Clearly, a troop would be wise to insist that only "swimmers" participate in a float trip. If non-swimmers participate, they must be accompanied by an adult swimmer for motorboating and rowing or an adult certified in lifesaving for canoeing, rafting or sailing.

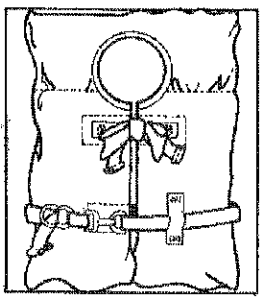
The swim test outlined is the same as the one used for Safe Swim Defense.

4. Personal Flotation Equipment

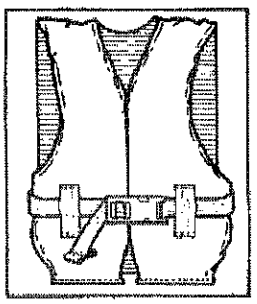
Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices (PFDs) must be worn by all persons engaged in activity on the open water (rowing, canoeing, sailing, boardsailing, motorboating, waterskiing, rafting, tubing, kayaking, and surfboarding). Type II and III PFDs are recommended.

Coast Guard approved PFDs are sized for both children and adults. Children's PFDs are generally sized for individuals weighing 90 pounds or less. Adult PFDs are generally sized for individuals weighing over 90 pounds. Adult PFDs may also have restrictions limiting chest size. Read the label inside the PFD to insure that the correct size PFD goes on each participant and keep your eyes open for the "little guy who thinks he needs a big PFD."

Type II PFDs (also referred to as "horse-collar" or "Mae West" style) put the bulk of the floatation in front. They will generally turn an unconscious wearer to float face-up. However, having the bulk in the front can interfere with active sports such as rowing and canoeing.



Type II PFD



Type III PFD

Type III PFDs (Fig. 4) are generally referred to as the "vest-style." They will not necessarily turn an unconscious wearer face-up. By spreading their floatation to both front and back of the vest they are more comfortable to wear than the Type II and generally interfere less with active sports. However, by wrapping around the wearer, they can be miserably hot to wear in the middle of the summer.

Type IV PFD - Ring Buoy

Type IV PFDs (Fig. 5) are throw-able devices such as ring buoys and floating cushions. They are proper gear in a lifeguard or rescue boat, but they are not suitable for wearing.

In case you are curious, there are two other categories of PFDs. Type I PFDs are jacket-style PFDs intended for off-shore boating, in open, rough, or remote water where rescue may be slow coming. There is also a Type V PFD which includes special use PFDs, inflatables and hybrids.

Wearing the PFD properly is essential to its proper performance. PFDs should be inspected to make sure belts are threaded through all the loops, all clips or buckles are fastened, and the belts are tightened down.

How can you tell if a PFD is fastened down tight enough? Simple.... Have each participant turn to his buddy, grasp his buddy's PFD at the shoulders, and pull up. (This simulates the effect the water will have on the PFD if he ends up in the water.) If the wearer's ears or chin disappear into the PFD, it needs further tightening.

PFDs should be safety-checked before each usage. Check for:

Buoyancy - Will it support the wearer? (Submerge the PFD, squeeze it and see if the floatation takes on water!)

Fabric - Is the fabric strong? (Faded fabric often means a loss of fabric strength.) Does it have holes or frayed seams?

Stitching - Is all the stitching intact?

Belts & loops - Are all belts and loops intact? Are all loops firmly stitched in place?

Clips or buckles - Do they work properly and hold securely?

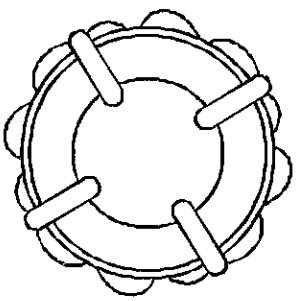
If a PFD fails any part of the above test, it should not only be discarded, but destroyed. If it isn't good enough for you to wear, it isn't good enough for anyone else to wear either! (Note: Belts from discarded Type III PFDs make great backpacking straps.)

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ALTER OR REPAIR A PFD!!! If it doesn't fit right, doesn't work right, doesn't float right, or is coming apart, it should not be used.

5. Buddy System

All activity afloat must adhere to the principles of the buddy system.

Your buddy (or buddies) are the guys in the boat with you. But in boating we carry the concept one step further by assigning "buddy boats" --- two boats that st ay together and lo ok after each ot her. If one boat h as a problem, it's b uddy boat should b e there to assist.



A ll participants

should be instructed in what to do if they upset their boat --- check on their buddy(s) and stay with their boat.

6. Skill Proficiency

All persons participating in unit activity afloat on the open water must be trained and practiced in craft-handling skills, safety, and emergency procedures.
a. All persons planning to participate in unit activity on white water must complete special training conducted by an Aquatics Instructor, BSA, or qualified equivalent.
b. Powerboat operators must complete state certification and be able to meet requirements for the Motorboating merit badge or equivalent (American Red Cross, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, or U.S. Power Squadron).
c. Except for white water and power-boat operation as noted above, a minimum of three hours training and supervised practice or fulfilling the requirements for basic handling tests is required for all unpowered craft.
For Cub Scouts: Canoeing and rafting for Cub Scouts (including Webelos Scouts) is to be limited to council/district events on flat water ponds or controlled lake areas free of powerboats and sailboats. Prior to recreational canoeing, Cub Scouts are to be instructed in basic handling skills and safety practices.

Everyone going on a float trip should know how to handle the boats involved before going on the trip. This may mean a couple practice sessions at a local pond, but it is well worth the effort.

Cub Scouts do not take float trips. Their boating is only at council/district events. Packs and dens do not get involved in boating even though there are boating activities in their handbooks. These should be done at council/district events or in a parent/son activity separate from the pack or den.

7. Planning

a. 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.

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

c. 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.

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

e. 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 and rafting does not include "trips" or

"expeditions" and is 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.

The float plan should list the names and phone numbers of all float trip participants, both leaders and Scouts. It should also list the name and phone number of the "emergency contact," the parent who will be home during the trip and who will relay plan changes to the other parents if changes occur during the trip.

The float plan should contain a complete listing of all the whens and wheres of the trip: departure time and place, put-in time and place, meal sites, overnight sites, pull-out time and place, and arrival time and place. It is helpful to attach a map highlighting the route. It should note any camping permits or river use permits needed.

The float plan should be distributed to the parents of all the Scouts participating in the trip and the emergency contact, as well as being attached to the tour permit which the unit files at their Council Service Center.

8. Equipment

All equipment must be suited to the craft, to the water conditions, and to the individual; must be in good repair; and must satisfy all state and U.S. Coast Guard requirements.

If at all possible, check out your gear before your trip. Do your canoes leak? Are they missing thwarts? Seats? Rivets?

Are the paddles the correct lengths for the participants? (Plan on taking 3 paddles per canoe as an allowance against losing or breaking one.) A roll of duct tape can provide a temporary patch on an accidentally punctured canoe.

Have you inspected your PFDs? Are they the right size for the participants? Are they in good shape or do they need replacing?

If you are rafting, do your rafts leak? Plan on taking along a puncture repair kit and a pump to guard against the unexpected.

For a day trip participants should be instructed to bring along a fanny pack or backpack. All their belongings should go in that pack which is then clipped around a thwart. Put the camera in a zip-loc plastic bag, and then in the pack. There should not be any loose items in the bottom of the canoe. In the case of a spill, all the participant has to hang onto is his paddle.

For a multi-day trip, clothes and sleeping bags should be packed inside plastic bags --- zip-locs are great for clothes, trash bags are great for sleeping bags --- inside a canvas bag or duffel bag. The canvas or duffel bag can then be lashed to a thwart. Packed this way, the clothes and sleeping bag will not only stay dry in a spill, but will actually provide additional floatation for the canoe.

For a multi-day trip, participants should pack a rain jacket or rainsuit. Do not allow boating participants to wear long raincoats or rain ponchos. The boater who ends up in the water will find that being tangled in a long raincoat or poncho will make swimming difficult.

For any float trip, the unit should provide a first aid kit, packed so that it stays dry and fastened down so it doesn't get lost if the boat rolls.

9. Discipline

All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for safe unit activity afloat. Rules for safety do not interfere with fun when fairly applied.

BSA policy on boating contains the following restrictions and precautions:

1. The use of motorized personal watercraft (such as jetskis) is prohibited.

2. Participation in parasailing, or any activity in which a person is carried aloft by a parachute, parasail, kite, or other device towed by a motorboat or by any other means is prohibited.

3. Motorboat racing is prohibited.

4. Boats carrying passengers should not be towed behind motorboats or sailboats.

5. When lightning is present, get all boats off the water. All participants should seek shelter.

Criteria to follow when returning to the water are the same as for swimming. (See "Safe Area" under Safe Swim Defense.

Controlling Risks & Preventing Accidents

"Risk" and "Liability" are two words we may not use every day so let's take a brief look at what they mean.

Risk is the chance of injury, damage or loss, a hazard or the exposure to injury, damage or loss.

Liability is the state of being responsible or answerable for an injury, damage or loss. (It can also be described as "getting the blame.") Being liable is the first step on the road to being sued.

Risks which result in injuries create liability. Therefore, in order to control liability (and avoid being sued), it is essential to control our risks.

The risks encountered in aquatic activities tend to be in these general areas:

Facilities & Equipment
Personnel
Chemicals
Participants & their behavior

Facilities & Equipment

Let's look at facilities and equipment and the risks they present:

Rescue Equipment: Is it readily available and in good condition?

Ladders, Boards, Slides (climbing onto): slick steps or slick spots on board, sharp edges, loose bolts, improper installation, or anchoring pulling loose

Pool Deck & Showerhouse floor: slick spots, algae growth, trash, broken glass, deck slabs uneven, deteriorating concrete, missing or broken floor drain covers, skimmer port covers broken or missing, pool deck congestion, gutter grates improperly secured

Fences & Gates: climbing on

Canoes/rowboats: Sharp edges, loose seats, thwarts loose or missing, floatation missing

When it comes to reducing risks involved with facilities and equipment, the key is preventive maintenance. Preventive maintenance involves checking your facility and equipment on a continuing basis. If a problem is noticed, get it fixed as soon as possible. If a pool facility must be used before the problem can be corrected, rope off the problem area (as in the case of a diving board) or warn the swimmers of the problem and how to avoid it. If the problem is severe enough or cannot be avoided, the supervisor should voluntarily close the facility until the problem can be corrected.

It is not unusual for a swimmer or leader to report a problem. Sometimes the reporting is done politely and sometimes it is done in a griping fashion. In either case, thank the person politely and make plans for correcting the situation.

It is also not unusual for a swimmer or leader to report that he corrected or

attempted to correct a problem (such as cleaning up broken glass). Again, thank the person politely and follow up to make sure the problem was completely corrected.

Personnel

Are the supervisor and lifeguards aware of their duties? Are the lifeguards properly trained and certified? Do they maintain the rules of Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat? Do they perform their jobs diligently? Do they observe the same rules as they set for participants?

Chemicals

As a lifeguard you may have to work with (or work around) the chemicals used in pool sanitation. All the chemicals used are strong and potentially dangerous. Do not use any of them unless you are instructed to and then only if you are trained to use them safely.

Here are a few facts about some of the more commonly used pool chemicals and the dangers they present.

Chlorine Gas is green in color and heavier than air. Upon contact with moisture in mucus membranes (such as eyes, nasal passages, throat, lungs) it forms hypochlorous acid which burns these membranes. Chlorine gas can easily kill. If your pool has a chlorine gas leak, evacuate all employees, pool patrons, and bystanders to an upwind position until the situation is corrected.

Liquid Chlorine (sodium hypochlorite) is a clear, slightly yellow solution which is very similar to liquid laundry bleach, only it is 2-3 times more concentrated. Avoid getting it on your clothes --- it will bleach the color out of fabrics upon contact. If you do get some on your skin, wash it off immediately with generous amounts of water.

Solid chlorine is available in many forms and strengths (calcium hypochlorite granular or tablets @ 65-70% chlorine, lithium hypochlorite powder @ 35% chlorine, and chlorinated isocyanurates - dichlor granular @ 56-62% chlorine or trichlor granular or tablets @ 90% chlorine). Do not handle these with your bare hands. Avoid breathing any dust from these products. The dust will burn your mucus membranes very much like the chlorine gas does.

Muriatic Acid is a highly concentrated form of hydrochloric acid. Wear protective gear and avoid all contact. Muriatic acid burns skin deeply and severely. Avoid breathing the fumes. Flush all spills with generous amounts of water. (Reminder: When working with acids - Add acid to water; Never add water to acid.)

Soda Ash (sodium carbonate) is commonly used to adjust the pH in pools chlorinated with chlorine gas. It is commonly available pressed into briquettes. Do not handle with bare hands and avoid breathing the dust in the container.

Pool chemicals should always be stored in their original containers, with the lids secure and in a dry and locked facility. Avoid mixing one chemical with another --- even a scoop with traces of another chemical

on it can touch off a disastrous reaction.

Swimmers should never have access to any of the chemicals used at your pool.

Participants

There are four categories of swimmers who tend to have more problems than usual:

1. The very young; individuals who live in the inner city; individuals who live in a remote rural area --- due to lack of experience or lack of opportunity.

2.The old --- due to declining abilities. This can also apply to middle aged adult who are physically out of shape.

3. Individuals who are excessively overweight, extremely thin, or pale in color. Excessive buoyancy of an overweight person can be detrimental when the individual tries to get his feet back underneath him. An extremely thin person or a pale person may be weak due to illness or injury.

4. Individuals with physical impairments, mental impairments, or medical conditions.

The swim check and ability groupings of Safe Swim Defense are your first line of defense. Do not underestimate the number of problems that are avoided by diligent usage of these two tools! Simply being aware of these potential situations can also cut response time if a problem develops.

Participant Behavior

The behavior of a participant can be a risk to others as well as to himself. Using rules to control these risks is generally referred to as "Crowd Control."

Crowd control rules to be used will depend somewhat on the facility. For example: with a concrete pool deck, it would be foolish to allow running; however at a sandy beach with no obstacles, running will probably not be a major cause of injuries.

The amount of "horsing-around" to be allowed is dependent on the facility as well as the ages and swimming abilities of the participants.

Do insist on proper attire for swimming. The guy who shows up in blue jeans or sweats should not be allowed to swim.

Diving boards must be closely monitored. Injuries are more likely to happen here than in any other part of the pool. Do not allow more than one person on the board at a time. Do not allow swimmers to hang from the board. Do not allow the person on the board to dive before the previous diver has cleared out of the diving zone. Do not tolerate individuals diving improperly or attempting dives beyond their ability.

Do not allow underwater distance swimming. Underwater swimming for distance encourages the practice of hyperventilation, taking several rapid deep breaths just before submerging. While the swimmer thinks he is building up oxygen in his bloodstream, he is actually depleting carbon dioxide. Since the build-up of carbon

dioxide gives him the "urge to breathe," he can actually pass out from a lack of oxygen before he feels the urge to breathe. This is referred to as "shallow water black-out."

Float rings, innertubes, and PFDs are not a replacement for swimming ability. A non-swimmer using these must stay in less than 3.5' of water (beginning swimmer in less than 6').

Do not allow swimmers to chew gum or eat while they are in the pool. Everyone swallows a little pool water occasionally, but the swimmer who inhales his chewing gum along with the water could very well cause himself additional problems.

Do not allow parents to take their non-swimmer or beginner children to deeper water. It is very easy for a parent to overestimate his ability to keep his child afloat in deep water.

Illegal drugs and alcohol are a factor in a significant number of swimming and boating accidents. Their usage is also a violation of BSA policy. Individuals who are using alcohol or illegal drugs should be removed from the program area immediately.

There is an old swimming myth that just refuses to die --- the myth that you must avoid swimming for 30 minutes (or 1 hour) after eating to escape the clutches of the dreaded STOMACH CRAMPS. This myth was disproven many years ago. While you may feel sluggish swimming immediately after eating, it won't hurt you.

Lawsuits

A lawsuit is a rather common result of an accident or injury in the aquatics area. A typical lawsuit could and probably would name everyone as defendants from the teen-age lifeguards and supervisor right on up the line to the Scout Executive and Board of Trustees of your Council.

The following are a few of the more common grounds which have been used as the basis for lawsuits:

Failure to provide a safe facility or equipment

Failure to provide adequate rescue equipment

Failure to provide properly trained lifeguards

Lifeguard or Supervisor negligence

Improper storage or usage of pool chemicals

Failure to enforce the rules or control the actions of the crowd

Failure to act promptly in performing a rescue

Failure to perform first aid properly, or failure to advise follow-up treatment

Failure to foresee possible danger

Attempting or performing procedures which are not covered in the lifeguard's training or certification

If you weren't trained to do a particular procedure, don't attempt it. There are many agencies worldwide which certify lifeguards --- and they don't all teach the same skills. If you expect your certifying agency to back you up, you must perform in accordance with your training.

Most lawsuits involving lifeguards are based on the lifeguard's failure to perform his job properly. If there is anything

positive to be noted here, it is the fact that the burden of proof (of negligence) must be provided by the plaintiff (the person who is suing).

The key to avoiding lawsuits lies with performing your job in a reasonable and prudent manner and minimizing your risks as much as possible.

If you follow Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat, and an accident occurs, your Council's liability policy will back you up. However, if you do not fully comply with Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat, you will be responsible for that portion of the liability yourself. How much will probably be determined by a judge or a jury.

On Duty

We tend to think of a lifeguard as a person who is employed at a pool or beach to save people from drowning and most dictionaries define the word in those terms, a perpetration of the idea that a lifeguard is a "professional hero."

But, let's talk about reality..... While on guard duty you will find much of your time is spent in other endeavors such as enforcing safety rules and endlessly scanning your area for problems.

Scanning your area

First of all, if there are two or more of you, mentally divide the area to be covered and split up so that each is conveniently located to his own area.

Next, position yourself so that you have a totally unobstructed view of your area. A lifeguard chair will give a good view. However, if you have no chair available, step up to the edge of the pool, close enough that swimmers cannot walk in front of you and block your view.

You will frequently be told, "Keep your eyes on the water!" Good advice, but don't interpret that as meaning staring at the water; instead, develop a scanning pattern for your area. The pattern you develop will depend on the shape of the area you are guarding. Your scanning pattern can be circular, rectangular, or any other pattern that covers all of your own area and slightly overlaps the next guard's area. The overlap provides a double coverage on the areas that are farthest from each guard. All guards must agree ahead of time as to each guard's area to insure that there are no areas that are overlooked.

Your scan must include all swimmers in your area, both on the surface and submerged.

You should be able to completely scan your area, checking on each swimmer in your area at least once every 10 seconds.

An occasional glance around the entire program area will help keep you in touch with situations developing in other areas.

> Hint: The lifeguard who never moves his head is the lifeguard who is asleep on duty.

Dealing with Boredom

One of the biggest challenges to a new lifeguard is learning to deal with B-O-R-E-D-O-M....

Think about it! If you were told to sit still, keep quiet, and endlessly watch the activity going on before you, what does it sound like you are doing? Spying? On a police stake-out? Well, that's lifeguarding, and it's boring! And, to add insult to injury, the people you watch are having fun! (And you're not!)

When you are getting bored (and you will), change your scanning pattern, again making sure all of your area is covered. Other techniques include changing your posture, stepping aside to get a different point of view, shifting your weight in your sitting position, standing up and stretching, or taking a sip out of your water bottle (plastic, of course). There are dozens of ways of maintaining your alertness. Devise some of your own --- and use them.

The recommended time limit for a Scout swim is 45 minutes. Usually that leaves a 10-15 minutes in between groups for guards to take a break, get in the water to cool off, re-fill water bottles, re-apply sunscreen, and take care of other personal needs. Take advantage of these few minutes as they help to break the boredom.

Before the next swim period starts, guards should rotate positions. This also helps combat boredom.

Additional notes...

Avoid the temptation to chat while on duty. This includes chatting with other guards as well as swimmers.

Do not attempt to coach swimming or diving while on duty.

If you must communicate with a swimmer while on duty, maintain your scanning pattern with a glance at the person as you finish each scan. Be sure you are covering your scanning area once every 10 seconds without interruption.

Do not play with your whistle or your reach pole. Your full attention needs to be on your scanning.

Watch for the guy who is breaking the rules. (Correct him politely.) Watch for the non-swimmer who is in the wrong area. (Move him politely.) Watch for the guy who isn't staying with his buddy. (Remind him --- and his buddy.) Watch for the guy who is running on the pool deck. (Ask him to "Please walk.") Watch for the guy who is too rough on his fellow swimmers. (Please cool it!) Each time you deal with one of these you may be preventing an injury or an emergency from happening.

Guards must always adhere to the "First In - Last Out" rule. Guards should be in place before swimmers enter the swimming area. When closing the swim, guards should remain in place until all swimmers are out of the water. They may then follow the last swimmer down the pool deck. Guards will always be the last ones to exit the swimming area. If a swimmer finds that he has left an item in the swimming area, one of the guards will accompany him to retrieve it. Why??? (The guard is serving as his "buddy!")

Before exiting, one guard should do a "final sweep" to ensure everyone has exited the pool. If you feel it's silly walking around the pool when you can obviously see everything on the bottom as well as everything on the deck area, then do it under the pretense you are picking up trash off the deck and retrieving "lost and found" items. Whatever the case, do it!

It is always better to prevent an emergency than it is to perform a rescue. Perhaps it would be better to define

"lifeguard" as an accident/injury preventer!

Emergency Procedures

You're on guard. You're alert. You're scanning your area. You're looking for that swimmer in trouble. But how do you recognize him? What does he look like? How does he act?

> According to the classic myth, a swimmer goes down three times (or comes up three times) (or whatever) before he drowns. It's strictly a myth! Don't believe it!

One guideline of what to look for deals with what's normal, and what's not. So, what's normal? Swimming, playing games, laughing, splashing, yelling, etc. And what's not normal? Well, it could be much the same except the movements are a little less in control --- that could mean thrashing in desperation or tired, weak and ineffective. The guy in trouble is likely to be more vertical in the water than he is horizontal.

There are many types of swimmers in trouble. But if we had to group them, we'd find the active types and the silent types. The more common of these two is the active.

Active Types

The active types may exhibit a number of different signs, but one thing is clear. They don't look normal. They exhibit a few signs that set them apart from normal swimmers.

One of these might start out as a tired swimmer. His stroke might be weak. He might have a tired look in his eyes, or a terrified look, or hair stringing in his eyes. He might try to wave a hand to get attention. He might try to yell out, or he might be too short of breath for yelling. He could be gradually sinking lower in the water.

Another of these might look like a guy who panicked when he stepped off into deeper water than he intended. He might have unpredictable behavior, thrashing motions. He might have his head back gasping for air.

The active type might be bobbing in the water, using every ounce of strength in him to push his head out of the water only to sink back underneath and try again.

If you see two heads together, you may have an active type who grabbed the object nearest to him --- another swimmer.

You may have only seconds to respond to this guy. At any moment he could inhale water or simply "run out of gas" and sink beneath the surface.

Silent Types

While the active type gives you a visual alert of trouble, the silent type may give little or no warning. He's perfectly normal one moment and not normal the next. He might just stop moving, clutch his arms around himself, or be moving erratically.

The silent type often has a medical emergency which then becomes an aquatic emergency. He might have had a heart attack, or a stroke, or an epileptic seizure. He might be dizzy or disoriented from pool water seeping through a perforated eardrum.

Of course, that's not always the case. He might have sustained a head injury from diving or experienced a shallow water black-out from hyperventilating. Or he could be experiencing the result of alcohol or drug abuse (or overdose).

The silent type may be floating, or sinking.

Regardless of the cause, your response must be quick. It is quite likely the silent type will be totally unable to help himself.

Your Response

The earlier you assist the guy in trouble, the better his odds of survival will be.

At the first sign of a suspicious situation, call a "Buddy Check." This serves more than one function. It clears the pool, getting others out of the way. It also gives you a few seconds to assess the victim's response. And, it alerts the other guards to cover for you, or assist you with the emergency.

Rescue

The type of rescue to be used will depend on the facility, equipment available, and the circumstances of the emergency.

Remember "Reach, Throw, Row, Go with support?" Quickly go through the list in your mind and search for equipment.

Reach - Is he near the edge of the water? Can I help him with an Arm reach, leg reach, reach pole, fishing pole, oar, water ski, human chain...

Throw - Is he within throwing range? Can I help him with a Ring buoy, heaving line, heaving line with jug, PFD, empty cooler fastened shut, empty water jug, innertube, throw bag, (anything that will float)...

Row - Are boats available? Rowboat, canoe, sailboat, motorboat...

Go with Support - When all else fails find something that floats and take it with you - rescue tube, torpedo buoy, ring buoy, innertube, empty cooler fastened shut, empty water jug, air mattress, PFD, kickboard, (any floating object, besides you, which the victim can grab)...

For more specific rescue techniques, refer to the BSA Lifesaving Merit Badge booklet and to American Red Cross Lifeguarding published by the American Red Cross.

Review your rescue techniques frequently. Improper rescue techniques are used in as much as 82% of rescues performed by lifeguards.

The Impossible Situation

There may come a time when you face a situation which is totally beyond your control. Let it go. As morbid as it may sound, it is always better to have a drowning than it is to have a double drowning.

After the Rescue / First Aid

It is essential to evaluate the victim immediately. Notify the health lodge (if at summer camp) or your local rescue squad (if on a unit activity) if the victim needs further care.

In the meantime, care for the life-threatening injuries first --- no breathing, no pulse, or bleeding. Continue your care until the rescue squad arrives. Use blankets or towels to keep the victim warm.

Any victim of a near-drowning should be taken to the nearest hospital. Place a call for your local rescue squad immediately. Between 80% and 90% of near drowning victims inhale water into their lungs. This water can be rapidly absorbed into the blood stream causing a medical emergency about 30 to 60 minutes afterwards. (Remember: If in doubt, have it checked out!)

If you suspect a broken bone, joint injury, or especially a spinal injury, don't move the victim unless leaving him where he is will subject him to further harm. If you must move him from the water, a backboard can be useful for any fracture.

Avoid doing anything that could make the injury worse. For instance, if the victim with a suspected fracture does not need to be moved, don't apply a splint. Let the rescue squad handle it.

The victim of a "little scare" may need only to rest a few minutes before returning to the water. A young child reluctant to return to the water may need a few minutes of "one on one" trust-building in the water after the swimming activity is over to overcome his reluctance.

Procedures for during and after the emergency

Any accident which results in injury should be recorded in the camp medical log (if at summer camp), reported to your State Health Department (if required), and reported to your Council Scout Executive.

If your local rescue squad or law enforcement are called in to assist, cooperate with them fully.

Do not make any comments to witnesses or bystanders.

If reporters from newspapers, television stations, or radio stations arrive, do not offer information and do not answer their questions. Refer them to your Council Scout Executive. If and when there is an announcement to be made or a statement to be released, he will do it.

You (and your image)

Your Personal Survival Kit

There are certain "tools" that go along with a particular job. Having the right tools makes the job easier, or at worst, more bearable. Every lifeguard should have his own personal survival kit consisting of:

Swimsuit
Whistle
Sun glasses
Hat (optional, but useful)
Sunscreen
Lip balm
Sunburn remedy
Zinc oxide
Plastic water bottle
Shampoo
Towel & Shirt
Fanny pack or backpack (especially for float trips)

Now let's take a closer look at each of these items.....

Swimsuit

The recommended swimsuit for the guys is boxer style. A lightweight nylon fabric is preferred by some as it dries out quickly. Your swim team competition suit should be left at home.

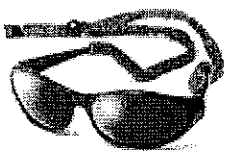
Women should wear a one-piece tank style suit, conservatively cut in the legs, chest, and back. Women should avoid flowered suits if they wish to be taken seriously. Solid colors are preferred.

For all swimwear, loud colors and wild patterns are distracting and inappropriate. The only insignia which may be worn are the BSA Lifeguard patch (or the BSA Aquatics Instructor patch). All other insignia should be left at home.

Whistle

Each guard should have a whistle. It may be suspended from a cord around the neck. Do not allow yourself to fall into the habit of twirling it around your finger.

It may be used to get attention such as in calling a buddy check, getting a specific swimmer's attention, or making announcements. Use your whistle sparingly.



Sunglasses

The use of sunglasses will help you avoid squinting and eyestrain on the job. Polarized lenses are highly recommended as they cut the sun glare from the water and allow you to see beneath the surface.

If you wear mirrored lenses, remove your glasses when talking to others --- the reflective surface of these lenses cuts off all eye contact and can be very intimidating to the other guy. Those you work with will know you well enough not to be intimidated, but the first year camper that you must talk to about running on the pool deck may be

terrified of you!

When you purchase sunglasses check for a label telling that the lenses cut out ultraviolet light. You may or may not be predisposed to developing cataracts in your eyes as you get older, but let's take this precaution now.....

A keeper strap for your sunglasses is recommended, especially for float trips. An inexpensive substitute is a short length of rubber surgical tubing.

Hat (optional, but highly recommended)

Wearing a hat is highly desirable in that it helps cut down on the amount of sunlight that reaches your eyes. A hat with your camp logo or other Scouting logo is preferred. Avoid hats with a non-Scouting logo.

A hat will also help protect your face from sunburn.

Sunscreen

Today it is widely accepted that continual exposure to sunlight ages skin, causing deep wrinkles, increasing splotchy pigmentation and the incidence of keratosis (warty spots). Exposure to the sun and especially to sunburn will also increase your risk of skin cancer. Don't mess around taking your chances --- use a sunscreen and save yourself a lot of sunburn pain in the process.

Sunscreens are all rated for their SPF (Sun Protection Factor). A sunscreen with an SPF of 8 will allow you to be in the sun for 8 hours while allowing 1 hour of sun exposure to your skin. Consequently, any sunscreen with an SPF of 20 or greater is virtually a sunblock.

So what SPF should you choose? Rule of thumb:

Fair skin --- Use SPF 15 to SPF 20
Medium skin --- Use SPF 8
Dark skin --- Use SPF 4 to SPF 8

Everyone should keep a small amount of SPF 20 on hand for those especially sensitive areas --- generally, the nose, lower lip, the part in your hair, and the tops of the ears (especially for those who wear a baseball style hat).

The strongest concentration of the sun's rays occurs between 10 AM and 3 PM, however sunburn occurs both before and after that time range. The reflection of the sun off the water can double your sun exposure.

Sunburn is the single most common health problem faced by a new lifeguard and although most first aid textbooks treat it as a minor burn, it can be very painful.

Don't take chances --- limit your sun exposure with sunscreen. Wear a hat. When you're suspicious you've had too much sun wear your shirt and spread your towel across your legs.

Sunburn remedy

If the previous section on sunburn is truly taken to heart, a sunburn remedy will never be needed. However, it is better to be prepared, and sooner or later it will undoubtedly be used.

One of the best sunburn pain relief remedies on the market today is aloe vera gel. It is sold under a variety of brand names and store brand names. It does not always relieve all the pain, but it is soothing, cooling and generally helpful.

To promote healing, 1/2% hydrocortisone (available over-the-counter) applied twice a day is also helpful. (Hydrocortisone can also be used on insect stings. Wasps and bees are frequent visitors at outdoor pools. If you leave them alone, they will usually leave you alone, but don't irritate them...)

Avoid butter and all greasy burn medications!

If fever, chills, nausea, or delirium are experienced along with sunburn, see a doctor at once.

In the case of severe sunburn (such as that experienced by falling asleep in the sun) contact your doctor at once. He (or she) may be able to give you a prescription which may decrease some of the sunburn reaction.

Lip balm

Wind, sun, and water are all drying to the skin, and especially to the lips. And licking your lips only makes matters worse. One little tube of lip balm (any brand) can be worth it's weight in gold.

When purchasing lip balm, check the label --- some of them contain a sunscreen. This can be especially helpful if your lower lip is prone to sunburn.

Zinc Oxide

What do you do when you have a mild sunburn on your nose but you have to go right back on guard and you're afraid you'll make it worse? Use zinc oxide! It comes in tubes in many fashionable colors if you're willing to pay the price. The least expensive is the plain white available at any drug store. It functions as a total sunblock.

Yes, zinc oxide will make you look like a clown, but it is better to look funny than to tough it out and end up with an even worse burn.

Plastic water bottle

Working in the sun, the heat, and the wind really sucks the moisture out of your body. Sooner or later you just might feel the effects of it --- a headache, light-headedness, maybe a touch of nausea. These signs generally mean that dehydration is setting in. To prevent this, get into the habit of drinking water frequently. That is easiest, if it's nearby. That's where the plastic water bottle comes in. Keep it filled, keep drinking it, and you'll experience a lot less of the old "in the sun" headache.

If not stopped in time, this can degenerate into heatstroke or heat exhaustion.

There is an old myth about taking salt tablets to retain water and avoid dehydration. Don't do it. Taking salt tablets actually causes your body to lose additional salt.

When the heat seems unbearable,

wear a wet tee shirt.

Shampoo

Always carry a small bottle of shampoo with you. Whether you are working at a pool or a lakefront, you'll want to get the "pool gunk" or the "lake gunk" out of your hair.

Blonds may experience a green tint in their hair resulting from contact with swimming pool chemicals in the pool water. There are shampoos on the market which are specially formulated to prevent this effect.

Towel and Shirt

Your shirt and towel can serve a couple of functions. You can use them for sun protection and you can also use them to warm a cold swimmer or help keep an accident victim warm.

Fanny Pack or Backpack

By all means take a fanny pack or backpack on a float trip. All the loose items in your boat should go into this bag (sunscreen, water bottle, camera in a zip plastic bag, etc.).

This bag should be clipped to a seat or thwart. If by chance, your boat should roll, your belongings will not be lost.

Your Image as a BSA Lifeguard

Do you see yourself as the macho sun-bronzed, muscle-bound swimming pool hero? Some of the lifeguards at the public pool or beach may have given you that impression.

Do you see yourself as spending all day gazing at scantily-clad, buxom, blond babes bouncing up and down the beach? Well, perhaps you've been watching too much TV!

The BSA Lifeguard probably will not have much opportunity to do much girl watching (unless he works at a BSA Family Camp). And if he does have the opportunity, he'd better do it on his own time. Lifeguarding and babe-watching don't mix well.

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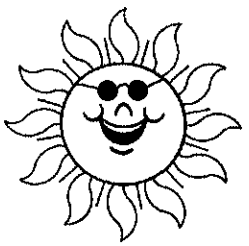

As for the sun-muscle-pool hero, much sun maturely skin.

It will serve you well to remember that a Scout Lifeguard is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, reverent --- and that he will help other people at all times, keep himself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.