



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

SAFETY AFLOAT

SUMMARY

Swimming, kayaking, or any aquatic activity will have potential hazards, even for advanced participants. Lives can be saved with proper supervision and training; lives can be and have been lost by not following Safety Afloat practices.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Safety Afloat training is designed for all authorized boating activities.* Adult leaders supervising those activities have completed their Safety Afloat training within the previous two years.

A summary of the nine points of Safety Afloat includes:

1. **Qualified Supervision**—Supervision by an adult, 21 or older, who is trained in BSA Safety Afloat. Leadership is provided in ratios of one trained adult per 10 participants; for Cub Scouts, it is 1:5. At least one leader must be trained in first aid that includes CPR. Any swimming done in conjunction with the activity must be within BSA Safe Swim Defense standards.
2. **Personal Health Review**—Complete health history will be needed. Are there any restrictions on the part of the participant?
3. **Swimming Ability**—Complete an annual swim test. Do you know what that is?
4. **Life Jackets**—Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets are worn by everyone engaged in boating activities.
5. **Buddy System**—Make sure each member is accounted for, especially when in the water.
6. **Skill Proficiency**—Everyone in an activity afloat must have sufficient knowledge and skill to participate safely.
7. **Planning**—Check for weather and contingencies as needed prior to your activity.
8. **Equipment**—All craft must be suitable for the activity, be seaworthy, and be capable of floating if capsized.
9. **Discipline**—Remember that rules are only effective when they are followed.

Review the age-appropriate guidelines for afloat activities for Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouting.

*Parasailing, kite-surfing, and unit-level use of personal watercraft are not authorized activities.

RESOURCES

- Safety Afloat: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss02/#j
- Guide to Safe Scouting: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/
- Safety Afloat Training: my.scouting.org
- BSA Safe Swim Defense: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss02/#d