

BSA Swimming & Water Rescue Instructor Guide
(2nd edition – updated for 2013 printing of *Aquatics Supervision*)

Purpose:

Training for *BSA Swimming & 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. Persons completing the training should be better able to assess their preparation to supervise unit swimming events. The BSA recommends that at least one person with this training is 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 15 or older. A council approved instructor must directly supervise all training. The course takes approximately eight hours and is valid for three years.

Although the training is consistent with training provided professional lifeguards, the *Swimming & Water Rescue* course is not a lifeguard training course and is not a substitute for *BSA Lifeguard* training for summer camp aquatics staff. On the other hand, this course addresses important information that may not be covered in generic lifeguard training programs such as: preventative measures, including the buddy system and swim classification tests; how to set up a safe swim area in diverse situations; the use of non-standard rescue equipment; and emergency action plans in remote settings. Therefore, BSA leaders with lifeguard training from other agencies are encouraged to complete this course prior to supervising unit swim activities in remote settings. A 'challenge' option is provided to foster cross-training of individuals with training from other agencies.

Adult and youth first aid training, including CPR, is an important safety consideration for all Scouting activities, not just swimming. First aid training is not included in the *Swimming & Water Rescue* course with the expectation the leader has addressed this need separately, as noted in the course material and on the training card.



Requirements:

Prerequisites:

1. Age and Physical Fitness:
 - A. Be 15 years old or older prior to training
 - B. Submit written evidence of physical fitness
 - C. Complete Safe Swim Defense training
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, 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.
 - 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 face-up subject
 - B. For a face-down 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.

Course eligibility:

Requirements 1 and 2, along with BSA registration, are course pre-requisites. If the instructor doubts a person's age or registration, proof should be requested. While the training is intended primarily for adult leaders, it may also be used to strengthen the ability of units to function under youth leadership. Venture crews and Sea Scout ships that specialize in remote outdoor activities that include swimming may wish to arrange a course for the entire unit. Although the training is open to and appropriate for Boy Scouts age 15 or older, they should be encouraged to earn the *Lifesaving* merit badge first, and to consider *BSA Lifeguard* training if they intend to apply for summer camp aquatics staff positions.

Requirement 1.b. follows *Safe Swim Defense* concepts. The instructor should make the point that this course involves swimming and therefore abides by the Personnel Health Review criteria. Since the activity is not unduly strenuous and lasts less than 72 hours, only a health history is required. Course participation should only be denied on the basis of physical fitness if a parent or physician states that the participant should not be allowed in the water or should not engage in normal exertion associated with swimming. Non-infectious illness that is under control or physical limitations are not automatic reasons for exclusion. So long as a person can safely participate in the activity and meet the objective of a physical requirement, the requirement is satisfied, even if an adapted technique is not standard. As part of the medical screening process the instructor should inquire privately whether the participant has any special physical or learning needs. The goal is to understand individual needs to provide successful experiences in the classroom, in the water, and during testing.

Course advertisements and registration procedures should clearly inform the applicant that exercises will take place in deep water and the person must be able to complete the BSA *swimmer* test to continue in the course.

Instructor and Course Authorization:

BSA Swimming & Water Rescue training may only be conducted by those currently trained as a *BSA Aquatics Instructor*, a *BSA Lifeguard Instructor*, or a *BSA Swimming & Water Rescue Instructor*. An instructor application is contained in this guide. All course offerings must be approved by the local council with that approval documented on the Course Record form used for each class. The Scout Executive or his/her designee (e.g. Council Aquatics Committee chairperson, council Training Committee chairperson, Camp Director, or District Executive) determines the local procedure for authorizing a course, which may be by phone or email, rather than by actual signature.

Course fees:

In keeping with the BSA emphasis on program delivery by volunteers, the course is not intended as a source of revenue for the instructor, the council, or other organizations. The participant should only be charged a fee to cover actual costs such as facility rental and course materials. Course fees should not be used to provide instructor compensation. If the instructor is conducting the course as a council employee, such as a summer camp staff member, that person should be paid a fixed salary rather than a supplement or commission for each participant.

Insurance:

Registered members of the BSA are typically covered by council insurance programs during Scouting activities. The instructor may obtain details from the local council.

Completion options:

Normal course completion requires attendance at, or make-up of, all course sessions as well as successful completion of all requirements. The goal is to train all interested leaders to the standards implied by the requirements. Participants unable to meet the requirements are not issued training cards even if conscientious and dedicated. However, the instructor is encouraged to continue to work with such individuals to improve their skills and understanding sufficiently to satisfy the requirements. A training card may be issued to such individuals following satisfactory performance at make-up sessions that are conducted by the original instructor within six months of the initial test date.

Training is renewed or extended either by taking the course again, or 'challenging' the requirements as noted below. Co-instructors of a normal session may sign a completion card for the other.

The following groups may complete the course by passing, or challenging, the requirements without attending the normal course sessions:

- a. Anyone with a completed *Swimming & Water Rescue* training card whose expiration date has not been exceeded by more than six months.
- b. Anyone with a completed *BSA Lifeguard* training card whose expiration date has not been exceeded by more than six months.
- c. Anyone with a completed lifeguard training card from an agency recognized by the local state whose expiration date has not been exceeded by more than six months.
- d. Anyone approved by the local council as a *Lifesaving Merit Badge* counselor.

Course Completion Cards & Patches:

Course completion cards are available from the council office and should be issued by the instructor at the conclusion of the course. The card, signed and dated by the instructor, is the only documentation provided the participant. Cards expire three years after completion. Replacement cards should be obtained directly from the instructor. A signed course completion card allows the holder to purchase and wear *Swimming and Water Rescue* patches from a council service center. Distribution of patches at the end of the course is recommended.

Course records:

The course instructor is required to maintain a Course Record, included in this guide, which notes the course authorization along with the instructor(s) name, type of training and expiration. The record also includes the name of each participant and a check list to document completion of each requirement. The same form is used for both normal and challenge courses. Instructors should retain the original Course Record and marked copies of the written exams for a period of three years unless the council office keeps those documents.

This guide contains an evaluation form to distribute to each participant to critique the course and instructor. Each participant should be asked to complete the evaluation form at the end of the course. The council may, at its discretion, require copies of the evaluations and course records to be forwarded to the council office for review by the Council Aquatics or Training Committees.

Course location:

Course conduct requires both a classroom setting and a swimming area with shallow water that deepens to at least eight feet. Either or both may be indoors or outdoors as long as they are conducive to effective learning. A classroom facility with a computer projection system is highly recommended to take advantage of training material. Course requirements are designed to allow completion in an indoor pool during the winter. However, if the course is conducted near a natural body of water during warm weather, then the instructor is encouraged to promote an optional session that sets up a safe swim area.

Course duration:

The normal course is designed to take approximately eight hours for a small group. A challenge course may take two hours or less. The exact time needed for effective instruction and testing will depend somewhat on the number and skill of the participants. Allow additional time for large groups. Allow sufficient time for participants to effectively absorb and demonstrate their understanding of the material. Schedule time for breaks, to move between the classroom and swimming area, and to change clothes. . If the amount of time needed is uncertain, it is better to schedule too much time and end early rather than omit material or run late.

The course material may be completed in one day. However, such a schedule doesn't allow participants much time to study for the written exam or to practice marginal skills. Therefore, a schedule over two or more mornings, afternoons or evenings, either a day or a week apart, may be preferred over a single day. If the entire course is scheduled for a single day, the instructor should arrange for texts to be delivered to the participants for individual study prior to the start of the course. Alternatively, the written exam may be scheduled separately from the rest of the course at a different time, and possibly place, to allow time for study.

If desired, the course may be extended on an optional basis by approximately one hour to include actual set-up of a safe swim area, and/or two hours to include *Snorkeling BSA* instruction for those who plan to take their units snorkeling in open water. Those not participating in optional sessions still qualify for a training card if all the standard requirements are completed.

Instructor/Participant ratios:

The maximum instructor to participant ratio is one instructor per ten participants to allow effective individual review of the physical skills. However, a ratio of one to eight or less is recommended. It is highly desirable for both effective teaching and safety to have two instructors for each course. Two instructors for eight participants provides near optimal group interaction and individual attention within the allocated time. The suggested times in the schedule are for that configuration. (Note: the procedure for qualifying as a *Swimming and Water Rescue* instructor promotes dual teaching. Ideally, each course offering is utilized to train additional instructors as well as unit leaders.)

Safety:

The course instructor has primary responsibility for the safety of all participants and shall conduct all training with safety a prime consideration, using assistants and/or lifeguards for support as needed.

Everyone will have a designated buddy during all skill sessions, including the instructors. Each buddy should be aware of the location and condition of the other at all times. Buddy checks are made at the beginning and end of each session in the water, between discussions of different skills, or whenever the group moves from one area to another. A simple head count will suffice, but should be made apparent to the participants. A deliberate, marked emphasis on the buddy system during instruction not only adds a margin of safety during the instruction but also sets the example participants are expected to follow during unit activities. Buddy tags may be used if desired, but are not necessary since the instructor will have a written list of all participants for recording performance.

Every instructor should be familiar with the facility and ensure that proper rescue equipment is on hand, that communication systems are working, and that an appropriate emergency action plan is in place.

If the course is conducted by a single instructor (not the preferred situation), then there must be a trained lifeguard on duty providing surveillance of all course in-water activities. Pools arranged for the course may be subject to state regulations and mandate use of their guards. Even when guards are provided by the facility, the instructor is still responsible for class safety and should review facility emergency procedures with the assigned guards.

If the course is conducted by two instructors (who must have water rescue training to be authorized), and no other lifeguards are on duty, then it is not necessary to reassign one instructor to occupy a lifeguard stand provided the following safety procedures are observed:

1. When both instructors are demonstrating a skill, either with both instructors in the water, or one in the water while the other explains from the deck, then participants are out of the water, or arranged in formation in shallow water or holding onto the side.
2. When the majority of the participants are in the water, one instructor conducts surveillance for the group and does not critique individuals for skills.
3. Both instructors may simultaneously review participant performance only in rotating practice situations, such as a round-robin, wherein each instructor observes only one person or buddy pair in the water at a time while the rest of the participants remain in lines.
4. Neither an individual nor group shall be separated from the class and sent to a different portion of the swimming area unless accompanied by an instructor.
5. Each instructor must guard the other while demonstrating an in-water skill. This precludes the possibility participants will assume an instructor's actions are part of the demonstration rather than an indication the instructor is in trouble.

In an outdoor setting, all swimmers should be cleared from the water during an approaching storm and remain in a safe area for at least 30 minutes after the last observance of thunder or lightening. Many indoor pools also observe a similar precaution.

Course material and presentation:

Each participant should have a copy of the BSA *Aquatics Supervision* publication No. 34346 (SKU 616730) that serves as the text for the course and is the standard reference on policies and skills covered during the course. The written exam is taken from material in Sections I and II of the text. Instructors may not exclude, modify, or add any requirements. The instructor should not present any material that contradicts information in the text unless there is an official BSA publication with a later print date that amends the material. If the instructor finds material in the text that is at odds with standard practice, the instructor should convey that information to the Outdoor Program division of the National Council.

The local council is responsible for providing all approved instructors with this instructor guide and the extra material noted herein. That material includes this guide, which contains a course record form, a course evaluation form, and instructor application. Standardized presentation and exam materials are provided separately. Course material may be downloaded from www.scouting.org by following the ScoutSource, Outdoor, Aquatics, and Aquatics Resources tabs. The video is on the Safe Swim Defense DVD, SKU 614504, available from BSA National Supply at www.scoutstuff.org.

The standardized presentation is provided in Microsoft PowerPoint format. While PowerPoint can be a very effective teaching tool, it is also easy to misuse. Some presenters read verbatim from long bullets lists on a slide that is also provided to participants on handouts. While such a technique assures that everyone is exposed to the same material in the same way, it also eliminates the need for the instructor, stifles interactions, and promotes inattention and boredom. The *Swimming and Water Rescue* presentation is designed to avoid such problems by presenting graphics and talking points that focus attention on what the instructor is saying, which includes questions to prompt audience participation. The slides do not stand alone without commentary and discussion. That commentary, along with teaching objectives and questions to prompt discussion, is contained in the notes window for each slide. Some slides have simple animation to present components in a logical progression. That animation is highlighted in the slide notes. The instructor should conduct a dry-run of the presentation prior to the course and then present the commentary from memory in his/or her own style. A hardcopy of the slides in notes format provides the instructor a prompt if needed. Hardcopies of the slides should not be given the participants prior to the presentation. The material is covered in the text so participant copies are not needed. Participants should be encouraged to make notes directly in their texts.

The intent of a common graphics presentation and commentary is to establish a nationwide standard for course content and quality. Instructors should work with their council, including the Aquatics and Training Committees, to provide that commonality. Projection on a screen is ideal, and small groups may be able to watch the presentation on a large computer or TV monitor. However, trying to fit a large group around a small laptop screen in broad daylight is likely not effective. If effective computer projection in any of the various forms is not available, then the slides may be printed as transparencies and presented using an overhead projector with only minor changes in presentation style or commentary. If no projection option is available, the material may be presented using flip charts so long as the session objectives are met, although that is not a preferred option. If flip charts are used, then hardcopies of the slides may be provided participants as needed.

Course outline:

Each instructor is expected to work from a course outline that presents the material logically and efficiently. A reasonable starting point is to adopt the schedule that was used when the instructor took the course. However, flexibility is needed when the instructor is adapting to different venues and time slots. The following list groups the course material into sessions of related topics tied to the requirements. Scheduling involves grouping the sessions into available time slots. Unless otherwise noted, sessions are conducted at the swimming area. The times are estimates based on two instructors and eight participants who do not need remedial swimming instruction. References, objectives, and suggestions follow for each topic in each session.

Session I – Prerequisites: (30 min)

- Review health histories, which will include ages
- Conduct swimmer classification tests
- Weight recovery

Session II – Safe Swim Defense principles (120 min- classroom)

- Introductions
- Course requirements, expectations, and schedule
- PowerPoint presentation on safety, rules & procedures
- Remote area setup video
- Break-out exercise on conducting a safe swim

Session III – Administering swim classifications (40 min)

Session IV – Shore based rescue (40 min)

- Victim characteristics
- Reaching assists
- Throwing assists

Session V – In-water non-contact rescues for active subjects (40 min)

- Flotation aids appropriate for unit swims
- Entries and approaches
- Accompanied rescues

Session VI – In-water contact rescues for passive subjects (90 min)

- Wrist tow without support (front approach)
- Wrist tow with support (front approach)
- Armpit tow without support (rear approach)
- Armpit tow with support (rear approach)
- Vertical lift
- Discussion of contact rescues for active subjects

Session VII – Defenses (15 min)

- Front head hold release
- Rear head hold release

Session VIII - Line and tender rescue (30 min)

Session IX - In-line stabilization (30 min)

- Face-up subject
- Face-down subject

Session X - Test and review (60 min - classroom)

Session XI – Safe area setup (optional) (1 hr)

Session XII – Snorkeling BSA (optional) (1.5 – 2 hrs)

Session Objectives & Instructor Notes:

Chapters and page numbers refer to the Aquatics Supervision text, No 34346, 2013 printing

Session I – Prerequisites (requirements 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b)

There is a space on the course record form to record each participant's age (req. 1a), which should be noted on the health history form. Items to consider when reviewing the health histories (req.1b) are covered in Chap 4. Ideally, each participant should be alerted thorough the sign-up process that a completed health history form will be required. However, adults who enroll late may complete the form onsite. Forms for youth must be signed by parent or guardian.

Swimmer classification requirements (req. 2a) and procedures are covered in Chap 5. Surface dives (req. 2b) are illustrated on pages 80 and 81. Course advertisements and advance sign-up procedures should clearly state these requirements to prevent those with marginal skills from having undue expectations.

If practical, 'qualification' sessions may be held separate from the main course, for example on a Thursday evening at a local pool prior to a Saturday course in a different town. Candidates for a large group may be scheduled to arrive at different times. Such an arrangement suits those unsure of their swimming ability who may be concerned about performing poorly in front of a group and travelling to a distant venue only to find they are not allowed to participate. At summer camp, the general swim classification procedure may be used to screen candidates. In some situations, it may be practical to combine requirement 2a with requirement 3, as discussed later.

A variety of efficient strokes will prove useful for water rescues. However, specific strokes, other than a restful (elementary) backstroke are not required for BSA *swimmer* classification. If a person is barely able to complete the required distance, the instructor may need to invoke the "... swim 75 yards in a strong manner..." statement in the *swimmer* requirements and privately counsel that person that some of the skills in the course may prove difficult and must be performed satisfactorily to obtain a card.

Neither a polished head-first nor feet-first surface dive is mandated. Requirement 2b is met if the 10 pound object is brought to the surface. The instructor should make the point during the weight recovery that a safe water depth for a unit swim is only as deep as rescuers can easily locate and recover someone on the bottom.

Anyone unable to complete the 100 yard swim without resting, or to recover the weight after two or three consecutive tries should not be allowed to continue with the water rescue portion of the course.

The basic swimming skill of the U.S. population at large is generally poor. Therefore, some leaders desiring to take the course will likely benefit from a bit of remedial swimming instruction. Those who struggled to complete the prerequisites are likely in that category. Poor performance often results from lack of skill rather than stamina and a few pointers and a bit of practice may quickly lead to marked improvement.

Time is not provided in the course for remedial swimming instruction, and the instructor should not delay or short-change other aspects of the course to provide such coaching. However, if the course schedule allows, the instructor is encouraged to offer swimming tips outside of normal class times. The goal is not to weed out poor performers in a quest for the best, but to bring everyone to an acceptable level. At the very least, everyone can be told to review the swimming skills covered in Chapter 8, pages 73-81.

During *swimmer* classification, participants may wear swim goggles. However, goggles, ear plugs, and/or nose clips are not appropriate for the other skill activities.

Session II – Safe Swim Defense principles (prep for requirement 13)

This session utilizes a standardized PowerPoint presentation that guides participants through a review and extension of BSA Safe Swim Defense. An eleven minute video on Remote Area Setup is also shown and discussed, as cued by the PowerPoint. Text references are noted on each slide so participants can follow the material in their texts.

The material assumes a basic familiarity with Safe Swim Defense. Pre-course promotion should encourage participants to review/renew online Safe Swim Defense training just prior to the course.

Break-out groups choose a swim location for an actual unit and develop a plan for a safe swim, including ability areas, number and placement of response personnel, and basic emergency action plans. Each group then reviews their plan with at least one other group for feedback. Details of the exercise are provided in the PowerPoint.

Session III – Administering swim classifications (requirement 3)

Safe Swim Defense requires a “tailgate” review just before a swimming activity. If this is the first in-water group session of the course, the instructor should review basic facility layout, such as emergency exits and communication systems, including emergency signals. Identify areas of use, particularly if the facility is shared. Basic safety rules include:

- The buddy system is in use at all times.
- No one leaves the immediate area without informing the instructor and his/her buddy or until the entire group is dismissed.
- No one enters the water until asked to do so by the instructor.
- No head first entry is allowed. (It’s against policy and dangerous in shallow water and not needed for the course in deep water.)
- In addition to the buddy system, surveillance is provided by the instructors and/or lifeguards who will direct the response for any real emergency.

For this session, the test administrator and person taking the swim classification test will be buddies. The test administrator is responsible for the safety of the person in the water. The tests will be conducted within reach of the side. The instructor should point out where reach poles are located and give a quick demonstration of their use. However, should anyone need assistance other than a simple reaching assist for a tired swimmer, the test administrator should alert the instructor since the group has not yet been taught in-water rescues.

Requirements for BSA *beginner* and *swimmer* classifications are covered in Session II and are questions on the written exam. Procedures are given on pages 38-42. The instructor should explain how those procedures are implemented at the current venue and then allow each buddy pair to administer both the *beginner* and *swimmer* tests to each other. For large groups, everyone doing first one test and then the other may help keep activities coordinated. No matter what arrangement is used for conducting both tests, the instructor should emphasize that a person taking the test for real can try the *swimmer* test without first completing the *beginner* test.

The instructor should make sure each of the following is observed:

- Each administrator reviews the requirements with each person being tested.
- Each administrator asks each person to repeat the requirements.
- Each person is asked if they think they can easily meet the requirements.
- Each person being tested is asked if they have jumped into deep water before.
- No one enters the water until told to do so.
- The administrator follows the swimmer along the shore and is prepared to make a reaching assist.
- Swimmers are not allowed to rest by holding to the side or walking in shallow water.

For small groups of known good swimmers, it may be practical to combine requirement 3 with requirement 2a, that is, to combine Sessions I and III after Session II. If that is done, any questions of inadequate performance are referred to the instructor.

General Skill Instruction

Sessions IV through IX involve teaching and evaluation of physical skills. Simple skills may be taught effectively as a whole. Each skill should be explained and then demonstrated. Each participant is then allowed to practice, with input from his/her buddy and the instructor as appropriate. A review of critical skills is useful at the beginning and end of each session to emphasize major points and link material together. Whenever material is reviewed, the instructor should consider framing the review either as questions to be answered by the participants, or asking for a volunteer to provide specific information to the rest of the class.

Complicated skills may be broken into individual components, each of which is explained, demonstrated, and practiced prior to combination. In a few situations, dry-land demonstration and practice are effective supplements to in-water work.

Each skill in the requirements is discussed in the Aquatics Supervision text. Highlights are provided as tips in the following discussion to help guide the instructor through an effective presentation. However, those highlights do not necessarily cover all the details of a skill that the instructor needs to present. Each instructor should therefore review the material in the text prior to demonstrating the skill for the class. If the text is not sufficiently clear, then additional explanation may be obtained from the Lifesaving merit badge pamphlet, the BSA Lifeguard Instructor Manual, and/or the Red Cross Lifeguarding manual.

If the instructor observes adequate skill performance by a participant during skill practice, then that requirement may be marked as completed on the Course Record form. Generally, individual performance, evaluation, and critique of more difficult skills are recommended after the participants have been led through group practice drills. It is not necessary to have a formal skills test at the end of the course separate from the instruction and practice that takes place in each session. The requirements may thus be completed in sequence.

Session IV (requirements 4, 5)

Victim Characteristics (p 90-92)

Victim recognition and characteristics are introduced in Session II, but should be reviewed here. The instructor should continually emphasize that rescue techniques must be adapted to the type of victim. For instance, a throwing rescue is not appropriate for an unconscious subject, and some conscious subjects will be unable to reach for an aid placed close by.

If all elements of Safe Swim Defense are observed, then the probability is small that a rescue will be needed during a unit swim. Even so, a goal of this course is to present safe, effective, comprehensive rescue techniques appropriate for most plausible situations. We start with the simplest: reaching assists.

Reaching Assists (p 94)

Basic reaching rescues as described in the text should be explained, demonstrated, and practiced for requirement 4. At a minimum, all participants should use an arm and a reach pole, at least eight feet in length, from the deck. Additional reaching rescues may be practiced as time allows using towels, paddles, and other devices from out of the water, and an in-water leg extension with the rescuer firmly grasping a ladder, gutter, or other handhold.

Emphasize the following:

- Shore based rescues, of which reaching is the simplest, are preferred over in-water assists, both for speed and safety.
- For small pools, a reach pole may suffice for rescuing all conscious, uninjured subjects.
- Reaching assists only work for unconscious subjects who are within reach of a hand or shepherd's crook, which is a common rescue device provided at hotel and apartment pools.
- The rescuer should be well braced with weight kept low to avoid being pulled into the water.
- The extension should be placed in contact with the subject since some conscious victims will be unable to reach for it. Poles are brought in from the side, not "stabbed" at the victim's chest.
- Clear, concise verbal instructions should be given to the subject in this and all other rescues. The instructor should include instructions to the subject during demonstrations and insist participants provide instructions to subjects during practice and testing.

Throwing Assists (p 95-96)

Ideally, at least one each of the following devices should be available for explanation and demonstration.

- An un-weighted line at least 30 ft in length.
- A home-made buoy using a light line and jug weighted with a small amount of water.
- A commercial throw-bag with floating line.
- A ring buoy with a line attached, preferably without a lemon (see note on lemons in text)
- Various life jackets and other loose flotation devices.

Any of the above devices may be used to satisfy the assist of a subject 25 ft from shore (requirement 5). Ideally, each person should try more than one device, but it is not necessary for everyone to become proficient with all the options. A throw-bag is often the easiest, with a jug on a line also relatively simple. An un-weighted line is

harder and not easy to use without practice. Throw-bags may be used along the deck to keep the line dry for repeat use.

Emphasize the following:

- Throwing devices extend reaching rescues, but are not appropriate for unconscious subjects.
- A float with a line attached is preferred since it offers support and a means to bring the subject to shore, but either a line or a float can be used individually.
- A floating line is preferred. Closely braided line is better than laid line which twists or loosely woven “ski-rope” which lacks flexibility.
- Verbally alert the subject, telling him what to expect and how to respond.
- A line should be thrown such that it rests on the subject’s shoulder since some conscious subjects will be unable to reach for it. If a float is attached, it should be thrown beyond and then pulled into contact with the subject.
- Lines used for guarding a unit swim should be re-coiled just prior to the swim to avoid tangles.
- Confident, accurate use of an un-weighted line requires practice to obtain and maintain proficiency.
- Winds and current may complicate a throwing rescue and necessitate another attempt.
- Control over others in the water needs to be established to prevent them from interfering with the rescue line.

Session V – In-water non-contact rescues for active subjects (requirements 6, 7, 9)

Entries and Approaches (p 100-101)

This topic transitions the class from assists made from out of the water, that is, from a deck, shore, dock, or a boat, to assists made within the water. Rather than throw an aid to a conscious subject, the next option is to swim an aid to that subject. Entries are done with a flotation aid and followed by an approach. Requirement 6 specifies use of the stride jump and compact jump into deep water. Soft objects such as rescue tubes, “noodles,” and boat cushions may be clutched to the chest. Hard objects such as ring buoys or rescue cans should either be held to the side during a stride entry or thrown ahead prior to a compact jump.

Wading (running) and sit-down entries should be described as alternatives to a jump, particularly in shallow water.

For the approach, a crawl, breaststroke or sidestroke is used, modified as necessary to push, pull, or swim on the flotation aid. The participants should practice entries and a short approach swim with different types of rescue aids.

A deliberate pause just prior to reaching the subject is another component of the approach that should be introduced here. Participants will use such a pause during further drills. The pause is done out of reach of the subject and is an opportunity to re-assess the type of rescue needed and to give instructions to the subject. (A ‘quick reverse’ is not needed, that is, changing swimming direction to position the rescuer’s legs toward the subject. The important safety consideration is the distance from the subject.)

Items to emphasize include:

- Entries and approaches should include a pre-determined rescue aid, preferably a buoyant device.
- An easy, universal entry from a pool side or low dock is to quickly sit down and then shove off.
- A stride jump may be made into deep water from heights less than 3 feet.
- Rescue personnel should not be positioned to enter the water from heights greater than 3 feet. (If a person in a high stand needs to enter the water, he/she should first descend to ground level.)
- Devices with lines and straps should be positioned to avoid tripping and entanglement.
- If the water is murky, it is important to keep close watch on the victim during the entry and the approach to allow quick recovery in case of submersion.
- The rescuer should provide encouragement and instruction during the approach and stop short of the subject to re-assess the situation.

Accompanied Rescues (p 102-103)

An accompanied rescue is simply a reliable way of providing an active victim with a flotation aid. The rescuer enters the water with the aid, swims the aid toward the subject, stops short of the subject, commands the subject to ‘grab this’, positions the aid such that it comes into contact with the subject, and then lets go. After the subject has a firm grasp on the aid, the rescuer can make the decision to let the subject move to shore under his/her own power or elect to grasp the aid to tow or push the subject to safety. The instructor should explain,

demonstrate and have the participants practice with a variety of flotation devices such as ring buoys, boat cushions, life jackets with the straps pulled tight, large diameter 'noodles', and rescue tubes. Rescue tubes are a preferred lifeguard device and should be included in this and the following exercises. However, they are not that common at locations where units are likely to swim on their own. For example, ring buoys are more commonly provided at unguarded hotel and apartment pools. Therefore the rescue tube should not be favored in these exercises to the exclusion of other devices.

Items to emphasize include:

- Accompanied rescues with a flotation aid are preferred for active victims over contact rescues with the same device.
- If the subject moves toward the rescuer during the final assessment, the flotation aid should be released and pushed toward the subject's chest as the rescuer backs up.
- If an active subject is unable to reach for the flotation aid, then the rescuer needs to position the device to contact the subject.
- Long narrow flotation aids such as rescue tubes and 'noodles' are best sweep from the side under the subject's arm and across the chest rather than presented point on.
- Clear instructions need to be provided throughout, particularly if the decision is made to tow the victim to safety by pulling on a device already grasped by the subject.
- The procedure will not work for all active victims, for example a person having a seizure.

Session VI – In-water contact rescues for passive subjects. (requirements 8, 9)

Wrist tow without support – front approach (p 104)

The instructor should make it very clear that the focus is now changing from an active victim defined earlier as 'tired', 'distressed', or 'active drowning', to one that is unconscious. Contact with the former presents a risk to the rescuer that is best avoided by using an equipment-based, non-contact rescue. For an unconscious subject, some type of contact is needed to move the person to safety, but risk to the rescuer is minimal.

For an unconscious subject it is still advisable to use certain types of flotation aids if they are available. However, to simplify learning the process, and to cover all likely situations, the participants will first be shown techniques that can either be used alone or in association with those devices. Confusion is avoided if the instructor clearly indicates the use and limitations of each procedure. The first is the wrist tow.

The wrist tow is useful if a rescuer approaches an unconscious subject from the front, regardless of whether the victim is floating face-down at the surface, floating below the surface, or lying on the bottom. The instructor should demonstrate and have participants practice with the subject initially at the surface. A dry-land drill, with participants practicing the grasp and twist is appropriate before they try it in the water.

Safety note: Since the subjects are 'unconscious' they should not resist or struggle. In this and all water contact exercises, the instructor should ask each buddy pair to adopt a prearranged signal, such as multiple taps, to stop the exercise. The rescuer should immediately release a subject who uses the signal.

Items to emphasize and demonstrate include:

- The wrist tow is only used for unconscious subjects.
- An unconscious subject likely needs rescue breathing or CPR.
- An unconscious subject is likely to submerge at any time.
- A prompt rescue is vital.
- When available, emergency medical personnel should be summoned while the rescue is underway, rather than afterwards.
- As always, pause during the approach to shout and splash water on the subject to confirm that the victim is unconscious.
- Reach across the victim, right hand to right, or left to left, as if shaking hands.
- Grasp underneath the subject's wrist with the rescuer's hand palm up with the thumb facing toward the subject.
- The grip is correct if the subject's hand would naturally close over the rescuer's wrist. (Since the subject is unconscious, the potential of the subject grasping the rescuer is not a concern. If the rescuer grasps the top of the subject's wrist to avoid such a possibility, the wrist tow is not as effective since it is more

difficult to keep the subject face-up. *Note: Parenthetical comments such as this are provided for the instructor in case questioned by a participant who learned a technique in a different manner. Generally such information is not intended for general presentation. Too much nonessential detail can be confusing.*)

- Once the grip is established, the rescuer rotates his wrist to bring his thumb up and over, thus rotating the subject face up.
- As the subject is turning face-up, the rescuer immediately begins a strong stroke to plane the subject on the surface.
- The wrist tow allows the rescuer approaching a subject from the front to return in the direction of the approach without having to turn with the subject in tow. However, the rescuer should proceed in whatever direction gets to safety the quickest.
- The tow is continued to safety with both the rescuer's and the subject's arm essentially straight. A side stroke is usually the most effective stroke for towing the victim.
- The grip is not adjusted once made: a slight tension in the arms helps to keep the subject face up.
- For most subjects in calm water, the wrist tow provides a fast means of getting the subject to safety. However, in some situations, such as waves, an armpit tow, to be learned later, may be needed to keep the subject face-up over long distances.

Wrist tow with support – front approach (p 104)

Once the participants are reasonably proficient with the wrist tow by itself, they should be shown how to use it in association with flotation devices such as a rescue tube, a 'noodle', or a foam mattress as explained in the text. Use with a flotation aid is the preferred implementation. Ring buoys and rescue cans should be identified as devices for which the technique is not well suited. A life jacket may be worn by the rescuer during the use of the wrist tow with or without another flotation aid. However, the life jacket would need to be removed to recover a submerged victim in water over a few feet deep.

Emphasize the following when demonstrating and practicing the wrist tow with a flotation aid:

- Pause during the approach to confirm the subject is passive.
- Position the rescue aid sideways between the rescuer and the subject.
- The rescuer holds the aid in the center with one hand and reaches across the aid with the other hand to use a wrist tow to rotate the subject face up.
- As the subject is turning, the rescuer pushes down on the aid, and positions the aid under the subject's back just below the shoulders
- Once the subject is resting face-up on the aid, the rescuer releases the middle of the aid, reaches across the subjects shoulder to grasp the aid on the other side of the subject's chest, and then releases the subject's wrist.
- The subject is then towed to the side or into shallow water, whichever is most likely to result in the quickest removal to allow rescue breathing or CPR.

Armpit tow without support – rear approach (p104-105)

The wrist tow is appropriate if the rescuer approaches the subject from the front. If a rear approach is more expedient, then an armpit tow may be used. The text illustrates a single and a double armpit tow. Generally, the double armpit is more effective at pulling the subject from face down to face up, and should be introduced first. Later, the participants may change to a single armpit tow that allows easier, faster swimming. A land drill can help clarify the technique prior to in-water practice.

Points of emphasis include:

- An armpit tow without a flotation aid is used only for an unconscious subject.
- The technique can be used for subjects at or below the surface.
- An unconscious subject needs quick attention both from rescuers and EMS.
- The tow should be toward the closest point of safety, which may not require turning the subject to return in the direction the rescuer approached.
- The rescuer pauses during the approach to confirm that the subject is passive.
- The rescuer grasps the subject's forearms at the armpit with the fingers underneath and thumbs up and circling the arm.
- The rescuer then leans backwards and begins swimming to bring the subject face up.
- Once the victim is floating at the surface, the rescuer may release one arm if desired.

Armpit tow with support – rear approach (p 105)

Once the participants have tried the armpit tows without equipment, they should be shown a rear approach with flotation devices such as a rescue tube or a 'noodle' as explained in the text. The procedure is now a 'scoop', with the rescuer's arms going under the subject's armpits. Ring buoys should be identified as devices for which the technique is not well suited. A life jacket may be worn by the rescuer during the use of the armpit tow with or without another flotation aid. However, the life jacket would need to be removed to recover a submerged victim in water over a few feet deep.

Points of emphasis include:

- The rescuer pauses during the approach to confirm that the subject is passive.
- The approach is behind the subject with the rescue aid held underneath the rescuer's armpits.
- The rescuer 'scoops' the subject onto the aid by hooking both forearms under the subject's armpits, and grasping the subject's shoulders.
- The easiest way to turn the subject face-up is to roll to the side. That positions the tow to proceed away from the rescuer's entry point.
- The subject may also be turned face-up by pulling back. That positions the tow to proceed back toward the entry point.
- The aid is held in place by being squeezed between the subject's back and the rescuer's chest.
- Once the subject is resting face-up on the aid and the tow is underway, the rescuer may elect to let go with one arm to allow easier, faster swimming.

Vertical Lift (p 106)

The beach drag is shown in the text and should be demonstrated to participants if the facility has a zero-depth entry.

The procedure for a vertical lift is described in the text. For the safety and comfort of the participants, the instructor may wish to pad the pool deck or dock with a non-slip cushion and avoid the use of subjects who are very heavy. During practice, two buddy pairs should work together. One pair acts as rescuer and victim, the other pairs lifts the subject from the water.

The following points should be made during the demonstrations and practice:

- A person without breathing or circulation needs to be safely positioned for rescue breathing or CPR as quickly as possible.
- Rescue breathing may be done in shallow water with multiple rescuers, but CPR requires rigid support.
- As soon as an unconscious person is brought to the edge of a pool or low dock in either shallow or deep water, that person is turned facing the side.
- Two additional rescuers on the shore grasp the subject's upper arms from each side.
- The rescuers crouch by bending the legs and then lift by straightening their legs.
- The rescuers' backs remain vertical during the lift, that is, the rescuers should not bend over at the waist.
- The subject is lifted until the hips are above the edge and then laid carefully on the stomach.
- If necessary, the subject is shifted forward until the legs are clear of the water and then turned face up.
- Once the victim is clear of the water, breathing is checked, and first aid administered.
- In urban settings, EMS should already be on the way.
- If the edge of the pool or dock is too far above the water for an easy vertical lift, then the subject should be moved either to a beach, or into shallow water.
- In shallow water with high vertical access, additional rescuers in the water can lift from below as others lift from above.

(Note: *BSA Lifeguard* training includes the efficient use of a backboard for extraction of a subject. The instructor may elect to demonstrate that procedure. This procedure is not required since backboards are often not accessible at unit swim sites.)

(Note: By crossing the arms, it is possible for one person to lift another such that the subject is rotated in the air and placed into a sitting position on the side. While that procedure is an impressive method for lifting a small child, it can result in injury to a larger subject's back if the person is bent backward over the edge without sufficient height to the lift. In this course, all lifts without a backboard should be done by two rescuers with the subject facing in.)

Discussion of contact rescues for active victims (p 108)

Prior to this stage, if a participant asks whether or not the 'scoop' with a floatation device can be used for an active victim, the instructor should respond that, at the moment, the focus is on contact assists for unconscious subjects, and that non-contact assists are preferred for active subjects. However, the question is valid and will be addressed later.

At this point the instructor should ask the class whether it would ever be advisable to use the 'scoop' procedure for a person who is conscious. If the participants have read the text, they should suggest appropriate circumstances. If they do not, then the instructor should ask how they aid someone in deep water who, though conscious, can't grasp an aid. For example, someone having a seizure or a stroke. That then leads into the recap discussion.

Recap

Now is a good time to review when the participants should use the different options they have been presented.

- Rescues are seldom necessary if Safe Swim Defense measures are used.
- Safe, simple, effective water rescue is feasible at unit swims.
- The distance to safety at backyard, apartment and hotel pools is often very short. The distance to safety in a natural body of water is controlled by defining the extent of the swim area.
- Rescue options should be pre-planned, with the necessary equipment prepared prior to need.
- In addition to advanced planning, effective rescues require on-the-spot victim assessment and selection of an option that fits the circumstances.
- Try reaching and throwing rescues first. If those don't work, then:
- For active subjects, approach with a floatation aid and present it to the subject.
- For conscious subjects unable to grasp an aid, for example, someone having a seizure, then an armpit 'scoop' with floatation aid is indicated.
- If a subject is face down or submerged, EMS should be summoned immediately.
- For unconscious victims at the surface, either the wrist tow or the armpit tow may be used with a slender floatation aid such as a rescue tube or a 'noodle'.
- The wrist tow is used with a front approach, the armpit tow with a rear approach. Ideally, use whichever is faster.
- Some floatation aids, such as a ring buoy, are not easily used for unconscious subjects.
- Some floatation aids are cumbersome if the victim is submerged.
- Both the wrist tow and the armpit tow may be used without a floatation aid if that is the easiest, quickest way to move an unconscious subject to a place where rescue breathing and/or CPR is feasible.
- Removing an unconscious subject from the water may be difficult, and should be pre-planned.

Session VII – Defenses (requirement 10)

Ideally, there should not be a need for participants to escape from a struggling subject. However, mistakes can happen, and practicing the escapes helps provide a margin for error.

The following points are pertinent:

- Review the prearranged signal to be used to stop the escape practice.
- Stay calm.
- If the victim's hold is such that the rescuer is not in distress, and can still move to safety a short distance away, the rescuer may not need to initiate an escape at all.
- If the rescuer does feel threatened, then the primary defense is to go underwater, quickly. A drowning person will not chase a rescuer underwater.
- If a person is grabbed from either the front or the rear, teach the rescuers to **Suck, Tuck, and Duck** as explained and illustrated in the text on pages 108-109.

Session VIII- Line and tender rescue (requirement 11)

A line and tender rescue has often been described in *Safe Swim Defense* literature as a preferred technique for protecting a unit swim. It is also part of Boy Scout rank advancement. On the plus side, the technique requires minimal equipment, is easy to teach, maintains shore contact with the rescuer, and is easily adapted for use

with flotation aids. But there are also some disadvantages to the line and tender procedure. It places two people watching from the same location when cross surveillance might be more effective. It may also slightly limit options for trained rescuers.

Greatest flexibility in response is achieved when the line and tender is considered as one of several options which may be put in place at the same time. If the 1 to 10 ratio of designated rescuers to swimmers requires the use of unit members with little training, then they are good candidates for a line and tender team. Adult leaders who have completed water rescue or lifeguard training probably should not be assigned to such a team, but placed instead where they can readily respond with a flotation aid. For a small group in a small pool, a line and tender team may be omitted if adequate coverage is provided with the use of reaching devices.

The technique is shown in the Safe Swim Defense video, needs to be reviewed for the participants (p 111,112). Each person then practices as both the rescuer and the line tender.

Points to emphasize include:

- The line must remain free of tangles.
- A throw bag is an easy way to maintain the line, but a coil also works.
- For an active subject, the rescuer swims past the subject, then turns to pull the line into the side of the subject.
- The line tender must pull fast enough to support the subject, but not so hard as to jerk the line free.
- The pulling action is the same as that using a line for a throwing assist.
- For an unconscious subject, the rescuer grasps the subject. The wrist tow or armpit tow may be used, but the rescuer may use any firm grasp that keeps the subject's face clear of the water.
- A line is the only necessary piece of equipment, but may be supplemented by a life jacket worn by the rescuer and/or a flotation device to be carried to the subject.
- If a line and tender team is deployed at a unit swim, they should be instructed in the procedure and make a practice run prior to the swim.
- Swimmers should be instructed to avoid the line during a rescue. The emergency action plan should contain a signal to alert the swimmers of a rescue in progress.

Session IX- In-line stabilization (requirement 12)

The requirements call for each participant to perform in-line stabilization in two situations: a face-up subject, and a face-down subject, both in water approximately waist deep. The requirement does not mandate a specific procedure since there are two techniques covered in the text, either of which may be used to satisfy the requirements. The head and chin support technique is not appropriate in all circumstances since it is difficult to use on a face-down victim in very shallow water. The head-splint technique can be used in a wider range of water depth and is generally favored in lifeguard training courses. However, it is purported to be difficult for certain body types and will not work if the victim is missing an arm. The instructor may choose one technique or the other. A combination of the two, such as head and chin support for the face-up subject, and the head split for the face-down subject is possible, but a single procedure is preferred.

Both techniques may also be used in deep water, and the head-splint technique modified for use in very shallow water, but it is not necessary for the participants to show proficiency in those situations. The instructor is expected to adequately cover the basics and to impress upon the participants the seriousness and difficulty of the situation, but is not expected to provide a complete course in all aspects of spinal injury management. The instructor should not take time away from other sessions to cover spinal injury in greater detail than mandated by the requirements. Too many options provided in a short time can be confusing and therefore less effective than teaching the minimum information needed to handle the situations posed in the requirements.

Backboarding is not part of the course since the equipment is seldom available at unit swim sites and sites in an urban setting probably have short EMS response times. Participants should be told to hold in-line stabilization for breathing subjects until care can be transferred to someone with additional training.

The potential for spinal injury is noted in the Session II presentation, but signs and symptoms were not covered. The following points should be presented in this session:

- Head, neck, and spine injuries most commonly occur when people dive into shallow water.
- Diving induced spinal injuries are preventable through education, signage, and supervision.
- The minimum water depth recommended for a head first entry from the side is 7 ft. Pose as question since covered in Safe Swim Defense material.

- Spinal injury should be assumed whenever anyone is observed forcefully hitting the head on the bottom or side.
- If loss of movement is apparent, then in-line stabilization is initiated immediately.
- If the subject is still active, have him/her stop moving and check for symptoms such as pain, tingling or numbness in the limbs, loss of balance, difficulty breathing, or mental confusion. Provide in-line stabilization if indicated.

Points to emphasize for both techniques include:

- EMS is summoned immediately whenever spinal injury is likely.
- In a remote setting, a planned evacuation procedure should be implemented
- Other swimmers need to be directed away from the subject while the rescuer is making the approach.
- Due diligence is taken to avoid causing waves during the entry and approach, but the need for speed and to keep others from disturbing the subject preclude a sluggish response.
- As soon as the subject is face-up with in-line stabilization applied, the subject is checked for breathing.
- If the subject is not breathing, a second rescuer can start rescue breathing in shallow water.
- If the subject has no circulation, then the subject should be pulled up on the beach or otherwise removed from the water. CPR takes precedence over in-line stabilization.

(Note: Some discussions of in-line stabilization don't address the initial position of the subject's arms relative to the type of technique chosen or applied. During practice it is fairly common for participants acting as subjects to position their arms to facilitate the type of in-line stabilization under review, that is, arms along the side for head and chin support and arms forward for the head splint. Demonstrations should be done with the subject floating such that some adjustment of the arms is necessary. Practice subjects should simply be told to float naturally.)

Session X – Testing and Review (requirement 13)

Each section of the text ends with a set of review questions. Exam questions for BSA *Swimming and Water Rescue* are taken from the review questions of Sections I and II beginning on pages 43 and 133. The questions are listed with both a digit and a decimal from N.0 to N.3.

If the question number ends with -.0, that question is on the test. If the question ends with a -.1, -.2, or -.3, then one of those questions is included on the test at the discretion of the instructor. Prior to Session X, the instructor should choose which questions to include and generate a paper copy of the test for each participant. Each participant in the group should receive the same test to facilitate grading and review.

Each test will consist of 50 numbered questions, of which 80%, or 40, must be answered correctly to complete requirement 10. Access to the text or notes is not allowed during the test, nor is collaboration with another person. If a person fails to correctly answer 80% of the questions, then makeup tests may be given until a passing grade is achieved. However, makeup tests must be composed of a different selection from the available questions and must be given at least a day apart.

To make test generation easier, four random sets of questions, A, B, C, D, have been generated and are available for download at www.scouting.org/Home/OutdoorProgram/Aquatics/forms.aspx. Each consists of 4 pages which may be interchanged with any of the others. That is, an instructor may choose A1, B2, C3, and D4 or any of the other 255 combinations. The instructor should choose a different combination for each course.

The intent of the randomized selection from a bank of questions is to prompt the participants to learn the answers to all the questions in the text rather than memorizing a particular sequence of questions from a single exam. With that in mind, the participants are told in the Session II presentation how the tests are generated. They should also be told that they need to read the text and review all the questions at the end of Sections I and II. Many of the questions are covered during the presentations and skill sessions, but not all. If the course is conducted with minimal elapsed time, the texts and reading assignments should be made in advance of the first meeting to allow ample time for study. Alternately, the test may be scheduled at a later date, and perhaps a different place, than the skill instruction to allow time for study.

If scheduling allows, the instructor may choose to review all the questions on pages 43-45 and 135-141 with participants prior to the test. A master answer sheet is available for download at www.scouting.org/Home/OutdoorProgram/Aquatics/forms.aspx.

The instructor may grade each test as it is turned in, or allow each person to grade their own during a group review. Regardless, the participants need to know which questions were missed so they do not leave with incorrect information. The instructor should keep the written tests for three years as a record of the participants' performance. However, copies may be returned to the participants since the test questions are not secret.

If a learning disability precludes a participant's success on the initial written test, then a make-up test may be given orally. If that is done, the instructor should mark the participant's answers on a copy of the test, and ask the participant to sign it after completion.

Session XI – Optional Safe Area Setup

If the course is held with access to a natural body of water, for example at a summer camp, then the instructor is encouraged to provide an optional opportunity for participants to establish a safe swim area. Combining the exercise with a course completion party, complete with hot dogs, watermelon, or the like, could be an inducement. The instructor should select an appropriate area in advance and provide materials that would likely comprise a unit's safe swim kit. Ideally, the area should not be too 'perfect'. The goal is for the group to gain realistic experience checking for hazards and designating areas for ability groups. The exercise should be under group leadership rather than directed by the instructor. Unless there is a safety issue, the instructor should reserve comment and review until the setup is completed. **Note: All aspects of Safe Swim Defense must be observed during the exercise.**

Session XIII – Snorkeling, BSA Option

BSA *Snorkeling Safety* guidelines state that unit snorkeling activities in open water must be supervised by someone with at least the skills and knowledge demonstrated by earning the *Snorkeling, BSA* award. The *Swimming and Water Rescue* course does not cover snorkeling skills. Therefore leaders preparing for a unit snorkeling activity may appreciate the option of a *Snorkeling, BSA* module. Such an option will add approximately two hours. Requirements, resources, and instructor credentials for *Snorkeling, BSA* are found in the *Aquatics Supervision* text. Those completing the option qualify for a *Snorkeling, BSA* card and patch.

Equipment Lists:

Each participant should bring:

- Signed health history
- Dry clothes
- Swimsuit
- Towel
- Sunscreen (if outdoors)
- Pen or pencil

The instructor should provide each participant with:

- Name tag
- Aquatics Supervision text
- Written exam
- Course evaluation form
- Course completion card
- Patch (optional)
- Safe Swim Defense card (optional)

The instructor should have:

- A course record form
- A copy of the instructor guide
- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation
- Extra health history forms

The classroom should have:

- Chairs and tables
- A computer projection system & DVD player (or overhead projector and screen)
- Flip charts, or dry erase boards, with markers for each break-out group in Session II
- Extra writing materials
- Easy access to first aid kit & emergency communication

The swim area must have at least one each:

- Reach pole (min 8 ft in length)
- Throw bag (for throwing & line and tender)
- Sample flotation device (e.g. ring buoy, cushion, 'noodle')
- Rescue tube
- Dive brick or other 10 lb object to recover
- First aid kit and emergency communication

The swim area should have one or more:

- Extras of the required items
- Reach pole with Shepard's Crook
- Home-made throw jug
- Ring buoy with line attached
- Various types of life jackets
- Several common flotation devices
- Commercial ear solution

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BSA Swimming and Water Rescue **Application for Instructor Classification**

Applicant's Name: _____ Age: _____ (≥18)

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

BSA registration as: _____

Current *BSA Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue* training is required.

Expiration: _____ Name of issuing instructor: _____

If approved as a *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue Instructor*, I agree to abide by the policies, standards, and guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America when serving as an instructor.

Applicant's signature _____ Date: _____

The applicant must first serve as an assistant instructor for a *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue* course under the tutelage of a current instructor. The signature of the supervising instructor confirms attendance at all sessions and satisfactory performance as an assistant.

_____/_____
Name of supervising instructor Signature & date

Service as an assistant instructor may be waived if the applicant satisfies the criteria outlined on the back of this application.

Qualification for exception: _____

The applicant must then serve as a provisional instructor for a *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue* course under the supervision of a current instructor who serves as an assistant. The signature of the supervising instructor confirms attendance at all sessions and satisfactory performance as the lead instructor.

_____/_____
Name of supervising instructor Signature & date

The local council must approve all applicants for *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue Instructor*, as indicated by the signature of the council Scout Executive or his/her designee.

_____/_____
Title of Council representative Signature & date

The application for classification as a *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue Instructor* is approved once the required signatures are affixed. The classification is valid for three years from the date of the last signature. Copies of the completed application should be kept by both the applicant and the council.

BSA Swimming and Water Rescue **Information for Instructor Classification**

Requirements:

To conduct training for *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue*, a person must be recognized as either:

- A *BSA Aquatics Instructor*
- A *BSA Lifeguard Instructor*
- A *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue Instructor*

To qualify as a *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue Instructor*, a person must

- Be registered as a member of the Boy Scouts of America
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Have a signed completion card that confirms current training in *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue*
- Assist a current instructor in conducting a *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue* training course for at least four participants who are not challenging the course requirements. The applicant must attend all sessions.
- As a 'provisional' instructor assisted by a current instructor, conduct a *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue* training course for at least four participants who are not challenging the course requirements.
- Agree to follow the policies and guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America.
- Have local council approval.

Duration:

- Designation as *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue Instructor* is valid for three years from the date of a completed application.
- Co-instructors of a *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue* training course may sign application forms for one another whenever a valid Course Record sheet is completed. The intent is for instructors to renew the instructor rating by co-teaching with another instructor.
- A council may revoke an instructor rating at any time.

Credit for previous experience:

A person may be excused from serving as a course assistant under the circumstances given below. That person must still have current training in *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue*, which may be obtained by challenging the requirements. Conduct of a course as a 'provisional' instructor with a current instructor as an assistant is still required.

Service as an assistant instructor may be waived if the applicant:

- Has expired training within the last three years as a *BSA Aquatics Instructor*, a *BSA Lifeguard Instructor*, a *BSA Lifeguard Counselor*, or a *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue Instructor*.
- Has taught swimming or lifesaving as an aquatics staff member at a BSA Boy Scout summer camp for at least four weeks within the last three years.
- Has current training as an American Red Cross *Water Safety Instructor* or *Lifeguard Instructor*.
- Is certified as a scuba instructor by an agency recognized in the BSA policy on scuba.

Jump-starting a council training program for *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue* is easier if the council has at least one person with training as a *BSA Aquatics Instructor* from a BSA National Camping School. The aquatics director at a Boy Scout summer camp should be so qualified. Councils are also encouraged to form a local Aquatics Committee, as recommended by the National Council, and to arrange for key volunteers to attend the Aquatics Section of National Camping School, even if they do not serve as a summer camp staff member. In the event that a council has neither a *BSA Aquatics Instructor* nor a *BSA Lifeguard Instructor* to initiate training of *Swimming and Water Rescue Instructors*, the council may grant *BSA Swimming and Water Rescue Instructor* status to a person who is both an experienced BSA volunteer and an American Red Cross Lifeguard Instructor. In that event, the council should make sure that person has access to and follows the *Swimming and Water Rescue Instructor Guide* from which this application is taken.

BSA Swimming and Water Rescue Course Record

Instructor Names

Instructor Qualification Expiration

Council Approval by

Date

Course Location

Course Dates

Participant Name	1.a age	1.b health review	1.c Safe Swim Defense	2.a swimmer test	2.b weight recovery	3. beginner test admin	3. swimmer test admin	4. reaching assists	5. throwing assists	6. stride jump	6. compact jump	7. accompanied rescue	8.a wrist tow	8.b armpit tow	8.c subject removal	9. use of flotation aids	10.a front hold escape	10.b rear hold escape	11. tender - line rescue	11. swimmer – line rescue	12.a face-up stabilization	12.b face-down stabil.	13. exam score	Card Issued (yes/no)
1																								
2																								
3																								
4																								
5																								
6																								
7																								
8																								
9																								
10																								

Use multiple sheets as required. Instructor qualification should be: Aquatics Instructor BSA, BSA Lifeguard Instructor, BSA S&WR Instructor, or instructor trainee. Participation in the Safe Swim Defense discussion and exercise is required unless previous experience allows the person to challenge the other requirements.

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Swimming and Water Rescue Course Evaluation

Course location _____ Instructor _____ Date _____

A. Would you recommend this course to other BSA leaders? Yes _____ No _____

B. What presentation, information, or activity in this course was most useful, interesting, helpful, and/or informative to you in your preparation to lead unit swimming events? Why?

C. What presentation, information, or activity in this course was least useful, interesting, helpful, and/or informative to you in your preparation to lead unit swimming events? Why?

D. To what subjects or skills should more time be given? (Rank by priority.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

E. What was most enjoyable about your experience? _____

F. What aspects of the course bothered or disappointed you? _____

G. Please provide any thoughts you have on how to improve the course, including material in the text, the scheduling, the physical arrangements, and/or the instructors' presentation styles.

Comments: _____

Name (optional) _____

*Thanks for
your input!*