



# Training Outline



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA.®



# SAFETY AFLOAT TRAINING OUTLINE

## Introduction

Safety Afloat training is intended for use with Scouts and Scouters in a variety of situations. It should be offered to leaders at summer camp. Training in Safety Afloat and BSA Paddle Craft Safety may be conducted jointly at summer camp. Those seeking only Safety Afloat training attend only the discussion section. Those seeking Paddle Craft Safety training also attend the skill sessions.

The training also can be conducted in connection with any Boy Scouts of America training program for Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or Venturing leaders. It should be included in the outdoor session of Scout-mastership Fundamentals, can be included in Boy Scout Leader Wood Badge, and can be offered in connection with other supplemental training programs.

It is suggested that the training last about 50 minutes. More time might be needed if the session includes a demonstration. The intended audience includes adult Scouters and junior leaders.

Leaders may complete online training in Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat at MyScouting at [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org).

A complete and official statement of the Safety Afloat plan can be found in Aquatics Supervision No. 34346. Copies of Safety Afloat may be downloaded from the Guide to Safe Scouting, available online at [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org).

## Learning Objectives

At the end of this session, each participant should be able to

- Understand and appreciate the most important and essential elements of aquatics safety—supervision and discipline.
- Explain the distinct contribution of each of the nine points of the Safety Afloat program and how each helps assure safe unit activity afloat.
- Judge his or her readiness to conduct a safe activity afloat.
- Identify resources for the skill training needed for activities afloat.

## Materials Needed

Aquatics Supervision: A leaders guide to swimming and boating activities, No. 34346.

Safety Afloat guide, No. 34368; one per participant

Safety Afloat pocket card, No. 34242; one per participant

### Life Jackets for Demonstration

Type II, No. 01596

Type III, No. 01592

### Throwing Devices

Type IV, buoyant cushion, No. 00154; ring buoy, No. 01138; throw bag

## Other Resources

Safe Swim Defense, No. 34370

Fieldbook, No. 33104

Merit badge pamphlets: *Canoeing*, No. 33305B; *Rowing*, No. 33404; *Small-Boat Sailing*, No. 33356A; *Whitewater*, No. 33405B, and *Motorboating*, No. 33345

Annual Health and Medical Record, No. 34605

Local Tour Permit Application, No. 34426

Sample unit float plan, reproduced from page 6

Float trip buddy board ideas, actual items, or reproduced from page 7

Canoeing and boating guides and maps of local waters

Boat or canoe equipped for demonstration

## Who Can Instruct This Training?

This training can be given by any person authorized by the council, including a BSA Aquatics resource person, a unit leader with aquatics skill, or any other person with aquatic knowledge or experience that has been approved by the local council. The council may assign oversight of instructors to a local aquatics committee. Each instructor should review Safety Afloat material in *Aquatics Supervision* and complete online training in Safety Afloat prior to conducting the training.

## The Problem

Invite the participants to relate their personal experiences with accidents or near-misses while afloat. Supplement their accounts with examples of actual incidents (news items, personal experiences, accident reports, etc.). Conclude the opening discussion with statistics reflecting Scouting's experience with boating and boating-related accidents.

## The Response

The Safety Afloat program has been developed by the BSA to promote boating and boating safety and to set standards for safe unit activity afloat.

## The Policy

Explain that before a BSA group may engage in any excursion, expedition, or trip on the water (canoe, raft, sailboat, sailboard, motorboat, rowboat, tube, or other watercraft), adult leaders for such activities should have an appreciation for the potential hazards they could encounter and should take steps to reduce those risks. The nine points of Safety Afloat have been established by the Boy Scouts of America in an effort to reduce potential hazards.

Distribute a copy of the Safety Afloat flier to each participant. Explain that each of the nine points will be reviewed in detail.

## Safe Swim Defense

Display a copy of the Safe Swim Defense leaflet. Explain that the Safety Afloat plan parallels the successful approach of the highly regarded Safe Swim Defense, which has given the BSA one of the best water-safety records of any youth organization.

Note that several Safety Afloat elements—probably the most important—also are found in the Safe Swim Defense: supervision, discipline, swimming ability, physical fitness, and the buddy system.

## **Qualified Supervision and Discipline**

Ask the participants to note the first and last points of the plan—qualified supervision and discipline. These are the most important points of the plan because the effectiveness of the others depends upon these two. The fact that they are the first and last points of the list is symbolic, for they hold the plan together.

The first point recognizes that youth of Scouting age who are having fun with friends in or on the water are not likely to be concerned about their own health and safety. Even if concerned, usually they are not able to protect themselves fully. For this reason, qualified adult supervision is the first and most important element of Safety Afloat.

Explain that when serious accidents happen in Scout aquatics, they usually involve a lack of supervision and discipline. If boating activity is not supervised by a conscientious adult who has the attention and respect of the children in his or her care, accidents could occur. Safety can be virtually assured if there is a caring adult who understands and appreciates the responsibility for children in or around the water, and who has the control and respect of the children so that his or her directions will be followed.

All Scout boating activity must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who understands and knowingly accepts his or her responsibility for the well-being and safety of the children in his or her care, is experienced in the water and confident of his or her ability to respond in the event of an emergency, and is trained in and committed to compliance with the nine points of BSA Safety Afloat. The importance of this supervision requirement, and the closely allied need for discipline, i.e., control of the activity, cannot be overemphasized. A responsible and conscientious supervisor knows his or her own limits, and will not put children at risk by permitting activity that could exceed his or her own ability to control and respond if an emergency does arise.

Emphasize that for supervision to be effective, there must be discipline. All participants in an activity afloat should know, understand, and follow the safety rules and procedures. Discipline means that all do their part to ensure that the rules are fairly and impartially applied and followed. Involving Scouts in all of the details of planning a trip afloat is a good way to promote cooperation and discipline.

Review and discuss points 1 and 9. Include situations where the unit leader can utilize the expertise of others, such as whitewater guides.

## **Personal Health Review**

Point out that when accidents do occur in aquatics, they frequently are caused by unknown physical conditions or the unexpected result of some known physical problem. Activity afloat, like swimming, requires that the person in charge know the physical condition of all those for whom he or she is responsible. Good safety requires an understanding of the risks or hazards of any individual conditions.

Review and discuss the text of point 2. Display and discuss the Annual Health and Medical Record. Parts A and C are required for all unit activities. Discuss activities for which the height-weight criteria apply. Part B is required for any event longer than 72 hours or more than 30 minutes away from ground transportation. Note that leader cardiac problems are the leading cause of death during Scouting activities.

## Swimming Ability

Point out that the best protection on the water is the ability to swim. Review and discuss the text of point 3. The swimmer test demonstrates the minimum level of swimming ability required for safe deepwater swimming. (Refer to *Aquatics Supervision* for guidelines on conducting swim classification tests.)

## Personal Flotation Devices (Life Jackets)

Review and discuss the text of point 4. Display the types of life jackets generally recommended for Scouting activities. Explain the features and uses of each. Point out that life jackets must be U.S. Coast Guard–approved and that damaged PFDs are no longer approved. Demonstrate and explain how to fit and wear PFD Types II and III and how to use and throw Type IV. Emphasize that life jackets are effective only when worn, and that they should be worn at all times when aboard canoes, rafts, kayaks, and other small watercraft.

## Buddy System

Anyone who goes in or on the water alone is foolish! Point out that there is a buddy system for activity afloat just as there is for swimming. No one goes boating alone. Every craft has a buddy boat on the water for activities with multiple boats. The buddy boat, just like an individual buddy, is there to give assistance when needed.

Review and discuss point 5, “Buddy System.”

## Skill Proficiency

Explain that watercraft handling skills are essential to safety as well as the enjoyment of on-the-water activity and stress the importance of skill proficiency in all boating activities. Display BSA materials with skill content, such as *Aquatics Supervision*, merit badge pamphlets and the BSA *Fieldbook*. Discuss BSA Paddle Craft Safety training and local implementation of that program. Review other training options as discussed in *Aquatics Supervision*, including where and how training in these activities can be obtained. Note differences between flat water, moving water, and whitewater skills and experience.

Review and discuss point 6, “Skill Proficiency.”

## Planning

Plan ahead for safety! Point out that good planning consists of living the event in advance. Think of the problems that could develop and be prepared for each.

Review and discuss point 7. Display guidebooks and maps of local waterways. Distribute and review a sample float plan.

Remind the participants that weather is an important factor in trip planning and protection. Discuss sources of weather information for the local area: both forecasts for planning and weather alerts during a trip. Refer participants to online weather hazards training available through My Scouting.

Display a Local Tour Permit and note the space used to confirm Safety Afloat and CPR training.

Explain that the float plan filed with the local council service center for trips on running water is not the tour permit. A float plan should be filed in addition to any tour permit that might be required.

*For Cub Scouts:* Cub Scout canoeing, kayaking, and rafting do not include “trips” or “expeditions” and are 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 gives the council a chance to review the plan and advise the leader of any special river conditions. Share a copy of the float plan with parents, and leave a copy with a member of the unit committee. Be sure to close the float plan when you have returned.

## **Equipment**

Review and discuss the text of point 8. Display and explain the type of equipment most commonly used and available in the local area. Include a description of repair materials that should be carried. Reference: *Aquatics Supervision*, *Canoeing* merit badge pamphlet, and the *Fieldbook*.

## **Video Options**

The instructor may use a computer presentation and projection system as an aid to discussing the above material. The presentation included with the instructor material for BSA Paddle Craft Safety is appropriate. If a computer presentation is used, it should promote discussion by participants.

## **Demonstration of Watercraft Handling Skills**

Safety Afloat commitment training is designed to instill awareness of important safety guidelines; not to impart the skills needed to follow those guidelines. BSA Paddle Craft Safety fills that training need for canoeing or kayaking. However, if time permits, a short demonstration of boating techniques may be added to supplement the training.

## **Conclusion and Commitment**

Conclude the session with a statement about the importance of protecting youth and adults engaged in activity afloat. Request an individual commitment to the principles of Safety Afloat, distribute the signed pocket cards, and thank the participants for their interest and attention. Note that the training is valid for two years.

TROOP 102  
FIRST METHODIST CHURCH  
BEDFORD, TEXAS 76025

MAY 15-16, 2010

ADULT LEADERSHIP:

WILLIAM EVERSOLE- SCOUTMASTER- 2216 JONES STREET  
BEDFORD, TX 817-555-4416 AGE: 48

CLYDE THORNTON - PARENT OF TROOP MEMBER 1588 SMITH ST.  
BEDFORD, TX. 817-555-6611

PARTICIPATING SCOUTS:

EDWARDS, DAVID	555-2381	MILLS, DEWEY	555-3999
EVERSOLE, MIKE	555-4416	OWENS, PETE	555-5521
GRIPPEY, STEVE	555-7928	REED, KEVIN	555-8002
KNIGHT, JOHN	555-6321	REED, THOMAS	555-8002
MARTIN, BRUCE	555-5871	THORNTON CHRIS	555-6611

SHUTTLE DRIVERS: KAREN EVERSOLE, TERRY THORNTON

TRANSPORTATION: CHURCH VAN, TX-9058; PICKUP W/CREW CAB, TX-7675;  
CANOE TRAILER, TX-6561

EQUIPMENT: 6 CANOES - 15 PADDLES - 12 PFD'S - 6 THROW BAGS  
OVERNIGHT CAMPING GEAR AND PROVISIONS  
FOR 2 PATROLS

CELL PHONES FOR EMERGENCY CONTACT -  
WEATHER RADIO

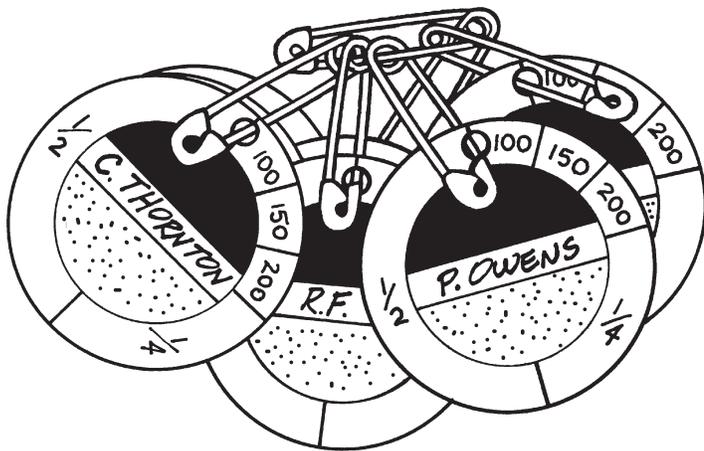
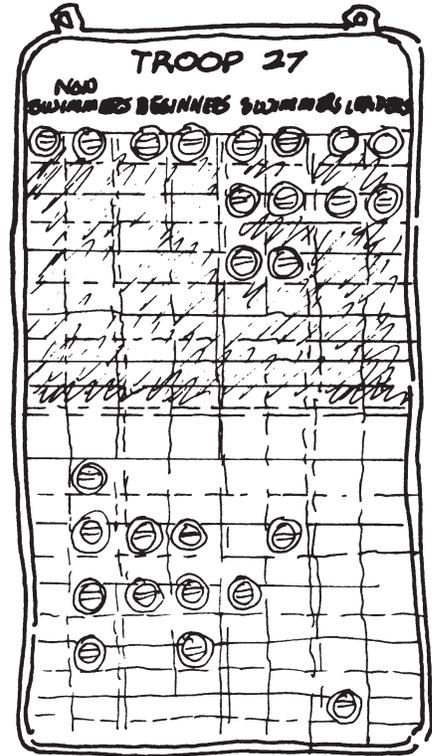
PLAN: FLOAT DOWN BRAZOS RIVER IN PALO PINTO COUNTY - 17 MILES  
LEAVE 1ST METHODIST CHURCH - 8:00 AM SAT. MAY 15  
PUT IN - HWY 16 CROSSING - 10:30 AM SAT. MAY 15  
OVERNITE CAMP - CARSON'S LEDGE @ MILE 8 - PERMIT ISSUED  
BY THE BRAZOS RIVER AUTHORITY. ALTERNATE  
TAKEOUT - EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS  
PULL OUT - WORTH RANCH - 3:30 PM - SUN. MAY 16  
ARRIVE 1ST METHODIST CHURCH - 6:00 PM - SUN. MAY 16

IN EMERGENCY CONTACT KAREN EVERSOLE 817-555-4432 - CELL

# Float Trip Buddy Tag Ideas

## Portable Plastic Buddy Board

The portable buddy board shown here can be made and used by units at all aquatics activities. The top section, used for the actual check-in procedure, can be constructed of red oilcloth or colored plastic. The bottom or tag-storage section is made of clear plastic. Clear plastic pockets are then sewn on both sections to enable easy reading of tags. Adaptable to all surroundings, this board can be fastened to a wall at the YMCA pool, a fence at the city pool, or a tree at the unit swimming hole. To carry, fold lengthwise down the center and carefully roll from bottom to keep tags in place.



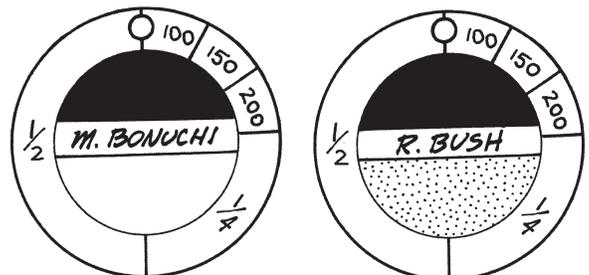
## Safety Pin Buddy Tag Cluster

For a float trip, an easy and inexpensive method to keep track of buddies in boats is to use safety pins. You need a safety pin for each canoe, boat, or raft plus two more. Clip buddy tags together on each safety pin representing one craft. Slip all of the pins onto a "master" pin to keep the group together. Add one more safety pin that can be used to attach the entire cluster to the leader's PFD, available for easy reference while on the water!

Buddy Tag, No. 01595—Print name in center with waterproof ink. Use red and blue permanent marking pens to identify swimming classification.

## Swimming Classification and Record

- Nonswimmer—plain white
- Beginner—color top semicircle red
- Swimmer—color top semicircle red and lower semicircle blue









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