




AQUANAUT



RATIONALE FOR ADVENTURE

This adventure will introduce Webelos Scouts to the key principles of aquatics safety as they develop their swimming and boating skills.

TAKEAWAYS FOR CUB SCOUTS

- Improving water safety knowledge
- Developing aquatics skills
- A Scout is obedient. 

ADVENTURE REQUIREMENTS

Webelos Handbook, page 228

Complete 1–5 and any two from 6–10.

1. State the safety precautions you need to take before doing any water activity.
2. Recognize the purpose and the three classifications of swimming ability groups in Scouting.
3. Discuss the importance of learning the skills you need to know before going boating.
4. Explain the meaning of “order of rescue” and demonstrate the reach and throw rescue techniques from land.
5. Attempt the BSA swimmer test.
6. Demonstrate the precautions you must take before attempting to dive headfirst into the water, and attempt a front surface dive.
7. Learn and demonstrate two of the following strokes: crawl, sidestroke, breaststroke, or elementary backstroke.
8. Invite a member or former member of a lifeguard team, rescue squad, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, or other armed forces branch who has had swimming and rescue training to your den meeting. Find out what training and other experiences this person has had.
9. Demonstrate how to correctly fasten a life jacket that is the right size for you. Jump into water over your head. Show how the life jacket helps keep your head above water by swimming 25 feet. Get out of the water, remove the life jacket and hang it where it will dry.
10. If you are a qualified swimmer, select a paddle of the proper size and paddle a canoe with an adult’s supervision.

NOTES TO DEN LEADER

An overview of BSA swimming and water activities is included in the Appendix. In preparation for any in-water activity, you should complete the BSA online training for Safe Swim Defense. This training outlines how to help lead a safe swimming activity with a Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, or Venturing crew. The training is available at www.myscouting.org.

You may find parts of this adventure easier to complete at a BSA day camp or Cub Scout resident camp with access to qualified swimming instruction and boating resources.

The den outing (Meeting 3) should be planned at a pool or swimming area with qualified supervision. Confirm the outing plan with families, including transportation, all the necessary clothing, and any additional items they need to bring. Make sure a tour and activity plan has been submitted, if required, and activity consent forms are distributed, signed, and collected.

Because this is primarily a water adventure, a den may opt to do one meeting at its usual meeting place and then the second meeting and outing at a pool or swimming area to give the boys extra practice in the water. Meeting 2 will include a visit from someone who has served as a member of a lifeguard team, rescue squad, or armed forces division with swimming and rescue training. Make arrangements for the visitor in advance, and prepare thank-you notes from the Scouts.

See the Appendix for optional den meeting activities, including openings, gatherings, and closings.

Although we have tried to make this elective fun, it is very important that the Webelos Scouts understand the importance of the safety required when they are around water.

MEETING 1 PLAN

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- U.S. and den flags
- Whistle for den leader
- Life jackets to try on—at least two youth sizes are needed, but others of various sizes should be on hand if some boys are much larger or smaller than the rest of the group. **Note:** If you are unable to find someone in your pack with life jackets, contact a local Boy Scout troop, your council aquatics committee, an outdoor sporting goods store, or a local parks and recreation department to see if you can borrow several from them.
- Items for Penny Toss (Gathering): dishpan or similar container, plastic lids from coffee cans, pennies (10 for each Scout)
- Words to the “Aquanaut Adventure” song (Opening), written in large print on a poster board
- Items for Swimming Ability Round-Robins (Activity 2):
 - Three large signs: “Nonswimmer,” “Beginner,” “Swimmer”
 - Swim tags and buddy tag board
 - Two jacket hangers
 - Four sets of swimming stroke cards for each team
 - Four small containers for each team (to hold the cards)
- Items for Aquanaut Uncovered Game (Activity 3):
 - Table
 - Two plastic squeak toys
 - Aquanaut Game Questions (see examples in Activity 3)
- 3-foot sections of rope (one per Scout) for Closing
- Thank-you notes that Scouts can sign in advance for their Meeting 2 guest(s) and anyone who will be helping with the Meeting 3 den outing

GATHERING: PENNY TOSS

- Fill a dishpan or other container with water. Float two plastic coffee can lids on top of the water. Give each Scout 10 pennies. Have Scouts stand back and throw their pennies to see how many can land on the lids without sinking them.

OPENING

- Conduct a flag ceremony of your choosing that includes the Pledge of Allegiance and, as appropriate, the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

- Sing the “Aquanaut Adventure” song (tune: “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”) or an aquatics-themed song of your choice.

*Aquanaut adventure,
Lots to learn and do,
Buddy checks and swimming tests,
I’m ready—how ’bout you?*

TALK TIME

- Carry out business items for the den.
- Allow time for sharing among Webelos Scouts.
- Introduce the Aquanaut adventure to the den. Build interest by describing the goals of the adventure and some of the activities that are planned.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Activity 1: Fitness Circle Exercise

- Gather all the Scouts in a circle, facing the same direction. They should be careful to avoid contact with each other. Then give a series of instructions:
 - Start walking in a circle and keep walking between these exercises.
 - Start hopping.
 - Make yourself as small as possible.
 - Make yourself as tall as possible and keep walking. Reach your hands over your head.
 - Bend your knees slightly, grasp your ankles, and continue walking.
 - Walk as if the heel of one foot and the toes of the other foot were sore.
 - Walk stiff-legged.
 - Squat down and jump forward from that position without bumping into others.
 - Walk on your hands and on one foot with the other foot held high, like a lame dog (if space allows).
 - Walk forward at a rapid pace (don’t run) while swinging arms vigorously.
 - Take giant steps at a regular pace.
 - Walk forward, raising your knees as high as possible with each step.
 - Jog, lifting your knees high.
 - Walk on both hands and feet.
 - Stop, stand up, and walk backward.
 - Stop.
- Ask the Scouts how they feel after the exercise. Help them recognize that physical exercise can be fun as well as good for getting the body warmed up before aquatics activities.

◆ Activity 2: Swimming Ability Round-Robins (Requirement 2)

- Divide the den into buddy pairs; allow one group of three if you have an uneven number of Scouts.
- Give out swim tags and have the Scouts write their names on them. Explain the use of the tags. Post a buddy tag board so the boys can hang their tags there as they would in an actual swimming area.
- Divide the room into three swimming ability areas: nonswimmer, beginner, and swimmer. Each of these areas will be a “training” station. Explain to the Scouts how the round-robin will work. Remind them to move with their buddies when they move to each station (see Meeting 1 Resources).
- After the Scouts have visited all the stations, bring them back together and briefly review what they just experienced and learned. Explain that they will use what they learned in the next activity.

◆ Activity 3: Aquanaut Uncovered Game (Requirement 1)

- Set up the game area before the meeting starts. You will need a table and two squeak toys to use as buzzers.
- Divide the Scouts into two teams lined up behind either side of the table. Give each team a buzzer and have them do a practice run. Tell them that the first team to buzz when you signal “go” gets to answer a question about water safety precautions (see Meeting 1 Resources). The team member whose turn it is may answer the question on his own or consult with his team. When his turn is done, he goes to the back of the line and the next Scout gets a turn.
- Here are some sample questions:
 - Can you name two swimming strokes?
 - What are the three classifications of swimming ability groups?
 - What is the proper way to wear a life jacket?
 - Name three safety precautions you need to take during swimming activities.

CLOSING: SQUARE KNOT CIRCLE

- Give each Scout a 3-foot section of rope. Have them tie their ropes together with square knots to form a complete circle. Then they lean back carefully to form a taut circle.
- Tell them: *In our den we rely on each other for support and help. We are all part of a group held together by the square knot. If one knot was not tied, the circle would not be formed. The same goes for our buddies when we are in and around water. We rely on each other for support then, just as we do at all other times.*

AFTER THE MEETING

- Serve refreshments, if desired.
- Work together to clean up the meeting place.
- Record completion of requirements 1 and 2.
- Confirm plans for a guest at Meeting 2. Identify pack leaders or parents who are experienced boaters or who know of any lifeguards or water safety and swimming instructors to invite. Boy Scouts or troop leaders in your area could assist in the demonstration and help present aquatics information at the meeting.
- Have Scouts sign thank-you notes for their guest(s) in advance.

MEETING 1 RESOURCES

ACTIVITIES

Activity 2: Swimming Ability Round-Robins (Requirement 2)

- The round-robin method is an effective way to teach important concepts, and to do hands-on activities. You will set up three stations and make sure you have adults or Boy Scouts to help lead the activity at each station.
- Have each group of Scouts spend at least seven to 10 minutes at each area. As the leader, you will need a whistle. At the end of each session, call a buddy check, and then have the Scouts move to their next station.
- Send the Scouts to each station as a den—unless you have a large den and dividing them in two will allow them to do the relays or games at each station.

Nonswimmer Station

- Explain to the Scouts that the nonswimmer classification is for those who have not completed the beginner or swimmer test. The nonswimmer area should be no more than waist to chest deep and should be enclosed by physical boundaries such as the shore, a pier, or lines.

- The enclosed beginner area should contain water of standing depth and may extend to depths just over the head.
- The swimmer area may be up to 12 feet in depth in clear water and should be defined by floats or other markers. The Scouts at this station will work on different swimming strokes. Demonstrate how to do the crawl, sidestroke, breaststroke, and elementary backstroke.
- When the Scouts have finished learning the strokes, have some fun:
 - Put pieces of paper with the different swimming strokes they just learned in a hat. A Scout will pick one and demonstrate the swimming stroke. Have the other Scouts guess which one it is. The Scout who guesses correctly gets to go next.
 - Now do a swimming stroke relay. Write each of the strokes (crawl, sidestroke, breaststroke, and elementary backstroke) on an index card. Make duplicate sets of cards for each team and put each card in a small container. Set a start line and finish line, spacing each team's four containers between the lines. On "go" a Scout on each team runs to the first container, takes the card, and demonstrates that swimming stroke. When his team has identified the swimming stroke, he moves on to the next container and so on until he has demonstrated all four strokes and reached the finish line. Then the next Scout on his team can go. The first team to complete the relay wins.

Beginner Station

- Explain to Scouts that to be a beginner, they must jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth, level off, and swim 25 feet on the surface. Then they must stop, turn sharply, resume swimming, and return to the starting place.
- Scouts at this station will learn about life jackets and the proper way to wear and use one. Demonstrate this, and then have each Scout do the same and show how to check their buddy to make sure his fits correctly.
- Divide Scouts into two teams and hang a life jacket on a hanger for each team. A Scout puts it on, fastens it, hops to a certain place, then turns around and walks backward to the finish line. Once there, he removes the life jacket, runs back, and gives it to next Scout. The team that finishes first wins.

Swimmer Station

- 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: crawl, sidestroke, breaststroke, or elementary (resting) backstroke; 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.
- In this station, review the safety precautions for engaging in water activities:
 - Be physically fit.
 - Have a qualified adult present whenever you swim.
 - Swim in areas that have already been checked for safe swimming.
 - If you can't swim, don't go in water that is more than 3½ feet deep. Enter deep water only if you are a good swimmer.
 - Swim with a buddy.
 - Obey the rules of the swimming area.
- Options: a) Write the sentences out and have buddy pairs take turns telling the group what one or more of the precautions means in their own words; b) Give each buddy pair the words to one of the precautions and then put those words in order to create the sentence (this can be a relay); c) Have each buddy pair act out a precaution for the group.

MEETING 2 PLAN

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- U.S. and den flags
- Signed thank-you notes for guest(s)
- Items for Duck Races (Gathering): two metal rain gutters—or one long, large PVC pipe cut down the middle with caps on either end; two picnic tables; two rubber ducks; water guns (one per Scout)
- Life jackets
- Index cards for Activities 1 and 2
- Water, four buckets, and two sponges for Activity 3
- If guests are attending, any special preparations or planning required

GATHERING: DUCK RACES

- This game must be done outside and requires some setup, but it is lots of fun! Pour water into the two rain gutters or the cut PVC pipe, setting them on two picnic tables or a level field. Put a small rubber duck at the far end of each gutter.
- Divide the den into two teams lined up at each gutter. Using water guns, Scouts aim at their rubber duck and shoot water to make it travel along the gutter. The team whose duck finishes first wins.

OPENING

- Conduct a flag ceremony of your choosing that includes the Pledge of Allegiance and, as appropriate, the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Talk about the Boy Scout motto as it relates to water activities. Have the Scouts say the motto in unison. Scouts need to “Be Prepared” when near water with their buddies, life jackets, ability groups, etc.

TALK TIME (REQUIREMENT 8)

- Carry out business items for the den.
- Allow time for sharing among Webelos Scouts.
- Introduce any special guest(s) to the Scouts. Invite guests to share their experiences or information and allow time for Scouts to ask questions. If guests are open to further participation, ask them to stay and take part in the boating skills review and rescue activities.
- Before a guest leaves, be sure the Scouts show appreciation and present their thank-you note.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Activity 1: Boating Skills (Requirement 3)

- Start by covering these boating safety rules:
 - Know your boat—don’t overload it. In a rowboat, one person per seat is a good rule.
 - Put on a life jacket before getting into the boat. Tell Scouts the minimum age at which children must wear life jackets in your state.
 - Balance your load. Divide weight evenly from side to side and from bow (front) to stern (back).
 - Step into the center of the boat when boarding or changing seats, and always keep low.
 - If your boat tips over or fills with water, hang on. You can kick the boat to shore or drift in, but don’t leave it. Let help come to you.
 - Watch the weather. Head for shore if it begins to look bad. If you’re caught on the water in bad weather, seat your passengers on the floor of the boat. Have everyone in the craft sit as low as possible. Head your boat into the waves.

- If you use a motor when boating with your family, use one that is appropriate for the boat. Too much power can damage your boat or even swamp it. Look on the boat for the capacity plate. It shows how many people the boat should hold and the recommended horsepower for the motor.
- Sharp turns are dangerous, so take it easy.
- Keep a lookout for other boaters and for swimmers.
- Put the key words below on index cards. Divide the Scouts into teams. Have each team draw a card and explain the related skill to the rest of the group. For instance, if a Scout draws the word “overload,” he may say something like, “Don’t overload your boat; one person per seat is a good rule.”

Overload	Center of the boat	Motor
Life jacket	Hang on	Sharp turns
Balance	Weather	Lookout

Activity 2: Order of Rescue (Requirement 4)

1. REACH toward the person in the water with whatever is available or at hand. For instance, you can use your hand or foot, a tree branch, a canoe paddle, or a towel.
 2. THROW a line, a buoy, or a floating object (like a kickboard) to the person.
 3. ROW in a watercraft to the victim. A rowing rescue should only be made by a “swimmer” and one who can handle the boat. A life jacket must be worn.
 4. GO, for help or into the water with support. Reach, throw, and row will not always work, for example when the person is on the bottom of a pool. Those who “go” to the victim and make a swimming rescue must be good swimmers and should be trained in lifesaving, which includes how to use flotation devices to avoid contact with active subjects.
- An order of rescues has been determined to help Scouts learn safe, effective water rescues. Although Webelos Scouts only do the first two methods (Reach and Throw) in water rescues, you need to be aware of all four methods.
 - The first two methods are the easiest and safest techniques because they do not require any swimming. **REMEMBER: In any water rescue, the Webelos Scout should never put himself in danger or at risk. If reaching and throwing don’t work, GO for HELP!**
 - Play a game of charades to reinforce the learning:
 - Put the words REACH, THROW, ROW, and GO on separate index cards along with the explanation of what is to be done. Have enough cards so that each buddy pair can pick one.
 - Scouts will act out what is on their card without talking. See if the other Scouts can guess what it is. Tell buddy pairs to be creative with their charades so the audience can tell what rescue it is and what should be done. You may want to have props on hand for the Scouts to use.

◆ Activity 3: Sponge or Bucket Relay

Note: Don’t worry about the length of your playing area. Just place the two buckets as far apart as possible to make the game challenging.

Sponge Relay

Materials: water, two sponges, buckets (two per team)

- Divide the Scouts into two teams lined up at the start line. Explain that they will use their sponge to transfer the water from the bucket on the start line to the bucket on the finish line.
- They should dip the sponge into the bucket, getting it really wet, and then cup it carefully in their hands as they go to the finish line, so as not to spill any water. Instead of walking quickly or running, have them hop, walk backward, etc.

Bucket Relay

Materials: water, buckets (two per team)

- Divide the Scouts into two teams. Fill half of each bucket at the start line with water and leave the other bucket empty.
- On “go,” the first player on each team runs while carrying the water-filled bucket to the finish line. Once there, he pours the water into the other bucket, leaves the empty one there, runs back with the filled bucket and gives it to the next player in line, who continues the relay. When all the players have run, the team with the most water left wins.

CLOSING

- Gather the den in a circle. Give each Scout a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Ask them to write down one thing that everyone must remember to bring or do at next week’s den outing—completing requirement 5 and any one of requirements 6, 7, 9, and 10 at a pool or other local swimming area.
- When they are done, each Scout crumples up his paper and tosses it into the center of the circle. Then everyone picks up one of the papers, opens it, and reads it to the den. Finish with the Boy Scout motto: “Be Prepared”!
- Review details for the upcoming outing in Meeting 3. Make sure all Scouts and their families know the plans.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Serve refreshments, if desired.
- Work together to clean up the meeting place.
- Record completion of requirements 3, 4, and 8.

MEETING 3 PLAN (Den Outing)

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- This meeting, a den outing to a local pool or other swimming area, may necessitate more than one visit for all the Scouts to complete the requirements. The size of your den may determine how you wish to proceed.
- A BSA day camp or Webelos Scout resident camp may be a good site for the outing if qualified swimming instruction and boating resources are available there. Use the resources of your local council, such as the aquatics committee, for assistance.
- You might also consider local schools, colleges, YMCAs, or Boys & Girls Clubs, and the local Red Cross chapter.
- Contact the outing location at least a month in advance to schedule the visit. Give the staff a copy of the requirements so they can see what the Scouts are doing in this adventure and possibly plan a hands-on activity.
- Confirm that a tour and activity plan has been submitted, if required, and that transportation to and from the location is in place. Secure signed activity consent forms.
- Unit den leader should have in possession (if required by local council practices) the tour and activity plan and a copy of the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.
- Remind Scouts of any gear they need to bring, including life jackets of the correct size for each Scout to complete requirement 9.
- Swimming instruction should be conducted ONLY by experienced, trained individuals. Arrange for assistance from qualified adult supervisors—those who have completed Safety Afloat training and Safe Swim Defense training during the last two years. A minimum of one adult leader present at the activities must have completed Safe Swim Defense online training at myscouting.org; all leaders participating in the activity should take or renew that training.

- You may also want to invite a BSA Lifeguard.
- Follow all Safe Swim Defense rules and do a buddy check before allowing Scouts to enter the water and every 10 minutes throughout the session.
- Bring the signed thank-you notes for those who help.

GATHERING

As Webelos Scouts arrive for the meeting, have each boy take turns leading the others in warm-up exercises.

OPENING

Have the Scouts form a circle and recite the Scout Law and motto.

TALK TIME

- Carry out business items for the den.
- Allow time for sharing among Webelos Scouts.
- Before the swimmer classification tests begin, bring all the Scouts together near the edge of the pool or anywhere outside of the water. Explain that each boy will have an opportunity at this meeting to attempt the swimmer classification test and complete the requirements for the Aquanaut adventure.
- Review the water safety precautions they learned at Meeting 1.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Activity 1: Swimmer Classification Test (Requirement 5)

- Depending on the size of the pool or swimming area, Scouts may be able to complete other requirements as well. Make sure that there is adequate supervision at all times.
- Explain what is required for the swimmer classification (see below). One adult must work with one Scout at a time when the Scout attempts the test. The adult needs to understand the testing procedure, be able to perform a reaching assist, and be able to swim well. A lifeguard must provide surveillance at all times.
- Give each Scout an opportunity to attempt the test. Before the Scout is allowed to enter the water, you should ask if he has ever jumped into water over his head. It is very important to talk to the Scout so that you understand his comfort level. If he seems nervous about this part, he should be allowed to slide in the water or go down the ladder and be allowed to complete the swimming portion. If he seems more comfortable after this, then allow him to jump in and complete the swim check. Each Scout attempting the test will
 1. Jump into the water over his head, feetfirst.
 2. Level off and swim 75 yards with a strong forward stroke and at least one sharp turn.
 3. Swim 25 yards using the elementary backstroke.
 4. Float on his back for a brief time.

Note: Once a Scout has attempted to complete the swimmer classification test, whether or not he passes, he has completed requirement 5.

◆ Activity 2: Other Requirements

Scouts may also complete other requirements at this meeting, including requirements 6, 7, 9, and 10 (if the meeting is held at an appropriate boating location).

CLOSING

- Gather the den in a brotherhood circle. Each Scout places his left arm around the shoulder of the Scout on his left and his right arm around the shoulder of the Scout on his right. Den leader or den chief: *Now may the Great Master of all Scouts be with us until we meet again.*
- If desired, you may also offer an inspirational thought about what was accomplished at this meeting. Bring out points of the Scout Law that the boys demonstrated at the meeting (e.g., obedient, brave, helpful, courteous, kind).

AFTER THE MEETING

- Serve refreshments, if desired and appropriate.
- Work to leave the location cleaner than you found it.
- Record completion of requirement 5 as well as 6, 7, 9, or 10 if completed.

MEETING 2 RESOURCES

Information on all of the swimming strokes, the BSA swimming ability test, and rescue techniques is available in the *Aquatics Supervision* guide (No. 34737). Other BSA resources include the *Swimming* (No. 35957) and *Lifesaving* (No. 35915) merit badge pamphlets. There are also several online resources, including:

SAFETY AFLOAT

The guidelines that follow are also posted at www.scouting.org/Home/OutdoorProgram/Aquatics/safety-afloat.aspx.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

Toll-free telephone: 800-733-2767
Website: www.redcross.org

USA SWIMMING

Website: www.usaswimming.org

YMCA OF THE USA

Check local association websites

BSA SAFE SWIM DEFENSE

BSA groups shall use Safe Swim Defense for all swimming activities. Go to www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS/toc.aspx for detailed information about the eight principles.

1. Qualified supervision
2. Personal health review
3. Safe area
4. Response personnel (lifeguards)
5. Lookout
6. Ability groups
7. Buddy system
8. Discipline

Home Swimming Pool Safety for Unit Events

All elements of Safe Swim Defense apply at backyard pools even though they may be small, shallow, and familiar. The biggest danger is probably complacency. Adult supervision must be continuous while the pool is in use. A Cub Scout who can't swim can drown silently within 20 seconds of entering water over his head.

Aquatics Supervision contains safety information specific to both in-ground and above-ground backyard pools. That includes the following:

- Most such pools are too shallow for diving. Diving prohibition should be discussed at a tailgate review for all participants prior to the activity.
- Beginner and swimmer areas may be combined in small, relatively shallow pools.
- Make sure to control access. Many backyard pools are too small to accommodate an entire pack at once. If other activities are also taking place, it may be best to allow only one den into the water at a time rather than allowing Scouts to move at will in and out of the water.
- Many states require pool fencing, which may help with supervision.
- If the uniform depth of an in-ground pool is too deep for short nonswimmers, they may need properly fitted life jackets.
- Rescues, if needed, should be simple. Provide reaching and throwing devices for active victims. A wading assist may be feasible for passive victims.
- For above-ground pools without decks, have a plan to remove large unresponsive adults who suffer a heart attack or other debilitating condition.

Guarded Public Pools With Lifeguards on Duty

Aquatics Supervision also covers swimming at public pools, waterparks, and guarded beaches.

Important items include the following:

- Dens and packs do not need to assign and equip rescue personnel. Professionally trained lifeguards provided by the venue satisfy that need.
- Unit leaders are still responsible for medical screening, ability groups, the buddy system, discipline, and supervision.
- Many public pools will have a safety line at the five-foot mark separating shallow and deep water that can be used to help designate appropriate areas for the different ability groups.
- Otherwise, appoint adult lookouts to make sure nonswimmers and beginners stay in their assigned areas.

Studies show that more than half of victims at public pools are spotted first by others rather than lifeguards. The buddy system is still very important for safety as well as instilling responsibility. It is likely awkward to conduct frequent buddy checks. Therefore, arrange a time for everyone to leave the water and meet at a given location. Then do a head count. Otherwise rely on unit lookouts, buddies, and lifeguards to maintain vigilance. At large waterparks, leaders should accompany dens moving from one feature to another after everyone in the group is accounted for.

SAFETY AFLOAT (Boating Safety)

BSA groups shall use Safety Afloat for all boating activities. Go to www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS/toc.aspx for more information on the nine principles.

1. Qualified supervision
2. Personal health review
3. Swimming ability
4. Life jackets
5. Buddy system
6. Skill proficiency
7. Planning
8. Equipment
9. Discipline

Water Rescue

Water rescue training for the lay rescuer often uses a reach, throw, row, go mnemonic to establish a safe, effective sequence for responding to water emergencies. That sequence is important to Cub Scout leaders for two distinct reasons. First it establishes the procedure that response personnel under Safe Swim Defense should follow. If professionally trained lifeguards are not available at a swimming location, then the qualified supervisor has to provide personnel and equipment suitable for likely emergencies. Fortunately, that is often not as difficult as it might first appear. For that reason, a review of the reach, throw, row, and go sequence is appropriate. Important detail can be found in *Aquatics Supervision*.

The other reason for reviewing the sequence is for age-appropriate training of youth. Drowning is the second-leading cause of accidental death for those of Cub Scout age. Therefore, there is a chance that Cub Scouts will be faced with seeing someone in trouble. That possibility is further supported by the Scouts in Action reports in *Boys' Life* magazine. Cub Scouts do save people from drowning.

However, there are also double drownings that occur yearly in the United States when well-meaning people of all ages attempt to save drowning victims. Those are often frantic friends and relatives whose swimming skills are no better than those of the person in trouble. Since Cub Scouts often lack swimming skills and the maturity to realize their limitations, it is important to modify the rescue sequence for Cub Scout training to reach, throw, row, and go for help.

Reach: This technique is appropriate to teach Cub Scouts, parents who are nonswimmers, and rescue personnel who are skilled in the water. People who can't swim often begin to struggle immediately after they step into or fall into water over their heads. That is likely to be very close to safety. If so, the rescuer should lie down, reach out, and grab the person. Laying down is necessary since the person in the water will likely stop all effort to remain afloat, and that sudden increase in weight can topple an unprepared rescuer into the water. If the victim is a bit further out, an extension device such as a pole, paddle, or noodle can be used. Those should be swept to the person from the side, not used like a spear. Victims often cannot reach for an extended item, even if it is just a foot away. Rescuers should therefore be told to place the item under the person's arm or within his grasp. Rescuers should also be told to provide loud, clear, simple instructions to the victim, for example "GRAB THIS!"

Throw: The second procedure in the sequence, used when the person is too far out to reach, is to throw the person an aid. A throwing rescue is also appropriate to teach to rescuers of any age and swimming ability. A float with a line attached is best, but any light floating item or a rope by itself may be used. An accurate first toss is required if a line is not attached, but throwing a line takes practice. Ring buoys are often found at hotel and apartment pools and are good devices for Cub Scout practice. Leaders may also fashion throwing devices from light floating line and a plastic jug with just a bit of water in it for weight. A throwing rescue is best suited to poor swimmers in trouble. Drowning nonswimmers will not be able to reach for the object unless it lands within their grasp, nor will passive victims floating face down or on the bottom.

Row: A boat can be used to provide a mobile platform from which to do reaching or throwing assists. Since Cub Scouts often do not have the skills needed for a safe rowing rescue, this procedure is not emphasized for that age group. A boat rescue is also not a common part of an emergency action plan for a unit swim since the swimming area is typically small and within easy reach of shore-based response personnel.

Go: For Cub Scout training, this item should be interpreted as "go for help." That is, they should first shout for help, and if no one responds, seek out a responsible person such as a parent, lifeguard, or park ranger. Poor swimmers should not enter the water to attempt a rescue. On the other hand, a unit swim cannot rely on reaching or throwing rescues for emergency planning. An in-water assist will be needed for a parent suffering cardiac arrest in the water. At guarded swims, GO also means going with equipment since lifeguards or response personnel should never be without appropriate rescue aids.

Upon completion of the Aquanaut adventure, your Webelos Scouts will have earned the adventure pin shown here. Make sure they are recognized for their completion by presenting the adventure pins, to be worn on their uniforms, as soon as possible according to your pack's tradition.

