Unit Swim Check Procedures

The swim classification of individuals participating in a Boy Scouts of America activity is a key element in both Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat. The swim tests should be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of each outdoor season. Traditionally, swim classification tests have only been conducted upon arrival at summer camp. However, there is no restriction that this be the only place the test is conducted. It may be more useful to conduct the swim classification prior to a unit's arrival at summer camp.

Special Note: Although swim tests may be conducted prior to summer camp, the Aquatics Director is expected to review or retest any Scout or Scouter whose skills appear to be inconsistent with his or her classification. Additionally the Aquatics Program Director is authorized to retest any Scout or group of Scouts when he or she is reasonably concerned that pre-camp swim tests were not properly administered.

Purpose of this Policy

The Pennsylvania Dutch Council has adopted the Unit Swim Check policy to promote the purposes of BSA aquatics.

The BSA Aquatics program has five basic objectives.

- **To give youth self-confidence and skill in aquatics**
- **To instruct youth in self-preservation, the care and use of aquatics equipment and rescue methods**
- **To promote aquatics recreation**
- **To develop physical strength and coordination**
- **To aid units in planning and conducting a safe year-round aquatics program**

If a Scout is enrolling in an aquatics merit badge, they may be asked to retake the swim test at summer camp under the direction of the summer camp Aquatics Program Director. This is to ensure the safety of all Scouts involved in the merit badge class. Participating in Aquatics merit badges exposes the Scout to additional risks not normally involved in recreational boating or swimming activities.

Administration of the Swim Test

All persons participating in BSA Aquatics are classified according to swimming ability. The classification tests and test procedures have been developed and structured to demonstrate a skill level consistent with the circumstances.

The BSA Aquatics swim test classifies Scouts and Scouters into three swimming ability groups.

The three swimmer ability groups are swimmer, beginner, and non-swimmer.

- **The swimmer test demonstrates the minimum level of swimming ability required for safe deep-water swimming. It is also required for a scout to take any of the Aquatics merit badges.**
- **The beginner test demonstrates that the Scout is ready to learn deep-water skills and has the minimum ability required for safe instructional and recreational activity in a confined swimming area in which shallow waters, sides, or other support are less than 25 feet from any point on the water.**
- **All Scouts and Scouters who do not complete the beginner test or who choose to not participate in any test are classified as non-swimmers. All non-swimmers should be encouraged to take swim lessons to improve their swimming ability and become comfortable participating in water activities.**

The BSA Swimmer and Beginner Test

Swimmer Test

Jump feet first into water over the head in depth, level off and begin swimming. Swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen or front crawl (freestyle); then swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke (hands in water). 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.

Beginner Test

Jump feet first into water over the head in depth, level off, swim 25 feet on the surface, stop, turn sharply, resume swimming as before, and return to starting place.

Who can administer the test outside of camp?

The swim classification test done at a unit level should be conducted by one of the following resource people: Aquatics Instructor, BSA; Cub Scout Aquatics Supervisor; BSA Lifeguard; leader certified in Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue certified lifeguard; swimming instructor; or swim coach. When the unit goes to summer camp, each individual may be issued a buddy tag under the direction of the Aquatics Program Director and Health Officer for use at the camp.

Reasons for not Passing the Test

A successful Scouting activity is accomplished only by carefully planning the activity. The BSA swim test in one tool in planning a successful and safe aquatics activity. The BSA has identified several reasons for a Scout or Scouter to not successfully complete the BSA swim test.

The following are reasons a Scout or Scouter WILL NOT pass the BSA swim test:

- **Underwater swimming**
- **Dog paddling**
- **Resting in the middle of the test**
- **Treading water and not maintaining a forward motion**
- **Not floating at the end of the test**
- **Failure to demonstrate a RESTFUL backstroke and appearing to be too tired at the end of the test**

Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat

All eight points of the Safe Swim Defense and all nine points of Safety Afloat must be followed at all times when including aquatics activities in the unit's activities.

The eight points of Safe Swim Defense include:

Qualified Supervision; Physical Fitness; Safe Area; Rescue Personnel on Duty; Lookout; Ability Groups; Buddy System; Discipline

The nine points of Safety Afloat include:

Qualified Supervision; Physical Fitness; Swimming ability; Personal Floatation Equipment; Buddy System; Skill Proficiency; Planning; Equipment; Discipline

Pre-Camp Swim Test Form

I, the BSA Swim Check Test Administrator, sign below certifying that the following Scouts and Scouters have been administered the BSA Swim Check Test. I also certify that all Scouts and Scouters have been classified according to the BSA Swim Check Test standards.

Signature_____ Date_____

Print Name: _____Title:_____

Phone _____

Approved Test Administrators: Aquatics Instructor, BSA; Cub Scout Aquatics Supervisor; BSA Lifeguard; leader certified in Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue; certified lifeguard; swimming instructor; or swim coach

Circle one: Tested in a Lake Tested in a Pool

Approximate Water Temp. _____Degrees F.

Swimmer's Name	Age	Swim Classification

(Attach additional copies of roster as necessary)

The above listed Scouts and Scouters have been administered the BSA swim check according to the BSA swim check standards. I feel confident in their swim classifications and sign my name certifying the swim check.

UNIT LEADER APPROVAL _____ Date_____

Unit (Pack/Troop/Team/Crew)_____

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