

BSA Aquatics Program



Gulf Ridge Council-2009

The National Health and Safety Committee and the National Program Committee have adopted several changes to the BSA Aquatics adult training program. Some of these are as follows:

Council Aquatics Committee

A Gulf Ridge Council Aquatics Committee has been formed to have overall responsibility for the Council's aquatic activities.

Contact John Ehas, Chairman, thehos@tampabay.rr.com, with questions or concerns.

BSA Lifeguard

In the past, BSA Lifeguard has served two purposes; skilled training for adult leaders who supervise unit activities and training for summer camp aquatics staff. Over the years, the aquatics program has become more complex and the expected standard of care has become more stringent. One program can no longer serve two purposes.

In addition, adult leaders had difficulty meeting the strenuous physical requirements of BSA Lifeguard. The new focus of BSA Lifeguard is that of professional lifeguarding, mainly for summer camp aquatics staff. Adult leaders who supervise units should instead become certified in *Swimming and Water Rescue*.

Swimming and Water Rescue/ Paddle Craft Safety

These two adult training programs focus on providing the skill training

for "qualified supervision" of BSA unit aquatics activities.

Swimming and Water Rescue and *Paddle Craft Safety* are **strongly recommended** for unit swim activities away from professionally lifeguarded swim areas or boating without trained guides. *Swimming and Water Rescue* is an in-water course, covering rescue techniques for swimmers, and *Paddle Craft Safety*, taught in boats, covers basic boating skills and individual and group rescue techniques for boaters. *Paddle Craft Safety* is craft-specific for either canoes or kayaks.

These courses are eight hours each and certification is good for three years. Beginning June, 2010, adult leaders are required to be certified in these courses to use Council swimming or boating facilities.

Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat

Safe Swim Defense and *Safety Afloat* remain the **required** training for supervision of unit swimming and boating activities. They define standard operating procedures for BSA swimming and boating activities and the standard of care expected of unit leadership.

Canoeing Merit Badge Counselors

Beginning in 2005, the requirements for Canoeing Merit Badge Counselors changed. The pamphlet states that all counselors should have formal training in canoeing and canoeing instruction.

Upcoming Training

- *Safe Swim Defense* and *Safety Afloat* will be offered as usual, at summer camp, on-line, and as arranged by Council and district training staff.
- *Swimming and Water Rescue* and *Paddle Craft Safety* will be offered at Flaming Arrow Scout Reservation on the following dates:
September 12-13, 2009
April 23-25, 2010
September 10-12, 2010
- BSA Lifeguard and formal canoe-merit badge counselor training will be offered on an as-needed basis.

Aquatics Supervision Guide Book

The new Aquatics Supervision Guide Book is available at the Council Service Center. It is a leader's guide for youth swimming and boating activities, and contains program information, safety guidelines, and basic skill descriptions. It serves as the text for *Swimming and Water Rescue* and *Paddle Craft Safety*.

