

Motorboating

Merit Badge Workbook

Merit badges are earned by doing: reading the pamphlet, practicing the skills, and showing your counselor what you have learned.
This workbook gives you a place to organize your notes and track your progress along the way.
Merit badge counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbook.
You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information.
Use the space under each requirement to note what you have done and what you want to talk about, not to write out full answers.
When a requirement says discuss, show, tell, explain, or demonstrate, that is what you must do.
No one may add to or subtract from the official requirements found on scouting.org (Guide to Advancement 7.0.4.8).
Scouting America last updated this badge's requirements page on December 31, 2025.
Requirements change from time to time. Double-check scouting.org before you start.

Scout's name: _____ Unit: _____ Date started: _____

Counselor's name: _____ Phone no.: _____ Email: _____

Links marked "Scouting America resources" are the ones Scouting America shares on its official badge page.
This workbook is unofficial and not endorsed by Scouting America.

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1. Do the following:

(a) Discuss with your counselor the following hazards you might encounter while motorboating: flammable fuel; carbon monoxide; propellers; collisions; falls overboard; capsize; or running aground. Explain what you should do to anticipate, prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.

Scouting America resources: Running Aground Prevention and Response (video) · Towsport Tips #4 Carbon Monoxide (video) Collision Avoidance Rules (video) · Preventing a Capsizing / Fall Overboard (video)

Motorboating hazards

Hazard	How I anticipate and prevent it	How I reduce and respond to it
flammable fuel		
carbon monoxide		
propellers		
collisions		
falls overboard		
capsize		
running aground		

(b) Explain first aid for injuries or illnesses that could occur while motorboating, including hypothermia, heat reactions, dehydration, motion sickness, bug bites, and blisters.

Scouting America resources: Cold Water Shock—How to Deal With Cold Water Shock (video)
What Happens If You Don't Drink Enough Water? Signs of Dehydration + 4 Ways to Keep Hydrated (video)
Mayo Clinic Minute—Dangers of Heat-Related Illnesses (video) · How To Prevent and Treat Blisters (website)

First aid while motorboating

Injury or illness	First aid
hypothermia	
heat reactions	
dehydration	
motion sickness	
bug bites	
blisters	

(c) Discuss the Scouting America Safety Afloat policy. Tell how it applies to motorboating activities.

Scouting America resources: Safety Afloat (website)

Safety Afloat, and how it applies to motorboating

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Do the following:

(a) Before doing requirement 5, successfully complete the Scouting America swimmer test. Note: See the Swimming merit badge pamphlet for details about the Scouting America swimmer test.

Scouting America resources: Swimming Merit Badge pamphlet (PDF)

Swimmer test passed on _____ Witnessed by _____

(b) Name the different types of personal flotation devices (PFDs), and explain when each type should be used. Show how to choose and properly fit a PFD.

Scouting America resources: How To Choose the Right Life Jacket (video)

Types of PFDs

Type of PFD	When it should be used

Date I showed fitting a PFD _____ PFD I picked _____

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Do the following:

(a) Explain inboard, outboard, and inboard/outboard motors, and the uses and advantages of each.

Scouting America resources: Whats the Difference Between Inboard, Outboard & Sterndrive Boat Engines? (video)
Engine Types (video)

Boat motors

Motor	Uses	Advantages
Inboard		
Outboard		
Inboard/outboard		

(b) Explain the safety procedures and precautions involving handling fuel and engine servicing, and equipment storage and placement.

Scouting America resources: Fueling Procedures (video) · Engine Servicing (website)

Topic	Safety procedures and precautions
Handling fuel	
Engine servicing	
Equipment storage and placement	

(c) Explain how to winterize a boat motor and tell why this procedure is necessary.

Scouting America resources: Winterize Your Boat Like a Pro in 7 Steps (video)

How to winterize a boat motor

Why this is necessary

(d) Explain the safety procedures and precautions involving swimmers and skiers in the water, passenger positions underway, and boat wakes.

Scouting America resources: Boat Wakes (video)

Topic	Safety procedures and precautions
Swimmers and skiers in the water	
Passenger positions underway	
Boat wakes	

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Show you know safety guidelines for motorboating by doing the following:

(a) Review how each item of the Scouting America Safety Afloat policy applies, including checking the weather prior to and during time on the water, confirming all required equipment is present and functional, and following a float plan.

Safety Afloat on a motorboat

Safety Afloat item	How it applies
Checking the weather prior to and during time on the water	
Confirming all required equipment is present and functional	
Following a float plan	

The other Safety Afloat items, and how each applies

(b) Explain the rules or laws that apply to recreational boating in your area or state. Have a permit to operate a motorboat, if required by the laws of your state. Discuss how you would find information regarding the boating laws in different states.

Scouting America resources: Boating Rules and Regulations by State (website)

Boating rules or laws in my area or state

Permit required in my state (yes or no) | Permit earned on

How I would find boating laws in other states

(c) Discuss how hazards of weather and heavy water conditions can affect safety and performance in motorboating.

Scouting America resources: Foul Weather Boating (video) · Coping With Foul Weather (video)
Operation in Restricted Visibility (video)

Condition	Effect on safety	Effect on performance
Weather hazards		
Heavy water conditions		

(d) Promise that you will follow Scouting America Safety Afloat guidelines. Explain the meaning of each point.

Promised on | Counselor

What each point of Safety Afloat means

(e) Explain and show the correct use of equipment required by both state and federal regulations to be carried aboard a motorboat.

Scouting America resources: Coast Guard Requirements: What Items You Must Have in Your Boat (ID, Tools, etc) (video)

Required equipment aboard a motorboat

Equipment	Required by (state, federal or both)	Correct use

Date I showed its use

(f) Explain federal and state rules for a ventilation system, and tell why these rules are required.

Scouting America resources: Ventilation Systems (video)

Federal and state rules for ventilation systems

Why these rules are required

(g) Explain the use of lights (sight signals) and sound signals on motorboats.

Scouting America resources: Navigation Light Equipment (video)

Signal	How and when it's used
Lights (sight signals)	
Sound signals	

(h) Discuss the common types of anchors used in motorboating and under what conditions each would be preferred. Explain proper anchoring techniques.

Scouting America resources: Anchoring (video) · Anchoring Tips (video) · Anchoring a Boat | Basics of Boating (video)

Common anchors

Type of anchor	Conditions where it's preferred

Proper anchoring techniques

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. With your counselor or other adults on board, demonstrate proper boat-handling procedures and skills by doing the following:

(a) Board and assist others in boarding. Confirm that all passengers on board are wearing properly fitted life jackets.

Scouting America resources: Boating Equipment—Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) (video)
Life Jacket Safety Essentials | Discover Boating (video)

Date _____ Boat _____ Adult on board _____

(b) Fuel the boat and complete a safety check.

Scouting America resources: Quick Tip: Pre-Boating Inspection & Safety Checklist (video)

Date _____ Notes from my safety check _____

(c) If equipped, attach the engine cut-off switch link and safely start the motor. Get underway from dockside or from a beach launch.

Scouting America resources: Launching a Boat (video)

Date _____ Launched from (dock or beach) _____

(d) Run a course for at least a mile, showing procedures for overtaking and passing slower vessels, yielding right-of-way, passing oncoming traffic, making turns, reversing direction, and using navigation aids.

Scouting America resources: What Every Boater Needs To Know About Boating Rules/Safety (video)

Date _____ Where _____ Distance run _____

- ☐ Overtaking and passing slower vessels
- ☐ Yielding right-of-way
- ☐ Passing oncoming traffic
- ☐ Making turns
- ☐ Reversing direction
- ☐ Using navigation aids

(e) Stop and secure the boat in position on the open water using anchors. Raise and stow the anchor and get underway.

Date _____ Anchor used _____

(f) Land or dock the boat, disembark, and assist others in doing the same.

Scouting America resources: Retrieving a Boat (video)

Date _____ Landed or docked at _____

(g) Moor, dock, or beach the boat and secure all gear.

Scouting America resources: How To Tie a Boat to a Dock (video) · Beaching Your Boat (website)

Date _____ Moored, docked or beached _____

(h) Demonstrate knots used in boating: cleating hitch, bowline, clove hitch, anchor bend, and sheet bend.

Scouting America resources: 10 Knots You Need for Sailing (video) · How To Tie the Anchor Bend Knot | Boating Knots (video)

Date _____ Counselor _____

- ☐ Cleating hitch
- ☐ Bowline
- ☐ Clove hitch
- ☐ Anchor bend
- ☐ Sheet bend

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

Counselor sign-off

Your counselor signs your blue card or approves the badge in Scoutbook, and your unit records it. This line is for your own records.

Counselor's signature _____ Date completed _____

Official Scouting America resources

Scouting America resources: Motorboating merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Motorboating merit badge pamphlet (free PDF)
All merit badges

Made by Cole at ScoutSmarts.com, an Eagle Scout who loves helping Scouts.
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