

Water Sports

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) Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while participating in water sports activities and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.

Water sports hazards

Hazard	How I anticipate and help prevent it	How I reduce and respond to it

(b) Review prevention, symptoms, and first-aid treatment for the following injuries or illnesses that could occur while participating in water sports: blisters, cold-water shock and hypothermia, dehydration, heat-related illnesses, sunburn, sprains, strains, minor cuts and bruises, spinal injury, and concussions and head trauma.

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)
Dangers of Heat-Related Illnesses (video) · What Causes Sunburns? (video) · Sprain Care With RICE Method (video)

Injuries and illnesses in water sports

Injury or illness	Prevention	Symptoms	First aid
blisters			
cold-water shock and hypothermia			
dehydration			
heat-related illnesses			
sunburn			
sprains			
strains			
minor cuts and bruises			
spinal injury			
concussions and head trauma			

(c) Review the Scouting America Safety Afloat policy. Tell how it applies to water sports.

Scouting America resources: Safety Afloat (website)

Reviewed on _____

How Safety Afloat applies to water sports

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Do the following:

(a) Discuss with your counselor the characteristics of life jackets most appropriate for water sports, and tell why one must always be worn while waterskiing or wakeboarding. Then demonstrate how to select and fit a life jacket for water sports activities.

Life jacket features best for water sports

Why one must always be worn while waterskiing or wakeboarding

Date I showed how to select and fit one _____ Life jacket I picked _____

(b) Review and discuss the Water Sports Safety Code with your counselor. Promise that you will live up to it and follow it in all water work for this merit badge. Review the safety precautions that must be used by the boat operator in pulling waterskiers and wakeboarders.

Scouting America resources: Watersports Safety Code (PDF)

Reviewed on _____

☐ I promise to live up to the Water Sports Safety Code

Safety precautions for the boat operator pulling skiers and wakeboarders

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Before doing requirements 4 through 6, 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 _____

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Show the following skier signals to the safety observer in the boat: skier safe, faster, slower, turns, back to dock, cut motor, skier in water.

Scouting America resources: Towed Watersports Hand Signals (PDF)

Date _____ Safety observer _____

☐ skier safe
☐ faster
☐ slower
☐ turns
☐ back to dock
☐ cut motor
☐ skier in water

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

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5. Showing reasonable control while using two skis, one ski, or a wakeboard, do the following:

- ☐ Two skis
- ☐ One ski
- ☐ Wakeboard

(a) Show how to enter the water from a boat and make a deepwater start without help.

Scouting America resources: How To Get Up on a Wakeboard (video) · How To Stand Up on Water Skis (video) How To Water-Ski for Beginners (video) · How To Ski on One Ski (video)

Date _____ Boat operator _____ Safety observer _____

(b) Starting from outside the wakes, show you can cross both wakes four times and return to the center of the wake each time, without falling.

Scouting America resources: Wakeboad Tutorial: Moving Around/Edging (video) How To Carve and Cross the Wake (Wakeboard) (video) · How To Get Started in Water Skiing (video)

Date _____ Wake crossings without falling _____

(c) Show you can fall properly to avoid an obstacle. Also show that you can drop handle and coast to a stop without losing your balance.

Date _____

- ☐ Fell properly to avoid an obstacle
- ☐ Dropped the handle and coasted to a stop

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. While on shore, show that you know how to properly adjust the bindings of your ski(s) or wakeboard to fit yourself. Then, in deep water, show you can adjust bindings to fit. Recover and put on your ski(s) or wakeboard that has come off during a fall.

Bindings and recovery

What I showed	Date	Notes
Adjusted bindings on shore		
Adjusted bindings in deep water		
Recovered and put on my ski(s) or wakeboard after a fall		

Requirement 6 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: Water Sports merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Water Sports merit badge pamphlet (free PDF) All merit badges

Made by Cole at ScoutSmarts.com, an Eagle Scout who loves helping Scouts.
Spot an error or a requirement change? Tell me at scoutsmarts.com/contact.
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