



WHITEWATER

U.S. SCOUTING SERVICE PROJECT -- [HTTP://USScouts.org](http://USScouts.org)

A new version of the merit badge pamphlet for this merit badge, with revised requirements, was issued during 2005 after the 2005 edition of BOY SCOUT REQUIREMENTS was issued.

[To see the changes, Click Here](#)

[Click here for the previous requirements](#)

1. Do the following:
 - a. Review with your counselor the first aid for injuries or illnesses that could occur while working on the Whitewater merit badge, including hypothermia, heat reactions, dehydration, insect stings, blisters, bruises, cuts, and shoulder dislocation.
 - b. Identify the conditions that must exist before performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on a person. Explain how such conditions are recognized.
 - c. Demonstrate proper technique for performing CPR using a training device approved by your counselor.
2. Do the following:
 - a. Review and compare BSA Safety Afloat and the American Whitewater safety guidelines and demonstrate your understanding of these principles by answering questions from your counselor.
 - b. Identify and explain the use and importance of safety equipment on moving water. Include in your explanation a discussion about throw ropes, whistles, and how to choose and properly fit PFDs (personal flotation devices) and helmets.
3. Before doing requirements 4 through 13 earn the [Canoeing merit badge](#) if you will be using a canoe to earn this merit badge. If you will be using a kayak, earn the [Kayaking BSA Award](#).
4. Do ONE of the following:
 - a. If you are completing these requirements as a tandem canoeist, demonstrate basic canoe-handling skills by completing the Scout gate test within 160 seconds while paddling tandem with a buddy. Then demonstrate the following strokes: cross forward, cross draw, bow pry, Duffek, high brace, and low brace,
 - b. If you are completing these requirements as a solo canoeist, demonstrate basic solo

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canoe-handling skills by completing the Scout gate test within 160 seconds. Then demonstrate the following strokes: cross forward, cross draw, stern pryDuffek, high brace, and low brace.

c. If you are using a kayak to complete these requirements, demonstrate basic kayak-handling skills by completing the Scout gate test within 160 seconds. Demonstrate the following strokes:Duffek, high brace, low brace, and sculling draw. Then do the following:

1. Move the kayak forward in a reasonably straight line for 10 yards.
2. Move the kayak sideways to the right and to the left.
3. Pivot 360 degrees to the right and left.
4. Stop the kayak.

5. Do the following:

- a. Explain the importance of scouting before committing to running a rapid, and discuss good judgment when evaluating a stretch of river or a particular rapid.
- b. Explain the terms *downstream V, riffle, strainer, eddy, eddy line, pillow, ledge, bend, shallows, falls, low-head dam, current, rock, drop, horizon line, wave, standing wave, hydraulic, and sleeper*.
- c. Explain how to scout and read a river while ashore and while afloat, and discuss the importance of hazard recognition.
- d. Demonstrate your ability to read the river where you are practicing and demonstrating your whitewater skills.

6. Explain the International Scale of River Difficulty and apply the scale to the stretch of river where you are practicing and demonstrating your whitewater skills. Identify the specific characteristics of the river that are factors in your classification according to the International Scale.

7. Explain the importance of communication during every whitewater outing. Explain and demonstrate using the following river signals: "Run right," "Run left," "Run down the center," "Stop," "Are you OK?" and "Help!"

8. Do the following:

- a. Explain the differences between flatwater and whitewater canoes; identify the advantages and special uses for kayaks and decked canoes in running water. Identify the different materials used in modern whitewater canoe construction and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- b. Describe the various types of kayaks and how they differ in design, materials, and purpose.
- c. Identify the advantages and special uses for kayaks and decked canoes in moving water.
- d. Discuss the construction, safety, and functional features of paddles used in whitewater activities.

9. Discuss the personal and group equipment necessary for a safe whitewater outing and how and why it is used. Explain how to pack and protect these items.

10. Wearing the proper personal flotation device (PFD) and being appropriately dressed for the weather and water conditions, perform the following skills in moving water in a properly equipped whitewater craft of your choice (tandem canoe, solo canoe, or solo kayak). If a tandem canoe is used, the skills must be demonstrated from both the bow and stern positions.

- a. Launch and land.
- b. Paddle forward in a straight line.

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- c. Backpaddle.
- d. Sideslip, both sides.
- e. Ferry upstream and downstream.
- f. Eddy turn.
- g. Peel out.

11. Explain and demonstrate:

- a. Self-rescue and procedures when capsized in moving water, including a wet exit if necessary
- b. Safe rescue of others in various whitewater situations situations using a throw rope.
- c. Portaging - when and how to do it.
- d. The whitewater buddy system using at least three persons and three craft.

12. Discuss the use of inflatable boats on moving water. Discuss the use of inflatable rafts on moving water. In your discussion, explain the special safety precautions that should be take when using an inflatable raft and the risks of "tubing" on moving water.

13. Participate in a whitewater trip using either a canoe or kayak on a Class I or Class II river. Help to prepare a written plan specifying the route, schedule, equipment, safety precautions and emergency procedures. Determine local rules and obtain permission from landowners and land managers in advance. Explain what steps you have taken to comply with BSA Safety Afloat and the American Whitewater safety guidelines. Execute the plan with others