

**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA COUNCIL**

**UNIT GUIDE**

**TO**

**AQUATICS**

**SHOOTING SPORTS**

**COPE/ CLIMBING**

**CAMP FLYING EAGLE**

**&**

**CAMP MILES**

**&**

**SWFL B.S.A. POLICIES**

(Revised July 24, 2019)

**B.S.A. GUIDELINES FOR UNIT LEADERS TO CONDUCT**  
**AQUATICS ACTIVITIES**  
**REQUIREMENTS, CERTIFICATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

**PROOF OF CERTIFICATE IS REQUIRED AT CHECK-IN**  
Training card **MUST** be presented.

**Aquatics Supervision: A leader's guide to youth swimming and boating activities, Item #621005. For additional details before conducting an activity consult the Guide to Safe Scouting available at: <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416.pdf>**

**Non-adherence to BSA policies by volunteers jeopardizes liability coverage for unit volunteers and the charter organization.**

**All swimming and activity afloat (canoes/boats of any type) must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who:**

- Understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of members in his or her care.
- Is experienced in the particular activity,
- Is confident in his or her ability to respond appropriately in an emergency, and
- Is trained and committed to the nine points of BSA Safety Afloat and/or the eight points of Safe Swim Defense.
- **No General Swimming is allowed at CFE in Hidden Lake/Wilson Pond or the lake at Camp Miles.**
- **All activities at Camp Flying Eagle and Camp Miles (Swimming Pools) or water front must be supervised by personnel that is:**

**1. BSA Lifeguard Certified or Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue Trained (for their Unit only) with at least one leader/parent in attendance to be trained in Red Cross Basic First Aid including CPR is *strongly recommended*.**

**2. Boating Activities require BSA Lifeguard Certified or Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety Training (for their Unit only) with at least one leader/parent in attendance must be trained in Red Cross Basic First Aid including CPR (*BSA Required*).**

**Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat must be adhered at all times.**

## **Aquatics Leadership Training Programs**

**Safe Swim Defense** and **Safety Afloat** training programs are available online at [www.my.scouting.org](http://www.my.scouting.org) and may be offered locally by instructors approved by the council aquatics committee or other council approved authority.

**Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue** and **Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety** cover skills needed to meet Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat policies applied at the unit level. These training courses are provided by qualified and approved local instructors who are authorized by the local council.

**BSA Lifeguard** provides professional-level training for lifeguards at unit or summer camp swimming activities and is provided locally by qualified instructors who are authorized by the local council.

**BSA Aquatics Instructor** prepares adults for leadership roles in year-round aquatics programs and is recommended for a least one member of the council aquatics committee. Those with BSA Aquatics Instructor training may serve as aquatics directors at Boy Scout or Cub Scout summer camps. The training is available at National Camping Schools conducted by the regions.

### **BSA Swimming & Water Rescue**

Training for BSA Swimming & Water Rescue provides BSA leaders with information and skills to prevent, recognize, and respond to swimming emergencies during unit swimming activities. It expands the awareness instruction provided by Safe Swim Defense training. Persons completing the training should be better able to assess their preparation to supervise unit swimming events. The BSA recommends that at least one person with this training is present to assist with supervision whenever a unit swims at a location that does not provide lifeguards. This training is open to any registered adult leader, Scout, Venturer or Explorer who is age 15 or older. A council approved instructor must directly supervise all training. The course takes approximately eight hours and is valid for three years. Although the training is consistent with training provided professional lifeguards, the Swimming & Water Rescue course is **not a lifeguard training course and is not a substitute for BSA Lifeguard Training**. On the other hand, this course addresses important information that may not be covered in generic lifeguard training programs such as: preventative measures, including the buddy system and swim classification tests; how to set up a safe swim area in diverse situations; the use of non-standard rescue equipment; and emergency action plans in remote settings. Therefore, BSA leaders with lifeguard training from other agencies are encouraged to complete this course prior to supervising unit swim activities in remote settings.

**For ALL SCOUTS, the leadership ratio is one trained adult, staff member, or guide per ten participants. At least one leader/parent in attendance is *strongly recommended* to be trained in Red Cross Basic First Aid including CPR. Any swimming done must be supervised in accordance with BSA Safe Swim Defense standards.**

## **BSA Paddle Craft Safety(canoes/rowboats/kayaks/rafting)**

Float trips are popular Boy Scout and Venturing activities. Safety Afloat awareness training provides guidelines for safe float trips and is required of unit leaders, but does not provide the skill training mandated by those guidelines. BSA Paddle Craft Safety expands Safety Afloat training to include the skills, as well as the knowledge, needed for a unit leader to confidently supervise canoeing or kayaking excursions on flat water. Persons completing the training should be better able to assess their preparation to supervise paddle craft activities. The training is open to any registered adult leader, Scout, Venturer, or Explorer who is age 15 or older. The training must be conducted by a council approved instructor, takes roughly eight hours and is valid for three years.

## **BSA Lifeguard**

The emphasis of BSA Lifeguard has changed. The primary purpose is no longer to give units the skills necessary to conduct safe swimming and boating activities. The two Aquatics Supervision awards in Swimming and Water Rescue and Paddle Craft Safety are designed to meet that need. The revised BSA Lifeguard program now focuses on the need to provide BSA-operated facilities, such as summer camps, winter camps and council events with training that meets the requirements of government agencies for professional lifeguards at regulated swimming activities. The program is open to all registered adults and youth age 15 or older and is a recommended adjunct to the Aquatics Supervision awards for unit leaders who wish to expand their water safety skills and for youth who wish to work on the aquatics staffs at BSA camps. Adult and youth first aid training, including CPR, is an important safety consideration for all Scouting activities. First aid training is not included in the above training, with the expectation the leader has addressed that need separately, as noted in the course material and on the training card. Southwest Florida Council training includes American Red Cross CPR and Basic First Aid Training.



BSA groups shall use Safety Afloat for all boating activities. Adult leaders supervising activities afloat must have completed Safety Afloat training within the previous two years. Cub Scout activities afloat are limited to council, district, pack or den events that do not include moving water or float trips (expeditions). Safety Afloat standards apply to the use of canoes, kayaks, rowboats, rafts, floating tubes, sailboats, motorboats (including waterskiing), and other small craft, but do not apply to transportation on large commercial vessels such as ferries and cruise ships. Parasailing (being towed airborne behind a boat using a parachute), kite surfing (using a wakeboard towed by a kite), and unit-level recreational use of personal watercraft (small sit-on-top motorboats propelled by water jets) are not authorized BSA activities.

Safety Afloat training may be obtained from [www.my.scouting.org](http://www.my.scouting.org), at council summer camps, and at other council and district training events. Additional guidance on appropriate skill levels and training resources is provided in the *Aquatics Supervision* guide available from council Scout Shop.

## 1. **Qualified Supervision**

All activities afloat must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of those in his or her care and who is trained in and committed to compliance with the nine points of BSA Safety Afloat. That supervisor must be skilled in the safe operation of the craft for the specific activity, knowledgeable in accident prevention, and prepared for emergency situations. If the adult with Safety Afloat training lacks the necessary boat operating and safety skills, then he or she may serve as the supervisor only if assisted by other adults, camp staff personnel, or professional tour guides who have the appropriate skills. Additional leadership is provided in ratios of one trained adult, staff member, or guide per 10 participants. **For Cub Scouts, the leadership ratio is one trained adult, staff member, or guide per five participants. At least one leader must be trained in first aid including CPR.** Any swimming done in conjunction with the activity afloat must be supervised in accordance with BSA Safe Swim Defense standards. It is strongly recommended that all units have at least one adult or older youth member currently trained in BSA Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety to assist in the planning and carrying out of all activities afloat.

## 2. **Personal Health Review**

A complete health history is required of all participants as evidence of fitness for boating activities. Forms for minors must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. Participants should be asked to relate any recent incidents of illness or injury just prior to the activity. Supervision and protection should be adjusted to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. For significant health conditions, the adult supervisor should require an examination by a physician and consult with parent, guardian, or caregiver for appropriate precautions.

## 3. **Swimming Ability**

Operation of any boat on a float trip is limited to youth and adults who have completed the BSA swimmer classification test. Swimmers must complete the following test, which must be administered annually.

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

For activity afloat, those not classified as a swimmer are limited to multi-person craft during outings or float trips on calm water with little likelihood of capsizing or falling overboard. They may operate a fixed-seat rowboat or pedal boat accompanied by a buddy who is a swimmer. They may paddle or ride in a canoe or other paddle craft with an adult swimmer skilled in that craft as a buddy. They may ride as part of a group on a motorboat or sailboat operated by a skilled adult.

## 4. **Life Jackets**

Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets must be worn by all persons engaged in a boating activity (rowing, canoeing, sailing, boardsailing, motorboating, waterskiing, rafting, tubing, and kayaking). Type III life jackets are recommended for general recreational use.

For vessels over 20 feet in length, life jackets need not be worn when participants are below deck or on deck when the qualified supervisor aboard the vessel determines that it is prudent to abide by less-restrictive state and federal regulations concerning the use and storage of life jackets, for example, when a cruising vessel with safety rails is at anchor. All participants not classified as swimmers must wear a life jacket when on deck underway.

Life jackets need not be worn when an activity falls under Safe Swim Defense guidelines—for example, when an inflated raft is used in a pool or when snorkeling from an anchored craft.

## 5. **Buddy System**

All participants in an activity afloat are paired as buddies who are always aware of each other's situation and prepared to sound an alarm and lend assistance immediately when needed. When several craft are used on a float trip, each boat on the water should have a "buddy boat." All buddy pairs must be accounted for at regular intervals during the activity and checked off the water by the qualified supervisor at the conclusion of the activity. Buddies either ride in the same boat or stay near each other in single-person craft.

## 6. **Skill Proficiency**

Everyone in an activity afloat must have sufficient knowledge and skill to participate safely. Passengers should know how their movement affects boat stability and have a basic understanding of self-rescue. Boat operators must meet government requirements, be able to maintain control of their craft, know how changes in the environment influence that control, and undertake activities only that are within their personal and group capabilities.

Content of training exercises should be appropriate for the age, size, and experience of the participants, and should cover basic skills on calm water of limited extent before proceeding to advanced skills involving current, waves, high winds, or extended distance. At a minimum, instructors for canoes and kayaks should be able to demonstrate the handling and rescue skills required for BSA Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety. All instructors must have at least one assistant who can recognize and respond appropriately if the instructor's safety is compromised.

Anyone engaged in recreational boating using human powered craft on flat water ponds or controlled lake areas free of conflicting activities should be instructed in basic safety procedures prior to launch, and allowed to proceed after they have demonstrated the ability to control the boat adequately to return to shore at will.

For recreational sailing, at least one person aboard should be able to demonstrate basic sailing proficiency (tacking, reaching, and running) sufficient to return the boat to the launch point. Extended cruising on a large sailboat requires either a professional captain or an adult with sufficient experience to qualify as a bareboat skipper.

Motorboats may be operated by youth, subject to state requirements, only when accompanied in the boat by an experienced leader or camp staff member who meets state requirements for motorboat operation. Extended cruising on a large power boat requires either a professional captain or an adult with similar qualifications.

Before a unit using human-powered craft controlled by youth embarks on a float trip or excursion that covers an extended distance or lasts longer than four hours, each participant should receive either a minimum of three hours training and supervised practice or demonstrate proficiency in maneuvering the craft effectively over a 100-yard course and recovering from a capsize.

Self-guided trips on Class III whitewater may only be done after all participants have received American Canoe Association or equivalent training for the class of water and type of craft involved. Unit trips on whitewater sections of rivers rated Class IV are only allowed in rafts with a professionally trained guide in each raft. Trips above Class IV are not allowed.

## 7. **Planning**

Proper planning is necessary to ensure a safe, enjoyable exercise afloat. All plans should

include a scheduled itinerary, notification of appropriate parties, communication arrangements, contingencies in case of foul weather or equipment failure, and emergency response options.

**Preparation.** Any boating activity requires access to the proper equipment and transportation of gear and participants to the site. Determine what state and local regulations are applicable. Get permission to use or cross private property. Determine whether personal resources will be used or whether outfitters will supply equipment, food, and shuttle services. Lists of group and personal equipment and supplies must be compiled and checked. Even short trips require selecting a route, checking water levels, and determining alternative pull-out locations. Changes in water level, especially on moving water, may pose significant, variable safety concerns. Obtain current charts and information about the waterway and consult those who have traveled the route recently.

**Float Plan.** Complete the preparation by writing a detailed itinerary, or float plan, noting put-in and pullout locations and waypoints, along with the approximate time the group should arrive at each. Travel time should be estimated generously.

**Notification.** File the float plan with parents, the local council office if traveling on running water, and local authorities if appropriate. Assign a member of the unit committee to alert authorities if prearranged check-ins are overdue. Make sure everyone is promptly notified when the trip is concluded.

**Weather.** Check the weather forecast just before setting out, and keep an alert weather eye. Anticipate changes and bring all craft ashore when rough weather threatens. Wait at least 30 minutes before resuming activities after the last incidence of thunder or lightning.

**Contingencies.** Planning must identify possible emergencies and other circumstances that could force a change of plans. Develop alternative plans for each situation. Identify local emergency resources such as EMS systems, sheriff's departments, or ranger stations. Check your primary communication system, and identify backups, such as the nearest residence to a campsite. Cell phones and radios may lose coverage, run out of power, or suffer water damage.

## 8. Equipment

All craft must be suitable for the activity, be seaworthy, and float if capsized. All craft and equipment must meet regulatory standards, be properly sized, and be in good repair. Life jackets and paddles must be sized to the participants. Properly designed and fitted helmets must be worn when running rapids rated Class II and above. Emergency equipment such as throw bags, signal devices, flashlights, heat sources, first-aid kits, radios, and maps must be ready for use. Spare equipment, repair materials, extra food and water, and dry clothes should be appropriate for the activity. All gear should be stowed to prevent loss and water damage. For float trips with multiple craft, the number of craft should be sufficient to carry the party if a boat is disabled, and critical supplies should be divided among the craft.

## 9. Discipline

Rules are effective only when followed. All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for safe boating activities provided by Safety Afloat guidelines. Applicable rules should be discussed prior to the outing and reviewed for all participants near the boarding area just before the activity afloat begins. People are more likely to follow directions when they know the reasons for rules and procedures. Consistent, impartially applied rules supported by skill and good judgment provide stepping-stones to a safe, enjoyable outing.

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**SHOOTING SPORTS ACTIVITIES**  
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Training card **MUST** be presented.

**For additional details before conducting an activity consult the Guide to Safe Scouting available at: <http://www.scouting.org/healthandsafety/resources/guidetosafescouting.aspx>**

**Non-adherence to BSA SW FL council policies by volunteers jeopardizes liability coverage for unit volunteers and the charter organization.**

The Boy Scouts of America adheres to its longstanding policy of teaching its youth and adult members the safe, responsible, intelligent handling, care, and use of firearms, air-guns, and BB guns in planned, carefully managed, and supervised programs.

**Except for law enforcement officers required to carry firearms within their jurisdiction, firearms shall not be brought on camping, hiking, backpacking, or other Scouting activities except those specifically planned for target shooting under the supervision of a currently certified BSA or National Rifle Association firearms instructor. Personal firearms and ammunition are not allowed on camp properties by Scouting units.**

**Cub Scouting Standards**

Youth members of Cub Scouting are permitted to participate in the shooting activities at Camp Miles and Camp Flying Eagle only when supervised by a SWFL Council certified and council approved volunteers, in accordance with SWFL Council Shooting Sports program policies. This is a council camp program for units. Units are encouraged to have their own certified and council approved Range Masters to insure availability of proper supervision.

**Personal protection.** • Eye protection is required for both BB and Archery shooting. • Arm protection; each archer must wear an arm guard on the bow arm.

**BB Guns in the Cub Scouting Program**

**BB Gun** - (defined as a smoothbore spring-action or air rifle propelling shot known as "BBs") shooting is an exciting, worthwhile activity for youth and it is one of the most popular program activities held at Cub Scout camps. The use of pellet air rifles is restricted to Webelos and Arrow of Light Scouts in a BSA Resident Camp setting only. Cub Scouts are not permitted to use any other type of firearm or handgun.

**Target** - The target line is usually set 5 meters (16.5 feet) from the firing line. The TQ-40 and AR-4 are the common targets for this distance. Paper plates or aluminum pie tins are also popular targets for Cub Scouts. Animal, zombie, and human form silhouettes are not approved for Cub Scout use.



### **Cub Scout BB Gun Range Masters**

BB gun shooting must be conducted by trained, qualified, on-site range masters who actually direct the operation of the range program and BB gun shooting instruction. To qualify as a BB gun range master, the range master must be at least 21 years of age or older, and be trained by a National Camping School trained shooting sports director or a NRA rifle instructor, or NRA/USA Shooting/CMP certified rifle coach. The BB gun range master also must be registered with the Boy Scouts of America. The local council issues a pocket certificate and certification must be renewed every two years.

### **Archery in the Cub Scouting Program**

**Bows** - A light-draw-weight (15- to 20-pound), 54-inch, takedown, recurve bow is recommended for Cub Scouts because the bow will fit the many archers who may have different lengths of draw. The bow should be equipped with an arrow rest in good condition and a proper-length, well-served, 10-strand string, with a properly placed nock locator. Always inspect the bow for cracks, splinters, and condition of the bow string and serving. True compound bows are not recommended at this level because they must be set up to fit each individual archer.

**Arrows** - Care should be taken to inspect arrows before use. • Length- An appropriate length arrow for Cub Scout-age youth will be approximately 24 to 26 inches. Care must be taken to avoid shooting an arrow that is too short for the archer. • Point - Arrows must be fitted with target points. No field points or broadheads.

**Targets** - For Cub Scouts, it is recommended that large diameter target mats and faces be used to ensure success and to reduce the number of lost arrows. Etha foam mats are commercially available in 48-inch, 36-inch, and 32-inch diameters, with five-color target faces to match. Animal, zombie, and human form silhouettes are not approved for Cub Scout use. Set the target line at no more than 10 yards in front of the shooting line, adding to the success of young archers. The mat should also be mounted relatively low to the ground to make it easier to extract arrows from the target.

### **Archery Range Masters**

The archery program requires a qualified and trained archery range master, 21 years of age or older, to assume responsibility for the program. A qualified and trained archery range master must actually direct the operation of the range program and archery instruction. Trained by a National Camping School trained shooting sports instructor or a USA Archery/ NFAA-instructor. The Archery Range Master must be registered with Boy Scouts of America and certification must be renewed every two years.

### **Unit Line Instructor ++**

Qualified adult 21 years or older that understands the points of BB Gun or Archery safety for respective ranges. Unit Line Instructors will interact with shooters and coaches to get them ready and placed in the proper position. ++The Unit Line Instructor will show Cub Scouts the correct way to place an arrow making sure the index finger is in the correct position. Cub Scouts will learn how to stand on the firing line, and all shooters are aiming down range. **A ratio of 1 qualified adult /(++Unit Line Instructor – SWFL Council terminology) for every 8 Cub Scouts is required on BB Gun Shooting and 1 for every 6 Cub Scouts is required for Archery shooting.**

### **++Additional SWFL Council Camp Usage Policy**

## **Scouts BSA Standards**

Scouts BSA may participate in all activities previously listed for Cub Scouts and in the activities listed here.

### **Shotguns**

1. For range shooting, shot size is determined by the range rules.
2. BSA 30 minute shotgun safety briefing taught by NRA shotgun instructor.
3. All shotgun shooting activities must be supervised by a currently NRA-certified Shotgun Instructor and when on the range, must be supervised by a currently NRA-certified Range Safety Officer. These must be two separate individuals.
4. NRA range safety officer must be present for each group consisting of a maximum of six shooters.
5. Shooting safety glasses and ear protection must be worn on shotgun ranges.
6. Care must be taken to comply with federal, state, and local laws.

### **Muzzleloading Rifle**

1. Only council owned Muzzle Loading Rifles may be used on the SWFC Ranges.
2. BSA 30 minute rifle safety briefing taught by a NRA/NMLRA rifle or muzzleloading rifle instructor.
3. All muzzleloader range shooting activities must be supervised by a currently NRA/NMLRA-certified muzzle loader firearms instructor and when on the range, must be supervised by a currently NRA-certified Range Safety Officer. One Range Safety Officer per four shooters. These must be two separate individuals.
4. For range firing, one NRA/ NMLRA instructor per 1 shooter.
5. Shooting safety glasses and ear protection must be worn on muzzleloader shooting ranges.
6. Care must be taken to comply with federal, state, and local laws.

### **Rifles**

1. Scouts BSA may shoot single shot .22 caliber bolt action rifles or .177 caliber air rifle only.
2. BSA 30 minute rifle safety briefing by an NRA certified rifle instructor.
3. All rifle shooting activities must be supervised by a currently NRA-certified Rifle Instructor and when on the range, must be supervised by a currently NRA-certified Range Safety Officer. One NRA range safety officer per eight shooters. These must be two separate individuals.
4. Shooting safety glasses and ear protection must be worn on rifle ranges.
5. Care must be taken to comply with federal, state, and local laws.

## **Venturing Standards**

Venturers may participate in all activities previously listed for Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA and may participate in the activities listed below:

### **Pistols**

1. **Pistol use is limited to the Venturing program.**
2. All pistol shooting activities must be supervised by a currently NRA -certified Pistol Instructor and when on the range, must be supervised by a currently NRA-certified Range Safety Officer. These must be two separate individuals.
3. When on the range, there must be a ratio of one shooter per NRA certified pistol instructor. One Range Safety Officer.
4. BSA 30 minute pistol safety briefing due to 1-to-1 ratio of shooter to instructor, with the instructor loading the pistol for the shooter.
5. Shooting safety glasses and ear protection must be worn on pistol ranges.
6. Care must be taken to comply with federal, state, and local laws.

## Cannons and Large-Bore Artillery

Units are not authorized, under any circumstances, to use a cannon or any other large-bore artillery device. The only authorized individuals are Muzzleloader Instructors or NMLRA Instructors.

### Shooting Sports Director

A Shooting Sports Director must be an adult 21 years of age or older, holding a current Shooting Sports Director Certificate from a Boy Scouts of America National Camping School. This person directs programs to achieve the aims of the Boy Scouts of America in spirit of, and according to, BSA standards. The director will be in charge of all shooting sports including riflery, shotguns, muzzleloaders, pistols, and archery. This individual sees that all areas are maintained and used properly. The shooting sports director maintains an updated inventory of equipment, and is in charge of the safe and proper maintenance and usage of this equipment. The camp shooting sports director may manage a staff that includes properly qualified instructors (as outlined below) and trains support staff members to work in the camp's shooting sports program areas. For conducting a year-round shooting sports program, councils may have a shooting sports coordinator who is an NCS-trained shooting sports director.

### Chief Instructor

A Chief Instructor must be an adult who is 21 years of age or older and who is a current instructor qualified (as outlined below) in the specific shooting sports program for which supervision and instruction is required. The BSA National Camping School Shooting Sports Director can be the Chief Instructor.

### Assistant Instructor

Is 18 years of age or older and holds a current NRA assistant instructor's certificate in the appropriate discipline. Can assist the chief instructor in supervising a range; however, this **does not include** running a live firing line.

### Shooting Sports Program Counselors and Aides

Shooting Sports Program Counselors and Aides must be 16 years of age or older who is trained for specific duties by an NCS shooting sports director or other qualified instructor (as outlined below). Shooting sports program counselors and aides under on-site supervision of a range officer may exercise crowd control; serve as a training assistant for specified topics; move and maintain equipment; and act as a coach in a student coach/pupil setting, etc. Shooting sports program counselors and aides may **NOT** supervise any live-fire range.

### What "Instructor Qualified" Means

To be instructor qualified means the individual is trained and currently documented by:

- The **BSA National Camping School** as a shooting sports director for rifle, muzzleloading rifle, shotgun, or archery. Pistol is optional.
- The **National Rifle Association** as a currently Certified Basic Firearms Instructor, Assistant Instructor, or Coach for rifle, muzzleloading rifle, shotgun, muzzleloading shotgun, pistol, or muzzleloading pistol.
- The **National Muzzleloading Rifle Association** as an instructor or instructor for muzzleloading rifle, muzzleloading shotgun, or muzzleloading pistol
- The **USA Archery /National Field Archery Association** as a currently certified instructor or coach for archery
- **Council Approved** means you are certified and have been **approved** by the Council Shooting Sports Director and the Scout Executive.

### Shooting Sports Range Safety Supervision

#### NRA Range Safety Officer

The range safety officer in charge has overall supervisory responsibility for the operation and safety of and on any shooting range. This individual will be in charge of the firing line and may not leave the firing line at any time while it is in operation. On any firearms range, the range safety officer in charge must have current NRA range safety officer credentials and must be 21 years of age or older. In most camps, the shooting sports director can serve as a range safety officer, if the shooting sports director holds current NRA range safety officer training.

## B.S.A. GUIDELINES FOR UNIT LEADERS TO CONDUCT

### C.O.P.E. / CLIMBING ACTIVITIES

#### REQUIREMENTS, QUALIFICATIONS AND PROCEDURES

#### **PROOF OF CERTIFICATE IS REQUIRED AT CHECK-IN**

**Training card MUST be presented.**

**BSA References:** Current Belay On Manual, Current Climb On Safely Guidelines, Current Topping Out Manual, Current COPE / Climbing National Standards and the current Guide to Safe Scouting Publication.

**Challenge Course Industry Reference:** Challenge Course and Canopy/Zip Line Tour Standards, produced by the Association for Challenge Course Technology, (ACCT)

For additional details before conducting an activity consult the Guide to Safe Scouting available at: [www.scouting.org/healthandsafety/resources/guidetosafescouting.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/healthandsafety/resources/guidetosafescouting.aspx)

*Non-adherence to policies and procedures by leaders jeopardizes liability coverage for unit volunteers and the charter organization.*

#### **Climbing and Rappelling**

The BSA limits district and council activities to bouldering, top-rope climbing, and belayed rappelling. The Climb on Safety Standards, No. 430- 099, apply to district and council activities.

**Participant requirements:**

#### **C.O.P.E.**

All participants must be at least **13 years of age** and must present a current BSA Annual Health and Medical record (**Parts A, B, & C Completed**) to the supervising director for review.

#### **Climbing**

Registered Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturers, Explorers and adults are permitted to climb and rappel on the Southwest Florida Council Climbing Tower. **All** participants must present a current BSA Annual Health and Medical Record to the Director in Charge for review. (**Parts A, B, & C Completed**)

**Units that elect to participate in snow and ice climbing, lead climbing without a top-rope belay, or canyoneering must receive training from a nationally recognized organization that trains climbing instructors.**

**BSA units that want to conduct their own bouldering, climbing, rappelling, or other related climbing activities must follow the requirements set forth in Climb On Safely, No. 430-099.**

***The Eight Points of Climb On Safely:***

*Qualified supervision*

*Qualified instructors*

*Physical fitness*

*Safe area*

*Equipment*

*Planning*

*Environmental conditions*

*Discipline*

References: *Climb On Safely*, No. 430-099  
*Belay On Manual*, No. 430-500 (Download from [Scouting.org](http://Scouting.org))  
*Climb On Safely* ([Web Training](#))

**The Guide to Safe Scouting:** Outlines in detail the most current B.S.A. policies; however, the following information explains the requirements at the unit level for units to participate in both C.O.P.E. /Climbing Activities.

**Project C.O.P.E. and Climbing / Rappelling Activities** include an inherent safety risk due to their nature. Unit leaders should never attempt any of these activities without proper training and supervision. Only those unit leaders who have successfully completed an approved training program such as those offered at BSA National Camp School or through the Council C.O.P.E. / Climbing Committee will be approved. Specific questions regarding what constitutes proper training, training opportunities or qualifications required should be directed to the Council Service Center or the Council C.O.P.E./Climbing Committee.

*(For detailed explanation of these activities refer to the current edition of the Project COPE / Topping Out Manual as appropriate).*

**Climb on Safely:** Explains how Climbing / Rappelling activities are to be conducted, but does not qualify an individual to instruct or lead the activity. It is meant to educate leaders who will be assisting National Camp School Trained or Council Trained C.O.P.E./Climbing Instructors or contracted organizations with specific training and skills appropriate to the activity. When using a contracted organization, such as a climbing gym, that organizations safety procedures apply.

**Council C.O.P.E./Climbing Instructor Training** is offered through the Council C.O.P.E./Climbing Committee and generally requires two weekends, 36 hours, to complete and is site specific. Candidates must be at least 16 years of age (C.O.P.E./Climbing Instructor In Training or ITT), or 18 years of age, (C.O.P.E./Climbing Level I Instructor) and a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America.

**National C.O.P.E./Climbing Instructor Training** offers separate training for the position of C.O.P.E./Climbing Program Manager, Trainer Tester and C.O.P.E./Climbing Level II Instructor (C.O.P.E./Climbing Director). This course is generally a week in duration and covers a variety of disciplines. All NCS C.O.P.E./Climbing candidates must be at least 21 years of age, a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America and have prior experience in C.O.P.E./Climbing Activities at the council level. Candidates must have successfully completed the Council Level C.O.P.E./Climbing Training Program and agree to adhere to the guidelines set forth in National C.O.P.E./Climbing Standards and Council C.O.P.E./Climbing Committee policies and procedures.

### **1. Qualified Supervision**

All C.O.P.E./Climbing activities must be supervised by a mature, conscientious adult unit leader at least 21 years of age who understands the risks inherent to these activities. This person knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the youth in his or her care. This adult supervisor is trained in and committed to compliance with the eight points of the Boy Scouts of America's Climb on Safely guidelines as appropriate to the activity. One additional adult who is at least 18 years of age must also accompany the unit. Units with more than 10 youth in the same C.O.P.E./Climbing session must have an additional adult leader at least 18 years of age for each 10 additional youth participants. In other words, a group of 11 to 20 youth requires at least three adult leaders; a group of 21 to 30 youth would require four adult leaders, and so on.

The adult supervisor is responsible for ensuring that someone in the group is currently trained in American Red Cross (ARC) Standard First Aid and CPR (a 6-1/2-hour course). In addition, the two-hour module "First Aid—When Help Is Delayed" is recommended. A course of equivalent length and content from another nationally recognized organization can be substituted. A higher level of certification such as emergency medical technician (EMT), licensed practical nurse (LPN),

registered nurse (RN), and licensed health-care practitioner is also acceptable. The ARC's Emergency Medical Response, is a 27-hour course that includes CPR, and is highly recommended.

## **2. Physical Fitness**

Requires evidence of fitness for the climbing/rappelling activity with at least a current (within last 12 months) BSA Annual Health and Medical Record; Parts A & B & C (current version). The adult supervisor should adapt all supervision, discipline, and precautions to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. If a significant health condition is present, an examination by a licensed health-care practitioner should be required by the adult supervisor before permitting participation in any C.O.P.E./Climbing activity. The adult supervisor must inform the C.O.P.E./Climbing Instructor about each participant's medical conditions.

## **3. Planning**

When planning, remember the following:

1. Obtain written parental consent to participate in COPE/Climbing activities for each participant.
2. In the event of severe weather or other problems, share the activity plan and an alternate with parents and the unit committee.
3. Obtain a current weather report for the area before the group's departure.
4. It is required that at least one of the adult leaders has an electronic means of communication in case of an emergency.
5. Before any activity, an adult leader should develop and share an emergency plan that includes the location of a nearby medical facility and the means of communicating with parents during the outing.

## **4. Environmental Conditions**

The adult unit leader and each participant assumes responsibility for monitoring potentially dangerous environmental conditions that may include loose, crumbly rock; poisonous plants; wildlife; and inclement weather. Use the buddy system to monitor concerns such as dehydration, hypothermia, and an unusually high degree of fear or apprehension. The adult supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the group leaves no trace of its presence at the site. See the *Principles of Leave No Trace*.

## **5. Discipline**

Each participant knows, understands, and respects the rules and procedures for the activity specified and has been oriented in Climb on Safely and Leave No Trace. All BSA members should respect and follow all instructions and rules of the C.O.P.E./Climbing Instructor. The applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing and should be reviewed for all participants before the activity begins. When participants know the reasons for rules and procedures, they are more likely to follow them. The C.O.P.E./Climbing Instructor must be both strict and fair while showing no favoritism.

## **CAVING**

### **General Policy for Unit Leaders**

Caving can be a hazardous activity when the proper equipment, skills, and judgment are not used. Trips that are led by adults inexperienced in caving and trips containing large numbers of persons compound the hazards already inherent in the activity and create a potentially dangerous situation. Qualified instructors with specific training and skill in leading these activities are required.

1. All caving, other than simple novice activities, should be limited to adults and young people 14 and older—members of Venturing crews and older Scouts in troops, and teams. "Simple novice activities" means commercially operated cave excursions.

2. Units (teams, troops, crews) that include cave visits in their program, whether for one trip or many, must adhere to the two-deep leadership policy of the Boy Scouts of America (two registered adult leaders, or one adult and a parent of a youth member, one of whom must be 21 or older). These leaders must be responsible, mature adults who are constantly present with the group. One cave trip leader must be highly qualified through caving experience and must be thoroughly versed in all established safety practices, conservation measures, and courtesy to cave owners.

3. In conformity with the BSA policy on the use of wilderness areas, all caving groups should be limited to 8 to 10 persons and two-deep leadership as required by the Boy Scouts of America for all trips or outings. Caving activities for larger groups should not be conducted. Each group should be organized to function independently, i.e., plan its own trips on different dates, provide its own transportation and food, and function as a separate and distinct group. The only exception to these rules may be trips to certain commercial caves where special provisions are made to furnish proper supervision by professional guides.

**Note:** Caving trips have been incorporated in the BSA "Policy on Use of Wilderness Areas by Personnel of the BSA," with a cross reference to these guidelines. Copies of the wilderness area policy statement are available from High Adventure Programs, Boy Scouts of America, 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane, Irving, Texas 75015-2079.

4. Any Venturing crew wishing to learn about cave rescue work or pursue that activity as a specialty must do so under the sponsorship and supervision of an adult cave rescue group affiliated with the National Speleological Society.

5. The leaders and the individual members of the group must understand these basic practices and policies of caving, which are approved by the Boy Scouts of America and the National Speleological Society. In addition to understanding these tenets, every participant in a caving trip must agree, without reservation, to follow all of the specific guidelines contained in BSA's Caving publication, No. 19-102A.

6. Any cave trip must include a fully qualified leader or adult assistants qualified to handle all problems that might arise. These leaders should have had experience as active participants in a competent caving group. They must realistically evaluate their own knowledge and experience and must never attempt to lead their group into a situation that is beyond their capability or the capability of any member of the group. The overall capability and pace of a caving group is always that of the least able member of that group, and no member of the group should ever be encouraged or permitted to attempt a potentially dangerous act that is beyond their ability solely because the remainder of the group has the necessary ability.

7. The leaders must thoroughly comprehend that overwhelming difficulties may easily result from the problems of fatigue, improper or faulty equipment, emotional problems, physical limitations, or excessive eagerness or exuberance in members of the group. Additionally, they must realize that all of these individual problems are often interrelated and that the occurrence of any one of them can easily create a situation that will lead to or accentuate any or all of the others.

The leaders must constantly remember that any obstacle overcome on the way into the cave will also have to be overcome on the way out, when the group is tired, when the initial enthusiasm of some of the group may have decreased, and when their alertness and physical abilities, as well as those of their group, is at the lowest.

8. The leaders must have adequate first aid training and ability, and a comprehensive knowledge of the practices to follow in the event of an accident.

9. The leaders must keep their group together at all times.
10. All basic equipment such as clothing, shoes, lights, and spare parts for the lights, hard hats, and food should be appropriate for the cave being visited. It is the responsibility of the leader to ensure that all equipment is adequate and in good condition.
11. The equipment and spare equipment must never be makeshift or of questionable dependability. The highest standards developed by experienced cavers are to be met in all categories of equipment. The use and repair of each item must be understood and demonstrated by all in the party before entering the cave.
12. Under no conditions should any member of the group be permitted to enter the cave if they do not have all of the required equipment in their possession. The sharing of any equipment, such as lights, between individuals must be prohibited.
13. Except for groups composed entirely of experienced cavers, the cave to be visited must not require the use of ropes, ladders, or other climbing devices. The safe use of these aids requires extensive initial training and practice under controlled conditions above ground, never in a cave.
14. Natural and fabricated hazards such as mud slopes, loose rocks, pits, deep water, complex routes, old ropes, wooden ladders, and the possibility of flooding are all dangers to some degree and must be approached with care and judgment. If it appears that an accident may still occur in spite of preventive measures, that area must be avoided entirely.
15. The strength, endurance, and specific abilities of every member of the group must be evaluated in advance and nothing attempted that exceeds anyone's limitations. Climbing, crawling, and route finding are not necessarily inborn skills, and should be taught and tested before a cave trip is undertaken.
16. Not only the leaders, but every person on a cave trip should be aware of the necessity to constantly observe the whereabouts and potential problems of other members of the group and be ready to provide any assistance necessary.
17. Running, jumping, horseplay, and solo exploration must be prohibited - such foolhardy actions jeopardize not only the individual, but also the entire group.
18. Caves are often cold and damp, and hypothermia is a danger, especially on long trips or trips requiring wading or crawling in water. Try to dress for conditions to be met, stay as dry as possible. Leave the cave immediately if any member of the group shows signs of hypothermia such as uncontrollable shivering, slurred speech, or loss of coordination.
19. Specific information about the caving trip must be left with a responsible person back home at time of departure. This should include location and length of time of trip, expected time of return, list of participants, and whom to contact for each trip member in case of emergency.
20. A record of every cave trip will provide valuable assistance to new leaders and cavers alike. Full records of all caving accidents will provide the basis for a guide to the development of a safe caving program. A complete report of any accident, regardless of severity, should be sent to the Safety Committee of the National Speleological Society, 6001 Pulaski Pike NW, Huntsville, AL 35810. Serious accidents should also be reported to the director of Health and Safety Service of the Boy Scouts of America, as well as Greg Graham, Scout Executive/ CEO of the Southwest Florida Council, Inc., 239-936-8072 ext. 102.

Resource: Caving, No. 19-102B