

GOLDEN EMPIRE COUNCIL AQUATIC MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR INTERIM CRITERIA

Revised June 5, 2015

Source Document: Gulf Coast Council Aquatics Committee Aquatic Merit Badge Counselor Criteria

References: BSA Guide to Advancement, Aquatics MB Pamphlets, and Aquatics Supervision Manual

General Requirements for all applying aquatic merit badge counselors:

1. Registered with the BSA
2. Current Youth Protection Training certification.
3. Currently certified in Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat. Copies of certification will be submitted with application.
4. All aquatic merit badge instruction, except kayaking, includes CPR and that portion of the instruction must be taught by an instructor that is currently trained by a nationally certified provider. Applicants must submit documentation that they are a certified CPR instructor, or have access to someone who is certified and will conduct the required CPR training.

NOTES:

1. Merit badge counselors who are currently certified in the new BSA Swimming and Water Rescue and/or Paddle Craft Safety courses must include copies of their certifications with their applications. All Aquatic merit badge counselors are strongly encouraged to enroll in the two new courses at their first opportunity.
2. All Aquatic merit badge counselors must have passed the BSA Swimmers Test, administered by an approved tester, within the last 12 months. Approved testers are BSA Aquatics Instructors, Summer Camp Waterfront Staff, and those personnel trained, and certified, by a BSA Waterfront Director. Counselors must check with Scoutmasters to see if scouts are current in passing the BSA Swimmers Test. If not, they should contact the Council for a name of an approved tester that can conduct the test prior to starting the merit badge class.
3. All Aquatic merit badge instruction must be supervised by an adult that is at least 21 years old and certified in Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat. A counselor under the age of 21 years may provide merit badge instruction, provided that an adult 21 or older supervises all activities in or on the water, and both counselors are certified in Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat.
4. The term "equivalent" when used in this document means that the merit badge counselor applicant must submit written documentation with their application that will substantiate that they are knowledgeable in the subject matter, and possess the qualifications necessary to teach the applicable Aquatics merit badge. The council Aquatics Committee will review all submitted documentation and make the final decision as to whether or not qualifications are met.
5. All swimming and watercraft activities must be conducted in accordance with Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat.

Specific Requirements for each Aquatic merit badge:

Lifesaving :

- Counselors must be currently certified in Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED, or the equivalent, and certified as a BSA, or Red Cross, Lifeguard Instructor, or a BSA Aquatics Instructor, or the equivalent.
- If the counselor is under 21 years old, an adult 21 or older must supervise all activities in or on the water.
- Both must be certified as a BSA, or Red Cross Lifeguard, a BSA Aquatics Instructor, or the equivalent, and also certified in First Aid/CPR/PR/AED by a nationally certified provider.

Swimming :

- Counselors must be certified Red Cross/YMCA Swim Instructors, BSA Aquatics Instructors, or the equivalent.
- Counselors must have a complete knowledge of the swimming strokes, and other aquatic skills, required for the Swimming MB and be able to apply that knowledge to effectively teach each skill.

Rowing :

- Counselors must be certified as a BSA Aquatics Instructor, or trained, and certified, by a BSA Aquatics Instructor.

Canoeing :

- Counselors must be certified as a BSA Aquatics Instructor, a Red Cross Canoeing Instructor, an American Canoe Association Instructor, or the equivalent, or trained, and certified, by a BSA Aquatics Instructor.

Whitewater :

- Counselors must be certified as a Whitewater Canoeing or Kayaking Instructor by the American Canoe Association, or the equivalent.

SCUBA:

- ALL PHASES OF INSTRUCTION must be conducted by instructors trained and sanctioned by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), Scuba Schools International, International Diving Educators Association,

Professional Diving Instructors Corporation, Scuba Diving International, or a member of the World Recreational Scuba Training Council.

Small Boat Sailing:

- Counselors must be certified as a BSA Aquatics Instructor, or the equivalent.
- Counselors must possess, or have access to, all equipment required to teach the MB.
- Sailing craft must be smaller than 21 feet, may be capsized, and able to sail to windward. Sailboards are not acceptable.
- All craft must carry U. S. Coast Guard required safety equipment, and adhere to all the points of Safety Afloat and Safe Boating.

Motor Boating and Water Sports:

- Counselors must be certified as a BSA Aquatics Instructor, or the equivalent.
- Counselors must possess or have access to all equipment required to teach the merit badge.
- Counselors must have successfully completed the California Boating Safety Course.
- All craft must carry U. S. Coast Guard required safety equipment, and adhere to all the points of Safety Afloat and Safe Boating.

Kayaking:

- Counselors must be certified as a BSA Aquatics Instructor, or have formal training in kayaking and paddle craft instruction, evidenced by a BSA Aquatics Instructor, or Paddle Craft Safety Instructor, or kayaking instructor certification from the American Canoe Association, the British Canoe Union, or American Red Cross, or equivalent.

Consolidated Waterfront Aquatics Programs

When multiple aquatics merit badge classes are provided in a formal waterfront setting such as BSA certified summer camps, the qualifying counselor training of one or more individuals may be applied to multiple aquatics programs and aquatics merit badge classes, provided the following conditions are met:

1. The Waterfront Director is a certified BSA Aquatics Instructor, or possesses qualifying ACA certification.
2. The aquatics merit badge program, including a plan to assure appropriate oversight by the Waterfront Director, is part of the approved waterfront plan for the certified summer camp.
3. All participating aquatics merit badge counselors must meet the general requirements for aquatic merit badge (MB) counselors, and must have current certification in CPR and current BSA training in weather awareness.
4. Each aquatics merit badge counselor must have equivalent training or experience, or both, in the merit badge(s) he or she is teaching.