

# Water Awareness and Charge Certificate Manual

## Module 01: Responsibilities and Limits of the Water Awareness Certificate Holder

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## **Outcomes**

After completing this module, the certificate holder will:

- Be able to explain the purpose and use of a water awareness certificate
- Have identified the responsibilities and limits of a water awareness certificate holder.

# 1 Limits Of The Water Awareness Certificate

As this Course has been designed primarily for the Scouter who wants to make use of water for Pack and Troop camps, expeditions and outings, definite guidelines have to be put in place to protect the Cub/Scout, the Movement and ultimately the Scouter.

## 1.1 Scope of Activity

The holding of the Water Awareness Certificate enables the Scouter to carry out Water Activities on a limited scale, safely, on inland waters with no special difficulties, without taking any of the fun and excitement out of the activities.

## 1.2 Limitations of the Activities

- a) No Cub must be allowed to venture out further than 10 metres and no Scout further than 20 metres from the shoreline and must remain within 20 metres either side of the observing qualified Scouter.
- b) The Troop Scouter is to ensure that the Scout remains within eyesight of Him/Her at all times and that the Scout does not venture further than 20 metres from the shoreline.
- c) No Cub or Scout shall be allowed to bathe, except under the personal supervision of the Scouter in charge of the party and if necessary some competent adult swimmer appointed by him for the purpose. The safety of the place must have been previously ascertained, and all reasonable precautions must be taken, including the provision of a lifeline.
- d) A picket of two scouts with holding the Swimmer Interest Badge, preferably those holding the Lifesaver Badge, must be on duty (wearing swimsuits) in a boat or on shore, as the circumstances may demand, ready to help any Cub or Scout in distress. The picket may not bathe until the others have left the water.
- e) The above does not apply to swimming in properly supervised swimming baths.
- f) The Water Awareness Certificate is not a Water Charge as defined in the Safe Scouting policy, section 9.5, and as such does not authorize the certificate holder to conduct any water or boating activities associated with such charges.
- g) Swimming must be limited to daylight hours with good visibility.

## 1.3 Staffing Requirement Guidelines

No of Scouts/cubs	Warranted Scouter with certificate	Lookouts	Swimmer
6	1	0	1
12	1	1	1
18	1	1	2
24	1	2	2

**NOTE:** this table only serves as a guideline and the following **MUST** be taken into consideration: 1) Competency and age of the Scouts and cubs and 2) the water conditions

## 1.4 Tabular Representation of Water Activity and Applicable Certificate / Charge

The following table shows the various water activities and shows the required of preferred charge associated with the activity.

Activity	Water Awareness Certificate	Flat Water Canoe Charge	White Water Canoe Charge	Sailing Charge	Oars Charge	Advanced open Water & Power Boat *
Swimming flat water	Yes	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred
Tubing flat water	Yes	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred
Rafting flat water	Yes	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred
Canoeing on flat water	No	Yes	Preferred	No	No	No
Canoeing – White Water	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Sailing flat water	No	No	No	Yes	No	Preferred
Rowing flat water – Gig	No	No	No	No	Yes	Preferred
Rowing on Open Water & Power Boat	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

\*: This is required for activities on large water expanses (e.g. Vaal Dam) where weather conditions are affected by the water body.

**NOTE:** Swimming, Tubing or Rafting in Rivers are not recognized Scout activities as per the Safe Scouting policy, however the White Water Canoe Charge is the only course that covers the dangers associated with white water.

## 2 Responsibility Of A Water Awareness Certificate Holder

To hold a Water Awareness Certificate is a privilege and not a right. This certificate can be revoked if for any reason it is found that misuse and/or irresponsible actions have resulted in bad publicity or if Scouts South Africa has been brought into disrepute. It must be realized that this Certificate places you as a Scouter, in a very responsible position and as such your responsibility must be discharged with honour. As a Water Awareness Certificate holder you must be aware of the following:

### 2.1 Responsibilities

Before any water activity can take place the holder of the certificate must ensure:

- a) That application for the event has been properly applied for through the correct channels and that a positive response has been received from Regional Headquarters and/or the Chairman Water Activity Committee.
- b) Once the permit has been received from Headquarters, ensure that properly completed Parent Consent forms have been received from each Cub/Scout, specifying the type of activity that will take place.
- c) Confirm that the weather conditions are suitable for the event prior to the start of the activity.
- d) Ensure that the required permission has been granted by the parent or guardian.

### 2.2 Identification of Suitable Venues

As for camping, the selection of a suitable venue for the holding of any water activity event is vital. If a safe and enjoyable activity is to be arranged, things that need to be addressed for swimming and tubing are:

**NOTE:** Check the suitability of water quality on the intranet

- a) An unobstructed shoreline where visibility on either side is so that either the Certificate holder/Observer can control and monitor the activity at all times.
- b) In dams and lakes select an area that is relatively free of water plants like reeds, bulrushes and water grasses. Reeds and bulrushes can obscure your vision of the Cubs and Scouts in the water. Water grass can be very restrictive and can severely hamper a swimmer's ability to remain afloat.
- c) Be very cautious of fallen trees in water and ensure Cubs and Scouts stay well clear of such obstacles. (entrapment danger)
- d) Be aware of any boating activity (canoeing, sailing or power boat), particularly at public venues, in or near the chosen swimming area. No boats should be allowed in a chosen water activity area except for explicit use as a rescue craft.
- e) Ensure that there are safe entry and exit points from the water activity area onto dry land – no steep embankments.
- f) Ensure that diving into the water is prohibited and that the buddy system is enforced at all times.
- g) Ensure that the proper permission from the controlling authority of the dam/lake has been obtained; also obtain information of any danger areas on the waters.

### 2.3 Know Your Own Limitations

The major cause of any accident on water is that people underestimate the power of water and all the dangers that go along with it.

- a) The Scouter should realize that that he/she must set the example at all times and therefore they must be on guard not to become too over-confident. Find out what your limitations are prior to the event and do not overextend yourself and become a statistic.
- b) Also realize that your Cubs/Scouts also have limitations. Never force them to do any activity that they feel uncomfortable with. Rather allow them to find their own confidence at their own pace.

### 2.4 Know When to End a Water Activity

As the Water Awareness Certificate holder YOU are directly responsible for the wellbeing and safety of the Cubs and Scouts participating in the specific water activity.

At the briefing before the start of the water activity, agree on an appropriate sound signal to leave the water (whistle blasts). Warn all that this sound will be used for bad weather or dangerous conditions, unacceptable behaviour in the water or during emergency procedures.

Any signs of imminent thunder and lightning in the area will end the water activity immediately. (refer to: **Module 8: Weather Conditions and Cloud Formations**).

On the highveld, summer storms can build very quickly, and as the certificate holder you need to make the decision when to call Cubs and Scouts off the water. You should remember that rafts may need to be pulled off the water and dismantled and packed away at the end of the water activity, and this should be accomplished before the storm sets in.