

# Water Awareness and Charge Certificate Manual

## Module 07: Swimming Safety, Barrel Rafting and Tubing

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## **Outcomes**

After completing this module, the certificate holder will:

- Implement the 9 safety steps to ensure a safe swimming environment.
- Construct safe rafts
- Explain how to conduct safe rafting / tubing activities with cubs and scouts.

# 1 Swimming Safety

Water Safety begins in your head prior to any activity taking place. Here are some handy safety hints to assist you.

1. Never swim by yourself, no matter how good a swimmer you may think you are, use the buddy system!
2. It is always much safer to swim where a lifeguard is on duty.
3. If you are in charge of small children Cubs/Scouts never take your eyes off of them round water as accidents happen quickly.
4. If you are a learner swimmer, stay in shallow water.
5. People who are poor swimmers or cannot swim should not float around on tubes or do any rafting.
6. Never attempt a long swim without proper rescue craft. Normally this will not happen at any Scouting activity.
7. If you get a cramp in your leg arm or foot while swimming, don't panic.
8. Stop and stretch the affected area, rub it and work it out, you will float.
9. Also change the way you are swimming if you feel the cramp coming on.
10. Never call for help if you are not in difficulty in the water it may just cost you your life. If you are in distress yell and wave your arms to attract attention.
11. Never drink the water directly from rivers or dams.
12. Leave the water as soon as you see lightning or hear thunder.

## 1.1 The Nine Safety Swimming Steps

### 1. Qualified Supervision:

A warranted scouter must be in charge at all times when Cubs/Scout swimming is conducted. He/she must hold the Water Awareness Certificate and have the required staffing as set out in **Module 1: Responsibilities and Limits of the Water Awareness Certificate Holder**

### 2. Safe Swimming Area:

The bottom of the swimming area is examined to make sure it is safe, with no deep holes, stumps or rocks. It is marked off in three sections not more than 1 meter deep for non swimmers, up to just over head depth for beginners and deep water for swimmers.

### 3. Picket (Lifeguards):

A picket consists of one or more competent adult swimmer(s) or scout(s) holding the Lifesaver interest badge maintaining a watch over the swimmers. The picket stands at the edge of the water, equipped with a lifeline, ready to assist a swimmer in trouble. If a Charge Certificate Holder is available a boat can be on standby at the edge of the water to assist in any rescue if necessary.

### 4. Lookout:

A lookout is posted where he/she has an unobstructed view of the swimming area and their duties are as follows:

- 1) Look out for signs of distress
- 2) Never take their eyes off the position of the person in distress
- 3) Dispatch the lifeguards (raise the alarm) and direct them to the person in distress.

### 5. Emergency Signal:

Use a previously agreed upon signal to leave the water. This should be an audible whistle signal. Use long, continuous blasts of the whistle, as these have the best chance of being heard, even under the water.

#### **6. Ability:**

Before any swimming starts each Cub/Scouts swimming ability is tested. They are then divided into the three groups, non swimmers, learner swimmers and swimmers. Each group must remain within their demarcated area at all times.

#### **7. Buddy System:**

Each Cub/Scout is paired off in their respective groups with a buddy and the buddies must at all times remain within 3 meters of each other. A predetermined sound signal on the whistle is given to all groups and on hearing this signal the buddies must join hands and raise them above their heads so that a count can be made to ensure all groups are accounted for.

#### **8. Good Discipline:**

The Certificate Holder must see that there is intelligent discipline with strict attention to the rules, but must also ensure that everyone has a fun time and become better swimmers.

#### **9. Sun Screen:**

People who live in areas that get high levels of UV radiation from the sun are more likely to get skin cancer. For example, the highest rates of skin cancer are found in South Africa and Australia, areas that receive high amounts of UV radiation.

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is the main cause of skin cancer, although artificial sources of UV radiation, such as sunlamps and tanning booths, also play a role.

The risk is greatest for people who have light-colored skin that freckles easily - often those who also have red or blond hair and blue or light-colored eyes - although anyone can get skin cancer.

The Certificate Holder must ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that Cubs and Scouts partaking in Water Activities wear a suitable Sun Block to protect from the harmful UV sun rays. If no Sun block lotion is available the children should be encouraged to swim with a T-shirt or rash vest on.

**Remember: Slip, Slap, Slop (Slip on a shirt, Slap on a hat and Slop on some sun screen)**

## **2 Barrel Rafting and Tubing on Flat Water**

### **2.1 Barrel Rafting**

Rafting is and can be endless hours of fun for both Scouts and Cubs, but must at all times be properly controlled and all safety factors taken into consideration. In Gauteng each year an area event takes place Kontiki, which has become a major event on our calendar, there many forms of rafts can be seen as well as many different designs of rafts. This however need not necessarily be the case on a Group/Troop or Pack camping weekend. A simple raft consisting of barrels, pioneering poles and decking will suffice.

- a. Barrels - These must be properly checked to ensure that they are water tight, that no dangerous or flammable fumes are leaking from the barrels. The rule of thumb is that there should be one (1) barrel per person to support such person and two additional barrels to support any gear.
- b. Anchors – Ensure that the raft is securely anchored and that it will not drift away outside the demarcated area for the event/swimming. These anchors can be a simple mud weight, dependant on the type of surface at the bottom of the dam. It is also advisable if you have Cubs participating in or on a raft to have a safety line from the shore to the raft.
- c. Fires – Only gas burners should be allowed on a raft. No open fires should be permitted and especially not on any of the barrels as the heat may cause these barrels to expand and explode.
- d. Swimming – Other than at Kontiki where no swimming is permitted due to the close proximity of the rafts to each other and the possibility that a person could be rammed/crushed by another raft swimming as per regulations must be strictly controlled as well as the diving from raft decks.
- e. Overnight Stays – If any Troop (NO CUBS) plan to stay overnight there must at all times be safety checks in place throughout the night like a permanent vigil from the shore and regular visits throughout the night. This is not recommended as it requires extensive planning.

### **2.2 Tubing**

Tubing is defined as any inflatable device that is not specifically designed for boating. These include: lilo's Inflatable toys, car and truck tubes etc.

NOTE: the danger of these devices lie in the fact that they are not easily controlled and can be easily blown away.