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By doing the requirements for the Kayaking merit badge, Scouts learn to safely glide across the water. They familiarize themselves with kayaking equipment and techniques. Then they put their paddling knowledge to use by demonstrating their skills on the water. Note that this is different than the Kayaking BSA award, but there is some overlap between the two. Kayaking merit badge is an elective merit badge. Sponsored Learn more about Scouts BSA Find specific helps for some of the Kayaking merit badge requirements listed below. Some of these resources will just give the answers. Others will provide engaging ways for older Scouts to introduce these concepts to new Scouts. Ask Scouter Mom a question or share your ideas with others Kayaking Merit Badge Requirement 1: Safety Explain to your counselor the hazards you are most likely to encounter while participating in kayaking activities, including weather and water-related hazards, and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards. Review prevention, symptoms, and first-aid treatment for the following injuries or illnesses that can occur while kayaking: blisters, cold-water shock and hypothermia, heat-related illnesses, dehydration, sunburn, sprains, and strains. Review the BSA Safety Afloat policy. Explain to your counselor how this applies to kayaking. You can prevent heat problems, using these tips: Avoid hard exercise during the hottest part of the day. If you're not in shape, slow down and let your body adjust. Make sure you acclimate to the environment and get in shape before the event. Dress in layers and wear clothing that breathes and wicks moisture away from you. Eat snacks that contain a little salt. Drink water and keep drinking it. Read more If you or someone else has heat exhaustion, treat symptoms in the following ways. Get out of the heat quickly and into a cool place, or at least shade. Lie down and elevate your legs to get blood flowing to your heart. Take off any tight or extra clothing. Apply cool towels to your skin or take a cool bath. This will help regulate and lower your internal body temperature. Drink fluids, such as water or a sports drink. Do not guzzle them, but take sips. Do not drink fluids with caffeine or alcohol. Read more, including when to call 911. To prevent dehydration, drink plenty of fluids and eat foods high in water such as fruits and vegetables. You can usually reverse mild to moderate dehydration by drinking more fluids, but severe dehydration needs immediate medical treatment. Read more Prevention: Avoid being in the sun between 10am and 4pm Wear a broad-brimmed hat, a long sleeved shirt, long pants, and UV blocking sunglasses Use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours or if you are sweating or swimming Learn more about sunburn, including options for relief Remember R.I.C.E. therapy Rest - Avoid movements which cause pain. Immobilize - Stabilize the injured area with a splint, sling, or bandage. Cold - Apply ice packs to reduce pain and swelling. Wrap crushed ice or a cold pack in a thin towel and apply for no more than 20 minutes at a time. Wait at least 40 minutes before reapplying. Elevate - If practical, raise the injured area above the level of the heart to reduce swelling. Seek medical attention if the pain persists. Before embarking on a boating activity with your scouts, make sure everyone is aware of the Safety Afloat guidelines. Kayaking Merit Badge Requirement 2: Swim Test Before doing requirements 3 through 8, successfully complete the BSA swimmer test. 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. The BSA swim test is used to determine ability level so that participants can swim in an area which is appropriate for them. Safe Swim Defense provides the steps which a BSA unit must take to safely participate in an activity which involves swimming. Kayaking Merit Badge Requirement 3: Safety Equipment Review the characteristics of life jackets most appropriate for kayaking and understand why one must always be worn while paddling. Then demonstrate how to select and fit a life jacket for kayaking. Review the importance of safety equipment such as a signal device, extra paddle, sponge, bilge pump, flotation bags, and throw bag. The most popular style used for paddling is a Type III PFD. This is a vest style PFD. When wearing a life jacket, zippers should be zipped, buckles should be buckled, and it should be fitted correctly so that when you lift it by the shoulder straps, the straps do not go above the ears and the front does not reach the chin. Whistle for emergency signaling Spare paddle in case your original paddle is lost or damaged First aid kit in case of injury Sponge to keep the inside of the kayak (and therefore yourself) dry Bilge pump to quickly remove a lot of water from a kayak Waterproof bag to keep your things dry Throw bag for rescue situations Map and compass for navigation Water and food to stay hydrated and keep your energy level up Kayaking Merit Badge Requirement 4: Kayaks Name and point out the major parts of a kayak. Review the differences in the design between recreational, whitewater, and sea or touring kayaks. Include how length, width, stability, and rocker are involved in the design of each type. Explain the care, maintenance, and storage of a kayak. A kayak rocker is one of the design elements that affect the dynamics of the kayak in the water. The rocker is simply the curved part in the bottom of the kayak hull that connects the bow with the stern. Learn about kayak stability and how the hull design impacts primary stability and secondary stability. Read more The choices available to potential kayakers and canoeers can be a little bewildering. Learn some of the more common types of paddle boats and their advantages and disadvantages. This article includes information for how to store, clean, wax, inspect, and maintain a kayak. Kayaking Merit Badge Requirement 5: Kayak Paddles Discuss the following: How to use a kayak paddle. Parts of a paddle. The care and maintenance of a paddle. Considerations include length, materials and price. Blade and shaft. Read more The blade is the wide flat part. The power face is the smooth side of the blade which presses against the water. The back face is the side of the blade opposite the power face. The tip is the far end of the blade. The shaft is the long section of the paddle between the blades. The throat is where the blade meets the shaft. The grip is where you place your hands. After each use: Separate your paddle halves. Rinse each half with clean, fresh water; be sure to rinse the ferrule as well. Examine the internal parts of the shaft frequently to make sure they are clear of water and debris. When not in use, store your kayak paddle halves apart in a clean, dry, indoor place whenever possible. This article also includes information on cleaning your kayak paddles. Read more. Kayaking Merit Badge Requirement 6: Safety Skills Using a properly equipped kayak with an open cockpit, a sit-on-top, or an inflatable kayak, do the following: Safely capsize and perform a wet exit. Reenter the kayak with assistance from a buddy boat. Demonstrate a kayak-over-kayak rescue. Demonstrate the HELP position. Capsize the kayak, swim it and the paddle to shore, and empty water from the kayak with assistance, if needed. Kayaking Merit Badge Requirement 7: Strokes As a solo paddler, use a properly equipped kayak to demonstrate the following: Forward stroke Reverse stroke Forward sweep Reverse sweep Draw stroke Stern draw The forward sweep allows you to make a big forward circle or to correct your forward motion. Learn how to turn your kayak in a circle in reverse. See how to do a draw stroke, which is the best way to move your kayak laterally through the water. The stern draw can be used to turn your kayak. Kayaking Merit Badge Requirement 8: Skills Demonstration As a solo paddler, use a properly equipped kayak to demonstrate the following: Paddle a straight line for 15 to 20 boat lengths using appropriate strokes while maintaining trim and balance of the kayak. Spin or pivot from a stationary position 180 degrees (half circle) to the right and left within two boat lengths. Move abeam to the right 10 feet and to the left 10 feet. Stop the boat in one boat length. While maintaining forward motion, turn the kayak 90 degrees to the right and left. Move the kayak backward three to four boat lengths using appropriate and effective reverse strokes. Paddle the kayak in a buoyed figure 8 course around markers three to four boat lengths apart. Other Resources Do the following: Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while participating in canoeing activities and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards. Review prevention, symptoms, and first-aid treatment for the following injuries or illnesses that could occur while canoeing: blisters, cold-water shock and hypothermia, dehydration, heat-related illnesses, sunburn, sprains, and strains. Discuss the BSA Safety Afloat policy. Tell how it applies to canoeing activities. Before doing the following requirements, successfully complete the BSA swimmer test. Jump feet first into water over your head in depth, swim 75 yards or 75 meters in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; then swim 25 yards or 25 meters using an easy resting backstroke. The 100 yards or 100 meters must be swum continuously and include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating. Do the following: Name and point out the major parts of a canoe. Describe how the length and shape of a canoe affect its performance. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the different materials used to make canoes. Do the following: Name and point out the parts of a paddle. Explain the difference between a straight and bent-shaft paddle and when each is best used. Demonstrate how to size correctly a paddle for a paddler in a sitting position and a kneeling position. Do the following: Discuss with your counselor the characteristics of life jackets most appropriate for canoeing and tell why a life jacket must always be worn while paddling. Demonstrate how to select and properly fit the correct size life jacket. Discuss with your counselor the general care and maintenance of canoes, paddles, and other canoeing equipment. Do the following: Discuss what personal and group equipment would be appropriate for a canoe camping trip. Describe how personal and group equipment can be packed and protected from water. Using the containers and packs from requirement 7a, demonstrate how to load and secure the containers and other equipment in the canoe. Using appropriate knots, including a trucker's hitch, tautline hitch, and bowline, demonstrate how to secure a canoe to a vehicle or a trailer, or if these are not available, a rack on land. With a companion, use a properly equipped canoe to demonstrate the following: Safely carry and launch the canoe from a dock or shore (both, if possible). Safely land the canoe on a dock or shore (both, if possible) and return it to its proper storage location. Demonstrate kneeling and sitting positions in a canoe and explain the proper use for each position. Change places while afloat in the canoe. With a companion, use a properly equipped canoe to demonstrate the following: In deep water, exit the canoe and get back in without capsizing. Safely perform a controlled capsize of the canoe and demonstrate how staying with a capsized canoe will support both paddlers. Swim, tow, or push a swamped canoe 50 feet to shallow water. In the shallow water, empty the swamped canoe and reenter it. In deep water, rescue a swamped canoe and its paddlers by emptying the swamped canoe and helping the paddlers safely reenter their boat without capsizing. With a companion, use a properly equipped canoe to demonstrate the following paddling strokes as both a bow and stern paddler: Forward stroke Backstroke Draw For stern paddling only: J-stroke Pushaway Forward sweep Reverse sweep Rudder stroke Stern pry Using the strokes in requirement 10, and in an order determined by your counselor, use a properly equipped canoe to demonstrate the following tandem maneuvers while paddling on opposite sides and without changing sides. Each paddler must demonstrate these maneuvers in both the bow and stern and on opposite paddling sides: Pivot or spin the canoe in either direction. Move the canoe sideways or abeam in either direction. Stop the canoe. Move the canoe in a straight line for 50 yards. Use a properly equipped canoe to demonstrate solo canoe handling: Launch from shore or a pier (both, if possible). Using a single-blade paddle and paddling only on one side, demonstrate proper form and use of the forward stroke, backstroke, draw stroke, pushaway stroke, forward sweep, reverse sweep, J-stroke, and rudder stroke. Repeat while paddling on the other side. Using a single-blade paddle and paddling only on one side, demonstrate proper form and use of a combination of a forward stroke, rudder stroke, and stern pry by canoeing to a target 50 yards away. Repeat while paddling on the other side. Make a proper landing at a dock or shore (both, if possible). Store canoe properly (with assistance, if needed). Discuss the following types of canoeing: Olympic canoe sprint Flatwater and river touring Outrigger Marathon Freestyle Whitewater Canoe poling Note: Canoeing merit badge counselors must have either BSA Aquatics Instructor or Canoeing Instructor certification from the American Canoe Association, American Red Cross, or equivalent; OR local councils may approve individuals previously certified as such, or trained by an instructor so qualified.

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