

BSA Lifeguard



To be trained as a BSA Lifeguard, you must successfully complete the BSA Lifeguard course and demonstrate the ability to perform each of the skills taught in the course. Before doing requirements 6 through 25, complete the following:

1. Submit proof of age. You must be at least 15 years old to participate.
2. Submit written evidence of fitness for swimming activities (signed health history).
3. Swim continuously for 550 yards, including at least 100 yards each of the following strokes in good form: front crawl, breaststroke, elementary backstroke, and sidestroke.
4. Immediately following the above swim, tread water for two minutes.
5. Starting in the water, swim 20 yards using a front crawl or breaststroke, surface dive 7 to 10 feet, retrieve a 10-pound object, surface, swim with the object 20 yards back to the starting point, and exit the water, all within 1 minute, 40 seconds.

Requirements

Complete the following requirements within a 120-day period:

6. Demonstrate reaching assists from the deck using an arm, a rescue tube, and a pole.
7. Demonstrate throwing assists using a throw bag and a ring buoy with line attached. Throw each device such that the line lands within

- reach of a conscious subject 30 feet from shore.
8. Demonstrate:
 - a. Rescue of a conscious subject in deep water using a rescue board, kayak, rowboat, canoe, or other rescue craft that would be available at your local facility.
 - b. Repeat for an unconscious subject.
 9. Demonstrate an entry and front approach with a rescue tube to a conscious subject in deep water 30 feet away from shore. Extend the rescue tube within the grasp of the subject and then tow the subject back to the entry point, providing direction and reassurance throughout.
 10. Demonstrate an entry and rear approach with a rescue tube to a conscious subject in deep water 30 feet away from shore. Grasp the victim from behind using a scoop technique under the arms to support the subject against a rescue tube squeezed between the victim's back and the rescuer's chest. Reassure the subject and tow the subject to shore.
 11. Demonstrate use of a rescue tube to assist two subjects grasping each other.
 12. Demonstrate both front and rear head-hold escapes from a subject's grasp.
 13. Demonstrate a feet-first entry in deep water with a rescue tube and swim an approach stroke 25 yards within 25 seconds while trailing the tube.
 14. Demonstrate an entry and front approach with a rescue tube to a face-down unconscious subject at or near the surface in deep water. Use a wrist tow to place the subject face-up on the rescue tube and use a one-arm tow to the closest point of safety.
 15. Demonstrate an entry and rear approach with a rescue tube to a face-down unconscious subject at or near the surface in deep water. Use a scoop technique to position the rescue tube between the subject and the rescuer's chest, then either lean back or rotate to bring the subject face-up. Tow the subject to the nearest point of safety using either a two-arm tow or switching to a one-arm tow.
 16. Demonstrate an entry and approach with a rescue tube to an unconscious subject submerged face-down at or near the bottom in 6 to 8 feet of water. Bring the subject to the surface and tow to the nearest point of safety.
 17. Remove a subject from the water using each of the following techniques in the appropriate circumstances with the aid of a second rescuer:

- a. Vertical lift at the edge of a pool or pier using a backboard
 - b. Walking assist
 - c. Beach drag
18. Participate in multiple-rescuer search techniques appropriate for a missing subject in murky water:
 - a. Line search in shallow water
 - b. Underwater line search in deep water without equipment
 - c. Underwater line search in deep water with mask and fins
 19. Demonstrate head-splint (extended arm rollover) in-line stabilization for a face-down subject with suspected spinal injury in very shallow water (18 inches or less).
 20. Demonstrate head-splint in-line stabilization for a suspected spinal injury in shallow water (waist to chest deep):
 - a. For a face-up subject
 - b. For a face-down subject
 21. Demonstrate head and chin support in-line stabilization for a suspected spinal injury in shallow water (waist to chest deep):
 - a. For a face-up subject
 - b. For a face-down subject
 22. Demonstrate in-line stabilization for a suspected spinal injury in deep water, swim the subject to shallow water, confirm vital signs, and, with the assistance of three others, remove the subject from the water using a backboard with straps and head immobilization device.
 23. Correctly answer 80 percent of the questions on the BSA Lifeguard written test covering Safe Swim Defense, aquatics procedures at BSA camps, guard duties, emergency action plans, surveillance, and water rescue. Review any incomplete or incorrect answers.
 24. Show evidence of current training in American Red Cross First Aid (valid for three years) and American Red Cross CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer (valid for one year) or equivalent (includes any training for a camp health officer recognized by BSA national camp standards).
 25. Serve as a lifeguard, under supervision, for at least two separate BSA swimming activities for a combined time of two hours. Afterward, discuss the experience with the lifeguarding instructor.

Completion Options

Course completion cards are valid only when signed by either a current BSA Aquatics Instructor or BSA Lifeguard Instructor approved by the local council. Training is valid for three years provided First Aid and CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer training are kept current during that period.

There are four ways to obtain a course completion card:

1. **Course Completion**—Complete all requirements in the instructor manual during a scheduled course of instruction. The participant must attend all course sessions. Makeup sessions are allowed at the instructor's discretion. If an individual is unable to complete all requirements during the scheduled course, the instructor may elect to continue training until the participant is able to complete all the requirements provided the total elapsed time from start to finish does not exceed the 120-day period.
2. **Renewal Challenge**—Anyone with a BSA Lifeguard completion card that is current or has expired within six months may renew or extend the training by performing requirements 2 through 24 without attending the standard course sessions. Prior to the testing, the instructor may provide a renewal training session to review and update skills and information. Summer camp aquatics directors should renew training for aquatics staff members during precamp training while emphasizing local camp facilities, procedures, and emergency action plans.
3. **Crossover Challenge**—Anyone who holds current training in American Red Cross Lifeguarding, American Red Cross Waterfront Lifeguarding, or other lifeguard training programs may obtain a BSA Lifeguard completion card by performing requirements 1 through 25 without attending the standard course sessions. The lifeguard training program that issued the training certificate must be recognized by the local or state regulatory agency that sets standards for lifeguards at youth camps. The instructor may provide a crossover training session to review and update skills and information prior to the testing. The applicant may receive credit for requirement 25 if within the past 18 months he or she has served as a lifeguard, under supervision, or has supervised lifeguards, for at least two separate BSA swimming activities for a combined time of two hours. Otherwise, due to BSA procedures not implemented at other lifeguarding venues, the applicant must accomplish requirement 25.
4. **Coinstructors** (BSA Aquatics Instructor or BSA Lifeguard Instructor) may each sign a completion card for the other at the conclusion of a BSA Lifeguard course if they satisfy requirements 2–22 and 24.

See the [Application for BSA Lifeguard, No. 430-033](#),  for detailed requirements.