

## **Appendix D**

### **EXCERPTS FROM THE *GUIDE TO SAFE SCOUTING***

All participants in official Scouting activities should become familiar with the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and applicable program literature or manuals, and be aware of state or local government regulations that supersede Boy Scouts of America practices, policies, and guidelines. The *Guide to Safe Scouting* is an overview of Scouting policies and procedures gleaned from a variety of sources. For some items, the policy statements are complete. For others, unit leaders are expected to review the additional reference material cited prior to conducting such activities.

In situations not specifically covered in the guide, activity planners should evaluate the potential risk of harm, and respond with action plans based on common sense, community standards, the Boy Scout motto, and safety policies and practices commonly prescribed for the activity by experienced providers and practitioners. Perhaps this quote by Lord Robert Baden-Powell from his 1914 book *Quick Training for War* is appropriate to include here:

*“... The books lay down definite principles and examples which serve to guide the leaders when applying their common sense to the situation before them. No two situations are ever precisely the same, and it is therefore impossible to lay down exact rules that should guide in every case, but a man who carries precedents and principles in his head has no difficulty in applying their teaching in supreme moments of sudden emergency ...”*

#### **Versions of the Guide**

In addition to the printed version, the *Guide to Safe Scouting* is available online at [www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/gss.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/gss.aspx).

To obtain additional printed copies of the book, contact your local Scout shop, or order online at [www.scoutstuff.org](http://www.scoutstuff.org). Don't forget to check Scouting Safely information at [www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety.aspx).

#### **Aquatics Safety**

##### **Aquatics Leadership Training Programs**

Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat training programs are available online at [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) and may be offered locally by instructors approved by the council aquatics committee or other council authority. ...

##### **Responsibilities of Supervisory Personnel**

Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat govern BSA swimming and boating activities. Both specify that the activities are supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who:

- Understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of youth members in his or her care
- Is experienced in the particular activity
- Is confident in his or her ability to respond appropriately in an emergency
- Is trained and committed to the nine points of BSA Safety Afloat and/or the eight points of Safe Swim Defense

Unit leadership that accompanies the unit on an outing handles the first and last bulleted points above. However, under appropriate circumstances, the unit leader may delegate responsibility to trained individuals within the unit or to on-site professionals for the second and third bulleted points above. For example, a Scout troop at a water park with trained lifeguards on duty need not assign separate unit personnel to perform water rescue.

A Venturing crew on a whitewater excursion may rely on a licensed outfitter to provide the necessary equipment and trained guides.

Every possible contingency will not be covered with a hard-and-fast rule, and rules are poor substitutes for experience. Ultimately, each responsible adult leader must personally decide if he or she understands the risk factors associated with the activity and is sufficiently experienced and well-informed to make the rational decisions expected of a “qualified supervisor.” The BSA training programs listed above help provide the skills, experience, and guidance for making such a determination.

### Safe Swim Defense

BSA groups shall use Safe Swim Defense for all swimming activities. Adult leaders supervising a swimming activity must have completed Safe Swim Defense training within the previous two years. Safe Swim Defense standards apply at backyard, hotel, apartment, and public pools; at established waterfront swim areas such as beaches at state parks and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes; and at all temporary swimming areas such as a lake, river, or ocean. Safe Swim Defense does not apply to boating or water activities such as waterskiing or swamped boat drills that are covered by Safety Afloat guidelines. Safe Swim Defense applies to other non-swimming activities whenever participants enter water over knee deep or when submersion is likely, for example, when fording a stream, seining for bait, or constructing a bridge as a pioneering project. Snorkeling in open water requires each participant to have demonstrated knowledge and skills equivalent to those for Snorkeling BSA in addition to following Safe Swim Defense. Scuba activities must be conducted in accordance with the BSA Scuba policy found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*. Because of concerns with hyperventilation, competitive underwater swimming events are not permitted in Scouting. ...

### Classification of Swimming Ability

The swimmer and beginner classification tests defined in Safe Swim Defense may be administered at the unit level following procedures specified in Aquatics Supervision, No. 34346.

Swim classification tests for multiunit district and council aquatics activities, such as day or resident camps, are generally conducted on-site by supervisory personnel for those activities. Councils may arrange for swim classification tests conducted by council-approved aquatics resource people prior to camp as outlined in section V of *Camp Program and Property Management*, No 20-290. When swim tests are conducted off-site prior to the camp session, the camp aquatics director retains the right to review or retest any or all participants.

### Safety Afloat

BSA groups shall use Safety Afloat for all boating activities. Adult leaders supervising activities afloat must have completed Safety Afloat training within the previous two years. Cub Scout activities afloat are limited to council, district, pack, or den events that do not include moving water or float trips (expeditions). Safety Afloat standards apply to the use of canoes, kayaks, rowboats, rafts, floating tubes, sailboats, motorboats (including waterskiing), and other small craft, but do not apply to transportation on large commercial vessels such as ferries and cruise ships. Parasailing (being towed airborne behind a boat using a parachute), kite-surfing (using a wakeboard towed by a kite), and recreational use of personal watercraft (small sit-on-top motorboats propelled by water jets) are not authorized BSA activities. ...

## Camping

### Age Guidelines

The Boy Scouts of America has established the following guidelines for its members' participation in camping activities:

- Overnight camping by Tiger, Wolf, and Bear Cub Scout dens as dens is not approved, and certificates of liability insurance will not be provided by the Boy Scouts of America.
- Tigers, with their parent, guardian, or other caring adult, may participate in child-parent excursions, day camps, pack overnights, council-organized family camping, or resident camping.
- Tiger, Wolf, and Bear Cub Scouts, and Webelos Scouts may participate in a resident overnight camping program operating under BSA National Camping School-trained leadership and managed by the council.
- A Webelos Scout may participate in overnight den camping when supervised by an adult. In most cases, Webelos Scouts will be under the supervision of their parent or guardian. It is essential that each Webelos Scout be under the supervision of a parent-approved adult. Joint Webelos den/troop campouts including the parents of the Webelos Scouts are encouraged to strengthen ties between the pack and troop. Den leaders, pack leaders, and parents are expected to accompany the youth on approved trips. ...

If a well-meaning leader brings along a child who does not meet these age guidelines, disservice is done to the unit because of distractions often caused by younger children. A disservice is also done to the child, who is not trained to participate in such an activity and who, as a nonmember of the group, may be ignored by the older campers.