

## **National Capital Area Council Aquatics Activity Awards Counselor Information and Procedures**

It is great that you want to serve as a Counselor for youth in the Boy Scouts of America. To protect our youth and ensure that they receive the highest quality instruction there are certain procedures required for you to follow to become an approved counselor with BSA. This document provides general background for aquatics activity awards and provides specific information on how you get approved as a counselor/instructor.

Several BSA aquatics activity awards, not tied to advancement, promote water safety and are available to Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers but not Cub Scouts. These awards include Boardsailing BSA, Kayaking BSA, Mile Swim BSA, Scuba BSA, Snorkeling BSA and BSA Stand Up Paddleboarding. Much of the material covering skills for the awards is presented in "Aquatics Supervision: A leader's guide to youth swimming and boating activities". Specific BSA resources for these awards are listed later in this document.

"Aquatics Supervision: A leader's guide to youth swimming and boating activities" serves as a primary resource for the Mile Swim BSA, Snorkeling BSA, Kayaking BSA, and Boardsailing BSA awards. The requirements for each of those recognitions are found in Appendix 3 of Aquatics Supervision. Anyone interested in earning these recognitions should refer to NCAC's list of qualified aquatics award counselors. Anyone interested in serving as a counselor should apply to NCAC to be listed on the council roster of approved counselors. Specific details on how to do that are listed in the next section.

All aquatics activities must be conducted in accordance with BSA's Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat guidelines. SSD and SA training is available online at [myscouting.scouting.org](http://myscouting.scouting.org). These guidelines are modified by BSA's Scuba policy, BSA Snorkeling Safety and Kayaking Safety procedures for those specific activities. See the referenced materials "Notes to Counselor" sections for specific program guidance.

Even though these aquatics awards are not part of the BSA advancement program, many of BSA's advancement program procedures are applicable for the aquatics activity awards. See [www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/GuideforMeritBadgeCounselors/MBCounselorGuide.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/GuideforMeritBadgeCounselors/MBCounselorGuide.aspx) for background information and guidance for working with Scouts. When the award requirements have been met (as stated on the award form – no more or no less than those requirements listed) the approved Counselor/Instructor signs the award completion form which is given to the Scout. The scout will then submit the approved form to his unit which then records the accomplishment and typically recognizes the Scout with an emblem purchased from the Scout Shop.

Typically there is no or little cost to Scouts to complete the requirements for an award. Fees to cover direct equipment rental or facility costs can be collected. Counselor's time to conduct the programs is generally donated in Scouting.

In Scouting, the emphasis is on programming for youth. However, these awards promote important skill and safety information that will help a unit leader conduct a safe unit activity. Therefore, these awards may also be earned by unit leaders and other registered volunteers (collectively known as Scouters). Often, training sessions are more effective when conducted separately for different age groups, but in some situations it is more practical for Scouters to attend the same training sessions as unit members. Generally, Scouts should be given priority over Scouters when equipment is limited.

### **NCAC BSA Aquatics Awards Counselor Requirements:**

Being approved as an aquatics awards counselor involves several steps (depending on your BSA registration status). First you must be registered with BSA. Registering with BSA in an adult position requires specifying a “position”. There isn’t a position of “Aquatics Award Counselor” so Aquatics Award Counselors are registered in the merit badge counselor position or any other BSA position (e.g., Assistant Scoutmaster in a Troop, Committee Member in a Cub Scout Pack, Boy Scout Troop or Venture Crew). The last step is to submit the required credentials for the particular awards you wish to counsel to NCAC. The procedures outlined here assume that you will be registering as a merit badge counselor.

1. Each Counselor must be registered with the Boy Scouts of America and have current BSA Youth Protection training (YPT). Please see [www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx) for information on completing the online BSA YPT course.

a. New BSA registration:

A prospective Counselor can register with BSA as a Merit Badge Counselor (position code #42) with no registration fee. Registering in any other position requires paying the annual BSA registration fee (in 2012 the fee is \$16).

The BSA adult leader application form is available at:

[www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-501.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-501.pdf). In the Council/district position box use code “42” to indicate merit badge counselor position. The merit badge counselor application form is available at:

[www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf). You should list the aquatics activity awards you want to counsel in the merit badge subjects boxes.

The completed adult leader application and the merit badge counselor application are submitted to:

Program Department  
National Capital Area Council  
Boy Scouts of America  
9190 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda MD 20814-3897  
Attention: Aquatics Committee

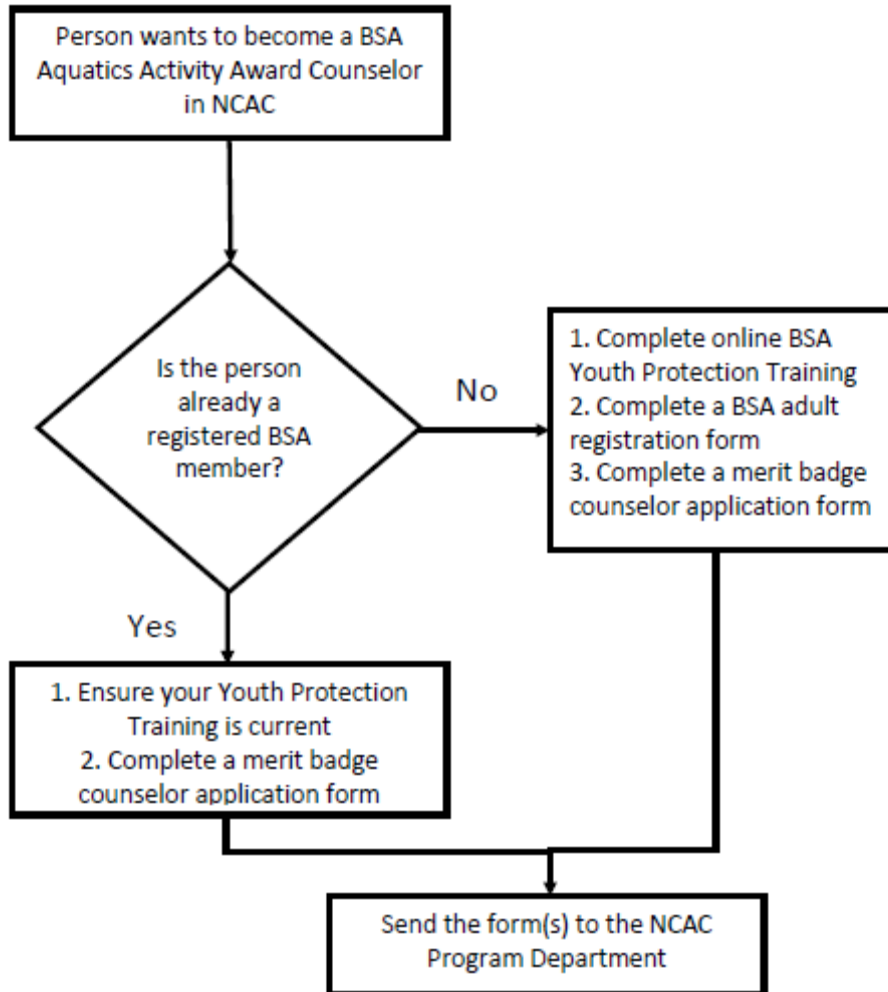
b. Already registered Scouter:

No separate BSA registration is required. The merit badge counselor application form listing your required counselor credentials must be completed and sent to the NCAC Program Department.

2. Each BSA aquatics activity award has specific criteria for Counselor qualifications. The qualifications for each award are listed below under “Award Specific Information”. Please ensure that the appropriate training credentials are listed in your merit badge counselor application form for each aquatics activity award for which you are applying as a counselor.

The applicant will be contacted with any questions or when their name has been successfully added to the Counselor list.

**Steps to become an Aquatics Activity Award Counselor  
in the National Capital Area Council**



## **Counselor List Distribution:**

The NCAC-approved Counselor list is distributed semi-annually to the District Advancement Committees by the NCAC Advancement and Recognition Committee. The list is also available on the NCAC Aquatics Committee webpage. Approved Counselors are free to promote their participation as Counselors however they desire.

## **Award Specific Information**

### **Kayaking BSA**

This award recognizes the growing interest in kayaking both in the public and in Scouting. Kayaking BSA skills in Chapter 17 satisfy Safety Afloat training guidelines for kayaking excursions on calm water.



#### *Required Counselor qualifications:*

- Must be recognized as a kayak instructor by the American Canoe Association or equivalent organization
- BSA Aquatics Instructor

#### *Program materials:*

- Kayaking BSA (flier and card) 19-510 (available at [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/19-510.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/19-510.pdf))
- Aquatics Supervision: A leader's guide to youth swimming and boating activities No. 34737 (Chapter 17)
- Kayaking Pocket Certificate (Item: 34208)
- Kayaking Emblem (Item: 246)

### **Snorkeling BSA**

This award encourages the development of basic skills using a mask, snorkel, and fins. Snorkeling BSA skills are prerequisites to unit snorkeling activities in open water.



#### *Required Counselor qualifications:*

- Persons certified to conduct snorkeling instruction by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), or the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), or other BSA recognized agency.
- Any adult trained and assigned by a currently trained BSA Aquatics Instructor may serve as a counselor.

*Program materials:*

- Snorkeling Safety (flier and card) 19-176 (available at [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/19-176.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/19-176.pdf))
- Aquatics Supervision: A leader's guide to youth swimming and boating activities No. 34737 (Chapter 11)
- Snorkeling Certificate (Item: 34205)
- Snorkeling Emblem (Item: 248)

**Scuba BSA**

In earning this award, Scouts and Scouters get an introductory scuba experience in clear, confined water conducted by a professionally trained scuba instructor.



*Required Counselor qualifications:*

- Counselors for Scuba BSA must hold current scuba instructor certification from PADI, NAUI, SSI, or other RSTC member organizations.

*Program materials:*

- Scuba BSA (flier and card) 19-515 (available at [www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/19-515.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/19-515.pdf))
- Aquatics Supervision: A leader's guide to youth swimming and boating activities No. 34737 (Chapter 11)
- Scuba Pocket Certificate (Item: 33143)
- BSA Scuba Emblem (Item: 247)

**Boardsailing BSA**

This award was introduced when boardsailing first became popular and remains a basic introduction to the sport.



*Required Counselor qualifications:*

- Any person recognized as a boardsailing instructor by the U.S. Windsurfing or U.S. Sailing associations may serve as a counselor for this award with the approval of the local council.
- Adults with similar qualifications may serve as counselors with approval from a council aquatics committee.
- Any adult trained and assigned by a currently trained BSA Aquatics Instructor may serve as a counselor.

*Program materials:*

- Boardsailing BSA application 19-935 (available at [www.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/pdf/512-017\\_WB.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/pdf/512-017_WB.pdf))
- Aquatics Supervision: A leader's guide to youth swimming and boating activities No. 34737 (Chapter 23)
- Boardsailing Emblem (Item: 249)

### **Mile Swim BSA**

This award promotes physical fitness as well as confidence. Several training and conditioning sessions culminate in a continuous mile-long swim in safe conditions.



#### *Required Counselor qualifications:*

-Currently trained BSA Aquatics Instructor or equivalent or Approved by NCAC Aquatics Committee.

#### *Program materials:*

- Aquatics Supervision: A leader's guide to youth swimming and boating activities No. 34737 (page 296)
- BSA Mile Swim Emblem (Item: 245)
- Mile Swim BSA card (Item: 34394 or 34246)

### **BSA Stand Up Paddleboarding Award**

The BSA Stand Up Paddleboarding award introduces Scouts to the basics of stand up paddleboarding (SUP) on calm water, including skills, equipment, self rescue, and safety precautions. This award also encourages Scouts to develop paddling skills that promote fitness and safe aquatics recreation.



#### *Required Counselor qualifications:*

-Any person recognized as a SUP instructor by the ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue or equivalent organization may serve as a counselor for this award, with the approval of the local council. An ACA Level 1 or Level 2 Stand Up Paddleboarding Assessment Course or ACA Instructor certification is strongly recommended.

#### *Program materials:*

- BSA Stand Up Paddleboarding Award 2013 Printing No. 430-189 (available at: [www.scouting.org/filestore/Outdoor%20Program/pdf/BSA\\_SUP\\_Award.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/Outdoor%20Program/pdf/BSA_SUP_Award.pdf))
- BSA Aquatics Supervision, 2013 Printing, No. 34346
- [sup-aca.org](http://sup-aca.org) or [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)
- Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) Pocket Certificate Item: 618552
- Standup Paddleboarding Emblem Item: 618632

#### **For further information or questions contact:**

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