



BSA

Safe Swim Defense



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA



Developed by Rich Diesslin, BSA Lifeguard,
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Safe Swim Defense

This is to verify that _____
has satisfactorily completed specific instruction in Safe Swim Defense
and has agreed to use the eight defenses in this plan on every occa-
sion when _____
goes swimming. (Unit and No.)
This card is good for two years from date: _____

Boy Scouts of America Council
Signed: _____
Aquatics Counselor Approved by Council
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Safe Swim Defense

Prerequisites!



Safe Swim Defense

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P Who can teach it?

- ▶ any person **authorized** by the council including:
 - a BSA Aquatics resource person
 - a unit leader with aquatics skill or
 - any other person with aquatics knowledge or experience whom the local council has approved

P Before a BSA group can swim:

- ▶ One adult leader must complete Safe Swim Defense training (at a minimum)
- ▶ have commitment card (No. 34243) with them, and
- ▶ agree to use the eight defenses in this plan

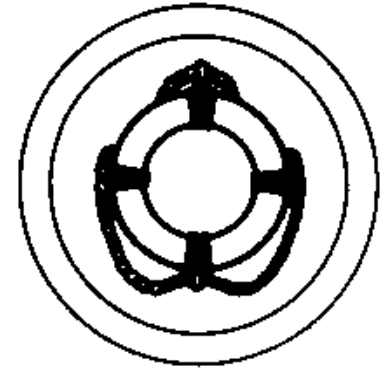
The 8 Defenses

Review Them Before Each Outting!

1. Qualified Supervision
2. Physical Fitness
3. Safe Area
4. Lifeguard on Duty
5. Lookout
6. Ability Groups
7. Buddy System
8. Discipline



1. Qualified Supervision



No Small Commitment!

P All swimming activity must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who:

- ▶ understands/accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of youth members in his or her care
- ▶ is experienced in the water and confident of his or her ability to respond in the event of an emergency, and
- ▶ is trained/committed to BSA Safe Swim Defense

Note: It is strongly recommended that all units have at least one adult or older youth member currently certified as a BSA Lifeguard to assist in the planning and conduct of all swimming activity.





2. Physical Fitness

Keep a Health History of Your Den, Pack or Troop!

P Require evidence of fitness for swimming activity

- ▶ Complete health history (from physician, parent, or legal guardian)
- ▶ Adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions
- ▶ Significant health conditions require proof of an examination by a physician

Note: Those with physical disabilities can enjoy and benefit from aquatics if the handicaps are known and necessary precautions are taken.

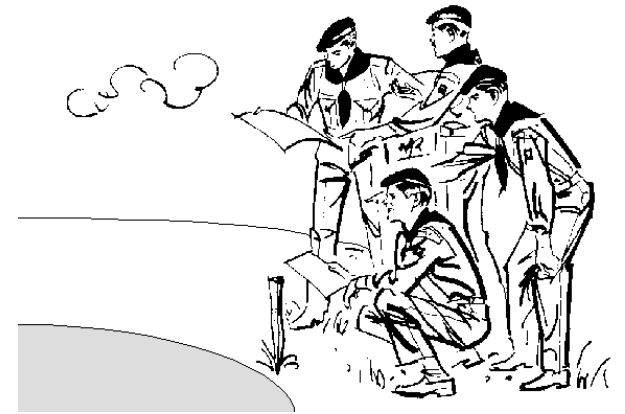
3. Safe Area

For Areas Not Regularly Used for Swimming ...

P Systematically check the bottom

P Mark off the area for 3 groups:

- ▶ not more than 3 1/2 feet deep for nonswimmers
- ▶ from shallow water to just over the head for beginners
- ▶ deep water not more than 12 feet for swimmers



Note: A participant should not be permitted to swim in an area where he cannot readily recover and maintain his footing, or cannot maintain his position on the water, because of swimming ability or water flow.

3. Safe Area (CONTINUED)

When Setting Up a Safe Swimming Area in Natural Waters

- P Mark the outer bounds with floats
- P Clear-water depth at least 7 ft. before diving
- P Diving prohibited more than 40 in. above surface
- P Feet-first entry prohibited more than 60 in.
- P Clear water depth of 10 ft. for any entry over 8 in.
- P Only surface swimming allowed in turbid water



3. Safe Area (CONTINUED)



!!!Not Allowed!!!

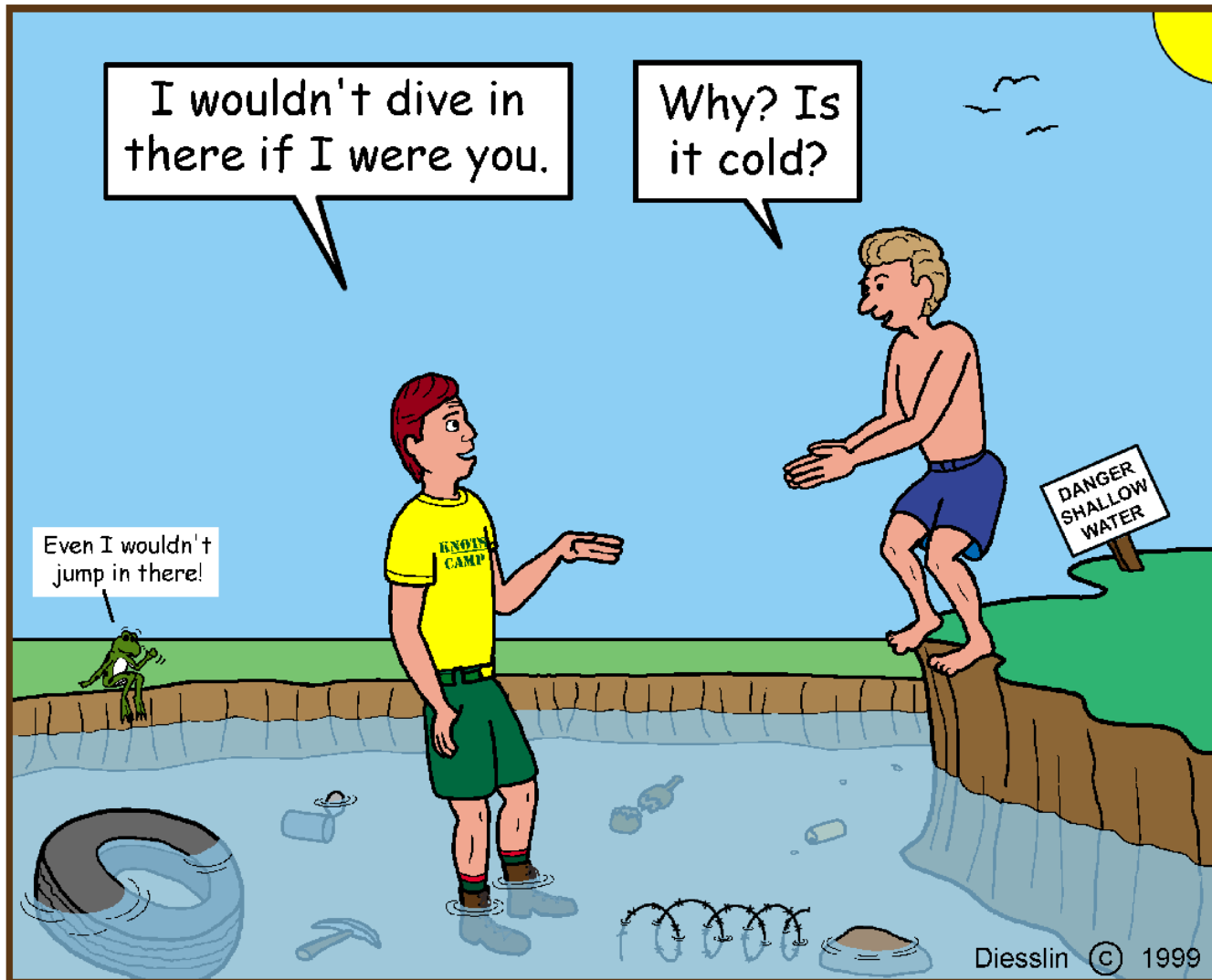
P Swimming is not permitted in:

- ▶ water over 12 feet deep
- ▶ turbid water
- ▶ whitewater
 - unless all participants wear appropriate personal flotation devices and the supervisor determines that swimming with personal flotation equipment is safe under the circumstances.

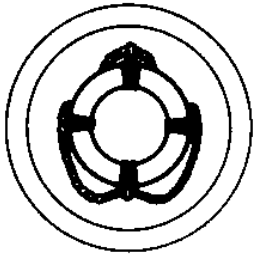
What's Wrong with this Picture?

KNOTS

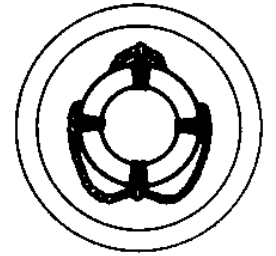
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FOLLOW BSA SAFE SWIM DEFENSE



4. Lifeguard On Duty



Swim Only Where there are Lifeguards On Duty

P If lifeguards are not provided by others:

- ▶ Designate two capable swimmers as lifeguards
- ▶ Station them ashore
- ▶ Equip with a lifeline (a 100-foot length of 3/8-inch nylon cord)
 - REACH: pole or oar
 - THROW: rope, life saving torpedo or ring
 - ROW: row boat rescue (still reach victim with oar or rope or boat)
 - GO (with assistance): last resort, use good judgment (e.g., tie rope around rescuer with another on shore to pull them in)
- ▶ Provide one guard for every 10 people in the water
- ▶ Adjust the number and positioning of guards as needed

5. Lookout

Make Sure the Whole Area is Being Observed

P Station a lookout on the shore

- ▶ where it is possible to see and hear everything in all areas

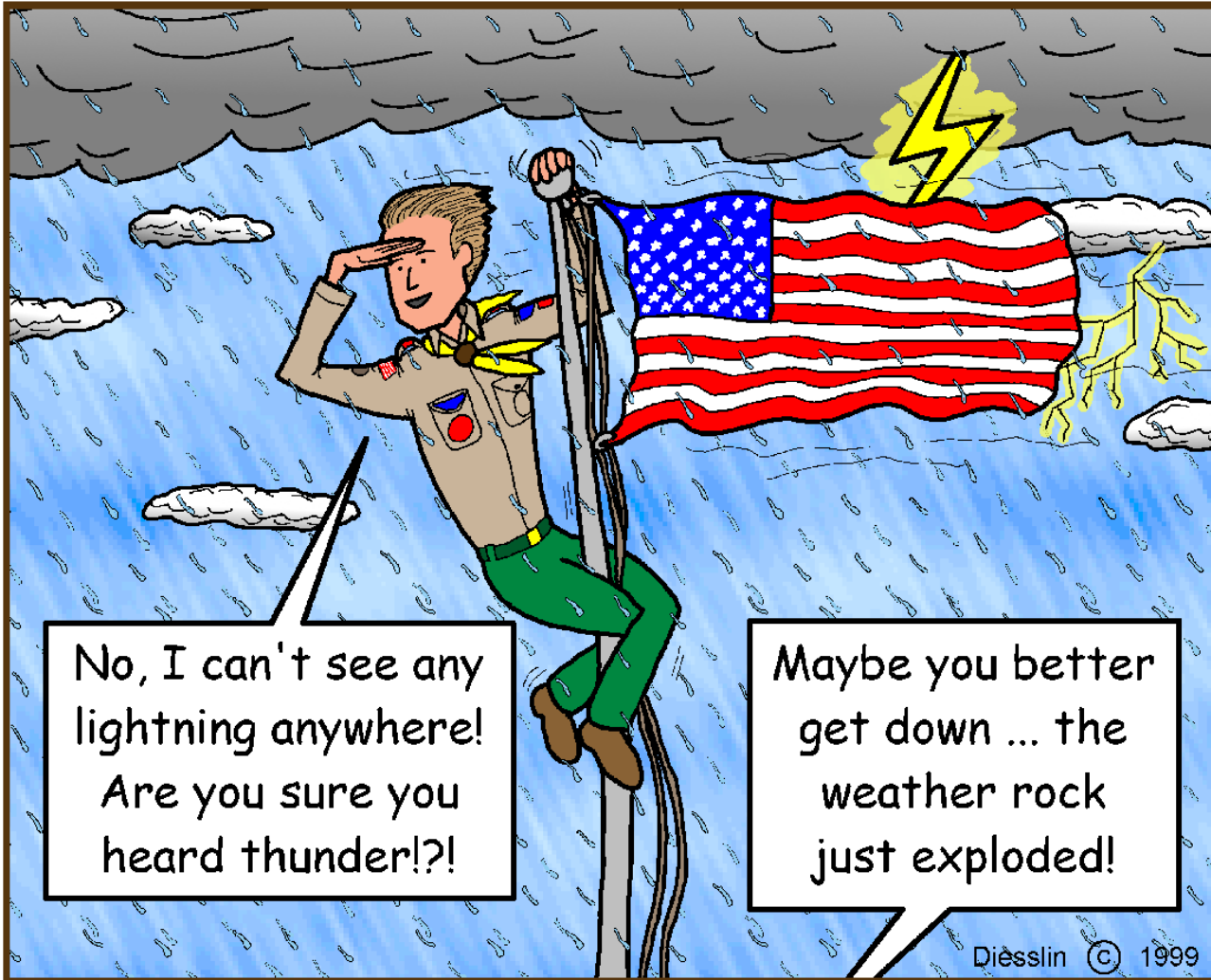
P The lookout may ...

- ▶ Be the adult in charge of the swim, and
- ▶ Give the buddy signals

Is This a Good Lookout?

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Keep Low and Avoid Metal Objects in a Thunder Storm

Note: My understanding from Emergency Preparedness is if you can hear thunder, lightning is near (enough).

No swimming for 1/2 hour from the last sight/sound of lightning/thunder is what I remember from my BSA Lifeguard training. I did not find any mention in SSD.

6. Ability Groups

Non-swimmers, Beginners & Swimmers

P Divide into three ability groups:

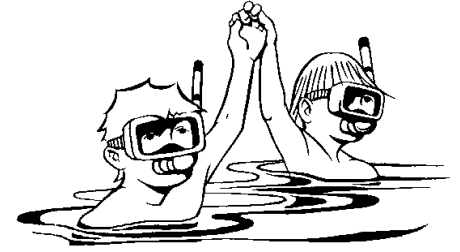
- ▶ Non-swimmers - not passed a swimming test
- ▶ Beginners - passed the beginner's test
 - Jump feet first into water over head depth, level off, swim 25 feet on the surface. Stop, turn sharply, resume swimming as before and return to starting place.
- ▶ Swimmers - passed the swimmer's test
 - jump 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 include at least one sharp turn.
 - After completing the swim, rest by floating.

P Keep each group in its own area.

Note: These classification tests should be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of the season.



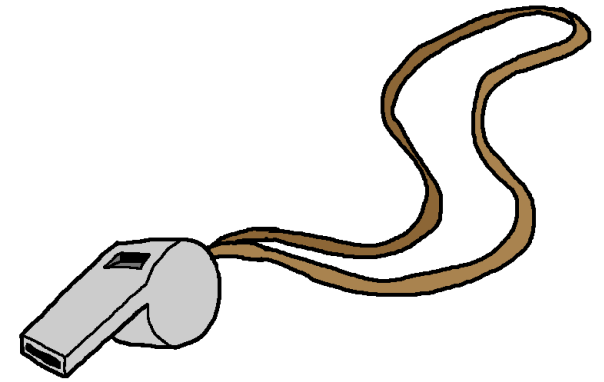
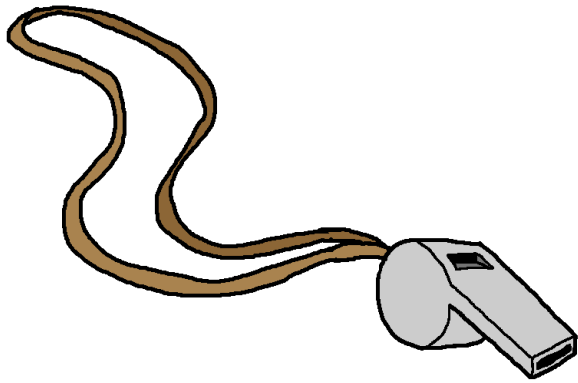
7. Buddy System



Pair Every Youth with Another in the Same Ability Group

- P Buddies check in and out of the swimming area together
- P Emphasize that each buddy lifeguards his buddy
- P Check everyone in the water about every ten minutes
- P Buddy check:
 - ▶ A single blast of a whistle or ring of a bell and a call of "Buddies!"
 - ▶ Count slowly to ten while buddies join and raise hands and remain still and silent
 - ▶ Guards check all areas, count the pairs, and compare the total with the number known to be in the water
 - ▶ Signal two blasts or bells to resume swimming
- P Signal three blasts or bells for checkout

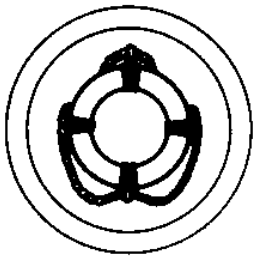
8. Discipline



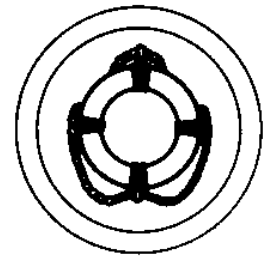
Be sure everyone understands swimming is allowed only with proper supervision and use of the complete Safe Swim Defense

- P** Rules are presented/learned prior to the outing
 - ▶ And reviewed at the water's edge just before the swimming activity begins
- P** Scouts are to respect/follow all directions and rules of the adult supervisor
- P** **Be strict and fair, showing no favoritism**

Note: When people know the reason for rules and procedures they are more likely to follow them.



Other Safe Swim Issues



Staffed Pools Still Require Safe Swim Defense!

P Public/Private Pools with Staff and Lifeguards

- ▶ There may be no need for Scout lifeguards and lookout
- ▶ Still use the buddy system
- ▶ Still divide into ability groups with designated areas

P Swimming Density

- ▶ Swimming areas should be large enough to avoid crowding (minimum of 40 square feet per swimmer).

Other Safe Swim Issues

Surf Swimming Requires Extra Planning/Precautions

- P Swimmer's physical condition - Should be able to ...
 - Recover footing in waves
 - Swim vigorously for at least five minutes without becoming exhausted
 - Remain calm and in control when faced with unexpected conditions

- P Designated swimming areas (flags or pennants)
 - Beginners and nonswimmers are positioned inshore
 - From the standing lifeguards equipped with reach poles
 - Better swimmers are permitted seaward of the lifeguard but must remain shoreward of anchored marker buoys
 - Lifeguard-to-swimmer ratio be 1-to-10
 - Rescue team stationed at the beach area
 - supplied with a rescue tube or torpedo buoy

Other Safe Swim Issues

Water Clarity

- P** Turbid water - Swimming limited to surface only
- ▶ Definition: When a 12-inch white disk at the depth of 3 feet is not visible from above the surface of the water
 - ▶ **NO:** Underwater swimming, headfirst entry (except for racing dives), and board diving
- P** Clear water
- ▶ Definition: When a 12-inch white disk at a depth of 8 feet is visible from above the surface of the water
 - ▶ Normal safe swim defense rules apply

Other Safe Swim Issues

About Diving and Elevated Entry - Know the Rules!

- P No diving or swimming activity of any kind is done in water with a depth greater than 12 feet
- P All water entry must be feetfirst where the water has less than 7 feet of unobstructed depth
 - ▶ A leaping entry is recommended where water is at or above head level
 - ▶ a step-down or jump-down entry from a sitting position is recommended for shallow water

Other Safe Swim Issues

More Diving Rules

- P** No diving is permitted in water with less than 7 feet of unobstructed depth
- P** Diving is permitted in clear water
 - ▶ from a dock, pier, or platform that is no more than 18 inches above the water surface
 - ▶ The water must be clear enough to enable supervisory and guard personnel to see the diver at the deepest part of the plunge

Other Safe Swim Issues

Board Diving Rules

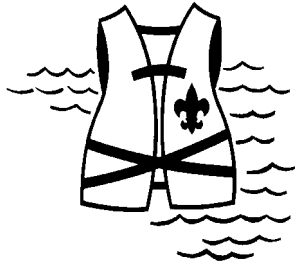
P Board diving is permitted

- ▶ Boards mounted on a fixed (not floating) platform or deck, no more than 40 inches (approximately 1 meter) above the water surface
- ▶ Clear water depth below the board should be 9 to 12 feet
- ▶ A guard or supervisor should be positioned where the diver can be seen at all times beneath the surface
- ▶ No other surface or underwater activity or obstruction for at least 15 feet on either side of the board and 25 feet in front of the board
- ▶ Diving should always be done straight ahead from the board, never to the sides

Other Safe Swim Issues

Elevated Entry Rules

- P Any elevated entry from a height greater than 40 inches ...
- ▶ Must be feetfirst
 - ▶ Only from a fixed platform or solid footing
 - ▶ **No more than 60 inches above the water surface**
 - ▶ Clear water depth should be 10 to 12 feet
 - ▶ Other protective measures and distances are the same as for board diving



About Safety Afloat



Disclaimer: This is Only Safe Swim Defense Training

P Safety Afloat is Similar but Separate Training

- ▶ **A.k.a., this has not been Safety Afloat Training!**

P Canoeing and Rafting and CUBS SCOUTS:

- ▶ (including Webelos) is to be **limited to council/district events on flat water ponds or controlled lake areas free of powerboats and sailboats**
- ▶ Prior to recreational canoeing, Cub Scouts are to be instructed in basic handling skills and safety practices
- ▶ **Does not include “trips” or “expeditions” and is not to be conducted on running water (i.e., rivers or streams)**

Not Normally Covered Under SSD!

KNOTS

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Pitch Your Tent on High Ground!



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