

Merit Badge Counselor Special Qualification Guidelines for Aquatics

In addition to the adult application and the merit badge counselor application, the following documentation/forms must be submitted for the specific merit badges listed below.

Special Qualifications are required to instructors for certain merit badges and require additional documentation. These badges are explained in Chapter 7 of the Guide to Advancement. For these badges, the prospective Merit Badge Counselor must provide a copy of current certification OR a letter specifying that instruction and activities for the merit badge will be conducted by a currently certified instructor as described below:

Canoeing – current evidence of training in one of the following:

- BSA Aquatics Instructor
- Canoeing Instructor certification from the American Canoe Association, American Red Cross, or equivalent
- UNIT ONLY: Completed the BSA course: Paddle Craft Safety taught by one of the above, or equivalent. Adult can be a counselor on a District / Council level ONLY if they are a Paddle Craft Safety Instructor or higher (Higher levels are outlined in MB book under the 'to the counselor' section).

Kayaking – current evidence of training in one of the following:

- BSA Aquatics Instructor
- Paddle Craft Safety Instructor certification
- UNIT ONLY: Completed the BSA course: Paddle Craft Safety taught by one of the above, or equivalent. Adult can be a counselor on a District / Council level ONLY if they are a Paddle Craft Safety Instructor or higher (Higher levels are outlined in MB book under the 'to the counselor' section).
- Kayaking instructor certification from the American Canoe Association, British Canoe Union, or American Red Cross, or equivalent

Lifesaving

- An adult at least 21 years old and:
 - Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED or equivalent, and:
 - ♣ BSA Lifeguard or ♣ Aquatics Instructor or equivalent, or
 - ♣ Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue taught by one of the above

Rowing

- BSA Aquatics Instructor certification or equivalent
- Completed the BSA course Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety taught by one of the above (or equivalent)

Scuba Diving

- Prospective MB Counselor must provide a letter stating that all instruction will be conducted by an insured recreational diving instructor in good standing with a recognized agency and approved by the council.

Swimming

- Current certification in BSA Safe Swim Defense and BSA Safety Afloat.
White water
- Certified as white water canoeing or kayaking instructors by the American Canoe Association All certifications listed above must be current.

For questions, please contact [Marqee Egan, George Mason District Merit Badge Dean](#)