



- **Swimming and watercraft activities** must be conducted in accordance with BSA Safe Swim Defense or BSA Safety Afloat, respectively, and be supervised by mature and conscientious adults at least 21 years old and trained in the program applicable. Counselors for merit badges involving swimming or the use of watercraft must be so trained, or use others who are.
- **CPR instruction**, wherever it is required, must be taught by instructors currently trained by a nationally certified provider. Several such providers are mentioned in the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#).

**The following merit badges have special qualifications or certifications for either the merit badge counselor or the supervisor of certain activities that may be involved.** Counselors and advancement administrators should consult the merit badge pamphlets for details and to maintain awareness of changes and updates as pamphlets are revised.

**Archery.** Archery activities must be supervised by a BSA National Camping School-trained shooting sports director or USA Archery or National Field Archery Association instructor, or by someone who has been trained by one of the three; or alternatively, the activities may be supervised by someone with at least Level 1 training in the operation of an archery range from USA Archery, NFAA, or an equivalent.

**Canoeing.** Canoeing merit badge counselors must have either BSA Aquatics Instructor or Canoeing Instructor certification from the American Canoe Association, American Red Cross, or equivalent; OR local councils may approve individuals previously certified as such or trained by an instructor so qualified.

#### **Citizenship in Society:**

- Counselors must complete the BSA National Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training available through My.Scouting,
- Participate in a discussion/merit badge review with a representative from the Council Advancement Committee. This will be an opportunity for prospective counselors to obtain answers to questions and/or discuss additional resources that may help in instructing the badge.

**Climbing.** All climbing, belaying, and rappelling exercises and activities must be supervised by a qualified rock-climbing instructor who is a mature and conscientious adult at least 21 years old, and who is trained in BSA Climb On Safely and understands the risks inherent to these activities. Training as BSA climbing director or instructor is highly recommended. Someone with certification in First Aid/CPR/AED from the American Red Cross (or equivalent) must be present at these activities.

**Kayaking.** Those supervising kayaking activities must have formal training in kayaking and paddle craft instruction, evidenced by either BSA Aquatics Instructor or Paddle Craft Safety Instructor certification, or kayaking instructor certification from the American

Canoe Association, British Canoe Union, or American Red Cross, or equivalent; OR local councils may approve individuals previously certified as such or trained by an instructor so qualified.

**Lifesaving.** Demonstrations or activities in or on the water must be supervised by an adult at least 21 years old with certification in Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED or equivalent, and also as BSA Lifeguard or Aquatics Instructor or equivalent.

**Motor Boating.** Motor boating activities must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult, age 21 or older, who has completed BSA Safety Afloat training and must present a valid Boating Safety Certificate.

In consideration of Brianna's Law:

If you were born on or after May 1, 1996 you will need a boating safety certificate.

Under a new law known as Brianna's Law, all motor boat operators born on or after Jan. 1, 1993 will need a boating safety certificate beginning in 2020.

Those born on or after Jan. 1, 1988 will need a boating safety certificate beginning in 2022.

Those born on or after Jan. 1, 1983 will need a boating safety certificate beginning in 2023.

Those born on or after Jan. 1, 1978 will need a boating safety certificate beginning in 2024.

All motor boat operators regardless of age will need a boating safety certificate beginning in 2025.

Approved courses include those offered by NYS Parks, the [U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary](#), the [U.S. Power Squadrons](#) or [U.S. Powerboating](#)

**Rifle Shooting.** The merit badge counselor must take responsibility to assure that all instruction involving any handling of firearms or live ammunition must be supervised by a certified BSA National Camping School (NCS) shooting sports director, or National Rifle Association (NRA) Rifle Shooting Instructor or Coach. That involving muzzleloaders must be supervised by an NCS shooting sports director or NRA/National Muzzleloader Rifle Association (NMLRA)—certified muzzleloader firearms instructor. Shooting must be supervised by an NRA-certified Range Safety Officer (RSO). If instruction and shooting are to occur at the same time, both the RSO and qualified instructor must be present. The supervisor and instructor may not be the same person. Note that commercial shooting ranges may provide RSOs. See the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#) and the BSA [National Shooting Sports Manual, No. 30931](#), for further details on shooting sports.

**Rowing.** Rowing merit badge counselors must have either BSA Aquatics Instructor certification or equivalent; OR local councils may approve individuals previously certified as such, or trained by an instructor so qualified.

**Scuba Diving.** All phases of scuba instruction—classroom, pool, and open-water training—are limited to instructors trained and sanctioned by one of the following agencies: Professional Association of Diving Instructors, National Association of Underwater Instructors, Scuba Schools International, International Diving Educators

Association, Professional Diving Instructors Corporation, or Scuba Diving International, or be a member of the World Recreational Scuba Training Council.

**Shotgun Shooting.** The merit badge counselor must take responsibility to assure that all instruction involving any handling of firearms or live ammunition must be supervised by a certified NCS shooting sports director or NRA Shotgun Instructor or Coach. That involving muzzle-loading shotguns must be supervised by an NCS shooting sports director or NRA/NMLRA certified muzzle-loading shotgun instructor. Shooting must be supervised by an NRA-certified Range Safety Officer. If instruction and shooting are to occur at the same time, both the RSO and qualified instructor must be present. They may not be the same person. Note that commercial shooting ranges may provide RSOs.

**Small Boat Sailing.** Those supervising sailing activities must have completed Safety Afloat training. They must be mature and conscientious adults age 21 or older. Appropriate credentials include instructor certification with a recognized sailing agency or school, US Sailing, or the American Sailing Association for sailing experience with different hull types including the rig being used for instruction; OR local councils may approve individuals previously certified as such or trained by an instructor so qualified.

**Snow Sports.** Activities in the field must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult 21 years or older who is committed to compliance with BSA Winter Sports Safety as defined in the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#).

**Whitewater.** Whitewater merit badge counselors must be designated by the local council and certified as whitewater canoeing or kayaking instructors by the American Canoe Association or have equivalent certification, training, or expertise.