



National Service Center, Sea Scouts, BSA
Boy Scouts of America
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May 18, 2017

To: Sea Scout Volunteer Leaders

Subject: Safe Boating and Sailing Standards

The National Sea Scout Committee has recently approved an update to the *Safe Boating and Sailing Standards* for Sea Scout activities. A copy of the new standards is attached. These standards are applicable to all Sea Scout activities; particularly activities on larger boats, which are typically 26 feet in length or longer.

All Sea Scout volunteer leaders and local council executive staff are requested to adopt the new standards for conducting Sea Scout activities. These standards are designed to fit most councils and most Sea Scout operations. The standards also provide flexibility to local councils to accommodate local circumstances.

The enclosed 2017 version of the *Safe Boating and Sailing Standards* supersedes the previous version dated November 28, 1994.

Approved and issued,

Charles D. Wurster
National Commodore
Sea Scouts, BSA

Keith Christopher
National Director
Sea Scouts, BSA

Attachment: *Safe Boating and Sailing Standards*, dated May 18, 2017

Safe Boating and Sailing Standards - Sea Scouts, BSA

May 18, 2017

Every Sea Scout has pledged to guard against water accidents. Every Scout deserves a safe boat and a qualified leader.

Adult leaders who conduct Sea Scout program activities must:

- Comply with the policies of the Boy Scouts of America and with Federal and State boating laws and regulations;
- Follow the *BSA Aquatic Safety Standards* including *Safety Afloat* published in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, No. 34416, for all Sea Scout program activities. These standards address small vessels such as sailboats, motorboats, and vessels propelled solely by oars or paddles (e.g. row boats, canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, and rafts).

In addition to the above, for larger vessels, typically 26 feet or longer, adult leaders who conduct Sea Scout program activities:

- Must complete a basic boating safety course (such as a course provided by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power Squadrons, U.S. Sailing, or the American Sailing Association) approved by the State Boating Law Administrator; *and*
- Should have a *Council Authorization* to conduct BSA operations (sample attached).

Because many Sea Scout volunteer leaders already have significant maritime experience, the basic boating safety course training requirement may be considered as having been met and exceeded by individuals who:

- Have completed maritime operator training programs through service in the Navy, Coast Guard, or Merchant Marine; or hold a USCG Operator's or Master's license.

Vessel Standards

Sea Scouts conduct program activities using several categories of vessels, including:

- Vessels owned by a local council;
- Vessels privately owned by a non-profit or charter partner that are used exclusively for Sea Scout activities;
- Vessels that take Sea Scouts out on the water for one time or infrequent activities that are owned by individuals. An example is a yacht club member who takes Sea Scouts sailing; and

All vessels used in Sea Scout program activities that are either owned by a local council, or privately owned and used exclusively for Sea Scout activities:

- Must have an annual “Vessel Safety Check” (VSC) conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or the United States Power Squadrons and display a current VSC decal; *and*,
- Should complete an annual *Boat Safety Checklist and Operations Authorization* (sample attached); and submit the checklist to the Council for review.
- *Vessels greater than 50'* should complete a condition survey every five years by a recognized or certified Marine Surveyor. The survey report should include a written statement or letter that indicates the condition of the vessel and its suitability for the intended service. Append the survey report to the *Boat Safety Checklist and Operations Authorization* for Council review.

With the exception of local council-owned boats that have in-house BSA insurance:

- All vessels used in Sea Scout program activities should have current liability insurance as described in the Sea Scout Fact Sheet *Liability Insurance for Watercraft*. For *vessels 26 feet and longer*, liability insurance limits should be at least \$500,000 and should comply with the insurance company's requirements for condition surveys and repairs.

All other *privately-owned vessels* used in Sea Scout program activities:

- Should have an annual "Vessel Safety Check" (VSC), display a current VSC decal, and have current liability insurance as described above.

Additional Considerations:

Local Councils may adjust these standards for local conditions or situations.

The standards above apply to vessels conducting Sea Scout program activities under Federal and State laws and regulations for *recreational* vessels. Recreational vessels **may not** carry “passengers for hire.”

Do not violate the *Passenger Vessel Safety Act of 1993*. Only *commercial* vessels operating in compliance with laws and regulations governing vessels defined in the *Passenger Vessel Safety Act of 1993* may carry “passengers for hire.” Also, the Vessel Safety Check doesn’t apply to commercial vessels that operate under different safety standards.

ANNUAL VESSEL SAFETY CHECKLIST AND OPERATIONS AUTHORIZATION

(For Council authorization to operate local council vessels or vessels used exclusively for Sea Scout activities)

Council number: _____ Council name: _____

Ship number: _____ Ship name: _____

Vessel Owner:

- ___ Local council
- ___ Charter partner
- ___ Non-profit organization
- ___ Other _____

Owner name: _____

Address: _____

Contact name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Vessel Description:

Name: _____ Year built: _____

Make/manufacture: _____ Model/style: _____

State registration number *or* U.S. document number: _____

(Serial numbers do not take the place of this data.)

Length: _____ feet (*See definition below*)

If over 50' length, indicate where vessel is docked: _____

Propulsion:

___ Sail (only)

___ Sail with auxiliary motor/engine (*Fill in motor information below*)

Sail rig type: _____ (e.g. sloop, yawl)

___ Motor/Engine: _____ horsepower per motor/engine; number of motors/engines: _____

___ Inboard

Fuel: ___ Gasoline

___ Inboard/Outboard

___ Diesel

___ Outboard

___ Electric

Note: "Length" is the horizontal distance between the outboard side of the bow of the hull and the outboard side of the stern of the hull; not including fittings and attachments.

Check:

_____ In compliance with an annual USCG Auxiliary or US Power Squadrons "Vessel Safety Check" with the VSC decal properly displayed on boat.

_____ In compliance with the Safety section of the *Sea Scout Manual*; including safe loading guidelines and the manufacturer's capacity plate. In compliance with any local council requirements regarding the minimum and maximum number of persons carried aboard.

_____ Have determined which additional equipment is appropriate for this boat as outlined in the USCG publication *Boater's Guide to Federal Requirements for Recreational Boats* and/or other items as described in the Safety section of the *Sea Scout Manual*.

_____ Have determined the suitability of the vessel for its intended operations. If there are any restrictions on the type or area of operations, _____ check here, and attach a description of the restrictions.

_____ If local council-owned, the boat is listed on the Council Watercraft Inventory. If not BSA-owned, the boat should have current liability insurance as described in the Sea Scout Fact Sheet *Liability Insurance for Watercraft* (which for vessels 26 feet and over is a minimum of \$500,000); and comply with the insurance company's requirements for condition surveys and repairs.

_____ Vessels greater than 50' in length should receive a condition survey every five years by a recognized or certified Marine Surveyor, with a written statement or letter that indicates the condition of the vessel; and its suitability for the intended service. Append the condition survey to this checklist.

_____ Adult leaders who operate this vessel for BSA activities have completed the state-approved basic boating safety course or equivalent.

This vessel is authorized for use in program activities in accordance with the policies of the Boy Scouts of America.

Approvals: Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(Unit leader or other operator)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(Council designee)



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

_____ COUNCIL AUTHORIZATION

(Name of Adult Boat Operator)

(Unit & Number)

IS AUTHORIZED TO OPERATE BSA PROGRAM VESSELS

(Levels of Qualification; list types/sizes of boats)

ON THE WATERS OF

(List types, or specific names, of bodies of water)

Council Scout Executive or Designee Date

LOCAL COUNCIL VESSEL OPERATOR AUTHORIZATION CERTIFICATE EXPLANATIONS

Level of Qualifications:

- No Operator Authorization Certificate is required for "exempt boats;" defined as small vessels propelled solely by oars or paddles (e.g. rowboats, canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, rafts), small sailboats (less than 26 feet), or small motorboats (less than 40 horsepower).
- "Boats up to 50 feet"
- "Boats over 50 feet" *and/or*,
- List the name or identification number of specific boats

On the Waters of:

(As appropriate to the maturity, training, and experience of the individual.)

- Unlimited waters; coastal waters; bays, lakes, and sounds; rivers and canals; etc. *and/or*,
- List the names of specific bodies of water.