



Motorboating

Scouts BSA · Aquatics

Name

Started

Completed

Motorboating opens up lakes, rivers, and coastlines for exploring and fun. You'll learn how boats and motors work, the rules of the water, and how to handle a boat safely. With good skills, you'll be a trusted crew member on any trip.

Requirements

Every official requirement, in plain language. Check the official wording when you sign off (scouting.org/merit-badges/motorboating/). Tips and examples are ideas, not extra requirements.

1 Safety and first aid

Tips for this section: Learn the Safety Afloat points and how to handle problems like sunburn, cold water, and cuts.

Example for this section: Walk through a scenario: a passenger leans over the side and falls in. Explain how you'd shut down the motor, throw a flotation device, circle back carefully, and help them aboard. Then tie it to the Safety Afloat points.

- ☐ **1a** Discuss with your counselor the hazards of motorboating (flammable fuel, carbon monoxide, propellers, collisions, falling overboard, capsizing, running aground) and how to anticipate, prevent, reduce, and respond to them

- ☐ **1b** Explain first aid for motorboating injuries and illnesses, including motion sickness, dehydration, hypothermia, heat reactions, blisters, and bug bites

- ☐ **1c** Discuss the Scouting America Safety Afloat policy and how it applies to motorboating

2 Swimming and life jackets

Tips for this section: Practice your swimming so the test is easy, and try on different life jackets to learn how a good fit feels.

Example for this section: Lay out three life jackets and explain the differences, then show how to check fit: buckle and tighten every strap, then have a buddy lift the shoulders. If it slides up over your chin, it's too loose.

- ☐ **2a** Pass the Scouting America swimmer test before doing requirement 5

- ☐ **2b** Name the types of life jackets (PFDs) and when to use each, and show how to pick and correctly fit one

3 Motors and boat operation

Tips for this section: Ask a boat owner or marina mechanic to show you a motor up close and explain fueling and winter storage.

Example for this section: With a marina mechanic or boat owner, compare an outboard motor with an inboard. Explain why you close hatches and keep flames away while fueling, and what winterizing does, like draining water so it won't freeze and crack the engine.

- ☐ **3a** Explain inboard, outboard, and inboard/outboard motors and what each is used for and good at

- ☐ **3b** Explain safety steps and precautions for handling fuel, servicing the engine, and storing and placing equipment

- ☐ **3c** Explain how to winterize a boat motor and why it's needed

- ☐ **3d** Explain safety steps and precautions for swimmers and skiers in the water, where passengers sit while underway, and boat wakes

4 Motorboating safety guidelines

Tips for this section: Look up your state's boating rules and check the weather forecast before every trip, just like a real captain would.

Example for this section: Plan a short trip: check the marine forecast for wind and storms, review your state's speed and no-wake rules, and explain the rules for passing and crossing other boats. Decide in advance what would make you cancel.

- ☐ **4a** Review how each part of Safety Afloat applies, including checking the weather before and during an outing, making sure all required equipment is aboard and working, and following a float plan

- ☐ **4b** Explain the recreational boating rules or laws in your area or state, get a motorboat operator permit if your state requires one, and discuss how you'd look up other states' boating laws

- ☐ **4c** Discuss how bad weather and rough water can affect motorboating safety and performance

- ☐ **4d** Promise to follow the Safety Afloat guidelines and explain what each point means

- ☐ **4e** Explain and show how to use the equipment that state and federal rules require aboard a motorboat

- ☐ **4f** Explain federal and state ventilation system rules and why they exist

- ☐ **4g** Explain how motorboats use lights (sight signals) and sound signals

- ☐ **4h** Discuss common motorboat anchors and when each works best, and explain how to anchor properly

5 Boat handling with an adult aboard

Tips for this section: Practice docking, turning, and stopping with a qualified adult aboard, starting in calm water away from other boats.

Example for this section: With a qualified adult aboard, practice in open, calm water: get underway, stop, turn, back up, and approach a dock slowly against the wind or current. Repeat each move until it feels smooth.

- ☐ **5a** Board the boat and help others board, and make sure everyone aboard wears a properly fitted life jacket

- ☐ **5b** Fuel the boat and do a safety check

- ☐ **5c** Attach the engine cut-off switch link if the boat has one, start the motor safely, and get underway from a dock or beach launch

- ☐ **5d** Run a course of at least 1 mile, showing how to overtake and pass slower boats, yield right-of-way, pass oncoming traffic, turn, reverse direction, and use navigation aids

- ☐ **5e** Anchor the boat to hold position on open water, then pull up and stow the anchor and move on

- ☐ **5f** Land or dock the boat, get off, and help others get off

- ☐ **5g** Moor, dock, or beach the boat, then stow and secure all the gear

- ☐ **5h** Tie these boating knots: bowline, sheet bend, clove hitch, cleating hitch, and anchor bend