

2026 GSLAC Scouting America Paddle Craft Safety Training Courses

Float trips are popular Scouts BSA and Venturing activities. Safety Afloat awareness training provides guidelines for safe float trips and is required of unit leaders, but does not provide the skill training mandated by those guidelines. Scouting America Paddle Craft Safety courses expands Safety Afloat training to include the skills, as well as the knowledge needed for a unit leader to confidently supervise canoeing or kayaking excursions on flat and moving water. Persons completing the training should be better able to assess their preparation to supervise paddle craft activities. The training is open to any registered adult leader, Scout, Venturer, or Explorer who is age 15 or older. The training must be conducted by a council approved instructor, valid for three years.

The Paddle Craft Safety offered by GSLAC at Camp course consists of a on/in flatwater portion on approximately 8 hours to offered the followed day on float on the St. Francis course is water level &



Basic and River Courses are Lewallen in Silva MO. The Basic classroom session followed by an Saturday. The training takes complete. The River course is Sunday. It involves a full-day River. Availability of the River weather dependent.



Paddle Craft Safety Basic Course Requirements:

Course Prerequisites

- Be at least 15 years old; Submit health review (Part B only, which will be reviewed at the course);
- Complete the Scouting America swimmer test;
- Have current Safety Afloat training (which is available online at myscouting.scouting.org/)

Personal Safety Skills

- Select a lifejacket of appropriate size and demonstrate proper fit.
- Demonstrate the feet-up floating position used if caught in a current.
- Demonstrate H.E.L.P and Huddle positions; Capsize and swim a boat to shore.

Basic boating skills

Demonstrate the following maneuvers on calm water using standard stroke techniques:

- Transport boat from rack or trailer to water's edge.
- Safely board and launch the craft.
- Travel in a straight line for 50 yards.
- Stop the craft.
- From the stop, move the boat sideways first to the right, then to the left.
- From the stop, pivot the boat to the right, then to the left.
- Return to shore along a curved course demonstrating both left and right turns while underway
- Land, safely exit and store the craft.

Group safety skills

- Throw a rescue bag, laying the line within 3 feet of an object 30 feet away.
- Demonstrate a boat rescue of a swimmer.
- Demonstrate an on-water boat-over-boat assist.

Knowledge development

- Correctly answer 80% of the questions on the Paddle Craft Safety written exam covering Safety Afloat, trip preparation, emergency action plans, and basic boating knowledge. Review any incomplete or incorrect answers.

GSLAC Paddle Craft Safety Basic Course Information

The Paddle Craft Safety Basic course has 4 major components:

- 1) Course Prerequisites
- 2) Classroom session
- 3) Written test
- 4) On/in-the-water boating session

The course prerequisites should be completed before the classroom session is conducted. Safety Afloat training is available online at www.scouting.org. Registrants must be 15 years old before the first classroom session. This course involves boating and therefore abides by the Personal Health Review criteria of the Scouting America Safety Afloat guidelines. Since the activity is not unduly strenuous and lasts less than 72 hours, only a health history (BSA Annual Health and Medical Record, Parts A&B) is required. Participants must present their health history before participating in any water activities. The Scouting America swimmer classification must have been completed within the past 12 months. There is no opportunity to take the swim classification test as part of the Basic course.

Component 2 is held as a three-hour classroom session. The required textbook for #2 & #3 is the Scouting America Aquatics Supervision publication (No. 34346). It serves as the text for the course and is the standard reference on policies and skills covered during the course. The written exam is taken directly from the material in Section I (page 5-8/R-1) and Chapters 13 through 27 in Section III (page 27-8/R-1) of the text. Participants should be prepared to take the written test at the end of the classroom session by being familiar with Sections I & III before coming to the class. Experience has shown that it is unlikely that the written test can be successfully completed without reviewing the appropriate sections in the Aquatics Supervision book since all the test material is NOT covered during the classroom session. The book is available free for downloading at:

https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/Outdoor%20Program/Aquatics/pdf/Aquatics_34346.pdf

The course fee includes a printed copy which will be provided at the classroom session. Please bring a 2" 3-ring binder for your book.

Component 4 takes about 4-6 hours of on/in-the water work. Participants will get wet during the session, so be prepared. The Scouting America swim test must be completed prior to participation in component #4. Participants should bring a sack lunch and drink for the lunch break.

Successful completion of all four course components results in a Paddle Craft Safety Basic course completion card being awarded. Cards expire 3 years after completion.

GSLAC Paddle Craft Safety Basic Course Registration Information

Register online at stlbsa.org/training/aquatics

The \$40 PCS Basic course registration fee includes the required textbook, the classroom session, water session and all required equipment. Please note that the same book is used for this course and the Scouting America Swimming and Water Rescue course. You may furnish your own equipment if you prefer. The participants will decide if the class will use kayaks or canoes.

2026 Paddle Craft Safety Basic Course		
Schedule		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Location</u>
9 May	4 May	Camp Lewallen Silva MO



**Paddle Craft
Safety River
Course
Requirements**



Course Prerequisites

- Submit written evidence of physical fitness (Part B only, will be reviewed at the course);
- Have current Safety Afloat training.
- Have current training in Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety—Basic for the appropriate craft.
- Demonstrate or provide evidence of current ability to complete the 100-yard Scouting America swimmer classification.

Knowledge Development

- View and discuss the ACA/BSA video “Reading the Rhythms of Rivers and Rapids.”
- Write a float plan for a troop, crew, or ship covering the stretch of river used for training.

River Water Skills

Do the following during an instructor-led canoe or kayak trip of at least three miles down a flowing river with Class I or Class II features, including standing waves, a downstream V, and a large eddy. A segment that includes isolated Class II+ or Class III rapids that can be portaged is appropriate, but not necessary. Features and water levels must be consistent with the safe performance of the requirements.

- Transport boat from trailer or carrier to river’s edge. Safely board and launch the boat into a current.
- Review the effect of basic flat-water strokes in moving water, demonstrating the ability to stay parallel with the current.
- Demonstrate knowledge of river signals to communicate with other boats.
- Perform a controlled swamp in a current, safely exit the craft, and guide it to shore.
- Swim feetfirst in a current without a boat and catch a throw bag deployed from shore.
- Successfully deploy a throw bag to a person fulfilling the previous requirement.
- If canoeing, demonstrate a cross-draw stroke.
- If kayaking, demonstrate a low brace.
- Demonstrate ability to cross the current using a front ferry.
- Demonstrate an eddy turn.
- Demonstrate peel out of an eddy.
- Stop above a rapid indicated on a river map. Scout the rapid to determine how best to run the rapid and then run it.
- Stop above a hole, low-head dam, or other feature indicated on a river map. Scout and portage the

feature, even if it can be safely run.
-Land, safely exit, and load the boat for transport.

Successful completion of the course results in a Paddle Craft Safety River course completion card being awarded. Cards expire 3 years after completion.

[GSLAC Paddle Craft Safety River Course Registration Information](#)

Register online at *stlbsa.org/training/aquatics*

The PCS River course is held the day after the PCS Basic course at Camp Lewallen. If all participants in the River course are present for the Basic course, then the knowledge development portion of the River course will be done as part of the Basic course. If not, then the knowledge development requirements will be done at Camp Lewallen before getting on the river.

The course float trip puts in the St. Francis River at the Coldwater Access and takes out at Camp Lewallen. Boats will be delivered to Coldwater Access by GSLAC Camp Lewallen staff. Course participants will work out a shuttle to the put in location. Participants should bring a sack lunch for eating on the river. Conduct of the PCS River Course is dependent on safe river levels and weather.

The \$40 PCS River course registration fee includes instructional material, facility fees, and equipment usage. You may use your own equipment if you prefer. Camping is available at Camp Lewallen for those wanting to stay over Friday or Saturday nights. The participants will decide if the class will use kayaks or canoes.

The course is water-level and weather dependent. It may be rescheduled if river water level is not safe.

2026 Paddle Craft Safety River Course Schedule		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Location</u>
Sunday 10 May	4 May	Camp Lewallen Silva MO