Small Craft



Whether paddling, rowing, sailing, or just drifting, being on the water can be a lot of fun and great exercise. Choose your craft and perfect your skill—it can keep you floating for a lifetime. To earn this badge, you must complete activity 1.

1. Staying Afloat

Show that you can select, use, and care for a PFD (personal flotation device). Be able to:

- Adjust a life jacket or life vest to fit
- Know if a PFD is in good condition
- Throw a buoyant cushion or life ring
- Float, swim, and do HELP (Heat Escape Lessening Position) and huddle in a PFD
- If you are a swimmer, put on a PFD while in water that is over your head

2. All Hands on Deck

Be ready for boating emergencies. With a knowledgeable adult, talk about what to do if three of the following things happen:

- You fall overboard
- Someone else falls overboard
- The wind rises (or, if sailing, dies)
- You see a storm approaching
- The boat swamps or capsizes
- It gets dark or foggy
- There is a fire on board

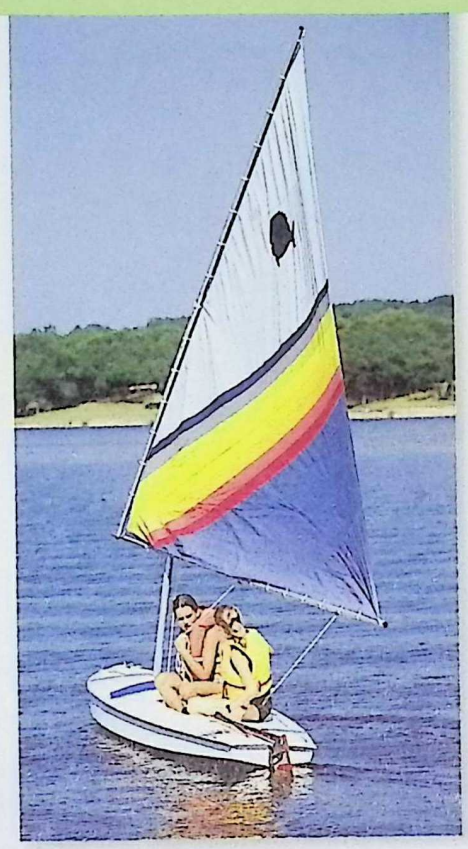
3. From Bow to Stern

Learn nautical terms for the major parts of a boat and use them correctly. Identify three kinds of water craft.

4. Permission to Board

Be able to trim your craft (maintain a balanced position of a boat in the water by moving around passengers and gear). Show that you can:

- Board properly
- Stow things and move weight around safely
- Change places safely



5. Shove Off

Show that you can handle a small craft safely. Demonstrate in a rowboat, rowing shell, kayak, or canoe that you can:

- Stow the paddle(s) or oar(s)
- Get underway
- Make turns and go straight
- Speed up, slow down, and stop
- Dock or land
- Secure the craft

6. Hoist the Sails!

Show that you can handle a sailboat. Demonstrate that you can:

- Get underway
- Raise and lower the sail(s)
- Sail straight ahead
- Tack and come about
- Speed up, slow down, and stop
- Dock or land
- Secure the craft

7. Full Speed Ahead!

In a boat with a motor, show that you know how to:

- Get underway
- Start the engine, change speed, and stop
- Use the oars, if the boat has them
- Make turns and go forward and backward
- Dock or land
- Secure the engine and the craft

8. Thar She Blows!

Learn to keep a sharp lookout. Show that you practice rules of the water by knowing how to:

- Keep away from swimmers, divers, and people fishing
- Look out for other craft, floating objects, or hazards under the surface
- Spot landmarks or navigational aids such as buoys or lights or read a navigational map
- Help someone in distress, and signal for help yourself
- Cross wakes correctly

9. Red Sky in the Morning, Sailors Take Warning

Be a water and weather watcher. Check to see if it is safe to be out on the water by keeping track of the following:

- Wind direction and speed
- Waves, tides, currents, or water releases from dams
- Cloud formations
- Weather signals and reports

10. Swab the Deck!

Do your share to keep a boat shipshape. Do at least three of the following:

- Unload or stow gear or rigging
- Wash down, bail out, or sponge off
- Sand, scrape, or chip
- Paint, patch, or fix up
- Tie knots, splice, or whip lines