



Kayaking Merit Badge at Riverbend Park

Welcome to the Kayaking Merit Badge program at Riverbend Park. The program is held at the Riverbend Visitor Center located at 8700 Potomac Hills Street in Great Falls unless otherwise indicated by park staff.

Important general Merit Badge information for parents:

Be sure that you are familiar with the requirements for the merit badge your scout has selected. Some badges may take considerable time and planning to complete and may not be appropriate for younger scouts. Blue cards must be signed by your Troop Leader prior to attending the merit badge class. Park staff will not sign off on any blue cards missing this signature.

Most merit badges are not designed to be completed in a single session with an instructor, so it is not always possible to walk away with a completed and signed blue card at the end of a program. Every badge requires some independent work by your scout.

Please be prepared for the possibility that you may have to stay for the program and not just drop off your scout. We encourage that one or more adults remain. There is no fee for adults and you are sure to learn something. This will allow the instructor to concentrate more fully on the difficult task of imparting all the required information and assisting the boys individually if necessary. Additionally, adults may help keep the atmosphere calm and productive. It is also in keeping with the scouting guidelines for youth protection.

Below is the recommended homework to be completed before the program:

Merit badge worksheets may be downloaded from meritbadge.org and brought to class. These worksheets help scouts organize their homework and classwork.

1. Do the following:
 - a. Explain to your counselor the hazards you are most likely to encounter while participating in kayaking activities, including weather and water-related hazards,

and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.

b. Review prevention, symptoms, and first-aid treatment for the following injuries or illnesses that can occur while kayaking: blisters, cold-water shock and hypothermia, heat-related illnesses, dehydration, sunburn, sprains, and strains.

c. Review the BSA [Safety Afloat](#) policy. Explain to your counselor how this applies to kayaking.

2. Before doing requirements 3 through 9, successfully complete the [BSA swimmer test](#): Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth. Level off and swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; then swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be completed in one swim without stops and must include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating. *****You MUST provide proof of your BSA SWIMMER TEST at the beginning of the class*****

3. Do the following:

a. Review the characteristics of life jackets most appropriate for kayaking and understand why one must always be worn while paddling. Then demonstrate how to select and fit a life jacket for kayaking.

b. Review the importance of safety equipment such as a signal device, extra paddle, sponge, bilge pump, and throw bag.

4. Do the following:

a. Name and point out the major parts of a kayak.

b. Review the differences in the design between recreational, whitewater, and sea or touring kayaks. Include how length, width, stability, and rocker are involved in the design of each type.

c. Review the advantages and disadvantages of the materials most commonly used to make kayaks. Explain the care, maintenance, and storage of a kayak.

5. Discuss the following:

a. How to choose a kayak paddle.

b. The different materials from which paddles are made, parts of a paddle, and the care and maintenance of a paddle.

Requirements to be demonstrated, practiced and assessed during the class by counselors

4. Do the following:
 - d. Using the trucker's hitch and bowline, demonstrate how to secure a kayak to a rack on a vehicle or a trailer, or to a rack on land.

6. Using a properly equipped kayak with an open cockpit, a sit-on-top, or an inflatable kayak, do the following:
 - a. Safely capsize and perform a wet exit.
 - b. Reenter the kayak with assistance from a buddy boat.
 - c. Demonstrate a kayak-over-kayak rescue.
 - d. Demonstrate the HELP position.
 - e. Capsize the kayak, swim it and the paddle to shore, and empty water from the kayak with assistance, if needed.

7. As a solo paddler, use a properly equipped kayak to demonstrate the following:
 - a. Forward stroke
 - b. Backstroke
 - c. Forward sweep
 - d. Reverse sweep
 - e. Draw stroke
 - f. Stern draw

8. As a solo paddler, use a properly equipped kayak to demonstrate the following:
 - a. Paddle a straight line for 25 yards, make a sharp turn, and return 25 yards in a straight line.
 - b. Spin or pivot 360 degrees to the right and 360 degrees to the left.
 - c. Move abeam to the right 10 feet and to the left 10 feet.
 - d. Stop the boat in one boat length.
 - e. Paddle a buoyed course of a length determined by your counselor that includes two right turns and two left turns performed while under way.

What to bring to the program:

- Merit Badge Worksheet Packet
- Bring a pencil and pen.
- Bring your completed homework. It is OK if you cannot complete the homework before class. You can bring completed homework in at a later date for sign-off.
- Come prepared to discuss and present your homework. As we move from one topic to the next during class, scouts will be asked to present homework elements completed. It will be more important to prove that you have understood a requirement orally rather than just presenting written information.
- Bring your blue card. (Riverbend does not have blue cards.)
- Drinking Water, Snack or Money to purchase items at the Visitor's Center
- Sunscreen and Hat
- Synthetic clothing, quick drying clothing, ready for immersion
- Rain Jacket
- Dry clothing to change into after the class
- Teva, Chaco, or Keen style sandals, or old tennis shoes, NO FLIP FLOPS

Work completed after the program:

During the program, the merit badge counselor will do a demonstration or explain the process for completing the final merit badge requirements. Your scout must provide evidence of completion or meet the required skills in order to obtain blue card sign-off. Digital photographs or video of your scout doing the element of the requirement will be sufficient evidence, unless otherwise stated.

If your scout needs blue card sign-off or further skill/requirement assessment after the class date, please call 703-759-9018 to arrange a time to meet with a merit badge counselor.

We're looking forward to working with your scout.

Riverbend Park

703-759-9018

8700 Potomac Hills Street

Great Falls, VA 22066

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/>