



# Girl Guides of Canada Swim & Boat Tests Overview

To ensure safety and confidence in water-based activities, Girl Guides of Canada (GGC) requires all participants to complete specific swim tests before engaging in certain activities. Here's a summary of the required swim tests and the criteria for each level, along with important information about their necessity.

## Required Swim Tests

Swim tests are required for participation in various activities including:

- **Swimming at a beach**
- **Canoeing**
- **Kayaking**
- **Rafting**
- **Paddleboarding**
- **Sailing**
- **Swimming at a hotel pool on unit trips**
- **And more!**



**We highly recommend that everyone complete a swim test at their highest possible level, even if you cannot swim or do not swim well.** For those who are not confident swimmers, we encourage completing the Non-Swimmer PFD Check for Boating Standards to ensure safety in all aquatic situations.



There are three different types of Boat and Swim Tests:

## 1. Non-Swimmer PFD Check for Boating Standards

### Requirements:

- **Wearing a properly fitted Personal Flotation Device (PFD), individuals must:**
  - Swim 25 meters
  - Demonstrate the Heat Escape Lessening Position (HELP) for one minute



**Note:** This test is not required if the individual has passed the Swim Test or Advanced Swim Test.

### Proof of Equivalency:

- Red Cross Swim Kids 3
- Lifesaving Society Swimmer 3
- YMCA Dolphin

## 2. Standard Swim Test

### Requirements:

- **To successfully complete the test, the swimmer must:**
  - Swim 50 meters
  - Tread water for one minute

### Test Conditions:

- The test must be performed without touching a dock or the bottom of the pool.
- Water depth should be no more than chest deep.
- The swimmer can use either front or back strokes.
- The swimmer must be in a horizontal position and continuously moving forward for the swim portion.
- The swimmer must immediately tread water after completing the 50-meter swim.
- During treading, the swimmer's head must remain upright and out of the water.

**Note:** This test is not required if the individual has passed the Advanced Swim Test.

**Proof of Equivalency:**

- Red Cross Swim Kids 5
- Lifesaving Society Swimmer 4
- YMCA Swimmer or higher

**3. Advanced Swim Test****Requirements:**

- **To successfully complete the test, the swimmer must:**
  1. Swim 200 meters
    - Any stroke without pausing or stopping at the edge of the pool
    - Face forward in water for at least 25 meters (e.g., breaststroke or crawl with face in and out of the water)
  2. Immediately after the 200 meters, tread water for 5 minutes
    - Keep head out of the water
    - Remain comfortable throughout
    - Able to turn around and talk during the test
  3. Goggles are permitted if the test is done in a chlorinated pool; however, masks are not allowed.

**Proof of Equivalency:**

- Lifesaving Bronze Star or Bronze Medallion
- Red Cross Swim Kids 10
- YMCA Star 7 or higher

**Opportunities for Pathfinders and Rangers**

Pathfinders and Rangers in our unit will have numerous opportunities to participate in activities and camps throughout the year that involve swimming and water-based adventures. While participation in these activities is not mandatory, we don't want anyone to miss out on the fun due to not having completed the swim test.

**To avoid missing out on these exciting opportunities, we strongly encourage all Pathfinders and Rangers to complete the swim test at their highest level.**

For any questions or additional information about the boat tests, please contact your unit Guider. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring the safety of all participants and encourage everyone to complete the appropriate swim tests for their level.

# FAQ

## Why are these swim tests necessary?

The swim tests are necessary to ensure safety during water-based activities. They help assess a participant's swimming ability and comfort in water, which is crucial for their safety and the safety of others.

## Who needs to complete which test?

- **Non-Swimmer PFD Check:** Recommended for those who are not confident swimmers. This test is necessary if you have not passed the Standard or Advanced Swim Tests.
- **Standard Swim Test:** Required if you want to participate in activities that require a higher level of swimming skill but have not completed the Advanced Swim Test.
- **Advanced Swim Test:** For those who will be involved in more intensive water-based activities or wish to achieve the highest swim proficiency level.

## Are there equivalency proofs for these tests?

Yes, equivalency proofs are recognized from other swim programs:

- **Non-Swimmer PFD Check:** Red Cross Swim Kids 3, Lifesaving Society Swimmer 3, YMCA Dolphin.
- **Standard Swim Test:** Red Cross Swim Kids 5, Lifesaving Society Swimmer 4, YMCA Swimmer or higher.
- **Advanced Swim Test:** Lifesaving Bronze Star or Bronze Medallion, Red Cross Swim Kids 10, YMCA Star 7 or higher.

## What if I can't swim or am not a strong swimmer?

We recommend that all participants, regardless of their swimming ability, complete the Non-Swimmer PFD Check for Boating Standards. This will ensure everyone is prepared and safe during aquatic activities.

## What if I don't complete the swim test?

While participation in swim tests is not mandatory, completing the appropriate test ensures you can fully participate in planned water-based activities. Without a completed swim test, you may be unable to join certain activities.

## What swim test level do most kids typically complete?

Most kids complete the **Standard Swim Test**. This level requires them to swim 50 meters and tread water for one minute. It provides a good balance of skill and safety for participating in a wide range of water-based activities.

## Can I upgrade my swim test to a higher level?

Yes, you can upgrade your swim test to a higher level. Upgrading your swim test allows you to participate in a broader range of water-based activities and ensures you meet the higher safety standards required for more challenging activities.

**What happens if I don't pass the upgraded swim test?**

If you don't pass the upgraded swim test, you can still participate in activities that require the lower-level test you have already completed. You may retake the upgraded test at a later date if you wish to achieve the higher level.

**Will there be opportunities to participate in water-based activities if I complete a lower level swim test?**

Pathfinders and Rangers in our unit will have various opportunities to engage in water-based activities throughout the year. Completing a higher-level swim test opens up more activities, but all levels of completion will allow participation in some activities.

**Who can I contact for more information about the swim tests?**

For more details about the swim tests, please reach out to your unit Guider. They can provide additional information and assist with any questions you may have.