

Health & Safety

Eagle Required (or Emergency Preparedness)

Lifesaving Merit Badge

Water rescue techniques and lifeguarding fundamentals — a swimming-intensive alternative to Emergency Preparedness.

Typical time to complete: **6–8 weeks**

GOOD FIT IF YOU LIKE

Water & Swimming

Helping Others

Sports & Fitness

Before You Start

- ! Be a confident, strong swimmer before you start — most troops recommend earning Swimming first or being comfortable well beyond the 100-yard swim test.
- ! Many camps set a minimum age or rank before enrolling in Lifesaving sessions — check with the counselor or camp before registering.

Tips for Earning This Badge

- 1 Strong swimming ability is a prerequisite. If you are not a confident swimmer, earn the Swimming merit badge first.
- 2 The rescue scenarios require a partner — coordinate with your counselor ahead of time so sessions are efficient.
- 3 Many scouts earn this at summer camp where pool access and trained counselors are available together.
- 4 The throw rescue, reach rescue, and row rescue are all tested — practice each one until they feel automatic.
- 5 Counselors are watching for hesitation as much as technique — rescues are judged on quick, controlled decision-making, not just correct form.
- 6 A common pitfall: strong swimmers who have not practiced rescue-specific skills assume swimming ability alone is enough. It is not.

Official Requirements

We keep this page focused on tips and what to expect, not a copy of the requirement text — requirements get revised periodically, and scouts are generally held to whichever version was current when they started the badge (the same reason Scoutbook lets you filter by pamphlet version). For the exact, current wording, check your Scoutbook record for this badge or the official page below.

[Lifesaving on scouting.org](https://lifesaving.on.scouting.org) 

Finding a Counselor

Ask your Scoutmaster for the council's merit badge counselor list. For popular badges, a parent in your troop may already be registered as a counselor. If your troop doesn't have one, your council's advancement chair can help connect you.