

Water Activities in Scouting Ireland

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INTRODUCTION

Water Activities are available as optional extras to all Scouts and Venturers, and to a limited extent to Cub Scouts.

Scouters wishing to undertake, or to arrange for water activities for their Scouts must first consider the Scouting Ireland Boating Rules and guidelines applicable to the activity under consideration. A Troop wishing to provide water activities (eg. rowing, canoeing, sailing) as a regular part of programme, must insure that Leaders possess appropriate qualifications, or arrangements must be made for a qualified outside instructor to supervise the activity. If it is decided to provide such activities on an occasional basis, for instance on special occasions or on a camp, the best way to do this is to arrange to visit a Scout Water Activities Centre, such as the Brian Boru Activity Centre in Killaloe, or a recognized commercial Adventure Centre, where adequate safety equipment is available, safety guidelines are in force, and qualified instructors conduct and supervise the activity. It may also be possible to arrange a visit to a local Sea Scout Group that has adequate equipment and qualified Leaders to conduct a similar exercise.

QUALIFICATIONS

Certain qualifications are required before Leaders can take their Scouts boating. These are known as Charge Certificates, and are available for rowing, sailing and power boating. The requirements for a Charge Certificate are –

- a). Practical competence in handling the appropriate craft.
- b). Leadership ability of the Scout or Leader concerned.
- c). Local knowledge of waters in the Group's area.

Charge Certificates are available at different levels (Intermediate and Advanced) for different classifications of water. The levels of practical ability equate with various levels in the Irish Sailing Association schemes - Small Boat Sailing, Powerboating or Inland Waterways. Canoeing has a separate Leadership Scheme. Restricted Canoe Leader is a Scouting qualification, but Basic Canoe Leader, Canoe Leader and Instructor are Irish Canoe Union qualifications.

For more details of the Charge Certificate Scheme, see Information Leaflet No 6.

SEA SCOUT AND WATER ACTIVITIES NATIONAL TEAM

This Team is concerned with sea and water activities, safety rules and standards, Charge Certificates and Boat Certificates and with training and assessments related to these activities. The Team is also responsible for the Sea Scout Programme, Competitions and Special Events (Regattas, etc). Sea Scout Groups are scattered throughout many Scout Provinces and therefore events, training, and assessments are organized through Provincial Committees.

TRAINING

Scouting Ireland Sea Training (formerly the Sea Training Team) is responsible to the National Team for sea and water activity training, seamanship, rowing, sailing and powerboating, and, through a separate committee, for canoeing. Training takes the form of –

1. Leadership Courses for Sea Scout Leaders on the implementation of the Sea Scout training scheme.
2. Watch Leader training courses
3. Practical boat handling courses, and assessments for Charge Certificates.
4. Shorebased Theory courses in Navigation and Meteorology, Water Safety, Marine Radio, First Aid Afloat.
5. In recognized centers, training and assessment for Irish Sailing Association certificates for small boat sailing and for power boating. A number of Scout Leaders have become qualified ISA Sailing and Powerboating Instructors.
6. Coastal and offshore sailing at present is a small but steadily growing segment of training activities. Three cruising Yachts with qualified Skippers are available occasionally for coastal/offshore training cruises.

The Brian Boru Activity Centre, Killaloe, is a Water Activity Centre and camp site on Lough Derg on the Shannon. It has its own craft, jetty, camp site and hostel accommodation. The centre is recognised by the Irish Sailing Association for dinghy sailing and for power boat training.

Dunlaoghaire Sea Scout Centre is ISA recognized for sailing training, and for Yachtmaster Shorebased Courses.

Malahide Sea Scout Centre will hopefully be ISA recognized in the near future.

For more information about Sea Training see Information Leaflet No 4.

SEA SCOUTING

Sea Scouting is part of Scouting. The Aim of Sea Scouting and the method of achieving that Aim are the same as elsewhere within the Movement. But in Sea Scouting, water is **as essential** a training and activity area as woodland and mountain. Boating and waterborne activities and expeditions are integral parts of the Programme, not optional extras. This does not mean that Sea Scouts do not go hiking, mountain walking and camping, like other Scouts. The Sea Scout training scheme is a fully integrated and balanced programme of sea and land activities, and Sea Scout Troops have a very good reputation of involvement in all Scouting activities and events.

The Sea Scouting and Water Activities National Team would be very happy to hear from any existing Troops who might be interested to learn more about the Sea Scout programme. Changing to a Sea Scout Troop is a big step that should not be rushed, and many factors must be considered, not least financial. There would be, for example, technical training of Leader(s), procurement of boat(s), storage space, access to suitable water, etc. But a small start need not be very expensive or complicated, and there is no existing Sea Scout Troop that did not start in a very small way. It may be found useful to start a Sea Scout Patrol within a Scout Troop and to arrange special training sessions for the Patrol with a neighbouring Sea Scout Troop.

However, advice is completely free! If you would like a visit from one of the team and have an illustrated talk about the programme, and a question and answer session, please contact the Sea Scouting and Water Activities National Team.

STANDARDS

Except in matters of water safety, there are no special minimum standards for Sea Scout Groups, but practical boating should form a normal part of the programme as soon as possible. The importance of Sea Scouts becoming confident and competent on and in the water must be remembered. Sea Scouting provides extra opportunities, but it also creates extra responsibilities, particularly demands on the skills of the Leaders, and the acquisition, storage, maintenance and repair of craft and equipment. Sea Scouting provides excellent training in its broadest sense and often appeals to young people and Leaders who may not otherwise be interested in the Movement.

For more information about Sea Scouting see Information Leaflet No 2.