

Authorisation Scheme for Water Activities



0845 300 1818

Guidelines for the issue of a District Commissioner's Authorisation

Introduction

This is the fifth edition of the factsheet, which updates that coded FS120601 and dated Aug 99. It provides the information required for an applicant for authorisation to lead or supervise water activities with Members of The Scout Association.

These notes form an integral part of the application and should not be detached from the form. If it is necessary to photocopy this material then both the notes and form should be copied.

Further editions may be published in the light of experience. The publication of further editions will be notified in SCOUTING Magazine, Talking Points and the Activities Newsletter.

General

The Rules of the Association relating to water activities are contained in *Policy, Organisation and Rules*. The benefits of the authorisation scheme are that it assists District Commissioners to ensure that those leading or supervising water activities are competent to do so. It shows clearly to parents that those who introduce young people to these activities have been authorised by The Scout Association and that all relevant training will be supervised or run by an authorised person.

It must be stressed that this scheme is for the safe encouragement of all water activities within the overall context of the development of young people through Scout training. It is not a qualification for use outside The Scout Association.

Competency in water activities will be assessed by a County/Area Water Activity Assessor, who

should take into account any documentary evidence, log books or certificates. These must

be attached to the application and may be photocopies rather than the originals.

To the Applicant

In completing this form you are openly and honestly declaring your background knowledge and experience. You will be aware of the importance of party leadership when with young people and the areas of responsibility as a leader or supervisor of any particular water activity.

Consider the possible serious implications of overstating experience gained when you were perhaps physically more able. The effects of any physical, medical or mental condition on your ability to act in emergency should also be considered. Be sure to state all recent experience. In claiming successful completion of any formal training, e.g. a Royal Yachting Association or British Canoe Union qualification, **you must** enclose the original or a photocopy of the page or pages which indicate your successes. In addition a log of your activities for the past three years will assist the County/Area Water Activity Assessor to come to a reasoned recommendation. An example of a suitable log sheet is included in this Factsheet.

You should complete the attached form giving as much detail as possible. Do not be afraid to attach additional sheets of paper if the space on the form is inadequate, or if you wish to add information not covered in any of the spaces available. You may also wish to indicate the level of authorisation sought.

Having completed the form, you should forward it to the appropriate Commissioner (normally the District Commissioner), via your Group Scout Leader. If the County/Area Water Activity

Assessor is not already aware of your experience on the water you should expect to hear from your County/Area Water Activity Assessor about arrangements for a practical assessment to be carried out. If you have heard nothing within one month of submitting your application form, you should contact your Group Scout Leader and/or the appropriate Commissioner.

You must be familiar with the appropriate water activity factsheet(s), *'Water Safety (incorporating Lifejackets and Buoyancy Aids)'* and the Rules of The Scout Association as contained in *Policy, Organisation and Rules*.

To the Commissioner responsible

On initial receipt of this form you should consider the applicant and decide whether or not that person is suitable for authorisation. The fact that a person holds a Scouter's warrant does not necessarily mean that he is she is suitable to lead or supervise young people in potentially hazardous activities.

This is no reflection on a person's ability as a Scouter, but age, physical disability, general health and fitness etc, may be reasons why you can not allow this application to go forward. What is important is that you are satisfied in general terms about the suitability of the applicant to be responsible for a party of young people engaged in such activities collectively or individually. Your acceptance at this stage is probably the key signature on the form. Whenever possible consult with the ADC or ACC/AAC (Activities) as appropriate before signing.

You should now send the form to the County/Area Water Activity Assessor for a recommendation on the level of authorisation to be granted. In the case of difficulties forward the form to the Programme and Development Department, Gilwell Park, Bury Road, Chingford, London E4 7QW.

It is important for the satisfaction and encouragement of the applicant that you complete your part of the process quickly. Seven days is the maximum time that the application should be with you.

On receiving the form back from the County/Area Water Activity Assessor, you

should decide on the level of authorisation to be granted in the light of the recommendation given by the County/Area Water Activity Assessor. You should note that you are in no way bound by what has been recommended by the County/Area Water Activity Assessor. It is within your right to reduce the scope of any authorisation. If you intend to give an authorisation that differs from that recommended by the County/Area Water Activity Assessor, you must consult the County/Area Water Activity Assessor.

Having decided on the level of authorisation, sign the bottom of the form and return the form to the applicant.

As the authorisation is valid for the maximum period of five years it is important that your County/Area or your District maintains a record of all authorisations granted. It is for the County/Area to determine who monitors the records and takes the subsequent action to cancel or renew authorisations.

You may also wish to make use of the facility to record this authorisation in the Leader's record book, the record of authorisation or the authorisation card, these being available from the Resource Centre at Gilwell Park.

To the County/Area Activity Assessor

On receiving the form from the District Commissioner, you should assess the level of technical experience and ability claimed by the applicant and check any supporting documents. It is for you to decide whether to carry out a practical assessment. If the applicant does not hold a formal qualification, and is not known to you from previous experience, you will normally want to do so. In this case you should contact the applicant directly to discuss suitable dates.

It is not envisaged that such an assessment will last for more than one day. The format of the assessment is for you to decide. While seeing the applicant actually leading a party of young people is the ideal, this is not mandatory.

While a practical assessment should be considered the norm it may be that the applicant's ability on the water is well known to you. If you are satisfied with the applicant's capability, it is acceptable to dispose with the

practical assessment since no useful purpose is likely to be served by its formal completion.

It is unlikely that the applicant will have the same depth of knowledge or the same breadth of experience as yourself and you should not expect it. In expressing your recommendation it would probably be best to refer to the Association's Classification of Waters and avoid references to the months of the year. It would be better to refer to seasons of the year and climatic conditions.

It is not the intention that applicants should necessarily be restricted to specific geographical areas but this may be necessary depending on the level of experience of the applicant.

For instance the recommendation for a 15-year-old Patrol Leader holding an RYA National Dinghy Sailing Scheme Level 2 with two summers experience could be:-

Authorised to take charge of a dinghy in summer conditions on XXX lake (B1 Water).

The recommendation for a Venture Scout Leader with BCU Instructor's Certificate, ten years canoeing experience and an experience of canal narrow boat expeditions could be:-

Authorised to supervise any canoeing activities (open or closed Kayak or Canadian Canoe) on B1 (maximum 9 canoes) or B2 (maximum 3 canoes) Water and take charge of a canal narrow boat on B1 Waters.

Please note that recommendations for authorisation should normally be to lead and/or supervise water activities. Authorisations to authorise water activities should only be recommended for teaching establishments supervised by well qualified people (i.e. BCU or RYA Senior Instructors). Such authorisation should be granted only by County or Area Commissioners.

After deciding on your recommendation, you should complete your section of the form and return it to the District Commissioner concerned. Like the District Commissioner you are expected to process this form quickly or contact the applicant directly if any delay is anticipated.

Notes for all

1. Read the specific factsheet relating to the activity for which authorisation is sought and the factsheet '*Water Safety (incorporating Lifejackets and Buoyancy Aids)*'.
2. Should an applicant gain further experience, another application may be submitted at any time in order that the authorisation may be reassessed. When this new authorisation is given it begins a new period of validity, i.e. normally five years.
3. The applicant need not be a warranted Scouter nor a Member of the Movement.
4. There is no upper or lower age limit for any applicant - suitable Scouts or Venture Scouts may be authorised. Any authorised person under 18 years of age may only operate with the permission of his or her Scout Leader or Venture Scout Leader on each separate occasion.
5. The possible outcome of overstating any experience gained by the applicant when physically more able should always be borne in mind by applicant, Commissioner and County/Area Water Activity Assessor.
6. Adults applying for authorisation must have completed the Scout and Guide Associations' First Response Course within the three-year period prior to the application. Holders of a valid First Aid Qualification, where the syllabus equals or exceeds that of a First Response Course, especially in respect of hypothermia and hyperthermia, meets this requirement
7. Applications should be accompanied by all documentary proof available, certificates of attendance at courses, log books, etc or clear photocopies of these documents. The originals should be made available if requested by the appropriate Commissioner or County/Area Water Activity Assessor.
8. It is expected that the complete authorisation process should be completed as soon as possible and certainly within one month.

9. The authorisation is granted by the appropriate Commissioner, who may grant an authorisation which differs from the recommendation of the County/Area Water Activity Assessor. The County/Area Water Activity Assessor must be consulted before issuing the authorisation.
10. It is for the Scout County/Area to decide where the record of authorisations granted is kept. This can be at County/Area or District. That body is then responsible for initiating the renewal or cancellation of the authorisation granted near the end of the period (normally five years) for which it was granted.

The authorisation scheme does not affect Groups wishing to make use of professional instruction and leadership. The Leader concerned must check that, if required, the Instructor(s) are registered in accordance with the Adventure Activity Licensing requirements,

or meet the requirements of the Marine Safety Agency's Code of Practice for Sail Training Vessels, or hold the appropriate Department of Transport qualification.

Publications Cross Reference

The current editions of:

Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association, ISBN-0-81565-290-5

First Response The Guide Association

Role and Qualifications of the County Water Activity Assessor and Adviser FS120602 2/95

Record of Authorisation CT120191

Authorisation Card CT120095

First Aid and the Saving of Life FS120051 5/97

Code of Practice - Sail Training Vessels ISBN-0-11-551184-9

Water Safety (Incorporating Lifejackets and Buoyancy Aids) FS120603 5/95

Activity Authorisation -

Water

Title: **Full Name:**

Maiden Name: (where applicable)

Full Postal Address: (including postcode)

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Tel. no. - Daytime: **Evening:**

Contact details: (e.g. Mobile, fax, e-mail)

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Date of Birth:

Health Factors: (Things that may affect the activity e.g. diabetes, asthma)

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Current Scouting appointment: (if any)

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Previous Scouting experience: (if any)

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Do you hold membership of any relevant club or society?

Please give details:

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First Aid: *Please state any relevant courses attended, e.g. First Response, and give dates.*

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Is this your first application for Authorisation? **Yes/No**

If No, please give details of previous applications.

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Has a previous application been refused? **Yes/No**

If Yes, please give details.

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State which activities you wish to be authorised for:

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In which geographical location(s) or Class of Waters do you want to carry out these activities?

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Are these activities to be held on:

Is your role to be: **Leading** **Supervising** *(tick box)*

How many years experience have you relevant to these activities? *Please give details on the form on the back page or attach a copy of your log book*

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Please give details of relevant training courses attended.

Please attach photocopies of all relevant documents including log book and/or licence.

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I have read and understood P.O.R. - Activity Rules. I am familiar with the appropriate Water Activity Factsheet.

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Signature of Applicant

Date

I am satisfied as to the maturity, ability to lead and supervise young people and the general suitability of the applicant.

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Signature of the GSL

Name in block capitals

Date

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Group

District

County

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Signature of the DC

Name in block capital

Date

I recommend that authorisation be given within the following limits:

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Signature of County Assessor

Name in block capitals

Date

I hereby grant authorisation within the following limits:

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Signature of the DC

Name in block capitals

Date

Review Date **Signature of DC**

