

Fulfilling the Scuba Diving Merit Badge and Other Great Opportunities



Bridging *the* Gap

between PADI Dive Centers *and*
Boy Scouts of America



Welcome to the World of Scuba Diving. The Popularity of scuba diving with the scouts has grown exponentially over the last several years. Much like scuba, the overall philosophy of scouting encourages the quest for adventure. It is a life changing experience that enables young men and women to embrace challenges in a whole new way. That first breath underwater; the feeling of total weightlessness as you embark into a foreign world enables you to be part of something so powerful it transforms your life.

Thousands of scouts have delved into the adventure during the jamboree, local camporees, and high adventure trips. Additionally, with the approval of the Scuba Diving merit badge there are now countless opportunities for Boy Scouts to explore the thrill of scuba. Prior to getting started it would be helpful for Boy Scout unit leaders to understand some general guidelines for working with PADI Dive Centers and Resorts. PADI facilities can be found throughout the United States as diving is available in many local lakes, quarries, rivers and of course oceans. The purpose of this pamphlet is to provide you a detailed roadmap on how to easily arrange merit badge counseling for the scuba merit badge as well as many other resources and opportunities.

WHY PADI?

The Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) is the world's largest recreational diver training, certification and membership organization. PADI Members (dive centers, resorts, educational facilities, instructors, assistant instructors and divemasters) issue approximately 1,000,000 certifications worldwide each year, making underwater exploration and adventure accessible to the public, while maintaining the highest industry standards for dive training and safety.

With more than 134,000 PADI Professionals and approximately 5,800 PADI Dive Centers and Resorts operating in more than 180 countries and territories worldwide, PADI training materials and services let you experience scuba diving from nearly anywhere.

PADI Divers carry the most respected and sought after scuba credentials in the world. No matter where you choose to dive, your PADI scuba certification card will be recognized and accepted. In fact, on most scuba diving adventures you'll be surrounded by other PADI Divers who made the same certification choice you did – to train with the world's largest and most respected scuba diving training organization.





WORKING WITH THE LOCAL PADI DIVE CENTER(S) OR RESORT(S)

Your local PADI Dive Center or Resort is your source for bringing scuba activities to your troop or crew.

Your local PADI Dive Center can help you with the following:

- ◆ Making a scuba presentation at the next Round Table meeting
- ◆ Attending local unit meetings to discuss Scuba programs (the new Scuba Diving merit badge, Scuba BSA, Scuba elective for Venturing and Snorkeling BSA)
- ◆ Putting together programs for units or individual scouts to get certified as PADI Open Water Divers or advanced dive ratings.

In addition, PADI Dive Centers can give presentations and teach programs in:

- ◆ First Aid, CPR and AED usage with the Emergency First Response® curriculum*
- ◆ Coordinate and arrange environmental programs such as beach clean-ups and training on how to protect the aquatic world using Project AWARE*

The progression and variety of scuba and snorkeling courses offered by PADI are bound to keep scouts engaged for many years to come. PADI offers over 27 Specialty Ratings

including Wreck Diving, Underwater Naturalist, and Digital Underwater Photography just to name a few. These courses encourage scouts to continue their education in a fun and exciting way. The Scuba Diving merit badge offers a unique opportunity since it is only the beginning of their scuba adventure.

SCUBA DIVING MERIT BADGE

Achievement of the Scuba Diving merit badge will result in a PADI Open Water Diver Certification. This is a lifetime certification that is only the first step into an endless world of new experiences, adventures and fun. After completing the certification boys will have the ability to go scuba diving in a variety of different environments and continue their education to further enhance their skill sets.



The Scuba Diving merit badge program consists of four parts;

- 1. The BSA requirements (use of BSA Scuba Diving merit badge booklet)**
- 2. Scuba Knowledge (use of PADI training material)**
- 3. Confined Water Dives and skill development**
- 4. Open Water Dives**



GETTING STARTED

When contacting a PADI Dive Center or Resort there are a few common questions that should be asked to determine the type of program that will best suit your troop.

(Please keep in mind all PADI Dive Centers and Resorts are independently owned and operated; programs, course schedules, products, pricing, hours of operation, etc. are all set by the facility and will vary from business to business.)

1) How is the knowledge development portion of the course completed?

There are three options available for completing the knowledge development portion of the scuba course:

PADI eLearning® program: Development portion is completed online at the pace of the student diver.

Home Study program: This option is also completed in the comfort of the student divers home and at their pace using a multi-media DVD version or hard copies of the training material.

Classroom program: This is a more traditional approach of conducting the development training in the dive centers classroom using hard copies of the training materials.

NOTE:

All three options provide the same high level of PADI training standards. The decision should be based on personal preference and availability from the dive center.

2) What is the schedule for the course?

Most dive centers offer a variety of different course schedules (including evenings and weekends). If the dive center does not have a class schedule that meets the needs of your scouts ask if there is an option to customize the schedule.

3) What information do I need to have available when I contact the dive center?

When scheduling a group the dive center will ask you a

variety of questions including number of students and age of each participant. This is important because PADI standards require specific instructor to student ratios so the store will want to make sure they have adequate staffing on hand.

4) How much will the course cost?

Each dive center is independently owned and operated so course pricing will vary depending on the store and the method of learning you choose. Many dive centers do offer special pricing for troops so be sure to identify yourself as a scout leader.

5) What type of gear will I need?

To ensure the experience is enjoyable most dive centers require each student diver to have personal snorkeling gear including mask, snorkel and fins. Depending on the geographic location and water temperature some stores may also require a hood, dive booties and gloves. All of these items can be purchased on site at the dive center. Most dive centers will have the remainder of the gear available for rental. It's important to work with an experienced dive center when purchasing scuba diving gear (including mask, snorkel and fins) to ensure everything fits properly.

NOTE:

Be sure to let the dive center know the height and weight of the students so they can make sure they enough gear available for everyone.

6) Where are the confined and open water dives conducted?

The confined water dives are conducted in a swimming pool either on site at the dive center or at a local pool or at an open water site with pool like conditions in the area and may take several sessions. The four open water dives are conducted over a minimum of two days at a local dive site such as a lake, quarry or the ocean depending on the geographic location.





Image Courtesy of Roger Morgan

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Open Water Diver course is just the first step to tapping into an abundance of educational opportunities, programs and adventures for scouts. There are many additional programs offered by PADI that compliment other scouting programs. The PADI and BSA partnership has now opened the door to making all of these accessible to troops.

Venturing Crews – Many PADI Dive Centers already sponsor Venturing crews. For many of the 25,000 Venturing crews, scuba is one of their most popular activities. As Venturing is for older young men and women and high adventure is a key element of the program, Scuba is a hot topic for Venturing.

First Aid - Through Emergency First Response, PADI offers an accredited First Aid, CPR and AED program covering Adult, Child and Infant emergency procedures. First aid is a requirement for many levels of rank advancement in Boy Scouts and Venturing, and also a requirement for the PADI Rescue diver course.

Swimming – Many PADI Dive Centers have pools on site and can assist packs, troops, and crews with swimming instruction as they pursue rank advancement. Some PADI Instructors are qualified as counselors for the swimming merit badge.

Oceanography – PADI offers a variety of programs that could be taught in conjunction with scuba, such as the PADI National Geographic Specialty, Project AWARE Specialty, Underwater Naturalist Specialty and Project AWARE Fish Identification program.

Salesmanship and Fundraising – In cooperation with a dive center, Scouts could sell tickets to a Discover Scuba experience (similar to the Scuba BSA program). The unit could use this as a fun and different fund-raising exercise.

Scouting and Conservation – Join a global movement of scuba divers around the world working to protect our ocean planet. Visit the Project AWARE Foundation online at www.projectaware.org and discover ongoing projects and events to volunteer for in your local community. Scouts can help make a valuable difference while logging valuable service hours.

SNORKELING BSA

BSA Snorkeling is ideal for teaching scouts how to snorkel safely and is the recommended procedure for conducting BSA swimming activities using masks, fins, and snorkels. This program has been around since 2002 and is one of the options as an entry point for Scouts that have not met the required age for Scuba BSA or the Scuba Diving merit badge program. PADI Instructors are qualified to sign off on this badge for your scouts.



first part, participants learn basic dive safety information and overview skills to be used during their water experience. The Water Skills Development session introduces essential dive skills, such as mask clearing, regulator clearing, and alternate air source use.

This experience program allows the Scouts to take part in an underwater experience so they can see what Scuba Diving is all about, prior to getting into the Scuba Diving merit badge program (although this program is not a mandatory program to gain access to the Scuba Diving merit badge program, it is counted towards it).



SCUBA BSA

The Scuba BSA program has been an existing program offered for the Boy Scouts since 2003. Your local PADI Dive Center or Resort can fulfill the qualified supervision and the scuba experience requirements needed to qualify for this award.

Scuba BSA introduces qualified Boy Scout, Venturing, and registered adult participants to the special skills, equipment, and safety precautions associated with scuba diving, encourages aquatic activities that promote fitness and recreation, and provides a foundation for those who later will participate in more advanced underwater activities.

The Scuba BSA experience contains two parts— Knowledge Development and Water Skills Development. During the

SCUBA ELECTIVE FOR RANGER AWARD IN VENTURING

Scuba is one of the eighteen electives available to Venturers who are in pursuit of the Ranger Award. There are three steps to successfully complete this segment of the training.

- 1. The Venturer must become certified as a PADI Open Water Diver (or obtain an equal certification from an accredited agency.)**
- 2. Make a presentation to their crew, another crew or a Cub or Boy Scout group on what it takes to become certified and some other subject related to scuba diving**
- 3. Assist with a Discover Scuba or Scuba BSA program as teaching others is a key characteristic of Venturing.**



Many PADI Dive Centers already support Venturing crews. Contact your local PADI Dive Center or Resort today to see how your crew can benefit from this partnership.



For additional questions regarding the PADI and BSA partnership please contact:

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***Project AWARE Foundation** is a global movement of scuba divers protecting the ocean planet - one dive at a time. Focused on the critical issues of Sharks in Peril and Marine Debris, Project AWARE empowers thousands of divers in more than 180 countries to work together for a clean, healthy and abundant ocean planet. Project AWARE Foundation is a registered non-profit organization.



***Emergency First Response®** is the fastest growing CPR, AED and First Aid training organization, with more than 48,000 instructors around the world. Focused on training the lay rescuer, the Emergency First Response low-stress, performance-based approach to training will build confidence in your scouts and increase the likelihood they'll respond when faced with a medical emergency.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

