



SEA CADETS

SWIM QUALIFICATION ADMINISTRATION GUIDANCE

Updated April 2025

References

Homeport>Policy:

- Training Operations Manual, Unit Specific Training, Swim Training (Chapter 2, Section 0203, #6).
- Administrative Manual, General Administration, Magellan Record Keeping, Swim Qualifications (Chapter 3, Section 311, #3.)

1. Purpose

- a. To provide guidelines and procedures for units, cadets, and families for administering swim qualifications.
- b. To update the third-class swimmer requirement for the 50-yard swim, allowing cadets to demonstrate at least one or a combination of the required strokes.
- c. To encourage regional coordination of swim qualifications for cadets from multiple units in a central location. Headquarters will provide funding when available for approved regional swim qualifications.
- d. To help identify the various levels of swimming proficiency a cadet must achieve to safely participate in water-based training and activities. A Commanding Officer, Regional Director, or Training Group may set the requirements for a unit/regional level activity or advancement training within the guidelines of the chart listed below.

2. Who must complete swim qualifications.

Cadets applying for water-based advancement training or any Sea Cadet activities requiring a swim qualification, must complete the required level of swim qualification associated with that training.

3. Required Form to be completed.

The Record of Swim Qualification for Sea Cadets is form NSCTNG015. This form can be found by logging into the Quarterdeck and going to Homeport>Forms and Templates. It was updated in April 2025 to align third-class swimmer requirements. Although it is not required, the best practice is to update the swim qualification record every two years, to ensure the cadet maintains proficiency in their ability to safely perform the elements of this test.

Swim Level	Training Examples
Basic	Any water-based training where there is a possibility of water skills needed or interaction in waist-high water (or deeper), or safety device needed
3 rd Class	Mostly land-based training with a half-day of water activities or kayaking on a river
2nd Class	John Brown, Barque Eagle, Tiger Cruises, Fleet Week underways, Small Boats, etc.
1 st Class	NSWOC, Lifeguarding

4. Who can Administer the Test.

The following individuals may administer and sign off on the NSCTNG015.

- Sea Cadet volunteers in good standing who can demonstrate proficiency in all strokes
- Certified lifeguards
- Certified swim instructors
- Certified rescue swimmers and members of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard that are rated as 1st class swimmers

Those administering swim qualifications must be able to demonstrate proficiency in all strokes (backstroke, elementary backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle). Non-swimmers may not conduct these tests.

Anyone outside the Sea Cadet program administering the test must provide their contact information and place of employment on the NSCTNG015. Expired certifications are not acceptable.

5. Location.

There are two options for securing a location to participate in a swim qualification.

- a. The Regional Director, Unit Commanding Officer or designated unit personnel will organize a location and individuals that can fulfill the needs of the testing requirements.

- b. The cadet's parent or guardian seeks out a certified or licensed person (mentioned above) to perform the test at their own cost and time. The Commanding Officer has authority to verify validity at any time.

Suggested locations include universities, public access pools, YMCA's, Salvation Army locations, Military Installations, and private clubs/organizations.

If requested by the location, the Sea Cadet Certificate of Liability Insurance is on Homeport>Policy>Guidance>Certificate of Insurance.

In all cases, pools must:

- Have the ability for cadets to swim a length of 25 yards without stopping
- Be monitored for routine cleanliness, and free from debris
- Have a place in the pool where they cannot touch the bottom by standing (personal above-ground pools are not allowed).

6. How to Administer the Test.

Record the cadet's swim qualification using NSCTNG 015. The sequence of instruction is as follows:

- a. Cadets must perform swim qualifications starting with the basic swimmer level. At the completion of each assessment level, there may be a break in time for rest, hydration, and lavatory needs. Cadets may not strictly test for one level without completing the ladder of events in order to provide documentation of endurance and proficiency.
- b. At any time, a cadet may request to terminate their evolution and accept the highest-level swimmer qualification they have passed. Cadets will not restart any evolution once they have terminated their event.
- c. For safety reasons, any person administering this qualification must use good judgment in assessing skills. There may be no passing on good faith or what has been previously observed of the cadet. Each cadet must pass on their skill sets. Swimming above all else presents a unique and inherent danger that requires keen and attentive observation

7. Preparation

- a. Each cadet must be wearing USNSCC approved swim attire:
 - i. Females must wear a black or blue 1 piece swimsuit (with or without shirt and shorts covering swimsuit, for comfort)
 - ii. Males must wear black or blue swim shorts that are loose and may not be considered speedo or race type style (with or without shirt, for comfort)
 - iii. Cadets will have access to NWU trousers for part of the swim qualification

- iv. Cadets must move to and from pool with appropriate footwear as dictated by the facility being used
- b. Sea Cadet adult volunteers must be in appropriate attire:
 - i. NWU, alternate uniform, PT gear or swimwear
 - ii. Meet same swimwear requirements as cadets
 - iii. Follow same footwear requirements as cadets
 - iv. Abide by all USNSCC regulations prior, during and post swim qualification administration

8. Basic Swimmer - this section is to be held concurrently without breaks in time

- a. Cadets must swim in deep water, to where they can not touch the bottom of the pool, unassisted, for 15 yards each. Using lane-lines, sides of pools and/or persons is considered not passing.
- b. Treading water means stationary movement, cadets may not meander in the water for the time given. [Navy Skills for Life – Water Survival Training – Treading Water](#)
- c. Prone flotation requires face in the water with minimal breaths, breaths should be taken by moving face to the side with head still in water in order to remain in a prone position for one minute. Modified version seen here: [Navy Skills for Life – Water Survival Training – Drownproofing](#)

9. Third Class Swimmer - this section is to be held concurrently without breaks in time.

[2nd Class Swim Qual](#)

- a. Deep Water Jump may occur from a platform, diving board 5 feet above the water surface or more, or a designated location approved by the facility.
- b. 50-yard swim must include at least one or any combination of the listed strokes and cadets must show at least minimally sufficient use of at least one stroke to be a credit to the qualification.
- c. Test administer must make every effort to correct and demonstrate swim strokes as needed
- d. Prone Float for 5 minutes may include minimal sculling in order to stay in a prone position. Encourage cadets to take slow breaths to the side in order to maintain position and not move about. Some kicks may be needed in order to keep cadets from moving into a perpendicular position.

- e. Shirt and Trouser inflation. Cadets may bring their own NWU's to test with or the command may provide a single pair to utilize minimal resources. Cadets must effectively inflate NWU by wetting and throwing gear over their heads to gather air in the extremities and then tying off or holding onto gear to float appropriately with inflated wear.

- i. Blouse Inflation: in optimal conditions, the goal of using one's NWU blouse to stay afloat is possible. Two most efficient methods are.

- 1. Button the blouse as high as possible and ensure the wrists are tightly buttoned, this will help trap air within. Cadets will then lift the bottom of the shirt and use their arm and hand to forcefully slap the water to force air pockets to form within the shirt opening. This takes much energy and should be practiced prior to testing.
 - 2. Wrists of the blouse should be fully buttoned to leave little or no gaps. If there is loose space, roll sleeves until they are tight. Button the blouse to the second highest button, leaving space for the swimmers mouth and nose to tuck in and blow air into the shirt. This is a long process that can be tiring.

- ii. Trouser Inflation: This is accomplished by removing the pants and ensuring it is fully zipped and buttoned. Next, tie the leg ends in a knot to secure the escape of air. Next, the swimmer will need to hold the waist of the pants and bring it around to the back of their neck. The goal is to bring the pants over the swimmers head with enough force to contain air in the pants and then close off the waist area with the swimmers hands. The swimmer will then move their head under the pants where there is the opening of the legs and rest upon the air filled trouser legs. [Navy Skills for Life – Water Survival Training – Clothing Inflation](#)

10. Second Class Swimmer - this section is to be held concurrently without breaks in time

- a. Cadets must swim 25 yards for each stroke, back-to-back without breaks in time. Flip turns or touch turns may be utilized, at no time should a cadet walk or touch the bottom of the pool to complete this section.
- b. Prone Float for 5 minutes may include minimal sullyng in order to stay in a prone position. Encourage cadets to take slow breaths to the side in order to maintain position and not move about. Some kicks may be needed in order to keep cadets from moving into a perpendicular position. This action is repeated from the Third-Class section and must be performed successfully in order to complete the Second-Class section.

- c. Back Float for 5 minutes may include minimal sculling in order to stay in a flat upward position. Cadets should always keep their head and ears in the water. Minimal leg, feet movement may occur in order to keep cadets in a flat position. Cadets may not use the sides of the pool, lane lines, or other persons to assist.

11. First Class Swimmer - this section is to be held concurrently without breaks in time. Test administrator may loudly encourage the cadet with instruction while the cadet is swimming.

- a. Cadets must swim 25 yards for each stroke, back-to-back without breaks in time. Flip turns or touch turns may be utilized, at no time should a cadet walk or touch the bottom of the pool to complete this section.
- b. Prone Float for 5 minutes may include minimal sculling in order to stay in a prone position. Encourage cadets to take slow breaths to the side in order to maintain position and not move about. Some kicks may be needed in order to keep cadets from moving into a perpendicular position. This action is repeated from the Third-Class section and must be performed successfully in order to complete the Second-Class section.
- c. Back Float for 5 minutes may include minimal sculling in order to stay in a flat upward position. Cadets should keep their head and ears in the water at all times. Minimal leg, feet movement may occur in order to keep cadets in a flat position. Cadets may not use the sides of the pool, lane lines, or other persons to assist.
- d. Underwater swim is added to the first-class qualification and is used to demonstrate calm and cool use of critical thinking skills while in the water. Cadets will swim for 25 yards with the Burning Oil Maneuver.
 - i. The cadet will take 1 breath and submerge under water as not to touch the surface
 - ii. Once ready to take a breath, cadet will stop movement, motion to move hands up and out of the water and splash "burning oil" from the surface away from where cadet wishes to surface, cadet will come up, take a breath, and submerge again
 - iii. Cadet will continue swimming forward and perform the movement 1 more time prior to the 25-yard finish
 - iv. Cadet must remember to not swim close to the surface as touching the surface will end the attempt, cadet must splash water in correct process in order to take breath

12. Holding Breath - For the safety of all swimmers and the facility in which swim qualifications are taking place, or even Sea Cadet activities in which swimming is occurring without Swim Qualifications. Sea Cadets and Volunteers will not participate in activities in the water that involve holding their breath in a timed event or competition. This excludes the “Burning Oil Maneuver” in the first class swimmer assessment.

Swimmers holding their breath for an extended period is dangerous and may lead to shallow water blackout. Participating in these games places even the most advanced swimmers at risk of emergency situations. Please click the link below to learn more: [Shallow Water Blackout Prevention Public Service Announcement](#)

13. Certification - Certifying individuals must check all boxes with a clear “YES” or “NO” for all sections. If there are unclear markings, cadets may be asked to retake the qualification. Qualification forms will be kept in cadets’ files and may be accessible upon request by the cadet, their guardians, regional staff, and/or training staff.

Questions? Please contact your chain of command

Thank you for volunteering and for making cadet safety a priority.

