

WATERFRONT GUIDE

Intended for the use of staff members of Pleasant Valley Camp as a basic guide to general procedures and guidelines.
This guide does not include all the information needed for teaching all waterfront activities.
Adapted from Ted Lane's North Woods Guide Updated 2006

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Goals and Objectives

Each camper should gain an appreciation for the aquatic environment and the possibilities for fun and enrichment. Each camper should also improve her aptitude for dealing with the aquatic environment, including knowledge of safety procedures. Ideally, each camper should advance one level per session in the YMCA Progressive Swimming program. Campers should learn rules for safe swimming and boating procedures, and each should learn how to do simple rescues with equipment to assist drowning victims. Each camper should learn how to use a Personal Flotation Device (PFD). Campers who are interested should have the opportunity to improve their canoeing, kayaking, sailing, water-skiing, and windsurfing skills through daily practice and staff instruction.

Staff Swimming

Staff may swim during any of their free time as long as a person certified in lifeguard training, or the equivalent, is present and the buddy system is in affect and the waterfront director is consulted. Night swimming is not permitted except under the following conditions: permission by the camp director, permission by the waterfront director, and supervision by a certified lifeguard or an equivalent.

If staff members desire to use other waterfront equipment they must comply with all waterfront rules which includes the wearing of PFD's.

Rules for Lifeguards

All staff members will act as lifeguards for free swims on a rotating basis. Be sure to know when you are scheduled to guard. The Waterfront Director or a counselor who is a certified Lifeguard will run the free swims. We will cover general rescue procedures during staff training week. But here are a few guidelines:

1. Be on time.
2. Wear a bathing suit, shorts, sunglasses/hat, sunscreen, and no sneakers.
3. Pay attention to the area you are designated to supervise.
4. No extended talking to or playing with swimmers or other lifeguards.
5. Only use rescue equipment that you know how to and can use correctly.
6. Bring or borrow a whistle.

Safety Equipment

The waterfront is equipped with enough rescue tubes for those counselors trained to use them. There is a backboard kept on the deck, leaning against Shangri-La at all times. A rowboat is also available at times. Do not attempt to use any equipment you are not familiar with. The use of safety equipment will be covered during staff training.

Free Swims

The Buddy Tag System is in affect at all times. Scheduled lifeguards come straight from their activity areas ready to guard. Campers line up on the deck until the head lifeguard is ready and has all the lifeguards set. Campers are signed up in pairs (sometimes three). They take their buddy tag from the Village area and place it with their buddy's tag in the swim area in which they will be swimming. Polliwogs, Guppies, and Minnows are only allowed in the shallow end. Levels of Fish and above are allowed to swim in both the shallow and deep end. Swimming is allowed only in the roped off swimming area. Buddies should be no more than 15 feet apart at all times. When the head lifeguard whistles for a buddy check all swimmers buddy up and stop swimming and talking. When their number is called they respond by saying "Here!" They may start swimming again after the entire buddy check has been completed. Staff members will have buddy tags and must also buddy up with another staff member or a camper. Masks, fins, snorkels, etc. can be used with the permission of the head lifeguard. Staff are expected to arrive at waterfront before campers. Lifeguards are placed at a specific post and must have proper rescue equipment within reach. Lifeguards on duty are expected to avoid conversation with each other. Non-lifeguards are responsible for checking buddies in and out of the water, making sure everyone flips their buddy tags, and being available for extra eyes, or an emergency. Our rafts can have 10 people maximum on them at one time. A specific lifeguard will be assigned top that area to supervise.

Pine Trips

Swimming at Pine Island occurs only when BOTH counselors are watching, the certified lifeguard must be on the dock or shore, and the other can be in the water. The buddy system is always in affect. A reaching pole and PFD (type IV) are on hand at all times. Swimming should be done from dockside of the island only and should not extend farther than 75 feet from shore. Absolutely NO swimming should occur after dark.

Waterfront Duty

Everyday one counselor is assigned to cover waterfront from 7 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. During activity days, she is relieved by a member of the waterfront staff before first period. Her main responsibility is to watch the area and to stop unauthorized use of the waterfront. The staff member on waterfront duty is also responsible for ringing the bell at the appropriate times (see daily schedule). Other duties are to snorkel for glass in and around the swimming area when a certified lifeguard observes and to be sure all equipment is put away at the end of the day. Beachside should be maintained as a clean and organized shed especially the dry life jackets, boats and windsurf boards should also be counted.

Evaluation of Swimming Ability

At the beginning of each session, all new campers are given a swim test for the purpose of placing each in a swim class, and for the purpose of determining whether or not they are capable of handling themselves in deep water. Campers who are at the Minnow level or below are not permitted to participate in kayaking, sailing, water-skiing, or windsurfing. All testing will be done by the Waterfront Director.

Swim Instruction

Swim instruction will be taught in accordance with the YMCA Progressive Swimming regulations. At all swimming classes a lifeguard is always present on the waterfront to oversee the training. Classes are taught by certified waterfront staff. Swim instructors will write evaluations of each class to be kept on file. This system helps the camp and future staff keep track of the progressing skill level each summer.

Personal Flotation Devices

All PFD's are Coast Guard approved, and many are designed for people weighing under 90 pounds. The staff member assigned to the waterfront activity involved supervises the wearing of PFD's to assure that each camper as well as staff member is wearing a life jacket with the proper size and fit and that is sufficiently buoyant. Campers and staff must wear PFD's at all times during boating activities on boats under 26 feet.

Safety at Boating Activities

Attendance is taken at the beginning of each waterfront class, so that the counselor in charge knows who is at the activity and reasons why people are not participating. Counselors always go out in the boats with campers to supervise, and all campers are accounted for during and at the end of class. All crafts departing from the waterfront are logged and accounted for after class on a clipboard in Beachside. Coast Guard approved PFD's are worn at all times during boating activities. During the first activity class of the session, an orientation must occur that deals with boarding and debarking each craft. The next class consists mainly of trimming as well as movement of the craft under the various weather conditions on Lake Winnepesaukee. Before a camper is allowed to man a craft on her own, all self-rescue techniques, along with dealing with capsizing and swamping must be taught and documented. In addition the following rules and procedures are in effect for specific activities:

Water-skiing

1. All skiers' wear PFD's at all times (type III).
2. Only the skier ending her ski and the skier beginning her ski and the instructor should be in the water.
3. Horseplay on or around the raft is not permitted.
4. Skiers should be instructed of the signals, most importantly the OK sign of the hands held together up high above the head.
5. Skiers must be told that on their return to the raft to stay in the wake and not try to whip themselves towards the raft.
6. Instructors must have the next skier in the water and ready to go in order to save time.
7. One staff member is in the water teaching. Another is in the boat with the driver acting as a spotter.

Windsurfing

1. Class is taught for the first two days with the boards tethered down to a mooring in the water, so that the campers can get used to handling the board and rig.
2. After a student displays adequate ability and familiarity with the techniques she is encouraged to windsurf untethered.
3. All windsurfers, tethered or untethered, must wear a PFD at all times.
4. During the activity, one instructor instructs a camper on the board and comments on her progress and ways to improve, while the other instructor watches over everyone else.
5. There are more campers than boards, so be sure to rotate them so they all have equal time.
6. Keep windsurfers out of the way of the ski boat and they should not go beyond the red buoy or towards Founders Lodge and North Woods or beyond the point. They must stay within sight.

Canoeing

1. The instructor supervises the racking and unranking of the canoes to ensure they are not dropped or dragged.
2. Experienced canoeers are paired with less experienced or younger campers.
3. No more than three people are allowed in a canoe.
4. Swamping of the canoes is not allowed (unless supervised in shallow water as a drill), nor is splashing with the paddles. Violation of these rules will be dealt with by the instructor and/or Waterfront Director.
5. The paddle blades are not to be used to push off from the shore, docks, or bottom of the lake.
6. PFD's must be worn at all times by campers and staff.
7. All PFD's and paddles should be hung up at the end of each period. At the end of each class, the canoes should be taken out of the water.
8. Canoes should stay together in a group. Remain in sight of camp unless permission is given by the Waterfront Director.

Sailing

1. All persons must remain in the boat at all times.
2. Boats should remain within sight of camp at all times.
3. Sailing trips can be taken on a limited basis with permission of the Waterfront Director.
4. There is no horseplay or disorderly behavior allowed in the boats.
5. Boats must be moored properly at the end of each class with the sails tied correctly. Moorings should be checked by the Waterfront Director every other day and noted in the log hanging in Beachside.
6. Boats must have paddles in them at all times, as well as a bailer.
7. PFD's are worn by all.

Basis Rules of the Waterfront

1. Do not enter the waterfront when the rope is across the path.
2. No running or horseplay on the docks.
3. Absolutely no swimming under the docks.
4. Swim only in designated area, never swim outside docked area.
Polliwogs, Guppies, and Minnows – Shallow end only
Fish and above – Shallow and Deep end
5. Always swim with a buddy and stay within 15 feet of her.
6. When at any boating activity, always wear a PFD.
7. Always flip your buddy tag when getting in and out of the water.

Emergency Action Plans

In case of a waterfront emergency of any sort bring it to the Waterfront Director's attention immediately. Then the Nurse and Director are to be informed. In case of a drowning or suspected drowning follow the procedures for search and rescue discussed during staff training.

If a buddy tag is left on the board after a class or free swim, counselors should first conduct an organized search of the area under the waterfront docks. A search of the bottom is easily accomplished by standing on the docks and studying the lake floor, which can be seen from the vantage point. At the same time as the above precautions are being taken one or more staff members can be sent to check the camper's cabin and other areas where she might have gone off to. At the same time, the staff line up on the waterfront and perform a group search of the lake bottom, concentrating on the deeper areas from the docks. The L.I.T.'s and selected non-swimming staff are assigned to watch the other campers at this time, and everyone should be in her Village during a waterfront emergency.

Procedure for water search

Missing person discovered during waterfront buddy check:

- Water is cleared and one counselor gathers all campers on Lakeview.
- One staff member is sent to check bathhouses and cabins. Beginning in missing camper's village.
- All other guards and staff members at the waterfront report to Waterfront Director or primary lifeguard in charge for directions.
- One staff member radios the nurse of a potential missing person, so she can be on hand in case of an emergency.
- Staff members are split up to search the villages of the swimming area and around boats and raft. Groups to search the shallow end, deep end, under docks and surrounding water should be as equal in number as possible, with the number determined by the available staff.

A water search should proceed as follows:

- Staff designated to search under docks start in shallow water and swim under all floating docks.
- Depending on the number of staff available, the shallow end and deep ends can be searched by two groups or one. This group should start in the shallowest water by the rocks. The searchers join hands to form a line, and proceed forward looking into the water and swinging their legs to cover the entire area. The guard on the end near the left side of the dock will lead this line, and is responsible for keeping the line together and at the same pace. Upon reaching the dock, the entire line swims under it looking to both sides and using hands to feel. The searchers will come up on the other side and reform the line, starting with their backs up against the docks. On command from the line leader, they will begin the following pattern and continue it to the farthest lemon line. Swim two breaststrokes, surface dive, three breaststrokes along the bottom, surface and two strokes backwards. After surfacing each time, everyone must line-up and listen for the leader's command to start again.
- For searching outside the swimming area; this should be done by two groups. One starting to the left of the docks and one starting to the right. If there is not enough people for this, one group can start on the left side and continue out around in a "U"-shape. These searchers will start at the shore and swim straight out until reaching the raft or furthest sailboat. Upon reaching this outer boundary they will turn using a diagonal line and swim across the top of the swimming area outside the lemon lines. They will follow the same format of swimming in a line and using the dive and swim pattern described above. The person on the left outer end of the line will be the line leader.
- If a victim is found, the guard who finds him/her becomes the primary rescuer and brings the victim into the dock. Immediate notification of finding a victim needs to be made to the search leader on the dock. They can then call the other searchers in and those on the dock can prepare to help the primary rescuer and the victim.