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**FRAGORD 1** to Appendix 4 (USACC JROTC Water Safety and Risk Management Considerations for Co-Curricular Events) to Annex E (US Army Cadet Command JROTC AY 24-25 Annual Training Guidance) to USACC OPOD 23-09-004 - USACC Annual Training Guidance AY 24-25

**(U) References:**

- a. (U) Annex E: US Army Cadet Command JROTC AY 24-25 Annual Training Guidance
- b. (U) Boy Scouts of America Aquatics Supervision: A Leader's Guide to Youth Swimming and Boating Activities dated 2018.

**1. (U) Overview:** This policy outlines water testing procedures, swimmer classifications, and swimmer locations. It implements many of the Scouts BSA swimming policies and guidance. Every mission has some measure of danger and consequences; in view of this, we put safety and risk management at the front of our considerations. Safety and risk management are critical to mission success; therefore, we want to provide an overview of water safety considerations while planning, developing, and participating in selected training events. Unit leaders will classify all swimmers prior to any aquatics activity.

**2. (U) Three Basic Swimming Classifications:** JROTC recognizes three basic swimming classifications: swimmer, beginner, and non-swimmer.

- a. (U) Non-Swimmer. **Anyone who has not completed either the beginner or the swimmer test is classified as a non-swimmer.** The title is descriptive and nonjudgmental. It may represent those just learning to swim who do not yet have the skills to safely venture beyond shallow water. It may also apply to those who have not yet been tested or who have elected to forego the test and to accept the limitations on activities imposed by the classification. A non-swimmer is typically someone who does not have a swimming background and is learning swimming for the first time.
- b. (U) Beginner. A beginner swimmer is **exploring the water, capable of entering and exiting the water themselves, and learning basic skills such as submerging their face, blowing bubbles, and floating on the front and back.** Beginner swimmers typically do not have a swimming background and are learning for the first time.
- c. (U) Swimmer. The swimmer **demonstrates** the minimum level of swimming ability required for safe deep-water swimming. The various components of the test evaluate several distinct, essential skills necessary for safety in the water.

**3. (U) Testing Procedure:**

- a. (U) JROTC Leaders will review the health history of each individual before testing. No one is allowed in the water against the recommendations of parents, guardian, or physician. **All Cadets shall do a portion of the "beginner" swim test to validate they are professing the correct swimmer classification.** Those who are not allowed to enter the water for whatever reason do not automatically fall into the non-swimmer

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category. Normally, non-swimmers are encouraged to participate in aquatics activities as an incentive to improve their skills. If the aquatics activities are conducted by the unit, then the leader in charge of the event should know the difference between those classified as non-swimmers based on skill, and those not allowed to swim due to a chronic or temporary physical condition that limits water contact. Care should be taken to preclude participation in an event as a non-swimmer by someone who should not be in the water. The leaders should discreetly communicate such situations to the event supervisor.

b. (U) During swim classification tests, the swimmer and the test administrator form a buddy pair. No group testing is authorized. Individual testing is required. JROTC unit members should not be aligned at each lane and started at once, as in a swim competition.

c. (U) The swim test will consist of:

1. Jump feet first into water over the head in depth, come up without pushing off the bottom of the pool, and level off.
2. Swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl.
3. Swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke.
4. The 100 yards must be completed in one swim without stops and must include at least one sharp turn.
5. After completing the swim, rest by floating for 5 minutes.

d. (U) The test administrator must objectively evaluate both the ease of the overall performance and the purpose of each test element. Any conscientious adult who is familiar with basic swimming strokes and who understands and abides by the following guidelines can administer the test.

e. (U) Situations may arise when special consideration should be given to those with temporary medical conditions. A physician may approve a person with an ear infection or a sutured wound to go on the trip, but caution against submerging the head or the bandage. Since it would be difficult to administer the swim test without getting the ears or the wound wet, the leader might classify the Cadets temporarily as a non-swimmer. If the unit leader has sufficient evidence that the Cadet is indeed a good swimmer, then an extension of the Cadets' previous swimmer classification is appropriate until he heals sufficiently to retake the test.

**4. (U) Testing Location:**

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- a. (U) The ideal place to conduct a swim test is a swimming pool with straight stretches of 25 to 50 yards and clear water at least 7 feet deep at the point of entry. Those taking the swimmer test can then be instructed simply to swim either four or two lengths, as appropriate. A pool 25 or 50 meters in length is easily adapted by placing a turning mark or line at the yard mark, or by having the person swim the short extra distance. (Recall that the swimmer test is not meant to demonstrate the maximum distance a person can swim.) The course may also be laid out such that the swimmer follows a circular pattern around the pool rather than back and forth but be sure to incorporate the sharp turn required by both beginner and swimmer tests.
- b. (U) Any natural body of water that satisfies requirements may be used for swim classification tests. Swimmer classification testing will not occur in personally owned pools, oceans, or rivers. Clear water is preferred over murky water, warm water over cold water. A pier that extends from shore to deep water is ideal for the feet first entry in the requirements, but a floating platform can also be used.
- c. (U) If a pool open to the public is used for testing, try to schedule a time when the pool is less crowded. Inform pool personnel of what you are doing. A guard may be willing to clear an area briefly if you have only one or two Cadets who need the test.

**5. (U) Additional Testing Procedures**

- a. (U) Although the tests may be explained to the unit, the test administrators should briefly review the tests with each participant. Each person should be asked if he or she would like to first try the beginner or the swimmer test. If the person asserts the ability to easily swim 100 yards, then it is not necessary to take the beginner test before the swimmer test. If a person is hesitant, he may take the beginner test first and follow it with the swimmer test if that seems appropriate. Those who fall just short of the required distances may be given a few pointers, a rest, and another try. Those who cannot complete the tests should be congratulated on how far they got, encouraged to practice, and told that they will be able to retake the test later. If a person in a swimsuit at the swimming area decides not to take either test, then they should be encouraged to slip into shallow water and show what they do know. That is, professed non-swimmers should be part of the overall unit activity, not shunted aside in the interest of time. Everyone should be encouraged to try to swim to the best of their ability, but no one should be coerced into the water.
- b. (U) Some participants may be willing to jump into water over their head even though they have never done it. Therefore, every participant should be asked if they have

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jumped into deep water before. If they have not, first confirm that they can swim in shallow water and then see if they are comfortable in deep water with a slide-in entry at the edge. The test may proceed once the person demonstrates comfort in deep water. Tests measure comfort in the water but do not require perfect form. Rest stops are not allowed; however, the course should be close to the side to allow for resting and easy assists if needed.

c. (U) With proper screening, those taking the test should not be at risk of a bad experience. Nevertheless, test administrators should be ready and able to provide immediate assistance if the swimmer does need help, perhaps due to a cramp or exhaustion. Ideally, the course for the beginner test should be alongside a pool deck or pier so that the swimmer is always within a hand's reach or a single stroke from support. The course for the swimmer test should be within reach of a pole. The best way to keep poles ready for use is to lay them along the edge of the pool or pier. A pole is then within easy, unobtrusive access at all times. If the course incorporates a floating dock in a natural body of water, then the feet first entry and first few strokes should be within easy reach. If the course then extends beyond the reach of a pole, the swimmers should be either within reach of rescue personnel in a rowboat or canoe or within easy throwing distance of a ring buoy on a line or a throw bag. If a person taking the test succeeds in leveling off after the feet first jump, then the most likely need will be to encourage a tired swimmer to come to the side under their own power. In a few cases, a reaching assist may be needed immediately after the feet first entry. Test administrators should be skilled in basic rescue techniques for trained safety personnel lifeguards must be present. Additionally, a lookout is required to monitor all in-water activity.

**6. (U) Swimming Locations:**

a. (U) Rivers and Private Pools are not authorized.

b. (U) Established Lakefront Swimming Areas: Swimming is often done in lakes, ponds, dammed rivers, and quarries. Although clear-water springs can provide water quality and clarity close to that of a swimming pool, visibility is impaired in many natural bodies of water. In clear water, swimmers and those in trouble may be tracked underwater, and a search for a submerged person takes only seconds when safety team members are positioned with clear views of the surface and the bottom. In murky water, the margin for error is reduced. Prompt rescue requires that an emergency is spotted before a person submerges. Locating a submerged person in turbid water may take more time than the victim has. Public lakefront swimming areas are maintained at many state and federal

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parks. Even though such areas often do not have lifeguards on duty, they may be equipped with changing facilities, sandy beaches, floating platforms, buoys that restrict boating, and other amenities that make them reasonable choices for a unit swim. If possible, a JROTC unit should conduct its swim in an otherwise unoccupied portion of a public beach within the designated swimming area. Before the swim, good swimmers should check depths and set up ability group areas, accordingly, using already established buoy lines as appropriate. The JROTC unit may need to bring its own rescue equipment to a lakefront swimming area. Reach poles will be of limited usefulness on a sloping beach. Instead, equip rescue personnel with lines and flotation devices. Emergency action plans need to consider the possibility of submerged victim recovery. To make that task easier, the leader may wish to limit the extent of the swimmer area and the depth to less than 8 feet. Depending on the area and the experience of the safety team, it may be prudent to have all participants wear life jackets. Check with park personnel on the availability of EMS.

c. (U) Oceans: Ocean swimming is only authorized at lifeguard supervised and established beaches. Units will follow all the posted flag warnings and will maintain proper lookout supervision in addition to the posted lifeguards. Swim classification tests are not authorized in the ocean.

**7. (U) Safety considerations for Army JROTC co-curricular training events**

a (U). All training must be conducted IAW TRADOC safety regulations. Whether Cadets are training on a major FORSCOM installation, a TRADOC installation, a small National Guard installation, on a high school campus, or at any other location. TRADOC safety regulations will be fully adhered to, or the training is NOT to be conducted.

b (U). USACC JROTC units do not participate in Extreme High-Risk events. Additionally, Medium Risk training events, i.e., water training sites, must be inspected as often as necessary to ensure safety is maintained at all times.

c. (U) Serious Incident Reports (SIRs): Serious incidents, accidents, and injuries will be reported through command channels within 24 hours (telephonic notification as a minimum) as outlined in Cadet Command memo, Serious Incident Reports (SIRs).