

## Swim Checks and Tippy Challenge

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Swimming is a popular activity at Camp Four Echoes. Who can resist the cool, clear lake on a hot summer day? Prior to any swimming activities, all participants (campers, volunteers, troop leaders and staff) do a swim check.

At swim check, lifeguards will cover:

- ✓ The rules of the waterfront and swimming area (always walk, have a buddy, etc).
- ✓ Different swimming areas (Minnow, Trout and Dolphin areas).
- ✓ Swimming bracelets and which color is for which section.

As you can see in the picture, our swimming area is divided into three parts:

- ❖ The section closest to shore is called the **Minnow** area, where you can swim in water that is about 3 feet (.914 meters) deep.
- ❖ The next level out is the **Trout** area, which starts about waist deep and actually goes even deeper (about 6 feet or 1.8 meters).
- ❖ The section outside the U shape of the dock out to the floating dock is the **Dolphin** area. That part is super-deep (dropping down to more than 25 feet or 7.62 meters). The Dolphin area has a diving board.

Each swimmer always has a buddy. The Waterfront Director and lifeguards will encourage swimmers to have a buddy that is assigned to the same swimming area (Minnows with Minnows, etc). If swimmers choose to buddy up with someone from a different area, that's okay. The buddies must remember to stay in the shallowest assigned area. For example, if a Trout and a Dolphin are buddies, they must stay in the Trout area.

Each girl will have the chance to do a swim check. Swim checks are not a test. There is no pass or fail for swim checks. This is just a chance for girls to show our Waterfront Director how comfortable they are in the water and how well they swim. It doesn't matter how old they are or how well they swim. We just want to keep our campers safe and help them have a good time at the waterfront.

Swim checks are performed with a buddy. Girls will wade in from the shore, along the dock on the right side. They will duck under the water to get completely wet and go under the dividing rope. Together, the girls will swim (using any stroke) to the cross dock and tread water for one minute. Sometimes the Waterfront Director and the girls tell jokes back and forth to pass the time ☺. Using any stroke, girls will return to the dividing rope swimming on their backs.

After swim checks, at the first swim time, the Waterfront Director will issue bracelets. The color of the bracelet corresponds to the section of the swimming area and helps lifeguards know who should be swimming in which area. The bracelets are fun and trendy and girls will wear them during their stay at camp. Girls assigned to the Minnow area may swim and play only in the Minnow area and will wear one color bracelet. Girls assigned to the Trout area may swim and play in the Minnow *and* Trout areas and will wear a different color bracelet. Girls assigned to the Dolphin area may swim in all three areas and will wear a different color bracelet.



Following are some general guidelines that the Waterfront Director will use to help assign swimmer to the different swim areas. Please know that these are guidelines only. We reserve the right to place girls in the area where we feel they will be the most successful and where we feel they will be the safest.

- Minnow. Beginning swimmer or does not yet know how to swim. Feels comfortable getting in the water up to her waist. A girl must at least get in the water in order to be a Minnow.
- Trout. Can swim in water over her head for short periods of time. Is able to swim the length of the swim area at least once without stopping or touching the bottom or the dock. Can tread water and keep her head above water for at least one minute. Demonstrates that she is fairly confident and comfortable in the water. Can demonstrate at least one stroke (stroke does not need to be executed perfectly).
- Dolphin. Can swim in water over her head for extended periods of time and is comfortable jumping feet first into deep water. Is able to swim the length of the swim area at least twice without stopping or touching the bottom or the dock. Can comfortably tread water for over a minute. Demonstrates that she is very confident in deep water. Can demonstrate a few basic strokes (strokes do not need to be executed perfectly).

### **Tippy Challenge/Swamped Canoe**

The Tippy Challenge is the opportunity to intentionally tip over or swamp a canoe so paddlers will know what to do in case their boat accidentally tips. We sometimes do Tippy Challenge right after Swim Checks since everyone is already in their bathing suits, although sometimes we do Tippy Challenge later in the week, depending on the program and the length of the session. Anybody who wants to canoe or kayak while at resident camp will need to participate in the Tippy Challenge.

In the past, girls got into the canoes and, sitting up high on their knees, rocked the boat until it tipped over. This year, even though everyone will probably still call it the Tippy Challenge, we will continue to swamp the canoes in a different way (described below). Girls who like the excitement of tipping their canoes can do so as part of a swamped canoe race activity during their time at camp

Tippy Challenge/Swamped Canoe takes place just outside the Dolphin section of the swim area or may take place next to the canoe dock, depending on when it takes place. There are usually 3-4 girls participating at one time. Each girl puts on a lifejacket and the lifeguard shows them how to properly get into the canoe. Each girl sits flat on the bottom of the canoe. When everyone is ready, the lifeguard, holding the painter (roped attached to one end of the canoe), gently pushes the canoe away from the dock. At the lifeguard's signal, the girls hang their legs outside one side of the canoe, everyone on the same side. With one hand on each gunwale (outside edge of the canoe), the girls begin to slowly rock the canoe back and forth, dipping the gunwales below the surface of the water. The boat will start to take on water slowly at first and then will quickly become filled with water. It's a funny sight to see a swamped canoe filled with girls in lifejackets bobbing around inside!

After the boat is full of water, the girls will swim out and tip the canoe upside down, two girls on each long side of the canoe. Reaching over the canoe, the girls will clasp arms, simulating how they would wait for rescue. After the lifeguard is assured that each girl knows what to do, the girls will help put the canoe upside down onto the dock where the water will drain out before starting all over again with the next group.



### **Bay Swim and Dock-to-Dock Swim**

Two of our most popular activities, the Bay Swim and Dock-to-Dock Swim, have certain requirements in order to participate. With a little practice and training, many of our campers are ready for one or both of these exciting activities and even earn a bead for their camp necklace!

#### **Dock-to-Dock Swim**

This activity takes place on the last afternoon of sessions lasting 5 days or longer. All campers are eligible to participate in this swim that starts at the swim dock, near the diving board and ends on the shore next to the boat dock.

- Each girl swims with 1-2 other swimmers.
- Minnows must wear a life jacket.
- Trout must either wear a lifejackets or have satisfactorily completed one 10-minute training sessions (swimming back and forth for 10 minutes non-stop in the

Trout section without a lifejacket) to show the lifeguards that she is ready for this swim.

- Dolphins may swim without a lifejacket.

### Bay Swim

This swim is often called the Bay-to-Bay Swim and is a very exciting achievement! This activity takes place the last afternoon of sessions lasting 6 days or longer. Swimmers are taken by canoe to what we call 5<sup>th</sup> Echo and they swim back to camp, accompanied by the staff in their canoe and lifeguards in the power boat. This is a long swim (taking a minimum of 45 minutes) and we adhere very strictly to the pre-requisites for this activity.

- Each girl swims with 1-2 other swimming buddies
- Only Dolphins are eligible for this swim
- Each swimmer must complete two 20 minute training sessions to show the lifeguards that she is ready for this swim. Each swimmer must swim continuously for 20 minutes in the Dolphin area without stopping and must be able to do this swim without a lifejacket. Lifejackets are available during the Bay Swim, in case a swimmer gets tired, but the training sessions must be done without them.