

# **Basic Military Swim Standard (BMSS) Test Operations Manual**

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Canadian Forces Moral and Welfare Services (CFMWS)  
Personnel Support Programs (PSP)

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## Background

1. Throughout their careers, members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) will be called upon to perform tasks, take part in operations and carry out training on, under or near water. The purpose of this test is to ensure that all CAF personnel possess elementary swimming skills and related water safety knowledge so that they can respond effectively to emergency situations that may arise when working in, on, under or around water.
2. The Basic Military Swim Standard (BMSS) Test has been designed to evaluate the rudimentary swimming skills of military members that may be required for different military-based activities (operational task, mandatory prerequisite for a specific activity, Special Forces selection process, Adventure training process).

## General

### Evaluation summary

3. The BMSS Test has three (3) components:
  - a. **Component 1: Water Safety Knowledge**  
Evaluators explain to the candidates the importance of recognizing and understanding the risks involved in working on, under or near water, and how to react in the event of difficulty, more specifically using the Ladder Approach. This is an educational component solely.
  - b. **Component 2: Abandon Ship Drill**  
This is the first practical component of the BMSS Test. While wearing personal flotation device (PFD), candidates jump in the water in a vertical position, re-surface with a hand above their head before swimming for 50m.
  - c. **Component 3: Basic Swimming Skills**  
This is the second and last practical component of the BMSS Test. Without a PFD, candidates must enter the water in a front roll position, orient themselves to the surface of the water, float or tread in the water for 2min before swimming for 20m.

### Evaluation timelines

4. As for all CAF activities (including Adventure Training), **members must refer to their Chain of Command (CoC)** for guidance on the timelines associated with the completion of the BMSS Test prior to the commencement of their activity.

### Evaluation validity period

5. The BMSS Test has no expiry date.

### Evaluation attempts

6. **CAF members must refer to their CoC** for guidance about the number of attempts and the period between the attempts of the BMSS Test.

### Evaluation performance objectives

7. **CAF members must refer to their CoC** for guidance about the performance objectives and repercussions associated with the results of a CAF member to the BMSS Test.

### **Aim**

8. This Operations Manual provides guidance and direction on how to administer the BMSS Test to CAF members (candidates).

### **Requirements and Responsibilities**

9. The following orders, directives, and publications are associated with the BMSS Test and this Operations Manual.
  - a. [DAOD 5031-10, Adventure Training](#);
  - b. [DAOD 5045-0, Canadian Forces Personnel Support Programs](#);
  - c. [Personnel Support Program \(PSP\) Policy Manual](#)
    - i. PART 8 AQUATICS

### Authority

10. Unless stated in a DAOD and/or specifically mandated as part of a selection process or as a pre-requisite, **the CoC has the authority to determine if the completion of a BMSS Test is required.**
  - a. For example, as stated in the [DAOD 5031-10, Adventure Training - Fitness standard - 4.9](#), *“the expedition leader shall ensure that all personnel taking part in an adventure training expedition [...], have passed the basic Military Swimming Standard Test if the expedition involves water-oriented activities.”*

### Candidate’s Responsibilities

11. Dress Code: Candidates must be dressed as follows:
  - a. Coverall, without boots;
    - i. Ensure that pockets have been emptied;
    - ii. Ankle-length pants fastened, shirt sleeves unrolled and buttoned at wrists, collar buttoned, and belt buckled.
  - b. Wearing a T-shirt under the coverall is not recommended, but permitted;
  - c. Swimsuit;
    - i. No underwear is permitted.
  - d. Belt is recommended.
12. Items that are not listed above are not accepted (e.g. swimming goggles, nose clips, fins, etc.)
13. Candidate(s) should comply with the protocol as detailed by the evaluator.

## Evaluator's Responsibilities

14. The BMSS Test must be administered by a qualified PSP Fitness Staff, or a qualified CAF member designated by their Chain of Command (CoC).
  - a. For PSP Fitness Staff, an evaluator is considered qualified if:
    - i. They have successfully completed the BMSS Test qualification training required to be an evaluator offered by the National Training Centre (NTC).
  - b. For CAF members, a qualified evaluator must be deemed competent by their CoC based on their rank, their specific experiences, and some basic qualifications.
15. Evaluators should ensure that the facility has all the required equipment and space to administer the BMSS Test before the evaluation.
  - a. Access to an indoor or outdoor pool is required.
    - i. The pool enclosure must have a springboard (3 m or 1 m), or starting blocks, or an open space around the deep end. The deep end must have a minimum depth of at least 9 feet / 2.75 metres. 50-metre and 20-metre courses must be measured and clearly identified for the swim distances to be completed.
  - b. Personal flotation device (PFD) for the number of candidates being evaluated.
    - i. There should be a range of sizes available for all candidates to be comfortable.
  - c. Overalls for the number of candidates being evaluated.
    - i. There should be a range of sizes available for all candidates to be comfortable.
16. Evaluators must abide by the rules detailed in the [PSP Policy Manual – PART 8 AQUATICS](#).

## Safety Recommendations

17. As per [Policy Manual – PART 8 AQUATICS - Section 3 – Supervision protocol](#), at minimum, each base must meet the most up to date Lifesaving Society Canada's National Safety Standards for the Bather-to-Lifeguard Ratios, unless their provincial legislation is more stringent, in that case the province legislation must apply.
18. As for the BMSS Test administration specifically, the following ratios are recommended to ensure candidates safety and standardized delivery process of the evaluation:
  - a. Component 1: Water Safety Knowledge**
    - i. This component does not have a specific candidate to evaluator ratio as it can be administered in a group or an individual format.
  - b. Component 2: Abandon Ship Drill**
    - i. This component has a lane-evaluator ratio based on the number of lane of candidates used during the test administration which may differ from a location to another. For example, if there are four (4) lanes of candidates (4 springboards or 4 starting blocks), there should be at least

one (1) evaluator (4:1 ratio). An evaluator can only observe four (4) candidates attempting this component at a time. If this ratio cannot be respected, the evaluator must reduce the number of lanes used at once.

- ii. For the “non-swimmer” candidates, the ratio is reduced to 1:1 to maximize candidate’s security.

**c. Component 3: Basic Swimming Skills**

- i. This component has a lane-evaluator ratio based on the number of lane of candidates used during the test administration, which may differ from a location to another. For example, if there are 4 lanes of candidates (4 edge of the pool starting points), there should be at least 1 evaluator (4:1 ratio). An evaluator can only observe 4 candidates attempting this component at a time. If this ratio cannot be respected, the evaluator must reduce the number of lanes used at once.
- ii. For the “non-swimmer” candidates, the ratio is reduced to 1:1 to maximize candidate’s security.

19. Self-identification process

- a. Through this self-identification process, participant can declare that they would prefer to be considered a “non-swimmer” or that they are afraid of heights, for evaluators to adapt the administration process for their safety.

- i. **Component 2: Abandon Ship Drill**

- If a candidate self-identifies as a “non-swimmer” and/or declares that they are afraid of heights, evaluators must evaluate them last, to allow for additional supervision of this component (1:1 ratio). If this ratio cannot be respected, the evaluator must reduce the number of lanes used at once.

- ii. **Component 3: Basic Swimming Skills**

- If a candidate self-identifies as a “non-swimmer”, evaluators must evaluate them last and ensure that they line up to the lanes closest to the edge of the pool, to allow for additional supervision of this component (1:1 ratio). If this ratio cannot be respected, the evaluator must reduce the number of lanes used at once.

20. In addition to the self-identification process, evaluators themselves can also declare candidates as “non-swimmers” based on the outcome of the Component 2: Abandon Ship Drill.

- a. If this is the case, the same risk management adaptations apply to the administration processes as the self-identification process.

## CHAPTER 2: EVALUATION

### Protocols

#### Component 1: Water Safety Knowledge

1. For this component, please use the appropriate script detailed in [TOOL 1](#).

STEPS	Instructions
<b>INFORMATION BRIEFING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The candidate(s) should be in a position that allows them to carefully listen to the information shared by the evaluator.</li> <li>• This portion of the evaluation is entirely educational.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There are no practical action items to be completed by the candidate(s).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<b>DEMONSTRATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluators should demonstrate a successful Ladder Approach.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A full simulation (evaluator going in the water) or a “mock” simulation (evaluator not going in the water) can be performed and should be based on the audience’s experience and needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evaluator uses the appropriate script to explain the Ladder Approach.</li> <li>• The evaluator should adapt the presentation to its audience by asking questions to candidates (or not), foster discussions amongst peers (or not) and/or address any other relevant information (at the evaluator’s discretion) for the candidates being tested.</li> </ul>
<b>WARNINGS &amp; FAULTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<b>FINISH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This component of the test is completed once the evaluators are done explaining all Water Safety Knowledge content.</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSITION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute personal flotation device to all candidates attempting Component 2: Abandon Ship Drill.</li> <li>• No specific transition time is necessary with the next component.</li> </ul>

Component 2: Abandon Ship Drill

2. For this component, please use the appropriate script detailed in [TOOL 2](#).

STEPS	Instructions
<b>INFORMATION BRIEFING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluators should confirm that candidates are aware of the required emergency procedures before commencing the test.</li> <li>• “Non-swimmer” candidates should be assessed last.</li> </ul>
<b>SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For this component specifically, in addition to the appropriate dress code, all candidates must wear a personal flotation device (PFD) of the appropriate size.</li> <li>• Candidates should be advised to ensure their PFD zipper is closed and all the buckles are clipped closed, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.</li> </ul>
<b>DEMONSTRATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluators should demonstrate a successful Abandon Ship Drill.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A full simulation (evaluator going in the water) or a “mock” simulation (evaluator not going in the water) can be performed and should be based on the audience’s experience and needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a pool with a deep end and springboard;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use the three (3)-metre springboard.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the pool does not have a three (3)-metre springboard;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use the one (1)-metre springboard.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If there is no springboard;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use the starting blocks.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If there are no starting blocks;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use the edge of the pool.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Water entry position</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The candidate crosses their arms across their chest, hold the lifejacket firmly and securely with hands by shoulders;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It is acceptable to plug one’s nose using the hand underneath.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Following a countdown (“3, 2, 1..”) and the signal "JUMP", the candidate steps forward and crosses their legs before entering the water.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Entry into the water must be made with legs and arms crossed, while keeping the body in an upright position.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The candidates' body must be in full extension. Bending the trunk at the hip and/or knees will result in a second attempt. No action will be</li> </ul>

	<p>taken if the entry into the water is slightly oblique.</p> <p><u>Water surfacing position</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the candidate surfaces, they are required to place at least one hand above their head to protect it from debris on the water's surface and give a "thumbs up" signal to indicate to the evaluator that all is well.</li> </ul> <p><u>Swimming instructions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the evaluator's signal "SWIM", candidates swim for at least 50 m (no time limit). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any style is permitted, except underwater swimming.</li> <li>○ If the pool is less than 50 m long, candidates must change direction at the end and continue swimming until the prescribed distance has been covered.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Exit instructions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of ladders is not permitted when exiting the water.</li> </ul>
<p><b>FAULTS, WARNINGS, RE-ATTEMPTS &amp; FAILS</b></p>	<p><u>Faults</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not assuming correct water entry position (arms and legs crossed, upright body position, holding onto PFD with at least one hand);</li> <li>• Upon surfacing at the water, there is not at least one hand above the head (the absence of a "thumbs up signal" is not considered a fault);</li> <li>• Does not swim the total prescribed distance (50m);</li> <li>• Swims with their head under water (underwater swimming is not permitted);</li> <li>• Voluntarily touching the edge or bottom of the pool (e.g. resting by holding on or propelling oneself while swimming).</li> </ul> <p><u>Warnings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a candidate touches the edge or bottom of the pool unintentionally and it does not constitute a marked advantage, the evaluator must warn the candidate, but will not be considered a fault. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Repeated warnings may be considered a fault at the evaluator's discretion.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Re-attempts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the event of any fault, allow one (1) additional attempt.</li> <li>• The number of attempts allowed will be determined by the evaluator's judgment.</li> </ul> <p><u>Fails</u></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a candidate is still at fault upon their last attempt, this component will be considered “failed”.</li> </ul>
<b>FINISH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This component of the BMSS test is completed once: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The candidate has reached the maximum number of attempts allowed, without being successful.</li> <li>○ The candidate successfully completes the component; and/or</li> <li>○ The candidate chooses not to continue (reasons for this could be fatigue, pain, injury, etc.); and/or</li> <li>○ The evaluator becomes concerned for the candidate’s safety due to immediate signs of serious distress. In that event, evaluators must engage relevant emergency procedures.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>TRANSITION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove PFD and await further instructions.</li> <li>• A break of 3-5min before the next components is recommended.</li> <li>• Candidates that have not successfully completed Component 2 are not required to attempt Component 3.</li> </ul>

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### Component 3: Basic Swimming Skills

3. For this component, please use the appropriate script detailed in [TOOL 3](#).

STEPS	Instructions
<b>INFORMATION BRIEFING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Non-swimmer" candidates should be assessed last and take position in a line that is near the pool's edge.</li> </ul>
<b>SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>
<b>DEMONSTRATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluators should demonstrate a successful Basic Swimming Skills.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A full simulation (evaluator going in the water) or a "mock" simulation (evaluator not going in the water) can be performed and should be based on the audience's experience and needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	<p><u>Starting position</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the edge of the deep end of the pool, the candidate will assume a front roll position by:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dropping into a squat;</li> <li>○ Placing hands on either side of head;</li> <li>○ Placing elbows on knees.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Water entry position</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the evaluator's signal "3, 2, 1, ROLL", the candidate enters the water in a forward roll.</li> </ul> <p><u>Swimming instructions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once immersed, they are required to float or swim on the spot for at least two (2) minutes, making sure to keep their head (face) out of the water;</li> <li>• Evaluators can advise the candidate of how much time is left in the 2min, at their discretion.</li> <li>• After floating or treading for two (2) minutes, following the evaluator's signal "SWIM", the candidate must swim a distance of at least 20 m.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any style is permitted except underwater swimming<sup>1</sup>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Exit instructions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of ladders is prohibited at the time of exit.</li> </ul>
<b>FAULTS, WARNINGS, RE-ATTEMPTS &amp; FAILS</b>	<p><u>Faults</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not assuming correct pre-water entry position (squat position, hands on head and elbows on knees);</li> <li>• The candidate cannot keep their head (face) out of the water on their own during the floating/treading portion;</li> <li>• The candidate's transition to the 20 metres swim is not successful;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not swim the total prescribed distance (20m)</li> <li>• Uses the underwater swimming technique</li> <li>• Voluntarily touching the edge or bottom of the pool (e.g. resting by holding on or propelling oneself while swimming).</li> </ul> <p><u>Warnings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of execution of the forward roll is not a criterion for success in this component. Demonstrating the intention to execute the movement is sufficient.</li> <li>• A reasonable delay in entering the water (e.g., 5 sec) will not result in a fault or a failure of the component. At the evaluator’s discretion, a candidate who delays entering the water may be asked to re-attempt.</li> </ul> <p><u>Re-attempts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the event of any fault, allow one (1) additional attempt.</li> <li>• The number of attempts allowed will be determined by the evaluator’s judgment.</li> </ul> <p><u>Fails</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a candidate is still at fault upon their last attempt, this component will be considered “failed”.</li> </ul>
<b>FINISH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This component of the BMSS test is completed once: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The candidate has reached the maximum number of attempts allowed, without being successful.</li> <li>○ The candidate successfully completes the component; and/or</li> <li>○ The candidate chooses not to continue (reasons for this could be fatigue, pain, injury, etc.); and/or</li> <li>○ The evaluator becomes concerned for the candidate’s safety due to immediate signs of serious distress. In that event, evaluators must engage relevant emergency procedures.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>TRANSITION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>

### Performance Objectives

4. All candidates must be encouraged to trial each component of the BMSS Test.
  - a. Evaluators should ensure candidates are aware of the protocols in place for the “non-swimmers”.
  - b. However, candidates shall not be forced to trial a component if they do not wish to.

5. If a candidate does not wish to attempt component 2 and/or 3, they will be advised that they will automatically be given the “fail” result for the specific component.

Component 1: Water Safety Knowledge

6. This component is not an assessment; it is a **learning component**.

Component 2: Abandon Ship Drill

7. This element of the BMSS test is assessed on a **pass/fail basis**.

Component 3: Basic Swimming Skills

8. This element of the BMSS test is assessed on a **pass/fail basis**.

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# TOOLS

## Scripts

### TOOL 1: Component 1: Water Safety Knowledge - Script

1. The purpose of the following script is to provide PSP Evaluator with a standardized explanation of each component of the BMSS Test.
2. For each component, the PSP Evaluator must use the appropriate script. This script is for the Component 1: Water Safety Knowledge.

*This component confirms that CAF members have the basic swimming skills and knowledge of water safety so that they can respond appropriately to emergencies that may arise while working in, on, under or near water.*

3. Inform participants of the importance of knowing and recognizing the risks involved in working on, under or near water, and how to react in the event of difficulty.

*Aquatic rescues must always be done according to the Ladder Approach to reduce as many risks as possible and prevent lifeguards from becoming victims. This approach presents, to increase risk, the various alternatives the lifeguard can choose to rescue someone who is drowning. The key is to always choose the rescue technique that involves the lowest level of risk.*

*The first step is to encourage the victim to go to a safe location. If this does not work, try extending or tossing a buoyant object; if the victim is close enough, try reaching with a towel. If the victim is far from you, throw a flotation device or buoyant aid that is preferably attached to a rope, so you can pull the victim towards you once they have grabbed the object.*

*If the victim is too far away from you, you can use a boat to get close enough to throw a buoyant object. If there is no boat, you can swim to the victim to provide them with a buoyant aid.*

*If you find that the victim is unable to move to safety, even with the aid of a rescue object, you will need to tow them by pulling the other end of the rescue object. This indirect contact brings you closer to the victim and increases the risk to which you are exposing yourself.*

*As a last resort, you'll have to swim to the victim and carry them to safety. Rescue methods that require direct contact with the victim are riskier, as the person in distress may try to grab hold of the rescuer to obtain the support they are seeking. The ability to maintain composure and act calmly and cautiously is your most important asset when helping a victim.*

4. Explain the Ladder Approach's eight rungs.

*The Ladder Approach's eight rungs*

*1- TALK: Without going into the water, encourage the victim to get to safety by swimming towards the side of the pool or the shore.*

*2- THROW: Throw a buoyant aid to the victim from the side of the pool or the shore, and calmly talk to them while bringing them back to safety.*

3- *REACH*: From a dry, safe location, extend or throw a rescue object to the victim and pull them to safety. The object may be buoyant or non-buoyant and should be attached to a rope.

4- *WADE*: Wade into shallow water and extend a rescue aid to the victim or enter deep water while holding onto a solid object and throw the rescue aid.

5- *ROW*: If one is available, use a watercraft and row to the victim until you are close enough to extend a rescue object while staying in the craft.

6- *SWIM*: If there is no watercraft you can use, swim to the victim and provide them with a buoyant aid. Calmly talk to them while bringing them back to safety without making direct or indirect contact. It is important to push the buoyant aid towards the victim; panic-stricken victims may try to grab onto you, thus endangering you.

7- *TOW*: If the victim is unable to go to a safe location without additional help, even while hanging onto a buoyant aid, tow them by pulling the other extremity of the object. Make sure you can quickly move away from the victim to ensure your own safety.

8- *CARRY*: Swim to the victim and carry them to safety. Choose this technique as a last resort, since direct contact rescues are the most dangerous ones for lifeguards.

5. Make sure to adapt the presentation of the information mentioned above to your audience by asking questions (or not), foster discussions amongst peers (or not) and/or address any other relevant information (at the evaluator's discretion).
6. Respond to questions, if need be.

## TOOL 2: Component 2: Abandon Ship Drill - Script

1. The purpose of the following script is to provide PSP Evaluator with a standardized explanation of each component of the BMSS Test.
2. For each component, the PSP Evaluator must use the appropriate script. This script is for the Component 2: Abandon Ship Drill.

*The purpose of this component is to simulate a situation where you would be required to abandon a ship by jumping in the water and swimming to safety.*

*For this component, you will be wearing a personal flotation device (PFD).*

*You will be required to cross your arms across your chest, holding on to the lifejacket firmly, cross your legs and jump in the water in a full upright/vertical position. You can plug your nose using the hand underneath if you wish.*

*As you surface, you must hold your hand above your head a signal a thumbs up to the evaluator to confirm that all is well.*

*Once you receive the signal from the evaluator "SWIM", you will proceed to a 50m swim, in any swim styles, except underwater swimming, and without a time limit. (If the length of the pool is less than 50m, turn around at the end of the pool to complete the required distance). The 50m swim ends here.*

3. Clearly indicate where the 50m swim ends.

*Once the distance completed, exit the pool. You can then remove your PFD and wait for further instructions.*

*We will now observe a successful Abandon Ship Drill.*

4. Demonstrate a successful Abandon Ship Drill, as per protocol.
5. Ask if there are any questions and respond, if need be.

*Any questions?*

*Please put your PFD. Make sure it is the right size for you and correctly secured.*

*Make sure your PFD zipper is closed, and all the buckles are clipped closed.*

6. Allow candidates time to put on a PFD.
7. Verify candidates PFD visually and assist candidates that require support with their PFD.

*Once your PFD is correctly secured, move to one of the springboards/starting bloc/edge of the pool and wait in line.*

*If you consider yourself a "non-swimmer", please make sure to be at the end of a line (last) for your attempt.*

*Only start when the signal "JUMP" is given.*

8. Wait until all candidates are in line and ready to attempt the component.
9. Ensure all evaluators are in position, ready to observe – and assist, if need be – candidates jumping in the water.

10. Signal to the candidates to jump in the water. Observe their water entry position, according to the **Tool 5: Grid of evaluation criteria** and note your observation on the **Tool 4: Results Transcription Sheet**.

*“3, 2, 1, JUMP”*

11. Observe the candidate surfacing the water according to **Tool 5: Grid of evaluation criteria** and provide them with your signal for the swimming portion.

*“SWIM”*

12. Candidates should then swim the appropriate distance (clearly identified beforehand) and exit the pool.
13. Once all candidates have gone through this component, proceed with another attempt of the candidates that were at fault during the previous attempt.
14. Go through the same steps as above and make sure the candidates are aware of their fault at the previous attempt before starting the next attempt.

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### TOOL 3: Component 3: Basic Swimming Skills - Script

1. The purpose of the following script is to provide PSP Evaluator with a standardized explanation of each component of the BMSS Test.
2. For each component, the PSP Evaluator must use the appropriate script. This script is for the Component 3: Basic Swimming Skills.

*The purpose of this component is to simulate an unexpected fall in the water. It will assess your ability to orient yourself at the surface after this type of water entry as well as the ability to remain at the surface for at least 2min, followed by a swim to safety of 20m.*

*For this component, you will not be wearing a personal flotation device (PFD).*

*You will be required to stand at the edge of the deep end of the pool, assume a front roll position by dropping into a squat, placing a hand on each side of the head and placing elbows close to knees.*

*At the evaluator's signal "ROLL", you will enter the water in a forward roll.*

*Once immersed, you are required to float or tread/swim on the spot for at least two (2) minutes, making sure to keep your head (face) out of the water.*

*If your head/face immerses underwater, you will be at fault.*

*The evaluator will give you the signal "SWIM" once the 2min of floating/treading water is complete, to initiate the 20m swim.*

*For the 20m swim, any swim style is permitted except underwater swimming.*

*The 20m swim ends here.*

3. Clearly indicate where the 20m swim ends.

*Once the distance is completed, exit the pool and wait for further instructions.*

*We will now observe a successful Basic Swimming Skills.*

4. Demonstrate a successful Basic Swimming Skills, as per protocol.
5. Ask if there are any questions and respond to them, if need be.

*Any question?*

*If you consider yourself a "non-swimmer", please make sure to line up at the end of a line (last) as well as in a line closest to the pool's edge.*

*Only start when the signal "ROLL" is given.*

6. Wait until all candidates are in line and ready to attempt the component.
7. Ensure all evaluators are in position, ready to observe – and assist, if need be – candidates rolling in the water.
8. Signal to the candidates to roll in the water. Observe their starting and water entry position according to the **Tool 5: Grid of evaluation criteria** and note your observation on the **Tool 4: Results Transcription Sheet**.

*"3, 2, 1, ROLL"*

9. Observe the candidate surfacing and floating/treading the water for 2min according to **Tool 5: Grid of evaluation criteria**.

10. If possible, advise candidates on how much time is left of the 2min.
11. Once the 2min is complete, provide the candidates with the signal “SWIM” for the 20m swim portion.

*“SWIM”*

12. Candidates should then swim the appropriate distance (clearly identified beforehand) and exit the pool.
13. Once all candidates have gone through this component, proceed with another attempt of the candidates that were at fault during the previous attempt.
14. Go through the same steps as above and make sure the candidates are aware of their fault at the previous attempt before starting the next attempt.

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**TOOL 4: Results Transcription Sheet – BMSS Test**

**Evaluator's names:** 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of test: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (YYYY-MM-DD)

PRESENCE	SERVICE NUMBER	RANK	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ABANDON SHIP DRILL (Trial 1, 2)		BASIC SWIMMING SKILLS (Trial 1, 2)		OVERALL BMSS TEST RESULT	CANDIDATES INITIALS	DATE (YYYY-MM-DD)
					1	2	1	2			
<input type="checkbox"/>											
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<input type="checkbox"/>											
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P = Pass F = Fail Empty box = Not attempted

**Evaluator's signatures:** 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
 3) \_\_\_\_\_

TOOL 5: Grid of evaluation criteria

<b>Component 1: Water Safety Knowledge</b>
<b>Mandatory Learning</b>
Ladder Approach

<b>Component 2: Abandon Ship Drill</b>
<b>Water entry position</b>
Arms crossed, at least one hand gripping the lifejacket
Legs crossed
Body in full extension (trunk, hips and knees)
<b>Water surfacing position</b>
At least one hand out of the water above the head
<b>Swimming instructions</b>
No voluntary assistance from floor or walls
50m swim completed
No underwater swimming (the head should not be under water)
<b>Exit instructions</b>
Without using ladder
<b>If at fault, a second attempt possible.</b>

<b>Component 3: Basic Swimming Skills</b>
<b>Water entry position</b>
Proper position (squat, hands on head and elbows on knees)
Attempt to roll into water
<b>Swimming instructions</b>
No voluntary assistance from floor or walls
Two (2) minutes treading/floating in place without external assistance
20m swim completed
<b>Exit instructions</b>
Without using ladder
<b>If at fault, a second attempt possible.</b>

Note: A fault will be attributed to any item from this checklist, which will result in a re-attempt of the component, or a failed score.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Basic Military Swim Standard		Chain of Command	
BMSS	1, 2	CoC	2, 3
Canadian Armed Forces		Chief of Military Personnel	
CAF	2	CMP	3
Canadian Forces Moral and Welfare		personal flotation device	
Services		PFD	2, 7, 15, 17
CFMWS	1	Personnel Support Programs	
		PSP	1, 3, 22

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## **REFERENCES**

[DAOD 5031-10 – Adventure Training](#)

[DAOD 5045-0 – Canadian Forces Personnel Support Programs](#)

[Lifesaving Society: The Lifeguarding Experts – Swim to Survive](#)

[THE LADDER APPROACH | Société de sauvetage du Québec](#)

[Personnel Support Programs – Policy Manual](#)

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