



# RIVER KAYAK LEADER 2



## National Resource Manual

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# PARTNERS IN COACH EDUCATION

The National Coaching Certification Program is a collaborative program of the Government of Canada, provincial/territorial governments, national/provincial/territorial sport organizations, and the Coaching Association of Canada.



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## **PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT**

This reference material is your source of information for the River Leader 2 workshop. It provides the theoretical reference for the training process. Participating in the workshop is part of the certification process in order to become River Leader 2. This workshop will equally provide you with tools to continue improving your leadership skills. We therefore recommend that you save this Guide and consult it regularly to ensure continuous improvement in your leadership skills as well as the trips you lead.

## **NCCP Core Competencies**

As you progress through the different modules, you will work on developing five core competencies that will help you become a more effective leader and have a more meaningful impact on paddlers' experience. The competencies are problem solving, valuing, critical thinking, leadership, and interaction. Below are the competencies developed in the River Leader 2 sections of the workshop.

## **Learning Outcomes**

After finishing this workshop, you will be able to take a critical look at your own leading skills. You will also learn how to use several assessment tools that will enable you to keep working on your own to improve your effectiveness as a leader. Each section has specific learning outcomes defined.

## **RIVER LEADER 2 / RIVER INSTRUCTOR 2 PROGRAM**

The River Leader 2 / River Instructor 2 program is normally offered as a combined program. However, the River Leader 2 program can be offered on its own to certify river leaders. Each program is offered as a 2.5 day course, but are offered together as a four-day course.

## **Required Skills and/or Prerequisites for a River Leader 2**

The required skills and/or prerequisites for a River Leader 2 are as follows:

- Able to perform all technical skills listed under “Teach the Following Skills” competently on Class II+ rivers.
- Are knowledgeable, skilled, comfortable and safe paddling Grade II+ whitewater.
- It is strongly recommended that River Leader 2's possess a valid First Aid certification appropriate for the group and location the trip will take place.
- It is strongly recommended that River Leaders possess a valid Swift Water Rescue certification (e.g., CKC Swift Water Rescue)
- Effective communication, listening, presenting skills
- Dynamic individual with good interpersonal skills
- Organized and punctual
- Plans, prepares, and follows up
- Must be 18 years of age (participants can be “Trained” at age 16, but can't be fully certified to lead independent trips until age 18)

## Evaluation

Upon completion of the L2 course, participants that meet the requirements will be considered “trained”. To be “certified”, participants must attend an evaluation session. These sessions may occur at the end of the course, at an event or festival, or scheduled individually.

Evaluators for the program will be the LFs or MLFs. Ideally, the evaluation will be completed by an independent LF (not the one running the course or affiliated with the candidate’s organization). But in some regions this will not be possible.

## River Leader 2

River Leaders are responsible for leading kayak participants on river trips. They must adhere to the CKC requirements outlined in this guide.

Certification remains valid for three paddling seasons and expires on Dec 31 of the third season.

## River Instructor 2

Instructors are responsible for teaching and leading kayak participants. They must adhere to the CKC requirements outlined in the River Instructor 2 guide.

Certifications remain valid for three paddling seasons and expire on Dec 31 of the third season.

## Learning Facilitator (LF)

Learning Facilitators are responsible for delivering the certification program to leader/instructor candidates. There is an LF for each level in the CKC Kayak Program.

To become an LF an Instructor must have been certified at that level for a minimum of two years and apply to their provincial body and national body. Additionally, they must attend an LF clinic where they assist on an L2/I2 course and be observed conducting an additional L2/I2 program and receive a recommendation by the LF or MLF running the program.

## Master Learning Facilitator (MLF)

Master Learning Facilitators are responsible for the national program and for certifying the LFs. There will be two MLF’s for each region. The MLF is responsible for maintaining an appropriate number of LFs regionally to adequately offer the CKC program. The MLF is also responsible for keeping the LFs current and up to date on the program. MLFs will meet every two years to review and update the program.

To become a MLF, an LF would apply to both the Provincial Body and National Body. LFs are generally invited to become MLFs.

## Recertification

To maintain an Instructor, LF, or MLF certification, the instructor must remain active in the paddling community. Recertification cycle is as follows:

- Instructors must attend a recertification clinic once every three years to remain current, or upgrade to a higher level of certification.
- LFs must attend a regional LF symposium every three years
- MLFs and LFs must teach a minimum of two courses in three years
- MLFs must attend the national MLF symposium every two years

## **THE ROLE OF A KAYAKING INSTRUCTOR - LEADER**

A kayaking leader is a highly-trained individual with a vast wealth of knowledge and experience in the sport of whitewater kayaking. They are able to effectively communicate difficult concepts and make trips in a whitewater environment fun while at the same time minimizing the risk to participants.

A leader leads under a mantle of professionalism. The use of appropriate language and behaviour is imperative at all times. To lose one's cool as a leader instantly loses the respect of participants.

A kayak leader must accurately assess each participants' mental and physical limitations and be able to vary the length of the river run to avoid situations where the participants become frightened, cold, overheated, bored, embarrassed, tired, frustrated or, at worst, injured.

A leader needs to be articulate and able to express himself/herself in a clear concise and accurate manner. It is the unique challenge of a leader to present information in a way that is interesting and fun.

Kayak leaders are responsible for choosing suitable paddling sites that will enhance the participant's learning curve, while at the same time minimizing the inherent risks of whitewater. It is a leader's duty to protect the safety of each participant on the course or river run.

A leader is considered to be a representative of the affiliation, club, school and/or company where they are leading. The leader is, in effect, an ambassador. The leader's ability to interact with participants is a direct reflection upon the organization and is crucial to the success of a leader.

Ultimately, the job of a kayak leader is to provide a safe and enjoyable learning experience.

In short, NO FUN = NO LEARNING



# CanoeKayak Canada NCCP *Whitewater Instructor Development Model*



## COMMUNITY SPORT COACH

### Community Initiation

**Trained Pool Kayak Instructor**  
(PKI Course - 1 Day)

## INSTRUCTION COACH

### Instruction Beginner

**Trained Lake Kayak Instructor**  
(LKI Course - 1 Day)



**Certified Novice Instructor**  
(LKI Evaluation - 1/2 Day)

### Instruction Intermediate

**Trained River Leader 2**  
(RL2 Course - 1.5 Days)



**Certified River Leader 2**  
(RL2 Evaluation - 1 Day)



**Trained River Instructor 2**  
(RI2 Course - 1.5 Days)



**Certified River Instructor 2**  
(RL2 Evaluation - 1 Day)

### Instruction Advanced

**Trained Whitewater Leader 3**  
(WL3 Course - 1.5 Days)



**Certified Whitewater Leader 3**  
(WL3 Evaluation - 1 Day)



**Trained Whitewater Instructor 3**  
(WI3 Course - 1.5 Days)



**Certified Whitewater Instructor 3**  
(WI3 Evaluation - 1 Day)

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# Training and Certification Pathway for Whitewater CanoeKayak Coaches, Instructors & Leaders

## River Kayak Leader 2



# River Leader 2

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the River Leader 2 level is to certify Leaders capable of organizing and leading paddlers on rivers up to and including Class II+.

Ratio: 1:6 Leader to Participant

With the support from another “trained” L2, the leader to participant ratio can be increased to 1:10.

A Class II river is defined as follows:

- Class II – “easy rapids with waves, wide clear channels, that are obvious with scouting. Some maneuvering required”.

## NCCP CORE COMPETENCIES

As leaders progress through this module, they will work on developing five core competencies that will help them become a more effective leader and have a more meaningful impact on paddlers’ experience. Here are just some of the ways these competencies come into play in the River Leader 2 workshop:

### Problem-solving

- Prepare a River Run (session).
- Develop a Trip Plan, including an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

### Valuing

- Appreciate how a structured and organized session promotes a safe and fun environment.
- Appreciate the need to consider potential risk factors when planning a session.
- Appreciate the importance of having an EAP.

### Critical Thinking

- Compare current knowledge, skills, and attitudes with the information provided in this manual.

### Leadership

- Develop strategies to manage time and resources, given the need for safety on the river.

### Interaction

- Work collaboratively with other leaders to complete specific tasks.
- Work with other leaders to develop an EAP.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this module, leaders will be able to organize and implement a whitewater kayaking session involving a river run, know how to plan safe, fun sessions that meet their paddlers' needs and reflects the whitewater Long Term Paddler Development Model. In particular, they will be able to:

- Explain the importance of logistics in the development of a session (river run).
- Establish an appropriate structure for their sessions (river runs).
- Plan a safe session involving a river run.
- Provide support to paddlers during the session.
- Establish and implement an EAP.
- Choose the best option for running a section of river.
- Implement their decision.
- Perform river rescues (swimmer, kayak, paddle, gear).

## TRAINING OBJECTIVES

CanoeKayak Canada uses a competency-based training and education structure to deliver this program. This means that during the program you will be evaluated on your skills and be provided with accurate feedback on your abilities. You will be provided with resources and training in; safety, planning, leading a paddling group and emergency action planning.

## EVALUATION

Upon completion of this course a River Leader 2 will be considered "trained". To be "certified", a River Leader 2 must be evaluated leading real life participants. This may happen at the end of the course, on a future course, or at a regional event. Each provincial MLF and association will ensure opportunities to complete the certification process exist.

Ideally the evaluation will be completed by an independent LF (not the one running the course or associated with the candidates' organization). But in some regions this will not be possible.

## PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES – RIVER LEADER 2

Participants must meet performance objectives in the following areas:

- Personal paddling skills that instill confidence in leading a Class II River Trip. Paddling Class II with ease and demonstrating proficient skills including a solid whitewater roll.
- Plan a day trip on a Class II river.
- Provide support to paddlers.
- Lead a trip on a Class II river in a safe manner.
  - The River Trip must be with real life participants
  - The River Trip must be a min 3 hrs. long
  - The Leader Candidate must spend a minimum of 1 hr leading through a series of 4-6 class II rapids.
  - The Leader Candidate will demonstrate knowledge of: setting a shuttle, 2 different river running strategies and 2 rescue procedures when dealing with swimmers (1 shore and 1 water based), completing the trip with a proper cool down and wrap up.

## **Perform and Demonstrate Skills, Techniques, and Information**

- Selection, use, and maintenance of boats and equipment.
- Throw bag rescues.
- Boat rescues.
- Swimmer rescue.

## **Know and be Able to Apply Essential Information**

- Leader roles and responsibilities.
- Risk management and safety issues.
- Site selection and session planning.
- Requirements for continued or further levels of certification.





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# Sport of Kayaking

# Equipment

## NCCP CORE COMPETENCIES

As you progress through this module, you will work on developing the following competencies: problem solving, valuing, critical thinking, leadership, and interaction. Here are just some of the ways these competencies come into play in the Equipment section:

### Problem-solving

- Analyze your environment and choose the appropriate equipment for the situation.

### Valuing

- Recognize and respect differences in paddling disciplines.
- Promote the development of all disciplines.

### Critical Thinking

- Compare current knowledge, skills and attitudes with the information provided in the reference material.

### Leadership

- Ensure your paddling group is properly equipped for the activity at hand.

### Interaction

- Brainstorm and work collaboratively with other leaders to complete specific task.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

After finishing this module, you will be able to take a critical look at your own basic kayak knowledge. You will also learn how to use several assessment tools that will enable you to keep working on your own to improve your effectiveness as a leader. In particular, you will be able to:

- Choose the appropriate gear for the situation at hand.
- Identify the different paddling disciplines and related equipment.
- Make interventions that promote a positive paddling experience.

## WORKBOOK TOPICS

There are four equipment and kayak topics in this workbook:

- Recognizing paddling equipment.
- Choosing appropriate gear.
- Understanding different paddling environments.
- Preparing for all paddling conditions.

# THE SPORT OF WHITEWATER KAYAKING

Whitewater kayaking is a rapidly changing sport. It has expanded and branched into many different forms, to suit different interests. Whitewater kayaking can be divided into two main categories; recreational and competitive kayaking.

**Recreational Whitewater Kayaking** is the broadest category of kayaking and can be further sub-divided into river running, expedition boating, creek boating, playboating and squirtboating.

**River running** is perhaps the most popular form of recreational whitewater paddling. Medium volume, general purpose kayakers are used to run rivers, paddlers scout and run rapids, hit every accessible eddy and play on fun waves.

**Expedition boating** is a form of whitewater kayaking where the kayaker paddles rapids as part of a trip down a long or remote river. The kayakers used for expeditions are often larger and higher volume kayakers that enable the kayaker to carry gear for the trip. These trips can last anywhere from a day to several weeks or more.

**Creek boating** is a form of whitewater kayaking where kayakers paddle narrow creeks with steep gradients. Sometimes creek boaters will run waterfalls after careful scouting. The kayakers used for creek boating are stable, medium to short length, high volume kayakers with blunt ends and lots of rocker.

**Playboating** or **Freestyle** is a popular form of whitewater kayaking and canoeing where paddlers play in various features of a rapid: eddy lines, rocks, waves and holes become the focus for play moves. Playboaters perform tricks and interact freely with the dynamic forces of the water, initiating mid air spins, cartwheels, blunts, backstabs and many other evolving freeform /freestyle moves. New kayak designs greatly facilitate these maneuvers and change on an annual basis. Playboaters may run a river for the rapids or spend entire days at a single rapid playing in and on the various features. This form of kayaking has led to the competitive form of whitewater paddling known as freestyle.

**Squirtboating** is a sub-form of playboating. A squirt boat is a thin, low volume kayak, which is custom made for each kayaker. Squirt boats do not have a lot of buoyancy and can be easily submerged under the surface of the water. Three-dimensional moves, both on and under the surface of the water emerge from these kayakers and current paradigms.

**Competitive whitewater kayaking** can also be sub-divided into disciplines: slalom, downriver, freestyle, canoe polo, boater cross, extreme whitewater creek racing and surf kayak. There is more information on this side of whitewater sport in the Competition Introduction program.

## Leader Equipment

Both the law and your participants expect you as the leader to be prepared for every eventuality that could happen during your trip. Part of this preparedness is having equipment with you to perform rescues, keep the group warm and provide first aid.

Transport Canada has outlined certain items a leader would be expected to carry with them. This list is not all inclusive, other gear may be appropriate for your group and location.

- First Aid Kit
- Repair Kit
- Pin/Wrap Kit
- Extra Clothes
- Food
- Water
- Emergency Kit

**Leader Gear: Exercise**

**List of Essential and Optional Gear for Participants and Leaders**

	<b>Essential Participant Gear</b>	<b>Optional Gear</b>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

	<b>Essential Leader Gear</b>	<b>Optional Gear</b>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

You should be carrying a first aid kit at all times when leading. What you carry in that kit reflects your level of knowledge and what kinds of problems you may have to deal with during a session or river run.

### Anticipated Problems and First Aid Provisions<sup>1</sup>

List in point form what you would have in your first aid kit for a one day trip on a local river near to a telephone and hospital access.

<b>Anticipated Problems</b>	<b>First Aid Provisions</b>

---

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Transport Canada requirements.



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# Risk Management

# Risk Management – River Leader 2

## NCCP CORE COMPETENCIES

As you progress through this section, you will work on developing the following competencies: problem solving, valuing, critical thinking, leadership, and interaction. Here are just some of the ways these competencies come into play in the Risk Management section:

### Problem-solving

- Prepare a river run (session).
- Develop an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

### Valuing

- Appreciate how a structured and organized session promotes a safe participant environment.
- Appreciate the need to consider potential risk factors when planning a session.
- Appreciate the importance of having an EAP.

### Critical Thinking

- Compare current knowledge, skills, and attitudes with the information provided in the reference material.

### Leadership

- Develop strategies to manage time and resources, given the need for safety on the river.

### Interaction

- Work collaboratively with other leaders to complete specific tasks.
- Work with other leaders to develop an EAP.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

After finishing this module, you will know how to plan safe, fun sessions that meet your paddlers' needs and reflects the whitewater Long-Term Athlete Development Model. In particular, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of logistics in the development of a session (river run).
- Establish an appropriate structure for your sessions (river runs).
- Design an EAP.

## WORKBOOK TOPICS

There are five topics on Risk Management – River Leader 2 in this section:

- Duty of care and negligence.
- Risk factors.
- Emergency response.
- Structuring a session (river run).
- Planning for safety and EAP.



# River Leader 2

## CALCULATED RISK

Leading paddlers in whitewater always presents a certain level of risk inherent to the environment in which it is practiced. Similarly to other high risk environments, for example aerial sports or mountain sports, zero risk simply does not exist. Taking risks is not specific to whitewater paddling, but managing the risk is. As a leader managing these risks becomes an important part in planning a safe session and providing safety to these paddlers while paddling. In order to maintain safety for you and the group, specific behaviours must be assumed throughout the session or run. Before choosing which behaviours to adopt, each leader must learn to calculate the risk involved in the different paddling settings.

### Four points to calculate risk

In order to calculate risk, each leader must take into consideration the four following points:

1. Paddlers
2. Environment
3. Framework
4. Equipment

The following table specifies each point. It is important to note that when considering each of these variables that the leader considers them as part of the equation.

## Questions to Ask Yourself When Calculating Risk

<b>Paddlers</b>	<b>Physical preparation</b>	How physically fit is each paddler? How often have the paddlers been out on the river recently (particularly important for cold water paddling)?
	<b>Psychological preparation</b>	What paddling level is each paddler (including yourself)? Have you ever paddled this level of whitewater before? Is any paddler under a high level of stress recently (e.g., break-up, due date for a project)? <b>Note:</b> This is hard to evaluate with paddlers you do not know very well, and it is not usually appropriate to ask flat-out how a person we barely know is doing in their personal life. As a leader, you can often tell if someone is anxious or out of sorts by their physical behaviour (e.g., speaking very fast, jumpy).
	<b>Technical preparation</b>	What paddling level are each paddler (including you)? Have you ever paddled this level of whitewater before?
	<b>Know yourself, the others, and the group</b>	How often have you paddled together? What attitudes do certain paddlers adopt when together? What relationship do you have with the group?
<b>Environment</b>	<b>Difficulties/duration</b>	What level of river are you paddling? How long is the session or run?
	<b>Specific rapid difficulties: (4) strainers, keeper holes, sieves, entrapments.</b>	Any specific river hazards that could endanger your lives?
	<b>Environment, remoteness (e.g., canyon = committed)</b>	How far away are you from rescue, help?
<b>Framework</b>	<b>Group teamwork</b>	Is help from the paddlers in your group possible?
	<b>Language and communication</b>	Common language? Communicate through sign language? Use conventional signs for river communication?
	<b>Lead and close the group run</b>	Are you alone leading and managing the group?
<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Tailored to the difficulty of the run, level of paddlers, type of river?</b>	Do you have the necessary equipment to react in case of a mishap during your run? Does your equipment correspond to the difficulty of the run (will you have what is necessary to react to a serious mishap?)
	<b>Answers CKC and provincial safety guidelines</b>	Do you carry the equipment required or recommended by the National and Provincial governing bodies?
	<b>Tested and dependable</b>	Have you used the equipment beforehand, and is it regularly checked for maintenance?
	<b>Types of boats</b>	Short, long, flat hull, displacement hull, fiberglass or composite, plastic, high or low volume, inflatable or hardshell
	<b>Ropes, carabineers, phone, maps, EAP</b>	Do you have the equipment with you?

## Leading and Risk

As a leader, you will need to adopt safe behaviours in order to maintain the safety of you and your group at all times. First and foremost, as a leader you must lead by example and be autonomous. You must not jeopardize group safety due to a bad choice of kayak for the session or run or by omitting safety equipment. Here are some basic guidelines to follow:

- Do not succumb to peer pressure in your selection of equipment, run or rapid.
- Maintain a safety margin (in case of accumulation of mishaps or failures).
- Do not expect any legal “presents” from your group or society when it comes to agreeing to risk.
- Present to the group that the level of risk is not proportional to the difficulty of the river (e.g., An easy Grade II river may have a higher level of risk if it is very remote, compared to a Grade IV river which is accessible by road all along the river run).
- Encourage paddlers to develop safe behaviours by educating them as opposed to forbidding certain river runs or rapids.
- Use provincial or CanoeKayak Canada paddler evaluation tools in order to establish each paddler’s abilities as opposed to randomly offering personal evaluations (The provincial or CanoeKayak Canada standards are impartial and specific to paddler’s abilities).
- Always remain vigilant and watchful on the “easy” sections.

### Before Leaving

Before leading a session or river run the leader has certain choices to make as well as information to obtain and dispense. The participants should fill out all paperwork (e.g., medical forms, waivers) prior to engaging in the activity. The information the leader needs to dispense is generally contained in a general “welcome” speech to participants. It should include specific comments on the potential and inherent risks and hazards of whitewater paddling. The leader should also mention the fact that he or she will do everything possible to minimize risk to ensure participants have a fun and safe learning experience.

The leader must check through participants’ paperwork to ensure that everything has been signed correctly and witnessed. Also check to see if there are participants with medical conditions or medications that you should know about.

One of the most important decisions the leader will have to make is choosing a site accessible to the weakest paddler of the group. This does not mean choosing the easiest run possible, but ensuring that river running options (e.g., portaging) are available to meet this paddler’s specific needs. Also each individual should have a task during the run (e.g., lead, middle, sweep or paired up).

Before leaving, the leader ensures that they are prepared and have the following information:

#### 1. Paddler information:

- The leader knows the site, and/or is able to quickly evaluate and assess the skills of the group to match the situation and notes that the external conditions can change, among others (e.g., cold, fatigue, light, weather).
- The equipment is adapted to the river run and the paddling course.
- The paddler and the group hierarchy between lead, middle and sweep relates to the relevance of the difficulty of the river compared to the level of practice in the group. The group hierarchy should be determined prior to start of trip and the paddlers should be informed who is responsible for each individual. (e.g., buddy system).
- The environment: + or – committed, assistance vehicle, water level, and maps.

## 2. Psychological preparation, safety and prevention

- Inform paddlers on the river map of: length, duration, difficulty, distance, river flow, the key lines, the portages, the “unrunnables”, traps. Ideally, if you can do this the day before it will give a clear picture of what is expected.
- Establish a precise timing, which provides a safety margin of 2-3 hours of security, including the duration of shuttles (often lengthy).
- Provide information on the environment, the weather, water level, the setting of the descent. This information has an impact on mental preparation, individual equipment (e.g., cold weather gear), food, group safety equipment and risk management.
- The leader should verify that everything is in order.

### During the River Trip

During the river trip, the leader should make sure to do the following:

- Check the water level at put-in (visual, river gauge level), the equipment of individual group members.
- Evaluate the difficulty and danger, the disaster scenarios and take time to identify: upstream, downstream, river right and left side with the group.
- Make a diagnostic review to the group of the dangers of running certain sections and point scouting references. Allow all paddlers to express their opinion of the choice of lines, fear of each scenario and safety strategy.
- Establish one (or more) safety plans for the identified hazards, but also consider placing a safety in response to "individual fears."
- Propose an order of descent: The lead chooses the line; it must be one of the most experienced paddlers. Opening is based on volunteerism, but as a leader you must pay attention to risky scenarios (e.g., paddler too self-confident or relies too heavily on the group) that can place the group in danger.
- Beware of very experienced paddlers who place their boat and paddle strokes to perfection (space and time), which gives an impression of ease, simplicity and low number of required moves.
- The “sweep” deserves as much attention as the others, even though all have successfully run their lines. Do not reduce or eliminate established safety (this may require someone to exit their kayak in order to ensure proper safety).

### After the River Trip: Review and Outlook

After the river trip, the leader reviews the session or trip in order to make adjustments for subsequent outings. He/she should choose a relaxed environment that is favourable towards individual comments. The leader should allow for a group review as well as an individual review.

#### Group Review:

- Level of satisfaction
- Level of fatigue (e.g., number of rolls, irritability, reduced level of alertness, injuries)
- Motivation
- Trip plan respected
- Reliability of maps, changes on the river, etc.

**Individual Review:**


- Individual feedback on technical, physical and psychological aspects
- Verbal or photographic reviews of key rapids
- Exchange between paddlers on the river run
- Relive interesting moments
- Express worries, fears (this applies to both paddlers and leaders)
- Bring attention to behaviours that jeopardized safety

In the case of an incident where the paddlers have sustained injury or have been shaken emotionally, a debriefing is in order. The goal of a debriefing is to reflect collectively on the emotional moments of the session or river run and to objectify any incidents. Ideally, a debriefing session should be held the day of the incident. Choose a pleasant and friendly moment to discuss the situation.

The leader regulates the discussion and must ensure that each individual benefits from the debriefing session. Each paddler speaks about their strong moments during the session and describes any incidents or situations in which they found themselves in difficulty. The group listens and corrects any technical details related to the incident. The leader will then have the ability to objectify the situation with regards to perceived risk and the actual danger the paddler may have been in.

It is crucial not to trivialize the emotions felt by the individual paddlers in order to play down the situation and to respect their perception of the incident. Individual level of proficiency will have a decisive impact on the emotions generated by each situation (e.g., flipping over for a beginner paddler who still swims and an intermediate paddler that successfully rolls does not hold the same importance to each individual). Again, the goal is to de-emphasize the drama of the situation and share knowledge of our river environment and the potential risk inherent in the sport.

## Actions to Take While Leading Checklist

<p><b>Planning</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Waivers and medical forms – Are they filled out? Did you read them?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Weather – What are the predictions (temperature, precipitation, wind)?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paddlers – How many are paddling?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that activities are appropriate for paddlers' age, fitness, and ability level.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the session starts with a warm-up and that the activities include a reasonable progression and challenge for the paddlers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Common sense – Use it!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emergency Action Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Is your EAP prepared and accessible? Does your group know where to find it?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inspecting Equipment and Facilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kayak, paddle, PFD, helmet, appropriate clothing, first aid kit, rope with river knife, rescue gear, phone (if possible). Take an inventory of collective and individual equipment.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assess the level and safety of the river (refer to river guides and water levels.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify environmental, equipment and facilities, framework and human risk factors.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that paddlers wear their protective equipment and that it is properly adjusted and in good condition.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Informing Paddlers and Parents</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inform paddlers (and parents when dealing with minors) of the risks inherent in the run.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> River safety talk – Did you cover all the points (see Talk for more information)?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When explaining a section during a river run, highlight potential risks (e.g., there is a Class 3 ledge around the bend, we shall get out and scout at a specific eddy on river left).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supervising Activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the paddler/leader ratio is within provincial safety standards.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep in mind that paddlers need constant supervision. Stop all activities when you have to leave your kayak or delegate responsibility for the group to a competent person.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Look for signs of hypothermia, fatigue and aggression in paddlers; if necessary, stop the river run.</li> </ul>

# River Safety Talk



A river safety talk is required by Transport Canada and should cover the following main points:

<b>Equipment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have all your gear? (e.g., paddle, skirt, pfd, helmet, kayak). <input type="checkbox"/> Is your gear adjusted (PFD and helmets zipped and clipped)? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you prepared for a prolonged period of time in the water? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the float bags inflated?
<b>Signals</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Did you cover whistle, paddle and verbal signals? <input type="checkbox"/> Remind paddlers they must return signals when they have understood. (ok – ok)
<b>Hazards</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood, rocks, ledges, holes and other hazards specific to your site.
<b>Group structure</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Remind paddlers there is a lead and sweep kayak and proper kayak spacing for each rapid (to be addressed on the river).
<b>Ropes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab the rope with your hands, do not wrap around you.
<b>Swim</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Defensive swim position. <input type="checkbox"/> Hang on to gear. <input type="checkbox"/> No standing until touching shore <input type="checkbox"/> Others to stay in/go to eddy
<b>Are we ready? Any questions?</b>	

## River Running While Leading

Traditionally, when running a river you have a paddler in front, “The Lead”, and one at the back of the group, “The Sweep”. This is a common and effective technique for relatively small groups, but this does not cover large groups (10 or more) and it does not address situations where you are alone on a river with a fairly inexperienced group (this happens regularly as an leader). In every case there are a few common guidelines:

- **Communication (signals):** Always review all river signals and basic communication signals with your group.
- **Safety:** Determine the basic group dynamics (who is leading, opening, closing, and who responds in case of emergency and activation of EAP)

### River running methods

There are many methods used to run rivers. What may suit a certain rapid can prove to be inappropriate for another. Certain methods are more efficient in certain circumstances (small or large group), while others require a specific context in order to maintain safety and efficiency. In any case, it is the leader’s responsibility to ensure the safety of the group during the session or river run.

- **Throw bag/portage:** Have the person portaging a rapid carry a rope and assume safety further downstream (if the paddler does not have an accessible river knife or does not know how to throw a rope do not assign this task to them).
- **All together:** The whole group navigates down the rapid at the same time while maintaining sufficient distance from each other not to run into each other. (Particularly efficient in easy rapids with no consequences to a capsized, or for an experienced group).
- **Small groups:** Small groups of paddlers run a rapid one after the other. (Efficient when paddling in large groups or varying abilities).
- **One by one:** Establish order of paddlers and call them one by one. After one person successfully runs the rapid, the leader signals for the next paddler to come. You can modify this system by having a weak paddler follow a stronger paddler that can show the line.
- **Eddy hopping:** The group moves from one eddy to the next. This works well when eddies are large or the group is small.
- **Shotgun:** The leader goes first and the others follow one after the other (leader, weak paddler, weak paddler, strongest paddler of group, weak paddler, weak paddler).
- **Two by two or buddy system (advanced):** Balance paddling abilities within the different teams and make sure the team knows that they are together in a sub group.
- **Rafted up:** Where 1 paddler is unable to continue down river without capsizing repeatedly, two paddlers can raft up with the weakest paddler in the middle. The weak paddler holds onto the other kayakers’ cockpits and the two outside paddlers navigate the raft.
- **Leap frog:** One after the other going from eddy to eddy. Using the eddies as safety stops and to keep the group together. Lead boat enters an eddy and waits for the second boat to get into the eddy before leaving. When the third boat reaches the eddy, the second boat moves on, repeat.
- **Kamikaze:** You send one paddler through and if they make it down they will signal the next to follow. As a leader, you may choose to use this technique for an intermediate level group in order to develop river reading skills. If so, as a responsible leader, you must choose a rapid that has little or no consequences, place safety accordingly and always remain vigilant to paddlers and be aware of the safety of your group.(This is not recommended for beginner groups)



## The Weak Link and Running a Rapid

In all groups there are stronger, more experienced paddlers as well as weaker or less experienced paddlers. Some demonstrate clear judgment while others adopt a carefree happy go lucky attitude. Be it their physical capabilities, technical skill, ability to make an educated decision or simply by demonstrating unsafe behaviours, there is almost always a weak link in your group. These paddlers should not be seen as a hindrance to the leader, but more an opportunity to develop their physical or mental skills, increase technical proficiency or acquire responsible river behaviours. A positive outlook as well as a healthy dose of patience are necessary to lead these paddlers. Nonetheless, they must still be integrated into the group and given clear options with safety being ever present in each scenario. Listed below is a simple recipe for success.

### Helping Weaker Paddlers Run Rapids

#### Step 1: Before

- Offer to watch the lines of a few paddlers to form an opinion.
- Always give paddlers the choice to portage.
- Do not allow weaker paddlers to wait for everyone to run a drop, make the decision to portage before or shortly after the first few have run, this will avoid loss of time for the whole group.
- Propose a line that is technically within the paddlers' range of ability, even if it may lead to a roll (in a safe zone).
- Strengthen safety if needed or to satisfy the emotional needs of the paddler.
- If time is short, encourage portaging right away
- Involve the walking paddler with safety to maintain integration within the group (safety from shore, river signals to group, throwbag).
- Have strong paddlers run the rapid again in the weaker paddlers' boats to minimize portage time.

#### Technical advice:

- Visually locate the lines from different angles (downstream, middle, upstream, river level, up high)
- Provide visual cues clearly visible from kayak.
- Provide advice on the placement of the kayak, its speed, body movements and the tempo.

#### Step 2: While running a rapid

- Observe the lines of the lead and the others.
- Adopt active safety behaviour as a whole group.
- Make sure whole group looks at paddler and gives him the "go" signal.
- Provide assistance with visual cues by placing an object or someone to help aim.
- Offer manual assistance such as a person standing in a tight eddy ready to seize a tip of the kayak if necessary.
- Verbally encourage or offer help.

#### Step 3: After:

- Review of running a line: look into the causes of success or failure.
- Analysis of spectator paddlers.
- Feedback from paddler: technical, physical, psychological.

This *quick* review serves as a useful tool for all paddlers and should be reinvested in the rest of the descent, and as a leader can lead to further tools to help develop the group's paddling and safety skills. These paddlers are a steady source of learning and development opportunities for the leader and continued interaction will bring you precious experience as a river leader.

## Scouting

Early on in our paddler development we are taught to exit our kayaks and to walk on the banks of the river in order to scout up coming rapids. This is a very useful technique to help less experienced paddlers to develop river reading skill. Another technique to develop is boat scouting. Not all river banks are conducive to exiting our kayaks in order to scout. This is why it is important with more intermediate paddlers to develop river reading skills while sitting in our kayaks.

Boat scouting is similar to the widespread technique used in climbing where the climber goes up the chosen route without spending hours studying it before. This does not always entitle them to success without falling, but does mean climbers learn to rely on their knowledge of their environment and their judgement a lot quicker than reading up on route charts. Paddlers can learn to use an adaptation of this technique, relying on their skills and knowledge to bring them down rivers. As a leader you should develop this technique that will come in handy on cold day river runs, when time is a factor or onland travel is challenging. In these situations exiting and entering your kayak slows down the progress of the group considerably as well as increase your chance of hypothermia and injury.

The following are some specific safe behaviours inherent to boat scouting:

- Paddler has a plan B to stop, exit and scout.
- Paddler has a large amount of river configurations in memory.
- Paddler is able to visualize lines by reading the on-land and river morphology cues.

Listed below are a few techniques for successful boat scouting:

- Move slower than the current, this will allow you to gain time to make the right decision. Paddling backwards while going downstream, using back ferries, ferries, surfing or eddying in/out will equally increase your decision making time.
- Open your visual range further downstream: Use frequent eddy stops in the middle and on both sides of the river to gain river knowledge downstream and around the corner.
- Communicate on the river between different paddlers in different locations (two paddlers from different points of view can create a better picture of what is to come downstream).

As a leader you are still responsible for the safety of your group. When boat scouting, if you are unsure of the next section or you see the horizon line suddenly drop off, traditional scouting becomes the safest option.

No matter which form of river running or scouting you choose to adopt for certain rapids, the safety of your group remains your first priority.

## BASIC RESCUES

Capsizes and swims are common with developing paddlers, we must be able to effectively respond to these situations. Leaders should be able to demonstrate competencies in the following areas:

- Self Rescue
  - Defensive swimming
  - Offensive swimming
  - Rolling
- Shore-Based Rescue
  - Use and deployment of throwropes
- Boat-Based Rescue
  - Bow rescues, rescuer and rescuee.
  - Pick up and tow swimmers to shore
  - Show various methods of boat recovery (e.g., boat over boat, tow and release systems)

### The Importance of Rescue Training

The focus of safety in whitewater paddling is in prevention, but as we know, things can and do go wrong. Dangerous situations can evolve quickly and often a potentially major incident is averted and a well executed rescue ensues due to the rescue training and response of the paddlers involved.

It is a clear responsibility of the leader to respond effectively, and to a standard of care in rescue and first aid scenarios. These scenarios evolve from the “potentially hazardous” environments in which we operate (e.g., a River Leader 2 leading in Class 1-2 water would reasonably be able to deal with simple rescues and first aid situations).

A River Leader 2 can lead groups in riskier environments and higher classes of rapids require a much higher level of skills, training and judgment. Leaders may be leading trips on continuous rapids in remote areas. These leaders should be reasonably able to deal with more complex rescues, evacuations, and or medical issues. Swiftwater Rescue training is required for whitewater leaders. Wilderness First Aid training is highly recommended.

There are many excellent training opportunities in these areas. Programs in Swiftwater Rescue and Wilderness First Aid are hosted by PSO's, clubs, affiliates and commercial members.

The recognized industry standard is the CKC-W Swiftwater Rescue Certification (SWR).

### Discussion

What kind of scenarios could we encounter as a group of friends out paddling in spring flows on a Class 2 11 km section of river, three hours to the nearest hospital? Logging roads in and out of the area.

## Conclusion

Learning the "concept of calculated risk" is essential for anyone wanting to become independent and responsible for his actions. As such, it can be said that outdoor sports in general and river descents in particular are tremendous schools of life. The main teacher for paddlers is the river and learning to safely navigate the rapids. However, the teaching of risk management is an art that requires a lot of experience, wisdom and sometimes sacrifice. An efficient way to learn from the various river runs you do is to take notes of your descents in a log book and to review it regularly. No amount of classroom teaching will equate to experiences on the river.

## RISK FACTORS



Identify and list environmental and human risk factors associated with whitewater paddling and outline strategies you would adopt to minimize or eliminate those risks

	Environmental Risk Factor	Appropriate Safety Planning
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

	Human Risk Factor	Appropriate Safety Planning
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

	How Can a Leader be a Risk Factor? List the Possibilities...	
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		



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# Site Selection

# Site Selection and Safety

Essentially there are two main factors in our choice of river runs and locations.

First, is the site safe and free from hazards.

Second are the hydrodynamics, waves and other features appropriate for the skill level of our paddlers.

## SITE SAFETY

The leader should ensure that the site is free of hazards and strong currents that may put paddlers into difficult situations. If there are no experienced paddlers to assist in rescues, the site should permit paddlers to rescue one another (given their paddling ability). There should be easily visible as well as attainable emergency access and egress points to the site. This guide can serve as a measure of whether or not a site is safe for a particular group of paddlers.

## SITE SUPERVISION

The leader should be constantly alert for hazardous situations that may require his or her attention. On flatwater, have paddlers work in pairs, and assume some degree of responsibility for each other. On the river, paddlers could be organized into buddy systems, groups of at least three and no more than six boats. The leader should brief paddlers to be ready to rescue anyone in difficulty, if within their capabilities. On river trips, capable paddlers should be assigned to act as lead and sweep boats. The lead boat is the first boat, the sweep the last. The remaining paddlers should be instructed to remain between these two boats. Always try to maintain visual contact with every paddler in the group.

## SAFE EQUIPMENT

Paddlers should wear PFDs for every practice session. The leader should ensure that all paddlers have adequate flotation in their boats and footrests that will not allow feet to become trapped. Helmets must always be worn on moving water. All paddlers must be dressed appropriately. The leader should tell paddlers to bring an adequate supply of warm, dry clothing to change into after paddling. The leader needs to have safety equipment such as a throw rope, tow system, knife and a first aid kit on hand.

## RIVER CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

- *Class I – “moving water with a few riffles and small waves. Few or no obstructions. Little maneuvering required”*
- *Class II – “easy rapids with waves and wide clear channels that are obvious with scouting. Some maneuvering required”.*
- *Class III - “obstacles that would be suggested to be avoided with potential consequences if encountered”*
- *Class IV – “obstacles that are difficult to avoid, and can cause severe consequences if encountered.*
- *Class V – “obstacles if not avoided can cause severe consequences including death.*
- *Class VI – “difficulties of Class V taken to extreme limits of difficulty and risk. By definition virtually unrunnable*

## SAFETY PRECAUTIONS REGARDING RIVER HAZARDS

Although new paddlers should never be paddling difficult water, precautions regarding avoiding river hazards must be taught in order that paddlers recognize them when they do arise. The key element in all situations outlined in this section is the force of the water. It should never be underestimated; the paddler's strength is no match for the river.

All rescue situations should be treated as though they are potentially fatal. Even if the paddler is obviously above water, conditions may change quickly. Therefore, speed is of the essence, but clear thinking and proper assessment of the situation on the part of the rescuers (and the paddlers in trouble) are of paramount importance.

The leader is responsible for ensuring that in all practice sessions or trips, the difficulty of the water is closely matched to the ability of the paddlers. Any places known to be hazardous should be discussed before leaving and arrangements to scout or portage made. When scouting rapids, the leader should discuss with paddlers why a particular section can or cannot be paddled. No paddler should ever be made to feel pressured into paddling something they honestly believe to be beyond their capability. Similarly, the leader should never attempt to lead on anything for which he or she is not qualified.

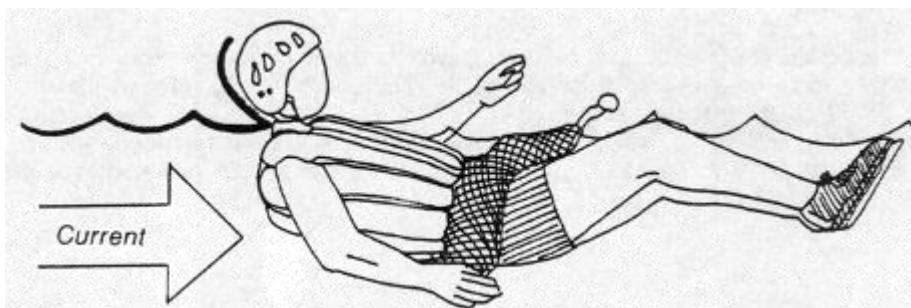
The leader must establish the competence of all paddlers involved. Ensure that paddlers know how to correctly perform a wet exit and swim in a river and determine which paddlers know how to roll.

### Swimming Rapids

Should you find yourself swimming in a rapid, for whatever reason, you should immediately adopt the defensive swimming position by doing the following:

1. Floating on your back, eyes ahead
2. Feet downstream and floating at the surface to fend off rocks
3. Sculling with hands for support and control of posture
4. Knees slightly bent; not locked
5. Buttocks fairly high and body not piked (you will prevent a lot of rear end scrapes this way)

Figure 1: The defensive swimming position



### Safety Briefing for Swimming Whitewater

The leader should instruct paddlers to take a breath of air whenever possible when swimming a rapid. Waves will cause a person to "bob" below the surface, and on flushing through small reversals; a person may not surface for a few seconds.

Paddlers must be told that they must never stand up when swimming a river since they can easily trap a foot or leg under a rock. The pressure of the water can push the person over and pin them underwater regardless of the depth.

When swimming, paddlers should be taught to kick with their legs, ferrying towards the nearest (or safest) shore. It is a good practice for the leader to have new paddlers swim down a safe section of a rapid in warm weather. This way when they do have to swim a rapid, it is not entirely new.

In the event that a paddler is forced to perform a wet exit in a river they should try to hold onto both the paddle and boat. This may entail swimming a few strokes to gather them together. The swimmer should move to the upstream end of the boat and hold onto the grab loop. The leader should explain that in this way, the boat cannot "pin" the paddler against any obstacles. Take care that the end of the boat is held off to the side of the paddler's body. Then if the boat strikes something, the paddler is not pushed into the boat by the current. Both the paddle and grab loop should be held in one hand leaving the other hand free to maneuver. However, the paddler should only hold the grab loop with the fingers, so that he or she can let go easily if necessary.

### **Strainers**

A strainer is created by the current flowing against and through wooden debris, thereby straining all objects from the water. Sometimes tree roots form a strainer when the earth around them has eroded. However, the most common type of strainer is a tree that has fallen into the water. A paddler may be swept against a strainer and pinned by the force of the water. This is disastrous if the paddler capsizes and is pinned (usually by leaning upstream). They may be trapped underwater. A swimming paddler not only risks being pinned but also entangled, with their head underwater. Strainers must be given a wide berth at all times.

### **Logs and Ice Jams**

These two hazards are essentially a variety of strainer that arises under particular conditions. Log jams are common wherever there are braided channels and soft river banks. Beavers can also contribute to log jams.

Ice jams are characteristic of rivers that freeze during the winter or are fed by frozen lakes. During the spring thaw, chunks of ice break off in the rapidly changing water level and may clog the river.

Log and ice jams may only be minor, creating diversions or piling up against rocks and bridge abutments. More serious ones can block narrow channels that may normally be navigable. Indeed, the whole river may be blocked. This situation is particularly misleading, since the river may appear flat and calm just upstream of the blockage. However, the river may be rushing underneath the blockage. Many jams are often in the main current. A floating paddler would be carried straight into them. Therefore, paddlers should be warned to always avoid such obstacles. Enormous pressure builds up behind obstructions, which, although appearing solid, can move suddenly without warning and with tremendous force, another reason why they should be avoided.

On rivers where jams are known to occur, special care should be taken to look out for them. Because ice is often clear in colour, ice jams can be difficult to see. It is recommended that someone who knows the river should lead on such rivers. Normally all that is necessary is a watchful eye.

### **Ledges**

Ledges are the most dangerous when they run perpendicular to the current and create a uniform backwash in the hole below the ledge. Boats or especially swimming paddlers may become trapped against or underneath ledges. (The following example, taken from The Best of the River Safety Task Force Newsletter, will show how futile human strength can be against the power of even a small river.)

#### **Fatal Accident at the Icebreaker Slalom:**

Undilla, N.Y. October 4, 1975

From the American Whitewater Association Journal Nov/Dec 1975

#### **Summary:**

On the morning of October 4, 1975 during practice runs held prior to the annual slalom races on Ouleout Creek below the East Sydney Dam in south central New York, Gene Bernadin, an Appalachian Mountain Club member rated by those who knew him as a competent intermediate boater, capsized in mid-course during a C-2 run. He failed to roll up, and caught his foot under a submerged boulder while swimming



through the fast jet of water below the bridge. The force of the current held him under water, and despite immediate, strenuous rescue efforts by other paddlers he was submerged for a total of 6-8 minutes.

The water was cut off at the dam, the victim recovered and CPR was administered on the spot until the arrival of the ambulance minutes later. Despite these efforts, he failed to respond and was pronounced dead at the hospital upon arrival. (Wallbridge, page 43)

### Ledges and foot entrapments

A paddler's foot can become entrapped between the rocks should he or she attempt to stand up in moving water. The leader cannot emphasize enough that a swimming paddler must float as high as they can in the water, and keep their feet up.



Figure 2: Example of a foot entrapment in a ledge

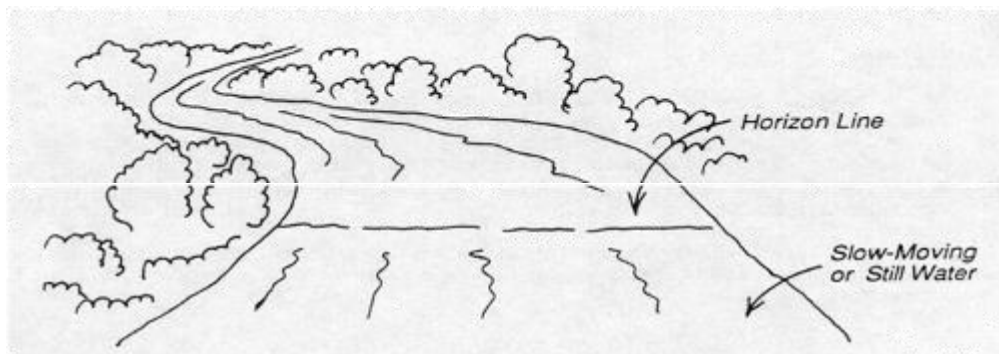
### Holes, Hydraulics, Keepers or Stoppers

A hole is any place where water falls steeply over an obstacle, accelerates down the back side of it only to slow down below it as it hits the greater mass of water. Some of the water rolls back upstream into the depression or hole created by the accelerating water over the obstacle. The danger lies in the water reversing back upstream into the hole, this back tow can be long enough to feed the unwary boater around and around in an endless powerful cycle. The continuous recirculation can carry with it anything that floats, for example, boats, people, logs or debris. Some holes have deep recirculations that represent a virtual "drowning machine". Other shallower and smaller holes may be fun to play in for the skillful paddler. If you want to play in holes start off with the small ones to develop a clear understanding of the required technique.

Many experienced paddlers can run through seemingly dangerous holes because they know how to read the drop and pick a chute through which the boat can pass. It requires considerable expertise and precision to hit the right spot and not get caught broadside in the reversal. The leader must emphasize to paddlers the skill necessary to read and paddle such difficult water.

When seen from above, a drop appears as a horizon line (see Figure 10). The leader should show paddlers an example of a horizon line at the first opportunity, so that they know what to look for. Explain how to spot the line through a ledge and hole by looking for the water moving downstream.

Figure 3: View of horizon line from upstream



**Important:**

The sound of the churning water can probably be heard. Usually, it is difficult to determine what is below a drop until you are able to see over it. To avoid being swept over, paddlers should scout from the shore and avoid large holes.

The following four points outline warning signs that may indicate the presence of a hole:

1. Flat pools on river stretches that are otherwise fast moving. This water may be backed up as a result of a dam or natural ledge.
2. Concrete retaining walls and other structures along the shore. Dams are most common in populated areas, and the associated outbuildings may hint at difficulties below.
3. Sharply sloping rock outcrops that come down and cross the river. These outcrops may warn of a ledge or waterfall.
4. A thin and smooth horizon line (known as a false horizon line) with a sudden transition to moving water just downstream. This line is the lip of the ledge of the dam; the drop is hidden below the line. Hard to spot from the river, the line is a sure indication of trouble. Stop and scout ahead at

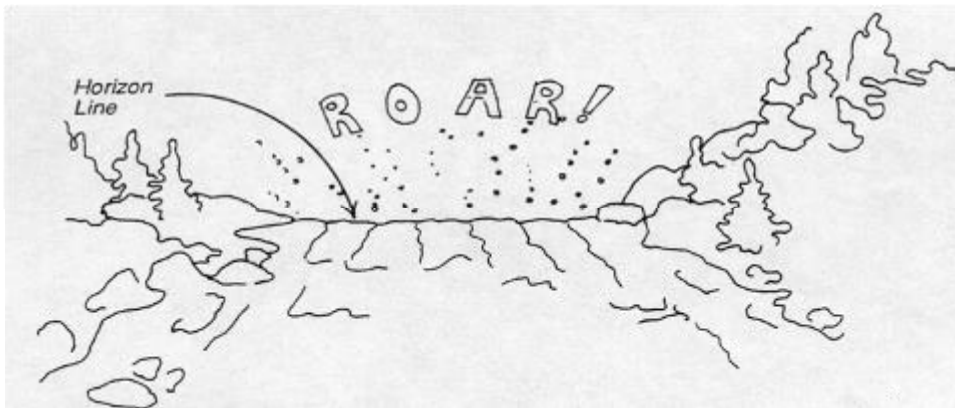


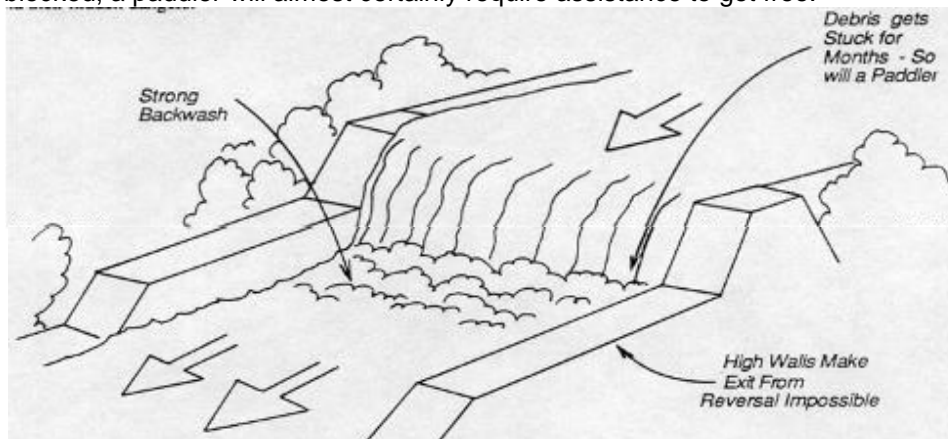
Figure 4: Signs of a drop from upstream

once.

**Weirs and Dams**

Human-made structures such as weirs and dams often create large, powerful and uniform holes that may not offer channels or chutes through which a boat may run. Many such obstacles stretch the full width of a river; consequently, the ends of a hole may be concrete walls offering no way out (see Figure ).

The size of many of the holes below human-made structures prohibits a boat from passing straight through. The boat will probably somersault forward or backward (end over end) or be completely stopped by the hole. The boat will then be drawn into the hole sideways. In a uniform hole whose ends are blocked, a paddler will almost certainly require assistance to get free.



It is foolish to run such obviously dangerous man-made obstacles. If a paddler runs such a drop successfully, she/he may well be a hero. The next time, she/he may become a statistic. Expert paddlers avoid weirs

Figure 12: The anatomy of a weir or dam

and dams and their hidden dangers.

### **Falls**

Falls represent a special challenge to many people. However, the new paddler has no reason to be concerned with anything but avoiding falls. That is, until he or she has gained the experience and competence necessary to take full responsibility for their paddling. Seen from upstream, falls appear as a horizon line. Some of the dangers of falls are that the kayak and paddler can become trapped in the backwash below, the kayak can become pinned, the kayak can hit rocks in the plunge pool or the kayaker can hit an obstacle during descent.

### **Whirlpools and Boils**

Many rivers have small whirlpools about one meter across. These whirlpools are not usually dangerous, but they can prove challenging when a paddler is deciding which way to edge a boat. Wide, deep rivers with a large volume of water can have deep and powerful whirlpools. The trip leader should avoid large whirlpools.

Boils are common in many rivers, but rarely are they large enough to be of concern. For the new paddler, boils can be quite unnerving. Boils require the paddler to have a very good feel for tilting or edging the boat. To stay upright, a paddler generally tilts away from a boil, but not so much as to catch the opposite edge. Leaders should make new paddlers aware of the difficulties presented by boils and caution paddlers accordingly.

### **Entrapment**

A paddler may be trapped in their boat in a number of ways:

- caught by a strainer or a ledge,
- trapped in a fall,
- broached against a rock, bridge abutments, or trees in the river.
- pinned upside down against a wall.
- the deck of a kayak may collapse, trapping the paddler's legs.
- feet may become lodged under a footrest (kayak) or entangled in straps (canoe).

Countless possibilities for entrapment exist in whitewater. Whatever the cause or form of entrapment, action on the part of rescuers must be swift. The priority is to get air to the paddler. There are a variety of ways in which this can be done:

- Physically lifting the head above water, even though legs may still be trapped
- Using an air bag inflation tube as a snorkel tube
- Attaching a rope to a free hand (or anything) and pulling them free
- Attaching a rope to the boat to pull it free

However, the above methods all require that would-be rescuers can reach the trapped paddler. A paddler may be out of sight, possibly under a logjam. Someone should watch downstream in case they wash out. Although experience in these situations may help, avoiding them by taking the appropriate safety precautions beforehand is the sign of a truly experienced leader.

## Communications

Communications around noisy rapids can be difficult. Paddlers generally depend on visual contact to stay organized and use visuals as an important aspect of safety. For paddlers out of sight of each other, whistles are used to get attention. The essential thing about whistle and paddle signals is that they must be simple and understood by everyone in the group. Here are some standardized signals that are used by most paddlers to signal to other paddlers.

### Visual signals

- High sign or a vertical paddle held high so it can be clearly seen. This is used to signal that it is safe to proceed or to run the rapid on the centre line
- Horizontal paddle or stop signal. The paddle is held horizontally overhead clearly indicating that the answer is "No, it is not yet safe to come down."
- Directional indicator the paddle can be used to indicate a positive direction of route. For example, "Go to the right" – the paddle points river right. Go left if the paddle indicates that direction.
- Okay signal – Put hand on top of head to indicate that you are okay.

Again, the important point is that the system is explained and adopted by new paddlers, and that everyone understands the same system. Consistency is key!

### Whistle signals

The whistle is used to get other paddlers' attention, usually when there is a problem. There may be a boat, object or swimmer coming downstream, either way its "heads up" mode for everyone around until the reason for the whistle blasts is determined.

There are a variety of whistle signal systems around and used by various rescue agencies. To keep things simple here are signals everyone knows and will respond to.

- Single blast (may be repeated) is an attention getter - somebody may be swimming, a boat may be coming down the rapid, somebody may require assistance. Most paddlers will stop playing, eddy out and look around for the reason for the whistle blast.
- Three blasts in rapid succession - repeated. This usually signals that a dangerous situation has evolved and somebody desperately needs help. Whistle blasts may be long alternating with short blasts, but always in groups of three and repeated. The meaning is the same – HELP, HELP, HELP!!

## Summary

The safety considerations that should be observed in every paddling session and the precautions necessary in hazardous situations have been discussed. Safety is an important part on whitewater paddling. It is important that the leader show paddlers discretion and the use of common sense when they are dealing with potentially dangerous situations. In this way, paddlers will develop a sense of the river that will stay with them throughout their paddling careers.

The following quote from the British Canoe Union's Canoeing Handbook\* should be heeded:

*"There is no such thing as a "safe" canoe (or kayak). There can only be a safe paddler. His or her safety is only ensured by good training and experience and the avoidance of unnecessary risks."*



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# Plan A Session

# PLANNING A SESSION

There is a direct link between leading and planning. With proper planning, the leader delivers a session that maximizes the time available to the group while providing a safe structure for paddlers to evolve in. There are some key elements to consider when you design and deliver a session. Here are some key questions to ask yourself during the process.

## SESSION PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

There are seven main questions you should ask yourself when creating a session plan.

1. What are the logistics of my session?
  - Facilities available
  - Equipment needed/available
  - Length of the session (time available)
  - Time of day of the session
  - Number of sessions per week
  - Availability of assistant leaders, and their experience
2. What abilities and skills does my sport require?
  - Physical abilities
  - Motor abilities
  - Technical/tactical skills
  - Mental skills
3. How will I deliver my session?
  - Key points to make
  - Leading methods I will use
  - Where I will position myself
  - What I will be watching for
  - How and when I will make interventions
4. Who are my paddlers?
  - Number of paddlers in attendance
  - Age/maturity of paddlers
  - Skills and abilities of paddlers
  - Gaps in paddler ability
  - Injuries to account for
  - Reasons why they are involved
5. How am I going to organize my session?
  - Structure of the session
  - Choice of activities
  - Sequence of activities

- Transition between activities to avoid wasting time
6. What are the safety risks, and how should I prepare for them?
    - The nature of the activities the paddlers will do and conditions in which they take place
    - Weather
    - River difficulty
    - Equipment
    - Human error
    - Emergency procedures to follow in case of an accident
  7. What am I trying to accomplish with my session?
    - What paddlers need to improve
    - Purpose of the session
    - Group goals and short-term objectives
    - Goals of leaders
    - Time of the season
    - Links with previous sessions and river runs
    - Links with future sessions and river runs

## The Key Components of a Session

A well-structured session has five parts. The following section gives a brief description of each one.

1. **The introduction:** The leader prepares the site and equipment, welcomes the paddlers, and tells them what will happen during the session. This is also a good time to assess the general status of the paddlers (e.g. have they recovered from the previous session?).
2. **The warm-up:** The leader plans activities that gradually activate the paddlers and prepare them physically and mentally to effectively perform the main part of the session. The warm-up consists of two parts: (1) general and (2) specific. The general warm-up aims to raise the body temperature until the paddler sweats, to allow for progressive muscle stretching. The specific warm-up, designed for the paddler's particular sport, aims to prepare the warmed muscles for the types of movements the paddler will perform in the main part of the session. The movements in the specific warm-up should mimic those of the main part, gradually building in intensity and range of motion.
3. **The main part:** The leader ensures a smooth flow of activities that are challenging for the paddlers and help them improve paddling abilities and fitness. The activities chosen must be appropriate for paddling, as well as the paddlers' age, fitness, and ability levels.
4. **The cool-down:** To initiate the recovery of the body, the leader plans low-intensity transition activities between the more intense efforts of the main part and the end of the session. The leader also plans for some time for paddlers to stretch.
5. **The conclusion:** The paddler provides some comments on the session and gives paddlers an opportunity to provide feedback. The leader ensures that the session ends on a positive and friendly note. The leader also provides some information about the next session.

## Key Elements of Each Part of a Session

Session	Time	Key Elements
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Purpose is to greet paddlers and let them know what will be taking place</p>	<p>Variable</p> <p>2-3 min</p>	<p><b>Before session begins:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect facilities and site selection</li> <li>• Organize equipment</li> <li>• Greet each paddler</li> <li>• Assess each paddler's energy level</li> </ul> <p><b>At the beginning of the session:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the goals of the session and the activities planned</li> <li>• Give safety instructions specific to the activities planned</li> </ul>
<p><b>Warm-up</b></p> <p>Purpose is to prepare the body for the efforts of the main part</p>	<p>5-10 min</p> <p>8-15 min</p>	<p><b>General warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General exercises or games to loosen muscles and raise body temperature</li> <li>• Progressive stretching</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific warm-up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief activities that paddlers already know that mimic the movements of the main part (may even be the same activity, but at lower intensity)</li> <li>• A gradual increase in intensity that will not tire the paddler</li> <li>• A quick transition between the end of the warm-up, the explanations/instructions given for the first activities of the main part, and the activities themselves</li> </ul>
<p><b>Main part</b></p> <p>Purpose is to perform activities that will help paddlers improve paddling-specific abilities and fitness</p>	<p>Variable; 30-60 min or more</p>	<p><b>Three or more activities linked in the proper order:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities that challenge paddlers so that they can learn and improve while enjoying themselves</li> <li>• Paddlers involved in an activity most of the time (i.e., not sitting around or waiting in line)</li> <li>• Paddlers allowed lots of practice for each activity</li> <li>• Activities that are appropriate for the age, fitness, and ability levels of the paddlers and are relevant to the sport</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cool-down</b></p> <p>Purpose is to begin recovery</p>	<p>5-10 min</p>	<p><b>General cool-down:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A gradual decrease in intensity</li> <li>• Stretching, especially of muscles most used</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Purpose is to debrief paddlers and tell them about the next session or river run</p>	<p>3-5 min</p>	<p><b>Provide closure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide and ask for feedback on what went well and what can be improved</li> <li>• Tell paddlers about the next session or river run (e.g. logistics, goals, and emphasis)</li> <li>• Lead team cheer</li> <li>• Speak with each paddler before he or she leaves</li> </ul>

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# Trip Planning: Emergency Action Plan

# Trip Planning

For any trip, no matter how long or short, a leader must create a Trip Plan. This planning shows that you have carefully considered the stretch of river you wish to take your participants on taking into account, their experience and skills as well as the goal of the trip.

A written trip plan can be simple with just an outline or complex with great detail. The key to any trip plan is to analyze where you will go, where the put in and take out are, what the hazards are, where the emergency exits are located, how long it will take and what equipment will be required.

Part of the trip planning process is included or duplicated in the Emergency Action Plan. The Trip Plan should include more details on the actual trip.

A blank Trip Plan form is included in the manual for your use.

# CanoeKayak Canada: River Trip Plan

## RIVER SAFETY TALK



**Location** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Put in** \_\_\_\_\_ **Take out** \_\_\_\_\_

**Trip leader** \_\_\_\_\_ **Assist. Leader** \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name	Age	Skill Level
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Before you begin teaching, make sure you cover the following:

**Equipment (Gear check):** Does everyone have a paddle, skirt, PFD, and kayak? Is gear put on properly (PFDs zipped and helmets clipped)? Are float bags inflated?

**Signals:** Discuss whistle, paddle, and verbal signs, and remind paddlers that they must return signals when they have understood (okay – okay)

**Hazards:** Wood, rocks, holes, and others specific to your site

**Group structure:** Remind paddlers that there is a lead and a sweep kayak, and to maintain proper spacing between paddlers for each rapid (to be addressed on the river)

**Ropes:** Grab the rope with your hands and do not wrap around you

### Swim:

- Show them the defensive swim position, feet up - bum up, looking downstream, ferry to shore
- Tell them not to stand until they touch the shore
- Tell them to hang onto their gear
- If there's a swimmer, others to stay where they are (in an eddy) or head to the closest eddy

# Sample Trip Planning Sheet

Trip date: \_\_\_\_\_ River / Section \_\_\_\_\_

Length/Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Equipment needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of River:

River Rapids : \_\_\_\_\_

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Risk factors/safety guidelines to give to paddlers: \_\_\_\_\_

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Notes/comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

## WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN?

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is a plan leaders design to help them respond to emergency situations. Preparing such a plan in advance will help you respond in a responsible and clear-headed way if an emergency occurs. An EAP is simply a pre-formulated idea of what you need to know if things were to go wrong while on the river.

Transport Canada requires an EAP to be prepared for the river, facility or site where you normally hold practices and for any river, facility or site where you host your instruction or river runs.


An EAP can be simple or elaborate. It should cover the following:

- Designate in advance who is in charge if an emergency occurs (this may be you).
- Have a cellular phone or VHF radio with you and make sure the battery is fully charged. If this is not possible, find out the exact location of a telephone you can use at all times. Have spare change in case you need to use a pay phone.
- Have emergency telephone numbers with you (facility manager, superintendent, fire, police, ambulance), as well as paddlers' contact numbers (parents/guardians, next of kin, family doctor).
- Have on hand a medical profile for each paddler so that this information can be provided to emergency medical personnel. Include in this profile signed consent from the parent/guardian to authorize medical treatment in an emergency.
- Prepare directions for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to follow to reach the site as quickly as possible. You must include information such as the closest major intersection; trail heads, or major landmarks.
- Have a first-aid kit accessible and properly stocked at all times (all leaders are required to obtain and maintain appropriate first-aid training).
- Designate in advance a call person: the person who makes contact with medical authorities and otherwise assists the person in charge. Be sure that your call person can give emergency vehicles precise directions to your location on the river, the facility or practice site.

When an injury occurs, the EAP should be activated immediately if the injured person:

- Is not breathing
- Does not have a pulse
- Is bleeding profusely
- Has impaired consciousness
- Has injured the back, neck, or head
- Has a visible major trauma to a limb

## Emergency Action Plan Checklist

<p><b>Access to telephones</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Phone battery well charged</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Practice venues</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Race venues</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> River runs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> List of emergency phone numbers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Change available to make phone calls from a pay phone</li> </ul>
<p><b>Directions to access the site and the river (throughout run)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accurate directions to river and site (practice)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accurate directions to emergency access points</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accurate directions to key or major river sites</li> </ul>
<p><b>Paddler information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personal profile forms</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency contacts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medical profiles</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personnel information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The person in charge is identified</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The call person is identified</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assistants (charge and call persons) are identified</li> </ul>
<p><b>Note:</b> The medical profile of each paddler should be up-to-date and be in the first-aid kit. Your first-aid kit must be accessible at all times and must be checked regularly.</p>	

## Sample Emergency Action Plan

Included is the suggested EAP you should carry with you while on the river, be it on your local practice site or during river outings. This EAP form is used as a quick visual reminder of the steps needed to follow during an emergency situation. All leaders should have established a detailed EAP for the venues they paddle on. When developing an EAP for your local venues or regular river runs, it is highly recommended to practice emergency situation simulations in order to develop better knowledge of the environment and hazards you will be exposed to as well as to familiarize leaders and paddlers with the steps below.

An emergency action plan is not a substitute for prudent planning or proper risk management while on or off the river.

## Steps to Follow When an Injury Occurs

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**Note:** Not all injuries require activation of EAP. It is important that leaders properly assess the situation to ensure the safety of all paddlers involved.

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### **Step 1: Control the environment so that no further harm occurs**

- Ensure you move to and stay in a safe area
- Stop all other paddlers in a safe area (ideally an eddy with access to an evacuation route)
- Extraction of dangerously pinned, entrapped or submerged paddlers automatically activates EAP
- Evacuation of injured paddler may be required. Do an initial assessment before activating EAP

### **Step 2: Do an initial assessment of the situation**

If the paddler:

- Is not breathing
- Does not have a pulse
- Is bleeding profusely
- Has impaired consciousness
- Has injured the back, neck, or head
- Has a visible major trauma to a limb
- Cannot move his or her arms or legs or has lost feeling in them

If the paddler does not show the signs above, proceed to Step 3

### **Step 3: Do a second assessment of the situation**

- Gather the facts by talking to the injured paddler as well as anyone who witnessed the incident
- Stay with the injured paddler and try to calm him or her; your tone of voice and body language are

### **Step 4: Assess the injury**

- Have someone with first-aid training complete an assessment of the injury and decide how to proceed.
- If the person trained in first aid is not sure of the severity of the injury or no one present has first-aid training, activate EAP.
- If the assessor is sure the injury is minor, proceed to Step 5.

### **Step 5: Control the return to activity**

Allow paddler to return to activity after a minor injury only if there is no:

- Swelling
- Deformity
- Continued bleeding
- Reduced range of motion
- Pain when using injured part

**Step 6: Record the injury on an accident report form and inform the parents/guardians if the paddler is less than 18.**

## River Maps for Emergency Action Plan

All river leaders and leaders must have a basic knowledge of the rivers they are paddling. Here is a list of symbols and details that should be found on the EAP river maps.

### River Access Points

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◆	Put-in and take out: place this symbol where you can put in and take out on the river
] [	Bridge: indicate any road crossings
]d	Dam
—	Paved road: indicate nearby roads including name or number
-	Dirt road: indicate nearby roads including name or number
...	Trail: Indicate trail details including name or number.
-+	Railway tracks: Indicate railway tracks nearby.

### Special Hazards:

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[w	Waterfall: Indicate height of waterfall ( ex. [ W→10m)
...p	Portage: Indicate portage trail on the side of the river and include the distance of the portage (ex. P 100m)
<///	Difficult rescue area(s): Indicate difficult rescue area(s) on the river. For example any canyons or cliffs make evacuation difficult if no trails reach the riverside. To indicate these areas, use the < to delineate the zone on the side of the river and place stripes on the inside of the delineation.  Others may be indicated by a small caption or footnote. (i.e. glass on trail during portage)

### River Classification:

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=>R	Rapid: To indicate these areas, use the = across the section of the river that has rapids. Then use the ∟ to delineate the zone on the side of the river and RI to RVI on the outside corner of the delineation to indicate the difficulty.
>S Sil	Then use the ∟ to delineate the zone on the side of the river and SI to SVI on the outside corner of the delineation to indicate the difficulty.
→	Direction of water flow is indicated by the arrow pointing downstream.

### Other Important Details:

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→H	Direction to hospital: Use the→ and H to indicate the route to follow.
→PH	Pay phone: Place either PH on the site where a phone may be found or →PH if it is found following a certain direction.
♥	Evacuation options: Include a brief description of conditions when not already specified by the map (e.g., steep incline leads to ...)

---

As mentioned above, an emergency action plan is not a substitute for prudent planning or proper risk management while on or off the river. As a leader you are responsible for the safety of your group. You also have the responsibility to indicate to your group where they can access your EAP form while on or off the river. This information will be useful in any emergency situation you are dealing with or if you are the victim in an emergency situation.





## CanoeKayak Canada Whitewater Emergency Action Plan Form

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time in: \_\_\_\_\_ Time out: \_\_\_\_\_

Trip leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Assist. leader: \_\_\_\_\_

First aid leader: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Comm. leader: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

### Map of River and Surroundings

River Access Points	Special Hazards	River Classification & Other
◆ Put-in and take out	[w Waterfall	=>R Rapid (e.g., RI to RVI)
] [ Bridge	...p Portage	>S Sil Include SI to SVI
]d Dam	</// Difficult rescue area(s)	→ Direction of water flow
— Paved road	Others (e.g., glass on trail)	
- Dirt road		→H Direction to hospital
... Trail		→PH Pay phone
-+ Railway tracks		♥ Evacuation (include description)

Place image of map here.

**Participants:**

Name	Medical Issues	ECP & Contact Numbers

**Vehicles:**

Make/Model	License Plate Number	Location of Keys

**In case of emergency, follow these steps:**

1. <b>Ensure you are safe</b>	
2. <b>Ensure no others are in danger</b>	
4. <b>All paddlers stop and gather</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extract victim</li> </ul>
6. <b>Stabilize victim (use soap notes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check level of consciousness</li> <li>• Check ABCs</li> <li>• Open airway</li> <li>• Check breathing</li> <li>• Check circulation (pulse)</li> <li>• Stabilize c-spine</li> <li>• DISABILITY (NEUROLOGICAL)</li> <li>• Check for trauma and exposure to extremities</li> </ul>
7. <b>Treat victim as required (first aid kits)</b>	
8. <b>Emergency contact - 911 (or other name, number, address)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital</li> <li>• Paddling Organization</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Forestry</li> </ul>
9. <b>Location of CELL/SAT phones (number, owner, location)</b>	
10. <b>Evacuation - preparation of</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paddler in need of care</li> <li>• Required gear</li> </ul>
11. <b>Group maintenance</b>	



## CanoeKayak Canada - Whitewater Plan a Session Template

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time in: \_\_\_\_\_ Time out: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trip leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Assist. leader: \_\_\_\_\_

### Actions to Take While Leading - Checklist

#### Step 1 - Planning

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- Waivers and Medical Forms – Are they filled out? Did you read them?
- Weather – What are the predictions – Temperature, precipitation and wind.
- Paddlers – How many are paddling.
- Ensure that activities are appropriate for paddlers' age, fitness, and ability level.
- Ensure that the session starts with a warm-up and that the activities include a reasonable progression and challenge for the paddlers.
- Common sense – Use it!

#### Step 2: Emergency action plan

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- Is your EAP prepared and accessible? Does your group know where to find it?

#### Step 3: Inspecting equipment and facilities

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- Kayak, paddle, PFD, helmet, first aid kit, rope with river knife, rescue gear, phone (if possible).
- Take an inventory of collective and individual equipment.
- Assess the level and safety of the river. (Refer to river guides and water levels.)
- Identify environmental, equipment and facilities, framework and human risk factors.
- Ensure that paddlers wear their protective equipment and that it is properly adjusted and in good condition.

#### Step 4: Informing paddlers and parents

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- Inform paddlers (and parents when dealing with minors) of the risks inherent in the run.
- River Safety Talk – Did you cover all the points (see River Safety Talk for more information)?
- When explaining a section during a river run highlight potential risks.
- Example: There is a class 3 ledge around the bend, we shall get out and scout at a specific eddy on river left.

#### Step 5: Supervising activities

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- Ensure that the paddlers/leader ratio is within provincial safety standards.
- Keep in mind that paddlers need constant supervision. Stop all activities when you have to leave your kayak or delegate responsibility for the group to a competent person.
- Look for signs of fatigue and aggression in paddlers; if necessary, stop the river run.

# River Safety Talk



A river safety talk is required by Transport Canada and should cover the following main points:

<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Do you have all your gear? (e.g., paddle, skirt, pfd, kayak).</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is it adjusted (PFD and helmets zipped and clipped)?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Are the float bags inflated?</li></ul>
<b>Signals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Did you cover whistle, paddle and verbal signals?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Remind paddlers they must return signals when they have understood (ok –ok)</li></ul>
<b>Hazards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Wood, rocks, holes, others specific to your site.</li></ul>
<b>Group structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Remind paddlers there is a lead and sweep kayak and proper kayak spacing for each rapid (to be addressed on the river).</li></ul>
<b>Ropes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Grab them, with your hands, do not wrap around you.</li></ul>
<b>Swim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Defensive swim position.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Hang on to gear.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Others to stay in/go to eddy.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> No standing until touching shore.</li></ul>
<b>Are we ready? Any questions?</b>	

# LOG BOOK

As a leader, it is important to keep a log of all your whitewater activities. This log book will allow you gain knowledge about the rivers you've paddled on, as well as keep a record of your whitewater experiences. To use this tool, fill out each column with the information at hand. To add more details, use the trip report form. Remember, the best way to learn how to paddle, lead and teach is getting out on different rivers and paddling.

Here are a few added details about each column:

- **Number, date, and duration:** Write a number for each trip. This will give you a quick reference # for a subsequent trip report if need be and a quick tally of how many runs you have done. Include the date you paddled as well as the time it took to run the section. Always use the same order when writing date and time, this way you will not question yourself later on as to what exactly was written.
- **Site:** Include the name of the river you paddled on. Include put-in and take-out information. If there are particular shuttle details add them here.
- **Section:** Write the name of the section paddled.
- **Distance:** Write the distance paddled in km.
- **Equipment:** Write down which kayak your were in, and what particular gear you had with you (e.g., cold weather gear).
- **Water conditions:** Include water levels as well as temperature.
- **Weather conditions:** Write what temperature it is outside as well as details on wind chill or humidex.
- **Responsibilities:** Are you a leader, assistant leader or even a student or paddler. Include what task you have as either a lead or sweep boat, second (in the middle somewhere) or even scout for a section.

The Log Book and Trip Report tools are merely examples of what you may wish to use in order to track your whitewater experiences. Some clubs, schools and outfitters provide their own forms when you teach or lead for them. The idea here is to track what you have done in a succinct and reader friendly way.

### Log Book Example

<b>LOG #, DATE &amp; DURATION</b>	<b>SITE PUT-IN &amp; TAKE-OUT</b>	<b>SECTION</b>	<b>DISTANCE</b>	<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>WATER CONDITIONS</b>	<b>WEATHER CONDITIONS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
01 2008/06/18 4 hours	Rouge river Azur & 7 Sisters	7 Sisters	6.5 km	LL Trigger dry top, board shorts	110 cms cold – not spring conditions	Hot, 24C No wind, low humidity	Assistant leader, Sweep boat



# CANOEKAYAK CANADA WHITEWATER TRIP REPORT

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Put-in:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Take-out:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Distance:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Site:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Section:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equipment:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Water Conditions:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Weather Conditions:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Trip Leader:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Assistant Leader:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsibilities:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Weather Conditions:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participants** (names, kayak paddled)

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Trip Details** (point form)

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Time/Activity:</b>	<b>Key Points:</b>
	_____	
<b>Events</b>	<b>Location:</b>	<b>Key Points:</b>
	_____	

**Other Details:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# SAMPLE ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date of Report: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Patient Information

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Known medical conditions/allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

## Incident Information

Date and Time of Incident	Time of First Intervention	Time of Medical Support Arrival	
____/____/____ dd mm yyyy	____ : ____ AM PM	____ : ____ AM PM	
<b>FIRST RESPONDER'S DESCRIPTION OF THE INCIDENT:</b> What and where it took place, what were the signs and symptoms of the patient.			
<b>PATIENT'S DESCRIPTION OF THE INCIDENT:</b> (see above)			
<b>EVENT AND CONDITIONS:</b> What was the event during which the incident took place, location of incident, surface quality, light, weather, etc.			
<b>ACTIONS TAKEN/INTERVENTION:</b>			
After treatment, the patient was:	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent home	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent to hospital/ clinic	<input type="checkbox"/> Returned to activity

Sample Accident Report Form (cont...)



**First Responder Information**

Last Name:	First Name:
Street Address:	City:
Postal Code:	Phone:
Email:	Age:
Role (Coach, assistant, parent, official, bystander, therapist):	

**Witness Information** (someone who observed the incident and the response, but not first responder)

Last Name:	First Name:
Street Address:	City:
Postal Code:	Phone:
Email:	Age:

**Other Comments or Remarks:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Form Completed By:** (please print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



# Making Ethical Decisions

## **Make Ethical Decisions:**

MED is a required element for certification at the L2/I2 level. MED may be delivered within the CKC River Leader 2 course or may be taken at a multi sport clinic.

MED has an online evaluation that must be completed to be certified.

Candidates that have not completed the MED section must do so prior to receiving certification at the L2/I2 level.

Courses may be found at [www.coach.ca](http://www.coach.ca)



# Inclusion

## **Inclusion:**

“Respecting the diversity of our ages, gender, background, cultures and disabilities”.

Your responsibility as an instructor is to create and maintain a welcoming and safe environment for all participants.

Please refer to [www.canoekayak.ca](http://www.canoekayak.ca) for the Paddle All program.



# References

## References:

- Alberta Whitewater Association
- Ontario Whitewater Association
- Canoe Kayak Canada
- Coaching Association of Canada
  - Make Ethical Decisions
  - Teaching and Learning
  - Plan a Practice
  - Community Sport Template
- Original NCCP Kayak Coaching 1 & 2



# Evaluation

## River Kayak

### Leader 2





## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this training, candidates will be able to take a critical look at their own facilitating skills. They will be able to organize safe, fun trips that meet their paddlers' needs and reflect the CanoeKayak Canada –Whitewater Long-Term Athlete Development Model. They will also learn how to use several self assessment tools that will enable them to keep working on their own to improve their effectiveness as a leader. In particular, they will be able to:

- Apply a six step ethical decision making process
- Ensure that the river trip environment is safe
- Produce a safe and organized trip plan
- Design an emergency action plan
- Safely guide participants through rapids
- Provide boat and shore based recues as required

## PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The purpose of the Leader Kayak 2 is to train Leaders that are able of organizing and leading paddlers on rivers up to and including Class II rivers.

Ratio: 1:6 Instructor to Participant

With the support from another “trained” L2, the instructor to participant ratio can be increased to 1:10.

A Class II river is defined as follows:

- Class II – “easy rapids with waves, wide clear channels, that are obvious with scouting. Some manoeuvring required”.

## EVALUATION

Leader candidates must demonstrate confidence in their personal paddling skills while leading on a Class II river. In addition they must demonstrate specific criteria that support the outcomes of *Make Ethical Decisions, Provide Support to Athletes in Training, Analyze Performance* and *Plan a Practice*

The evaluation is to be conducted with real life students by an outside Learning Facilitator (i.e., not the one that ran the course and not one affiliated with the group or association who sponsored the course) It is the responsibility of the Evaluator to ensure that candidates meet the established National standard for each of the above outcomes. Before they sign the card, evaluators should ask themselves if they would send a loved one out with this candidate.

## FORMS

All required forms for registering, evaluation, post course reports, etc. can be found on the CKC website at [http://www.canoekayak.ca/english/content/NCCP\\_i2\\_I2](http://www.canoekayak.ca/english/content/NCCP_i2_I2)

## EVALUATION OVERVIEW– CKC RIVER KAYAK LEADER 2

OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	METHOD OF EVALUATION
MAKE ETHICAL DECISIONS	Candidates will be asked to apply a 6 step ethical decision making process	Complete the on-line, NCCP evaluation for the Instructor-Intermediate context.  <i>(Details of registration for the on-line evaluation are available on the CAC website (<a href="http://www.coach.ca">www.coach.ca</a>)).</i>
PLAN A PRACTICE	Produce a safe and organized trip plan.  Design an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).	Submit a trip plan for a 1 day trip down a class 2 river.  Submit an EAP for the same trip.
PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ATHLETES IN TRAINING	<b>Ensure that the trip environment is safe</b>  Provide boat and shore based rescues when required.  Lead participants safely through the rapids.	*Demonstrate safety awareness throughout  Candidate will be observed leading an appropriate trip by an evaluator.
ANALYZE PERFORMANCE		

\* NOTE: A Video/DVD submission of a candidate working with intermediate paddlers may be substituted for an on-site evaluation.

# INSTRUCTOR 2 EVALUATION FORM

Date					
Instructor			CC		
	Surname	First Name			
<b>Comments</b>	<b>Evidence of Achievement</b>				
<b>Safety</b>		Site Selection / Site Plan	P		F
		Leader Positioning	P		F
		<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>			
<b>Organization</b>		Trip Plan	P	W	F
		Introductions, Warm Up, Briefing	P	W	F
		Delivery and Presentation	P	W	F
		Site Selection	P	W	F
		Group Management	P	W	F
		Time Management	P	W	F
		Cool Down/ Debrief	P	W	F
	<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>				
<b>Personal Interaction</b>		FUN	P	W	F
		Communication – Clear, Appropriate, Concise, Effective	P	W	F
		Group Dynamics – Manage personalities, fear, stress, excitement	P	W	F
		Rescues	P	W	F
			P	W	F
			P	W	F
			P	W	F
	<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>				
<b>Personal Paddling</b>		Paddling Skill – Paddling Class II with ease and proficient demonstration quality techniques	P		F
		Instills confidence instructing on a Class II river	P		F
		<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>			
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<i>P=Meets Standard</i>	<i>W=Needs improvement</i>	<i>F=Below Standard</i>	
Evaluator:			Date:		
Participant:			CC#:		

# RIVER LEADER 2 COMMUNITY SPORT ONGOING PLAN A PRACTICE (RIVER RUN)

Instructor		CC number:		C	C						
Surname		First Name									
Comments		Evidence of Achievement				Scoring					
Produce a safe and organized River Run plan	The plan identifies basic information which includes date, time, location, number of paddlers, age and gender, and level of paddlers	0	1	3	5						
	The plan has a clearly identified goal, consistent with the paddler development model and the actual level of the participants.	0	1	3	5						
	The plan is designed so there is minimal waiting time for paddlers during the run or wasted time during transitions.	0	1	3	5						
	Selected activities contribute to the development of skills and are appropriate to the stage of skill development (Acquisition, Consolidation, Refinement)	0	1	3	5						
	Selected activities reflect awareness of and control for potential risk factors	0	1	3	5						
	<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>										
Nature of activities are relevant to situation.	Selected activities reflect awareness of and control for potential risk factors (environment, water conditions, etc)	0	1	3	5						
	Selected activities are appropriate to the time and location in the run and to the paddlers abilities	0	1	3	5						
	Planned activities are effectively described through illustration, diagram or explanation	0	1	3	5						
	Activities present reasonable challenges to the paddlers, and are chosen or designed so that paddlers succeed 2 / 3 of the time.	0	1	3	5						
	<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>										
Design an emergency action plan	Specific steps or procedures are identified in the plan if an injury occurs	0	1	3	5						
	The locations of telephones and emergency telephone numbers are identified	0	1	3	5						
	Specific directions are given on how to reach the activity site, which should include a map and a list of key instructions	0	1	3	5						
	Evacuation sites identified	0	1	3	5						
	Location of medical profile for each participant under the instructor's care is identified	0	1	3	5						
	Location of, including route to, nearest emergency medical facilities	0	1	3	5						
	Location of, including access to, vehicles and keys	0	1	3	5						
	Location of a fully stocked first-aid kit is identified	0	1	3	5						
	First-aid leader and "communication leader" are designated and their roles and responsibilities outlined.	0	1	3	5						
	<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>										
<b>Rank</b> (NI, MS, ES)	<b>Planning Element</b>				<b>NI = Needs Improvement</b>	<b>MS = Meets Standard</b>	<b>ES = Exceeds</b>				

<b>Standard</b>			
	<b><i>Produce a safe and organized River Run plan that shows: Structure and organization.</i></b>	≤ 11	12 - 15 (no 0) ≥ 16 (no 0 or 1)
	<b><i>Nature of activities are relevant to situation.</i></b>	≤ 8	9 – 12 (no 0) ≥ 13 (no 0 or 1)
	<b><i>Design an emergency action plan</i></b>	≤ 23 (no 0)	24 - 27 (no 0 or 1) ≥ 28
Evaluator			
Signed		Date	
Surname		First Name	

<b>SCORING</b>	
<b>0</b>	No evidence present
<b>1</b>	Some evidence. Plan has limited detail and insufficient accuracy to meet overall criteria. A different leader would have difficulty in implementing the river run.
<b>3</b>	Good evidence. Plan has sufficient detail and accuracy to meet overall criteria. A different leader could implement the river run.
<b>5</b>	Exceptional evidence. Plan has excellent detail and accuracy to meet overall criteria. Plan would assist a different leader in enhancing the river run.

# RIVER LEADER 2 COMMUNITY SPORT ONGOING



National  
Coaching  
Certification  
Program

Programme  
national de  
certification des  
entraîneurs

## NCCP PROVIDE SUPPORT TO PADDLERS IN TRAINING

Date											
Instructor			CC number:	C	C						
	Surname	First Name									
<i>Comments</i>		<i>Evidence of Achievement</i>					<i>Scoring</i>				
<b>Ensures that the River Run environment is safe</b>		Leader takes steps to minimize risk to participants before and throughout the run — (Includes equipment, surveying session site, adapting to environmental and other factors).	0								3
		Leader identifies dangerous factors and makes adjustments so participants are not at risk in <b>all</b> activities.	0								3
		Leader presents an emergency action plan(EAP) appropriate to the specific site being used	0								3
		Leader positions themselves appropriately to supervise paddlers	0								3
		In the river, the leader is able to perform kayak to swimmer rescues, throw bag rescues, equipment recoveries	0								3
		Leader ensures that CKC River Safety protocols are in place	0								3
			<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>								
<b>Implements a Structured &amp; Organized Run</b>		Leader greets paddlers and informs them of the activities, locations and timelines	0	1	3	5					
		Leader is ready to start sessions on time.	0	1	3	5					
		Paddlers have adequate room for execution of maneuvers.	0	1	3	5					
		Leader modifies skills / maneuvers to desired level where appropriate	0	1	3	5					
		There are clear segments, which include an appropriate warm-up, the river run, a cool down, and wrap-up / next steps.	0	1	3	5					
		Breaks are provided for appropriate recovery and hydration.	0	1	3	5					
		Leader is dressed for activity as appropriate to kayaking and the weather conditions.	0	1	3	5					
		<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>									

<b>Makes Interventions that promote learning</b>	Leader positions themselves to communicate effectively with paddlers.	0	1	3	5
	Explanations are clear and concise and provide opportunities for participants to ask questions.	0	1	3	5
	Leader utilizes effective group organization to communicate – rafting up, bankside beaching, etc.	0	1	3	5
	Leader creates opportunities to interact with all participants	0	1	3	5
	Leader promotes a positive image of the kayaking and models the image to participants and other stake holders.	0	1	3	5
	Leader creates a positive, engaging and fun paddling environment.	0	1	3	5
	Leader identifies appropriate expectations for paddler behaviour and reinforces these expectations when appropriate.	0	1	3	5
	Leader uses respectful language towards paddlers when providing verbal interventions.	0	1	3	5
	<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>				

<b>Rank</b> <i>(NI, MS, ES)</i>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>NI = Needs Improvement</b>	<b>MS = Meets Standard</b>	<b>ES = Exceeds Standard</b>
	<i>Ensures that the River Run environment is safe</i>	≤ 14	15 - 18 (no 0)	≥ 19
	<i>Implements an organized and structured River Run plan</i>	≤ 17	18 – 21 (no 0)	≥ 22 (no 0 or 1)
	<b>Makes interventions that promote learning</b>	≤ 25	26 – 30 (no 0)	≥ 31 (no 0 or 1)
Evaluator				
Signed		Date		
Surname		First Name		

<b>SCORING</b>	
<b>0</b>	No evidence is observed.
<b>1</b>	Evidence is observed; however, there is limited attention or quality in the presentation of the plan, or it is not entirely complete.
<b>3</b>	Evidence is observed consistently throughout the session. Attention to detail throughout the whole session.
<b>5</b>	Evidence is observed consistently throughout the session. Exceptional quality and attention to detail throughout the whole session.



## CanoeKayak Canada River Trip Plan

Location \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Put in \_\_\_\_\_ Take out \_\_\_\_\_

Trip leader \_\_\_\_\_ Assist. Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name	Age	Skill Level
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

### RIVER SAFETY TALK

Before you begin teaching, make sure you cover the following:

**Equipment (Gear check):** Does everyone have a paddle, skirt, PFD, and kayak? Is gear put on properly (PFDs zipped and helmets clipped)? Are float bags inflated?

**Signals:** Discuss whistle, paddle, and verbal signs, and remind paddlers that they must return signals when they have understood (okay – okay)

**Hazards:** Wood, rocks, holes, and others specific to your site

**Group structure:** Remind paddlers that there is a lead and a sweep kayak, and to maintain proper spacing between paddlers for each rapid (to be addressed on the river)

**Ropes:** Grab the rope with your hands and do not wrap around you

#### Swim:

- Show them the defensive swim position, feet up - bum up, looking downstream, ferry to shore
- Tell them not to stand until they touch the shore
- Tell them to hang onto their gear
- If there's a swimmer, others to stay where they are (in an eddy) or head to the closest eddy



## Sample Trip Planning Sheet

Trip date: \_\_\_\_\_ River / Section \_\_\_\_\_

Length/Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Equipment needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of River:

River Rapids : \_\_\_\_\_

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Risk factors/safety guidelines to give to paddlers: \_\_\_\_\_

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Notes/comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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## CanoeKayak Canada Whitewater Emergency Action Plan Form

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time in: \_\_\_\_\_ Time out: \_\_\_\_\_

Trip leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Assist. leader: \_\_\_\_\_

First aid leader: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Comm. leader: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

### Map of River and Surroundings

River Access Points	Special Hazards	River Classification & Other
◆ Put-in and take out	[w Waterfall	=>R Rapid (e.g., RI to RVI)
] [ Bridge	...p Portage	>S Sil Include SI to SVI
]d Dam	</// Difficult rescue area(s)	→ Direction of water flow
— Paved road	Others (e.g., glass on trail)	
- Dirt road		→H Direction to hospital
... Trail		→PH Pay phone
-+ Railway tracks		♥ Evacuation (include description)

Place image of map here.

**Participants:**

Name	Medical Issues	ECP & Contact Numbers

**Vehicles:**

Make/Model	License Plate Number	Location of Keys

**In case of emergency, follow these steps:**

<b>1. Ensure you are safe</b>	
<b>2. Ensure no others are in danger</b>	
<b>3.. All paddlers stop and gather</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extract victim</li> </ul>
<b>4. Stabilize victim (use soap notes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check level of consciousness</li> <li>• Check ABCs</li> <li>• Open airway</li> <li>• Check breathing</li> <li>• Check circulation (pulse)</li> <li>• Stabilize c-spine</li> <li>• DISABILITY (NEUROLOGICAL)</li> <li>• Check for trauma and exposure to extremities</li> </ul>
<b>5. Treat victim as required (first aid kits)</b>	
<b>6. Emergency contact - 911 (or other name, number, address)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital</li> <li>• Paddling Organization</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Forestry</li> </ul>
<b>7. Location of CELL/SAT phones (number, owner, location)</b>	
<b>8. Evacuation - preparation of</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paddler in need of care</li> <li>• Required gear</li> </ul>
<b>9. Group maintenance</b>	





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