

# KEYSTONE CANOE CLUB

## GUIDELINES FOR SAFE TRIP PARTICIPATION

### \*Mandatory items

\*KCC and ACA membership is expected. \$5 ACA Event Membership fee OK for one trip.

In general, we follow guidelines of the Schuylkill River Sojourn and their safety team. It's mostly common sense.

- The trip organizer is a volunteer and not a professional, instructor or trained guide, and is not necessarily trained in First Aid or CPR.
- \*If you don't feel you can comply with the trip policy, please excuse yourself.

### SAFETY FOR YOURSELF AND OTHER PADDLERS IS OUR PRIORITY:

- \*Please stay between the lead boat and the sweep.
- \*If you are considering bringing someone who hasn't paddled with the club, expect that the trip leader will need to talk to you or your guest before the day of the trip. It's the trip leaders' decision as to whether guests go on the trip.
- \*Young paddlers: Under 12 should be in same boat as parent, adult, guardian or responsible adult. Under 18, young paddler should be accompanied by parent, adult, guardian or responsible adult. Contact trip leader prior to trip for approval.
- \*If you need to leave the group for any reason, please let the trip leader or sweep know. If you have a 'call of nature', tell someone that you are going to stop. Don't just disappear, or pull your boat up where we can't see it.
- \*Must call or email the trip leader prior to the trip to let them know you're planning to come.
- \*Don't follow too close to another's boat, especially when entering a rapid. (Stay at least 50 feet away, or 5 boat lengths.)
- \*Consumption of alcoholic beverages is not allowed before or during paddling.

### GEAR:

- \*Zipped PFD, whistle, water, snacks, spare clothing. Helmets at pool sessions and intermediate whitewater.
- \*Dress for the water temperature, as if you are going to swim.
- Advisable: sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat with a brim make most people more comfortable.
- Wear a helmet on a whitewater trip listed for Strong Novice.
- \*Helmet is mandatory for an intermediate level paddle on whitewater.

### EACH PADDLER:

- \* Please list name, contact person and that person's phone number on the trip roster.
- \*Medical conditions, injuries, restrictions: Please alert the trip leader (privately if you wish). Bring whatever meds, special snacks you need in the boat.
- Know your limitations!
- Advisable: Small bag of first-aid items in your boat.
- Consider the 'Buddy system', when shuttling and paddling.
- Keep an eye on others. Notice if someone doesn't eat or isn't drinking water, seems overly tired, or if they are 'acting spacey or different.'
- \*Practice situational awareness: Notice conditions- Communicate your concerns with the leaders.

**GROUP GEAR:** Can be shared among the group.

- Spare paddle, towlines, large first aid kit, paddle float, pump.
- Extra clothing, water, snacks

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### BOAT:

- Airbags or two bulkheads keep water out and make it far easier to dump water out of your boat.
- A sprayskirt will help keep you comfortable- warm in cold conditions, and keep the sun off your legs in hot weather.

### SIGNALS:

- WHISTLE:  
One blast: attention, announcement to be made  
Two blasts: all stop  
Three blasts: emergency, swimmer, all help
- PADDLE:  
Raised, horizontal paddle: All stop  
Vertical paddle waved in a circular motion: Help/ Emergency  
Paddle pointing- Go this way, direction of travel. Never use the paddle to point at rocks or obstructions.  
Vertical, stationary paddle- All clear.

### PRACTICE SKILLS: Attend our skills practices to learn more!

- Efficient forward stroke, sweep stroke, reverse. Practice pry, draw, etc.
- Practice good boat control.
- Controlled wet exit.
- If you swim in current, do not stand up. Lie on your back, feet facing downstream to avoid foot entrapment. (defensive swimming) Keep the boat downstream of your body.
- Proper use of skeg, rudder, sprayskirt if needed.
- Practice bracing.
- Assisted rescue practice, T-rescue. Use of a stirrup to re-enter.
- Know how to dump the water out of your boat.
- Up against a rock or obstruction? Lean downstream! Keep the upstream edge up.
- Using a throw rope in current.

### CLOTHING:

- Sturdy footwear. No flip-flops. No bare feet.
- In the spring and fall, we often have warm air temperatures, but 50 or less degree water means if you're wet, you are going to become very cold very quickly.
- Customize for your personal needs and situation.
- Not advisable: cotton or jeans, nor cotton athletic wear unless it's 80-90 degrees air temp, with 70 degrees water temp. Warm weather: Layered wicking clothing is best.
- In spring and fall or cold water situations, dress as if you were going to accidentally swim.  
Extra clothing (not cotton): hat, socks, long underwear, warm coat in a dry bag- in your boat.  
Advisable: In cold water even in warm air temps: wetsuit, paddle jacket, warm footwear and gloves for 50-60 degrees water. Drysuit recommended in water temps 50 degrees and below.

### LEADER/ CO-LEADER COMMUNICATION: (Two heads are better than one) .

- Noted in trip directions: Difficulty of the trip, directions, map if needed, length and description of trip, meeting time, special features.
- Roster with the list of emergency contact phone numbers in a drybag.
- Communicate route, weather forecast, signals.
- Assign 2 lead boats and 2 sweeps when possible.
- Lead boat- look back! Wait for catch-up.
- Keep an eye on novices.

- Make a head/ boat count.
- First-aid kit including emergency blanket, antihistamines, and heat packs in cold weather.
- Suggest carry: extra energy snacks, thermos of hot liquid. Participants should help with having extras in their boat, such as extra clothing. Carry cellphone in drybag. Check for reception.
- Organize shuttle if one is needed.
- Leaders should make go/no go decision. Discussion with group is good procedure.
- If someone is not cooperative, the trip leaders have the responsibility to tell them to take a hike instead.
- Encourage paddlers to wear recommended clothing.

In bigger water, usually marine:

- Be familiar with tide/ current/ wind data/ charts and plan the trip accordingly.
- File a float plan with responsible person ashore, including expected take-out time and cell phone numbers or VHF radio. Report in when return. For emergencies, use Channel 16 for the initial call, then switch channels.
- Be familiar with a VHF radio. GPS. Chart of local waters, airhorn (big boats can't hear or see paddlers very well), carry a stirrup to aid rescue.

### **TRIP RATINGS- Intended as guidelines only.**

**Beginner-** Little or no river experience. Lake experience only.

**Novice-**

- River skills: Some knowledge of basic strokes. Some river experience and river-reading skills. Can maneuver around some obstacles like rocks. Can do a wet exit. Comfortable with 3 hrs. of paddling.
- Open water (bays, ocean, big lakes): Can paddle in calm winds 5-10 mph. Comfortable in minimal waves in open water.
- Good group-paddling skills.

**Intermediate-**

- River skills: Good boat control. Can maneuver in strong current, make abrupt turns. Can ferry and peel out on rapid. Can pry, draw.  
Open water: Can negotiate long (1-mile) open water. Can handle 20-25 mph winds. Can read a chart. Knowledgeable with tides. Has practiced beach landings.
- Has practiced self-rescue and group-rescue skills.

**Advanced-**

- River skills: Combat roll. Substantial river experience on class III+ rivers.
- Open water: Comfortable in coastal waters in varying conditions. Navigation experience.

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**I have read the above policy, information and ratings and understand their purpose: to help keep everyone safe on KCC trips. I will comply to the best of my ability.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_