

# Canoeing Safety: Equipment & Procedures

*Canoeing is an activity that may include a certain element of risk. All participants in club activities should be aware that they and they alone, are responsible for their own safety and comfort.*

The applicability of outings safety rules will vary with the time of year and the type of trip, with the exception of the Coast Guard required equipment in section 1, which is obligatory. Decisions as to what specific safety rules, equipment, and boat outfitting are appropriate for particular outings rests with the trip organizer, who will advise participants accordingly.

## Equipment

1. All paddlers must have:
  - a. A Canadian approved personal flotation device of appropriate size.
  - b. A whistle for signaling purposes.
  - c. A boat of suitable design and outfitting for the trip. The boat must be equipped with a bailer, a buoyant heaving line of not less than 15 m, and a spare paddle.
2. Paddlers should bring:
  - a. Spare clothing, well waterproofed.
  - b. Extra food and water.
  - c. Matches in a waterproof container.
  - d. Ropes suitable for lining and rescue.
  - e. First aid, safety and rescue equipment.
  - f. Materials to repair the boat and other equipment.
3. On whitewater trips additional personal equipment may be required by the organizer such as wetsuit or drysuit, helmet, or flotation bags.

## Procedures

1. On WCA river trips before starting the organizer will review, as appropriate to the trip, any hand, paddle, and whistle signals; as well as any specific river running procedures that will be used.
2. When running a section of river with rapids:
  - a. Participants may be asked to maintain a definite order.
  - b. Each participant is responsible for the participant behind.

- c. Signals should be used when necessary to direct others, and manage the group safety.
  - d. Rescuers should be positioned at strategic points along difficult or potentially dangerous rapids.
- 3. Organizers have the right to exclude participants due to inadequate skills or equipment for the trip.
- 4. While all participants must ultimately assume responsibility for their own wellbeing, the organizer's wishes around running rapids and other paddling or camping activities should always be respected as coming from an experienced person who wants all participants to have a safe and enjoyable experience.