



RCABC 2015 Club Trip Sanctioning Guidelines

SECTION 1 - GENERAL RCABC SANCTIONING INFORMATION

1.1 DEFINITIONS & PURPOSE

a) Sanctioning

'Sanctioning' a club trip is the act of approving or authorizing a club paddling trip or event by RCABC. Sanctioning guidelines promote better safety practices for club leaders, paddlers and executive who are members of clubs participating in RCABC's Club Liability Insurance program.

b) Club Trips (more details in Section 3)

'Club trips' are defined as recreational paddling where the focus is or similar to one of the following:

- Any distance of paddling on lake, ocean or river
- Short distance or 'stay in one spot' paddling or gatherings which can have a social focus
- Sessions at play spots on rivers
- Pool sessions to practice skills
- Canoe tripping including camping, hiking, etc.
- Multi-day events with vehicle access camping which can include more than one location
- Practice sessions for dragon boat, marathon canoe, and other types of race or fitness craft (note the restrictions regarding competitions)

Club trips:

- must be advertised by the executive in advance
- are non-competitive unless the competition is informal and restricted to club members and a limited number of guests (note: insurance for competitive events is available)
- must have a leader appointed by the executive

The following participation boundaries apply to club trips:

- Participation starts when the group meets at the beginning of the event and ends once a person intentionally leaves the group or the remainder of the group, after the trip or at any point during the trip
- Driving or flying to and from the event is not considered part of a club trip.

c) Instruction

Club 'instruction' events are any trip or gathering which has a significant focus on instruction. These have special requirements which are detailed in Section 1.9.

d) Competitive Events

Advertised, competitive events accepting people from outside the club are currently NOT covered by RCABC's liability insurance. RCABC does not currently have the expertise to create sanctioning guidelines for these events. If your club is hosting or competing in an event and you wish to have liability coverage, contact RCABC for more details.



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1.2 OVERVIEW

Safety requirements fall into the following categories:

- Administrative – memberships, leader assignment, waivers, scheduling courses, etc.
- Transport Canada - federal regulations for required safety gear and leadership practices
- RCABC specific - additional safety gear and club trip practices

1.3 MEMBERSHIP

In order for club trips to be sanctioned the following membership requirements must be met:

- Clubs must have an RCABC club membership in good standing
- Trip paddlers (not including guests) and leaders must be club members in good standing
- The club must have purchased the RCABC liability insurance package for all of its members

There is no liability insurance coverage for RCABC member clubs or their members who have not purchased the liability insurance package from RCABC.

1.4 CLUB WAIVERS

A club waiver must be given to all club members and guests by the club executive and read and signed by members and guests, and returned to the executive or trip leader prior to participating in any club trip, event or instruction. Returning club members must complete a new waiver every season.

In order to be considered most effective in the event of legal challenges, club waivers should meet the following criteria:

- be clearly written and easily understandable
- identify common potential hazards of canoeing or any additional or related activity undertaken
- be given to participants and guests far enough in advance of the trip in order to provide time to fully read, understand and sign the waiver without causing pressure
- be separated from the member registration form in order to not cause confusion.

If your club waiver does not meet these requirements, please notify the RCABC Executive and request a period of time to develop and transition to a new waiver.

1.5 RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone involved in a club plays a role in running safe trips. The people involved in club trips or instruction are listed below with a brief description of their role.

LEADER - The designated leader of the trip. The leader's objective is to coordinate club trip or event safety measures.

PADDLERS – Trip participants that are club members but not leaders. They are not Guests.

GUESTS - Paddlers that are not club members but have signed a club waiver.



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INSTRUCTORS – Club members or non-club members that lead instruction based club events and activities beyond the typical sharing of skills and knowledge within a club.

EXECUTIVE – All of the members of the club executive. The executive or chosen members within the executive are responsible for organizing, scheduling and supporting club trips and leaders.

1.6 OUT OF PROVINCE

Trip location and citizenship affect sanctioning.

- As of 2014, temporary club trips in the USA are covered by RCABC's liability insurance coverage
- Club trips can be in any location in Canada
- Only Canadian citizens are covered by our policy (although you may have liability coverage through your home or tenants insurance policy)

1.7 IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT OR HARM

If an accident or serious harm occurs during a club trip, the club should record and keep the details of the incident in the event of legal action, which could potentially occur years after the incident. Please ensure that all of the steps below are followed.

- ✓ Notify RCABC immediately
- ✓ Fill out the accident form provided on www.bccanoe.com
- ✓ Record additional details if the form is insufficient
- ✓ Send it to RCABC
- ✓ We have been advised that no one in your group "admits fault" after an incident

1.8 ACTIVITIES OR CIRCUMSTANCES NOT COVERED IN THESE GUIDELINES

Including exact guidelines for all possible activities, circumstances and events in this document is not possible or practical. Please remember the following recommendations:

- If club members are unsure of the sanctioning rules or how they apply to your club trip practices, contact the RCABC executive for more information.
- Special club events and circumstances are often eligible for the purchasing of optional insurance coverage.

1.9 INSTRUCTION EVENTS

Club instruction events are encouraged by RCABC to help promote skill development and safe canoeing. However club instruction activities must meet the following requirements:

- Instructors of club instruction events who are
 - NOT club members and
 - NOT RCABC instructor membersare NOT covered by RCABC liability insurance. In this case the club should ensure that the instructor has his or her own liability insurance coverage.



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- The event should be advertised as 'instruction' to distinguish it from a 'trip'
- RCABC recommends that event instructors are current, certified instructors from a Provincial or National recognized paddling organization such as RCABC, who are covered by their own liability insurance
- Club members who are NOT certified instructors are sanctioned to conduct instructional activities if:
 - the club executive can demonstrate that the instructor has standard knowledge, skill and experience to safely lead the activity

These requirements are not intended to discourage sharing of skills and knowledge between club members and guests during club trips.

1.10 DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

RCABC does not allow club members under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs to participate in sanctioned on-water activities. Clubs and trip leaders should to the best of their ability, not allow people who have consumed any alcohol or illegal drugs to participate in sanctioned activities:

- immediately before on-water activities (a minimum of 4 hours as a rough guideline)
- during breaks in on-water activities
- during an on-water activity or event

Trip leaders must disqualify any participant under the influence of alcohol or drugs from participation in on-water activities and ask them to leave immediately.

RCABC's insurance policy excludes coverage for clubs serving or selling alcohol at any events other than an annual general meeting and a yearly awards banquet, which cannot be held on the water if alcohol is being served or sold. Contact RCABC for more details or information on additional coverage.

1.11 WHO IS AN INSURED?

Insurance coverage is for club members who are executive, trip leaders and trip participants other than guests on sanctioned trips or events.

1.12 EXCEPTIONS

The guidelines in this document are not intended to create hazard or compromise the safety of club leaders, members or guests.

SECTION 2 - TRANSPORT CANADA REGULATIONS

2.1 TRANSPORT CANADA

Laws that affect recreational paddlers are set by Transport Canada (TC), a branch of the, federal government. Transport Canada regulations apply to the basic safety gear carried by all paddlers on the trip.

NOTE: All updates to TC regulations automatically become RCABC sanctioning requirements. Check the Transport Canada website for updates and changes.



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2.2 PLEASURE & NON-PLEASURE CRAFT

Canoes and kayaks are considered 'Pleasure Craft' when used in a non-commercial, non-leadership role. Only basic safety gear requirements apply.

When a canoe or kayak is used in a leadership role, it may become a "non-pleasure craft" if there is a commercial element to the leadership (the exchange of money for a service). Currently, it does not appear that club trip leaders would be designated "non-pleasure craft"; however, it is possible that some club events which include a financial exchange would force leaders into the "non-pleasure craft" designation. When in doubt, follow "non-pleasure craft" requirements.

Note: The actual wording of the Canada Shipping Act law for non-pleasure craft designation does not distinguish between commercial and volunteer and is subject to interpretation.

2.3 "PLEASURE CRAFT" REGULATIONS

Pleasure Craft regulations apply to all craft on club trips. Canoes and kayaks less than 6m (19'8") in length¹ are classified together by Transport Canada as a category of human powered, 'Pleasure Craft'. These are the minimum gear requirements for all waterways and must be carried in each canoe or kayak.

- A PFD or life jacket for each person on board² (RCABC requires it must be worn)
- A buoyant heaving line no less than 15 m (49'3") in length
- A bailer or manual pumping device
- A sound signalling device (whistle, air horn, etc)
- A navigation light if travelling at night or in limited visibility³

1. See special requirements for canoes over 6m in length and craft other than standard canoes and kayaks.
2. Only inherently buoyant PFDs can be used on whitewater
3. An electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light (a watertight flashlight is acceptable) ready to use far enough in advance to prevent a collision.

All safety equipment on board must be:

- ✓ in good working order;
- ✓ always easy to reach (so that it can be used in an emergency); and
- ✓ maintained and replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or recommendations.

In addition, Transport Canada recommends:

"Make sure you are seen on the water. Even in bright, calm conditions a kayak can be nearly invisible. It is especially difficult for power-driven vessel and large vessel operators riding high in the water to see kayaks. Choose bright colours such as red,



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yellow or orange for your flotation device and kayak. Also, remember to keep signalling devices within hand's reach in case of emergency."

2.4 NON-PLEASURE CRAFT REGULATIONS

When a canoe or kayak is used in a leadership role on a club trip that includes financial exchange for service, it may be considered a "Non-Pleasure Craft" and additional gear and leadership requirements apply. This would also apply to instruction events where instructors are paid for their services.

The following guidelines are taken from the Transport Canada publication "TP 15204E" which is found on the Transport Canada and RCABC website.

The Transport Canada guidelines are intended to accommodate the large variety of circumstances that Non-Pleasure Craft would operate in (such as commercial guiding, instruction, camps, etc.). For a club trip or instruction with financial exchange, these guidelines should be interpreted as follows :

- All participants are given a "pre-departure safety meeting"
- A trip or "float" plan with details of the group and route has been left with a contact person on shore
- Equipment or procedures are in place to protect everyone from cold weather shock or hypothermia if water temperature is below 15°C
- Procedures for safe operation of the vessel(s) have been established. [This should be interpreted broadly to include rescue procedures, proper paddling skills, group structure and route, etc.]
- Everyone must be WEARING a PFD or lifejacket of appropriate size, and must be inherently buoyant for persons under 16 yrs of age, or for all participants on whitewater.

The following gear must be carried (in addition to the Pleasure Craft requirements):

- Waterproof flashlight or three marine flares
- First Aid Kit (see Section 4)

Transport Canada guidelines regularly change. Use their publications and website information as your determining source for your trip practices.

SECTION 3 - RCABC SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

3.0 RCABC GUIDELINES INTRODUCTION

The following guidelines are created by RCABC. They affect group travel, safety and leadership, plus some additional gear requirements.

3.1 RCABC GENERAL GUIDELINES

RCABC requires that the following guidelines are met for the sanctioning of club trips.

3.1A TRIP LOCATION AND ORGANIZATION

- Club trips must have a minimum of 3 canoes, sea kayaks, whitewater kayaks or C1s, in any combination. See exception for big canoes (details in Section 4)



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- All club river paddling activity must be restricted to maximum grade 3 rivers and class 3 rapids. River grades are in accordance with current, local guidebooks. Portaging rapids more difficult than Grade 3 is acceptable when appropriate safety measures are in place.
- Leaders should be within reasonable communication and rescue distance of the paddlers and guests during the trip
- Leaders, paddlers and guests must review requirements for their particular craft or situation as noted in Section 4 of these guidelines
- Paddling in darkness (night) is sanctioned only in calm conditions, and is not sanctioned on rivers

3.1B TRIP LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE EMBARKING

- Leave a float plan with an on land contact person.
- Determine the paddling ability and experience of the trip participants and assess to the best of your ability whether they are able to meet the demands of the trip.
- Hold a pre-trip meeting with the group to discuss:
 - Route, known hazards and objectives of the trip
 - Capsize and rescue procedures, signals, safety gear

If the trip leader feels an individual does not meet the skill, safety and attitude requirements necessary for the trip, the leader has the right to refuse to allow that individual on the trip, or to change the trip location to meet the individual's abilities.

3.1C SAFETY AND EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

- Carry a first aid kit of a reasonable size for the group
- For river trips, carry standard river rescue equipment (throwbags with reasonable quality rope and a standard "wrap kit")
- At least one person on the trip, particularly on remote trips, is recommended (but not required) to have Wilderness First Aid training.
- Consider carrying communication devices, maps, signalling and navigation devices if determined appropriate by the club (in addition to applicable Transport Canada requirements)
- Consider methods of preventing or treating hypothermia, as determined by the club. These are a few examples of how this can be interpreted:
 - paddling close to emergency services access
 - paddling in a restricted area, close to vehicles and heated buildings
 - carrying additional clothing and shelter during a remote trip
 - wearing immersion gear

Use good judgment. Consider water temperature, weather, age of participants, response time of emergency services, remoteness, geographical terrain, etc.

3.1D PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (For Leaders and Paddlers)

- All trip leaders, paddlers and guests must WEAR a properly fitted Transport Canada (or DoT, Canada Coast Guard) approved Personal Flotation Device or lifejacket, which is in good



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condition, at all times on the water, or near the water when engaged in water based activity (for example: when doing shore based river rescues or training)

- Wear a whistle attached to your PFD or carry some other effective sound signalling device
- Helmets must be worn on river trips when paddling Grade 2 or 3 rapids
- RCABC strongly recommends wearing clothing or immersion gear that is appropriate to the water temperature, weather, skill level of the participants, technical difficulty of the trip and the environment. Or ensure that treatment or prevention of hypothermia is available as determined by the club.

3.1E PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES (for all trip participants)

- Paddlers and guests should advise the trip leader of all physical or medical conditions, or impairments that could impact the objectives or safety of the trip and its participants. Do so before the start of the trip.
- Leaders, paddlers and guests are recommended to carry a personal, spare set of clothing in a waterproof container
- Organize and carry necessary personal items (for example: food, water, sun and rain protection, foot, hand and head wear, medications, etc.)
- Not consume alcohol or illegal drugs immediately before or during paddling

RCABC recognizes that it may not be possible for a leader to ensure that all of the personal responsibilities of members and guests are performed or communicated. If information is requested by a leader or executive and that information is withheld, it should not reflect negatively on the leader.

3.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLUB EXECUTIVE

Club executive are responsible for the following:

- Appointing or selecting a club trip organizer and scheduler
- Appointing an appropriate leader for trips.
- Communicating and supplying relevant safety information, regulations, guidelines, forms, responsibilities, and supporting documentation to leaders, paddlers and guests
- Advertising club trips in advance of their departure date. (Trip locations can and should be altered for reasons such as weather, water levels, change of leader, or other concerns affecting safety of the trip.)
- When possible, provide support and training to develop or update leadership skills for trip leaders, as determined by the club



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SECTION 4 - RCABC REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIC CRAFT

This section contains a few additional requirements depending on the type of craft used during the trip.

4.1 RCABC CANOE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Each canoe should be equipped with:

- a spare paddle
- bow and stern lines (painters). Three to eight metres of 8 –12 mm diameter polypropylene (floating rope) is recommended (some exceptions can be considered, such as playboating)
- outfitting that does not unnecessarily impede exit or cause entrapment hazard (excludes standard outfitting such as well designed thigh strap systems)
- for river canoeing, extra floatation is highly recommended but not mandatory if determined by the club

The trip leader or club may determine that additional gear may be required.

4.2 RCABC SEA OR RECREATIONAL KAYAK SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Each kayak should be equipped with:

- outfitting that does not impede exit or create an unnecessary risk of entrapment (excluding typical outfitting such as properly fitted spray skirts)
- a spare paddle is recommended for each boat but carried by at least one member in the group
- a paddle float (not required if other rescue methods are available)
- a bilge pump or bailer

The trip leader or club may determine that additional gear may be required.

4.3 RCABC WHITEWATER KAYAK OR C1 GUIDELINES

RCABC sanctioning requirements for whitewater kayaks or C1s in addition to Transport Canada's are as follows. Each boat should be equipped with:

- outfitting that does not impede exit or create an unnecessary risk of entrapment (excluding typical outfitting such as a properly fitted spray skirt or thigh straps)
- a recommended spare paddle carried by at least one member of your group
- Kayaks or C1s must be outfitted with grab loops or handles, and floatation to facilitate easier rescues.

The trip leader or club may determine that additional gear may be required.

4.4 OTHER CRAFT

Other types of craft such as stand up paddle boards, sit on top kayaks and dragon boats are becoming increasingly common on club trips.

RCABC's liability insurance policy can cover these types of activities; however, RCABC does not have the expertise to create sanctioning guidelines for activities outside the scope of our experience. Therefore



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the following guidelines apply to these 'other craft':

- any Transport Canada regulations that apply to craft not represented in this section
- all general trip organization and safety practices when going on 'trips'
- Transport Canada non-pleasure craft regulations when the 'other craft' is leading

If your club hosts activities which include craft not covered by RCABC in these guidelines, contact us with details. Clubs that have craft not covered by this document must develop and submit sanctioning recommendations to RCABC, which will after consultation be applied to all clubs in future updates of these guidelines.

SECTION 5 – SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR BIG CANOES

5.1 BIG CANOES

Big canoes are canoes 6m (roughly 20') or longer and typically hold 4 or more paddlers. They are recognized as generally being stable and safe. However the consequences of capsize involve considerably greater effort to recover or rescue the canoe and paddlers. Club leaders must gauge these considerations carefully when deciding routes.

5.2 TRANSPORT CANADA BIG CANOE GUIDELINES (over 6m in length)

The following TC regulations apply to big canoes if the canoe is over 6 m:

- One (1) watertight flashlight
- Six flares of type A,B or C

Note: There are exceptions to the Canada Coast Guard regulations for carrying flares, however RCABC recommends having flares aboard when conducting a trip on any larger body of water where visibility, rescue time and distance are a concern.

You may also be required to carry the following:

- One (1) Reboarding Device - Only required if the vertical height that must be climbed to reboard the boat from the water (freeboard) is over 0.5 m (1'8").
- One (1) magnetic compass - Not required if the boat is 8 m (26'3") or less and operated within sight of navigation marks.
- One (1) radar reflector - Radar reflectors are required for boats under 20 m (65'7") and boats that are built of mostly non-metallic materials. A radar reflector is not required if:
 - the boat operates in limited traffic conditions, daylight and favourable environmental conditions, and where having a radar reflector is not essential to the boat's safety;
 - or the small size of the boat or its operation away from radar navigation makes having a radar reflector impracticable.



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5.3 RCABC ADDITIONAL BIG CANOE GUIDELINES

The executive of the club, and the club's big canoe trip leader(s) are responsible for:

- determining the number of boats (there is no "minimum of 3 boats" requirement for club trips with big canoes)
- determining the clothing (with respect to immersion and hypothermia risk) requirements for the trip
- assessing the risk level of the trip in accordance with standard practices
- determining safe distances from shore, crossing points and emergency access

SECTION 6 - ADDENDUMS

6.1 TRANSPORT CANADA MARINE FIRST AID KIT REQUIREMENTS

Transport Canada requires that Non-Pleasure Craft carry a marine emergency first aid kit. This list is provided for your convenience. Always check the Transport Canada website for the most current information.

- 1) The first aid kit contains the following (see alternative below):
 - An up to date first aid manual or up to date first aid instructions, in English and French
 - 48 doses of analgesic medication of a non-narcotic type
 - Six safety pins or one roll of adhesive first aid tape
 - One pair of bandage scissors or safety scissors
 - One resuscitation face shield
 - Two pairs of examination gloves
 - 10 applications of antiseptic preparations
 - 12 applications of burn preparations
 - 20 adhesive plasters in assorted sizes
 - 10 sterile compression bandages in assorted sizes
 - 4 m of elastic bandage
 - Two sterile gauze compresses
 - Two triangular bandages
 - A waterproof list of the contents, in English and French

NOTE: You may meet this requirement either by buying a kit that contains all of the above items or you may purchase the items separately. In either situation, the items must be stored in a waterproof case.

OR



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- 2) A first aid kit that meets the requirements of the Maritime Occupational Health and Safety Regulations or of provincial regulations governing workers' compensation, with the addition of a resuscitation face shield and two pairs of examination gloves if the kit does not already contain them.