

# Working Draft for 2011

## **Ceyana Canoe Club Safety Guidelines For Lake, River, Whitewater Trips**

*Adapted from the Kayak Newfoundland and Labrador Club WW Events and Paddles Policy*

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### **General**

All participants should consider Ceyana Canoe Club (Ceyana) paddles to be a **'common adventure'** under the guidance of a Trip Leader. As such, trip participants share responsibility for their conduct on a trip, and are individually responsible for judging their own capabilities and safety as the trip progresses.

The Ceyana Executive has responsibility for selecting Trip Leaders and approving Trip Plans for Ceyana events. Unless special arrangements have been made Ceyana Trip Leaders are volunteers and participate themselves with the expectation of sharing leadership with all participants and for their own personal pleasure and enjoyment.

### **Participant paddlers**

Despite the mutually supportive group structure of a club paddle or tour, each participant is ultimately responsible for their own safety, and must assume sole responsibility for the following:

1) Meets Ceyana policy requirements: member in good standing, or approved guest, club waiver completed, appropriate skill level, and is aware of Ceyana's safety policies.

-Participation on an official Ceyana trip is permissible only with the consent of the Authorized Ceyana Trip Leader.

-Ceyana reserves the right to refuse participation of any person who does not meet the standards as indicated above.

-All participants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

2) The decision to participate on any trip

-Such a decision must be made according to the participant's best judgment of his/her capabilities given the intended river/lake, water levels, expected degree of difficulty and forecasted weather conditions.

### 3) The selection of appropriate equipment

- PFD
- Helmet (> grade II+)
- Throw bag (1 per boat ≤ grade II - minimum 1 attached to boat and one for throwing/hauling rescues > grade II)
- Paddle
- Sound signaling device (Fox 40 whistle)
- Appropriate boat for expected conditions
- Boat specific equipment (ie: spray skirt to match kayak)
- Flotation to match boat/conditions
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Protective Clothing suitable to anticipated water/weather conditions
- Appropriate footwear (worn if possible, if not possible due to shape of boat, footwear should be carried in boat)
- Trips on more remote rivers/lakes, overnights or brigades may need additional mandatory equipment

### 4) Conduct:

Participants are responsible for their own conduct during a trip, ensuring that their actions do not put themselves, or the group at risk.

### 5) Group Safety:

- Participants should constantly evaluate their own safety and that of the group
- Everyone should stay together
- Concerns about safety should be brought to the Trip Leaders attention
- Everyone is encouraged to speak to anyone whose actions are considered to be dangerous either to themselves or the group
- Participants are encouraged to share their knowledge/expertise pertaining to the safety of the group
- During Emergency situations, all participants are expected to work together under the guidance of the Trip Leaders and Sweeps

### 6) Environmental Impact:

- Participants are responsible for maintaining a 'no impact' mindset relative to the environment. pack out what you pack in, leave no trace, nothing but tracks and memories. etc

## **Sweep Boaters**

As Above for participant paddlers, and in addition:

- Approved by Ceyana Executive and/or Trip leader
- Has taken first Aid and has rescue knowledge appropriate for expected conditions
- Is appointed by the Trip Leader to assist on the trip
- Has a skill level at least 1 grade higher than expected conditions
- Is proficient at self rescue
- Assists on trips with gear retrieval and rescue
- In addition to the equipment expected of a participant a sweep boater will carry:
  - Group First Aid Kit
  - Rescue Kit for grade II or greater (Including: tubular webbing, prussic cords, 2 carabineers, 1 pulley)
  - Extra Throw bag.
  - Breakdown Kayak Paddle if appropriate.

## **Trip Leaders**

As above, plus:

- Approved by Ceyana Executive.
- Has taken first aid and has taken River Rescue training (ie: River Rescue for River Runners would be a minimum, Swift Water Rescue 1 completion is to be encouraged).
- Has a skill level at least a grade higher than the expected conditions and is familiar with the lake/river on which the trip is to occur.
- Trip Leaders will carry the same additional equipment as a Trip Sweep.

## **Operating Procedure**

A responsible person shall be appointed as trip leader (see above) by the Ceyana executive. He/She will::

- submit basic trip plan to the tripping coordinator of the Ceyana executive for inclusion in the club calendar.
- act as a contact for interested participants from Ceyana Canoe Club.
- Answer prospective participant queries as to the expected paddling conditions to better allow them to decide on whether they are to partake.
- on the intended day of the trip leave one copy of a Ceyana 'float plan' detailing participants, contact information and rough itinerary in one of the shuttle vehicles, and keep one copy with him/herself.

Before leaving town:

- check that participants paddling ability is appropriate for the trip. If necessary contact previous trip leaders of trips the person has been on to verify participants' ability.
- get an up to date weather forecast and river flow information as available.

## **Party Management**

Ratio and numbers

- Ensure there will be enough experienced paddlers to give a ratio of one experienced boat for every 2 to 3 beginner boats or one experienced boat for every 3 to 4 intermediate boats.
- The minimum group size should be 2 boats for  $\leq$  grade II and 3 boats for  $>$  grade II.
- If the group is expected to be a large one (greater than 6-7 boats), assigning a second trip leader and breaking into 2 groups is advisable.
- Trip leaders are responsible for selecting qualified sweeps.

## **On Trip Day:**

Trip leaders will:

- Check that each person has appropriate clothing and equipment to complete the trip safely.
- Ensure all paddlers record their details on the Ceyana float plan.
- Facilitate transport of people and boats, discuss shuttle plans. Ensure everyone knows the way to the river/lake. If necessary arrange intermediate rendezvous points enroute.
- In addition, the Trip Leader must be prepared to stop a person travelling to the river if he/she knows their paddling ability is not appropriate for this trip, and/or they don't have the appropriate clothing equipment.
- Discuss with the whole group the plans for the day including the grade of the river/lake, the expected flow (low/med/high), weather conditions, length of time on the river and options for various levels of paddlers. At this time also Trip Leader should make sure that everyone knows the signals to be used on the river (visual and audible) as well as who the Leaders and sweeps are. This is a good time for participants to voice any concerns or conditions they may have (ie: "i'm diabetic and if I go into shock please crush these glucose tabs and put them in my mouth").

## **Go / No-Go Decision for a Club Paddle**

The decision on whether or not a Club Trip is to go should be made by the trip participants:

- If the group is unable to make a decision, the designated Trip Leader will make the decision.
- If some paddlers decide to proceed, even though a 'no' decision has been made by the majority of the group and/or the trip leader, then such a paddle is no longer deemed to be a Club Paddle.

## **On the River/Lake**

- Leaders shall ensure all participants are aware of the group organization (Leader, Sweeps) and the expected method of travel (Leapfrogging down Eddies, Follow the leader, or everyone cruising together across the lake).
- Participants should try to make appropriate decisions about whether they are to run a section of river or not. Safety is the primary consideration. Trip leaders have the final say on whether an individual or group is to run a certain section of water.
- Leaders should be constantly evaluating the groups skill level, fitness, fatigue etc throughout the trip and adjust schedule and rules accordingly.
- When running major rapids the group should visually scout the rapid and discuss the safest route. Safety shall be set accordingly as designated by the Trip Leader and Sweep.

- A regular head count should be made.
- A Trip Leaders first responsibility is to the safety of the individuals on the river (including themselves). Equipment will be rescued after victims.

### **River Signals:**

Visual river signals will follow the American Whitewater Association Safety Code. Supplemental signals may be presented during the pre trip meeting by the trip leader.

Link to AWA Safety Code:  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Wiki/safety:start>

Audible River Signals are to be confirmed by trip leader:

**ONE** long whistle blast means 'Pay Attention' or 'Look at me'.

**THREE** long whistle blasts mean 'Major emergency' come help if possible!

### **Off the River:**

Following each trip, the Trip Leader or another designated participant should submit a brief trip report to the Ceyana executive that summarizes:

- trip destination and conditions.
- number of participants.
- learnings, planning issues, problems/challenges.
- recommendations for future trips.

### **Ceyana Canoe Club Executive**

The Ceyana Executive has the following responsibilities associated with the organization of Club Paddles:

- 1 - Development of an annual schedule of lake, river and whitewater events and paddles of various skill levels.
- 2 - Selection of qualified Trip Leaders.
- 3 - Facilitation and Delivery of Training for Trip Leaders through provincial and National paddling organizations (Paddle Alberta, Paddle Canada, Alberta Whitewater Assoc., CKC-W).
- 4 - Review of individual trip reports from each season, and sharing learnings with all of the Ceyana organization.
- 5 - Maintenance of Safety policy guidelines for Lake - River – Whitewater.
- 6 - Maintenance of qualified trip leader and sweep database..
- 7 – Provision of a pair of "Pin/Rescue" kits for trip leaders, and a pair of leader first aid kits that meet Canadian Department of Transport standards. These may be signed out by approved trip leaders with the expectation they will be returned immediately following each trip, normally by the Tuesday following the weekend.

\*Where these club safety guidelines "fall silent" the Safety Code of the American Whitewater Association shall be consulted and used for guidance.