

Ceyana Canoe Club

Trip Program Safety Guidelines

For Lake, River, and Whitewater Trips

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

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Approved by Ceyana Executive May 9 2022.

General

All Members should consider Ceyana Canoe Club (Ceyana) trips (day, weekend, multi-day) to be a '**common adventure**' under the guidance of a Trip Leader. As such, trip participants share responsibility for the conduct each 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 otherwise stated, Ceyana Trip Leaders are volunteers and participate with the expectation of sharing a common goal with all participants of a safe, fun and enjoyable paddling opportunity. These volunteers may hold the same or higher skill level of the participants. They may have outside or "in house" training and have paddling experience where the Ceyana Executive have deemed these individuals as Trip Leaders.

Ceyana Canoe Club Executive

The Ceyana Executive, the Club Trips Chair or their delegate has the following responsibilities associated with the organization of Club tripping for canoe, kayak or Stand-Up Paddle Board touring:

- Development of an annual schedule of lake, river and whitewater trips for various skill levels and time frames;
- Selection of qualified Trip Leaders;
- Facilitation and Delivery of Training for Trip Leaders through "in house" club, provincial or national paddling organizations (Paddle Alberta, Paddle Canada, Alberta Whitewater Assoc., CKC-WW);
- Review of individual trip reports from each season, and sharing learnings with all of the Ceyana organization;
- Maintenance of Safety Guidelines for Lake, River & Whitewater;
- Maintenance of a database of the club approved Trip Leaders; and,
- Provide two appropriate "Rescue" (Pin) kits and Group First Aid Kits. These may be signed out by approved Trip Leaders with the expectation they will be returned immediately following each trip (the Thursday following each weekend, or extended trip).

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

Knowledge: Participant Paddlers

It is the responsibility of the participants

- to know if they have the skill level to participate in any club paddle or tour;
- to inform the Trip Leader of any health issues (allergies, medical conditions, contagious diseases, (i.e., Covid-19 symptoms) that might factor on the trip;
- ensure any other information that might affect the club paddle or tour; and,
- ensure they are supporting and following Ceyana Canoe Club's Safety Guidelines.

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:

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

Participation 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.

Appropriate equipment.

Trips on more remote locations, overnights or brigades will need additional mandatory equipment.

- PFD (to be worn at all times when on the water);
- Helmet (unless otherwise stated, on Class II and over);
- Throw bag (1 per boat – minimum; secured to the boat);
- Paddle (spare if recommended);
- Sound signaling device (i.e. Fox 40 whistle) attached to the PFD;
- Bailer or pump;
- Appropriate boat for expected conditions;
- Boat specific equipment to match conditions
- canoe flotation, spray skirt to match kayak;
- Personal First Aid Kit;
- Protective Clothing suitable to anticipated and changing water/weather conditions (rain gear, wet suit, dry suit, dry tops, extra set of clothing, etc.); and,
- Appropriate footwear (should be worn, if possible, if not possible due to shape of boat, footwear should be carried in boat.)

Conduct

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

Guests

Members are welcome to bring guests on club paddles or trips.

- There is no Membership Fee for first time guests;

- Guests are required to follow the Ceyana Canoe Club Safety Guidelines.; and,
- Members are responsible for their guest's safety and conduct.

Special Needs Members and Guests

It is important to know that Ceyana Canoe Club is open to special needs individuals joining their club paddles or trips. If either a member or an invited guest on any paddle or trip please note that:

- Ceyana Canoe Club does not have specialized equipment or trained staff to manage these events;
- know their limitations and agree to have support measures (family and friends) in place to assist with the needs if required; and,
- Member's guests are responsible for their safety and well-being.

Guests participating on a River Paddle or Trip

A participating member to a moving water outing can sponsor a guest. In that role, the sponsoring member must ensure the guest has the qualifications required to participate on the proposed outing. The members are responsible for the guest's safety and security on the river and will support the final Trip Leaders decision to allow or not allow the guest to join the trip (even if the decision is made at water's edge or during the trip). The participating member must ensure the guest(s):

- boat is in good condition with the appropriate outfitting as mentioned above;
- has other appropriate gear (helmet, whistle, PFD, etc) and is in good working order; and,
- sign the required forms.

Group Safety

- Participants should constantly evaluate their own safety and that of the group;
- Support and assist the Trip Leader if changes have to be made to ensure safety of the group. This includes but not limited to canceling prior to the trip, stopping the trip mid-way, changing the route, etc;
- Everyone should stay together and only break up with Trip Leader approval;
- 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; and,
- During Emergency situations, all participants are expected to work together under the guidance of the Trip Leader(s).

Environmental Impact

Participants are responsible for maintaining a 'no to minimal impact' mind-set relative to the environment. Follow the Leave No Trace principles, leave nothing but tracks and memories, etc.

Knowledge: On Water Leadership

In addition to the above the Trip Leader will:

- appoint a Lead and Sweep boat;
 - Lead Boat will set the pace based on the group's skills and guide the group down the river. Participants will not go ahead of the Lead Boat;
 - Sweep Boat ensures no one gets too far behind the group;
- have first aid knowledge;

- will have training in or assign a knowledgeable individual(s) with rescue knowledge and skills appropriate for expected conditions;
- be experienced on the waterway or have a skill level one class higher than expected conditions,
- lead and direct participants with rescues of people, boats, gear retrieval;
- designate where the “group” first aid kit will be stored;
- designate where the “rescue kit” (tubular webbing, prusik cords, 2 carabiners, 1 pulley) when on class II or greater rivers will be stored;
- carry an extra throw bag, and a breakdown kayak paddle if needed; and,
- will let the group know where the “kits” are being kept.

Operating Procedure

For each Ceyana Canoe Club trip, a responsible person shall be appointed as trip coordinator and/or leader (coordinator and leader maybe one or more persons) by the Ceyana executive. He/She/They will prior to the trip:

- take part in an “in house” Trip Leader training session;
- pre-trip screening of participants (appropriate level for the trip);
- 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; and,
- 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.

Group Management

Ratio and numbers

The Trip Leader and Ceyana Trips Chair shall 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; and,
- The minimum group size should be 2 boats for Class II and 3 boats for Class III.

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

The Trip Leader will deliver the “safety briefing” and ensure the following of the participants:

- Check that each person has appropriate clothing and equipment to complete the trip safely;
- Ensure all paddlers record their details on the Ceyana Canoe Club 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;
- Let the participants know that the trip may be altered or stopped if a participant is not at the appropriate skill level for this trip, and/or they don’t have the appropriate clothing or equipment or their behavior is not in line with a safe and enjoyable trip;

- know the plans for the day including the class 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;
- knows the signals to be used on the river (visual and audible); and,
- know who are the Lead and Sweep boats.

Prior to the on-water gathering, it is important that participants remind the Trip Leader of any medical concerns or conditions they have and where their personal medicine is being kept in the canoe. (i.e., “I am diabetic and I need to stop every two hours for a snack or if I go into shock, please crush these glucose tabs and put them in my mouth”).

During declared pandemics, at the put-in the trip leader will conduct a review of infectious symptoms, recent exposure, and request that anyone displaying symptoms, or who have had recent exposure, request such participants return home.

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 Leader in consultation with participants, and:

- If the group is unable to make a decision, the designated Trip Leader will make the decision; and,
- 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 Water Practices

- Leaders shall ensure all participants are aware of the possible changes while on route with group organization (Lead, Sweeps) and the expected method of travel on certain sections of the rivers (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 group's skill level, fitness, fatigue, etc, throughout the trip and adjust the pace, schedule and rules accordingly;
- When running major rapids, the group will visually scout the rapid, when experience and skill dictates, and discuss the safest route. Safety shall be set accordingly as designated by the Trip Leader, Lead and Sweep boats;
- A regular head count should be made; and,
- A Trip Leader's first responsibility is to the safety of the individuals on the river (including themselves). Priority level for rescues: people, boats and then gear.

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 at the start:

- **ONE** long whistle blast means ‘Pay Attention’ or ‘Look at me’; and,
- **THREE** long whistle blasts mean ‘Major emergency’ come help if possible!

Off the Water

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

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

Trip Leaders can also put photos and highlights of the trip on *CeyanaNews* or the club Facebook page *Ceyana Community*.