



# RCABC 2020 Club Trip Sanctioning Guidelines

## SECTION 1: PRINCIPAL TRIP SANCTIONING GUIDELINES

### 1.1 DEFINITIONS & PURPOSE

#### a) Sanctioning

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

#### b) Club Trips

'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
- May include the use of any paddle craft: canoe, kayak, SUP, etc.
- Short distance or 'stay in one spot' paddling, or playboating sessions or gatherings
- Pool sessions to practice skills
- Canoe tripping including camping, hiking, etc. and multi-day events with vehicle access camping
- Practice sessions for dragon boat, marathon canoe, and other types of race or fitness craft (please note the restrictions regarding competitions - No advertised competitions with competitors from outside the club at this time.)

#### c) Requirements for Club Trips

Club trips must:

- be advertised by the executive to all club members in advance
- have a certified leader appointed by the executive
- are non-competitive unless the competition is informal and restricted to club members

#### d) Participation Boundaries

The following participation boundaries apply to club trips:

- Participation starts when the group meets at the beginning of the event and as long as a person stays with the group.
- Participation ends if a person intentionally leaves the at any point during the trip. Trip leaders must try to keep the group together and stay in control, however if adult participants knowingly choose to leave your supervision despite your warnings, then they are deemed to no longer be on the club trip, and are no longer under your duty of care, or covered by the RCABC insurance policy.
- 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.



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### d) Competitive Events

Advertised, competitive events accepting people from outside the club are currently NOT covered by RCABC's liability insurance. RCABC would need to first create sanctioning guidelines for these events. If your club is hoping to host or compete in an event and you wish to have liability coverage, contact RCABC for more details.

### 1.2 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 (renewed each year by May 15<sup>th</sup>)
- 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
- Club membership for 2020 is \$75 + 8.77 per member + a 10% processing fee.

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

### 1.3 GUESTS

'Guests' are permitted to attend club trips. They must fill out an RCABC waiver. They are not covered by RCABC insurance though. Guests should not be permitted on more than an occasional trip. If a guest wishes to attend more than one trip, they should be strongly encouraged to join the club.

### 1.4 RCABC WAIVER

Waivers are a very effective means of shielding trip leaders, clubs, and the RCABC from litigation but only if they are presented properly. An RCABC 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.

When presenting the waiver make sure:

- Participants understand what they are signing, such as by reading out the top box to them—  
"This is a release of liability, waiver of claims and an assumption of risks and indemnity agreement. By signing the document, you will waive or give up certain rights, including your right to sue or claim compensation following and accident. Please read it carefully."
- The waiver is presented 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 undue pressure.
- Once the waiver is signed ask them:
  - *Have you read the waiver? Do you understand the waiver? Do you have any questions?*



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### Things to be aware of when administering waivers:

- A new waiver must be signed at the start of each season regardless of whether a previously signed an RCABC waiver either recently or in the past.
- Waivers should be signed with either blue or black ball point pen (no pencils, felts, sharpies).
- Crosses out anything on the waiver, making marks or adding language is not permitted. The document must remain unaltered except for the sections meant to be filled out.
- If a person says they cannot read the waiver for any reason, offer to read it to them.
- Avoid interpreting or summarizing the document in your own words. Read it word for word.
- A waiver can be ruled invalid if the person who was signing it was intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time, they signed it.
- A parent or guardian should sign a waiver of liability on behalf of each of their children that are eighteen or under in age. Technically, minors can't waive their rights, nor can anyone on their behalf; however, the waiver serves as a assumption of risk document still and must be done.
- Each person involved in a course or activity must sign their own waiver as you cannot waive the legal rights of another person. E.g. A wife or husband cannot sign on behalf of their spouse.
- If a participant refuses to sign the RCABC waiver of liability, they are ineligible to participate.
- Waivers should be kept for a period of 3 years since the statute of limitations for adults seeking compensation is 2 years. Keep it with the season or event registration forms as these forms indicate the course or event dates, location, event the participant was participating in when they signed the waiver, address, age, ability as indicated and their medical history. If there is an incident involving a minor keep the waiver until 2 years after they turn 19, as that reflects the statute of limitations for minors.

### 1.5 RESPONSIBILITY

- **TRIP LEADER** - *The designated leader of the trip. The leader's objective is to coordinate club trip or event safety measures, and to ensure they are certified, a RCABC member, and capable and familiar for the locations trips they sign up to lead.*
- **PADDLERS** – *Trip participants that are club members but not leaders. They must sign a waiver, have paid their club dues, and follow safety guidelines as directed by the trip leader.*
- **GUESTS** - *Paddlers that are not club members but have signed a club waiver and join a club trip to see what it is like, or as an out of town visitor along for an occasional trip.*
- **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. They typically should be certified for the content they are teaching, preferably by the RCABC, but may be certified with another association or may be a highly skilled but uncertified paddler; however, club trip Leader certification and other formal courses and certification must be taught by a certified instructor.*
- **CLUB EXECUTIVE** – *The executive or chosen members within the executive are responsible for organizing, renewing insurance with the RCABC each year (May 15<sup>th</sup>), scheduling trips and training, ensuring certification and safety requirements and supporting club trips and leaders*



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- **RCABC EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS** – *The RCABC executive is responsible for administering insurance, providing up to date waivers and other documents, certification and instruction programs and standards, and relaying current best practices and industry standards with regards to safety and liability for club trips and instruction.*

### 1.6 OUT OF PROVINCE TRIPS

Trip location and citizenship affect sanctioning.

- As of 2020, temporary club trips in the USA are **NOT** covered by RCABC's liability insurance
- Club trips can be in any location in Canada
- Only Canadian citizens are covered by our 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. Do not admit fault or make statements of any kind to the media. Please ensure that all of the steps below are followed.

- ✓ Keep notes and possibly take photos for all important details of the incident
- ✓ Fill out the accident form provided on [www.bccanoe.com](http://www.bccanoe.com)
- ✓ Record additional details if the form is insufficient
- ✓ Assure us that no one has "admitted fault" or made statements to the media, etc.
- ✓ Record the contact information for all witnesses if possible
- ✓ Note if there are any concerns surrounding non-compliance to our policies
- ✓ Notify RCABC immediately and send in your notes and incident report form

### 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 may be eligible for the purchasing of optional insurance.
- Our insurance policy has a number of exclusions including terrorism, natural disasters, alcohol related incidents, and communicable diseases including Covid-19. Liability insurance is meant to help protect the trip leader, directors, volunteers, and the RCABC executive from being sued.

### 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 members are 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 'club 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

**Note:** 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 AND CANNABIS USE

RCABC does not allow club members under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, 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. The RCABC insurance plan does not prohibit the responsible and moderate consumption of alcohol after the days paddling activities are over such as with dinner or while socializing in camp. Drunkenness or inebriation is unacceptable, as any accident arising either directly or indirectly through the consumption of alcohol will void our insurance policy.

### 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.

## SECTION 2 - TRANSPORT CANADA REGULATION

### 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.



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

### 2.2 “PLEASURE CRAFT” DESIGNATION

Canoes, kayaks, SUP Boards and all paddle craft are considered ‘Pleasure Craft’ when used in a non-commercial or leadership role. Most boats on a club trip would be considered a “pleasure craft”.

### 2.3 “PLEASURE CRAFT” REGULATIONS

Pleasure Craft regulations apply to all craft on club trips. Canoes, kayaks, and SUP less than 6m (19’8”) in length 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 board (RCABC requires that it must be worn) and must be inherently buoyant on white water (not an inflatable type)
- A buoyant heaving line no less than 15 m (49’3”) in length
- A bailer or manual pumping device (auto bailers or self bailing craft are OK)
- A sound signalling device (whistle, air horn, etc.)
- A navigation light if travelling at night or in limited visibility

All safety equipment on board must be:

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

### 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 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
- Equipment or procedures are in place to protect everyone from cold weather shock or hypothermia if water temperature is below 15 degrees Celsius.



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- 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.
- A waterproof flashlight (or three marine flares) and first aid kit must be carried

### SECTION 3 - RCABC SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

#### 3.0 TRIP LOCATION AND ORGANIZATION

- It is recommended (but not required) that groups have a minimum of 3 canoes, kayaks, or SUP in any combination, especially on moving water trips. See exception for big canoes (Section 4)
- 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 or online route descriptions.
- Portaging rapids more difficult than Grade 3 is acceptable with appropriate safety measures.
- Leaders should be within reasonable communication and rescue distance of the paddlers
- 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

#### 3.1 TRIP LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE EMBARKING

- Trip leaders must be current "RCABC Certified Club Trip Leaders", having completed the basic training, and that the trip must be approved by the club executive and advertised to members.
- 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, etc.

**Note:** 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.

#### 3.2 SAFETY AND EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

It is mandatory for club trip leaders must have basic RCABC Club Trip Leader certification as a minimum. They may then lead any trip in any location that the club executive feels they have the skills and knowledge to safely oversee. Club trip leaders must be registered as Paddler members with the RCABC and have their current training logged in our database by an instructor.



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The RCABC offers many higher levels of certifications and other Leader, Guide and Instructor level certifications surpass these requirements and are acceptable to meet minimum training requirements for club trip leaders: the following certifications are highly valuable and should be considered:

Big Canoe Trips	Moving Water Trips	Lakewater Trips	Multi-Day Trips	Ocean Trips	SUP	Canoe Poling
Big Canoe Leader <b>OR</b> Instructor	Moving Water Leader <b>OR</b> Instructor OR Exp. Guide	Lakewater Leader OR Instructor <b>OR</b> Day Guide	Tripping Leader <b>OR</b> Expedition Guide	Ocean Canoe Leader <b>OR</b> Instructor	SUP Instructor	Canoe Poling Instructor

- Club trip leaders must confirm that all participants are club members in good standing (have paid their club due and filled out whatever club registration form the club uses) or are guests for the trip and that **ALL participants have signed an RCABC waiver.**
- Carry a first aid kit of a reasonable size for the group and that they are comfortable using.
- For river trips, carry standard river rescue equipment (throwbags , “wrap kit”, etc.)
- 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 such as a wet-suit or dry-suit
- Use good judgment. Consider water temperature, weather, age of participants, response time of emergency services, remoteness, geographical terrain, etc.

### 3.3 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- 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 condition, at all times on the water, or near the water.
- signalling device ☒
- Helmets must be worn on river trips when paddling Grade 3 rapids and are recommended for grade 2 or if it is shallow/rocky.
- 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.





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### 3.4 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)
- Not consume alcohol, cannabis, or illegal drugs before or during paddling.

**Note:** The 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.

### 3.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLUB EXECUTIVE

Club executive are responsible for the following:

- Organizing regular club safety and trip leader training led by an RCABC certified instructor. Recommended once a year, but at least once every 3 years.
- 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. Club trip leaders may also change at short notice for safety reasons or if the advertised leader becomes sick or is otherwise made unavailable.)

## SECTION 4 - RCABC REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIC PADDLE CRAFT

### 4.1 All canoes or other Paddle Craft

Each canoe or other paddlecraft should be equipped with:

- a spare paddle (recommended for each boat, but carried by at least one member in the group)
- bow and/or stern lines (painters) of about three to eight metres polypropylene (floating rope) is recommended (some exceptions may 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)
- minimal floatation so that the paddlecraft is at least neutrally buoyant



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- for river canoeing, extra floatation is highly recommended but not mandatory.
- Helmets are mandatory on class 3 rapids, as well recommended for grade 2 and 3 as well as any time it is shallow and rocky.
- The club the trip leader or club may determine that additional gear may be required.

### 4.3 RCABC WHITEWATER CANOES, KAYAKS, C-1s, etc.

RCABC sanctioning requirements for white water boats including canoes, kayaks or C1s in addition to Transport Canada's requirements and the above general RCABC requirements.

Each boat should be equipped with:

- Whitewater canoes, Kayaks, or C1s should be outfitted with grab loops or handles, and extra floatation to facilitate easier rescues.
- Helmets are recommended but not mandatory, especially on class 2 or 3 white water or whenever shallow, rocky rivers mean that head injuries are a substantial risk.
- the trip leader or club may determine that additional gear may be required.

### 4.4 STAND UP PADDLE BOARDS

RCABC sanctioning requirements for SUP boards in addition to Transport Canada's are as follows. Each boat should be equipped with:

- a leash, but understand the risks: a leash in whitewater can be a hazard!
- For river paddling helmets are recommended but not mandatory
- the trip leader or club may determine that additional gear may be required.

### 4.5 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 all paddlecraft.

activities outside the scope of our experience.

Therefore, 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' that may apply from the above guidelines
- 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



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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 (There are exceptions to the Canada Coast Guard regulations for carrying flares, however RCABC recommends only 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) Re-boarding Device - Only required if the vertical height that must be climbed to re-board 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 markers and is therefor not typically required for club trips on inland waters.
- 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.
  - and is therefor not typically required for club trips on inland waters

#### 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