

Safety Checklist

All Paddling Activities

Introduction & Instructions

This checklist is the recommended minimum standard to ensure safety of both **competitive and recreational activities** of Australian Canoeing affiliates. Its purpose is to ensure that all appropriate steps have been taken to ensure the safety of participants in Australian Canoeing-sanctioned paddling activities.

How to use this checklist:

- When organising **trips and expeditions** – ***This checklist is all you need.*** Please refer to it when planning for a safe activity, and complete as required to confirm that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the safety of all participants.
- When organising **competitive events** – ***You need this checklist plus the relevant discipline-specific safety checklist.*** Please refer to both checklists when planning for a safe competitive event, and complete both as required to confirm that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the safety of all participants.

Requirements noted in this checklist are based on the following documents:

- Australian Canoeing Safety Guidelines – December 1 2004; and
- Member Protection By Law – effective July 1 2003.

You may find it helpful to have these documents on hand.

Information about the Activity

Name of organisation hosting the activity:	
Name of activity:	
Description of activity and participants: <i>'Participants' include paddlers, officials, guides, instructors, coaches, observers, etc</i>	
Activity date(s) & times:	
Activity Venue(s):	
Other relevant information about the activity:	

Safety Checklist

Please document whether or not the following safety measures have been taken in preparation for your activity by completing the checklist below.

1. Member Protection

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>1.1. Prevention – Screening and Prohibited Person Declarations</p> <p>(a) (mandatory) Have all of the following personnel been screened* for their roles, whether appointed or seeking appointment with Australian Canoeing, State Associations, or Affiliated Clubs for reward:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Coaches and registered Instructors and Guides</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer personnel who will or are likely to travel away with teams of canoeists under 18 years of age; and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Persons in a role in which that person is likely to have individual and unsupervised contact with canoeists under 18 years of age?</p>				
<p>(b) (highly recommended) Have all of the following personnel been screened* for their roles, whether appointed or seeking appointment with Australian Canoeing, State Associations, or Affiliated Clubs for reward:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer coaches and Registered Instructors and Guides who will or are likely to travel away with teams of canoeists over 18 years or age; and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Persons whose role means that person is likely to have contact with canoeists under 18 years of age but where such contact is supervised at all times by another adult.</p>				
<p>* Screening means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Checking the Preferred Applicant's referees;</i> • <i>Interviewing the Preferred Applicant as to their suitability for the proposed role and their suitability for involvement with children under 18 years of age; and</i> • <i>Obtaining a Police Check of Preferred Applicants and Existing Approaches.</i> 				
<p>(c) (In the event that the person screened is found to have committed any criminal offences or whose history suggests that he/she may be a questionable candidate for the role) has appropriate action been taken?</p> <p><i>Refer to Australian Canoeing Member Protection By Law, section 6 for details of appropriate action.</i></p>				

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>1.2. Breaches</p> <p>(a) Harassment – Has your organisation developed and implemented policies and procedures to prevent harassment of any kind, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Racial harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Disability harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Vilification <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination – direct and indirect? 				
<p>(b) Codes of behaviour – Does your organisation insist on codes of behaviour being practiced by all its representatives and participants (clients) as noted in the AC Member Protection By Law, Attachment E?</p>				
<p>(c) Complaint resolution – Does your organisation have a clear procedure in place to deal with both formal and informal complaints, as noted in clauses 12 - 17 of the AC Member Protection By Law?</p>				
<p>(d) Appeals – Does your organisation exercise the appeals process as outlined in Clause 18 of the AC Member Protection By Law?</p>				

2. Planning

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
2.1 Risk Management – Has an emergency Management Plan been developed, which includes the following:				
(a) Chain of command – who will report to whom in the event of an emergency?				
(b) Communication systems and technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communication technology (mobiles, radios, satellite phones etc) that can be relied upon to work at the venue been organised? <input type="checkbox"/> Has emergency response information been documented and is it readily available in the event of an emergency that requires external assistance? Information should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communication and contact details <input type="checkbox"/> Escape route and location information <input type="checkbox"/> Participant lists <input type="checkbox"/> Medical forms <input type="checkbox"/> Transport details. 				
(c) Emergency procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Have emergency procedures been developed and documented, for each of the following events (as applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Serious injury or fatality <input type="checkbox"/> Serious threats to personal safety from high-risk environmental conditions (e.g. flood, storm, bushfire, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Lost participants <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioural management problems? 				

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>ii) Do the emergency procedures include (as applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Priority of tasks: immediate, second, third <input type="checkbox"/> Roles and responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Exit routes, emergency and evacuation procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Contact details for base camp, and program administrators as required <input type="checkbox"/> Contact details for police, rescue and medical services in the area <input type="checkbox"/> Communication modes and protocols <input type="checkbox"/> Location management <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicular access <input type="checkbox"/> Boat access <input type="checkbox"/> Helicopter access <input type="checkbox"/> Identification of nearest medical facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Identification of natural hazards and appropriate response (as required) <input type="checkbox"/> Post incident management: contact of insurer, legal procedures, post incident trauma, counselling? 				
<p>2.2 Float Plan (for trips & expeditions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has a float plan been established for the event? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the float plan include full details of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The route <input type="checkbox"/> The participants <input type="checkbox"/> Contingency plans? <p><i>NB Refer to Appendix F of Australian Canoeing's Safety Guidelines for a sample template of a float plan.</i></p>				

3. People

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>3.1. Leader (or competition manager) Responsibilities</p> <p>Does the leader have the following minimum responsibilities (as applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Research likely hazards <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm group experience/capabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Adhere to the AC Safety Guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure a full briefing of participants is clearly carried out and understood <input type="checkbox"/> Check river levels and weather reports <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all group equipment is stored correctly <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm head count before departure and throughout trip <input type="checkbox"/> Be alert for physical and psychological condition of the group <input type="checkbox"/> Control pace of the group (trips & expeditions) <input type="checkbox"/> Rest group if necessary (trips & expeditions) <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure, to the best of his/her ability that participants do not get into situations beyond their capabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Designate responsibility to other leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm headcount after trip (trips & expeditions) <input type="checkbox"/> Notify appropriate persons of safe completion (trips & expeditions) <input type="checkbox"/> Check all equipment on return? 				
<p>3.2. Competency and qualifications of Instructors and/or Guides (trips & expeditions)</p> <p>Are all Instructors and/or Guides <u>qualified</u> for the roles that they will perform at the event? Qualification must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The <u>relevant</u> qualification (see pages 10-11 of the AC Safety Guidelines document for overview of what activities people holding each qualification are licensed to conduct) 				

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<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Proof that their qualification and skills are <u>current</u> – this means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Registration / re-registration was less than 3 years ago (b) Instructors/Guides have consistently complied with and observed the constitution, bylaws, regulations of AC including the AC member protection Bylaw and Safety Guidelines throughout the period of their registration. 				
<p>3.3. First Aid qualifications</p> <p>(a) (trips & expeditions) – Do all Instructors and Guides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> have a current state government regulating body approved first aid qualification? <input type="checkbox"/> have a state government authority's designated first aid kit as a minimum? <input type="checkbox"/> (recommended for an activity in which participants will, at any point be more than 2 hours away from medical attention) hold a remote first aid certificate? <p><i>OR</i></p> <p>(b) (competitive events) – Have arrangements been made to ensure adequate provision of first aid in the event of an emergency? This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hire St. John's Ambulance or another reputable first aid provider organisation to provide first aid services at the event <p><i>OR</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have on site, an acceptable ratio of Australian Canoeing personnel who are qualified in first aid (see 3.3(a) above), and who will be available to provide first aid services if required, <p><i>AND</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have adequate first aid facilities and equipment available at the event. 				

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>3.4. Communication and authority</p> <p>(a) (trips and expeditions)</p> <p>Has the leader ensured that all participants are given clear and concise instructions on the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The National Standard Signals <i>(This is the AC-recommended choice of communication system. Details can be found in Appendix A of AC's Safety Guidelines – December 2004)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> The correct and safe handling and navigation of any canoe or kayak <input type="checkbox"/> The correct fitting and wearing of appropriate Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's) which are to be worn at all times <input type="checkbox"/> The whereabouts of all group and safety equipment <input type="checkbox"/> The correct and safe operation of any (including safety) equipment <input type="checkbox"/> In sea programs, the group spacing and average speed as well as the signals to be used by the trip leader and participants <input type="checkbox"/> The group's capsize procedure <input type="checkbox"/> Sun and/or environmental protection <input type="checkbox"/> Group medical concerns <input type="checkbox"/> The program for the day <input type="checkbox"/> The role of each participant <input type="checkbox"/> The expectations of each participant? 				
<p>(b) (competitive events)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has the competition manager ensured that all event staff and participants (as necessary) are fully briefed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> First aid personnel, services and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency procedures <input type="checkbox"/> The role of each staff member & participant <input type="checkbox"/> The chain of command <input type="checkbox"/> Codes of behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Communication systems and technology <input type="checkbox"/> Weather conditions (as relevant) <input type="checkbox"/> Other information as relevant to the event. 				

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>3.5. (trips and expeditions) Ratios and group size</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is there an appropriate instructor/guide: client ratio for this trip?</p> <p><i>To determine the correct ratio for your trip, refer to Appendix C of AC's Safety Guidelines – December 2004.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (where a group has to pass a crux point, travel a rapid, launch or recover through surf or perform any activity that increases the level of risk) Have steps been taken to ensure that only one participant shall be in the danger zone at any time AND a dedicated leader will be attendant to the participant in the danger zone?</p>				
<p>3.6. (trips and expeditions) Skills of participants</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has the leader taken all reasonable steps (ideally an on-water familiarisation session*) to ensure that participants are competent to participate in the proposed activity?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has he/she refused participation to anyone who is considered not sufficiently capable or responsible? **</p> <p><i>* Purpose of the on-water familiarisation session to demonstrate and practice relevant skills and procedures including but not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>rescue</i> • <i>self rescue and capsize drills.</i> <p><i>** AC recommends that an individual should comply with the AC Safety Code. A copy of the code is found in Appendix H of AC's Safety Guidelines – December 2004.</i></p>				

4. Equipment

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>4.0. a) Have all possible eventualities been considered when selecting equipment for the activity?</p> <p>b) Have measures been put into place to ensure that all necessary equipment (including emergency supplies) is available to all participants, as appropriate for the event?</p> <p><i>For trips & expeditions, it is usually expected that participants will carry whatever equipment they may need (including emergency supplies) with them. In some cases, where participants are working on a very small body of water, it is acceptable for equipment to be available on shore and not carried on boats.</i></p> <p><i>For competitive events, <u>either</u> all required equipment (including emergency supplies) must be made readily available from shore, <u>or</u> (for some events) participants may be required to carry their own equipment.</i></p>				
<p>4.1. Boats and associated equipment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are the kayaks and canoes used suitable for the nature and duration of the activity, the conditions expected during the activity, and the skill levels of all participants?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are measures put into place to ensure that all craft:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a stable platform allowing strokes to be performed effectively <input type="checkbox"/> Possess the strength to withstand all foreseeable forces <input type="checkbox"/> Not sink, but remain horizontal when swamped and be useable as buoyancy for its crew <input type="checkbox"/> Be capable of being towed by rope and grasped by hand <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for easy exit in the event of a capsize <input type="checkbox"/> Not be designed, made of a material or finished in a way that could cause injury or impede exit <input type="checkbox"/> Be fitted with end loops or toggles <input type="checkbox"/> Be fitted with a footrest that will not allow feet to become entrapped and that will not break in the event of foreseeable paddling forces or impacts <input type="checkbox"/> Be of a colour that is clearly visible to other water users or rescue authorities 				

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<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Have positive buoyancy at each end which may consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sturdy, waterproof bulkheads, fore and aft, with water tight hatch covers or ▪ Integrated cockpits with watertight hatch covers or ▪ Fixed float in bags or ▪ Being a 'sit on top' self-draining kayak. <input type="checkbox"/> (recommended) Are rudders, skegs or retractable fins used on sea kayaks? <i>N.B. Paddlers should not be reliant on them for directional control of the craft.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Pump or self-bailer – is a pump or self bailer carried so that water may be removed from a sea kayak cockpit as necessary? <input type="checkbox"/> Vessels used for clients under supervision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Is the kayak configured in a manner that a competent paddler can guide and assist the novice paddler back into the kayak in a safe and efficient manner? □ Is there in place a method of evacuating any water from within the cockpit that can be accessed effectively by either the competent guide or novice paddler? 				
4.2. Paddles <input type="checkbox"/> Are paddles appropriate to the type of craft and do they build the skill levels of the participants? <input type="checkbox"/> Is one or more spare paddle(s) available as appropriate for the activity?				
4.3. Personal flotation devices (PFD's) <p>Are PFD's that comply with the requirements below available for each participant:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Construction complies with Australian Standards for Type 2 or Type 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Are the correct size and are adjustable to ensure a proper fit <input type="checkbox"/> (recommended) Each PFD has a whistle attached <input type="checkbox"/> Towing cowtails are quick release <input type="checkbox"/> The PFD's must not contain any pocket or other component that may impede paddling, normal rescue practices or exit from craft. <input type="checkbox"/> (recommended) All PFD's are bright in colour?				

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>4.4. Helmets</p> <p>Are canoeing helmets available and worn for <u>all</u> of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Paddling water Grade 2 and above <input type="checkbox"/> Surfing <input type="checkbox"/> Paddling among rocks or in sea caves <input type="checkbox"/> During rescue practice? <p><i>Helmets are optional for other canoeing activities.</i></p>				
<p>4.5. Navigation equipment (where appropriate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Will an appropriate choice of navigation equipment be used? This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maps and/or marine charts <input type="checkbox"/> Compasses <input type="checkbox"/> GPS receivers. <input type="checkbox"/> Is the navigation equipment treated and/or stored in such a way as to make them water resistant? 				
<p>4.6. Communication equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has the leader or competition manager determined what equipment should be carried by the participants? Equipment chosen must be appropriate for the activity and area of operation. It may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Marine whistle <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile phone <input type="checkbox"/> Signalling mirror <input type="checkbox"/> Marine VHF radio (operators should hold the VHF Certificate for Proficiency) <input type="checkbox"/> Flares (red, smoke, parachute) <input type="checkbox"/> Marine 27MHz radio <input type="checkbox"/> Torch <input type="checkbox"/> Strobe light <input type="checkbox"/> UHF radio <input type="checkbox"/> V-sheet <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite phone <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical light stick (or electronic equivalent) <input type="checkbox"/> EPIRB. <input type="checkbox"/> Is all electronic and other equipment that can be damaged by water carried in water resistant containers? 				

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>4.7. Safety and rescue equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is all safety and rescue equipment carried in such a way that it is quickly and easily accessible? <input type="checkbox"/> Do leaders (or relevant competition personnel) have an appropriate towing system easily accessible so that it can be deployed quickly when needed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are other participants carrying towlines as appropriate for the activity and at the discretion of the leader? <input type="checkbox"/> Are all towing systems quick-release, and are they set up so that they do not restrict the manoeuvrability of the towing boat? <input type="checkbox"/> Do all leaders in any activity involving moving water carry throw bags (or for competitive events, are throw bags available)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do some other participants who are trained in the use of throw bags carry them as well (at the discretion of the leader)? <input type="checkbox"/> (recommended) Is a rescue knife available for all white water activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are the knives quickly and easily accessible (but not carried on the outside of a PFD)? <input type="checkbox"/> (trips & expeditions) Does the leader (and other participants at the leader's discretion) carry a basic repair kit that is appropriate for the boats that are being used <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>(competitive events) Is a basic repair kit available for use by all participants as appropriate?</p>				
<p>4.8. Maintenance, replacement and storage of equipment</p> <p>Is all equipment used in canoeing activities used, maintained and stored according to manufacturers' instructions where applicable?</p>				

5. Incident Reporting

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>5.1. Recording and reporting incidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does your organisation maintain centralised records (preferably a database) of canoeing incidents and accidents that resulted in injury or had the potential to result in injury? <input type="checkbox"/> Are all paddlers able to use these records to benefit from the experience of others? <input type="checkbox"/> Does your organisation report these incidents to Australian Canoeing? <input type="checkbox"/> (recommended) In the event of an incident, are all personnel encouraged to complete an incident report form and forward directly to AC for processing? <p><i>See www.canoe.org.au for a copy of the incident form, or contact AC on (02) 9552 4500.</i></p>				

6. Other requirements

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>6.1 Clothing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is the outer layer of all participants' clothing of a colour that makes it easily visible for other water users or rescue services? <input type="checkbox"/> Is clothing of a material and design that gives adequate protection from the weather conditions that are expected during the activity (<i>i.e. the protective qualities of the clothing shall not be significantly reduced when the material is wet</i>). <input type="checkbox"/> Is footwear worn at all times for paddling? 				

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Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is footwear designed such that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> It provides adequate protection when the wearer is in the boat, and while walking both in and out of the water? <input type="checkbox"/> It cannot come off easily, especially while walking in water or mud? <input type="checkbox"/> It is not a heavy boot of any style <input type="checkbox"/> It is not of a design that may become caught on foot pegs. <input type="checkbox"/> Are hats that provide adequate sun protection and/or warmth as required, worn at all times while on the water? <input type="checkbox"/> Are sunglasses and prescription spectacles secured with a suitable restraint? <input type="checkbox"/> (trips & expeditions) Does the trip leader carry extra dry clothing, as appropriate for the participants, the paddling conditions and the duration of the activity? 				
<p>6.2 Sun protection</p> <p>Do trip leaders and all competition participants adhere to and promote best practice sun protection behaviour, to include (as relevant):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen freely available to all participants <input type="checkbox"/> Regular use of high protection factor sunscreen on all exposed areas, with reapplication at least every 2 hours (more often when sweating or in spray/wet environments) <input type="checkbox"/> Regular use of a high protection factor lip balm <input type="checkbox"/> Use of a wide brim hat or a style that gives 360 degrees protection, tied on, OR (where helmets are used) use of a helmet with a visor (if available), and regular, liberal application of sunscreen <input type="checkbox"/> Long sleeve shirts with a collar, appropriate to the conditions, is worn (rash vests, thermal tops, cags, etc) <input type="checkbox"/> (In the event that legs are exposed for prolonged periods) regular, liberal use of sunscreen is a minimum. A full-length pant, of a fit and materials that is safe and comfortable for swimming, is preferable. <input type="checkbox"/> Eye protection from solar UV radiation is recommended. 				

<i>Have the following steps been actioned?</i>	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
<p>6.3 Food and drink</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are adequate food and drink supplies as appropriate for the nature and duration of the activity for all participants carried or available?</p> <p><i>High-energy foods are recommended, particularly in cold weather.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is adequate drinking water available or carried?</p> <p><i>N.B. Guides/Instructors are <u>not</u> qualified by virtue of their AC qualifications to determine the suitability of lake or river water for human consumption. The condition of water should be checked with the relevant body and if any concerns exist, water should be carried or an acceptable water purification method should be used.</i></p>				

END OF CHECKLIST