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: *'Participants' include paddlers, officials, guides, instructors, coaches, observers, etc*	
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

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
1.1. Prevention – Screening and Prohibited Person Declarations				
(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: ❑ Coaches and registered Instructors and Guides ❑ Volunteer personnel who will or are likely to travel away with teams of canoeists under 18 years of age; and ❑ Persons in a role in which that person is likely to have individual and unsupervised contact with canoeists under 18 years of age?				
(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: ❑ 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 ❑ 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.				
*** Screening means:** • *Checking the Preferred Applicant's referees;* • *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* • *Obtaining a Police Check of Preferred Applicants and Existing Approaches.*				
(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? *Refer to Australian Canoeing Member Protection By Law, section 6 for details of appropriate action.*				

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
1.2. Breaches				
(a) *Harassment* – Has your organisation developed and implemented policies and procedures to prevent harassment of any kind, including: ❑ Sexual harassment ❑ Racial harassment ❑ Sexuality harassment ❑ Disability harassment ❑ Abuse ❑ Vilification ❑ Discrimination – direct and indirect?				
(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?				
(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?				
(d) *Appeals* – Does your organisation exercise the appeals process as outlined in Clause 18 of the AC Member Protection By Law?				

2. Planning

Have the following steps been actioned?	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*
 	
❑ Communication technology (mobiles, radios, satellite phones etc) that can be relied upon to work at the venue been organised?
 	
❑ Has emergency response information been documented and is it readily available in the event of an emergency that requires external assistance? Information should include:
 	
  ❑ Communication and contact details
  ❑ Escape route and location information
  ❑ Participant lists
  ❑ Medical forms
  ❑ Transport details.				

(c) *Emergency procedures* **i)** Have emergency procedures been developed and documented, for each of the following events (as applicable): ❑ Serious injury or fatality ❑ Serious threats to personal safety from high-risk environmental conditions (e.g. flood, storm, bushfire, etc.) ❑ Lost participants ❑ Behavioural management problems?				

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
ii) Do the emergency procedures include (as applicable):				
❑ Priority of tasks: immediate, second, third				
❑ Roles and responsibilities				
❑ Exit routes, emergency and evacuation procedures				
❑ Contact details for base camp, and program administrators as required				
❑ Contact details for police, rescue and medical services in the area				
❑ Communication modes and protocols				
❑ Location management				
❑ Vehicular access				
❑ Boat access				
❑ Helicopter access				
❑ Identification of nearest medical facilities				
❑ Identification of natural hazards and appropriate response (as required)				
❑ Post incident management: contact of insurer, legal procedures, post incident trauma, counselling?				
2.2 Float Plan (for trips & expeditions)				
❑ Has a float plan been established for the event?				
❑ Does the float plan include full details of:				
❑ The route				
❑ The participants				
❑ Contingency plans?				
NB Refer to Appendix F of Australian Canoeing's Safety Guidelines for a sample template of a float plan.				

3. People

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
3.1. **Leader (or competition manager) Responsibilities** Does the leader have the following minimum responsibilities (as applicable): ❑ Research likely hazards ❑ Confirm group experience/capabilities ❑ Adhere to the AC Safety Guidelines ❑ Ensure a full briefing of participants is clearly carried out and understood ❑ Check river levels and weather reports ❑ Ensure that all group equipment is stored correctly ❑ Confirm head count before departure and throughout trip ❑ Be alert for physical and psychological condition of the group ❑ Control pace of the group (trips & expeditions) ❑ Rest group if necessary (trips & expeditions) ❑ Ensure, to the best of his/her ability that participants do not get into situations beyond their capabilities ❑ Designate responsibility to other leaders ❑ Confirm headcount after trip (trips & expeditions) ❑ Notify appropriate persons of safe completion (trips & expeditions) ❑ Check all equipment on return?				
3.2. **Competency and qualifications of Instructors and/or Guides (trips & expeditions)** Are all Instructors and/or Guides <u>qualified</u> for the roles that they will perform at the event? Qualification must include: ❑ 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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Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
❑ Proof that their qualification and skills are <u>current</u> – this means: **(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.				
3.3. **First Aid qualifications** **(a)** **(trips & expeditions)** – Do all Instructors and Guides: ❑ have a current state government regulating body approved first aid qualification? ❑ have a state government authority's designated first aid kit as a minimum? ❑ (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? *OR* **(b)** **(competitive events)** – Have arrangements been made to ensure adequate provision of first aid in the event of an emergency? This means: ❑ Hire St. John's Ambulance or another reputable first aid provider organisation to provide first aid services at the event *OR* ❑ 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, *AND* ❑ Have adequate first aid facilities and equipment available at the event.			`	

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
3.4. Communication and authority				
(a) (trips and expeditions)				
Has the leader ensured that all participants are given clear and concise instructions on the following matters:				
❑ The National Standard Signals *(This is the AC-recommended choice of communication system. Details can be found in Appendix A of AC's Safety Guidelines – December 2004)*				
❑ The correct and safe handling and navigation of any canoe or kayak				
❑ The correct fitting and wearing of appropriate Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's) which are to be worn at all times				
❑ The whereabouts of all group and safety equipment				
❑ The correct and safe operation of any (including safety) equipment				
❑ In sea programs, the group spacing and average speed as well as the signals to be used by the trip leader and participants				
❑ The group's capsize procedure				
❑ Sun and/or environmental protection				
❑ Group medical concerns				
❑ The program for the day				
❑ The role of each participant				
❑ The expectations of each participant?				
(b) (competitive events)				
❑ Has the competition manager ensured that all event staff and participants (as necessary) are fully briefed on:				
❑ First aid personnel, services and procedures				
❑ Emergency procedures				
❑ The role of each staff member & participant				
❑ The chain of command				
❑ Codes of behaviour				
❑ Communication systems and technology				
❑ Weather conditions (as relevant)				
❑ Other information as relevant to the event.				

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
3.5. **(trips and expeditions) Ratios and group size** ❑ Is there an appropriate instructor/guide: client ratio for this trip? *To determine the correct radio for your trip, refer to Appendix C of AC's Safety Guidelines – December 2004.* ❑ (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?				

3.6. **(trips and expeditions) Skills of participants**
 	
❑ 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?
 	
❑ Has he/she refused participation to anyone who is considered not sufficiently capable or responsible? **
 	
* Purpose of the on-water familiarisation session to demonstrate and practice relevant skills and procedures including but not limited to:
   • *rescue*
   • *self rescue and capsize drills.*
 	
** 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.				

4. Equipment

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
4.0. **a)** Have all possible eventualities been considered when selecting equipment for the activity? **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? *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.* *For competitive events, either all required equipment (including emergency supplies) must be made readily available from shore, or (for some events) participants may be required to carry their own equipment.*				

4.1. **Boats and associated equipment**
 	
❑ 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?
 	
❑ Are measures put into place to ensure that all craft:
  ❑ Provide a stable platform allowing strokes to be performed effectively
  ❑ Possess the strength to withstand all foreseeable forces
  ❑ Not sink, but remain horizontal when swamped and be useable as buoyancy for its crew
  ❑ Be capable of being towed by rope and grasped by hand
  ❑ Allow for easy exit in the event of a capsize
  ❑ Not be designed, made of a material or finished in a way that could cause injury or impede exit
  ❑ Be fitted with end loops or toggles
  ❑ 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
  ❑ Be of a colour that is clearly visible to other water users or rescue authorities				

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
❑ Have positive buoyancy at each end which may consist of: • 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.				
❑ (recommended) Are rudders, skegs or retractable fins used on sea kayaks? *N.B. Paddlers should not be reliant on them for directional control of the craft.*				
❑ Pump or self-bailer – is a pump or self bailer carried so that water may be removed from a sea kayak cockpit as necessary?				
❑ Vessels used for clients under supervision: ❑ 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 a 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				
❑ Are paddles appropriate to the type of craft and do they build the skill levels of the participants?				
❑ Is one or more spare paddle(s) available as appropriate for the activity?				
4.3. Personal flotation devices (PFD's)				
Are PFD's that comply with the requirements below available for each participant:				
❑ Construction complies with Australian Standards for Type 2 or Type 3				
❑ Are the correct size and are adjustable to ensure a proper fit				
❑ (recommended) Each PFD has a whistle attached				
❑ Towing cowtails are quick release				
❑ The PFD's must not contain any pocket or other component that may impede paddling, normal rescue practices or exit from craft.				
❑ (recommended) All PFD's are bright in colour?				

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
4.4. Helmets Are canoeing helmets available and worn for <u>all</u> of the following activities: ❑ Paddling water Grade 2 and above ❑ Surfing ❑ Paddling among rocks or in sea caves ❑ During rescue practice? *Helmets are optional for other canoeing activities.*				

4.5. Navigation equipment (where appropriate)
 	
❑ Will an appropriate choice of navigation equipment be used? This may include:
 	
    ❑ Maps and/or marine charts
    ❑ Compasses
    ❑ GPS receivers.
 	
❑ Is the navigation equipment treated and/or stored in such a way as to make them water resistant?				

4.6. Communication equipment
 	
❑ 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:
    ❑ Marine whistle
    ❑ Mobile phone
    ❑ Signalling mirror
    ❑ Marine VHF radio (operators should hold the VHF Certificate for Proficiency)
    ❑ Flares (red, smoke, parachute)
    ❑ Marine 27MHz radio
    ❑ Torch
    ❑ Strobe light
    ❑ UHF radio
    ❑ V-sheet
    ❑ Satellite phone
    ❑ Chemical light stick (or electronic equivalent)
    ❑ EPIRB.
 	
❑ Is all electronic and other equipment that can be damaged by water carried in water resistant containers?				

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
4.7. **Safety and rescue equipment**				
❑ Is all safety and rescue equipment carried in such a way that it is quickly and easily accessible?				
❑ Do leaders (or relevant competition personnel) have an appropriate *towing system* easily accessible so that it can be deployed quickly when needed?				
❑ Are other participants carrying towlines as appropriate for the activity and at the discretion of the leader?				
❑ Are all towing systems quick-release, and are they set up so that they do not restrict the manoeuvrability of the towing boat?				
❑ Do all leaders in any activity involving moving water carry *throw bags* (or for competitive events, are throw bags available)?				
❑ Do some other participants who are trained in the use of throw bags carry them as well (at the discretion of the leader)?				
❑ (recommended) Is a *rescue knife* available for all white water activities?				
❑ Are the knives quickly and easily accessible (but not carried on the outside of a PFD)?				
❑ (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				
OR				
(competitive events) Is a basic repair kit available for use by all participants as appropriate?				
4.8. **Maintenance, replacement and storage of equipment**				
Is all equipment used in canoeing activities used, maintained and stored according to manufacturers' instructions where applicable?				

5. Incident Reporting

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
5.1. **Recording and reporting incidents:**				
❑ 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?				
❑ Are all paddlers able to use these records to benefit from the experience of others?				
❑ Does your organisation report these incidents to Australian Canoeing?				
❑ (recommended) In the event of an incident, are all personnel encouraged to complete an incident report form and forward directly to AC for processing?				
See www.canoe.org.au for a copy of the incident form, or contact AC on (02) 9552 4500.				

6. Other requirements

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
6.1 **Clothing**				
❑ Is the **outer layer** of all participants' clothing of a colour that makes it easily visible for other water users or rescue services?				
❑ Is clothing of a material and design that gives adequate protection from the weather conditions that are expected during the activity *(i.e. the protective qualities of the clothing shall not be significantly reduced when the material is wet).*				
❑ Is **footwear** worn at all times for paddling?				

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)

❑ Is footwear designed such that:
 	
  ❑ It provides adequate protection when the wearer is in the boat, and while walking both in and out of the water?
 	
  ❑ It cannot come off easily, especially while walking in water or mud?
 	
  ❑ It is not a heavy boot of any style
 	
❑ It is not of a design that may become caught on foot pegs.
 	
❑ Are *hats* that provide adequate sun protection and/or warmth as required, worn at all times while on the water?
 	
❑ Are *sunglasses* and prescription spectacles secured with a suitable restraint?
 	
❑ (trips & expeditions) Does the trip leader carry *extra dry clothing*, as appropriate for the participants, the paddling conditions and the duration of the activity?				

6.2 Sun protection Do trip leaders and all competition participants adhere to and promote best practice sun protection behaviour, to include (as relevant): ❑ Sunscreen freely available to all participants ❑ 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) ❑ Regular use of a high protection factor lip balm ❑ 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 ❑ Long sleeve shirts with a collar, appropriate to the conditions, is worn (rash vests, thermal tops, cags, etc) ❑ (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. ❑ Eye protection from solar UV radiation is recommended.				

Have the following steps been actioned?	Yes	No	Date completed	Comments (if applicable)
6.3 **Food and drink**				
❑ Are adequate food and drink supplies as appropriate for the nature and duration of the activity for all participants carried or available? *High-energy foods are recommended, particularly in cold weather.*				
❑ Is adequate drinking water available or carried? *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.*				

END OF CHECKLIST