

1 **Canyon Paddlers Association**
2 **Racers/Participants Guidelines and Procedures**
3 **(Specific to the Cache la Poudre River, Colorado)**
4

5 **Introduction**

6 The Canyon Paddlers Association is committed to the safety and well-being of all participants and volunteers
7 of the event. We do not take for granted that safety will just happen---we make it happen. Below are
8 guidelines: (Note: Racers and Participants are used interchangeably.)
9

10 **Experience and Awareness**

- 11 • All race participants are responsible for honestly evaluating their own skills, experience, and physical
12 condition before entering the competition. Racers understand and accept the inherent risks associated
13 with whitewater racing.
 - 14 • Participants are encouraged to notify event personnel of any observed hazards or conditions that may
15 pose a risk to participants.
 - 16 • All racers are encouraged to:
 - 17 ○ Possess a reliable and consistent self-rescue combat roll.
 - 18 ○ Be competent Class III paddlers or above.
 - 19 ○ Be familiar with the race course, including its features, hazards, and technical characteristics.
 - 20 ○ Exercise sound judgment throughout the event.
 - 21 ○ Be a Good Samaritan if you encounter a life threatening situation during the race. Do what you
22 can to help but do it in a safe manner. An attractive award is available.
- 23

24 **Locations of safety personnel**

- 25 • There will be approximately 10-safety personnel on the course.
 - 26 • The group will be a mixture of safety boaters and shoreline personnel with throw ropes.
 - 27 • 1-2 volunteers at each prominent rapid, including 3-Way, Tunnel, Mish Falls, Cardiac, and Pine View.
 - 28 • Other rapids may have volunteers depending on the flow: Rocky Falls, Horseshoe Hole, and Bob's Hole
 - 29 • Also, a designated driver will be on patrol, or, flag down any vehicle if you are alone and need
30 immediate assistance.
- 31

32 **Gear and Equipment**

- 33 • Each racer is responsible for ensuring that all required equipment is present, properly fitted, and in good
34 working condition before the race begins. Racers will be checked prior to entering the river.
- 35 • Required equipment includes:
 - 36 ○ Approved whitewater helmet
 - 37 ○ Properly fitted Coast Guard approved Class III/ Class V Personal Flotation Device (PFD)
 - 38 ○ Spray skirt
 - 39 ○ Appropriate footwear
 - 40 ○ Clothing suitable for water and weather conditions
 - 41 ○ Protective eyewear (recommended)
 - 42 ○ Nose and ear protection (optional but recommended)
 - 43 ○ Whistle
 - 44 ○ Internal flotation or displacement bags
 - 45 ○ Throw bag or tow line system
 - 46 ○ Paddle
 - 47 ○ Race-appropriate water crafts

Conduct during the Race

- All racers share responsibility for maintaining a safe environment on the river.
- Participants are expected to:
 - Treat fellow racers, volunteers, spectators, and river users with courtesy and respect.
 - Follow all instructions from the race officials and volunteers.
 - Communicate clearly when overtaking other boaters while on the river by calling out or signaling your intention and passing side. The river is a public, multi-use resource.
 - Respect all safety warnings and directions provided before and during the race.
 - Be Alcohol and impairing substances free before and during the race
 - Understand that safety personnel are present to help ensure that every participant has a safe and enjoyable race experience. Their directions must be followed at all times.

When the Lower Canyon Search and Rescue Team (LCSRT) is alerted via the call box

Rescue Team Response Procedures

When the rescue team is notified of an incident involving a swimmer, the following procedures shall be followed.

Swimmer Assessment – No Injury

Upon notification of an incident, the on-call ambulance stationed outside the canyon will be placed on standby. Upon arrival at the scene, the Lower Canyon Search and Rescue (LCSR) team will assess the swimmer's condition.

If the swimmer is determined to be uninjured, alert, and capable of making informed decisions, the swimmer may either:

- Withdraw from the race; or
- Continue participation in the race, subject to LCSR approval.

Before resuming participation, the swimmer must sign the appropriate LCSR release form. Once the assessment is complete and ambulance transport is not required, the ambulance service will be released from standby.

Injury Requiring Medical Evaluation

If the swimmer has sustained an injury, LCSR personnel will provide appropriate field medical care and advise the swimmer of available options, including:

- Withdrawal from the race and transport by ambulance to a local emergency department; or
- Withdrawal from the race and refusal of ambulance transport.

If ambulance transport is declined, the swimmer must sign the appropriate LCSR release form acknowledging the refusal of services. Once patient disposition has been determined, the ambulance service will be released as appropriate.

River Extraction

If a swimmer requires extraction from the river, LCSR will immediately initiate and complete the extraction operation.

Following extraction:

If the swimmer is uninjured, the procedures outlined in ***Swimmer Assessment – No Injury*** will apply.

If the swimmer is injured, the procedures outlined in ***Injury Requiring Medical Evaluation*** will apply.

Procedures and Guidelines for Race Participants

In the Event of a Swim or Injury

- ***If You Swim***---If you exit your boat, your first priority is your personal safety. Do not attempt to chase your boat or other equipment. Pursuing gear can create additional hazards and may interfere with self-rescue or rescue efforts by others. Instead:
 - Swim aggressively to shore or to a safe eddy.
 - Follow instructions from nearby paddlers or designated safety personnel.
 - Focus on reaching a safe location before addressing equipment recovery.
 - Once on shore, safety volunteer will assess your condition and determine whether further assistance is needed.
- ***Continuing the Race***---If you are uninjured and choose to continue racing:
 - You are responsible for recovering your own equipment.
 - You are responsible for emptying water from your boat.
 - You are responsible for re-entering your boat and resuming the race.
 - Safety volunteers may provide guidance but are not responsible for preparing your boat for continued racing.
- ***If You Are Injured***---If you require medical assistance:
 - Inform the nearest safety volunteer immediately.
 - Remain as calm and still as possible.
 - Follow all instructions provided by rescue personnel.
 - A safety volunteer will remain with you whenever possible and will coordinate communication with emergency responders.
 - Emergency response access points are located at Mishawaka and the Poudre Park Fire Department. Response times may vary depending on river location and conditions.

Authority to Remove a Racer from Competition

- Volunteer Safety members have the authority to recommend that a racer discontinue participation when, in their judgment, continuing would present an unreasonable risk to the racer or others. Examples may include, but are not limited to:
 - Injury or suspected injury.
 - Signs of concussion or altered mental status.
 - Physical exhaustion or inability to safely navigate the river.
 - Hypothermia or other environmental exposure concerns.
 - Loss of essential safety equipment.
 - Equipment damage that compromises safe operation.
 - Any condition that significantly impairs the racer's ability to continue safely.

- Whenever practical, the volunteer should communicate their concerns to the Safety Coordinator.
- The final authority, however, to remove a racer rests with the Safety Coordinator, but when an immediate safety concern exists, Volunteer Safety members are expected to take reasonable action to prevent a racer from re-entering the course.
- Racers who are injured, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to continue safely shall not be permitted to resume racing.
- The safety of participants, volunteers, and rescuers shall take precedence over race results.

Entrapment or Extrication Situations---If you become trapped in your boat or in debris, safety volunteer will immediately initiate rescue efforts while maintaining the safety for all. If immediate extrication is not possible, rescuers will focus on keeping you safe, maintaining your airway, and providing reassurance until additional rescue resources arrive.

Equipment Recovery---Safety personnel will not pursue equipment when doing so would create unnecessary risk. If recovery attempts are unsafe or unsuccessful, the gear may be allowed to continue downstream. Personal safety always takes priority over equipment recovery.

Shore-Based Safety Volunteers---Safety volunteers stationed along the river provide additional rescue support and assistance. These volunteers are there to assist with emergency response and should be treated with the same authority and respect as safety boaters. Follow their directions promptly.

After a Self-Rescue---If after you self-rescued and do not immediately encounter safety personnel:

- Remain in a safe location and do not continue moving if you suspect an injury.
- Do not attempt gear recovery if you suspect an injury.
- Signal or flag down a volunteer or a safety driver for assistance.

Sweep Boaters---Sweep boaters serve as the final layer of on-water safety coverage. If assistance is needed and no other safety personnel are present wait for the sweep boaters. All safety procedures and instructions outlined above apply equally to sweep boaters.

Emergency Medical Services---If the local rescue crew is activated, they will assess and determine the level of care. These trained professionals are first responders that take your safety and health seriously. If ambulance transport is recommended, you may be asked to accept or decline transportation. If you are unconscious the rescue crew will authorize transport to the nearest medical facility.

END

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