

Canyon Paddlers Association Safety Plan for Race Events

(Specific for the Cache la Poudre River, CO.)

Introduction

Canyon Paddlers Association (CPA) is devoted to safety and health of its racers, volunteers, and the general public. We do not take for granted that safety will just happen—we make it happen. Below are descriptions and methods.

1. Safety Coordinator

The Safety Coordinator serves as the lead safety official for the event and is responsible for organizing and managing all safety operations.

Responsibilities

- Conduct pre-race safety briefings.
- Assign Safety Boaters, Safety Shoreline personnel, and Sweep Boaters to appropriate locations based on experience and ability.
- Ensure all safety positions are adequately staffed.
- Monitor safety operations throughout the event.
- Coordinate responses to incidents and emergencies.
- Maintain communication with race officials and safety personnel.

2. Safety Boater

Safety Boaters are expected to be skilled paddlers who are capable of safely retrieving swimmers while protecting both themselves and the participant. They should be familiar with their assigned rapid and able to determine the safest and most effective location from which to provide coverage. If, however, they are not familiar enough to adequately determine the most effective location for setup, they will be given advice and recommendations in order to provide the best coverage for self and swimmers. CPR certification is strongly recommended.

Responsibilities

- Prioritize swimmer safety at all times.
- Recover swimmers and assist them to shore whenever possible.
- Once the swimmer is safely on shore, assess whether they are injured and ask if they wish to continue racing.
- If the participant is uninjured and chooses not to continue, they may remain at the shoreline until transported by a Safety Driver or joined by the Sweep Boaters.

- If the participant is uninjured and chooses to continue and their equipment is nearby, do not assist them in re-entering their boat or removing water from it. Competitors are responsible for their own race performance and equipment management.

Emergency Procedures

- If the participant is injured and requires immediate medical assistance, stay with the participant and keep them calm. Inform another safety volunteer to contact emergency services using the event emergency phone available at one of two locations. See additional guidelines for locations.
- If a swimmer requires extrication, ensure their head remains above water and maintain contact with them if it is safe to do so.
- Direct another safety volunteer to contact emergency services using the event emergency phone number available at one of two locations. See Additional Guidelines below for locations.
- Do not attempt extrication if doing so would place you or the swimmer at greater risk.
- Remain with the swimmer, monitor their condition, and help keep them calm until additional assistance arrives.

Additional Guidelines

- Carry a cell phone to use at each of the two Lower Canyon Rescue Team locations (Poudre Park Fire Department and Mishawaka). It is an internet hot spot that requires you to read the instruction placard to report your emergency.
- Carry a tow line and whistle.
- Do not pursue lost equipment if doing so is unsafe.
- If a gear recovery attempt is unsuccessful or presents unnecessary risk, allow the equipment to continue downstream.

3. Safety Shoreline

Safety Shoreline volunteers provide shore-based rescue support and are expected to be proficient in the safe use of a throw rope. If the Safety Shoreline volunteer is unfamiliar with the location, he will be given advice and recommendation in order to provide the best setup for proper coverage for yourself and swimmer. CPR certification is strongly recommended.

Responsibilities

- Position yourself where you can effectively monitor your assigned section of river.
- Use a throw rope to assist swimmers when necessary.
- Remain on shore while deploying a throw rope. Do not stand in the river while performing a rescue.
- If your first throw is unsuccessful, you may move along the shoreline or adjacent roadway to attempt a second rescue from a safer or more effective position.

- If rescue efforts are unsuccessful, immediately notify a nearby Safety Boater or event official that a swimmer requires assistance.
- Carry a whistle to alert others.

4. Sweep Boaters

Sweep Boaters serve as the final safety team on the water.

Their responsibilities include:

- Confirming that all competitors have completed their run or exited the river.
- Notifying Safety Boaters when the course is clear and the race has concluded.
- Ensuring Safety Boaters either exit the river or join the sweep.
- Assisting with any emergencies encountered while moving downstream.
- Sweep must carry a tow line and whistle.

5. 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.

5.1. 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.

5.2. 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:

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

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

104 **5.3. River Extraction**

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

107 Following extraction:

- 108 • If the swimmer is uninjured, the procedures outlined in Section 5.1 shall apply.
- 109 • If the swimmer is injured, the procedures outlined in Section 5.2 shall apply.

110 **6. Protective Gear**

111 All participants, including competitors, safety boaters, and on-water personnel, must wear
112 properly-fitting U.S. Coast Guard approved personal floatation devices (PFD's) at all
113 time during any on-water activities sanctioned by the company and/or insured by the
114 American Canoe Association (ACA).

115 All PFD's classified III or V and designed and approved for whitewater or flat water use,
116 must be in serviceable condition at all times.

117 All participants must be dressed in clothing appropriate for the venue and conditions of
118 the event and appropriately for changing conditions including both the air and water
119 temperatures.

120 **7. Drugs and Alcohol**

121 Drugs and alcohol use before or during the on-water activity is not acceptable by the
122 Company and may lead to expulsion from the event and the Company.

123 **8. Class III or Higher Whitewater**

124 Participants must wear properly fitting paddling helmets for the activity.

125 Participants must have an appropriate level of additional flotation in their boats for the
126 venue.

127 Groups of up to eight participants must carry at least two throw ropes. Groups larger than
128 eight participants must carry at least one throw rope per every four participants.

129 **9. Venue changes and modifications**

130 Should the Event encounter conditions that require modifying locations and other aspects
131 of the Event, the Event Organizer and other officers will consider recommendations and
132 remedy and to alert ACA insurance department.

133 The conditions include unusual high water levels, weather, and natural phenomenon..

134 Relocation of launch sites, shortening course length, and other aspects due to weather and
135 high water will be considered with the safety of the participants in mind.

136 **Conclusion**

137 This plan is in no way complete. Field conditions and available personnel are factors that this
138 plan can be modified as field decisions.

139 All incidences whether a swimmer has sustained injuries or not, will be reported to the Safety
140 Coordinator in writing.

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