

GREAT LAKES PADDLERS – TRIP COORDINATOR GUIDE LINES

So...you want to be a trip coordinator but do not have the foggiest idea of what you need to do. This guide will help put you on the right track. This guide is not intended for wilderness trips or big water excursions as these trips require additional planning and expertise.

KNOW THE ROUTE

You need to know where you will be putting in and taking out and what lies between the two points. This includes any portages, hazards and type of water. You also need to know how long the trip will take.

You should try to paddle the route at some reasonable time before the trip takes place. If it is a well-traveled route that you know about, this requirement may not be necessary. However, if there has been a recent heavy rain or wind storm the route should be pre-paddled just in case something may have changed.

FLOAT PLAN

You should develop a float plan with the following information:

Does your trip require a specific boat configuration?

Identify the requirements of the skills required to undertake the trip. Refer to the GLP Paddle skills & trip difficulty rating chart. Specify if children or pets are to be allowed to participate.

Meeting time and place – will everyone be meeting at the put-in? Meeting and launching times are critical; people straggling in could delay your launch significantly.

Do you have a tentative shuttle plan developed? Do you know how long it will take?

What time will you launch. This should be clear and allow for the meeting time, shuttle, etc.

Time and place of a break or lunch stop if one is planned.

Location and points of interest; how long to remain at that location.

What is the expected take out time? Factor in the paddle time, stop times.

Recommend that all participants notify their personal contact person as to the plans for the trip.

Emphasize the requirements that all participants MUST wear their PFD while on the water.

You should be aware of the whereabouts of any local hospitals or medical treatment centers. If possible have someone in the group that has had some first aid training. Someone in the group should have a cell phone.

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KNOW THE SKILL LEVEL OF THE PARTICIPANTS

If you do not have personal knowledge of an individual's skill level ask someone who does have knowledge of the person's skills. If you are not sure and receive questionable information you should not allow that person to join you. Suggest that the person develop additional skills by joining in on a less demanding trip or take formal canoe/kayak classes.

NOTE: If the trip requires a minimum boat size or configuration it should be spelled out in the float plan i.e.; paddling on big open water that may require a kayak with a minimum length and 2 bulk heads or flotation devices.

LEGAL ISSUES

As a trip coordinator you must make sure that everyone is advised on the conditions that they may encounter on the trip. If you think that an individual's skill or equipment is less than the minimum requirements for the trip you have the obligation to refuse the individual to participate. An unprepared individual could become a hazard for the group. You will not be able to stop him/her from proceeding on their own, but you can refuse to allow them to participate with the group.

WAIVERS AND/OR PERMISSION SLIPS

You must have signed waivers by all participating adults. In the case of minors you will need permission slips signed by the parent or guardian. The parent or guardian must accompany the minor.

ON THE WATER

Before getting on the water have a brief meeting to discuss the plan and review any safety precautions.

Advise everyone, if a boat goes over; announce "BOAT OVER", everyone stops, rescue sequence is:

(1) paddler,(2) boat,(3) equipment in the water.

Establish a lead paddler and a sweep paddler. Inform others that no one is to be neither ahead of the lead boat nor behind the sweep boat. If you have a rather large group, assign someone the task of floating between the lead and sweep.

It is good practice to have the lead boat stop along the way and gather all the paddlers for a brief moment before continuing on.

An ideal situation is for all boats to keep in sight of those behind and ahead. This maintains a smaller footprint and provides ready assistance to those who may have a problem.

Utilize the clubs Walkie-talkies.

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EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS (MIMINUM)

Wearable PFD

Proper clothing for the weather

Whistle (wet type)

Throw rope

Painter

Sponge & Bailer/Pump

Change of clothes in water tight container

Snack or lunch

Drinking Water

Sunscreen

Hat

Insect repellent

Rain gear (top & bottom)

Spare paddle

Sun Glasses

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Announce your paddle plans in the club newsletter (Eddy Lines) at least 2 months in advance. Post your paddle plans on the clubs website calendar at least 2 months in advance.

Try to obtain maps of the area where you are going to paddle and distribute to the paddlers.

Provide directions for the shuttles in case someone gets left behind the string of cars.

Watch the weather, be prepared to cancel or postpone the trip if it appears that severe weather is a possibility. Light rain should not be a cause for you to cancel the trip.

Following the above guide lines should provide you with a successful paddle. Thanks for taking charge to coordinate a trip.

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