

# Shuswap Association for Rowing and Paddling

## Outrigger Canoe Safety Guidelines

### People and Prerequisites

**Waiver:** All adult club members and guests must read these guidelines and sign the club's Shuswap Association for Rowing and Paddling Member Waiver before participating in any club activity.

**Minors:** A parent/guardian of a minor age 14-18 must sign a Shuswap Association for Rowing and Paddling Acknowledgement of Risk and Consent form prior to the minor participating in a club activity.

**Swim to Survive:** All people going out in club boats must have sufficient skills and comfort in the water to complete the Swim to Survive test while wearing a PFD: Roll into deep water, tread water one minute, and swim 50 meters.

**Alcohol/Drugs:** No paddler may, prior to entering or while in a club boat, use alcohol or recreational drugs that may affect clear thinking, coordination, and reaction time.

**Health Issues:** Each paddler must inform the leader of any physical or health issues or medications that may affect their attention or performance in an emergency. The leader may decline to sit a paddler who, in their sole opinion, may not have the ability to perform the duties associated with safe paddling.

**Number of Paddlers:** An OC6 will not go out with less than four paddlers including the steersperson, and only with that number if they are all experienced OC paddlers. Otherwise, five paddlers is the minimum and six is the maximum.

**Issues Arising from Paddling:** A paddler who has a question or issue related an activity should address it with the canoe's captain. If not resolved, then present the issue to the Outrigger Coordinator.

### Environment

#### **If in Doubt, Don't go Out!**

**Lightning:** Paddling will be cancelled in the event of a lightning storm forecasted during the paddling period. If on the water when one unexpectedly blows in, the group will paddle to the nearest safe docking site or shore and get off the water to wait out the storm.

**Wind/Weather:** Paddling may be cancelled in the event of winds creating whitecaps, cold weather, or conditions that are otherwise unsafe for paddlers with the knowledge, skill and experience of those in the group. The leader will make this call, generally with input from group members. If paddling in rough weather, the OC should be kept at least 100 m from the shoreline to allow time, in the event of a huli, to right the boat and bail before hitting the shore or rocks.

**Cold Water:** Groups will work to remain within 100 meters of the shoreline in early season or otherwise paddling in cold water.

**Air Quality:** Paddling will be cancelled when the Air Quality Index (AQI) is above 200. Paddlers are strongly encouraged to wear N95 masks with valves for AQI readings of 100-200.

**Visibility:** Whether caused by fog or smoke, a minimum of 150 meters of unrestricted visibility is required before going out. A loss of this visibility during a paddling session is cause to return to dock. Do not paddle after sunset or before sunrise unless carrying all Transport Canada safety equipment required for this situation.

**In-water Hazards:** Everyone is responsible for keeping an eye out for and warning of deadheads or other objects in the water that could damage the boat or cause an upset.

**Safe Docking:** Never risk crushed fingers by grabbing a dock while the boat is still moving; wait until the boat has been brought to a stop using paddles before reaching for the dock and keep fingers out from between gunwales and dock edges when placing bumpers or getting in and out of the craft.

## Personal Equipment

**PFD or Lifejacket:** All paddlers must wear an appropriately sized Transport Canada approved PFD or lifejacket when on the water in club activities.

**Paddles:** Every paddler should have a paddle, appropriately sized prior to setting out.

**Clothing:** Every paddler should be wearing and/or bring in a waterproof container (e.g., drybag), sufficient quantities and types of clothing to remain protected from anticipatable adverse weather.

**Sun Protection:** All paddlers are strongly encouraged to practise sun protection: **SLIP** on a long-sleeved shirt, **SLAP** on a broad-brimmed hat, **SLOP** sunscreen on uncovered skin, and **WRAP** on sunglasses for eye protection from direct and reflected rays.

## Group Equipment

**Required Equipment in OC Craft:** Every boat going out must have all equipment consistent with Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guidelines:

- One Transport Canada approved PDF or lifejacket per person (see above)
- One buoyant heaving line of at least 15 meters
- Two bailers
- Two whistles
- One reboarding device (i.e., huli strap)
- One watertight flashlight if the boat is to be used after sunset or before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility

**Cell Phone:** Every boat going out must have at least one cell phone or other reliable communication device stored in a waterproof but accessible container.

**First Aid Kit:** Every boat must be outfitted with a first aid kit with sufficient supplies to manage foreseeable injuries.

**Boat Check:** The leader is responsible for ensuring the boat is checked over to ensure the lashings are tight and in good condition, bulkheads and ama are watertight and fitted with proper plugs, and that the required group equipment listed above is aboard.

## Training

**Loading/Unloading Paddlers:** Support the crew in keeping the boat stable while following the organized system for paddlers getting in and out of the craft safely.

**In-craft Communications:** Learn the basic commands the steersperson/captain uses and follow them.

**Train for all Seats:** Each paddler should be given the opportunity to become familiar with paddling in different positions in the boat.

**Huli Procedures Review:** Before going out each time, the leader should review huli procedures, including identifying specific roles to be taken by each paddler and a reminder to stay with the boat.

**Huli Practise:** Every paddler should become familiar with and practise huli procedures, including applying the buddy system when in the water, and getting themselves back in the boat.

**H.E.L.P./Huddle Positions:** In the event of very cold water, paddlers should be familiar with the H.E.L.P. (Heat Escape Lessening Position) and Huddle positions and be prepared to leave the canoe to swim to shore and get out of the water before hypothermia sets in and makes that impossible.

**Swamping:** If an OC swamps in high waves, work to bail it out as quickly as possible. If the gunwales are below water level, the leader may require some paddlers to get out of the boat until sufficient bailing has been done to regain enough freeboard for them to re-enter.

**Safety is Everyone's Responsibility! If you are aware of an issue or concern that may affect the safety of yourself or the group, make it known prior to setting out.**