

Baltimore Canoe & Kayak Club

Trip Coordination & Participation – Basic Guidelines

GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

General Terms:

- 1) “Trip Coordinator”: Person who determines trip parameters, including (but not limited to):
 - River selection/section selection
 - Day/Time of trip
 - Shuttle/convoy coordination
 - Promotion & announcements pertaining to trip;
- 2) “Put-in”: The location on the river where a trip begins;
- 3) “Take-out”: The location on the river where the trip ends;
- 4) “Shuttle”: The movement of vehicles/equipment/people between the put-in/take-out;
- 5) “Rally Point”: A meeting place for trip participants (put-in, take-out and/or meet up location for caravan);
- 6) “Caravan”: Group of vehicles traveling together;
- 7) “Canoe Camper”: Camping gear goes with paddler in their boat;
- 8) “Car Camper”: Camping gear stays in paddler’s vehicle or camp site;
- 9) “Dealer’s Choice” (DC): A trip that may be proposed/promoted days or weeks in advance, but:
 - Trip Coordinator has the option of selecting the river to be run at a later date (nearer to the trip date), based upon water levels, difficulty rating of river(s), weather/travel considerations;
- 10) “Pick-up Trip”: A non-scheduled, informal trip (not club sponsored).

Time Management Terms (It is possible to be obsessive about this -- after all, there is a social side to the sport and the point is to have fun; but many common trip problems relate to time management, so trip participants should give it some thought.):

- 1) “Critical Path”: A number of activities have to be accomplished for a successful paddling trip.
 - Some activities can be done simultaneously; other activities are necessarily sequential.
 - The “Critical Path” refers to a series of one or more sequential activities that cannot be started until a predecessor activity is complete.
- 2) “Burning Daylight”: Refers to the limited daylight hours available for an outdoor activity, particularly in fall, winter and early spring; context almost always involves intra-trip daylight time wasting.
- 3) “Dithering”: Refers to time spent when paddlers meet, socialize or are waiting for something to happen.

TRIP COORDINATION:

(Trip Coordinator's Role)

PRIOR TO TRIP:

- Verify put-in and take-out points, available parking, etc.
- Set a Rally Point time/place with both primary and alternate runs in mind.
- If necessary, obtain private property owner's permissions.
- Set camping/motel arrangements for multiple day trips.
- Locate the nearest emergency medical aid to the trip area; retain emergency contact info.
- Be available for inquiries about the trip. If TC will be unavailable, set up an alternate contact.
- Discourage any potential participant(s) who does not possess the skills necessary to paddle the intended run.
- Be willing to recommend that lesser-skilled paddlers do not run certain rapids in the interest of personal and group safety.
- Maintain a list of persons signed up for the trip (with contact info).
- Encourage participants to bring appropriate safety gear (throw rope, first aid kit, etc) and weather gear (splash top, dry suit, layers, etc – as appropriate).

NOTE: Trip coordinator is not necessarily the lead boater on the trip, if not they may recruit other experienced paddlers to assist on the water.

DAY BEFORE TRIP:

- Check water levels.
- Check weather forecasts (with attention to temperature, winds, rain predictions and possible flood warnings).
- Consider alternate rivers/streams based on local, current conditions.
- Contact all participants if cancellation is warranted.

DAY OF TRIP – AT RALLY POINT:

- If caravanning:
 - Set lead and sweep cars for trip.
 - Exchange cell numbers before leaving. All drivers should have the number for at least one other vehicle in the caravan (preferably 2 or more).
 - Keep vehicle behind you in sight.

AT RIVERSIDE:

- Make any final decisions based upon river and weather conditions at riverside.
- Set up vehicle shuttles, including half-way point take outs (if necessary);
 - Make sure drivers at take-out points have keys!
- All participants will wear appropriate safety/weather gear (life jackets/helmets, at the minimum).
- Identify first-timers so that others are aware and can assist them.
- Review river signals with participants.
- Before heading downstream, determine break/lunch locations with lead boat.
- Make sure the lead boat can recognize take-out *from river*.
- NOTE: It is the responsibility of each paddler to inform the Trip Coordinator of any medical conditions and/or emergency medications, including where and how medications are stored during the trip.

ON THE WATER:

- Encourage the maintenance of a leisurely pace.
- Stop and regroup periodically.
- Stop upstream of hazardous areas and scout as needed.
- Use a “buddy system” on the water (no paddler left behind!)
- Set lead and sweep boats (or teams).
- Watch the boat behind – stop if/when that boat is not in sight.
- Consider breaking large trips into smaller groups.

AT TAKE OUT:

- Set up return shuttle (drivers – bring keys!)

AFTER TRIP:

- Remind all participants to return any loaned/borrowed gear.
- Before leaving, make sure all cars are able to start/run.

GENERAL ETIQUETTE FOR PADDLERS

- 1) Leave the put-in, the take-out, lunch spots and the river cleaner than you found it.
- 2) Be courteous on the roadway - it's OBVIOUS you're a paddler (boats and racks are a dead give-away).
- 3) Remember, when you're at riverside you are on someone's property – treat it with respect.
- 4) Notify the TC as early as possible about your intention to participate in the trip
 - a. At least one week in advance for camping trips (more may be required at TC's discretion);
 - b. At least 48 hours for day trips.
- 5) Notify the TC *as early as possible* if your plans change.
- 6) Know the river classification (ask TC if uncertain)
 - a. For your safety and the safety of others, please do not attempt trips beyond your skill and/or ability;
 - b. Understand that the TC has final say on any club organized trip to exclude paddlers who are not qualified for the difficulty level of the trip.
- 7) Arrive at the Rally Point *on time* and *prepared to participate in shuttle* (avoid “burning daylight”)
 - a. Obtain gas and supplies *in advance*;
 - b. Be prepared to do your share of driving;
 - c. Have adequate rack/strap systems to carry multiple boats.
- 8) When caravanning, keep the car behind you in sight (stop if necessary to keep caravan intact).
- 9) When on the river:
 - a. Do not get ahead of the lead boat or fall behind the sweep boat/sweep team;
 - b. Keep a safe distance between boats when approaching rapids or hazards;
 - c. When in doubt, STOP AND SCOUT,
 - c.i. Still in doubt? WALK IT!
- 10) When available, use dressing facilities at put-in/take-out for changing clothes
 - a. If dressing facilities are not available, use discretion and modesty
 - a.i. Use cover-ups or find an “out of sight” location to change;
 - b. Remember, river access is often dependent on good public relations.