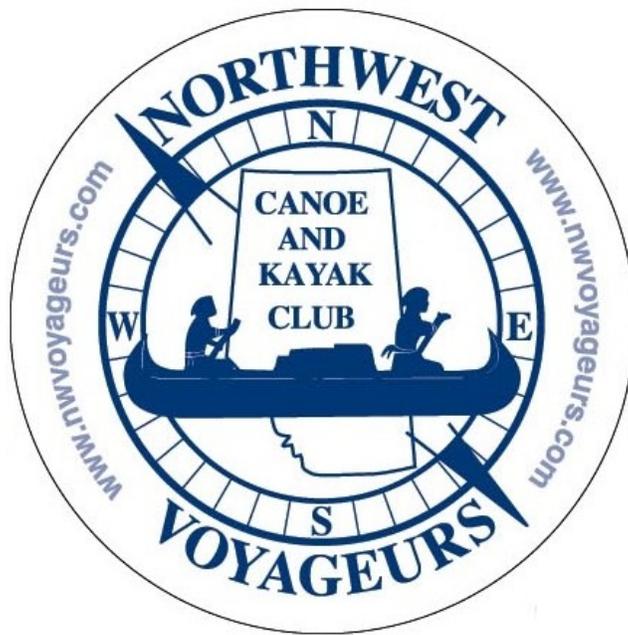


NORTHWEST VOYAGEURS CANOE AND KAYAK CLUB TRIP COORDINATOR GUIDE



2019

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TRIP COORDINATORS GUIDE**

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Section 1: INTRODUCTION

This information is intended as a guide to assist members in leading or organizing an enjoyable and safe paddling experience. Many of the ideas have come from Northwest Voyageurs (NWW) trip coordinators over the years, and we are very grateful for their assistance. The Club Executive is always receptive to new suggestions or ideas on improving the content of this manual. Additional information can be found in the Members Handbook and Policy Manual.

Section 2: COORDINATOR'S CHECKLIST

- I am comfortable to paddle at a skill level at or above what the trip requires.
- I am able to read water one level above what the trip will experience
- I have knowledge about the river or lake to be paddled.
- I have knowledge of basic first aid.
- I am able to use a throw bag.
- I am able to ascertain the level of the participants
- I have an awareness of the hazards and necessary precautions in paddling; e.g., if there are still ice floes, hypothermia is likely, recognize the effects of wind, etc.
- I am able to lead all participants in basic safety overview including basic river signals.
- I am willing and able to ensure that all necessary spots are filled, e.g. first aid, river rescue, leader, optional - GPS/map.
- I am able to organize various aspects of a trip e.g.; schedule, shuttle etc.
- I am willing to collect emergency contacts from all participants and file a float plan.
- For longer trips, or trips in more isolated areas, or in level 3 or above, ensure that there will be someone on the trip who has completed a water rescue course.
- For longer trips, I am able to read maps enough to be able to coordinate current position with a point on the map.

Section 3: PRE-TRIP PREPARATION

Route Research

- Determine put-in/ take-out points, including alternatives. If there is a sudden change in the weather or other emergency, you may wish to shorten the trip. It is better to have too short a trip in poor weather than a long one.
- Check that access is available if it goes through private land.
- If using campsites or park access, check if booking procedures are required or any fees.
- Determine approximate distances and driving times from Edmonton to the river and the shuttle.
- For current flow rates <https://rivers.alberta.ca> is your source for stream warnings and advisories.
- Estimate the river distances and/or paddling times from maps, paddling guides or other information available. A good reference for Alberta rivers and lakes is **Mark's Guide For Alberta Paddlers** which is available at most outdoors stores. For overnight trips look for indications of suitable campsites at appropriate paddling distances.
- It is sometimes useful to know sources of help in case you require assistance during your trip (Ranger Stations, RCMP, farm houses etc).

Float Plan

- See the Trip Coordinators resources section of club web site www.nwvoyageurs.com for float plan templates.
- Put in place determined.
- Put in time determined.

- Take out place determined.
- Take out time estimated.
- Names/phone numbers/emergency contacts of people on the trip.
- Leave a copy with a reliable contact.

Group Equipment and Packing

Depending on the type of trip, the following equipment may be useful to have with the group, but not necessarily by every participant.

Day Trips near Urban Areas

- Cellphone
- Simple First Aid Kit
- Warm fleece in a dry bag

Overnight Trip near Urban Areas

- First Aid kit - #3 Occupational Health Kit
- Rescue knife
- Duct tape
- Waterproof Maps or Maps in waterproof bag.
- Cellphone (if reception where you are going).
- Axe/hatchet
- Saw
- Large tarp
- Rope

Additional Items that are useful for trips in isolated areas

- Spot or satellite phone.
- Personal locator beacon recommended for extended wilderness trips
- Compass
- GPS (optional) with flotation & lanyard
- Survey tape (bright tape for rescue marking)
- Sharpening stone
- Sewing supplies
- Fabric repair/adhesives
- Multi tool
- Wrench / pliers / vice grips
- Boat Repair Kit
 - o Selection of screws and bolts
 - o Wire
 - o Adhesives (epoxy, etc)
 - o Cable Ties
 - o Hose Clamps
 - o Sandpaper
 - o File
 - o Spare nuts & bolts, including seat bolts

Personal Equipment and Packing

Individuals are responsible for their own equipment so that each person is self-sufficient and does not become a burden to his fellow paddlers, especially for canoe camping

Mandatory

- Lifejacket or PDF to be worn by each participant while on the water.
- Pea-less whistle or other sound signaling device.
- Spare paddle.
- Well fitted helmet when on Class III water or above.
- Bailer or bilge pump and sponge.
- Buoyant heaving line; minimum 15 meters throw bag.
- Watertight flashlight or three pyrotechnic distress signals if the craft is to be operated after sunset or before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility.
- Water bottle with extra water or other means of hydration
- Magnetic compass if the craft is to be operated out of sight of navigation markers.

Nice to have (If you need it, you'll wish you brought it)

- A extra paddle
- Health insurance card.
- Waterproof day pack with an extra set of dry clothing, fleece sweater/jacket, toque, socks, towels, jackets/windbreakers/rain gear, sun screen/lotions/insect repellents.
- Footwear that is secure on feet with good grips that can get wet.
- Food/snacks, lunch.
- Sun hat, toque.
- Paddling gloves, mitts or poggies; weather and water dependent.
- Wet or dry suit; weather and water dependent.
- Knife.
- Trowel and toilet paper.
- Ties downs.
- Boat repair kit.

Overnight and longer trips; take all the above PLUS

- Tent
- Sleeping pad
- Sleeping bag/blankets
- Water purification system
- Waterproof Toiletries bag with all your personal stuff, deodorant, tooth brush, comb, etc.
- Towel
- Medications.
- Enough food for the duration of the trip plus enough extra for a day or two
- Shoes for campsite
- Clothes (NO Cotton), including short & long pants, short & long sleeved shirt, pjs,
- Extra socks,
- Bathing suit
- Toque, mitts

Nice to have

- Camp Chair
- Flashlight or headlight, especially if paddling in the mountains where it does get dark in the summer
- Camera (with plenty of batteries)
- Pen & Paper, Journals, books
- Fishing gear (including the license)
- Hammock
- Bear Spray

Food, Related Equipment and Packing

For overnight and longer trips, consider whether you are doing group cooking or individual. What you need will depend on your dietary requirements and styles. It can be as simple as a single multi-purpose pot to a gourmet outfitted kitchen. The list below is a general list. Please modify to suit your needs.

- Stove and fuel
- Pots and pans
- Fire grate
- Waterproof matches, lighters, fire starters
- Water purification system
- Kettle / Coffee Pot
- Plates, bowls, mugs
- Cutlery
- Sharp knives
- Wooden spoons, spatulas, veggie peelers, whisks, lifters, ladles, etc
- Can opener if you are bringing canned goods
- Cutting board
- Dish soap
- Dish Pans
- Dish cloths, tea towels
- Scouring pads/scrubbies
- Oven mitts
- Food

Trip Coordinator's Equipment

A trip coordinator is required to have the following equipment:

- First aid kit packed in a waterproof case
- For shorter day trips a small first aid kit is adequate
- For longer or more isolate trips a first-aid kit with the following contents
 - o An Up-to-date first aid manual or up-to-date first aid instructions.
 - o 48 doses of analgesic medication of a non-narcotic type.
 - o Six safety pins
 - o One roll of adhesive first aid tape.
 - o One pair of bandage scissors or safety scissors.
 - o One resuscitation face shield.
 - o Two pairs of examination gloves.
 - o 10 applications of antiseptic preparations.
 - o 12 applications of burn preparations.
 - o 20 adhesive plasters in assorted sizes.
 - o 4 m of elastic bandage.
 - o Two sterile gauze compresses.
 - o Two triangular bandages.
- Many of these items are pre-packed in the club first aid kits that can be obtained from the Equipment Manager.
- If the water temperature is less than 15 degrees centigrade, (basic Alberta water), equipment must be immediately available or procedures are established to protect the participants from the effects of hypothermia or cold shock resulting from swamping, capsizing or falling overboard.
- Rescue kit including rescue knife, ropes, carabiners, prussic loop/s) when on Class II and above whitewater trips.

Section 4: PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

When prospective paddlers sign on for a trip, the Trip Coordinator should be able to give information, discuss the type of trip and any requirements. By conducting the conversation and questions in a tactful and friendly manner you should be able to assess their ability for the river conditions. You need to explain that the safety of the whole group must always be considered. The following are some of the items of information that you may require to evaluate their suitability for the trip, particularly if you do not know the individuals well.

Participants

- Note their full name, home and cell phone number and e-mail address so that you may contact them again, particularly if plans change.
- Ensure that they are indeed members of the club for insurance purposes. If unsure, contact the club Membership representative or President and they can check for you.
- Members of other paddle clubs affiliated with Paddle Alberta can join NWV trips at the trip coordinators discretion. They need to sign a copy of the waiver on the back of the NWV membership form. Failure to sign the form and have it properly witnessed may mean that they will not be allowed on the trip.
- Parents must sign for their children if under the age of 18.
- Parents must accompany any children under 18 on the trip

Equipment

- Find out what type of boat they will be paddling; if paddling tandem do they have a partner or do they need one? You may make suggestions, but you are under no obligation to find them a partner.
- Ask about their vehicles and whether they can take more than one boat. Explain about shuttles.
- Talk about equipment which they are planning to bring or may be required from our mandatory list, so they do not arrive with inadequate equipment.
- Explain what rental equipment is available from the club or from other sources such as rentals at Mountain Equipment Co-op or Totem Outfitters.

Skill Evaluation

Depending on the type of trip and your requirements, find out about the following:

- Recent paddling experience, taken any recent courses; if so, what was covered.
- Do they know and understand the water rating system, especially with reference to the current trip? Are they familiar with eddy turns, ferries, back ferries, river hazards and rescue techniques?
- Do they understand the trip rating system
- Have they experience with capsizes, and self-rescue? Have they paddled with any members?
- If you do not know the paddlers and are unsure about their abilities, you may want to call them back when you know how strong a group you have. Alternatively, suggest that they try a different trip or one of the courses.
- If it is a canoe camping trip, do they have experience in wilderness camping?

Section 5: ON THE TRIP

Vehicle Shuttle

- The shuttle should be planned so that the required space for people and equipment is available, as well the type of boats and how they will be carried.
- Consider availability of non-paddling friends who are prepared to drive vehicles for the shuttle.
- Consider hired drivers for exceptionally long shuttles and share the costs between all participants.
- Sharing expenses might be considered for those participants who use their vehicles for very lengthy shuttles.
- If the shuttle allows, you may wish to leave a vehicle near the mid-point of the reach. This will allow you to shorten the trip in case of bad weather or some unforeseen circumstance. Just before commencing the shuttle, make sure that everyone is present.
- Ensure that all the vehicles start before departing. If you are in a remote area, it is advisable to leave as a group, to assist each other in case of trouble.
- Make sure every driver has their keys before leaving the shuttle drop-off

Trip Briefing

While people are getting ready

- Do quick visual check of their equipment. Ensure its security and accessibility with rope ends secured.
- Make sure everyone has a PFD/life jacket/ helmet if necessary, and that they are wearing them properly.

When everyone is assembled

- Introductions and welcome.
- Where are we going and how long to get there.
- What to expect, what we may see and points of interest.
- When breaks and lunch are, remind participants to say if they need to stop.
- Review the rules of the river/lake, and the river signals
- Who has first aid kits.
- Safety review, what to do if capsize. If you have new or unfamiliar members in your group, review basic rescue procedures. If the situation warrants it, designate a rescue coordinator, (preferably not the sweep). Each paddler should understand that they are to do what they safely can, if in a position to do so. Make sure that everyone knows who has the first aid kits
- Review possible dangers or unexpected situations.
- Designate your lead and sweep boats: These should be your most experienced people. If they are not sure of their responsibilities, explain them.
- Remind people that they have the final decision themselves as to whether they will run any rapids or line/portage around them. Stress that there is no shame in deciding to portage. Ask if they have concerns.
- Finally, make sure all the drivers have their keys. It is too easy to leave them behind when changing into paddling gear.
- Do not hesitate to set a policy on intoxicants, etc., for safety reasons. Consumption of intoxicants while on the water can result in fines and loss of vehicle driver's license.
- Note: As the trip coordinator, you have the right to reject any participant for any reason, but this should be used with discretion. Explain your reasons fairly. He/she should not be allowed to jeopardize the safety of the group.

On the River

- The trip coordinator should become aware of the participants' abilities as quickly as possible, so that he can make appropriate decisions as the trip progresses. Some suggestions are:
 - o A warm-up practice at or near the put-in is useful to make an initial assessment.
 - o If the group is very large, it should be broken up into more than one group, provided that there are enough experienced people to do so.
 - o Each group should have an experienced lead boat, sweep boat and rescue capabilities.
 - o The coordinator should adjust the pace of the group as necessary, keeping in mind time, distance and light availability.
 - o Stop occasionally to allow everyone to stretch legs. Kayakers, in particular, find it difficult to paddle long distances sections without stretching. If there are children in the group, stops might have to be more frequent.
 - o Keep in touch with the general feelings of the group, especially if they are getting cold. Consider stopping and warming up by a fire, rather than pushing on and risking an accident.
 - o If there have been swimmers, watch for symptoms of hypothermia. If a boat dumps, it might be a good idea to stop for a break while everyone gets sorted out and warmed up. If they are cold, they will be more inclined to dump again. If the sweeps have dumped, move them into the center of the group, where they can be watched and appoint someone else as sweep. Scout areas with which the group may be uncomfortable. Different water levels can change the character of the river dramatically from when it was last paddled and log jams, in particular, come and go. It also gives you a chance to observe people's reactions or discuss any problems or questions.
 - o As coordinator, get in the habit of not only reading the water, but also the banks. Large broken rocks on shore, especially if they go into water's edge, may indicate an

approaching ledge or rough water. Sharp banks on one side can warn of abrupt turns, strong eddies or good fishing holes. Steep banks on both sides, especially rock cut, may indicate very fast or whitewater ahead. In such places it may not be easy to pull out, so be cautious.

Running Rapids

Some advantages of joining a club are that a group provides safety and a learning experience plus it brings people together who can share ideas and the less experienced can learn from the more experienced. Some people like the experience, while others prefer to take life on the river at a more leisurely fashion. Respect an individual's right to decide for what to try, without pressure. Before deciding to run a rapid, you may wish to consider some of the following, in light of the river difficulty and a paddler's skill level.

- Consider the time of day. Will there be enough daylight left for a rescue, dry-out, and to reach your destination?
- After scouting the rapid, discuss the real hazards; sweepers, keepers, log jams etc. Identify the clearest and safest passage and eddy resting places.
- Ask if anyone has any questions or concerns regarding the run.
- If you feel that there are members in the group who do not have the skill level for the rapid, do not hesitate to ask them to line or portage their boat. More experienced paddlers could walk back and paddle their boat for them.
- If there is some hesitation in the group, try to avoid peer pressure. You may want to set an example by portaging yourself. If you feel that the overall strength of the group and rescue skills are not up to the situation, it should be lined or portaged.
- If rescue stations are required, set them up prior to the run so that everyone knows what to do. This may include bringing a boat to the bottom of the run. Have experienced paddlers go through first, so that you have the manpower and equipment standing by for the later boats. It shows the other paddlers the desired line to follow and what to expect.
- Make sure any swimmers have the opportunity to get warm before proceeding. When warming wet people by the fire, remove wet clothes first because as water evaporates from the clothes it draws heat from the body, cooling the person further.
- After running the rapid, make sure that everyone is accounted for before proceeding
- In case of an accident see Section 7: Safety and Risk Management

Section 6: AFTER THE TRIP

At the End of day

At the end of the day everyone should have all their gear. Double check to see nothing is left behind. Be sure all vehicles start and that everyone is on their way home. Return in a convoy if you think there might be any difficulty with muddy access roads or if the way in and out is difficult to find. Remember, the shuttle vehicles have to be retrieved on the way home.

Trip Report

The webmaster would like a description of the trip written while it is still fresh in your mind. You can also delegate someone else to write the trip report. It can be as simple as the date, name of the river or lake, number of people, start and end points. Other information you can add could include potential hazards and locations of rapids when not generally known. You can write about incidents (humorous or otherwise), interesting observations, geographical, historical or wildlife sightings, point of access or shuttle suggestions.

Section 7: SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

See also Members Handbook, Section 4 for River Hazards, Self-Rescue and rescue of others.

Dealing with an accident

If you are going to be doing a lot of serious paddling, it is strongly advised that you take a CPR and/or first aid course, so that you will be a bit better prepared.

- Determine the extent of the injuries. Carry out first aid procedures. Remove wet clothing. If possible, keep the participant warm to prevent shock and hypothermia.
- For serious incidents appoint someone to keep notes. Document times, place, what happened, any first aid given, any medications given. This may assist for later medical treatment.
- If you can, call for help with cell phone, spot phone or satellite phone. Having a GPS to be able to give coordinates will enable rescuers to reach you quicker.
- If a power boat appears flag them down and ask them to notify the authorities and request assistance.
- If the accident is serious and no contact can be made with the outside world, the most experienced first-aiders should stay with the participant and the persons most physically fit and capable of wilderness walk/paddle should go for help.

Risk Management

Risk management is a way of minimizing the risk of preventable injury, accidents or loss by taking steps to identify, measure, and control risks. The NWV endeavor to manage risk in several ways:

- We try to identify potential dangers and therefore reduce risks by our practices on the river. This manual gives you a number of suggestions which focus on taking steps of prevention. e.g. pre-trip planning, rules of the river, etc.
- We recognize that some risk is desirable because it adds to the excitement of a paddle adventure, and that there are inherent dangers, particularly in whitewater.
- The membership fee of the NWV also grants members coverage under the club's liability insurance policy, in the event of an incident on the river. The waiver form must be completed properly and witnessed before the trip.
- Certain risks can have serious consequences, and occur relatively frequently. These should be avoided if at all possible (e.g. log jams).
- Other risks can be reduced, and with proper preparation and practice, and depending on circumstances, can be taken as calculated risks. The following gives a summary of the most important and frequent risks and suggestions for dealing with them:

<p>Hypothermia Body core temperature starts to drop to unsafe levels In Alberta, rivers are often extremely cold. Your body loses heat in water 20 times faster than in air. This can quickly develop into a dangerous or even life threatening situation.</p>	<p>Occurrence Frequent</p>	<p>Severity High</p>	<p>Avoid: Excessive or prolonged swimming and always carry a warm dry change of clothes and be dressed appropriately, e.g. wear a wetsuit or drysuit</p>	<p>Action: Remove the person from the water safely and quickly. Remove wet clothes. Wrap in warm clothes and use external heat; fire or another warm body. Give hot drinks. Watch for signs of hypothermia in all at risk, (uncontrolled shivering, uncoordinated speech</p>
<p>Sweepers Log Jams: If caught in a sweeper or log-jam, the water goes through it, but you are caught. Potential for drowning is high.</p>	<p>Occurrence Frequent</p>	<p>Severity High</p>	<p>Avoid: Choose a course well clear of the hazard</p>	<p>Action: Assess the situation; usually best to approach from downstream. Never risk a second life. Organize and execute rescue procedures. If the person needs immediate help to avoid drowning, stabilize them in the water first if possible.</p>
<p>Pinning A paddler can become pinned inside his boat while submerged or upside down. Potential for drowning is high.</p>	<p>Occurrence Rare</p>	<p>Severity High</p>	<p>Avoid: Assess your skills and course chosen</p>	<p>Action: Assess the situation; usually best to approach from downstream. Never risk a second life. Organize and execute rescue procedures</p>
<p>Holes/Keepers Low head dams can have extremely dangerous keepers. Other holes/keepers can be fun play spots, but will depend on the paddlers' experience.</p>	<p>Occurrence Rare</p>	<p>Severity High</p>	<p>Avoid: Dams and weirs, at all costs; practice skills in keepers which are not life threatening</p>	<p>Action: Stay with your boat. If separated from boat, swim out of the hole if possible. You may have to swim under water to where the water is not re-circulating. Use throw bags or tag lines for rescue. Rescue boats must avoid being sucked into the hole as well</p>
<p>Wilderness Survival</p>	<p>Occurrence Rare</p>	<p>Severity High</p>	<p>Can be a concern on wilderness trips.</p>	<p>Action: Carry adequate gear, maps, compass, GPS, cell phones or spot or sat phones, extra batteries. Understand survival techniques. Use common sense.</p>
<p>Insufficient Skill Level</p>	<p>Occurrence Common</p>	<p>Severity Moderate</p>	<p>People often misjudge their own abilities, which can easily lead to accidents. If the rescue strength of the group is weak, this can compound the problems.</p>	<p>Action: Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the group and plan accordingly. It is better to err on the side of safety.</p>

Bruises/Sprains	Occurrence Frequent	Severity Low		Action: Learn first Aid and carry First Aid kits
Swimming in rapids	Occurrence Frequent	Severity Low	Ensure paddlers know basic rescue procedures	Action: Scout the river if the group needs to study the situation. Portaging is always acceptable.
Inadequate Equipment	Occurrence Frequent	Severity Low	Make equipment lists available on website before trips	Action: Take precautions to keep from losing gear. Redundant tie down system

TAKE CARE AND HAVE FUN!