

Scouts NSW Adventurous Activities

Boating Activities Standard Operating

Procedures



These Standard Operating Procedures are issued and updated by the State Activities Council and distributed by the State Commissioner Adventurous Activities on behalf of the Chief Commissioner of NSW. They outline the requirements for the conduct of Adventurous Activities within Scouts NSW.

Version 4.0

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1 Conduct of Activities

- 1.1 These Standard Operating Procedures should be read in conjunction with the Scouts NSW Adventurous Activity Policy and the Scouts NSW SIS-13 Information Policy booklet.
- 1.2 Scout boating activities should be conducted in accordance with all relevant NSW legislative regulations and requirements, as well as these Standard Operating Procedures.
- 1.3 The term 'boating activities' includes but is not restricted to, canoeing, kayaking, (including all forms of sit on top canoes/kayaks) boating, sailing, sail boarding and rafting (including temporary rafts). The use of flotation aids (airbeds, inner tubes, etc), snorkelling, scuba diving and cascading are classified as Swimming Activities.
- 1.4 These Standard Operating Procedures shall not apply to public transport, licensed commercial or charter vessels.
- 1.5 A suitably qualified Adventurous Activity Coordinator must be in charge of the activity and its immediate surrounds. Watercraft should only be used in conditions appropriate to the craft.
- 1.6 The term 'night activity' describes the use of suitably equipped watercraft between sunset and sunrise, in conditions appropriate to the craft in use.
- 1.7 The term 'expedition' describes an overnight activity or point---to---point travel over two or more days. It also includes any use that does not fall under the category of 'activity' or 'night activity'.
- 1.8 Unless otherwise qualified, all boating activities must take place on flat (or near flat, including 'pebble races'), undemanding, enclosed or protected waters.

2 Equipment

- 2.1 All watercraft used for Boating Activities, including privately owned or hire craft, must be inspected prior to the activity by the Adventurous Activity Coordinator to ensure they meet, and continue to meet, the requirements of the activity.
- 2.2 It is recognised that participants may have considerable personal equipment, usually obtained over many years of experience. While it remains the personal responsibility for participants to ensure their equipment is in good order, the Adventurous Activity Coordinator should ensure that the equipment is suitable for the particular activity.
- 2.3 All equipment is to be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and must meet recognised standards where such standards exist.

- 2.4 Appropriately sized and fitted Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) that meet Australian Standards and well-fitting enclosed footwear are to be worn at all times by participants in boating activities.
- 2.5 It is recognised that Sail Boarding activities may require the use of an alternate flotation support in lieu of a standard PFD.
- 2.6 Use of self or auto-inflating PFDs is not suitable for any youth member under the age of 15 years.
- 2.7 Environmental considerations e.g. water quality, must be taken into account when planning activities.
- 2.8 Navigation equipment appropriate to the situation must be carried. The Adventurous Activity Coordinator must be competent in the use of topographical maps and compasses. Relying solely on electronic navigation devices is not appropriate.
- 2.9 Participants are to be informed of the type and quality of equipment they are expected to bring. Specific mention should be made of anticipated weather conditions and seasonal factors.
- 2.10 Sufficient food and refreshments suitable for the activity should be carried. Overnight activities should include at least one day's emergency rations.
- 2.11 Individual equipment (including personal protective equipment) must be appropriate for the anticipated conditions.
- 2.12 A suitable first aid kit must be available on every activity. Individual participants are also encouraged to carry a first aid kit that should include personal medications.
- 2.13 An electronic emergency locating device must be available on all activities more than one hour from an emergency response.

2.14 CRAFT INSPECTIONS

- 2.14.1 If applicable, vessels must meet the requirements of, and be registered under appropriate legislation.
- 2.14.2 All craft (including private and commercial) used for Scout activities must be inspected to ensure that they are structurally sound and in suitable condition prior to the activity.
- 2.14.3 All Scout owned craft equipped with propellers must have child safe propeller guards fitted.
- 2.14.4 Permanent flotation, sufficient to float the craft upright when filled with water, must be fixed to each vessel. Aerated foam is the preferred flotation device for canoes and kayaks. Trailer sailer yachts, power and keel boats are exempt from this rule, but must have buoyancy.

- 2.14.5 Suitable bailing equipment (e.g. sponge for kayaks, scoop, bucket etc for other craft) must be securely attached to the craft by way of a suitable length of cord.
- 2.14.6 Painters are not mandatory however, if present, must be securely stowed to prevent entanglement in the event of capsize.
- 2.14.7 Yachts and powered craft shall carry a towline of suitable strength. The towline should be twice the length of the craft from the stem when secured for towing. Where appropriate the mainsail must be capable of being lowered from within the craft.
- 2.14.8 The total number of crew and passengers shall not exceed the approved limit for the type of craft.
- 2.14.9 Canoe/kayaks shall have a hand loop fixed at each end of the craft in lieu of a tow ring.
- 2.14.10 It is recommended that seats in both canoes and kayaks be attached to the gunwale or around the cockpit if the craft is to be used on white water. (This allows the craft to flex naturally when a solid obstacle is struck on the underside so the seat mounting will not be broken.)
- 2.14.11 Rowboats shall have their rowlocks secured to the boat to prevent loss.
- 2.14.12 Powered boats (including sailing craft with motors) are to have a safety chain attached to the motor to prevent loss, unless the motor is bolted directly to the hull. An alternate method of propulsion (e.g. oars) must be carried. Anchors must be on a rope of suitable length and a chain that is at least half the length of the boat.
- 2.14.13 The following additional equipment should be included for expeditions where appropriate:
- Extra paddle/oar/rowlock
 - Extra bailer
 - Emergency distress equipment (flags, flares, whistle)
 - Suitable repair kit
 - First aid kit in waterproof container
 - Towline and/or throw bag
 - Knife for use during an emergency.
 - Quick release belt/tow connection on PFD
- 2.14.14 Scout boats must NOT be marked with the word 'RESCUE' as this implies specific qualifications and can potentially raise legal and liability issues.

Where operating as a tender for training or regatta activities, a brightly coloured plain flag should be used.

2.14.15 For information regarding the insurance of watercraft please read the Association's Insurance document or seek advice from your Regional Office.

3 Leader to Participant Ratios and Party Sizes

3.1 Leader to participant ratios and minimum party size are to be determined by a risk assessment process based on the following considerations:

- Level of difficulty and the skills required
- Anticipated environmental conditions, remoteness and duration of the activity
- Weather conditions and future forecasts
- Prior experience of leaders and participants
- Requirements of land owners or managers
- Availability of communications and access
- Environmental sustainability

3.2 For youth sections the minimum party sizes must be in accordance with sectional award scheme requirements.

3.3 The Adventurous Activity Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that maximum numbers do not exceed locality specific requirements.

4 Qualifications

4.1 The gaining of boating qualifications is via the Scouts Australia Institute of Training. They are to be recorded on the Scoutlink member record.

4.2 Any person qualified in canoe or kayak automatically gains recognition to use sit on tops.

5 Rapid Ratings

5.1 NSW Scouts use the International River Grading System. Participants must clearly demonstrate that they have the knowledge, skill, understanding and experience to safely negotiate the entire trip and grade/s of white water.

5.2 Grade 1 and Grade 2 rapids are approved for Scout activities, leaders must document a site risk assessment and where doubt exists about the experience of participants portage of craft should be used:

GRADE 1 --- NOT DIFFICULT: Easy moving water, small waves, clear passages, occasional sand banks and curves. May include very small rapids, pebble races and simple obstructions.

GRADE 2 --- MODERATELY DIFFICULT: Rapids with regular waves, eddies, pressure areas, small drops and small stoppers. Clear channels with simple obstructions exist. If the rapid had numerous obstructions it would become very tricky.

5.3 Due to insurance reasons the following Grades are not permitted on Scouting activities:

GRADE 3 --- DIFFICULT: Larger rapids, high and irregular waves, stoppers, medium sized drops, eddies, numerous boulders, and obstructions. Pressure areas and boils become a concern. Precise manoeuvring is necessary. Some rapids may need observation from along the shore.

GRADE 4 --- VERY DIFFICULT: Long and powerful rapids, route not always recognisable. Large standing waves, stoppers, holes, whirlpools, pressure areas and boiling eddies. Big drops, violent current, technical turns and many obstructions. Requires precise manoeuvring. Inspection of difficult sections essential and some portages often necessary. Conditions make rescuing difficult.

GRADE 5 --- EXTREMELY DIFFICULT: Violent, long rapids without interruption. River filled with big drops, huge stoppers, whirlpools, boils, and pressure areas. Complex boulder fields, gradient extremely steep, narrow passages and large holes. Access and landing may be difficult. Inspection essential, although portaging and reconnoitring may be impossible. Extremely advanced rolling skills essential. Can only be run by experts. Rescues virtually impossible. Increased risk of drowning.

GRADE 6 --- EXCEPTIONALLY DIFFICULT---IMPOSSIBLE: Much higher level of difficulty than class. Constant threat of death, rapids extremely dangerous and nearly impossible to master.