



PROCEDURE

Boating Activities SOP



Issued with the authority of the Chief Commissioner
and Chief Executive Officer of Scouts Australia NSW

Chief Commissioner signature		Chief Executive Officer signature	
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1 Philosophy

Boating activities are covered by Scouts NSW Adventurous Activities procedures. The requirements that are common to planning and conducting *any* type of adventurous activity are covered in [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#). The additional requirements that are specific to boating activities and are described in the following procedure.

Therefore, when planning and conducting any boating activity, it is necessary to refer to [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#) as well as this specific SOP. Should contradicting requirements be found in these documents, the more stringent standard shall apply.

2 Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Refer to [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#) for roles and responsibilities.

3 Conduct of Activities

In addition to the requirements of [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#), the following **additional** requirements apply to this activity;

- 3.1 The term 'boating activities' includes, but is not restricted to canoeing, kayaking (including all forms of sit on top canoes and kayaks), boating, sailing, sail boarding, and rafting (including temporary rafts). The use of flotation aids (airbeds, inner tubes, etc), snorkelling, SCUBA, and cascading are classified as swimming activities.
- 3.2 This SOP does not apply to public transport, licenced commercial or charter vessels.
- 3.3 A suitably qualified Activity Leader must be in charge of the activity and its immediate surrounds. Watercraft should only be used in conditions appropriate to the craft.
- 3.4 The term 'night activity' describes the use of suitably equipped watercraft between sunset and sunrise, in conditions appropriate to craft use.
- 3.5 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'.
- 3.6 Unless otherwise qualified, all boating activities must take place on flat (or near flat, including pebble races), undemanding, enclosed or protected waters.

4 Equipment

In addition to the requirements of *POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy*, the following **additional** requirements apply to this activity;

- 4.1 All equipment used for Boating activities, including privately owned or hire craft, must be inspected prior to the activity by the Activity Leader to ensure it meets requirements.
- 4.2 Appropriately sized and fitted Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) that meet Australian standards and are in good condition are required for all participants. Well-fitting enclosed footwear should be worn at all times by participants in boating activities.
 - 4.2.1. Sail boarding activities may require the use of alternate flotation support in lieu of a standard PFD.
 - 4.2.2. Use of self or auto inflating PFDs is not suitable for any youth member under the age of 15 years.
- 4.3 Environmental considerations, eg water quality, must be taken into account when planning boating activities.

5 Watercraft

- 5.1 If applicable, vessels must meet requirements of, and be registered under appropriate legislation.
- 5.2 All craft (including private and commercial) used for Scouting activities must be inspected to ensure that they are structurally sound and in suitable condition prior to the activity.
- 5.3 All Scout owned craft equipped with propellers must have child safe propeller guards fitted.
- 5.4 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 sailor yachts, power and keel boats are exempt from this rule, but must have buoyancy.
- 5.5 Where appropriate, suitable bailing equipment (eg sponge for kayaks, scoop, bucket for other craft) must be securely attached to the craft by way of a suitable length of cord.
- 5.6 Painters are not mandatory, however, if present, must be securely stowed to prevent entanglement in the event of capsizing.
- 5.7 Yachts and powered craft shall carry a towline of suitable length. The towline should be at least 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.
- 5.8 The total number of crew and passengers shall not exceed the approved limit for the type of craft.
- 5.9 Canoes/kayaks shall have a hand loop fixed at each end of the craft in lieu of a tow ring.
- 5.10 Row boats should have their row locks secured to avoid loss.

- 5.11 Powered boats (including sailing craft with motors) are to have safety chains attached to the motor to prevent loss, unless the motor is bolted directly to the hull. An alternate propulsion method (eg 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.
- 5.12 The following additional equipment should also be included for expeditions where appropriate:
- Extra paddle/oar/row lock
 - 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 in emergency
 - Quick release belt/tow connection on PFD
- 5.13 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.
- 5.14 For more information regarding insurance of watercraft please refer to the Association's Insurance documentation.

6 Ratios and Party Sizes

- 6.1 Refer to [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#) for Ratios and Party Sizes requirements.

7 Qualifications

In addition to the requirements of [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#), the following **additional** requirements apply to this activity;

- 7.1 Any person qualified in canoe or kayak automatically gains recognition to use 'sit on top' craft.

8 Rapid Ratings

- 8.1 Scouts NSW follow the International River Grading system. Participants must clearly demonstrate they have the knowledge, skills, understanding and experience to safely negotiate the entire trip and grade/s of white water.
- 8.2 Grade 1 and 2 rapids are approved for Scout activities. Leaders must document a site risk assessment and where doubt exists about participant's experience, portage should be used:

- Grade 1 – NOT DIFFICULT. Easy moving water, small waves, clear passages, occasional sand banks, curves. May include very small rapids, pebble races and simple obstructions.
- Grade 2 – MODERATELY DIFFICULT. Rapids with regular waves, eddies, pressure areas, small drops, small stoppers. Clear channels with simple obstructions exist. If the rapid had numerous obstructions it would become tricky.

Due to insurance limitations, 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 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, many obstructions. Requires precise manoeuvring. Inspection of difficult sections essential and some portages often necessary. Conditions make rescue difficult.
- Grade 5 – EXCEPTIONALLY DIFFICULT, IMPOSSIBLE. Much higher level of difficulty than class 4. Constant threat of death, rapids extremely dangerous and nearly impossible to master.

9 Incidents

- 9.1 Refer to [POL 36 Adventurous Activities Policy](#) for Responsibilities and expectations for reporting incidents, including for if a serious incident occurs.