

PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT GROUP PADDLING WITH RMSKC

1. When you paddle with the Rocky Mountain Sea Kayak Club you get a trip planned by a Trip Leader with the opportunity to meet new paddlers and enjoy safety in numbers. However, Club Trip Leaders are not trained, certified, or pre-qualified by the RMSKC with regard to their abilities as either kayakers or leaders; they act voluntarily and without compensation, as anyone among a group of acquaintances might agree to act as the organizer for a particular activity or trip. If you are expecting the RMSKC or our Trip Leaders to act as a commercial outfitter (provide for your needs, teach you how to paddle, or guarantee your safety), Club trips are not for you.
2. Because of #1 above, joining a RMSKC sponsored event does not relieve you of any responsibility for your own personal welfare. You should communicate with the Trip Leader to understand the nature of the paddle and determine whether it is within your capabilities. Remember, paddling conditions can change rapidly and you must be physically and mentally prepared for, and must bring appropriate gear for, all possibilities.
3. The presence of individuals at Club paddling events who are unwilling to comply with RMSKC and ACA requirements puts all participants at unnecessary risk. By attending a Club paddling event you are committing to abide by these Participant Guidelines. Please do not join a Club paddling event if you are not in agreement with these General Thoughts about Group Paddling, or are unwilling to abide by the following Specific Guidelines for RMSKC Paddles.
4. For group trips to be successful, all participants must look after the welfare of the whole group and be willing to align their personal paddling expectations with the needs of the other paddlers. Please choose your trips with this in mind.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR RMSKC PADDLES

1. **PADDLE FEES:** For day paddles, participants who are not RMSKC members will need to pay the an ACA event fee and sign an *ACA Waiver and Release of Liability* form to ensure compliance with ACA insurance requirements. Paddlers who are ACA members but who are not in our Club may provide proof of current ACA membership with their ACA card; while they must sign an ACA Waiver, no payment of the ACA event fee is required. Multi-day paddles are only open to RMSKC members.
2. **APPROPRIATE TRIP SELECTION:** Participants must understand the paddling requirements of the event, should know their skill levels, and should avoid picking trips for which they are not prepared. The Trip Leader may deny a participant access to a trip if he or she feels the participant does not have the appropriate paddling ability, boat, or safety gear required to be safe on the trip.
3. **LIFEJACKET WEAR:** All participants in ACA-insured activities must wear a properly-fitting U.S. Coast Guard-approved lifejacket [also called a PFD: Personal Flotation Device] at all times during on-water activities. The ACA states that Clubs are responsible for enforcing this requirement, and should understand that if a participant removes his or her lifejacket and an injury or death occurs, the insurance company may deny coverage to the club or its members.
4. **ON-WATER COMMUNICATION:** Participants must carry a whistle. Participants should review and learn the *On Water Signals*, which can be found, along with other useful safety information on the RMSKC website: http://www.useakayak.org/recoveries_rescues/paddle_arm_signals.html
5. **WHITewater GEAR REQUIREMENTS:** Participants must wear properly-fitting paddling helmets in Class II and above rapids. Bicycle helmets are not acceptable. Participants must have an appropriate level of additional flotation in their boats for the venue.
6. **APPROPRIATE CLOTHING:** All participants must be dressed in clothing appropriate for the venue and conditions of the activity. This means paddlers should dress for the water temperature, not the weather; kayakers should always be prepared to get wet, flip over or go into the water. See the *Cold Water Survival Chart* on the last page for clothing recommendations.
7. **FOOD AND WATER:** Participants should carry food and water adequate for the paddle. During the paddle, participants should stay well-hydrated, and eat enough food to maintain their energy levels.
8. **START TIME CLARIFICATION:** For RMSKC paddlers, “start time” means the time that everyone will be in their boats ready to paddle off. Participants new to Club paddles should allow enough time to find the venue, unload and pack their kayaks and park their car so that they can be in the water and ready at the posted time.
9. **REGULATIONS POLICY:** Participants should pay attention to signs and safety warnings, which must be obeyed. All camp sites, trails and surrounding areas must be left in at least as good a condition as found. [Packing out extra trash is encouraged. It is becoming a Club habit.] For multi-day trips, participants must carry a solid waste disposal system that meets the requirements of the location.

10. **DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE:** The ACA does not allow persons under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs to participate in ACA-insured on-water activities. Clubs and Trip Leaders should not allow participants to consume any alcohol or recreational drugs immediately before or during an on-water activity or event. RMSKC Trip Leaders must disqualify any paddler under the influence of alcohol or drugs from participation and ask them to leave immediately.

11. **COMMUNICATION OF HEALTH ISSUES:** Participants should tell the Trip Leader of any health conditions that could become a concern during the paddle. In certain circumstances the whole group may be made aware of the condition so they will be ready if a problem arises. [Inability to hear directions and diabetes have been problematic on trips in the past.]

12. **CONCERNS DURING A PADDLE:** Participants should advise the Trip Leader if they are having problems with their equipment, trouble handling the conditions, or fatigue or illness.

13. **GROUP COHESION:** Participants should paddle at a reasonable pace so everyone can stay together. Good group paddlers recognize when members are tired or having difficulty and adjust their pace accordingly. Participants should stay with the group even if it means going slower than they would like; they should not leave the group without the trip leader's permission.

14. **TRIP PLAN MODIFICATION:** The Trip Leader may alter the trip plan due to the demands of the weather or paddling conditions, or to meet the needs of a single paddler or the group as a whole.

15. **FINAL DECISION-MAKING:** Participants should abide by the Trip Leader's instructions; although Trip Leaders always consult with participants, they have the final decision-making authority over all aspects of the trip.

COLD WATER SURVIVAL CHART

Water Temperature	Time Before Exhaustion Or Unconsciousness	Expected Survival Time	Recommended Clothing
Over 80 degrees	Indefinite	Indefinite	Minimal, but remember sun protection
70 - 79 degrees	3 – 12 hours	3 hours – indefinite	Light wetsuit vest, hydroskin
60 – 69 degrees	2 – 7 hours	2 – 40 hours	Hydroskin, wetsuit shorty, splash gear, semi-drytop
50 – 59 degrees	1 – 2 hours	1 – 6 hours	3mm wetsuit, insulating layer, drytop with insulation
40 – 49 degrees	30 – 60 minutes	1 – 3 hours	Drysuit with light to medium insulation inside
32.5 – 40 degrees	15 – 30 minutes	30 – 90 minutes	Drysuit with medium to heavy insulation inside
Below 32.5 degrees	Under 15 minutes	15 – 45 minutes	Drysuit with heavy insulation inside