

PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT GROUP PADDLING WITH RMSKC:

1. 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 the following General Thoughts about Group Paddling, or are not willing to abide by the following Specific Guidelines for Club Paddles. A Trip Leader may deny a participant access to a trip if he/she feels the participant has demonstrated an unwillingness to abide by these Participant Guidelines.
2. 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.
3. Because of #1 above, joining a RMSKC sponsored event does not relieve you of 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 bring appropriate gear for, and be mentally and physically prepared for, all possibilities.
4. For group trips to be successful, participants must also 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.
5. The ACA strongly encourages clubs, divisions, and affiliate organizations and their individual members to review the ACA's safety publications, which contain valuable information and recommendations for making paddling activities safer and more enjoyable. In particular, the ACA's Best Practices for Paddlers and Paddlesports Programs provide detailed information on how to have a successful paddling trip in a variety of venues. Visit the Educational Resource page of the ACA website to review the ACA's safety materials – www.americancanoe.org. Navigation is Education/Instruction – Learn To Paddle – Educational Resources.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR CLUB PADDLES:

1. Day Paddle Fee: For day paddles, participants who are not PAID RMSKC members will need to pay the appropriate RMSKC or ACA fees and sign an ACA Waiver and Release of Liability form to ensure compliance with ACA insurance requirements. ACA members who are not in our Club may provide proof of current ACA membership with their ACA card expiration date; while they must sign an ACA Waiver, no payment of the ACA event fee is required.

2. Ready to Paddle: Participants should allow enough time to unload and pack their boats so that they can be in the water and ready to paddle at the posted time.
3. Preparedness: Participants must have the appropriate paddling ability, boat, and safety gear as specified by the Trip Leader. Individual participants must understand the paddling requirements of the trip, should know their skill levels, and should avoid conditions for which they are not prepared. The Trip Leader may deny a participant access to a trip if he/she feels the participant does not have the appropriate paddling skill level, ability, boat, and/or safety gear required for the participant to be safe on the trip.
4. Lifejacket Wear: All participants in ACA-insured activities must wear a properly-fitting U.S. Coast Guard-approved lifejacket (Personal Flotation Devices, or PFDs) 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 and/or its members. All lifejackets must be in serviceable condition.
5. Whitewater Requirements: Participants must wear properly-fitting paddling helmets in class II and above rapids. Bicycle helmets are not acceptable. Participant must have an appropriate level of additional flotation in their boats for the venue.
6. Appropriate Clothing: Participants must be prepared to capsize by being properly clothed for the water, not the weather. All participants must be dressed in clothing appropriate for the venue and conditions of the activity. Participants should always be prepared to get wet, flip over or go into the water. In particular, if the water temperature is less than 60°F, and/or the combined air and water temperature is less than 120°F, participants must wear wetsuits, dry suits or other acceptable clothing. 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. Drug and Alcohol Use Before or During On-Water Activities: The ACA does not allow persons under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs to participate in ACA-insured on-water activities. Clubs and Trip Leaders should not allow participants to consume any alcohol or illegal drugs immediately before or during an on-water activity or event. Clubs must disqualify any day paddle participant under the influence of alcohol or drugs from participation and ask them to leave immediately.
9. Good Paddling Practices: Do not stand up in a kayak and avoid weight shifts that may cause capsize. Keep three points of contact with your boat at all times. Do not leave loose rope in or dangling from boats, since these ropes can rapidly become entrapment hazards. Do not tie any person in or to a boat.
10. Solid Waste Disposal: For multi-day trips, participants must carry a solid waste disposal system that meets the requirements of the location.
11. On-Water Communication: Participants should carry a whistle. Participants should review and learn the signals for On Water Signals – Safety found on the RMSKC website.
12. Obey Regulations: Participants should pay attention to signs and safety warnings. Land and water regulations must be obeyed and camp sites, trails and surrounding areas must be left in as good a condition as found. Federal regulations restrict paddling near military vessels and installations. Anticipate that there may be restrictions near bridge pilings and other areas.
13. Disclose Problems: Participants should tell the Trip Leader if they are having problems with their equipment or fatigue, sickness, blisters, trouble handling the conditions, anxiety, etc.

14. Trip Plan Alteration: All participants should constantly scan for changing weather conditions, and be prepared for weather changes. 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. Stay with the Group: Participants should paddle at a reasonable pace so everyone can stay together, recognize when group members are tired or having difficulty, and adjust the group's 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.
16. 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