

WHITE WATER SAFETY AND RESCUE

Training requires practice, which gives experience and leads to improved judgment and safety



KIT AWARENESS

- Adopt the clean approach, ensure there are no unnecessary loops on your body, wetsuit, buoyancy aid, spray deck etc. inspect your kit and cut any loops or surplus trailing ends. Check your kit regularly for wear and tear.
- An ideal buoyancy aid should have a pocket, be adequate to carry your weight. Try it on in the shop and make sure you have full movement. If it has quick release chest harness - check the positioning for the live bait harness - this should be raised above waist height, below shoulder blade height. Ensure it will run smoothly if necessary. Know your buoyancy aid!

Only wear a chest harness if you are prepared to use it! Live bait rescues!

- Helmets should protect the forehead as well as the skull. Adjust the fasteners so it is fixed and not able to slide backwards and forwards.
- **Do not clip karabiners or clips to your buoyancy aid and spray decks** - you could end up clipped to someone you're not that friendly with! Or attached to boats, trees etc.
- Karabiners should be river ones, not climbing - screw gate and pear shaped - they should fit over the shaft of a paddle.
- Use Cut slings 4 m, these can be used to there maximum length, unlike looped stitched slings.
- A 15m to 20m throw line, 10 – 12 mm thickness, learn and practice using it!
- If you carry a throw line you should carry a rescue knife which can be accessed quickly, i.e. in buoyancy aid. The rescue knife should have a hook knife to quickly cut throw lines.
- Try to carry a first aid kit, survival bag, splits, repair kit, spare clothing, and food between the group members.
- Always carry your own personal first aid kit with your own medication e.g. inhalers as leaders can't administer drugs.

RIVER RUNNING

Review safe group paddling techniques depending, on each groups' size and ability, level of water being navigated. For more advanced water stop at 4 people, no less than three.

Prevention is better than Cure!

Run through the signals before each trip to refresh everyone's memory and in case of new paddlers. These are **hand** signals only; paddle signals are ambiguous and should be avoided. **Acknowledge signals back to ensure clear communication.**

Eddy out A circling motion above the paddlers head followed by pointing to where they want you to eddy out.

Come to me The paddler pats the top of their head.

One at a time The paddler strikes out one arm straight up in the air

Everyone down The paddler pumps the straight arm up and down.

Go left Someone pointing left means go left.

Go Right Someone pointing right means go right.

Don't give too much information. **Always point away from obstacles.**

Use signals or give direct instructions to individual people as and when required, not more than 3 instructions at a time. **Remember only use hand signals.**

Buddy System - buddy people up so that they have to keep an eye on each other. Tail end Charlie to sweep up, Leader to direct. Experienced paddlers mingle.

Leap Frog Descent - All paddlers must be of similar ability and able to find eddies on their own. Each one in turn goes into the next eddy overtaking the next person. Practice on the bank. This can only be done in small groups, at the same level of ability, for advanced paddlers only. This has the disadvantage of being difficult to stop and can lead to danger.

Alpine descent

1. The leader goes to the eddy, the next person waits for the signal then follows
2. When they are almost there the leader then leaves and finds the next eddy,
3. He then signals the 1st person to come down, the 1st person then signals the 2nd person,
4. When 2nd almost reaches the 1st, the 1st then leaves and heads for the leader.
5. And so on.

It is always the last person to come down that moves first. This can be a slow descent - most effective when in small groups.

Use both sides of the riverbank; you never know when you may need someone on both sides. **Remember to maintain Line of Sight!**

Groups of four are the ideal, but no less than three. Each group can be adjusted in size to meet the needs and experience of the group or river grading.

Leaders should use **CLAP**, Control groups tightly **C**ommunicate well, Maintain a **L**ine of sight at all times, **A**voidance is better than cure, **BE IN THAT POSITION OF MAXIMUM USEFULLNESS AT ALL TIMES** when paddling with Non – advanced people.

For safety direct people individually over rapids, and cover both sides of rapid.

The length of time you spend inspecting a rapid is the length of time you will spend in it!

IF IN DOUBT, BOTTLE OUT!

SWIMMING & RESCUE TECHNIQUES

- If possible - **self rescue**.
- Defensive swim - on your back with feet up until you see an appropriate eddy then move into the aggressive swim.
- Aggressive swim - swimming down river towards an eddy fence, roll body over and reach for the eddy.
- Ferry glide across a river - front crawl, kicking with legs, look where you are going, someone may have thrown you a line.
- Swimming through holes - bring knees up and roll up into ball. Surfing a hole as in sky diving, surf on hands body ridged head up stream.
- If you have to enter the water use a low entry rather than jumping in (you never know what's lurking underneath)
- If the length of the tow back is the length of your body then it will hold you.

THROW LINES

- 15m to 20m is an adequate length. 25m dependent on river widths
- Ensure the loop on the end of the bag is just enough to get your fingers in and that your whole hand cannot go through the loop. Remove any plastic tubing from the rope.
- Check the knot inside the throw bag.
- Adopt the clean line approach - ensure there is nothing attached to the end i.e. karabiners. (These could knock someone's teeth out!)
- Practice underarm, over arm, sideways - as it is not always possible to throw underarm.
- Practice hitting a moving target. Once the line lands in the water it is harder for the victim to see, you should be ready to take the strain in a low down posture, walk to dissipate energy if necessary. Never wrap rope around your arms or tie it off.

- A line should be thrown 45° upstream, with a dynamic stance to avoid being dragged into the water. Aim to pendulum the swimmer into an eddy rather than drag them up the bank.

Always work with the flow not against it.

- Re-throw - When you miss the first time, coil the rope back in without twisting and quick scoop of water in the bag (added weight) then re-throw.
- If you carry a throw line you should always carry a knife.
- Encourage self rescue - be an active victim not passive

Remember: Self, Team, Casualty

SHOUT - Talk to the casualty. Calm them down, encourage them to help themselves.

REACH - If the casualty can be reached by hand or paddle this should be the approach.

THROW - If the casualty cannot be physically reached, throw lines should be used.

ROW - If the use of a throw line fails it may be possible to paddle to them. The rescuer should not put them selves in undue danger.

GO - If all else fails swim to the victim, providing the rescuer is not put in unacceptable danger (Dope on a rope only if necessary!) **Only do this as a last resort.**

Cinch line - Throw a line across the river in front of the victim, and one behind them. Clip in the Karabiners from the throw bag of one line to the other throw line to form a loop which can be closed around the victim, pull across the victim's chest under the arms; pull the victim out equally by walking up stream.

A **Snag line** is a single line down stream of victim to be pulled up to victim

Vector Line - Use a vector line if a single line will not naturally swing into an eddy. Clip another throw line half way down the first line, so it is possible to pull from the centre creating a vector.

No knot - loop the rope 2/3 times around a tree and it will hold.

Use only use overhand knots

Downstream diagonal evacuation - if one throw line is not long enough tie two together with an overhand knot - paddle karabiners will slide over the knot under tension. Think about the strength of the current against the angle and length of rope required. Use no knots in order to release if necessary. Use karabiners to secure paddles inside boats when transporting boats across a river.

Live bait – always measure the line required; clip and screw lock onto live bait's buoyancy aid back loop secure the other end. This is preferably with a sling around a tree, clip karabiner onto sling and loop rope around 2 maybe 3 times. This only works to release and is not easy to pull back in - to pull back in use a Vector - clip another line on halfway down and sweat it.

Live bait jumps on victim in a claw like fashion as victim floats passed, grab hold of shoulder straps on buoyancy aid. The Measured line will then swing into eddy.

Remember this should be used as last resort (Dope on a Rope!)

If a swimmer is stuck in a stopper, attach a buoyancy aid to the throw line before throwing the line. If a boat is stuck in a stopper, use H rescue to reach the victim.

Boat rescues – Victim is to hold on to the back deck of the boat, with hands round waist of rescuer for shallow water,

Deep water hang from front of boat, legs are used to hang on, head to one side of the front of boat to avoid hitting rocks.

Never clip a boat onto you / your chest harness or boat when towing, do use a loose sling over your shoulder to enable quick release.

Never clip karabiners to any kit as a general rule. They will clip you to something.

Safe Paddling!

