

Outdoor Education (Canoeing Moving Water)

SECONDARY - CURRICULAR 2025

- Consult [Disability-Centred Safety](#) if your groups of students include students with disabilities.
- The Outdoor Education (Canoeing Moving Water) safety standards must be used in conjunction with one of the following activity safety standards when part of the activity includes moving water:
 - [Outdoor Education \(Canoeing\)](#) - Canoe Training and Single Day Trips which travel within 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance. (Pools, Lake Water Canoeing, Base Camp Canoeing)
 - [Outdoor Education \(Canoe Tripping\)](#) - Single Day and Multi Day Trips which travel more than 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance and Multi Day Trips which travel within 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance.
- The Outdoor Education (Canoeing Moving Water) safety standards outline additional safety requirements for canoeing activities that involve moving water. Participation is restricted to Class I and Class II rivers only, as defined by the [International Scale of River Difficulty](#):
 - Class I: Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight; self-rescue is easy.
 - Class II: Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium-sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers.
- Consult [Risk Management](#).

- The safety standards for this activity must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed in the safety standards. For more information on planning trips using outside providers, consult [Outside Activity Providers](#).
- These Outdoor Education (Canoeing Moving Water) safety standards as well as the safety standards of the Outside Activity Provider must be followed.
- Consult [Outdoor Education \(General Procedures\)](#)
- Consult [Outdoor Education \(Swimming - on Watercraft and Land-based Trips\)](#) if swimming is to take place in a non-designated swim area when on a watercraft trip.
- Consult [Outdoor Education \(Swimming - Leisure\)](#) if leisure swimming is included as an associated activity that takes place at a Designated or Non-Designated Swim area (for example, at camps or municipal swim areas) when not on a watercraft or land-based trip
- Consult [Outdoor Education \(Swimming - Instructional\)](#) if the associated activity (for example, a swim test) is to take place at a Designated Swim Area at a waterfront.
- Consult [Swimming](#) if any associated activity (for example, a swim test) is to take place in a pool.

Equipment

- Durable resilient canoes (for example, royalex, rotomolded polyethylene, double layer polyethylene, T-Formex (ABS plastic laminate)) must be used.
- Paddles must be designed for moving water.
- All participants must wear a correctly fitted helmet designed to withstand multiple impacts and appropriate for moving water conditions (e.g. EN-1385 standard or higher). Bicycle helmets are prohibited.

- Personal Flotation Devices (P.F.D) or Lifejackets worn must be appropriate for Moving Water paddling. Such P.F.D.s or Lifejackets must not restrict the ability to swim in moving water and must provide appropriate flotation. Inflatable or keyhole P.F.D.s and inflatable or keyhole Lifejackets are not permitted.
- Wrap Kit with bailer must include, at a minimum:
 - 2 locking carabiners
 - 2 – 18 in prusik loops
 - A minimum of 21m (70') of floating, low stretch, high strength, highly visible rope
 - Friction removing device (e.g. pulley)

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Appropriate closed toe footwear must be worn (e.g. water shoes, neoprene booties, running shoes). Sandals are not permitted.

Facilities

- Paddling a section of a river with strainers is not permitted (e.g. downed trees in water).
- River difficulty must be read and classified by a Qualified Instructor or Trip Guide on the day of the activity.
- At least one Teacher/Monitor must have detailed knowledge of the area.

Special Rules/Instructions

Canoeing Moving Water Skills

- Canoeing moving water skills are for the safe maneuvering of a canoe in moving water. These skills must be taught after the skills listed on the [Outdoor Education \(Canoeing\)](#) safety standards are taught.
- Canoe training, practice of skills, and demonstration of proficiency must occur in a pool, shallow water, sheltered bay, or in a low consequence moving water setting (e.g. paddle upstream easily against current, prior to large flat-water bay where recovery is easily achieved).
- Prior to the student's first ever attempt at paddling rapids from top to bottom, they must demonstrate the following moving water skills in a low consequence moving water setting:
 - Eddy out
 - Peel out
 - C-Turn
 - S-Turn
 - Front ferry
 - Back ferry
 - Low brace

Water Safety Skills

- Prior to a canoeing in moving water, water safety skills must be taught and practiced where most appropriate, which can occur in a pool, shallow water, sheltered bay, or in a low consequence moving water setting (e.g., paddle upstream easily against current, prior to large flat-water bay where recovery is easily achieved). The water safety skills include:

- Swimming in currents wearing a PFD/lifejacket
 - Avoiding obstacles while swimming (for example canoe, rocks)
 - Self rescue (feet first on back, front crawl swim to shore)
- Retrieving a swamped canoe
- Receiving a line toss (on land and/or in water)
- Communication (river signals)
- Prior to the student's first ever attempt at paddling rapids (from top to bottom), river reading skills must be taught. These include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Downstream V / Upstream V
 - Curling waves
 - Hydraulics
 - Standing waves
 - Eddies and Eddy lines
 - Pillow rocks
 - Sweepers and Strainers

Supervision

Supervision/Monitoring Ratios

- One (1) Qualified Instructor and one (1) Water Safety Supervisor per 10 boats (maximum 2 students per boat).

Canoeing Moving Water Training

- There must be a minimum of two (2) adults supervising/monitoring the activity. If the Qualified Instructor is also the Water Safety Supervisor, a second individual with the knowledge and skills is required to assist the Qualified Instructor. This role could be fulfilled by a Teacher, Volunteer, or an Outside Provider and must be approved by the school/school board.

Canoeing Moving Water Single Day Trips

- When the activity involves a day trip, there must be a minimum of three (3) adults supervising/monitoring the activity. If the Qualified Instructor is also the Water Safety Supervisor, two (2) other individuals with the knowledge and skills are required to assist the Qualified Instructor. These roles could be fulfilled by a Teacher, a Volunteer or an Outside Provider, and must be approved by the school/school board.

Qualifications

Instructor Qualifications

- A Trip Guide or Qualified Instructor must have a minimum of one of the following current certifications:
 - ORCKA
 - * Moving Water Instructor 1 or 2
 - * River Running Instructor 1 or 2
 - Paddle Canada
 - * Introduction or Intermediate Moving Water Instructor (tandem or solo)
 - Equivalent to any of the above

Water Safety Supervisor

- At least one (1) Teacher, Qualified Instructor, Trip Guide, Assistant Trip Guide, or Volunteer with one (1) of the following current certifications must fill the role of Water Safety Supervisor for the Group when on, in or around moving water:
 - * Whitewater Rescue Technician
 - * Swiftwater Rescue Technician
 - * Equivalent to any of the certifications listed
- A student may not act as the water safety supervisor if they are participating in the activity.

First Aid

Safety Craft

- A moving water appropriate safety craft must be in the water and with occupant(s) aboard while students are canoeing or swimming as part of the canoeing safety training exercise. The operator of the safety craft must have experience in navigating the craft.

Definitions

- **In-charge Person:**
 - Some activities refer to an “In-Charge” person. While the teacher is in-charge and responsible for the overall safety and well-being of students under their care, sometimes there are other personnel who must be identified as “In-Charge” related to specific situations (for example, a pool lifeguard). In activities where an “In-Charge” person is designated, that person, in consultation with the teacher, must make final decisions regarding safety of the students
- **Instructional Time:**

- Time during which there is formal instruction and/or instructor led activities. Examples of instructional time are lessons, events, practice, and games.

- **Qualified Instructor:**

- An individual who provides safety and skill instruction, and monitoring for an activity, and possesses the required qualifications (e.g., experience, certifications). This role could be fulfilled by a teacher, volunteer, or an employee of an outside provider. An instructor does not have the authority to supervise.

- **Lifeguard, Assistant Lifeguard and Aquatic Instructor:**

- Refer to the Qualification section.

- **Lifejacket:**

- Canadian-approved lifejackets are designed to turn an unconscious or incapacitated person face-up in the water. Lifejackets are available with varying amounts of flotation and turning ability. Canadian approved Lifejackets are stamped or labelled indicating that they are approved by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- **Monitor:**

- An individual who assists the Teacher with a group of students, (e.g., Volunteer, Qualified Instructor) and has a responsibility to monitor student behaviors for the duration of the activity.

- **Monitoring:**

- The role of monitoring is to observe, identify, act, and report:
 - **Observe:** Observe with attention to detail the actions of the students.
 - **Identify:** Identify the student and the unsafe behaviour.
 - **Act:** Take appropriate actions to safeguard students and others (e.g., stop the activity).
 - **Report:** Provide the name of the student and the unsafe behaviour to the teacher for management and direction.

- **Outside Activity Provider:**

- A commercial company, volunteer organization, or individual, not associated with the school board, who possess the required qualifications to provide safety and initial skill instruction, and monitoring for the duration of an activity.

- **Personal Flotation Device (P.F.D.):**

- Canadian-approved P.F.D.'s are designed for use in recreational boating and are generally smaller, less bulky and more comfortable than lifejackets. They may have less flotation than lifejackets and may have no or little self-turning ability (the ability to turn an unconscious or incapacitated person face-up in the water). Canadian approved P.F.D.'s are stamped or labelled indicating that they are approved by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of an activity for management or direction. Activities, facilities, and equipment have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.
- The Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education includes three Types of supervision, Direct Supervision, On-Site Supervision, and In-the-Area Supervision. These types of supervision take into consideration the level of risk, which is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, the environmental conditions, the age, and developmental stage.
- The three types of supervision described are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that activities require and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.
- Some activities in OPASSE transition from one type of supervision to another type of supervision (e.g., Direct Supervision to On-Site Supervision OR On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision).

- **Teacher:**

- A person with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school/school board (i.e., teacher, vice-principal, principal). This person is legally responsible for the students and has the authority and responsibility to supervise.

- **Trip Guide:**

- An individual who has the required certifications and/or knowledge/skills of the route and activity. This role could be fulfilled by a Teacher, a Volunteer, or an employee of an Outside Activity Provider and must be approved by the school/school board. Trip Guides have been instructed on their monitoring responsibilities.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Direct Supervision:**

- Direct Supervision requires that the Teacher is physically present at the activity, providing visual and verbal oversight for management and direction of both, the activity and student safety.

- Provisos:

- No other activity can occur when part of the activity or the entire activity is under Direct Supervision when there is only one Teacher supervising.
- The Supervision section of the relevant activity safety standards page in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education describes when parts of an activity are under Direct Supervision.
- Where a Qualified Instructor(s) is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring for one activity and requires the Teacher to be present at that activity for management and direction.

- An activity may be under Direct Supervision:

- During the entire duration of the activity;
- During the set up and take down of equipment; .

- During the safety and initial skill instruction;
 - During the performance/practice of the activity skill; and
 - When the activities transition from Direct Supervision to On-Site Supervision.
- **In-the-Area Supervision:**
 - The Teacher is located in proximity to a combination of locations where the student activities take place, is circulating, and is accessible for providing management and direction of the physical activity and student safety.
 - Provisos:
 - The Teacher is circulating between the activities occurring at separate locations, and is readily accessible, or the location of the Teacher is communicated to the student.
 - Where a Qualified Instructor(s) is providing the safety and skill and instruction and is monitoring at a combination of locations, the Teacher is located in proximity to where the student activities take place, is circulating between the activity locations, and is accessible for management and direction.
 - Students may be out of sight for periods of time.
 - An activity or a component of the activity is under In-the-Area Supervision:
 - Where the same activity is located in separate locations (e.g., Fitness activities);
 - Where two or more activities under In-the-Area Supervision occur in separate locations (e.g., Badminton, Table Tennis, Handball (Wall));
 - Where the skill application of the activity takes place at a separate location from the teacher (e.g., Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine), Cycling, hiking on trails);
 - When the activities occur in double or triple gymnasiums; and

- Where more than one Qualified Instructor is providing activities at a combination of locations.

- **On-Site Supervision:**

- The Teacher is present at one location where the student activity takes place (e.g., gymnasium, sports field, climbing wall at an Outside Activity Provider's facility, campsite) and is accessible for providing management and direction of the physical activity and student safety.

- **Provisos:**

- Where more than one activity occurs in one location, the Teacher is circulating between the activities and is accessible for management and direction.
- Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (e.g., equipment room, outdoor storage shed, boathouse, staff tent) is considered to be On-Site Supervision.
- Where a Qualified Instructor(s) is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring for an activity or a combination of activities at one location and the Teacher is present and is circulating and accessible for management and direction.

- **An activity may be under On-Site Supervision:**

- During the entire duration of the activity;
- During the safety and initial skill instruction;
- With activities using multiple stations while the Teacher is circulating;
- When combining two or more activities at one location while the Teacher is circulating; and
- When activities transition from On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision.

- **Volunteer:**

- A responsible adult (e.g., Educational Assistants, Retired Teachers, Co-op Students, Parents/Guardians, Teacher Candidates) approved by the Principal/Designate who is under the direction of a Teacher and has been instructed on their monitoring responsibilities. Refer to your school board's policy on volunteers assisting with student's physical activities.

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