

# Outdoor Education (Paddle Rafting)

## Pools, Lakes, Rivers

### ELEMENTARY - INTRAMURAL 2023

- 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](#).
- For grades 6 to 8 only
- Flatwater and Class I River Classification Only
- In class I there is no evidence of rapids with moderate, irregular waves, large waves or strainers, strong eddies or powerful currents (source: International Scale of River Difficulty).
- White Water Canoeing, White Water Kayaking, White Water Rafting and Canoeing-Moving Water are not appropriate activities at the Elementary level.
- Also consult [Outdoor Education \(General Procedures\)](#).
- 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 any 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

- Determine that all equipment is safe for use (for example, no sharp corners, cracks, or splinters).  
Students must be encouraged to report equipment problems to the teacher.
- Rafts must be provided by the facility. Personal rafts must not be used.
- Comply with the Minimum Safety Equipment Requirements in [Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide](#).
- Correctly fitting and Canadian-approved personal flotation devices (P.F.D.)/lifejackets, with whistle attached, must be worn and properly secured at all times by all students when near the water, on docks and in rafts.

Refer to the [First Aid](#) section for first aid equipment requirements.

## Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

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- Determine that all necessary clothing and footwear are included prior to departing on the excursion.  
Clothing (in layers where appropriate) and footwear appropriate to the activity, location and environmental conditions must be worn. Rain gear and/or a dry change of clothing kept in a watertight bag/container must be accessible.
- When long hair poses a safety risk it must be secured. Devices (for example, hair pins, elastics and barrettes) used to tie back long hair must not present a safety concern.
- Students must not participate when the length of fingernails poses a safety risk to themselves or others.

## Facilities

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- Flatwater or Class I River Classifications only.
- Check with local authorities for current information regarding route safety.
- Water conditions must be appropriate for the skill level of the group.
- Instructor/trip guide must be familiar with site including potential hazards and emergency exit points.

- Determine that all facilities are safe for use. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the teacher.

## Environmental Considerations

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- When environmental conditions may pose a risk to student safety (for example, thunderstorms [lightning] or student(s) with asthma, triggered by air quality), teachers must take into consideration their school board/school's protocols and procedures related to:
  - environmental conditions (consult [Weather](#)); and
  - insects (for example, mosquitoes and ticks [consult the school/school board's protocols and/or regional Public Health Department's website]).
- Students must receive instruction on safety procedures related to environmental conditions and be made aware of ways to protect themselves (for example, sun burn, heat stroke).
- At all times the school board's weather and insect procedures are the minimum standards. In situations where a higher standard of care is presented (for example, outside activity providers, facility/program coordinators), the higher standard of care must be followed.
- Instructor and teacher must:
  - be aware of and respond to changing weather and water conditions prior to and during the trip; and
  - cancel, postpone or alter the excursion if conditions put students' safety at an elevated level of risk (for example, wind, temperature, lightning storms, fog).
- If hazardous weather suddenly approaches, leave the water immediately.
- Daylight paddle rafting only except under emergency situations.
- Navigation lights (for example, waterproof flashlight) are required if operating at night or in restricted visibility.

## Special Rules/Instructions

- Be aware of students whose medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, casts, previous concussion, orthopaedic device) may affect participation. Consult [Medical Conditions](#).
- Students must not participate in the activity until they receive information on concussion prevention specific to the activity, inherent risks of the activity (for example, outline possible risks and ways to minimize the risks), and procedures and rules for safe play. Students must receive instruction on the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- Refer to school board policies and procedures (i.e., transportation, excursion/field trip) for communication with parents/guardians, the location of an off-site activity, means of transportation, supervision ratios, and parent/guardian permission.
- Parents/guardians must be informed that all students will wear a correctly fitting and Canadian-approved PFD/lifejacket, with whistle attached, when near, in or on the water.
- Activities must be modified according to the age, ability level, language, and experience of students, number of participants, and the facility available.
- Previous training, fitness level, and the length of time and intensity of physical activity must be taken into consideration.
- Activities must be based on skills that are taught.
- Skills must be taught in proper progression.
- A proper warm-up and cool-down must be included.
- When a student displays hesitation (verbally or non-verbally) with participating, the teacher must determine the reason(s) for doubt. If the teacher believes that a potential hesitancy during the skill could put the student at risk, the student must be directed toward a more basic skill, or be permitted to select a role within the activity at their comfort level, including the choice to not participate.
- Prior to participation, the teacher must reference and apply their school board's policy on equity and inclusion as it affects student participation and makes appropriate accommodations/modifications to provide a safe learning environment. Consult the Intent subsection within the [About section](#).
- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.

- Proper exit techniques must always be followed. No diving or jumping off rafts.
- Establish appropriate start and stop procedures (for example, whistle system).
- All instructors must be knowledgeable of the established emergency and safety procedures for their site. Instructors must outline emergency and safety procedures to all participants and other trip supervisors.

## Paddle Rafting Skills

- Prior to paddle rafting, a prerequisite test must occur in a pool, shallow water, or sheltered bay for which students must demonstrate to the instructor competence in paddle rafting skills, as follow:
  - Launching
  - Positioning of paddlers
  - Proper entry/exit

## Steersperson

- Every craft requires a qualified steersperson.
- Steersperson may sit or stand while steering.
- Steersperson is the in-charge person outranking all persons in the boat.
- Steersperson for each boat must demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:
  - Read and understand [Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide](#)
  - Be able to manage the team and exercise authority over team members
  - Load the boat
  - Balance the boat
  - Maintain a straight course
  - Steer a figure eight course around two buoys at normal speed with a full crew, in both directions, or in the absence of buoys, steer a set course which includes both left- and right-angled turns
  - Execute sideways maneuvers without going forwards

- Turn the boat through 360 degrees in both directions without the use of paddlers
- Guide the craft forward in a straight line without the use of paddlers
- Execute an emergency stop
- Execute safe approaches to a jetty/pontoon/dock in still and windy conditions
- Manage the unloading of the team members
- Secure the boat and determine that gear is put away correctly

## Supervision

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- All activities must be supervised.
- The level of supervision must be commensurate with the inherent risk of the activity. The level of risk is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, and environmental conditions.
- On-site supervision is required.

Refer to the [Swim Test](#) section for the swim test supervision ratios.

### Supervision Ratios for Instructional Time

- 1 supervisor per 8 students.

Refer to the definition of [Instructional Time](#).

## Qualifications

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Refer to the [Swim Test](#) section for the swim test aquatic instructor qualification requirements.

### Steersperson Qualifications

- Paddle Rafting steersperson must possess one of the following qualifications:

- Attendance at a clinic or workshop within the last three years provided by an instructor who is knowledgeable of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
- Past experience within the last three years as a steersperson in paddle rafting, having knowledge of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.

## Instructor Qualifications

- For an OCA member waterfront setting (for example, local pond or lake in a sheltered, confined spot), the minimum ORCKA qualification is Camp Canoeing Instructor.
- Situations beyond the training of the Camp Canoeing Instructor or outside of an OCA member setting will require an Instructor to have one of the following current certifications:
  - ORCKA Basic Canoeing Instructor
  - ORCKA Canadian Style Paddling Instructor
  - ORCKA Canoe Tripping Instructor 2
  - ORCKA Moving Water Instructor 2
  - ORCKA River Running Instructor 2
  - ORCKA Canoe Tripping Level 3
  - Paddle Canada equivalent.
- For non-OCA member sites, and for flatwater paddle rafting in a non-wilderness environment, there must be one instructor with a minimum of one of the following qualifications:
  - ORCKA Basic Canoeing Instructor
  - ORCKA Canadian Style Paddling Instructor
  - ORCKA Canoe Tripping Instructor 2
  - ORCKA Moving Water Instructor 2
  - ORCKA River Running Instructor 2

- ORCKA Canoe Tripping Level 3
- Paddle Canada Waterfront Canoe Instructor
- Paddle Canada Intermediate Lake Skills
- Paddle Canada Introductory Lake Skills
- Paddle Canada Advanced Lake Skills – Solo
- Paddle Canada Advanced Tripping Skills
- Paddle Canada Advanced Moving Water (both tandem & solo)
- Paddle Canada Advanced Tripping Skills + Wilderness Advanced First Aid + CPR + 1000 km experience
- Paddle Canada Advanced Tripping Skills + Wilderness First Aid + CPR + 500 km experience
- Paddle Canada Waterfront Canoe Instructor

## Lifeguard Qualifications

- A lifeguard must be 18 years of age or older and possess a current (the date on the certificate must not be older than two years) lifeguard certificate issued by one of the following organizations:
  - Lifesaving Society – National Lifeguard – Pool/Waterfront
  - Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
- A student may not act as a lifeguard if they are participating in the activity.

Refer to the [Swim Test](#) section for the swim test lifeguard qualification requirements.

## First Aid

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A fully stocked first aid kit must be readily accessible. (Consult [Sample First Aid Kit](#))

- A working communication device (for example, satellite or cell phone, or satellite GPS messenger) suitable for the activities/locations must be available. This device must be maintained, waterproofed, protected and dedicated for emergency communications only. The phone number for the device, and

phone numbers for emergency services and school contact people (for example, the principal) must be included with the phone.

- At least one teacher, trip guide, instructor, or supervisor must have a minimum of a current (not more than three years prior to the day on which the holder is on duty) first aid certificate (standard or higher) issued by one of the following agencies: St. John Ambulance; Canadian Red Cross; Lifesaving Society; Canadian Ski Patrol; or an organization whose certificate is deemed equivalent by the medical officer of health in the local health unit.
- Follow the school's first aid emergency response (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)) and the school board's concussion protocol (consult [Concussions](#)).
- An emergency action plan and response to deal with evacuations and lock downs must be followed and communicated to students.

## Safety Craft

- If instruction is taking place in a pool, no safety craft is required.
- A safety craft is a designated craft that is rescue-capable, taking into consideration necessary factors (for example, distance from shore, weather, water and wind conditions), and contains at least one instructor, trip guide or individual who meets the first aid certification.
- A safety craft must be in the water and accessible while students are paddle rafting. If the safety craft is motorized then the operator must have a Pleasure Craft Operator Card and must have experience in navigating the craft.

## Swim Test

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### Swim Test for Watercraft

- Prior to the activity, students must successfully complete the following swim test in its entirety, without any stops, in sequence, with or without a personal flotation device (P.F.D.):
  - Rolling entry (backwards or forward) into deep water at 2.75m (9') minimum depth
  - Tread water for 1 minute

- Swim 50m (164') continuously any stroke
- The test must be administered by a certified aquatic instructor or a certified lifeguard (the test is based on the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive™ Standard).
- The swim test must be completed within the school year in which the activity is taking place.
- In lieu of completing the swim test, students may provide proof of Bronze Star certification or higher.
- Results of the swim test must be documented and communicated as per school board policy (for example, to the student, teacher, principal, parents/guardians, trip guide(s), lifeguards, aquatic instructor, and outside provider [if applicable]).
- All Teachers, Trip Guides, and Volunteers must be aware of the students who require a P.F.D./Lifejacket to complete the swim test.

## Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery for the Swim Test

- Appropriate swimwear must be worn.

## Aquatic Instructor Qualifications for the Swim Test for Watercraft

- An aquatic instructor must possess both an aquatic instructor certificate and a lifeguard certificate that are dated not more than two years prior to the date on which they are required to instruct and lifeguard. If the aquatic instructor does not hold a lifeguard certificate, a certified lifeguard must also be on the dock/shore during the swim test.
- Aquatic Instructor Certificates for Waterfronts:
  - Lifesaving Society - Instructor Certificate
  - YMCA - Instructor Certificate
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the swimming area.

## Lifeguard Qualifications for the Swim Test for Watercraft

- A lifeguard must be 18 years of age or older and possess a current (the date on the certificate must not be older than two years) lifeguard certificate issued by one of the following organizations:

- Lifesaving Society – National Lifeguard – Pool/Waterfront
- Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
- A student may not act as a lifeguard if they are participating in the activity.
- Lifeguard certification is the only acceptable standard in a recreational camp waterfront scenario.
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the swimming area.

## Supervision Ratios for the Swim Test for Watercraft

- There must be a minimum of 2 certified aquatic instructors or lifeguards at the waterfront or in the water.
- Supervision ratio is 2 certified aquatic instructors or lifeguards per 1 to 25 students.
- For every additional 25 students, an additional certified aquatic instructor or lifeguard is required.

## Definitions

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- **Class I:**
  - Easy. Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. There are few obstructions and all are obvious and easily missed with some training.
- **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:**
  - Instructional time is defined as time during which there are organized activities or instructions. Examples of instructional time are lessons, events, practice, and games.

- **Instructor:**

- An individual who provides instruction on skills and possesses the required certifications. This role could be fulfilled by a teacher, parent/guardian/volunteer or an employee of an outside provider.

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

- Refer to the Qualification section.

- **Outside Activity Provider:**

- An outside facility contracted by the school/board to provide activity services.

- **Parent/guardian/volunteer:**

- An adult who has been approved by the principal and has been instructed on responsibilities (for example, monitoring [supervision]).

- **Personal Flotation Device (PFD):**

- According to [Canadian Red Cross](#), "A Canadian approved PFD is designed to keep you afloat in the water. PFDs were designed for use in recreational boating and are generally smaller, less bulky and more comfortable than lifejackets. They have less flotation than lifejackets, and have limited turning capacity, but are available in a variety of styles and colours."

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of an activity for regulation 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 designate three categories of supervision, Constant visual supervision, On-site supervision, and In-the-area supervision. The categories take into consideration the risk level of the activity, the participants' skill level and the participants' maturity. The three levels of supervision described are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that an activity requires and the type of supervision that is inherently

possible.

- **Supervisor:**

- A supervisor is a teacher, parent/guardian/volunteer, or trip guide. This term is used only in relation to supervision ratios.

- **Teacher:**

- A person with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers, under contract by the school/board. This person is legally responsible for the students.

- **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 parent/guardian/volunteer or an employee of an outside provider, and must be approved by the school/board.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Constant Visual Supervision:**

- Constant visual supervision means that the teacher is physically present, watching the activity in question. Only one activity requiring “Constant visual” supervision may take place while other activities are going on.
- Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For high jump, the teacher is at the high jump area and is observing the activity.
- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For parachute, the intramural supervisor is at the event and is observing activity.

- **In-the-area Supervision:**

- In-the-area supervision means that the teacher could be in the gymnasium while another activity is taking place in an area adjacent to the gymnasium. In-the-area supervision requires the teacher to be readily accessible.
- In-the-area supervision occurs:
  - in activities in which students may be out of sight for periods of time and the location of the teacher is not nearby (for example, alpine skiing, cross-country running). At least one of the following criteria must be in place:
    - The teacher is circulating
    - The location of teacher has been communicated to students and volunteers
  - in single activities and those that may be combined (for example, other in- the- area activities such as badminton, table tennis, handball – wall) with the following criteria in place:
    - The teacher must be circulating between the activities and readily accessible
    - The teacher informs students of the location of the activities
- Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For distance running, the students are running around the school and at times may be out of sight.
- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For a scavenger hunt, the students are running around the school grounds and at times may be out of sight.
- **On-site Supervision:**
  - On-site supervision entails teacher presence but not necessarily constantly viewing one specific activity. Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (for example, equipment room)

to the gym is considered part of “on-site supervision”.

- Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For a relay, the students are practising on the track and can be seen by the teacher who is with the high jumpers.
- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For relay games, the students are participating on the playground and can be seen by the intramural supervisor.

Last Published

Fri, 01/26/24 02:33 pm