

VCKC MEMBERS' GUIDE – PROGRAMS & TRIP GUIDELINES

General Code of Conduct for VCKC Members

The VCKC requires that all club members and their guests conduct themselves in a manner that respects the General Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct states that Club members and their guests should:

Use club facilities and equipment in a respectful, careful and secure manner, so as not to cause damage of any kind to club property, or risk injury to themselves, other club members, or members of the general public;

Be attentive to and follow the guidance of club instructors, coaches, trip leaders, and coordinators of any club activity, especially when guidance is concerned with issues of personal and group safety;

Treat all persons with respect at all times and conduct themselves in a manner that agrees with the VCKC Policies and Procedures, to ensure the success and enjoyment of club activities for all members.

Convey respect when communicating about or referring to fellow paddlers, new recruits or guest paddlers (both oral and written communication);

Refrain from, and refuse to tolerate in others, all forms of harassment;

Respect the property and space of all individuals;

Make NO disturbance to the wildlife or habitat, bird habitat in particular, during activities on the Gorge;

Demonstrate integrity and good sportsmanship in all relationships;

Offer assistance to anyone in genuine need, on or off the water, but should not put themselves or fellow paddlers at risk;

Always behave appropriately when representing the club, be respectful of officials, competitors and organizers of all club-related events;

Respect the fact that all individuals within the club have a common interest and are present at events and

activities as either participants or volunteers on their own time;

Have special regard for inexperienced paddlers in their group; and

Realize that membership is a privilege.

Dragonboat Program – Paddlers' Code of Conduct

- Participate with team and program members in a positive and productive manner;
- Abide by team protocols and requirements that are established by individual teams;
- Direct any concerns or complaints about team issues to the team coach/captain/manager, not other paddlers;
- Not challenge a coach's decision while in the boat and during practice, but rather, discussing the issue on land either before or after the practice session

Outrigger Program – Paddlers' Code of Conduct

Every team member agrees to:

- Be committed to the schedule
- Find a replacement from the spares list when necessary and as far ahead of the scheduled date as possible; then advise the team captain.
- Arrive no less than 15 minutes prior to launch time, properly equipped and clothed for the event and weather conditions.
- Take care of personal pre-launch duties.
- Do a personal recall of huli duties or ask the stern to confirm those tasks prior to each outing; AND be prepared to participate in a practice huli once every two years.

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- Advise the stern/captain of any personal physical limitations prior to each outing, or promptly should something occur during the trip.
- Contribute to an enjoyable and safe outing.
- Take care of assigned post trip duties.

Care of Club Boats

“Club boats” are the dragon boat, outrigger and voyageur canoes, club kayaks, club canoes, marathon canoes and safety boat.

Club boats must be

- treated with care to minimize damage and wear and tear; hulls should not be driven onto the shore or into rocks, pilings, etc; voyageurs gunwales should be handled firmly but not grabbed when lifting;
- stored so as to minimize stress on the boat, whether on land or in the water;
- rinsed and drained after each use.
- If there is a boat cover it must be placed over the boat and tied down.
- Damage to/loss of a boat or its equipment (including trailers) must be reported as soon as possible to the program director.

Use of Club Boats

- Club boats must be used in the context of a VCKC Program;
- be booked with the program director or designate;
- be in the control of an approved steers person at all times;
- be operated in a safe and responsible manner at all times;

- follow the rules and regulations of the Victoria Harbourmaster and Canadian Coastguard.
- not be used during lightning storms;
- be sea worthy - if the boat is not safe to paddle a note must be placed on the boat, on the Clubhouse basement door and the appropriate program board
- Club boats will not be used in the open ocean after dusk.

VCKC TRIP GUIDELINES:

Voyageur Canoe; Outrigger Canoe; Dragonboat

“Approved steers person” is a Club member who has demonstrated to the program director that he/she has the experience and/or training to be competent in handling the type of craft in the expected setting and circumstances;

DRAGONBOATS

- The Club dragon boat will not be used beyond the Ogden Point Breakwater. A minimum of 10 paddlers and a steersperson are required to use the dragonboat.

OUTRIGGER CANOE

- The Club outrigger canoes may be used offshore provided that
- the stern person has open ocean experience;
- the crew of 6 are experienced paddlers;
- a minimum of 4 paddlers must have practiced righting the canoe (huli) during the previous 2years.
- Spray skirts are required in open waters.

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VOYAGEUR CANOE

The Club voyageur canoes may be used offshore provided that

- two canoes travel together;
- the steers person has open ocean experience;
- the crew include a minimum of 4 experienced paddlers.

Responsibilities of Steers Persons

- The main duties of a steers person are to
- be familiar with, or anticipate, potential hazards in the trip area/route;
- be aware of weather and water conditions which may affect safety;
- check the latest public and marine forecasts and tides before departure where applicable.
- (Marine and Public forecast call 363-6717) or website:
http://www.tc.gc.ca/MarineSafety/TP/TP511/boat.htm#Canoes_kayaks_less_6m
- discuss the objectives of the trip, route, type and known hazards of the trip, accident prevention, signals, emergency and rescue procedures with the crew;
- ensure that the required safety equipment is in the boat before launching;
- decide the safest course, watch for hazards such as debris, waves, and other boats and users of the water – swimmers, fishers, etc.;
- be aware of the rules for passing other craft and take appropriate action to avoid collisions;

- advise a responsible person if they are paddling offshore and when they are expected back;
- assure that he/she is the first level of authority in the boat, but also accept input from the crew.

Responsibilities of Paddlers

- Paddlers using Club boats should only participate in trips that you feel competent to handle;
- be properly equipped for the trip;
- know the appropriate procedures to follow if the boat capsizes;
- be aware of the steers person's responsibilities and cooperate with him/her with respect to the safety of the boat and crew;
- inform the steers person of personal circumstances that could affect your performance and advise him/her at any time during the trip if you experience discomfort or difficulty;
- know the proper procedures for lifting and carrying the boat. Launching and fetching boats can be physically demanding. Lift with legs, not the back, and carry with a straight back.

Safety Equipment

The minimum necessary equipment for trips in Club boats is:

- Boat and equipment
- Minimum of 3 large bailing buckets
- a paddle for each paddler;
- an extra paddle in each boat;

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- a watertight flashlight and a whistle per boat;
- a buoyant heaving line at least 15 m in length (recommend a minimum of 60 feet line with a minimum 1800 lb. breaking strength);
- a white light on the boat as set out in collision regulations for unpowered craft operating after sunset and before sunrise or in periods of restricted or reduced visibility.
- An Emergency Safety Kit, including flares, attached to each boat, if in open waters;
- a spray deck on outrigger canoes for trips in unsheltered waters, including trips that go beyond Ogden Point Breakwater.

Personal gear

- a PFD for each paddler properly fastened at all times;
- a whistle attached to each PFD is recommended; the stern person must have a whistle attached to their PFD;
- appropriate clothing for the weather and water conditions;
- a dry bag containing warm dry clothes if paddling offshore;
- a wetsuit is recommended if paddling offshore.

VCKC TRIP GUIDELINES

Canoes & Kayaks

“Club trips” are those trips advertised in the newsletter open to all members with the necessary skills and equipment.

- Club trips should only be undertaken if a competent trip leader is available.

- There will be a minimum of three boats on Club canoe and kayak trips.

Responsibilities of Trip Leaders

The main duties of a trip leader are:

- Trip planning
- provide an outline of the trip (ie: difficulty, route, times, and meeting places);
- if possible, have an alternative trip planned if conditions are unfavourable for the original trip;
- be familiar with, or anticipate, potential hazards in the trip area/route;
- check the public and marine forecasts and tides before departure where applicable;
- (Marine and Public forecast call 363-6717)
- carry phone number(s) of the nearest emergency contact in the area (ie: R.C.M.P., Air-sea rescue), and also consider notifying local authorities prior to departure;
- endeavour to ensure that only paddlers who are properly skilled and equipped attempt the trip.

Checks and briefing

- discuss the objectives of the trip, route, type and known hazards of the trip, accident prevention, signals, emergency and rescue procedures;
- ensure that the necessary extra group equipment is present and designate who will be carrying it;
- designate capable lead and sweep boats.

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On the water

- endeavour to keep the group together and properly spaced, especially on rivers, rough water and in high traffic areas on lakes and ocean;
- set a pace which is comfortable to the entire group, allowing for sufficient rest stops;
- modify the trip according to changing paddling conditions and be prepared to handle emergency situations (paddling conditions, first aid, rescue);
- assure that he/she is the first level of authority on a trip, but also be prepared to delegate authority;
- debrief participants with any information which could help them improve their knowledge and skills;
- report situations (positive or negative) to the safety director that could benefit the leadership of future trips.

Responsibilities of Trip Members

Paddlers participating Club trips should

- attend only trips that you feel competent to handle;
- be properly equipped for the trip;
- be aware of the trip leader's responsibilities and cooperate with him/her in performing these duties with respect to the safety and comfort of the group;
- inform the leader of personal circumstances that could affect your performance and advise the leader at any time during the trip if you experience discomfort or difficulty.

OPEN CANADIAN CANOES

The minimum necessary equipment for open Canadian canoes is

- Boat and equipment
- a paddle for each paddler with an adequate spare in each boat;
- a bailer tied into the boat;
- buoyant bow and stern lines, minimum 3/8";
- Coast guard approved throw bag (buoyant heaving line);
- a sponge is useful on both flat and moving water trips;
- extra flotation tied into the boat is strongly recommended for moving water trips;
- appropriate navigation lights if paddling before sunrise or after sunset or in periods of restricted visibility.

Personal gear

- a P.F.D. for each paddler;
- a sound signaling device (whistle/air horn);
- a watertight bag containing adequate spare dry clothing to withstand the prevailing conditions;
- adequate food and water to last the duration of the trip;
- adequate footwear on moving water trips;
- Wetsuits are optional but highly recommended on moving water trips.

Extra group equipment

- two knives;

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- a whistle;
- a first aid kit;
- matches and fire-starter;
- two spare paddles;
- an extra bailer;
- an extra dry bag containing warm dry clothes;
- adequate charts and compass where applicable;
- the phone number of the local emergency organization.

SEA KAYAKS

The minimum necessary equipment for sea (touring) kayaks is:

- Boat and equipment
- a paddle with adequate spare;
- perimeter deckline and grab loops at each end of the kayak;
- Coast guard approved throwline;
- a pump or bailer;
- adequate flotation;
- CCG approved navigation lights if traveling after sunset, before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility.

Personal gear

- PFD;
- spray deck where applicable;
- a dry bag containing spare dry clothes to withstand the prevailing conditions;

- immersion wear if paddling offshore;
- a sound signalling device (whistle/air horn);
- adequate food and water for duration of trip;
- helmets if surf may be encountered.

Extra group equipment

- rescue stirrup;
- charts and compass where applicable;
- emergency signalling and communication devices (flares, vhf radio, cell phone);
- first aid kit and an emergency kit which should include a flashlight, lighter, fire starter, emergency shelter, knife, cordage, food;
- a spare dry bag containing warm dry clothes.

RIVER KAYAKS

The minimum necessary equipment for decked river kayaks is:

- Boat and equipment
- an adequate river paddle;
- grab loops at each end of the kayak;
- adequate flotation;
- spray deck
- Personal gear
- PFD;
- helmet;
- a wet or drysuit is recommended;
- food and water to last the duration of the trip.

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Extra group equipment

- a dry bag containing warm dry clothing;
- two throw ropes;
- two knives;
- a whistle;
- a first aid kit;
- matches and fire-starter;
- an extra dry bay containing warm dry clothes;
- the phone number of the local emergency organization.

DRAGON BOAT PROGRAM

The Dragon Boat policy includes the following:

- All paddlers must be made aware of boat safety procedures.
- There is to be No Drumming on our side of the Tillicum Bridge.
- All team names must have VCKC preceding the name. For example, when registering a team for a festival, the registered name must be VCKC Ageless Warriors, not just Ageless Warriors.
- All team uniforms or t-shirts must show the VCKC and/or logo.
- All regular dragon boat activities are postponed during VCKC sponsored events such as Canada Day, Spring and Fall clean-ups of the clubhouse and grounds, and the Gorge Waterway Clean-ups.

Qualifications

As dragon boating is a team activity, the boat should only be taken out under the guidance of qualified paddlers. Specifically

Coach – should have taken and passed a recognized approved training program or have comparable experience as deemed acceptable by the Program Director.

Stern – should have taken and passed a recognized clinic on sterning a dragon boat or possess comparable experience as deemed acceptable by the Program Director.

Safety

- The boat must have a safety bag.
- All paddlers must wear a PFD properly done up.
- All paddlers must be familiar with the standard dragon boat commands for steering and controlling the boat.
- The boat should only be taken out in safe weather and water conditions
- The Captain/Coach should be aware of any pre-existing medical conditions of paddlers in the boat that may be affected by paddling.
- All paddlers should wear appropriate clothing for the weather and be advised to have water and to use sunscreen when necessary.
- There should be a minimum of 10 paddlers and a qualified stern before a dragon boat can go out.

Equipment

Club equipment must be treated with care. The Captain/Coach is required to report any damage or misuse of equipment to the Program Director.

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- The club will provide paddles and PFDs for new paddlers but it is expected that team and regular paddlers will purchase their own equipment.
- The dragon boats should be locked and tied up securely at the end of each practice, with the cable and ropes out of the water.
- At the end of each practice the Dragon Boats will be empty of water and cleaned if needed.
- The clubhouse door must be closed before the boat leaves the dock

Responsibility

- Captain/Coach – ensure that all safety points are covered and that you take charge of the boat, as you are the ‘Captain of the boat’.
- Stern – is aware of water and weather conditions and communicates effectively with caller (Captain/Coach).
- Paddlers – is a paid-up member of the club or has signed a waiver if a guest, listens to the Captain/Coach/Stern instructions, informs the Captain/Coach if there are any pre-existing medical conditions that may be affected by paddling.
- The Captain and Coach are required to submit a team roster to the DB Director at the beginning of each season. Names of any new members joining mid-season will need to be added to the team roster.
- The Captains & Coaches will provide the Program Director with team member lists regularly to ensure all paddlers (except guests) are paid up members.

OUTRIGGER CANOE PROGRAM

The Outrigger Program policy includes the following:

- All paddlers must be aware of boat safety procedures.
- All team names must have VCKC preceding the name.
- All team uniforms or t-shirts must show VCKC and/ or logo.
- All regular dragon boat activities are postponed during VCKC sponsored events such as Canada Day, Spring and Fall clean-ups of the clubhouse and grounds, and the Gorge Waterway Clean-ups.

VCKC owns two traditionally styled 6 person outrigger canoes (OC 6), and two single paddler training/recreational canoes (OC 1) crews are formed and paddle in 3 classes; recreational, recreational/racing, and racing.

- Fixed paddling times are assigned to each crew, with the exception that unassigned time slots may be booked by any crew, so long as they have an experienced steerer and at least four members have participated in a huli (capsize recovery) drill within the past 2 years.
- Purely recreational crews often paddle only once a week, crews training for racing usually paddle more often.
- Racing crews may be gender and/or age specific, and participation is usually by invitation. The level of exertion and endurance required for racing is quite high, as outrigger races frequently exceed 10 km in length, and potential crew members should maintain a suitable level of fitness.

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- The steer person must be made aware of any outstanding health problems before a person is allowed to paddle.
- The wearing of PFD's is mandatory at ALL times for insurance and liability reasons, no exceptions.

OC6 Positions

STROKE: sets the pace and strives to keep it constant throughout, except when starting a race. The stroker can feel the paddlers, the boat, and the water, and can alter the stroke rate slightly until the crew becomes synchronized. It is the business of the rest of the crew to imitate the rate, rhythm and stroke length of the stroker at all times; by definition, the stroker is doing it right, and a good stroker will adapt to conditions to get the best out of the crew.

SEAT 2 sets the timing for half of the crew, and must pay close attention to the Stroker. Seat 2 may offer encouragement or comment to the stroker, but only if the stroker asks for it. The amount and nature of conversation should be agreed upon before setting out. Seat 2 is also responsible for putting weight onto the iako when at rest or when about to huli.

SEAT 3: the boiler room. Follows Seat 1. Usually assigned to a powerful paddler, who has no special duties except to paddle hard. May be the caller in some boats (see Seat 4). Otherwise is silent.

SEAT 4: also a power position, follows seat 2, calls the changes (huts). Huts are usually called every 12 to 20 strokes. It may be a single 'hut' on the strike, followed by one more stroke before the change, or a 'hut' with a 'ho' on the change stroke. In waves, the call should not come when the bow is down in a trough; wait until the canoe is being pushed and the bow is up. For VCKC crews, the hut should not be called while paddling under the Tillicum Bridge against the tide. Call just as the bow enters the race, and

again after the boat is past the crest on the other side. Likewise changes should not be called while under the Craigflower Bridge. Seat 4 is also in the best position for bailing while underway.

SEAT 5: requires good all round skills, follows seat 3, and should be a powerful paddler who maintains awareness of the boat. Seat 5 has a good view of the boat and the ama and can react quickly to put weight on the ama to prevent a huli. Seat 5 supports the steerer if necessary, and bails when necessary. Generally remains silent.

SEAT 6. The steerer is in charge of the boat. Responsibility for the crew's safety is of primary importance. Before going out he/she should:

- Check that the boat has a minimum of 2 large bailers, and smaller ones for all crew members (4 more?).
- Check that the rigging is tight and unfrayed, that the fore and aft plugs are in, and that there is no water in the ama or the floatation tanks.
- Make sure that a properly stocked emergency kit and throw bag are in the boat, and mount at least 1 light if you will be out after dark. Check to ensure all paddlers are wearing CCG-approved PFD's.
- Check the weather and the appropriate tide/current tables, and do not take the boat out unless you are sure that your skills are up to safely handling the expected sea conditions! (unless you have a more experienced coach or steerer to help)
- Assign seats. Be sure to rotate seats so that each paddler learns each seat.
- Tell the crew about the planned paddle, and be sure that they are aware of their individual roles in case of a huli.

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- Stay close to shore when the wind is up.
- Avoid paddling under the Tillicum Bridge when the predicted current exceeds 2 knots (from current table) unless you have a strong crew, and you are confident that you will be able to control the boat and be successful in the attempt. Avoid going out to Victoria Harbour if the tide will change against your return.

STEERERS are generally trained through mentoring with an experienced steerer, and in courses offered within VCKC or other clubs. Steerers must gain experience in different sea conditions in an incremental fashion in order to safely control the boat in adverse conditions.

Except as noted above, seats 1-5 should be silent while paddling. It creates friction and an unsafe canoe if crew members argue, correct each other, or give orders. If they have issues with each other or with the steerer, they should wait until they reach shore to deal with them. On no account should anyone stop paddling until the steerer calls a break, since the steerer cannot control the boat if the crew isn't paddling. This is particularly important in challenging conditions or when approaching shore.

The safety and cohesiveness of the crew depends on the steerer being trusted and obeyed exactly and immediately. A divisive boat is an unsafe boat. The steerer has the right to remove any paddler from the crew if he/she does not cooperate.

HULI DRILL

- All VCKC outrigger crews are expected to practice huli recovery, and crews are not allowed to take a boat out unless at least 4 of the crew members have participated in a huli recovery within the past 2 years.
- Crews should plan to do a huli practice each year, so that all members (including spares)

become familiar with their responsibilities when the inevitable occurs.

- Steerers and coaches should verbally describe huli procedures to new crew members.
- Racing crews should practice huli procedures more often, as it is possible to recover quickly enough to retain position in a race.
- It is highly recommended that any persons paddling after dark equip themselves with a PFD light of some sort.

Paddling outside the inner harbour

During the summer one OC 6 is moored at Oak Bay or Cadboro Bay. Waters are generally rougher than normally encountered in the Inner Harbour or Gorge, so the chance of a huli in these cold waters increases.

- Crews using the 'outside' boat should do at least one huli drill near shore so that all members are aware of the effects of the cold water on their recovery attempt.
- When paddling to and from this location from the club, and for paddle offshore (outside of the breakwater in general), paddlers should provide their own dry bags containing dry clothes in case of a huli.
- Use of wet- or dry-suits is encouraged if paddlers have them.
- Carrying a VHF radio is likewise strongly encouraged if paddling outside the harbour area.