**PRE-TRIP CHECKLIST** (Revised 01.18.2024)

**INTRODUCTIONS**

* Organizer, Co-organizer, CPR/First Aid persons
* Participants

**LIABILITY**

* **You have all signed the Liability Waiver releasing OOPS and its agents in exchange for the “opportunity to participate”.**

**ITINERARY**

* Put in / take out
* Intended route
* Bail out options

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

* **What worst-case scenario most concerns each of you personally?**
* Assess local hazards:
  + Boat traffic, strainers, surf, or rapids
* Assess observed conditions:
  + Compare observed to expected using OOPS Trip Rating System
* Assess paddlers:
  + Relevant medical issues; allergies; athleticism
  + Wet exit experience? Roll? **Adequacy of immersion wear and equipment**?

**SAFETY DISCUSSION**

* **Are each of you comfortable that we can manage these risks as a group?**
* In case of a capsize…
  + Nearest paddler is responsible
  + Next nearest assists
  + Remainder of the group immediately rafts up
* Be willing to accept being towed if it is beneficial to group progress or safety

**GROUP COMMUNICATION**

* Whistle
  + 1 blast: ATTENTION
  + More than 1 blast: HELP!!!
* Paddle signals
  + Vertical static: COME TO ME, RAFT UP
  + 45° angle: PREFERRED ROUTE - GO THAT WAY
  + Horizontal: STOP, HOLD YOUR POSITION
  + Waving arms/paddle: HELP!!!
* Hand signals
  + Pat on top of head (question): ARE YOU OKAY?
  + Pat on top of head (response): I’M OKAY
  + Point with finger: LOOK AT THAT

**EQUIPMENT CHECK**

* Who has first aid or repair kits?
* Is everyone wearing proper immersion wear?
* Check relief zippers/hatch covers/life jackets/invasive species permits/skirt grab loops
* VHF “radio check” (if applicable)

**GROUP EXPECTATIONS**

* **Stay together – What does that mean for today? (distance, earshot?)**
* **Speak up if you have any safety or comfort concerns.**

***Have fun!!***

**OOPS Policy reminders:**

* Assign additional Co-Organizer(s) per the Activity Policy section H if needed. Level 1&2: 1 TO per 5 non-TOs, total 10 non-TOs per pod; level 3: 1 TO to 4, max 8 non-TO per pod; 4&5: 1 TO to 3, max non-TO 6 per pod
* Pods of 12 paddlers (2 organizers plus 10 other paddlers levels 1 & 2) max
* One 1st aid kit per pod
* No alcohol before or during OOPS activities
* No cotton clothing except for a hat
* Clean up your trash and pack it out

### OOPS Trip Rating System

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Condition** | **Level 1** | **Level 2** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** | **Level 5** |
| **Wind** | Less than 7 knots. (8mph) | Up to 12 knots  (14 mph) | Up to 16 knots  (19 mph) | Up to 21 knots (25 mph) | Any two of the level 4 conditions exceeded. Any three or more level 4 conditions present |
| **Waves, Swell, Breaking Waves, Surf** | Under 1' waves, no breaking waves | Waves up to 2', no surf | Waves to 3', breaking waves to 2' | Waves up 6', surf up to 4' |
| **Sea State as seen from boat** | Waves up to the deck seam; water glassy to rippled, no whitecaps | Waves up to armpit; light to moderate chop, scattered whitecaps | Waves to paddle tops; numerous whitecaps, waves becoming longer | Many whitecaps, some spray |
| **Total Distance** | Up to 6 miles | 6 to 11 miles | 11 to 15 miles | 15 to 22 miles |
| **Landing Type** | Frequent easy landing opportunities including gently sloping, sand, gravel or grass | Frequent landing opportunities including docks or moderate sloping banks, brush or overhanging trees | Bad footing, rocky shores, or surf up to 1.5' | Steep rocky shores if sheltered from the waves, or surf up to 4' |
| **Current** | None or mild (less than 1 knot) | Mild currents (up to 2 knots): current increases / decreases group speed by half | Up to 4 knots: paddlers must sprint to move forward | Up to 6 knots |
| **Open Crossings** | Less than 0.5 miles | Between 0.5 and 1 miles | 1 to 2 miles | 2-4 miles |
| **Recommended Skills** | | | | | |
| **Paddling** | Forward, reverse, sweep turns, stern rudder | High and low bracing ability. Comfort with some edging. Efficient forward stroke. | Eddy line crossings. Confident edge control in all maneuvering strokes. Confident bracing ability. | Confident boat control in wind and moving water. Reliable roll. | Reliable rough water roll. |
| **Rescue** | Wet exit ability | Confident wet exits. Assisted rescue ability both as swimmer and rescuer. Paddle float or other self-rescue. | Confident assisted rescues. Self-rescue ability. | Recently rehearsed assisted rescues in Level 3 or Level 4 conditions. | Confident rough water assisted rescue ability. |
| **Group Dynamics** | Group  positioning awareness | Group positioning and dynamics awareness. | Group  management ability. | Confident group management experience. | Confident group management experience |
| **Navigation** |  |  | Basic navigation skills. | Accurate course plotting and chart positioning skills. | Night and limited visibility navigation |

* **When planning a trip**, any two conditions exceeding the trip’s average rating bumps the rating up to the next level (for example, trip where all conditions are level 2 except level 3 currents and level 3 distance becomes a level 3 trip).
* **Night or limited visibility (fog, heavy rain)** bumps the rating up at least one level.
* **Just before a trip**, any wind, weather, swell, surf, sea state, or current conditions exceeding the posted level of the trip **cause the entire trip to be bumped to that level** (possibly even skipping intermediate levels) and should trigger a careful re-evaluation of the plan, goals, venue, and participants of that trip.
* **There are no half-levels.**
* Please refer to [https://oopskayak.org/Trip-Rating-System](https://oopskayak.org/Trip-Rating-System%20) for definitions and details on the rating system.

**Risk Management Triangle (green, yellow, red) –** [**www.nols.edu**](http://www.nols.edu) **– what is the worst that could happen?**

**People**: Gear, skills, health, attitude, communication, pressures and goals

**Water**: Swell, period & size, river levels, water temp, current, tide

**Atmosphere**: Wind, temperature, precipitation

**Context**: Shore, sand, rock, boat-traffic, bailout options, accessibility to emergency services

**CLAP**: Communication, Line-of-Sight, Avoid Problems/Awareness, Position of Maximum Usefulness