

ACTIVITY POLICIES

OREGON OCEAN PADDLING SOCIETY (OOPS)

(Adopted by the Board 4/17/1996; Amended 11/12/1997, 10/21/1998, 2/16/2000, 1/28/2001, 4/11/06, 3/21/07, 5/15/08, 4/7/09, 5/1/09, 10/21/15, 9/14/2016, 12/16/2021, 05/29/2023, 09/13/2023)

The following policies and procedures for planning, approving, and conducting club-sponsored activities are intended to help make OOPS trips fun and successful, while promoting safe paddling practices and responsible leadership. Not every policy will apply for every activity, but generally these procedures will apply to all club-sponsored activities except regular monthly general membership meetings and potlucks.

There are several important advantages to organizing an activity as an official club function. Organizers and Co-Organizers of authorized OOPS activities are covered by the Club's liability insurance. Authorized activities may be advertised on the club web site, and announced by email notification. The activity review and approval process put you in touch with other paddlers who can provide you with planning assistance and organizational support. Well-defined activity policies help contribute to a general awareness of safety and shared responsibility, which can make the organizer's job easier and allow everyone to have more fun.

DEFINITIONS

Activity: Any on-water trip, class, practice session, etc. For overnight camping trips, the term includes associated land-based activities.

Trip: An activity in which the primary goal is to safely travel/paddle from one place to another and/or back again.

Class: An activity in which the primary goal is to pass knowledge from the Instructor(s) to the Participants.

Trip Organizer: A volunteer club member who organizes or helps organize an activity on behalf of the club, and whose authority to make decisions necessary for safe and successful conduct of the trip is approved by the OOPS Board and acknowledged by the paddlers who agree to participate in the trip.

Instructor: A volunteer club member who also teaches or helps to teach a class on behalf of the club, whether on land or water. An Instructor of an on-water class shall either be a Trip Organizer or a Trip Organizer shall be present as a Co-Instructor during any on-water class. All on-water classes must have a number of participants and Trip Organizers appropriate for the trip level in accordance with section H.

Co-Organizer or Co-Instructor: A Trip Organizer or Instructor who volunteers to assist the Trip Organizer or Instructor to conduct their activity.

Participant: A current member in good standing or an approved non-member. (See section "S")

Trips Board member: An elected Board member who reviews and approves trips proposed by the Organizers.

Education Board member: An elected Board member who reviews and approves classes proposed

by instructors.

Pod: A self-contained group of club members assembled to participate in an OOPS-sponsored water sport activity consisting of up to two Trip Organizers, a number of participants appropriate for the trip level in accordance with section H, a person trained in first aid and CPR per section K, and equipped as specified in sections I and J.

REVIEW OF PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

A. Club activities must be approved by official action of the appropriate Board member. An activity may not be calendared or presented as an official OOPS activity unless so approved.

1. The Board has authorized the Trips Board member to review and approve trips proposed by Organizers.
1. The Board has authorized the Education Board member to review and approve classes proposed by instructors.

B. Instructors should submit an outline of the planned class and an Activity Proposal Form to the Education Board member.

C. Approved Trip Organizers planning a trip should present an Activity Proposal Form to the Trips Board member

D. OOPS Trip Organizer Training:

1. To become an approved OOPS Trip Organizer the individual must be a club member in good standing and have participated in official OOPS trips.
2. The applicant must successfully complete the official TOT (Trip Organizer Training) program. Alternatively, the applicant must complete at least ACA Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Trip Leader or BC Paddlesport Touring Leader training supplemented by instruction on OOPS-specific topics such as maintaining our insurance, submitting trips and reporting on completed trips, etc.
3. The individual / applicant must be recommended by the TOT, ACA, or BC instructors for consideration by the Board.
4. The individual / applicant must provide the Trips Board member with a completed Paddler Resume which outlines paddling skills, documented formal training, and experience appropriate to becoming a Trip Organizer.
5. The Board must approve the applicant before they can lead official OOPS trips.
 - a. After completing the Trip Organizer, ACA, or BC training, prospective Trip Organizers will be awarded "Trip Organizer Candidate" ("TO Candidate") status.
 - b. The newly approved "TO Candidate" must be mentored by experienced Trip Organizers who will accompany them on at least three mentored trips.
 - c. Each mentored trip is to have a different mentor. This will provide a safety backup as well as further mentoring and coaching opportunities. The Board ~~also~~ recommends that the first mentored trips have fewer participants than later mentored trips so that the "TO Candidate" can incrementally build their leadership skills.
 - d. As with all trips, the "TO Candidate" is personally responsible for planning, executing, and reporting on these trips, possibly with the assistance of the mentor.
 - e. *The Mentoring Trip Organizer is also required to submit a post trip report or evaluation of the mentored "TO Candidate", using the same form as required for all post trip*

reports.

- f. After satisfactory completion of at least three mentored trips and discussion of the candidate by the Trip Organizer Committee based on feedback from their mentors and instructors, candidates judged ready for full Trip Organizer status will be recommended to the Board for a vote of approval. If approved by the Board, the “TO Candidate” will be awarded Trip Organizer status. Candidates that started mentoring with at least ACA Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Trip Leader or British Canoeing Paddlesport Touring Leader training must also obtain formal ACA or BC certification of their skills after completing their mentored paddles before they can be nominated for approval as a full Trip Organizer.
6. Individuals will be considered for Advanced Trip Organizer status by the Board if they hold at least the following internationally recognized certifications at the time of application: BC Sea Leader, BC Sea Kayak Coach (Moderate Water), ACA Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Trip Leader, or ACA Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Trip Instructor. Equivalent experience leading advanced trips for commercial guiding firms or other clubs will be also considered based on certifications, employment history, and recent verifiable trip leadership. These members also need to obtain instruction on OOPS-specific topics such maintaining our insurance, submitting trips and reporting on completed trips, etc. Finally, it is strongly recommended that these members lead a few Level I-II trips before submitting to lead Level III or greater trips (to gain familiarity with OOPS members and processes).
7. Those individuals designated as *Trip Organizers* will be authorized to lead Level I-II trips.
8. Those individuals designated as *Advanced Trip Organizers* will be authorized to lead Level III or greater trips *based on their individual qualifications, skills and certifications.*
9. Trip Organizers (those authorized to organize Level II trips) can be co-organizers on L3 trips with the following stipulations:
 - a. The primary organizer (Advanced Trip Organizer) recommends the L2 Trip Organizer and agrees that they have the skill level to co-organize their proposed L3 trip.
 - b. The Trips Board member must approve the request from the primary organizer (Advanced Trip Organizer).
10. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board retains the discretion to approve or disapprove any individual who has applied to be a Trip Organizer for any level of trips. The Board’s decision in that regard shall be based on the following considerations:
 - a. A review of the individual’s Paddler Resume;
 - b. An assessment of the individual's knowledge of OOPS policies and procedures;
 - c. An assessment of the individual’s on-water skills by OOPS members or ACA/BC assessors whose competence the Board recognizes;
 - d. An assessment of the individual’s leadership competency and skills by OOPS members or ACA/BC assessors whose competence the Board recognizes; and
 - e. Any other factors the Board reasonably concludes are relevant to its decision.
11. The Board reserves the right to revoke Trip Organizer status of anyone who fails to meet acceptable standards of conduct, skill or safety.

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E. Trip participants should arrive at the put-in prepared with proper equipment and clothing necessary for safe paddling. They should also arrive with knowledge of the venue, knowledge of current and forecast conditions during the paddle, and an honest assessment of their ability to handle the conditions found during the paddle. At the discretion of the Trip Organizer, alternative watercraft such as Stand-Up Paddle boards and canoes may be allowed—with the expectation that all watercraft will be able to maintain the pace of the group as set by the trip organizer. **Please**

contact your Trip Organizer *before* you consider arriving with an alternative water craft.

For activities all participants and organizers are required to:

1. Wear a securely fastened Coast Guard approved PFD at all times while on the water.
2. Use a boat equipped with buoyancy enhancement in the form of flotation, secured bulkheads and hatches, and/or a properly fitted sea sock.
3. Carry food and water supplies appropriate to the length of the trip.
4. Carry a personal first aid kit (self-selected contents) as needed. (e.g., personal medications)
5. Signaling:
 - a. On evening or overnight trips, carry a signaling device for *immediate* use such as a waterproof flashlight/ headlamp or strong hand-held light to signal approaching water craft. The light does not have to be continuously on, but immediately available.
 - b. For trips in an ocean environment or wide rivers, we require a member of the paddling group (preferably the Trip Organizer) carry at least one USCG approved distress signaling device such as red/white flares, parachute flare, smoke flares, mirrors, hand held laser light, PLB (personal locator beacon), VHF radio, flashing strobe light, etc.
6. Wear cold water protective clothing appropriate per the Cold-Water Protective Clothing policy in Section “Q”, below.
7. Have and use other equipment and clothing appropriate to expected conditions as required at the discretion of the Trip Organizer.
8. Have a whistle readily accessible and attached to the PFD.
9. Have a pump or bailer readily available.
10. Wear no cotton clothing on the water (exception: a hat).
11. Participants using a Stand-Up Paddle board must wear a board leash in addition to a securely fastened PFD (inflatable or solid)
12. All participants must sign the “Combined Activity Roster, Release of Claims, and Assumption of Risk” form.
13. Have a paddle float for self-rescue, if deemed necessary by the participant.

F. In addition to having or wearing the items specified for all trips above, Trip Organizers and participants of trips rated above level one, or at any trip level in water or air temperatures below 60 degrees F, are required to:

1. Have an elastic spray skirt properly and tightly fitted to the boat and paddler that prevents water from entering the cockpit (loosely fitting spray skirts or spray decks attached in such a way that they release when the paddler capsizes do not qualify), unless paddling a:
 - a. Self-bailing, sit-on-top kayak.
 - b. Canoe outfitted appropriately to expected conditions as approved by the Trip Organizer.
 - c. Stand-Up Paddle board
2. **Wet Exit Policy:**
 - a. Wet Exit and Assisted Rescue Certification is mandatory for all individuals participating in official OOPS trips. The only exception is on Level I trips when the paddler does not use a spray skirt and the air and water temperatures are above 60 degrees F.
 - b. Please review the details of the Wet Exit Policy as set forth in the Documents section on the official OOPS website.

G. On all activities, Trip Organizers and Co-Organizers are also required to carry a spare paddle, tow system, emergency signal devices, a flashlight (evenings or night), and bailing pump. On level three or above activities, all Organizers should carry a VHF radio and all participants should carry a

tow system if they are trained to use a tow system.

H. For all club on-water activities (trip or class), each pod must maintain a *maximum of*:

1. **5** non-TO paddlers per TO on Level I-II rated trips, up to a maximum of 10 non-TO paddlers per pod.
2. **4** non-TO paddlers per TO on Level III rated trips, up to a maximum of 8 non-TO paddlers per pod.
3. **3** non-TO paddlers per TO on Level IV or V rated trips, up to a maximum of 6 non-TO paddlers per pod.

Additional trip-size guidelines:

- a) On level I-II rated trips, so long as the non-TO maximum of 10 is maintained, one (1) additional TO who is acting as a Co-Organizer may be added to a pod at the discretion of the Trip Organizer, as they would tend to add to the safety and skill level of the overall group.
- b) Newer TOs or those who haven't led for a while are strongly encouraged to enlist at least one Co-Organizer of equal or higher skill with more recent experience for on-water activities.
- c) TOs always have the discretion to lower the number of paddlers per TO for any on-water activity they lead, whether with an Co-Organizer or not.
- d) If the total number of non-TO paddlers exceeds the limits described above, the group should be split into multiple pods which are managed independently and kept separate while on the water (some way to visually tell members of each pod apart is recommended). Each pod must be complete, including the equipment specified in sections I, J, and K.

For example, for a level II trip, the maximum number of non-TO paddlers per pod would be 10 with 2 Trip Organizers. Each pod would include a first aid kit, at least one person trained in first aid and CPR, and the components in section I.

Everyone within a pod shares the identical level of responsibility towards every other member and the group as a whole. (see section "P")

- e) There must be **at least** three paddlers on all OOPS Trips. If only two people (including the Trip Organizer) show up for an OOPS trip, or it is not possible to create a pod of three or more members (including a Trip Organizer), they can paddle together, but with the **clearly spelled out understanding that they are no longer taking part in an OOPS trip.**

I. On all activities, each pod should have at least one compass, appropriate chart or charts, tide information, current weather forecast information, and an emergency boat repair kit (such as duct tape, gutter tape, plumbers' epoxy, multi-tool, spare bungee cord, garbage bags, or other items to make emergency boat repairs).

J. One first aid kit meeting minimum OOPS standards is required for each pod (Required contents are specified in the Trip Organizer package). It is the Trip Organizer's responsibility to obtain an OOPS first aid kit from the Safety Board member. OOPS-owned first aid kits are intended for emergency use only. There is no charge for appropriate use of the kit. Participants and/or trip organizers are expected to be individually prepared for their own common or minor first aid needs.

K. A minimum of one person with current first aid and CPR training must be present on the water for every Pod. Medical professionals who have not practiced CPR within 2 years do not meet this requirement. It is strongly recommended that all Trip Organizers maintain current certification for First Aid and CPR.

L. Trip Organizers should follow the procedures in the Trip Organizer Training Program Materials. Pre-“put-in” checks and safety discussion must take place prior to “put-in”.

M. No alcohol or drugs are allowed before or during on-water activities. Federally listed Illegal drugs are prohibited.

N. Prior to put-in, the Trip Organizer and any Co-Organizers should discuss and agree on their respective roles and “chain of command,” including delegation of authority in the event of an emergency or the Trip Organizer's absence or incapacitation. Roles of all Organizers as well as participants should be discussed with the entire group before launching boats.

O. The Trip Organizer may refuse or withdraw permission for any person to participate in an OOPS trip/activity for any reason, including inadequate equipment or insufficient skill.

To avoid being excluded from activities:

1. Be safe. Prioritize others' safety and comfort over having fun individually.
2. Be prepared: Ask questions prior to arrival regarding the trip organizer's expectations of immersion protection or other gear. Review the rating carefully. Arrive on time. *Be prepared for conditions to be more than expected.*
3. Be respectful of your fellow paddlers, wildlife and the environment.

P. It is the responsibility of all participants to maintain an awareness of the location and condition of the entire group at all times when on the water. All participants should stay with the group unless given specific permission by the Trip Organizer. All participants should remain close enough to a Trip Organizer or Co-Organizer to communicate with visible or audible signals.

COLD WATER PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Q. Whenever water temperatures are expected to be below 70 degrees F (i.e., on most club trips), it is recommended that all paddlers wear cold water protective clothing. Whenever water temperatures are expected to be below 60 degrees F, all paddlers are required to wear cold water protective clothing. In the trip plan, Trip Organizers must specify a minimum standard to be worn for a specific trip (example: dry suit required). Depending on conditions, cold water protective clothing may consist of:

- Half wet suit (Farmer John or Shorty) with or without synthetic or wool insulation and/or a water repellent shell, or
- Full wet suit; or
- Dry suit with synthetic insulation worn underneath.
- Cotton clothing will NOT be allowed on any OOPS water activities, except for a cotton hat or a cotton shirt worn over one of the above clothing options.

Each trip participant is responsible for determining the specific type or types of clothing to wear for

the trip based on anticipated conditions and requirements of the Trip Organizer. In making these decisions, participants will consider: water temperature, air temperature, trip rating, wind chill, precipitation, distance from land, group size/rescue conditions, and their personal skills and experience. Paddlers should regularly swim-test their immersion protection in various water temperatures to determine the integrity of their gear and their personal comfort levels. Trip Organizers may deny participation at the put-in if, in the Trip Organizer's opinion, the participant is ill-prepared for immersion. Questions regarding a particular Trip Organizer's minimum standard should be addressed by phone or email prior to the day of the trip.

PARTICIPATION IN OOPS ACTIVITIES

R. On water activities are for OOPS members only.

S. With the approval of the President, Trips Board member, or the Education Board member, non-member participation in OOPS Trip or class activities may be permitted. Non-members will be subject to the same policies and rules as OOPS members. Trip Organizers should fully brief non-members on pertinent club policies at the time of sign-up.

T. No person will be allowed to participate in an OOPS activity unless they first sign the OOPS "waiver" release and acknowledgment of risk. With a Trip Organizer's approval, a person under 18 years of age will be allowed to participate when accompanied on the water by a responsible member adult and if a parent or legal guardian has signed an OOPS release on their behalf. The Responsible Adult accepts responsibility for the minor for the duration of the activity. The Parent or Guardian acknowledges that this responsibility includes authority to authorize medical transport and treatment in an emergency.

U. Disabled Member Paddlers:

Members who are disabled and wish to participate in any OOPS on-water activity may do so under the following conditions:

1. The Trip Organizer or Instructor must agree to the participation of the disabled individual.
2. If the individual requires the assistance of an attendant, the Trip Organizer or Instructor must agree to the participation of the attendant.
3. The disabled individual and the attendant (if one is required) must have signed the official Trip Waiver.
4. Both the disabled participant and the attendant must be OOPS members.
5. The Trip Organizer or Instructor must weigh the risk assessment of the activity as well as the abilities of both the disabled participant and the attendant before approving their participation.

V. Following all OOPS trips and classes, the full signed Combined Release Roster and a Post Trip report must be filed with the Trips Board member. The Trips Board member will maintain electronic copies of the Combined Release Rosters, except in the case of an incident, when a hard copy of the full signed Combined Release Roster is required.

W. Board Members In Absentia:

1. The President, Trips Board member, and the Education Board member should remain available via direct or electronic contact and be able to respond within a 24-hour time period.
2. The Membership Board member should be similarly available within 72 hours of attempted

- contact.
3. If any of these Board members plan to become unavailable for more than the specified timeframe, then that Board member should designate a substitute and notify the remaining Board members of their disposition and designated substitute.
 4. A temporary substitute Board member should be another Board member, or in the case of the Trips Board member and the Education Board member, a well-qualified and reliable designee who is an OOPS member is acceptable. In the case of the President, only another Board member should be designated as a temporary substitute.
 5. On return from absentee status, the previously absent Board member should notify the Board of their return.

REPORTING ACCIDENTS OR INCIDENTS

X. In the event of an accident or other incident which might reasonably be expected to result in a claim against OOPS:

The **Trip Organizer, Instructor, or Event Organizer** shall:

1. Promptly notify the President, and the appropriate Board member (the Trips Board member if the incident happened on a trip, or the Education Board member if the incident happened in a class) of the incident, and personally confirm their receipt of that information.
2. Complete an incident report and send the report with any witness statements or other documentary evidence to the President and the respective Board member.

The President or Respective Officer shall:

1. File an Incident / Accident Report within 72 hours or as soon as logistically possible with:
Philadelphia Insurance Companies
One Bela Plaza, Suite: 100
Bala Cynwyd , PA, 19004
Tel. 610-617-7900
<https://www.phly.com/AboutPHLY/Claims/Default.aspx?nav=top>
claimsreport@phly.com

Local Contact Agent:
Tracey Bora
Caerus Insurance
503-719-7620
caerusinsurance.com

DATE	AUTHOR	REVISION DESCRIPTION
5-1-09	D. Beale	Revised definitions section
4-07-09	D. Dalbey	Leader to Organizer changes
5-15-08	D Beale	Paragraph U, changed from parent to responsible party
10-21-15	C. Congdon	New Organizer, SUP revisions, insurance, misc

9-14-16	S. Teicher, A. Fisher	Revision of Activity Policy.
12-3-16	A. Fisher	Revision of Activity Policy
2-16-17	2017 Board	Revision of Activity Policy
4-25-17	S. Teicher, A. Fisher	Revision of Activity Policy
7-28-2017	2017 Board	Revision of Activity Policy
10-13-2017	A. Fisher	New Insurance Binder
9-25-18	J. Howell	Revision of Activity Policy through section P.
12/16/21	C. Congdon	Revision of Activity Policy
05/29/23	C. Congdon, T. Waldron	Revisions including minimum 3-paddler limit, naming changes, etc.
9/13/23	T. Waldron, Mark Niemann-Ross	Addition of section D.9.