

# PRE-TRIP CHECKLIST

## 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 capsized...
  - 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 Trip Rating System - Any two conditions exceeding a level's listing bumps the rating up to the next level.  
Night or limited visibility (fog) bumps the rating up one level.**

Condition	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<b>Wind</b>	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
<b>Waves, Swell, Breaking Waves, Surf</b>	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'	
<b>Sea State as seen from boat</b>	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	
<b>Total Distance</b>	Up to 6 miles	6 to 11 miles	11 to 15 miles	15 to 22 miles	
<b>Landing Type</b>	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'	
<b>Current</b>	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	
<b>Open Crossings</b>	No open Crossings	Short: Less than 1 mile	1 to 2 miles	Over 2 miles	
<b>Recommended Skills</b>					
<b>Paddling</b>	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.
<b>Rescue</b>	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.
<b>Group Dynamics</b>	Group positioning awareness	Group positioning and dynamics awareness.	Group management ability.	Confident group management experience.	Confident group management experience
<b>Navigation</b>			Basic navigation skills.	Accurate course plotting and chart positioning skills.	Night and limited visibility navigation

**Note:** Please refer to the OOPS website for definitions and additional 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

**OOPS Policy reminders:**

- Assign additional Co-Organizer(s) or Assistant Organizer(s) per the Activity Policy if needed. 1&2: 6; 3;5; 4&5: 3
- Pods of 14 paddlers (2 organizers plus 12 other paddlers levels 1 & 2) max
- One 1<sup>st</sup> 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