

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 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 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> for definitions and details on the rating system.

Risk Management Triangle (green, yellow, red) – 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