

# SAFE CANOEING GUIDE

*"Your Personal Handbook For Safe and Environmentally  
Friendly Canoe Travel"*



*Sponsored By:*

**Canadian  
Recreational  
Canoeing  
Association**



Canadian  
Coast Guard

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**DON'T OVERLOAD YOUR CANOES -  
BE SURE TO HAVE A MINIMUM OF  
6 INCHES (15 CM) OF FREEBOARD!**

## Practices for Safe and Environmentally Friendly Paddling

### INTRODUCTION

Canoe travel in Canada is part of our heritage. Many groups and individuals are rediscovering our country using the canoe as their means of travel. The Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association (CRCA) has as one of its mandates, the promotion of safe canoeing and canoe travel, as well as environmentally sensitive paddling practices while exploring our waterways.

Many schools, canoe clubs, organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, etc., have asked the CRCA for guidelines on planning a safe canoe trip and guidelines for minimum impact camping. We have drawn from the expertise of experienced canoeists from across Canada to prepare these outlines. The rationale for the check list can be found in the "Canoe Travel Handbook" produced by the CRCA. The Check Lists are for your use as an individual paddler, a Principal of a school, the Consultant of a School Board, the Executive of an Agency, the leader of a trip or anyone who is planning to travel on Canada's waterways. Just as a pilot checks his flight plan and his aeroplane prior to take-off, a canoeist should check and make sure that all aspects of the trip have been considered.

The Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association (CRCA) is a Federation of Provincial and Territorial Canoeing Associations. The CRCA acts a "Resource

Centre" for information on all aspects of paddling. These Check Lists are a resource for you, the tripper. You and the participants will build on your own experience. You will take into consideration the vast differences in canoeing throughout Canada. Our geography alone precludes all canoeing practices from being exactly the same.

Accidents and environmental negligence while canoeing affect everyone who travels by canoe! Small groups and individuals should follow the check lists for safer and environmentally sensitive canoe travel. Being prepared will make your trip a far more enjoyable experience and it will also ensure that the waterways of Canada are safe for the enjoyment of our natural environment. Canoes do not cause accidents or pollution . . . people do! – BE PREPARED.

*Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association (CRCA)*



**"Canada's  
Paddling  
Information  
Specialists"**

## Planning A Safe and Satisfying Canoe Trip?

<b>1.0 OBJECTIVES</b>	Yes	No		Yes	No
1.1 Do you have written objectives?	—	—	3.14 Are the leaders physically and emotionally fit to lead the canoe trip?	—	—
1.2 Can the objectives be evaluated?	—	—	3.15 Have the leaders' medical conditions been evaluated within the last 3 months prior to the canoe trip?	—	—
1.3 Are participants made aware of the objectives?	—	—	3.16 Can the leaders demonstrate effective rescue techniques for this trip?	—	—
<b>2.0 PARTICIPANTS</b>			3.17 Do the leaders have standard St. John's or Red Cross first aid training or equivalent?	—	—
2.1 Is your canoe travel group twelve participants or less?	—	—	3.18 Is the first aid training current (within the last year)?	—	—
2.2 Is the age range of participants consistent with meeting the objectives?	—	—	3.19 Do the leaders possess C.R.C.A. Level IV (whitewater, flatwater and canoe camping) skill or provincial standards?	—	—
2.3 Is the participant's experience and skill level consistent with meeting the objectives?	—	—	3.20 Do the leaders possess a Bronze Medallion or equivalent in lifesaving?	—	—
2.4 Is the participant's fitness level consistent with meeting the objectives?	—	—	3.21 Is the Bronze Medallion or equivalent certificate current?	—	—
2.5 Is the composition (male, female, co-ed) of the group consistent with meeting the objectives?	—	—	3.22 Are the leaders well rested and nourished before commencement of the trip?	—	—
2.6 Have you considered the compatibility of the individuals within the total group?	—	—	3.23 Is the leader to participant ratio 1 to 5 or less?	—	—
2.7 Is the medical status of the participant consistent with meeting the objectives?	—	—			
2.8 Are participants well rested and nourished prior to commencement of the canoe trip?	—	—			
<b>3.0 LEADERSHIP</b>			<b>4.0 ROUTE PLANNING</b>		
(leaders refer to designated group leader and assistant group leader)	—	—	4.1 Is the proposed route consistent with meeting the objectives?	—	—
3.1 Do you have 2 designated leaders for your canoe travel experience?	—	—	4.2 Have participants been fully informed about the nature of the canoe trip?	—	—
3.2 Is one leader designated group leader?	—	—	4.3 Have you consulted with the following to obtain route information? (ie. government agencies, canoeing associations, written materials, historical documents, local inhabitants, and previous trip participants).	—	—
3.3 Is one leader designated assistant group leader?	—	—	4.4 Have you considered:		
3.4 Do the group leaders have written job descriptions?	—	—	— total length of the route?	—	—
3.5 Are the roles and responsibilities of each leadership position clearly defined and understood by each leader?	—	—	— access and exit points?	—	—
3.6 Are the leaders compatible under trip circumstances?	—	—	— nature of the geography (whitewater, ocean, lake)?	—	—
3.7 Does the group leader have experience at least equivalent to the current trip?	—	—	— weather probabilities?	—	—
3.8 Is the group leader 21 years of age or older?	—	—	— water levels?	—	—
3.9 Is the assistant group leader the age of majority?	—	—	— water temperature?	—	—
3.10 Have the leaders experienced positive leadership training related to canoe travel?	—	—	— water quality?	—	—
3.11 Do the leaders have previous practical experience:			— campsites, location and quantity?	—	—
— as a participant?	—	—	— portages and conditions?	—	—
— as an assistant group leader?	—	—	— unusual hazards?	—	—
— as a group leader?	—	—	— emergency communication?	—	—
3.12 Have the leaders previously canoed the designated canoe area?	—	—	— available mapping?	—	—
3.13 Is the maturity of the leaders consistent with the objectives?	—	—	— daily mileage?	—	—
			— seasonal variations?	—	—
			— fire restrictions?	—	—

	Yes	No
4.5 Having considered all route information, is the route compatible with the participants abilities and expectations?	___	___
4.6 Have permits and authorizations been obtained for presentation en route?	___	___
4.7 Is your route itinerary documented and left with responsible authorities?	___	___
4.8 Have you allowed a minimum of one rest day per 7 day week?	___	___
4.9 Are local authorities informed of the details of the trip?	___	___

## 5.0 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

5.1 Are you conducting a pre-trip training session?	___	___
5.2 Does your training session include both theory and practical sessions in a simulated trip environment?	___	___
5.3 Do the training sessions include the following minimum canoeing skills?	___	___
– Lakewater - CRCA Level III or provincial equivalent	___	___
– Canoe Camping (Tripping) - CRCA Level III or provincial equivalent	___	___
– Moving Water CRCA Level III or provincial equivalent	___	___
– Coastal Paddling - CRCA Level IV or provincial equipment	___	___
5.4 Does the training session cover basic campcraft skills (ie. fire lighting, cooking, equipment use)?	___	___
5.5 Are the levels of swimming and lifesaving of participants tested in conditions similar to those experienced on the canoe trip?	___	___
5.6 Are the participants instructed in first aid and survival procedures?	___	___
5.7 Are the participants made aware of the contents and location of the first aid and survival kits?	___	___
5.8 Do the participants go through canoe rescue techniques (canoe over canoe, canoe-tipping, and self rescue)?	___	___
5.9 Are participants made aware of emergency management procedures?	___	___
5.10 Are participants made aware of appropriate environmental concerns?	___	___
5.11 Are participants made aware of on route organizations?	___	___
5.12 Are participants taught navigation skills (map and compass)?	___	___
5.13 Are participants made aware of weather prediction techniques?	___	___
5.14 Have leaders and participants been made aware of rules and regulations?	___	___
5.15 Has the rationale for these rules and regulations been discussed with the participants?	___	___

	Yes	No
5.16 Do participants take part in a one or two day shakedown cruise?	___	___
5.17 Is the equipment used in trip training the same equipment taken on the trip?	___	___

## 6.0 ADMINISTRATION

### 6.1 Objectives

6.1.1 Are the written objectives recorded and kept on file?	___	___
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### 6.2 Records

6.2.1 Is the following information on participants on file (name, address, phone number, parents or guardians address and phone number, medical health number and alternate emergency contact)?	___	___
6.2.2 Is there a medical record on file for each participant?	___	___
6.2.3 Are canoe trip log books made available to group leaders (accident reports, medication administered, etc.)?	___	___
6.2.4 Is there a written record on file of all food and equipment taken?	___	___
6.2.5 Is there a written record on file of the route itinerary and alternatives?	___	___
6.2.6 Have written menus been developed which observe the Canada Food Guide?	___	___
6.2.7 Are there evaluations completed for the following (program objectives, updated route information, post trip, medical forms, equipment)?	___	___
6.2.8 Is the above information recorded?	___	___

### 6.3 Contracts and Agreements

6.3.1 Is written permission obtained and kept on file for each participant to take part in the program?	___	___
6.3.2 Do you have clear written agreement with the parent or guardian on designated management of the participant in the event of an emergency?	___	___
6.3.3 Are parents or guardians informed regarding the general scope and nature of the trip?	___	___
6.3.4 Is there a written job description on file for each person who is assigned a leadership position?	___	___
6.3.5 Is there a written contract between the group leaders and the sponsoring agency?	___	___

### 6.4 Legal and Insurance

6.4.1 Have the necessary permits been acquired for the route?	___	___
6.4.2 Do you have current insurance policies in force?	___	___

### 6.5 Financial

6.5.1 Are proper financial practices or procedures being used?	___	___
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	Yes	No		Yes	No
<b>6.6 Transportation</b>			<b>8.0 EVALUATION AFTER THE TRIP</b>		
6.6.1 Are the vehicles used in transport of participants and equipment checked on a regular maintenance basis? (as per manufacturers manual).	—	—	8.1 Is there an opportunity for participants to evaluate the trip experience (written or verbal)?	—	—
6.6.2 Is the driver's schedule conducive to the safety of the participants as well as his/herself?	—	—	8.2 Is there a written evaluation of the trip experience by the leaders?	—	—
6.6.3 Are trailer hitches, canoe tie-downs and electrical directional signals checked on a regular basis en route?	—	—	8.3 Is there an opportunity for the parents or guardians to comment on the effects of the quality of the experience?	—	—
6.6.4 Do all vehicles, including trailer, have usable spare tires and attached equipment?	—	—	8.4 Is there an opportunity for administrators to evaluate the trip experience?	—	—
6.6.5 Has the licensing of the driver been checked in relation to the type of vehicle being used?	—	—	8.5 Is there an opportunity for leaders to discuss the canoe tripping experience with a view to improving the programme.	—	—
6.6.6 Does the driver of the vehicle carry essential documents at all times?	—	—	8.6 Are the forms and documents filed for future reference?	—	—
6.6.7 Are persons involved in transportation aware of all pick up and delivery times?	—	—			
6.6.8 Are accessories (first aid kit, fire extinguisher and highway signals) present and in usable condition?	—	—			
6.6.9 Are vehicle load capacities observed?	—	—			
<b>6.7 Equipment</b>					
6.7.1 Is all equipment checked to ensure it is in good condition before the trip departs?	—	—			
6.7.2 Are the canoes designed for the most demanding water conditions on the planned route?	—	—			
6.7.3 Are the canoes designed to facilitate appropriate rescue procedures?	—	—			
6.7.4 Has the capacity of the canoe been observed in relation to the weight of the passengers and equipment?	—	—			
6.7.5 Is there an extra paddle in each canoe and a bailer?	—	—			
6.7.6 Is there an approved lifejacket or approved personal flotation device for each individual?	—	—			
6.7.7 Is this equipment included (ie. repair kits, signal flares, portable stove and fuel?)	—	—			
<b>6.8 Special Considerations</b>					
6.8.1 Have food drops (caches) been arranged if required?	—	—			
6.8.2 Are adequate emergency funds provided to the leaders?	—	—			
6.8.3 Do you go through a brief final checklist?	—	—			
<b>7.0 TRIP EN ROUTE</b>					
7.1 Are exceptions from recommended procedures recorded for future reference?	—	—			
7.2 Are incidents that signify accomplishment of the trips objectives recorded?	—	—			
7.3 Are there opportunities for evaluation by participants on the progress of the trip?	—	—			

*\* Note: The Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association (CRCA) provides this check list to assist in planning a safe and satisfying canoe trip(s). Most facets of planning are included; some may not apply due to geography or length of trip. For a detailed checklist obtain the "Canoe Travel Handbook" from the CRCA for \$5.<sup>us</sup> plus \$1.<sup>us</sup> P&H and 7% GST.*

## Minimum Impact Camping

### "An Environmental Philosophy"

*Man is an intelligent, adaptable animal, with new knowledge of the environment and our effects on it, and with increasing appreciation for the joys and rewards of wilderness experiences. Enlightened outdoor users with a feeling of stewardship for the land, travel and camp with minimum impact on the natural environment and clean up areas of those who are less environmentally sensitive. (From CRCA's "Canoeists Code").*

### Planning

1. Keep the group size small. Remember, however, that the ecological impact of a group is not necessarily a function of numbers. Two careless people can do far more damage than twelve careful ones. Carrying capacity of an area varies so the number should depend on the region of Canada involved (groups should not exceed 12).
2. Prepare carefully. Carry everything you need with you.
  - (a) Research the trip area. Become familiar with national, provincial, and local laws and regulations.

- (b) Conduct pre-trip discussion and instruction with group going into the out-of-doors. Be thoroughly familiar with this code.
- (c) Carry adequate food supplies. Do not rely on the environment to provide a food supply (ie. fishing).
- (d) Carry proper equipment including: shelter, adequate warm clothing, washing equipment, foam pads, etc. Use cache system if necessary. To be sure you have everything – obtain a checklist of required equipment for a canoe trip. Before departing make sure the group is familiar with the proper use of all equipment. Have a list of who is carrying what for quick access.

## Emergencies

- 3. Leave an itinerary, route description and possible contacts in the need of contacting the group. The group leader should be made aware of any group members medical conditions and medical coverage of individuals.

## Travelling

- 4. Use existing trails and portages staying within their confines. This will help limit contact with plants, unfamiliar to the novice, such as poison ivy. Conduct careful study of implications for environment before blazing new trails/portages.
- 5. Use switch backs on trails. Do not cut a new trail to save 50 metres. This helps limit soil erosion.
- 6. Follow game trails where possible and when necessary. Don't break new trails.
- 7. Low erosion footwear should be worn as opposed to high erosion footwear such as lug shoes.

## Campsites and Shelters

- 8. Use existing campsites. Keep heavy use (soil compaction) to a confined area.
- 9. Do not overstay. Do not expand the campsite.
- 10. Refrain from using natural materials for shelters, except in emergency situations.
- 11. Refrain from landscaping of campsite.
- 12. Use natural drainage. Do not dig trenches. Use a tent with a floor and a ground sheet.

## Fires

- 13. Use stoves where law and local regulation dictates: where there is a fire hazard; where serious danger to the

ecosystem exists; where there is little or no firewood; and where the user wishes to have minimal impact. A stove should be used whenever possible to minimize environmental impact.

- 14. Keep fires small (maximum of knee high).
- 15. Use existing fire pit. If area is untravelled remove evidence of fire after use.
- 16. Where the fire pit is lacking dig to mineral soil or rock away from burnable soils, mosses, roots and overhanging trees. Save sand to cover cold ashes when you leave.
- 17. Use only dead fall for firewood. Do not collect birchbark unless the tree is dead and fallen on the ground. The birchbark on a standing tree is a protective layer against the elements and disease – regardless of its state on the tree.
- 18. Burn to a white ash. Retrieve non burnables – foil, tin cans, plastics, glass, etc.
- 19. Douse fire thoroughly. Stir ashes and surrounding area. Douse again. Eliminate fire scars where possible.

## Human Waste

- 20. Use existing out houses.
- 21. If there is no latrine, bury human waste in a small shallow cat-hole (10-15 cm deep) (2"-4") well away from campsites and trails and 35 metres from any water source.
- 22. Burn all toilet paper. Otherwise use single ply biodegradable toilet paper and bury completely.

## Other Waste

- 23. What is carried in must also be carried out. Burn it, stash it, bag it, bring it back. This includes cans, foil, plastic wraps, paper, twist ties, cigarette filters, cigar tips, etc.
- 24. Wash dishes, clothes and yourself in a dish pan, not in the lake or stream. Rinse away from open water. Dump dishwater in latrine, 20 metres being the minimum disposal distance from shoreline.
- 25. Use biodegradable soap (sunlight type). Wildlife and natural foods.
- 26. Because you are a guest in someone's home – act accordingly.
- 27. Avoid overfishing, overhunting and overtrapping.
- 28. Obey all fish, game and forestry laws and regulations. (It is also important to help challenge the laws which are environmentally unsound).
- 29. Pick edible wild foods only where abundant and never near built up areas. Do not pull up roots when using only leafy parts or when there are not very many of that species in the area.

## Clean up Others' Mistakes

30. Pack out all garbage you find. For cans remember the 3B's – Burn or wash out the contents; Bash it to save room and; Bag it to carry out. Labels from cans should not be burned because of the toxic chemicals in the inks. Burning plastic also emits chemicals toxic to both humans and the environment.
31. Destroy woodcraft projects found on campsites. Use for firewood. In some situations, use of the structures when they are already built is reasonable. There is, furthermore, always the temptation to build again where such devices have been destroyed.
32. Eliminate unnecessary fire pits. Leave bundles of dry wood covered so that it can be available in emergencies.
33. Fill in overused latrines situated too close to the water.
34. Inform authorities of mistakes of others that are too extensive for you to cope with.

## General Courtesies and Responsibility

35. Respect the rights of private land owners. Obtain permission if required, and realize it will be the landowner that will remember how his land was treated.

36. Respect the rights of fishermen. Slip silently past on the opposite shore or wait quietly for the fisherman to finish working a pool.
37. Respect the rights of other canoeists and/or campers. Be sensitive and courteous.
38. It is to our benefit to become responsible guardians of our waterways and nature in general. We must display leadership when we know ourselves to be right in any situation that might bring harm to the environment.
39. Setting examples without making judgements upon others is our most effective tool in any situation.
40. Remember the motto: The best camper is not seen or heard, and leaves no trace.
41. Respect physical, cultural and historical sites and properties along the route, eg. settlements, cemeteries, pictographs, abandoned cabins.

*The Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association adopted and adapted "The Woodsman's Code" for these guidelines. Appreciation is extended to the Canadian Camping Association for this privilege. The Woodsman's Code is contained in the "Woodsmanship Leaders' Guide" (copyright 1979) which is available from the Canadian Camping Association.*

# Equipment and Clothing Checklist

## EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

*The following list has been compiled with many overlaps and duplications in each category and is hence a **SUGGESTED** list of possibilities. Tailor it to your own needs / preferences.*

### Route

- ☐ 3 Route Plans (leave 2 behind with trusted people). If paddling in a national / provincial park, register with the park warden. If in an isolated area, register with the local police or RCMP
- 2-3 sets of maps (at least one laminated)
- ☐ Waterproof map cases
- ☐ Compass(es) with string/cover/float
- ☐ Log book

### Emergency Pack

- ☐ Float pad (closed cell foam)
- ☐ Phone numbers (police, weather, kin, etc.)
- ☐ Emergency money
- ☐ Flares
- ☐ Signalling mirror
- ☐ Whistle ☐ Compass
- ☐ Matches (windproof and waterproof + striker)
- ☐ Knife
- ☐ Flashlight (or fluorescent lantern)
- ☐ Space Blanket
- ☐ Medical info (if required)
- ☐ Medication (if required)
- ☐ Fluorescent orange flagging tape

### Canoe

- ☐ Canoe(s)
- ☐ Paddles (1/person)
- ☐ Extra Paddle (1/boat)

- ☐ Lifejackets / P.F.D.'s (1/person)
- ☐ Tie down ropes and pads (closed cell foam)
- ☐ 25 ft. Painters (2/canoe)
- ☐ Throw bag
- ☐ Whistle (1/canoe)
- ☐ Flashlight (put on lifejacket)
- ☐ Bailing sponge / kneeling pad (open cell foam)
- ☐ Drinking cup / bailer
- ☐ Duct tape (minor repairs)

### Tent

- ☐ Tent ☐ Fly
- ☐ Vestibule ☐ Poles
- ☐ Pegs ☐ Peg bag
- ☐ Ground sheet (6 mil. poly)
- ☐ Small sponge (mops up rain/spills)
- ☐ Seam sealer
- ☐ Extra nylon (repairs)
- ☐ Extra netting (repairs)

- ☐ Extra hardware (repairs)

### Stove

- ☐ Stove
- ☐ Stove sack / metal container
- ☐ Fuel bottle(s)
- ☐ Fuel spout (with string)
- ☐ Fuel funnel (with string)
- ☐ Fuel
- ☐ Priming paste (cold weather)
- ☐ Matches (waterproof and windproof, with striker)
- ☐ Waterproof match container
- ☐ Spare parts for stove
- ☐ Stove pump oil (neatsfoot oil)

### Equipment pack

- ☐ Pack
- ☐ Tarpaulin / Fly
- ☐ Garbage bag (plastic bag inside burlap sack)

- ☐ Toilet paper
- ☐ Buck saw (with cover)
- ☐ Axe (with cover)
- ☐ Hatchet (with cover)
- ☐ Axe File
- ☐ Honing / sharpening stone
- ☐ Aluminum foil
- ☐ Twine ☐ Rope

### Nesting kit / Food pack

- ☐ Large and small pots with lids
- ☐ Frypan (coated)
- ☐ Pressure cooker (high altitudes)
- ☐ Kettle
- ☐ Reflector oven ☐ Grill
- ☐ Stirring spoon
- ☐ Nylon spatula ☐ Cutlery
- ☐ Cutting knife ☐ Plate(s)
- ☐ Bowls(s) ☐ Cup(s)
- ☐ Thermal cup(s)
- ☐ Thermos
- ☐ Folding water jug
- ☐ Kitchen sack / bag / wannigan ☐ Spice kit
- ☐ Cleaning kit: Brillo pad(s); Washcloth(es), Chor girl(s); Biodegradable detergent / soap
- ☐ Chlorine bleach / Iodine / Halazone (water purification)
- ☐ Meal plan ☐ Recipes
- ☐ Food inventory
- ☐ Food and Lunch packs

### Repair kit

- ☐ Photocopied info (manuals, instructions, etc.)
- ☐ Twine ☐ Rope
- ☐ Sewing Awl ☐ Thread
- ☐ Needles
- ☐ Thimble
- ☐ Safety pins
- ☐ Canvas ☐ Nylon
- ☐ Netting ☐ Leather
- ☐ Cloth
- ☐ Nylon webbing
- ☐ Hardware (Buckles, D-rings, Zippers, Velcro, etc.)
- ☐ Spare parts (for stove, etc.)
- ☐ Tools (adjustable wrench, pliers etc.)

- ☐ Flashlight / Fluorescent lantern
- ☐ Extra batteries

### Misc.

- ☐ Weather charts and forecaster
- ☐ Barometer
- ☐ Max. and min. thermometer
- ☐ Garbage bags
- ☐ Plastic bags

## CLOTHING / PERSONAL CHECKLIST

*The following lists contain a full range of choices with many overlaps and duplications so that you can design your own list according to your own preferences.*

### Leggings

- ☐ Army pants (quick drying polyester / cotton)
- ☐ Wool pants ☐ Shorts
- ☐ Bathing suit
- ☐ Nylon / polypro running shorts
- ☐ Long underwear (wool or polypro)
- ☐ Sweat pants (cotton or polypro)
- ☐ Rain pants
- ☐ Wind pants
- ☐ Suspenders ☐ Belt
- ☐ Knickers ☐ Gaiters

### Feet

- ☐ Liner socks (polypro)
- ☐ Wool socks
- ☐ Sports socks (high bulk orlon)
- ☐ Cotton socks
- ☐ Hiking boots
- ☐ Canvas runners (or boots)
- ☐ Moccasins
- ☐ Boot waterproofer (Snowseal)
- ☐ Welt sealer (or epoxy)

### Tops

- ☐ Polypro shirt (long sleeve)
- ☐ Wool T-shirt
- ☐ Cotton T-shirt(s)
- ☐ Flannel shirt(s)
- ☐ Turtle neck shirt (cotton or polypro)
- ☐ Wool shirt (or viyella)
- ☐ Wool sweater / Pile jacket
- ☐ Down vest (or synthetic)
- ☐ Rain jacket (coated nylon or Gortex) [+ seam sealer]
- ☐ Mountain Parka / Wind anorak (uncoated nylon or 60/40 cloth)
- ☐ Poncho (doubles as ground sheet / sail)

### Head and Hands

- ☐ Sunhat (with brim / visor)
- ☐ Bandana(s) – 101 uses
- ☐ Wool / silk scarf
- ☐ Rain hat
- ☐ Wool hat / touque
- ☐ Bug hat
- ☐ Fingerless gloves
- ☐ Gloves (leather or wool)
- ☐ Mitts (wool, polypro or leather)
- ☐ Overmitts (nylon or leather)

### End of trip change of clothes

- ☐ Your choice

### Sleeping

- ☐ Sleeping bag (be sure to waterproof with a garbage bag)
- ☐ Stuff sack
- ☐ Foam pad / Thermorest

### Personal

- ☐ Biodegradable soap
- ☐ Biodegradable Shampoo
- ☐ Towel(s) (beach size / wash-up size)
- ☐ Toothbrush
- ☐ Biodegradable Toothpaste
- ☐ Dental floss

- ☐ Razor (whatever happened to roughing it)
- ☐ Tampons
- ☐ Mirror (could be used for signalling)
- ☐ Hair pick / brush / comb
- ☐ Nail clippers
- ☐ Pocket knife
- ☐ Sheath knife
- ☐ Laundry / wet clothes bag
- ☐ Laundry soap (Biodegradable)
- ☐ Lipbalm
- ☐ Sunscreen ☐ Noxema
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Extra glasses
- ☐ Strap for glasses
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Contact case and cleaning solution
- ☐ Glasses size screwdriver
- ☐ Reading material
- ☐ Writing material
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Camera (lens and film)
- ☐ Binoculars
- ☐ Flashlight (fluorescent lantern)
- ☐ Radio (AM, SW or CB)
- ☐ Extra batteries
- ☐ Audobon birdcaller
- ☐ Wallet (waterproof) (extra money / MC / VISA)
- ☐ Personal identification
- ☐ Medication (if necessary)
- ☐ Medical information
- ☐ Phone numbers and addresses
- ☐ Sewing kit
- ☐ First aid kit

*(Courtesy of "Canadian Canoeing Companion" – Alex Narvey – Thunder Enlightening Press). Available through the CRCA for \$19.<sup>95</sup> plus \$1.<sup>50</sup> p & h and 7% GST)*





# Introductory Canoeing Skills

## LEVEL I

*Having completed Level I, one should be recognized as a novice canoeist capable of performing elementary manoeuvres from the bow and stern positions on flat water and under supervision.*

### C.R.C.A. STANDARD TEST OF ACHIEVEMENT

#### Note to Examiner:

In examining a Level I paddler, one must remember that the important thing is whether or not the problem or the manoeuvre has been solved: the way it is solved is of secondary importance; the style is of no importance. Any other method (or stroke) should be acceptable provided that the problem is solved as stated.

The tests dealing with swimming ability (No. 3 and 4) are prerequisite to canoeing and consequently to further testing.

These paddling techniques may be done solo as well as tandem although at this beginner level tandem paddling is preferable.

**In the illustrations in the manual, the bow of the canoe is dark and the stern is light.**

#### A) WATER SAFETY

##### 1) P.F.D. SELECTION



A canoeist should be able to select an appropriate P.F.D. Knowledge of government regulations should be known and the canoeist must know at least five things to consider when choosing a P.F.D.

1. The P.F.D. must be approved by Transport Canada (check the label).
2. The P.F.D. is in good repair.
3. The canoeist can move arms freely.
4. It is the appropriate size in relation to the weight and height of the person wearing it (snug but comfortable).
5. It is relatively easy to swim in.

##### 2) RESCUE BREATHING



A canoeist should be able to demonstrate basic mouth-to-mouth artificial respiration on land. In addition, the participant should demonstrate how to maintain an open airway, the removal of airway obstructions and the recovery position.

##### 3) 25 METER SWIM



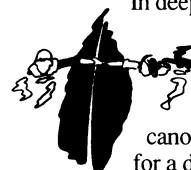
A canoeist should be able to swim a minimum distance of 25 meters, on front or back, with any stroke. This test can be performed under clement conditions. A canoeist who can't swim should be able to swim 25 meters with their P.F.D.

##### 4) THROW LINE AND REACHING ASSIST



A canoeist should be able to extend a reaching assist line to a conscious victim in deep water from his canoe. A canoeist should also be able to perform these manoeuvres from a dock and from shore. Positive reinforcing communication should be part of the rescue between victim and rescuer.

##### 5) SWIMMING WITH A SWAMPED CANOE



In deep water, but close to the shore and under supervision, two canoeists should be able to upset their canoe without losing contact, perform a wrist hold with each other over the upside down submerged canoe, and then swim with the canoe to shore for a distance of 20 meters. The latter can also be performed with an upright canoe.

*NOTE: Some canoe designs will not float upside down when submerged; if this is the case, eliminate the "wrist hold."*

##### 6) PADDLING A SWAMPED CANOE



In deep water and with a partner in the bow, a canoeist should be able to capsize the canoe, climb in the submerged canoe and paddle it a distance of 50 meters with the paddle, make a U-turn and paddle 50 meters with hands only.

*NOTE: This test might be very difficult with certain canoe designs.*

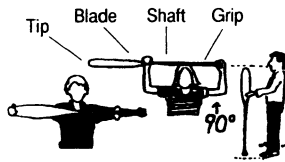
##### 7) CHANGING POSITIONS IN A CANOE



A canoeist should be able to change positions in the canoe. This will be done both when the canoe is rafted with another and as a single canoe. A safe procedure must be followed (ie. weight is kept low and centred). Although this procedure is not always recommended (ie. rough water) it provides the canoeist with a sense of security, balance and control over the craft in emergency situations.

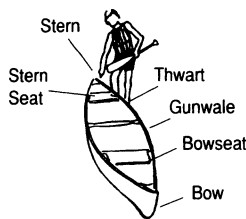
## B) CANOE THEORY

### 8) BASIC PADDLE TERMINOLOGY



A canoeist should be able to indicate where the tip, blade, shaft and grip are located as well as understand and demonstrate appropriate care of a paddle.

### 9) BASIC CANOE TERMINOLOGY



A canoeist should be able to indicate the bow, stern, gunwale, bow and stern seats and thwarts.

### 10) SELECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT

A canoeist should be able to select a suitable paddle and

P.F.D. and show familiarity with the parts of a canoe and paddle. Care and respect for all equipment should also be known by the canoeist.

### 11) KNOWLEDGE OF TRIMMING PRINCIPLES

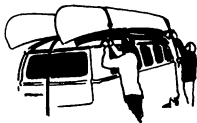


A canoeist should be able to explain verbally the principles of trimming (balancing) a canoe. The explanation must deal with:

- Position of the paddlers and their paddling side in a canoe (1, 2 and 3 paddlers);
- Position of passengers in a canoe (1, 2, and 3 paddlers);
- Position of packs in a canoe (1, 2 and 3 paddlers);
- The most stable to least stable position of a paddler
- When to kneel, when to sit and how;
- How to avoid tipping when entering and leaving a canoe.

## C) CANOE SKILLS

### 12) TRANSPORTING CANOES ON VEHICLES



A canoeist should be able to demonstrate several methods of how to transport a canoe on a vehicle, loading techniques and knots that can be used to ensure the proper securing of the canoe through practical application.

### 13) ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND ETHICS

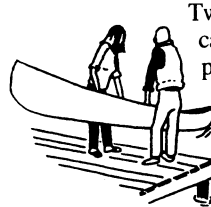
A canoeist must be familiar with knowledge of ethical environmental practices that would be employed on a canoe trip (refer to the "Canoeist's Code" and environmental guidelines for minimum impact camping techniques).

### 14) LIFTS AND CARRIES



A canoeist should be able to illustrate two methods of carrying the canoe tandem and be familiar with and may attempt a solo teepee and carry. (If size prevents carrying, the canoeist must demonstrate a knowledge of the methods).

### 15 i) LAUNCHING FROM A DOCK

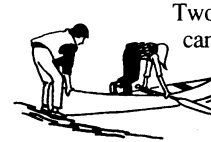


Two canoeists should be able to carry a canoe a distance of 10 meters to a dock, place it in the water and turn it parallel to the dock. While one stabilizes the canoe, the other enters at the stern and assumes the proper position. The bow partner then takes his position. The canoeists should be able to do this manoeuvre with ease, no

hesitation and both should show good care for the canoe.

*NOTE: In cases with small children, more than one partner should be used to assist with the manoeuvre.*

### 15 ii) LAUNCHING FROM SHORE



Two canoeists should be able to carry a canoe a distance of 10 meters to a shoreline and place it in the water. One moves to the bow, assumes proper position, and stabilizes the

canoe while the other enters the stern. This manoeuvre can also be performed by launching the stern first. The canoeists should be able to do this manoeuvre with ease, without hesitation and should show good care for the canoe.\* (B.S. – Bow and Stern indicates that the manoeuvre must be performed as a bow paddler as well as a stern paddler).

### 16) PADDLING POSITIONS AND TRIMMING



A canoeist should be able to enter the canoe and assume the correct paddling position. The paddler should know how his/her own

weight as well as that of packs can be shifted to maximize safety and efficient paddling given different wind and water conditions.

### 17) LANDING AT A DOCK

Two canoeists should be able to approach the dock at a 45° angle, reduce their speed and bring their canoe to a stop parallel to the dock within 10 cm but without touching (at least until the canoe is stationary). They should exit their canoe (the bow person first), bring it perpendicular to the dock and lift the canoe onto the dock. The canoeists should be able to do this manoeuvre with ease, no hesitation, and should show good care for the canoe. B.S.

*NOTE: A smaller person may be assisted by a stronger person.*

### 18) LANDING AT A SHORE

Two canoeists should be able to approach the shore at a right angle, reduce their speed and bring the canoe to a stop within 10 cm from the shore but without touching. They should exit from their canoe (the bow person first) and lift the canoe onto the shore. The canoeists should be able to do this manoeuvre with ease, no hesitation, and should show good care for the canoe.

*NOTE: A smaller person may be assisted by a stronger person.*

### 19) BALANCING

The paddler will, from a kneeling or sitting position, stand for 15 seconds, and then return to the original position while the partner stabilizes the canoe. With both paddlers kneeling, gently rock the canoe for 15 seconds. At all times while in the canoe, the paddlers, demonstrate balance by avoiding sudden, unannounced movements. It is not recommended for beginners to stand in the canoe but this manoeuvre provides a sense of stability and control while paddling.

### 20) STRAIGHT LINE PADDLING – 100m

A canoeist will demonstrate the ability to paddle forward in a straight line a distance of 100m. This must be completed when the paddler is in the stern.

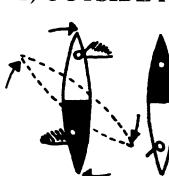
### 21) STOPPING

Two canoeists travelling at an accelerated speed, should be able to stop the forward motion of the canoe with any appropriate stroke within a distance of one canoe length after the



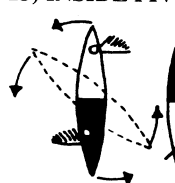
last forward stroke. The canoe should not rotate or move sideward more than one meter (ie. using a snub stroke).

### 22) OUTSIDE PIVOT



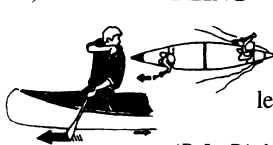
Two canoeists must work together to pivot the canoe so that it moves away from the paddling side of the person in the stern. The paddlers may not change paddling sides. This manoeuvre should be completed in both the bow and the stern.

### 23) INSIDE PIVOT



Two canoeists must work together to pivot the canoe so that it moves towards the paddling side of the person in the stern. The paddlers may not change paddling sides. The manoeuvre should be completed in both the bow and the stern.

### 24) BACK PADDLING



The canoeist should be able to make their canoe go straight backwards for a distance of at least 10 metres. B.S., R.L.

*(R-L: Right and Left indicates that the manoeuvre must be performed as a right handed paddler as well as a left handed paddler).*

### 25) SIDE SLIPPING (DISPLACEMENT)



Two canoeists should move the canoe sideways in both directions a distance of 3m. Minimal pivoting and diagonal motion should be experienced, however, changing of paddling sides should not be required. Speed should be constant in both directions.

## LEVEL II

*Having completed Level II, one should be recognized as a novice canoeist capable of performing most of the basic manoeuvres from the bow, stern and solo positions on calm water and under supervision.*

continued on page 10

## C.R.C.A. STANDARD TESTS OF ACHIEVEMENT

### Note to the Examiner:

In order to qualify for the Level II award, the canoeist should have completed all test items for Level I. However, any canoeist should be allowed to be tested on any of the following test items.

The tests dealing with swimming ability (No. 4 and 5) are considered a prerequisite to canoeing and consequently to further testing.

In the following illustrations, the bow of the canoe is dark and the stern is light.

### A) WATER SAFETY

#### 1) DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT REGULATIONS

Describe and discuss the most recent set of regulations regarding canoeing. Explain why each of these items is important to canoeists (minimum equipment necessary for paddling a canoe: P.F.D. and paddle for each paddler; bailer, sound signalling device, extra paddle).



#### 2) KNOWLEDGE OF HYPOTHERMIA AND OVEREXPOSURE



The canoeist should be able to describe the stages and treatment of hypothermia and overexposure.

#### 3) DON A P.F.D. IN WATER



In deep water the canoeist must demonstrate how to put on and tie up a P.F.D. correctly. Canoeists should wear their P.F.D.s at all times while on the water. This test is to assist others in instructing them how to don a P.F.D. if they were not wearing one beforehand. Be careful of paddlers in distress as they may inadvertently place you in a potentially dangerous situation.

#### 4) 50 METER SWIM WITH P.F.D.

The participant will swim 50m in deep water while wearing an approved Personal Flotation Device (P.F.D.).

#### 5) SAFETY RESCUE BREATHING IN SHALLOW WATER



The canoeist should be able to, while standing in waist deep water, secure a victim and demonstrate correct artificial respiration for a period of at least one minute.

#### 6) CANOE OVER CANOE RESCUE



In deep water and with the assistance of a partner in the stern, a canoeist should be able to paddle toward an upset canoe with two conscious victims, and perform within approximately 90 seconds, a canoe over canoe rescue. The canoeist then instructs the victims to climb into their canoe.

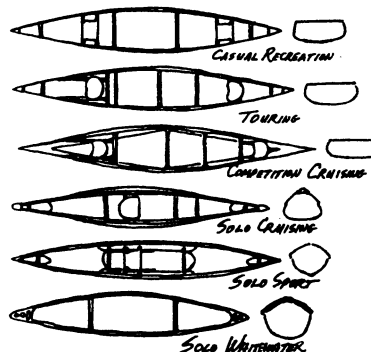
#### 7) JUMP OUT AND CLIMB IN



In deep water and with a partner steadying the stationary canoe, the canoeist, in the bow position should be able to jump out of the canoe and climb back in. During the whole procedure the canoeist must never lose contact with the canoe and must not cause the gunwale to dip below the surface.

### B) CANOE THEORY

#### 8) SELECTION OF A CANOE



A paddler should demonstrate: (1) a knowledge of which canoes are preferable for tandem or solo canoeing and (2) a knowledge of which canoes are preferable for paddling on moving water.

#### 9) KNOWLEDGE OF CANOEING ETHICS



The canoeists should be able to indicate examples of desirable behaviour for each of the following points.

- How to relate to other canoeists using the same canoeing area; to other water recreationalists.
- How to treat plant life and wild life both aquatic and terrestrial.
- How to set good examples as canoeists.

NOTE: Suggested source of information: C.R.C.A.'s "Canoeists Code" and "Environmental and Ethical Concerns Manual"

### 10) CANOEING HISTORY



The canoeist should be able to write a brief essay (500-750 words) on a topic concerning the development of modern canoeing.

### 11) CANOEING SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS AND MATERIALS



The canoeists will be aware of the Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association, Provincial/Territorial Recreational Canoeing Associations, conservation authorities, private camps and schools, clubs, books and films which pertain to canoeing.

## C) CANOE SKILLS

### 12) STRAIGHT COURSE (200m steering stroke)

Two canoeists should be able to propel their canoe forward and keep it in a straight course for a distance of 200 meters after having switched sides at midpoint. The canoe should not go off course more than 5 meters. The canoeists must keep the whole blade of the paddle under water during the propulsive phase of the stroke and must show a continuous and natural rhythm of paddling. The steering must be done entirely by the stern paddler with an appropriate steering stroke ("J", "knifed J", "Canadian", or "Pitch").



### 13) REVERSE PADDLING



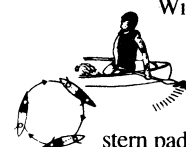
Two canoeists should be able to make their canoe go straight backward for a distance of at least 10 meters. B.S.\*R-L.\*

### 14) BOW DRAW TURN



With a partner at the stern position and travelling at a reduced speed, the bow paddler should be able to execute 180° turn within a 5 meter radius (a U-turn in a 10 meter corridor) using a draw stroke. The stern paddler can assist with the manoeuvre but the main turning action should be performed from the bow. Rhythm should be kept and the recovery can be underwater or above water. Both R & L.\*

### 15) OUTSIDE CIRCLE



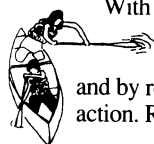
With a bow paddler assisting in the forward propulsion of the canoe, the stern paddler should be able to complete an outside circle (turning away from his paddling side) within a 20 meter radius. The stern paddler, while turning the canoe, should also help in the forward propulsion of the canoe. R-L.\*

### 16) INSIDE CIRCLE (TANDEM)



With a bow paddler assisting in the forward propulsion of the canoe, the stern paddler should be able to complete an inside circle (turning toward his/her paddling side) within a 20 meter radius. The stern paddler, while turning the canoe, should also help in the forward propulsion of the canoe. R-L.

### 17) LOW BRACE



With a paddler in the bow, the stern paddler should rapidly tilt the canoe by shifting their weight towards his/her paddling side and by recovering with the help of a low brace action. R-L.

### 18) SOLO PADDLING POSITIONS

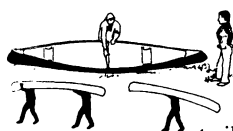
The paddler demonstrates a knowledge of how to paddle solo in flat water, calm, and in windy conditions.



### 19) SOLO STRAIGHT COURSE

The canoeist, using any appropriate stroke must be able to paddle the canoe in a straight line for a distance of 100m. The canoeist may not change paddling sides. The canoe should remain stable and should not go off course more than 4 meters.

### 20) PORTAGING



With the help of a partner, if necessary, the canoeist must be able to bring a canoe onto the shoulders, walk for a distance of not less than 50 meters along a trail, and lower the canoe. This manoeuvre must be done effectively and with ease.

*Note: The complete "Standard Tests of Achievement in Canoeing Manual" is available from the CRCA for \$15.<sup>95</sup> Regular, \$13.<sup>95</sup> Member, plus \$2.<sup>50</sup> p & h and 7% GST.*

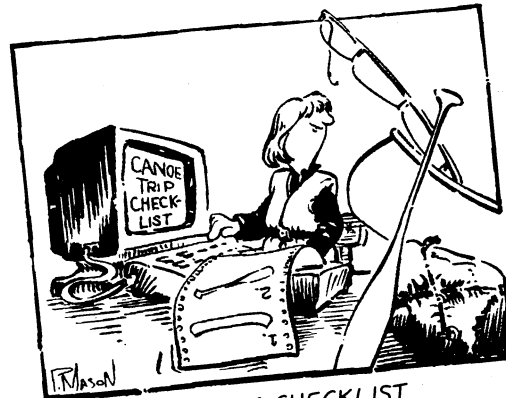
## Safety Tips for Paddlers

### "Essentials for Safe Paddling"

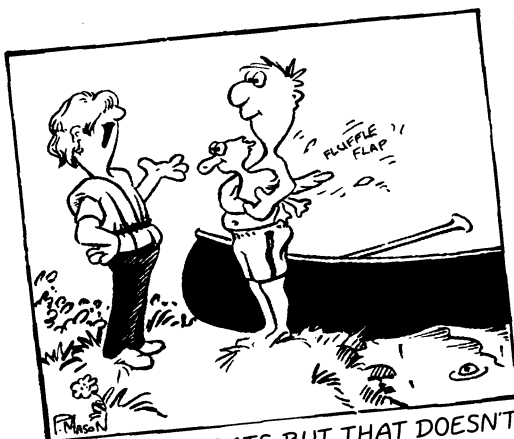
**Preparation:** What preparation should be made before setting out on the water.

**Risk Reduction:** While on the water, how do you minimize the chance of causing the accident.

**Ensuring Survival:** In the event of an accident, how do you ensure the safety of those involved.



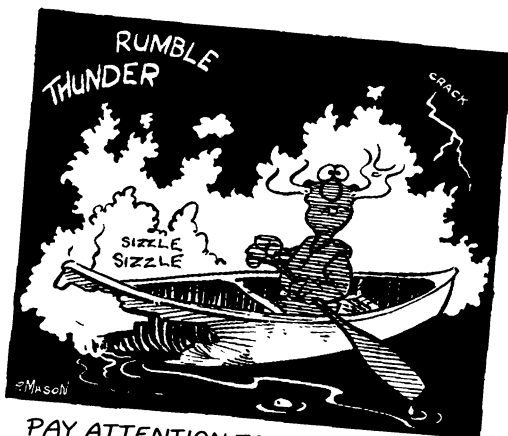
USE A CHECKLIST



SURE HE FLOATS. BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE HIM A TRANSPORT CANADA APPROVED P.F.D.



ON JULY 15 AT 3:31 P.M.  
WE WILL BE RIGHT HERE.  
(TELL OTHERS YOUR TRIP PLANS)



PAY ATTENTION TO THE WEATHER  
TO AVOID POTENTIAL HAZARDS



I TOLD YA CHOPPING A  
HOLE WOULDN'T LET WATER OUT!  
(HAVE A BAILER ON BOARD)



ALCOHOL AND BOATING DONT MIX



AVOID SITUATIONS WHERE  
HYPOTHERMIA COULD DEVELOP



DONT LEAVE YOUR CRAFT IF YOU  
ARE FAR FROM SHORE.



NIGHT PADDLING. YOU NEED TO  
BE SEEN TO BE AVOIDED.



KNOW THE BOUY SYSTEM, BUT GIVE  
WAY TO LARGER CRAFT!



***“Contact Canada’s  
Paddling Information  
Specialists Before  
Your Next Adventure”***

## Federated Canoeing Associations in Canada



Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association  
P.O. Box 398, 446 Main Street, West  
Merrickville, Ontario  
Canada K0G 1N0

Telephone: (613) 269-2910 Fax: (613) 269-2908  
Web Site: <http://www.crca.ca/> E-mail: [staff@crca.ca](mailto:staff@crca.ca)

### NEWFOUNDLAND

Newfoundland Canoe Association  
P.O. Box 5961  
St. John's, Nfld. A1C 5X4

### NOVA SCOTIA

Canoe Nova Scotia  
P.O. Box 3010  
5516 Spring Garden Road S.  
Halifax, N.S. B3J 3G6

### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

P.E.I. Recreational Canoeing Association  
P.O. Box 5604, R.R. #4  
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 7J8

### NEW BRUNSWICK

Canoe New Brunswick  
P.O. Box 243  
Moncton, N.B. E1C 8K9

### QUEBEC

Fédération Québécoise de Canoe Camping  
4545 Ave. Pierre de Coubertin  
C.P. 1000 Succursale M  
Montréal, Québec H1V 3R2

### ONTARIO

Ontario Recreational Canoeing Association  
1185 Eglinton Ave. E., Ste. 104  
North York, Ontario M3C 3C6

### MANITOBA

Manitoba Recreational Canoeing Association  
c/o Manitoba Sports Federation  
200 Main Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4M2

### SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan Recreational Canoeing Association  
P.O. Box 6064  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 4E5

### ALBERTA

Alberta Recreational Canoeing Association  
1111 Memorial Drive N.W.  
Calgary, Alberta T2N 3E4

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

Recreational Canoeing Assoc. of B.C.  
4782 Fernglan Dr.  
Burnaby, B.C. V5G 3V7

### YUKON

Yukon Voyageurs Canoe Club  
P.O. Box 5546  
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5H4

### NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

N.W.T. Canoeing Association  
P.O. Box 2763  
Yellowknife, N.W.T. X1A 2R1

### For More Information on Paddling:

Call or write the CRCA to receive your free Paddling Catalogue. The CRCA is "Canada's Paddling Information Specialist" and can answer most questions pertaining to canoeing, kayaking and sea kayaking. Canoe and kayak course information is available May 1st each year.

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"KANAWA" is printed quarterly. When you support "KANAWA" you are supporting the preservation of Canada's Canoeable wilderness in cooperation with the Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association. The word "KANAWA" is trilingual for canoe.

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