

COUNCIL CANOEING PROCEDURES

These procedures apply to all groups canoeing at any of our council sites:

- Day camp
- Resident camp
- Council and service unit events
- Troop campers
- Outside rental groups

The council provides for canoeing:

Canoes, paddles, US Coast Guard approved life vests (PFDs), ring buoy and/or throw rope bags.

Required: Meet GSUSA Canoeing: Safety Activity Checkpoint guidelines.

In addition:

SUPERVISION

1. There must be a minimum of two adults supervising a canoeing activity. One of these adults must have Flatwater Introduction to Canoeing Instruction Certification from the American Canoe Association.
2. Also present must be an adult currently certified in council-approved first aid and CPR. This adult may be one of the two adults above.
3. In addition to the above, adult lookouts should be stationed on the shore to observe and make sure the canoe instructor is aware of canoers in trouble. There needs to be a minimum of 2 adult lookouts for up to 16 canoers.
4. Essential Functions for all canoeing personnel:
 - Show good judgment in anticipating and preventing accidents; quickness in emergency situations.
 - Ability to recognize aquatic hazards.
 - While on duty - must be alert, not distracted, neat, friendly, and efficient.In addition, the two adults supervising the canoeing activity:
 - Teach and supervise participants.
 - Monitor quality of pond or lake water.
 - Handle capsizing, near drowning, hypothermia, and first aid.
 - Monitor the weather.
5. All people, including adult lookouts, at the canoeing area are under the direct supervision and direction of the certified canoe instructor.

SAFETY RULES FOR CANOEING

1. People canoeing must be at least nine (9) years old and strong enough to paddle.
2. Each person canoeing is required to wear a US Coast Guard approved life vest (PFD). PFDs must be worn properly while in the canoe and while on shore near the water.
3. Each person canoeing must sign/have custodial parent/guardian sign a Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council Canoeing Waiver. These waivers must be turned in and checked by the person unlocking the canoes.
4. There will be no intentional swimming or swamping and tipping of canoes in the pond or lake.
5. No canoeing during electrical storms.
6. Limit two (2) people to a canoe.
7. Before canoeing on a Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council site, people canoeing must first have basic canoe orientation.
8. A communication system that is both audible and visible must be established for calling canoers to shore (i.e. whistle, megaphone, fog horn, etc.)
9. A first aid kit must be present for all canoe activities.

EQUIPMENT

It is the responsibility of the group's canoe instructor teaching canoeing to ensure equipment is safe and appropriate to size of participant:

- PFDs appropriate size to wearer and in good condition;
- Paddle length appropriate to size of canoer and in good condition.
- In addition, canoes should be safe. A painter should be attached to each end of each canoe. If the bow hook is broken, have a throw rope available. Throw rope bags and ring buoys should be readily accessible.
- One adult should have a working cell phone to use in emergencies.

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GENERAL SAFETY RULES

- Safety equipment provided at the ponds and lake shall be one or more ring buoys. Safety equipment for the canoe instructor should include a throw rope bag.
- All canoeing will take place only when properly certified adult personnel are present.
- Canoes are kept locked, or stored away from the canoeing area when not in use.
- Paddles and PFDs are stored separately from the canoes.
- All canoes, paddles, and PFDs must be safety checked by group's canoe instructor/lifeguard prior to use.
- Damaged equipment must be put aside and reported to council staff.
- A variety of paddle lengths will be available.
- PFDs are available in youth and adult sizes and are US Coast Guard approved for near-shore canoeing.
- Canoers are to wear tied sneakers or other non-slip footwear with closed-toes, which must be securely fastened to the foot.
- Optional for canoers: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, windbreaker, or other long sleeve shirt.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- In the event of an emergency, the canoe instructor will take charge to designate personnel to summon additional assistance and call 9-1-1 if needed. One adult in the group should carry a cell phone. If there is no cell phone service, know where the nearest accessible working phone is located.
- If 9-1-1 is contacted, the Council Procedures for Serious Emergencies and Crisis Communication Plan will become effective.

BASIC CANOE ORIENTATION SHALL COVER:

- How to select and wear the proper size US Coast Guard approved PFD.
- Parts of canoe and paddle.
- How to select and properly hold a paddle.
- Care and storage of equipment.
- Canoeing safety rules.
- Appropriate clothing.
- General craft handling including basic canoeing strokes (forward, bow draw, cross bow draw, stern pry, stern draw, back stroke.)
- How to safely get in and out of a canoe.
- What to do if the canoe capsizes.
- Communication system including distress signals.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

From supervising adults to canoers:

Audio: One long whistle blast – Activity stops. Everyone listens to instructor or supervising adult. Three short, sharp whistle blasts – everyone paddles to bank indicated by supervising adult. (Repeat periodically until all have heard.)

Visual: The Girl Scout Quiet Sign (accompanies the long whistle blast) – Activity stops. Everyone listens.

A grand sweeping motion with one raised arm, moving toward the body and repeated several times (accompanies three sharp whistle blasts.) Everyone paddles to bank indicated by supervising adult.

Distress signal for participants to supervising adult, lifeguard, or instructor:

Visual: Raise both arms above head and wave them back and forth in a slow crossing motion

NUMBER OF CANOES AVAILABLE

Crooked Lane 8 canoes
Ken-Jockety 8 canoes
Molly Lauman 8 canoes

I have received and read "Council Canoeing Procedures" for use of the canoes. Our user group assumes full responsibility for the conduct of the group members and the enforcement of all regulations.

Name of Group _____

Canoe Instructor _____
Print Name

Canoe Instructor Signature

Date signed