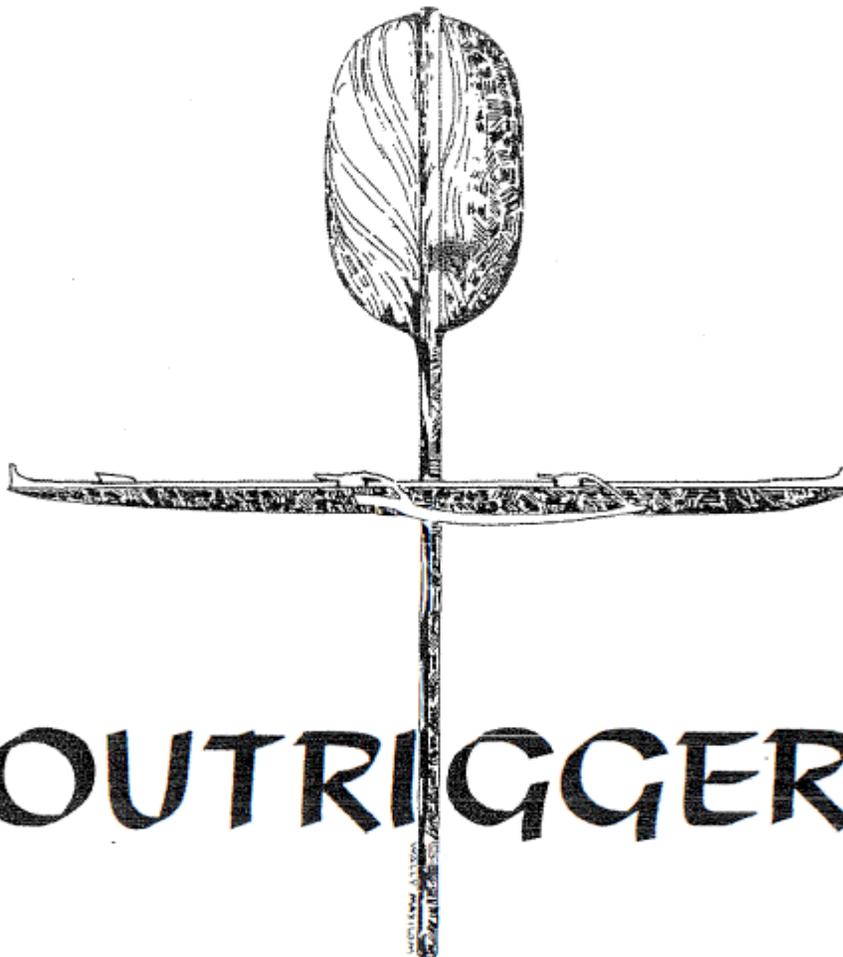




Steersman Accreditation Study Guide



OUTRIGGER

**BASIC
SAFETY**

Best Practices and Procedures

Best Practices and Procedures are guidelines that we as coaches, steerspersons, paddlers and all participants in this sport should abide by.

We all have stories, incidents, close calls, the misunderstandings of directions, and the occasional accident. Some of you have been paddling for untold years, some just recently, to everyone, this our best knowledge of safe coaching and steering practices.

Incidents happen when actions are under the control of the human factor. Being in the wrong place, going out when the conditions say different, staying tight to the docks, using faulty equipment, not watching the ocean conditions and steering accordingly, and finally taking Risks.

Risk Management is recognizing the situations and properly dealing with them. Risk identification is an assessment of potential hazards. Listing them is called risk evaluation. Finding, fixing hazards, changing bad boating habits, and removing potential injury situations is risk resolution.

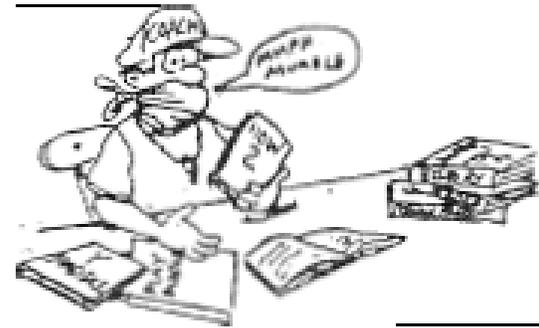
Staying on top of risk management is considered risk control. All of these tasks are essential to minimizing injury and financial outlay of the association and you personally.

Our sport is aquatic in nature, with that comes a need for knowledge that is essential for the Safety to your club and others. Following these guidelines will help in minimizing the risks apparent to this sport. Teaching these guidelines will help the future of this sport.

This is not meant to be a lecture, but a primer.

I. Reasons for a Safety Primer?

- A. Most people in the sport are not practicing such habits while on or off the water.
- B. Some coaches and steersperson's are not knowledgeable or take for granted the common sense of their paddlers.
- C. If presented in group discussions, information will be exchanged.
- D. A "safety first" attitude goes along with a competitive spirit.
- E. SCORA directive (insurance compliance)



II. Basic Safety Procedures

- A. Steersmen should be made aware of safety practices
- B. Base program must be addressed to all
- C. Stretch, warmup and cool down. Knowledge of Navigation Rights of Way
- D. Canoe should be checked once over for maintenance
Proper Gear: buckets, iakos, amas, floatation tanks, rigging, paddles and PFDs

III. Know the Water and Weather

- A. Paddlers, steersmen and coaches should all know the prevailing conditions and possible change of weather.

1. Wind = Waves

Winds create waves so if it has been windy most of the day, don't practice outside unless prepared. Don't go outside without spray cover, escort, float plan, until all paddlers are knowledgeable.

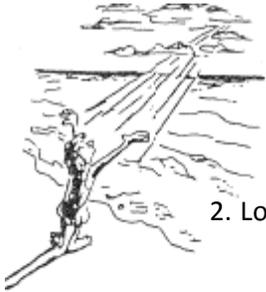
- a. Be flexible with training schedule. If windy, use it as a resistance training session inside. Paddle easy downwind and hard into it.
- b. If you are ready to paddle outside in adverse conditions, leave a float plan (departure time, direction of travel and estimated time of return). Life jackets are just that, LIFE JACKETS.
- c. Don't make bad conditions worse conditions.

2. Low clouds and low pressure = Rain

- a. Bad visibility
- b. Hypothermia is the lowering of the body core temperature. You don't have to be in the water to get it
- c. Go out but wear suitable and appropriate clothing

3. Hot day and cool ocean breeze = Fog

- a. Don't event go on the water. Make it a weight training day or a run, etc.
- b. If paddling is essential, practice in a controlled area.
- c. IF CAUGHT OUTSIDE:
 - Turn toward jetty entrance immediately and head for it. Take other land citings.
 - Take notice of the time and distance you have traveled and prevailing conditions (i.e. Tide and swell)
 - Don't panic and start sprinting, it will only tire you and the team, plus you will lose concentration on direction of hull and swell pattern.
 - When calculated time puts you close to entrance be ready for other in or out going craft probably traveling faster and a lot bigger than your canoe.
 - If in a white out, slow pace down and have someone become your fog whistle, preferably seat 1.
 - Foggy weather doesn't usually have large swells within its makeup so you can paddle closer to shore to find your way. Be careful not to go inside the shore break.



4. Surf

a. Swells

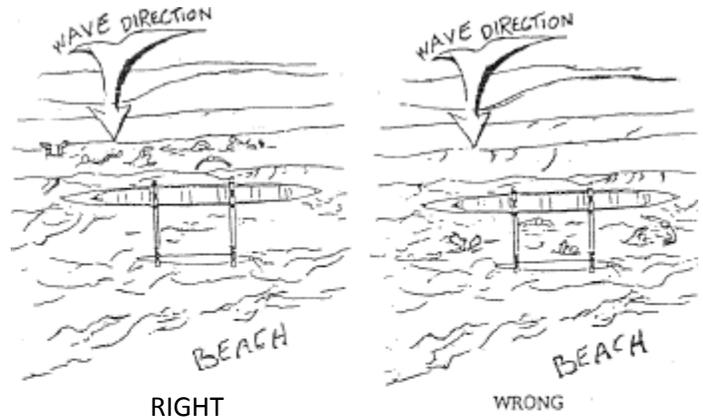
- Ideal canoe position is perpendicular to swell direction
- Speed of canoe has to attain speed of swell
- It is the job of the steersman to notice one and announce it
- It is the job of the stoker to feel the canoe and swell position and react usually by picking up the rate and also applying more pressure to the blade
- It is the task of the crew to follow the stoker's rate and notice that application of power and respond immediately.
- Don't let up on the back side

b. Waves In

- If you haven't been taught, ask and learn first, don't go by trial and error
- Again, know swell direction
- Bottom condition (what is causing wave to break)
- Reef
- Storm
- Rocky
- Sewer outfall
- Swell reaching shore condition
- Jetty break
- Sand bar
- Know inside bottom condition, its too late to find out that the shore has hidden submerged items when you've committed yourself
- Realistically weigh the wave height and your ability, then proceed in or out
- Don't surf with people in the immediate area
- Our race canoes are just that, they are not designed to surf California beach break. If approached properly it's fun, if not it's death!
- Count the waves in the set
- Remember on the first wave if you do flip or swamp you'll be in the turmoil longer which may cause greater damage to paddlers and canoe
- Surf god says third wave of set is largest (surf god lies). The larger wave is the wave you catch successfully.
- If you have a beachmaster follow his/her commands. He times the sets, counts the waves per set, knows the lull time and place and he controls the beach to notify the area of canoes coming in and going out.
- Follow steersman's commands, get canoe up to speed but not too far in front of wave
- Once you catch the wave, don't try to out paddle the wave or you will fill up with white water

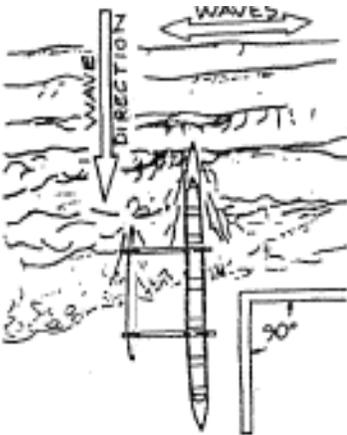
c. If you flip:

- Stay to the ocean side of the canoe
- Call out your seat numbers in order to make sure everyone is okay.
- Turn the canoe perpendicular to the wave direction, it makes less of a target
- Gather paddles and equipment before they become lost or projectiles.
- Steersman: tell your crew what you're going to do and what is expected of each member (in time it will become second nature, but until then discuss it).
- If the canoe does break up, stay away from the edges because they usually are not rounded and soft. Make others aware of the possible consequences of broken equipment.
- Arguing about who or what caused the flip will not bring the boat out. Get it to shore and size up your repairs



d. Wave Out

- Again, know your area
- If kelp beds close by, walk canoes towards that area (waves are smaller inside kelp beds).
- Stay away from submerged rocks and jetties, because of the consequences of not making it out on the first try.
- Time and count your waves to a set and proceed accordingly
- One man calls the shots
- Put canoes into water as far as possible
- Have all but 1, 2 and 6 in the canoes. Reason one being 1 and 2 are usually the most agile and lighter. The bow will float higher until they're in it. They can lift canoe and keep water out while waiting. Also its easier to keep bow perpendicular to waves thus creating least resistance. Seat 6 is higher and can see farther. He calls the commands. He would have clearer shot to see the beachmaster signals.
- Once you see a large lull with no swells on immediate horizon, get in and ladle as fast and straight as possible
- Don't stop paddling until outside or else you may get swamped



e. Dusk and Night

- Don't go outside and try to make a quick trip at dusk.
- Don't attempt outside travel alone. Use more than one canoe.
- If you do, have lights. It's safe and the law.
- Again, float plan and stick to it
- Don't ever send or leave any canoes outside your harbor except for ideal conditions.

IV. Know Yourself and Crew

- A. Swim Test is a must – 200 yds minimum. If swimming ability is lacking, then a lifejacket is a must.
- B. Treading water is something that will be needed when the boat flips, if a paddler cant, then insist on them wearing a lifejacket. This is being responsible and prudent.
- C. Know your paddlers medical situations
 1. Dont pry or tell others
 2. Knowledge of medical situations will help in your ability to make decisions pertaining to physical activity beyond their condition, have them consult a physician
 3. Are they on any medication schedules that would be necessary during practice or race, if so the steersman should be notified of that situation, this is especially important for kids
 4. Injured paddlers shouldn't be practicing, they will further injure themselves or others



V. Know Your Area

- A. Does your site have warning flags near your site?
 1. Green flag = good weather, calm seas
 2. Yellow flag = windy weather, use caution when outside
 3. Red flag = small craft warning, don't go out
 4. Double Red flag = gale warning, batten down the canoes
 5. Red with Black Square = storm warning, move canoes
- B. Does your harbor have a traffic scheme
 1. Know those areas and abide by the direction, don't create a problem for potential conflicts
 2. Does your harbor have designated speed zones? Stay away from those areas or stay to the right shore side of those areas.
 3. Ferrys at crossings have the right of way, don't linger in those areas
 4. Tight (blind) corners, dock entrances should be given a wide berth to allow for last minute situations
 5. Because sail boats are under wind power they have certain rights, stay away from sailing regattas, known turning basins, sail areas
 6. Tugs, boats under tow have right of way over sail boats
 7. Dive boats displaying the Diver Down Flag should be given a wide berth
 8. Tankers, freighters are under tremendous power and inertia, they have rights of commerce, don't try to out run them or make them turn. Wait and go behind. Our race permits do not allow for navigational traffic stops or changes.
 9. Escort boats inside the harbor must abide by the 5 knot/no wake within those zones
- C. Known Hazards
 1. Is there any reefs, shoals, rocks, and obstructions with in your area. Let the entire club know of those potential hazard areas
 2. Is your area subject to fog? If so, have a plan for knowing the symptoms and make club members aware of them

3. Outfall outlets/storm channels can be hazardous and toxic
4. Boat/kayak/SUP rental areas have general public using the equipment. Don't assume that boaters in those craft are knowledgeable of navigation rules, be alert in those areas and stay clear of those craft.
5. When doing drills or paddling through the harbor, don't become a hazard by paddling 3 canoe wide in known contested areas. Choose less crowded areas to perform those activities.

VI. Know Your Leaders

- A. Have weekly sessions with assistant coaches, steerspersons, equipment managers, etc. Address any known situations that would be of assistance to the club risk management
- B. Have the club be a leader within the community. Be involved in beach cleanups and proactive in harbor discussions of community involvement
- C. Get known in the community by having an ongoing conversation with local media/newspapers, harbor patrol, Marine Department, lifeguards, Park Rangers, etc. They are assets to draw from but more importantly they are the community leaders.

VII. Know Federal and State Requirements for Canoes 40' and Over

- A. Coast Guard approved PFDs – One per occupant plus one throwable
- B. Manual bailing device
- C. Sound producing device, audible for ½ mile, 4-6 second duration
- D. White light on board after sunset and before sunrise to be shown in time to prevent collision
- E. Knowledge of right of way rules
- F. Acknowledge federal and state waterway markers and regulations
- G. Children under 13 must wear PFD
- H. Render assistance that can be safely provided to any individual in danger at sea
- I. Fill out California Boating Accident Report if an accident occurs which results in death, disappearance, injury that requires medical attention beyond first aid, total property damage in excess of \$500, or complete loss of a vessel.

SAFETY REMINDER LIST

KNOW YOUR PADDLERS:

- Medical conditions
- Emergency contact numbers
- Swimming ability
- Huli test

KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT

- Rigging
- Buckets
- PFDs
- Spare paddles
- Distress kit
- Trailers

KNOW YOUR AREA

- Hazards, fishing lines, ferrys, pollution warnings
- Boat traffic patterns, sailing knowledge
- First Aid kit
- Nearest telephone
- Visiting race site knowledge

KNOW YOUR WEATHER

- Wind, seas, cold, heat
- Normal conditions
- Adverse conditions

KNOW YOUR TIME

- Time of day
- Length of workout

As a Coach...

- You are the one responsible for making sound, informed decisions for your paddlers.
- You are the one responsible to make sure that your paddlers fully understand all aspects of safety.
- You are the one responsible for the consequences.