

## Bow Waters Canoe Club Canoe Tour Coordinator's Checklist

### PREPARATION FOR TOUR

- a) Be available to return messages and answer calls regarding your trip, or designate an alternate if you are unable.
- b) The group itself is your first source of backup but also consider finding contact numbers of tow trucks, ambulances, rangers, wardens, police. Making a note of any phone booths along the route. **911** is now province wide so that covers a lot of issues.
- c) If required, contact landowners to obtain or confirm permission for access or camping (**check landowner information with the club office**).
- d) Make campsite reservations where required.
- e) Arrange for assistant tour co-ordinators if the group is large. One assistant for every six - eight boats or less depending on your comfort level.
- f) Avoid cancelling tours early due to poor weather. Weather often improves on the morning of a tour.

### SIGN-UP AND PRESCREENING

- a.) **Verify** they are Club members, non-members may try one or two trips at your discretion.
- b.) **Describe river conditions**, hazards and required skills, the **type of trip** as required, e.g. – day trip, canoe camping, car camping,. Make sure that all participants have the necessary paddling skills. Inform what the **standard is for proper equipment** (pfd's, whistle and 15m floating rope is mandatory). Club boats are available for Novice, Intermediate and Advanced (with permission) club trips).
- c.) If in doubt about a callers' skill ask for a reference from within the club from a previous trip they were on. Any participant may be refused at your discretion. If you refuse someone, be courteous and refer to the river progression table in the handbook for details. If canoe camping, interview for prior experience with a fully loaded canoe, new paddlers should drop one level their first time.
- d.) Describe car shuttle procedure . Tell participants where to meet and to arrive 15minutes before leaving time is prudent for shuttle prep. **Leave the meeting place on time**. Promising to arrive back by a certain time is not a good idea, but an indication of the normal duration of the tour is useful.
- e.) Try to facilitate (suggest who to contact) finding transportation, partners, equipment if needed. The single paddlers list is available to participants by phoning the club.

- f.) **For overnight trips**, consider holding a pre-trip meeting: to plan, car-pooling, partners, equipment sharing, food-groups etc. Consider having a vehicle midway through trips for contingency purposes.

## AT THE PUT IN

- SIGN WAIVER - all participants sign, no exceptions, parents cover kids under 18.
  - identify first time participants and give them a brief sheet.
  - check for any medical conditions the group should be aware of, (asthma, allergies).
- REVIEW PADDLE SIGNALS (See below)
- IN CASE OF A SWIM AND FLIPPED CANOE,
  - a. advise to keep feet downstream and near water surface:  
wait to stand up until out of the strong current to avoid foot entrapment.
  - b. stay on the upstream side of your canoe, hold on to your paddle.
  - c. any member blow your whistle, to attract the attention of the group.
  - d. In a small, narrow river, self-rescue and your equipment if possible; in a wide, deep river, consider your own safety first and leave your boat to others. Don't feel you have to teach rescue, recommend the CLUB courses, and reinforce that people should only get involved in rescues to the level that they are comfortable with.
  - e. Determine who has first aid equipment and training. Ask who has spare clothes.
- DESCRIBE WHAT TO EXPECT ON THE RIVER
  - a.) hazards and points of interest along the route, lunch stop plans, other stops, re-grouping etc. Throw bag practice during lunch is always fun.
- DESIGNATE LEAD AND SWEEP BOATS & RIVER COORDINATION
  - a. Divide large groups into sub-groups of eight boats or less, each with a lead and sweep boat (first aid and competent paddlers) , and start the groups about fifteen minutes apart.
  - b. **Inform all participants that lead boats are not guideboats. Ultimately each participants is responsible for deciding if the lead boat is taking a route suitable for their own abilities. Note that canoes and kayaks maneuver differently.**
  - c. **CHECK** for PFD's, whistles and at least on 15m floating rope, (Must on all Club trips)
  - d. Please stay behind the lead boat and in front of the sweep. Check frequently to see that the boat behind you is in sight; stop and wait if it is not (to prevent boats from getting separated from the group).
  - e. Allow plenty of space between you and the next boat in front when going through rapids and constricted places

- f. REMIND OF LOW-IMPACT TRAVEL; We carry out all trash and garbage and bury human waste. We build fires only when needed and avoid building them above the normal high water mark.

- ON THE WATER

- a. Remind the lead boat to adjust pace and members to keep within sight of each other.
- b. If in doubt scout it out, encourage portaging as an individual decision. At obstacles where spills may occur, set up throw ropes and downstream rescue canoes.
- c. After a swim , see that the swimmers put on dry clothes and are warmed with hot liquids, particularly if the weather is cold. Make a fire if necessary. NO alcohol. Other paddlers may need to ferry swimmers to their boats.

- AT THE TAKE OUT

- a. Make sure no-one is left without transportation and don't leave until all vehicles are running.
- b. If possible, identify someone to write an article for the newsletter.

- AFTER THE TOUR

- a. Fill out the tour report completely as possible and add any personal comments. Include river flow for the day if avail to you. The information is important to recognize members for awards, river bottom inspector, most improved, most trips, most improved tandem team. Mail the Tour Report / Waiver to the Canoe Tour Coordinator in the envelope provided
- b. If any landowners should receive "Thank You" cards from the Club, give their names and addresses to the club office.

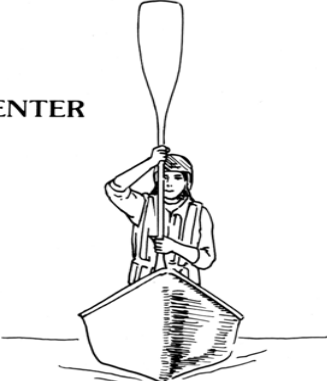
- INCIDENT REPORTING

Use the report form supplied with this package. **Do not talk to the press**, refer them to the club phone # 235-2992, for contact with the Executive. Inform the executive personally of the incident.


# RIVER SIGNALS

The Club uses an international system of signals for paddlers to communicate with each other on the river on matters of route finding and contingencies. These are used on all trips and it is important all members are familiar with them. The signal is taken from the paddle blade position; it does not matter what direction the paddler is facing.

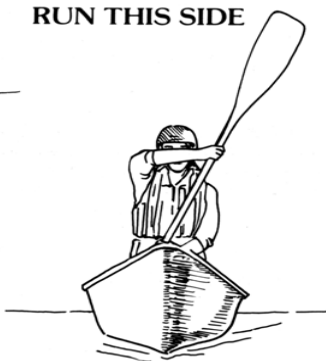
**RUN CENTER**



**RUN THIS SIDE**



**RUN THIS SIDE**

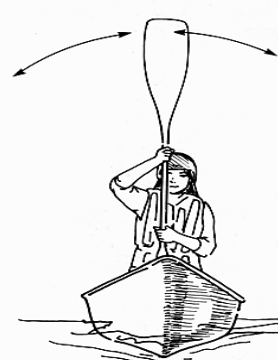


**ALL CLEAR:** Come ahead. In the absence of other directions, proceed down the center. Form a vertical bar with your paddle or with one arm held high above your head. Paddle blade should be turned flat for maximum visibility. To signal direction or a preferred course through a rapid around an obstruction, lower the previously vertical "all clear" by 45 degrees toward the side of the river with the preferred route. Never point toward the obstacle you wish to avoid.

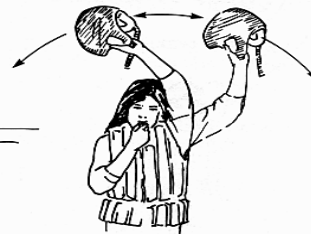
**ATTENTION**

**ATTENTION:** This signal, audible only, consists of a series of short "chirps" on the police whistle. It is used where no emergency exists, but where the need to communicate is obvious and necessary. This signal should not be given casually; only when other common forms of communication are having little or no effect.


**AWA Universal River Signals**



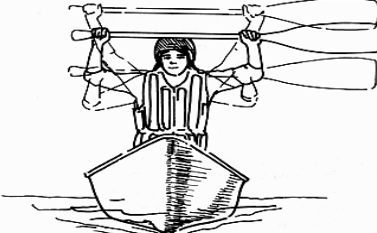
**EMERGENCY-HELP**



**HELP/EMERGENCY:** Assist the signaller as quickly as possible. Give three long blasts on a police whistle while waving a paddle, helmet or life vest over your head in a circular motion. If a whistle is not available, use the visual signal alone. A whistle can be carried on a lanyard, or attached to the zipper of a life vest.



**STOP**



**STOP:** Potential hazard ahead. Form a horizontal bar with your paddle or outstretched arms. Move this bar up and down to attract attention by using a pumping motion with paddle or flying motion with arms. Those seeing the signal should pass it back to others in the party. Wait for "all clear" signal before proceeding, or scout ahead.

*(Signals: continued on next page)*

# *Briefing Sheet for Canoe Tour Participants*

**Bow Waters Canoe Club DOES NOT OFFER GUIDED TOURS.**

**As a trip participant:**

**YOU MUST ASSUME SOLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY and  
CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR ACTIONS.  
NOBODY ELSE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU.**

- **Constantly evaluate your own and the group's situation, voicing concerns and ideas whenever appropriate and following what you JUDGE to be the safest course of action.**
- **Evaluate your personal ability and the expected difficulty of rapids and river conditions.**
- **Scout rapids or other sections of river as you feel necessary and make your own decision to run or portage these.**
- **Bring appropriate equipment for the trip including a boat suitable for your skill and trip level and appropriate rescue and survival gear.**

**Before the Trip:**

- 1) Phone the trip co-ordinator at least two or three days in advance (or earlier) to notify her/him of your intention to participate.
- 2) Obtain the necessary information to determine if you are capable of doing the trip.
- 3) Bring the required equipment.
  - life jacket and whistle for each participant in your boat
  - 15 m (50 ft) of floating rope
  - a bailer and extra paddle for each boat
  - a dry pack of clothes/snacks for each participant in your boat (mountain rivers are cold and risk of hypothermia is high if you get wet and stay wet)

**At the Start of the Trip:**

- 1) Meet at the place designated by the trip coordinator.  
With the group of participants:
- 2) Organize the the logistics of the car shuttle.
- 3) Designate lead and sweep boats.
- 4) Discuss the stretch of river to be paddled, in particular, sections that participants may wish to scout or portage and any other known hazards (sweepers, ledges, etc.).
- 5) **READ AND** Sign the waiver form provided by the trip coordinator.  
(Tasks (2) to (5) may be organized by the trip coordinator to facilitate the start and finish of the trip.)

**ABOVE ALL – if you are unsure of anything, ASK – Call the Club (235-2922) if you need additional advice.**

*Cross Reference Chart, Recommended Skill, Level of difficulty, and Suggested river progression*

BWCC Level	International Scale of Difficulty	Skills & Competencies	River Reach Progressions <b>In order of increasing difficulty</b>
Novice	<b>Class I :</b> Fast moving water with rifles and small waves. Few obstructions, all easily missed with basic training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can effectively use all the basic canoe strokes from bow and stern, (forward, back, draw, pry, crossdraw, J, sweep) .</li> <li>• Competently steer from A to B on a river.</li> <li>• Knows the basics of maneuvering (i.e.: eddy turns &amp; ferries), and is developing river reading skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Bow River in Calgary (except weir),</u></li> <li>• Bow R. <u>Fish Creek to Mckinnon Flats.</u></li> <li>• Lower Red Deer River (good intro to canoe camping),</li> <li>• Elbow River <u>Sandy Beach to Ft. Calgary,</u></li> <li>• Bow River <u>Ghost Dam to Cochrane</u> (intro to wave trains and bigger water, wear warm gear.)</li> </ul>
Intermediate	<b>Class II:</b> Easy rapids with waves up to one metre high. Wide, clear channels with obvious routes through them without scouting. <b><u>Some competent maneuvering required.</u></b> Small ledges, and log jams may be present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can front and back ferry, and maintain boat angle in river current,</li> <li>• Carry out eddy turns in rapids confidently.</li> <li>• Capable of river reading .</li> <li>• Confident with shore and self rescue techniques as a minimum.</li> <li>• <u>Helmets and floatation are recommended.</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kananaskis River <u>Canoe Meadows to Seebe.</u></li> <li>• Bow R. <u>Banff to Canmore,</u></li> <li>• Highwood R., <u>Highway 547 - 552,</u></li> <li>• Highwood R. <u>Longview to Hoggs Camp,</u></li> <li>• Elbow R. <u>Allan Bill Pond to Bragg Creek,</u></li> <li>• Highwood R. <u>Ing's Creek to Longview,</u></li> <li>• Kootenay R. <u>McLeod Meadows to Canal Flats,</u></li> <li>• Lower White R. <u>Bridge to the Kootenay</u></li> </ul>
Advanced	<b>Class III:</b> Numerous rapids with high, powerful and irregular waves often <u>capable of swamping an open canoe.</u> Many rocks are exposed with strong eddies. Narrow passages often <u>require complex maneuvering and scouting</u> from shore. This is usually considered the upper limit for open canoes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skillful in rapids in bow or stern of an open canoe.</li> <li>• Can negotiate fast, turbulent water requiring complex maneuvering. <u>Full floatation is required for all boats and helmets are mandatory for all paddlers.</u></li> <li>• Shore, self and river based, rescue knowledge and skill recommended.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kananaskis R. <u>Widowmaker to Canoe Meadows,</u></li> <li>• Elbow R., <u>Canyon Creek to Paddy's Flats,</u></li> <li>• Elbow R, <u>Cobbles Flats to Elbow Falls</u></li> <li>• Red Deer R., <u>Mountaineer Lodge to S-Bend</u></li> <li>• Cross R. B.C.</li> <li>• Sheep River, <u>Gorge Creek to Sandy McNabb</u></li> <li>• Upper White River, <u>Thunder Ck to Bridge</u></li> </ul>
Extreme	<b>Class IV:</b> Long, difficult, and constricted passages requiring <b><u>precise maneuvering</u></b> in very turbulent waters. Waves high, powerful and irregular with boiling eddies, high ledges and exposed rocks. <u>Conditions make group rescues and self rescue difficult.</u> Scouting is necessary first time down. <u>Risk of injury is moderate to high.</u> Precisely executed moves are required to avoid dangerous hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no guidance to give at this level you know your skills best by now.</li> <li>• Be very comfortable with your paddling partners and group members.</li> <li>• Closed boats only.</li> <li>• No club rental boats allowed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring conditions on the Upper Sheep &amp; Highwood Rivers</li> <li>• East Kootenay area Rivers. Findlay, Palliser</li> <li>• Other rivers listed in Stuart Smiths' Guide book Canadian Rockies Whitewater Vol I,</li> </ul>

## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

**Rite Number: (Free Long Distance to Provincial phone numbers): 310-0000**

	Phone		Phone
<b>Paddling Season</b>		<b>Skiing Season</b>	
Alberta Environment River Flow	403 207-2718	Avalanche Information	800-667-1105
BC River Flows	604-664-9360	AMA Main Office	403 240-5300
		AMA Road report ALTA	403-246-5853
<b>All Seasons</b>		AMA Road report BC	900-565-4997
Inveremere Forest District	604 342-4200	Hostelling reservations	403-237-8282
		Hut Bookings: Nat'l Parks	403-292-4511
<b>Parks/Wardens/Rangers</b>		Hut Bookings Alpine Club	403-678-5822
Banff Info Center	403 762-4256	Hostels Banff & area	403-762-4122
<b>Banff Emergency/Wardens</b>	<b>403 762-4506</b>	Hostels Jasper	403-852-3215
Elbow District Ranger Stn	403 949-3754	Glacier Park Lodge	250-837-2126
K-Country Barrier Lake Info	Rite 673-3985		
<b>K-Country Emergency only</b>	<b>Rite 591-7767</b>		
K-Country P. Lougheed Info	Rite 591-6344		
K-Country Wardens	Rite-591-6300		
Kootenay Park Wardens	604-347-9361	<b>RCMP</b>	
Lake Louise Wardens	403 522-1220	Banff	403-762-2226
Mt. Assiniboine Prov Park	604-422-3212	Canmore	403-678-5515
Nat'l Parks info service	403 292-4401	Field	604-343-6316
Nat'l Parks Trail conditions:	292-4401, #2	Golden	604-344-2221
Nat'l Parks Fees:	292-4401, #4	Inveremere	604-342-9292
Rogers Pass Info Center	604-837-7560	Kananaskis (Seebe)	403-591-7707
Rogers Pass Wardens	604-837-6274	Lake Louise	403-522-3711
Waterton Wardens	604-859-2477	Radium	604-347-9393
Weather recording:	403 299-7878	Revelstoke	604-837-5255
Weather detailed:	403 299-7800	Valemont Mt. Robson	604-566-4466
Yoho Wardens	604-343-6324	Wateron (Summer)	406-859-2244

Internet:

[www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca)

[www.crca.ca](http://www.crca.ca)

[www.transalta.com/website/homepage.nsf?OpenDatabase](http://www.transalta.com/website/homepage.nsf?OpenDatabase) Transalta (Kananaskis River Flow Times)

[www.gov.ab.ca/env/water/forecast.html](http://www.gov.ab.ca/env/water/forecast.html)  
Information

[www.abcanoekayak.org](http://www.abcanoekayak.org)

[www.bowwaters.org](http://www.bowwaters.org)

Canadian Avalanche Association

Canadian Recreational Canoe Association

Alberta Environment – River Flow

Alberta Recreation – River Flow

Alberta Recreational Canoe Association

Bow Waters Canoe Club

**\*\*visit our webpage for tour schedule updates, upcoming events as well as our newsletter online!**

## **Bow Waters Canoe Club - February 2002**

### ***Identified factors that can compromise group or individual, safety and enjoyment***

- Mismatched paddling partners, skill, personality, individual objectives.
- Paddling, too many lower level paddlers , badly balanced skills in group, See skill table
- Rescue, no adequate rescue skills for the level of river within the group, See skill table
- First aid - no skills within the group.
- Weather and water level - outstrips the groups ability
- Grade of river relative to skill, be familiar with international scale of difficulty
- New paddlers to club (guests), not familiar with club norms and expectations.
- Equipment & gear, ie: no floatation, helmets, spare equip (paddle), cotton clothing
- Not on the program, ie: not staying within group parameters, ie too far back, or downriver.

### **OTHER you think of:**

What should the group do if any one, two, three, or four of these factors are evident on a trip?

### **Solutions to some group management issues**

- Break groups in managable sizes 6 - 9 boats per group
- Break groups into style, ie: downriver, and play
- Split weak teams apart and utilize more competent paddlers to work with weak ones.
- Educate new members or guest paddlers to club norms with briefing sheet or recommend handbook.

### **Decision Making 101**

Have a group meeting to determine if all or part of the group leaving the river is the best solution, make this a group decision or as much of the group as possible. Do not shoulder one person with the responsibility for a decision informing someone they will have to leave the trip. If the majority of the group decides, it should be done with safety of all parties in mind.