NANAIMO PADDLERS
SEE YOU ON THE WATER

HOSTING HANDBOOK

Revised November 2024

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Minimum Competency Criteria for Hosts

- The minimum skills requirement for hosting a paddle is to be at Nanaimo Paddlers Proficiency Level 3, as shown in the Nanaimo Paddlers Skills Self-Assessment.

- You can access the Self-Assessment rubric by using the link below:

  http://www.nanaimopaddlers.org/uploads/1/8/0/1/18018567/np-paddlers-self-assessment-rubric.pdf

A host must also:

- Be comfortable at smoothly performing an assisted rescue, managing an assisted rescue, and have performed an assisted rescue (saltwater recommended) within the past year. Yearly the Hosts will demonstrate a self rescue as well as an assisted rescue to the Hosting chair and or designate.
- Be competent paddling in at least 10 knot winds.
- Be familiar with and competent in all of hosting responsibilities as laid out in the Hosting Handbook
- Provide a Beach talk for each and every paddle they Host, which will include key safety issues and self responsibility.

It is expected that hosts will regularly assess their skills and meet the competency and practice regimen criteria. . If a Host is unable to complete an self rescue or assisted rescue to the satisfaction of the Host Chair or other competency noted in the Hosting handbook, the Host Chair will work with the individual to build a plan to achieve this in a timely fashion. If there is a time a Host does not meet these criteria, it is expected that the Host will step away from hosting duties until they do.

The Chair will keep a record of Hosts who are experiencing injuries that prevent them from Hosting, but will ensure that while they cannot Host they are kept abreast of all activities of Hosting.

The Chair will keep a record of Co Hosts. This designation is for individuals who are working towards Hosting but have not achieved the competency, or are uncomfortable Hosting alone. Co Hosts can assist Hosts with larger paddles, challenging paddles and in general shadow a Host to learn what is required.

Hosting Responsibilities

1. Post the paddle event on Meetup. ***(https://www.meetup.com/nanaimopaddlers/ - Only post scheduled NP paddles and meetings under the "Event" section. Use "Discussions" for other communications.)***

See Appendix 1 for a detailed description of the Meetup posting procedures.

2. Check wind and weather forecast

Contact prospective paddlers on Meetup before the event with a weather update, and if there are any concerns. Communicating with attendees can be done by simply putting a comment on the Meetup posting.

3. Re-post on Meetup any changes to paddle as soon as possible.

e.g. weather, time, launch, changes or cancellations. Comment on the Meetup posting.

4. Ensure that you know the skills of all who sign up.

Check the member profiles on Meetup to see their self-assessed skill level and whether those skills are adequate for the proposed paddle. If you have any doubts, use the Host Skills Query to look at their self-assessment results. If you still have doubts, you may wish to contact the participant directly via Meetup Messenger or email. You could also contact other members who have paddled with them. If a paddler arrives at the launch site and it is determined that they do not have the required skills to participate in the paddle, the host may refuse to allow them on the paddle. Obviously, it is far preferable that this decision be made before the member travels to the launch site.

5. Give a beach talk

Nanaimo Paddlers **requires** that a Host provide a Beach talk. The Beach talk should include noting to the Paddlers that the Host is NOT A GUIDE and does not hold that responsibility on the water. (As discussed in the next section; "Suggested Beach Talk and Preparation.")

6. Equipment check

(As per "Suggested Beach Talk" below and "Guidelines for Participants" in Appendix 3). Paddlers without essential equipment must not participate in club paddles.

7. Carry a list of participants with you on the paddle

8. Leave a Paddle Plan with someone reliable who is not on the paddle (even for day paddles). A paddle plan should include:

- Phone numbers for host and host's emergency contact person

- List of participants (can be downloaded to Excel from Meetup: Attendees / Manage / Tools / Download Attendees)
- Description of kayaks (if possible)
- Departure location
- Departure date and time
- Proposed route (include possible alternate routes if those options are known)
- Expected return time

The Paddle Plan should provide clear instructions to the holder as to a specific time when a search should be initiated if the host does not check in. They should start by calling the host, and then if there is no response, the host's emergency contact person. If the paddler's whereabouts still cannot be ascertained then Search and Rescue should be contacted:

Joint Rescue Coordination Centre Victoria
(24 hour contact numbers for Search and Rescue for the entire BC coast)

Toll Free (Emergency):	**1-800-567-5111**
Phone (Emergency):	**1-250-413-8933**
Phone (Non Emergency):	**1-250-413-8948**
Cellular:	**#727**

An example of a paddle plan format is presented in Appendix 2 at the end of this document.

Other Meetup Management Duties after a paddle

- If the paddle is **cancelled** for whatever reason (poor weather, lack of attendees, etc.) the host should indicate on Meetup what happened. Within the Meetup event page there is a button with "Organizer tools." Options there include "Cancel meetup" and "Edit meetup." If the event is cancelled, the list of interested attendees will be deleted. In some cases it is useful to have this list available for reposting the event at a later time. To preserve the attendee list it is better to use the "Edit meetup" tool. Click on "Edit meetup" and change the title to include "CANCELLED." Add a comment in the event to explain why it was cancelled. Meetup keeps track of how many events individuals attend and if the event is only edited it will still show the listed attendees as having participated. To avoid this, go into "Manage attendees." For each attendee click on the three dots to the right of the name and select "Move to not going."

- For safety reasons it is club policy that a **minimum of three paddlers** stay together (or within hailing distance) at all times. Therefore if a paddle has only two attendees (host and one other) it is not considered a sanctioned club paddle (ie. not insured). The event can take place but it should be understood that its status has changed to a private paddle. If it is clear before the event that there will not be a quorum of three paddlers, the event can be cancelled and then

coordinated privately. If the event has passed, go into the event page on Meetup and make a comment as to what happened.

- If any paddlers on an event attendee list do not show up on the day of the paddle the host should note that on Meetup. Under the list of attendees click on the “Manage” button. Select the attendee(s) in question and click on the three dots to the right of the name. Select “Did not go.” This will move the name into the “Didn’t go” list. If the person did not communicate that they were not planning on attending, they can be further designated “Flag as no show. it is recommended that Hosts contact the Chair of Hosting should there be a pattern of repeated ‘no shows’ or late cancellations from a member.

Remuneration to Host

If a host posts a trip on Meetup and is charging an extra organizational fee or service fee or receiving a personal benefit for organizing the trip, he or she must be fully transparent about this when first accounting for the costs of the trip in the Meetup description.

Incident Report
This is not a report of an accident or emergency on the water.
NP form is primarily for usage when an incident (a member’s behaviour on the water that risks safety to themselves or others) takes place that is not resolved between the parties during or immediately after the paddle & the Host feels that documentation is required for safety reasons.

Should an accident occur on the water there likely will be Search and Rescue or the police involved
and an incident report will be conducted by those parties. Should an accident not involve any third parties, the Host will prepare a factual report and deliver to the Chair of Hosting and the President.

SUGGESTED BEACH TALK and PREPARATION

1. Mention that all paddlers must have the essential equipment for the paddle. You may wish to check for optional equipment also, as listed in “Guidelines for Participants in Club Paddles” in Appendix 2.

Required Equipment / Supplies for a Day Trip/Paddle:

- Seaworthy ocean going kayak with watertight bulkheads or floatation, and deck lines appropriate for use during rescues.
- Spray skirt
- Paddle
- Spare paddle
- Dry bag containing an extra set of dry clothes
- *PFD, to be worn at all times (not the inflatable type).
- *Sound signaling device (whistle, air horn, etc.)
- *Bilge Pump or bailing device
- *15m buoyant throw line (or tow belt)
- *Navigation lights (or flash light, strobe light, etc.) if on the water between sunset and sunrise. ** As mandated by Transport Canada for small craft under 6m (19’8”)*

Note: You may also want to look at **Recommended Equipment/Supplies** as outlined in Guidelines for Participants in Club Paddles on pages 12-15 of this manual

2. Demonstrate the proposed route using a chart
   - Identify potential hazards
   - Identify crossings and transition zone regrouping points
   - Identify currents if applicable
   - Discuss wind predictions
   - Identify high and low tide times and implications
3. Discuss group organization e.g. buddying up, leads and sweeps etc.
4. Discuss paddle and whistle signals
5. Check who has a radio and discuss which radio channel you will be monitoring
6. Ask if there are any medical issues the group needs to know about
7. Ensure that you as host feel comfortable that all paddlers are capable of completing the proposed paddle
8. Ensure that all paddlers are themselves comfortable with the proposed paddle (ask them).
9. Suggest paddlers buddy up to check each other’s kayaks that hatches are closed and are ready to go and that zippers on dry suits are securely closed.
10. Ensure that all paddlers are told the following: *This is not a guided trip. Each participant is expected to be aware of their own abilities and limitations and be responsible for their own safety both on and off the water.*

Suggested Guidelines for On The Water Management

- For safety purposes, group paddles need a system to ensure that every paddler can be observed by at least two other paddlers at all times.

- No matter which system, all paddlers should regroup at every transition zone.

- Slower paddlers should be towards the front of the group, if at all possible.

- Always ensure you see that the next paddler behind you is close by, especially if you are in the lead or you are the second to last paddler.

- The host could suggest one or more of the following before every paddle and ask for comment and commitment:

    - Groups of 5 or fewer intermediate or greater skilled paddlers may discuss just simply paddling close together.

    - Have a lead and 2 sweeps. Try to have a radio for the lead and at least one of the sweeps. This formation is preferred for groups that include both weaker and stronger paddlers.

    - If bad weather is anticipated (and unavoidable) , predetermine the way it will be handled as a group (e.g. determining smaller groups of 2 or 3 that will stay very close together at these times).

    - Buddy or triple up and keep the buddy/triple for the entire paddle(this is not easy)

    - Paddling on crossings may best be done abreast of each other. A group of 6 can easily do this. Larger groups may need to be split up. This is very important in conditions of poor visibility. Looking sideways rather than behind is much easier to see fellow paddlers. As well, this minimizes the chance of being hit by other craft crossing your path. The host should choose a position to be able to survey the paddlers; at one of the flanks may be best.

Appendix 1
Meetup Posting Procedures

Hosts will be given posting privileges by the club Meetup administrator. In the Nanaimo Paddlers Meetup site (https://www.meetup.com/nanaimopaddlers/), click on the red “Create event” button and then “Create a new event.” An “event” form will come up.

- Give the paddle a **title**.
- Note the **date and start time** (“on the water” or OTW)
- Note the **end time**. The average speed of a group on a leisurely paddle is about 2.2 nautical miles per hour, including stops. Calculate the length of the proposed paddle and divide by 2.2 to determine the number of hours required. Make sure there is enough daylight to be off the water in good time. Build in a time buffer.
- Upload a **photo** (optional). This can be anything to promote the paddle. An image of the paddle route clarifies what the paddle will involve. A proposed route can be a screen capture from a GIS program such as Navionix (for purchase), or Google Earth or Google Earth Pro (free downloads). If using **Google Earth Pro** to create an image of the proposed paddle route:
    - Zoom in to the area of the proposed paddle
    - Click on the ruler icon, path tab and set the units of length to be measured to Nautical Miles

    - Trace the proposed paddle path with the mouse. Double click to end. The total distance will show in the Length box.
    - Save the path and give it a name. Colour and line width can be adjusted. The path will show up in the table of contents to the left of the image under “Places” / “Temporary Places.”
    - Zoom in to the proposed route but showing enough of the surrounding geographical details to make the location of the route clear.
    - Capture a screen shot by: File / Save / Save Image.

- Give the map a title in the box in the upper left.
- Set the features wanted under “Map Options.”
- Select a medium resolution
- Save Image. It will ask where the image is to be saved. File type should be JPEG to be compatible with Meetup.
- Go back to the Create Event Form and upload the map into the Featured Photo section. Crop as desired.

- **Description**: provide details of the paddle. Include:
  - A general description of the proposed route
  - Total distance and length of crossings
  - Currents, tides, wind and weather forecast if available
  - Any other possible hazards
  - Specific skills deemed necessary by host to participate in the paddle. ***Note:*** *Additional paddling skills and safety requirements beyond the basics laid out in the Guidelines for Participants may be requested by the host according to their comfort level with group safety and the difficulty of the paddle. It is encouraged, however, that these requirements remain within the accepted norms, standards and philosophy of the club.*

  - **Specific wording** to be used in every paddle Description:
    - **This is not a guided trip. Each participant is expected to be aware of their own abilities and limitations and be responsible for their own safety both on and off the water. They must have the basic requirements of kayaking, i.e. a properly equipped kayak (Transport Canada requirements for small craft are essential), general knowledge of tides and weather, and the ability to do a wet exit and assisted re-entry so that we can help each other in case of an emergency..*
    - ***Appropriate immersion gear is always recommended (or “Appropriate immersion gear is mandatory” or “A dry suit is mandatory” as the host sees fit). A change of warm clothing in a dry bag is essential. If you have a VHF radio, please bring it.*
    - ****See "Guidelines for Participants in Club Paddles"*

- **Location:** This is a Google Map of the launch location.
  - Enter a landmark or address nearby (or at) the launch location. A map with a location pin will appear.
  - Under the map, click on the “Edit map pin.” Move the map under the pin until the launch site coincides with the pin.

- **Optional Settings**
  - These settings include “Attendee limit.” There is no club policy on these limits, but in reality it is very difficult to keep track of a large number of paddlers. The host should select a number that he or she feels comfortable with.

- **Publish and Announce:** This will put the proposed paddle on Meetup and then send a message to all members that it has been posted.

Appendix 2

NANAIMO PADDLERS GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS IN CLUB PADDLES

Nanaimo Paddlers is a club of peers, all with varying paddling abilities. These guidelines are intended to optimize safety on the water. On all Club paddles, each participant is expected to be aware of their own abilities and limitations and be responsible for their own safety. Participants need to know what gear to wear and bring, paddling etiquette, safety procedures and emergency protocols.

Proficiency Level: Paddlers must have a minimum of Nanaimo Paddlers Proficiency Level 1 before joining us on a paddle. Take the Nanaimo Paddlers Skills Self-Assessment questionnaire at www.nanaimopaddlers.org, where you will find it under the Resources tab. The information is then immediately available to yourself, and to hosts who plan paddles, to determine whether you have the necessary skills for that paddle.

If you do not yet have Proficiency Level 1 skills, please see the Kayak Instruction Regional Resource List under the Resources tab of our website. In addition, the Training tab will show you the current training opportunities available through the club.

Each paddle will have a description of the expected conditions: things like distance, duration, current, wind and open water crossings. You can use your self-assessment to determine if your skills are a good match for the paddle in the same way a host will. If you have any questions about the paddle, please contact the host. Note that you may receive a query from the host once you have signed up, if they have not paddled with you before and wish to discuss the paddle conditions.

Communication is key. If, at any time, before or during the paddle, you are not comfortable with the conditions, or if you see someone else in difficulty, please make sure the Host is aware of this so the group as a whole can come together and assist where necessary.

Event Organizers/Hosts: These are club members who volunteer to coordinate and host a trip/paddle for other club members. They are not required to be expert paddlers, or guides. Their primary responsibility is to plan and organize a trip or paddle.

Group Paddling Guidelines:

- OTW means On The Water
- All start times posted are OTW
- Be sure you arrive at the launch area in plenty of time to unload and pack your kayak and assist others if necessary
- Follow Host instructions during beach talk and on the water
- Stay in a formation designated by the host when requested for crossings etc.
- Buddy up with another paddler or paddlers if possible
- Count the number of paddlers regularly to make sure everyone is accounted for
- If for any reason, a group splits up, it is important that a minimum of three paddlers stay together
- Pets and individuals under 18 years of age are not allowed on group paddles

Immersion Gear: The water around Vancouver Island is cold all year round. Cold water shock or hypothermia can happen on the hottest days with deadly consequences. These two factors are the most common causes of kayaking fatalities.

The 1 – 10 – 1 Rule: If you capsize and end up in the water you have:

- **one minute to bring your breathing under control** so you can function**.**
- **ten minutes before you lose your ability to use your fingers and hands**, so you need to get back into your boat or on to land quickly.
- **one hour before you lose consciousness due to hypothermia.**

Read the Meetup postings before registering to see if the host mandates immersion gear for an event. Most paddles from September to June will require immersion gear, as well as many in the summer months especially where crossings or extreme conditions may be encountered.

Considerations for all Participants Registering for and Participating in an outing:

- To join a trip or paddle, register on Nanaimo Paddlers Meetup. Only RSVP if you plan on attending.
- If the trip is full and there is a waitlist, put your name on the waitlist. Space often becomes available.
- Check details of the event carefully to make sure your abilities match the type of paddle described. It is up to each participant to self-assess their own skills and abilities prior to registering for a paddle. Paddlers will update their skills self-assessment each year, at a minimum, upon renewing their membership.
- Make sure your Self-Assessment is accurate and up-to-date, as Hosts check the most recent information to determine if registrants are currently capable of participating safely. As you add skills, update your self assessment. If you are

recovering from illness or injury, and your skills have lapsed, update your self-assessment. There is no limitation on the number of updates you can do.

- Everyone participating in a Club trip or paddle must be able to do a wet exit and assisted re-entry, plus an assisted rescue of another paddler. These are skills that must be practiced regularly, a minimum of once per year (in the ocean, in water deeper than you are tall).
- Watch Meetup for information updates on weather and possible cancellation in case of bad weather.
- Whether you are registered for a trip or paddle, or on the waitlist, if for any reason you cannot go, please change your RSVP to 'NO' to allow another club member to take your spot. Please be considerate of other members and cancel in plenty of time, ideally a day or two before the event.

Required Equipment / Supplies for a Day Trip/Paddle:

- Seaworthy ocean-going kayak with watertight bulkheads or floatation, and deck lines appropriate for use during rescues.
- Spray skirt
- Paddle
- Spare paddle
- Dry bag containing an extra set of dry clothes
- *PFD, to be worn at all times (not the inflatable type)
- *Sound signaling device (whistle, air horn, etc.)
- *Bilge Pump or bailing device
- *15m buoyant throw line (or tow belt)
- *Navigation lights (or flash light, strobe light, etc.) if on the water between sunset and sunrise.

* *As mandated by Transport Canada for small craft under 6m (19'8"*)

Recommended Equipment / Supplies for a Day Trip/Paddle:

- Water, hot drink and food
- Paddle float (preferably the inflatable type)
- VHF marine radio
- Sunscreen
- First Aid kit
- Distress signals (flares, strobes)
- Reflective Material on boat and paddle
- Knife and multi tool
- Repair Kit
- Emergency Contact Information (preferably inside your PFD)

- Chart
- Compass

Information to know before you go:

Tides and Currents:
http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca/eng/data#s1

Weather:
https://sailflow.com/
https://windy.com
https://weather.gc.ca/marine/
https://spotwx.com

Signals:
Paddle held horizontally: Stop
Paddle held straight up: Come to me.
Whistle/Air Horn: 1 blast: Stop 3 blasts: Come to Me

Skill Development Opportunities:

Nanaimo Paddlers offers a variety of opportunities throughout the year where members can improve their skills and learn more about paddling, navigation, camping and safety. These skills can also be learned and improved through several local outfitters. All members are encouraged to continually upgrade their skills for their own safety and to assist others when necessary.

Every club member is responsible for their own safety on and off the water.