

Alberta Education Safety Guidelines for schools

Outdoor Education - Kayaking – Pool, Lake or River ***Suitable for Grades 4-6 in the Pool Kayaking*** ***Suitable for Grades 7-12 in the Pool, Lake or River Kayaking***

The following sections must also be consulted:

All Physical Activities and Outdoor Activities or Pool-based Activities and, if applicable, Outdoor Education Activities and Off-site Activities.

Supervision - Pool

- On-site qualified supervision is required at all times on or around the water following initial skill instruction and after all safety concerns have been emphasized.
- Constant visual supervision by a certified NLS Lifeguard is required
- Constant visual supervision by a certified Kayak Instructor is required
- Note that the Kayak Instructor and the Pool Lifeguard on duty work together as a 2 person team responsible for overseeing in-water activities at all times.
- Suggested maximum 1:15 ratio of certified Kayak Instructors to students (CanoeKayak Canada standards)
- Instructor should have NCCP / CanoeKayak Canada Pool Kayak Instructor certification or equivalent.
- Kayak instructor must be in-water supervising students at all times. In-water supervision can be from a boat or standing in the shallow end of the pool.
- Pool Lifeguard must be on deck supervising students at all times.

Supervision - Lake

- On-site qualified supervision is required at all times on or around the water following initial skill instruction and after all safety concerns have been emphasized.
- Constant visual supervision by a certified Kayak Instructor is required
- Suggested maximum 1:10 ratio of certified Kayak Instructors to students or less (CanoeKayak Canada standards) depending on the presence of wind or waves and the maturity of students
- Instructors must possess NCCP / CanoeKayak Canada Lake Kayak Instructor 1 certification or equivalent.
- Kayak Instructor must be in-water supervising students at all times from their kayak and all students must be within visual and auditory range at all times (100 m or less)
- Emergency Action Plan should be carried by the instructor and a copy left with the school containing the trip plan, emergency communication plan, emergency contacts, evacuation routes and an emergency warming plan.

Supervision - River

- On-site qualified supervision is required at all times on or around the water following initial skill instruction and after all safety concerns have been emphasized.
- Constant visual supervision by a certified Kayak Instructor is required

- Suggested maximum 1:6 ratio of certified instructors to students (CanoeKayak Canada standards)
- Instructors must possess NCCP / Canoe Kayak Canada River Kayak Instructor 2 certification or equivalent.
- For all river kayaking at least 1 staff must possess Swift Water Rescue certification.
- Kayak instructor must be in-water supervising students at all times from their kayak and all students must be within visual and auditory range at all times (50 m or less).
- Emergency Action Plan should be carried by the instructor and a copy left with the school containing the trip plan, emergency communication plan, emergency contacts, evacuation routes and an emergency warming plan.
- At least one Instructor must have completed the river run within the past season.

Instructional Considerations

- Prior to in-water instruction, all students should be briefed on procedures for the safe and fun use of the kayak equipment.
- Prior to participating in boating activities, students should demonstrate the three skills of the Swim to Survive Standard (use Appendix P) while wearing a properly fitted lifejacket/PFD.
- Students will demonstrate wet exits without a spray skirt before leaving direct control of instructor without a spray skirt attached to their boat.
- Instructor must ensure students can attach spray skirt to the kayak by themselves when introducing this piece of equipment
- Students will demonstrate wet exits with a spray skirt before leaving direct control of instructor wearing a spray skirt attached to their boat.
- The Kayak Instructor will determine when the student is ready for next skill level

- It is recommended to start kayaking in a pool or controlled environment before progressing to open water.
- Students must be of good general health on the day of the activity to be able to participate in the water.

- Before open water kayaking, students should pass the CKC Passport for Paddlesports Fundamental 1 skill test and demonstrate basic competence in:
 - Getting in and out of a kayak
 - Launching kayak
 - Wet exits without and then with a sprayskirt
 - Emptying the kayak (pool deck and shore)
 - Forward stroke
 - Back stroke
 - Front sweep
 - Reverse sweep
 - Stopping and reverse strokes
 - Draw stroke
 - Bracing

- Teacher/instructor and in-charge person should be informed of students with medical problems that may affect their safety in the water.
- Supervisors require awareness of conditions contributing to and treatment of hypothermia and hyperthermia.
- Before advancing to the river, students should pass the CKC Passport for Paddlesports Fundamental 1-2-3 skill tests (except the roll) and demonstrate all the basic skills above and competence in the lake in:
 - Paddling forward in a straight line for 50 m
 - Maneuvering through a zig-zag obstacle course
 - Bow draw
 - Edging and holding the kayak on a tilt for 15 seconds
 - Bracing
 - T-Rescues
- Before going on the river, students should have received an appropriately delivered river safety session that covers:
 - safe swimming positions
 - river rescue procedures
 - river hazards
 - safety signals using paddle and/or whistle signals for “stop, go, left, right and help”

Equipment/Facilities

- Kayak should have adequate flotation to ensure buoyancy when capsized.
- All boats should meet Canadian Coast Guard Regulation standards, e.g. bailing device, 15 m of buoyant rope in each kayak when on open water.
- When on open water a correctly fitting and Transport Canada-approved PFD/life jacket, with whistle attached, must be worn properly and done up at all times.
- Sun protection should be applied when paddling outside prior to going on the water and insect repellent should be available.
- For kayaking outside the pool students should wear appropriate clothing. This includes being dressed for the weather and for the water temperature.
- Outside of the pool, students must wear closed footwear that is securely attached and is able to get wet.
- Wetsuits/drysuits are recommended in Alberta for all rivers.
- An appropriate paddling helmet must be worn on all rivers.
- A knife should be carried by the leader and be accessible at all times in the event of rope entanglement by one of the students.
- Waterproof first aid kit should be stocked and accessible
- Lake kayaking involves paddling on a lake, canal or pond where there is no current
- River kayaking includes Grade I and II rivers. Travel on rivers should be limited to Class II rapids or less.

- All teachers should be familiar with both Transport Canada and Canadian Coast Guard Regulations.
- Teacher/supervisors should be aware of the weather forecast, especially wind conditions for lake kayaking and possible storm activity.
- The type of kayak being used should be appropriate for the water conditions and the skill level of the group.
- Instructors should be aware of flow conditions and any changes in flows that may affect river difficulty.
- Kayaking must be cancelled in adverse weather or water conditions.

Contact:

Alberta Whitewater Association

403-628-2336

admin@albertawhitewater.ca

www.albertawhitewater.ca