

So you want to start a paddling club !!

That's great and the Alberta Whitewater Association is excited about helping you get started and building a successful program to build kayaking in your community. There are several steps to go through in getting organized and this guide will help you walk through that process to make sure that you are well prepared for future success.

1. *Will the club include whitewater kayaks, sprint racing canoe/kayaks, open canoes, sea kayaks, rafts, stand up paddleboards ?*

The AWA is the Provincial Sport Governing Body for whitewater canoeing and kayaking. This includes recreational river running, creekboating, slalom canoe/kayak racing, canoe polo, freestyle kayaking, downriver racing, and everything in between with decked boats.

The Alberta Sprint Canoe Racing Association governs the Olympic sport of sprint canoe and kayak racing. For more information on their services and programs go to: <http://asrca.com/>

Paddle Alberta governs the recreational disciplines of open canoeing, sea kayaking, stand up paddleboards. For more information on their services and programs go to <http://paddlealberta.org/default.asp>

Clubs can belong to one, two or all three of the Provincial Canoe/Kayak Associations depending on their interests and passions of the champion(s) in their club. (check all the boxes that apply)

- a. Whitewater Kayaking
- b. Sprint Racing
- c. Recreational Canoeing & Sea Kayaking

2. *What is the purpose of your club ?* (check all the boxes that apply)

- a. Recreation trips for adult paddlers
- b. Teaching paddling in your community
- c. Competition and training
- d. Youth programs and learn to paddle

Understanding what activities and programs that you want to offer is important in working with like-minded individuals to start the club. Over time this can change but to start with it helps to understand your objectives and to focus your energies. Alberta has a range of clubs that have one or more of these objectives that they focus on.

3. *Do you have one or more **kayaking champions** that will support your kayak programs ?*

Without a kayaking champion it is difficult to sustain the club's whitewater program and to build the programs that can bring in other participants. If you have to constantly hire outside instructors/coaches it is a severe drain on your club's resources. You need some key volunteers or deep pockets to start your programs.

- a. Yes Name i. _____
- b. No ii. _____

4. *Do you have one or more **administrative champions** that will support your kayak programs ?*

Without someone to organize, coordinate and track activities it is difficult to keep the club running. If no one is taking care of administration and finances, opportunities will be missed or problems will start to emerge. You need a key volunteer to coordinate your programs.

- a. Yes Name i. _____
- b. No ii. _____

5. Do you have the support of your local **recreation and parks department** for your kayak programs ?

Without your local swimming pool, recreation department or town administration it is difficult to build the club and to access facilities and equipment. You need to work with the community to build alliances and get help to promote and run your programs.

- a. Yes
b. No

Key Contacts i. _____
ii. _____

6. Is your club incorporated ?

- i. Incorporating your club as a non-profit society gives you access to recreation equipment grants, employment grants, regulated fund-raising activities (bingos, raffles, casinos), and special pricing discounts.
ii. Incorporation gives you easier access to banking and financial affairs.
iii. Incorporation provides special personal protection for you and your volunteers from any legal liability issues that might arise in the future.

- a. Yes
b. No

See the other information packages on how to incorporate your club.
This includes sample bylaws, incorporation forms and other info.

7. Do you need equipment and do you have any equipment for your club programs ?

If you are going to offer lessons, provide youth programs or offer special activities you will need some equipment for those participants that are just getting into the sport. The specialized nature of kayaking and the cost of good equipment makes it difficult to run a program without the club providing equipment for people. But if you are just a recreation club for adults who are already paddling this might not be important for your club.

- a. Yes – we need equipment
b. No – we will be an adult recreation club

Check out our website for information on how to apply for an Alberta Sports, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation – Community Initiatives Program grant. These grants can provide up to \$75,000 to purchase equipment for the club. Your local municipality can assist you with this process and support your application.

The service clubs (Lions, Legion, Elks, etc) may assist in providing funds to get started. Companies with operations in your community (Shell, TransAlta and others) have funds available if their personnel are involved in your club.

8. What about insurance for your club and your volunteers ?

It is important that you and the other volunteers in your group are protected by an insurance policy designed around whitewater kayaking activities. The AWA offers an insurance policy to all of our clubs and volunteers. By bringing together all of our clubs under one umbrella policy, we are able to get the best rate possible for our sport. This policy covers regular club activities, pool sessions, directors and officers errors and omissions, whitewater lessons, races and competitions, festivals and events and any other club or AWA sanctioned activities.

Alternatively you may have insurance through another organization and in that case you would not need to register your members in the AWA's insurance policy.

9. How do we get qualified to lead trips, teach kayaking or coach athletes ?

The AWA participates in the national Canoe/Kayak Canada – NCCP leadership program to train and certify trip leaders, instructors and coaches for whitewater paddling. The outline of the program is on the AWA website www.albertawhitewater.ca in the Education section. You are welcome to participate in the program to qualify club members to help with your programs.

- a. No we don't need certification right now

- b. Yes we need training & certification for our leaders
- i. CKC Pool Kayak Instructor
 - ii. CKC Lake Kayak Instructor
 - iii. CKC River Leader 2
 - iv. CKC River Instructor 2
 - v. CKC Intro Coach

10. *What facilities will we need ?*

Some of the AWA clubs are virtual clubs that have no facilities or equipment and exist online to connect paddlers together for trips through e-mails, blogs and forums. Individuals (usually adults) go online to post their trips and to plan activities, rendezvous points and participants.

Some clubs have extensive youth and adult programs. These clubs have access to a variety of facilities and water that create opportunities to run a range of programs and activities. Some of the important facilities that you will want to get access to would include:

<u>Water</u>	<u>Support Facilities</u>
a. Swimming pool	boat and paddle racking and skirt hangers
b. Flatwater lake or channel	secure storage area (clubhouse or steel bin)
c. Moving water or river	secure storage area or boat trailer
d. Whitewater river	boat trailer
e. Slalom course	gates
f. Canoe Polo	polo pitch and nets
g. Freestyle	wave/hole on the river