

River Safety Lecture Guidelines

1. The purpose of this safety talk is to inform you if something goes wrong, what action you will need to take to make a bad situation better. This talk is not to scare you but to inform you of the action you will need to take to rescue yourself or assist in your own rescue or in someone else's rescue.
2. Assure that everybody has the appropriate PFD, and are wearing them correctly. Make sure everybody is wearing appropriate clothing, including closed toe footwear, and that helmets are properly strapped.
3. If anyone has a medical condition, which may endanger him or her on this trip, or affect his or her ability to participate on the trip or the health or safety of other participants, please inform me. Take me aside and tell me how to recognize your condition and what needs to be done if your condition arises. Also, if you have medications let me know where they are. I am not a licensed medical professional, and cannot administer them to you, but may be able to assist you in administering the medications yourself. It is recommended if anyone does have a medical condition, or is on medication write it down on a card, laminate it and keep it on you.
4. When paddling use the buddy system. Get with another person on the trip and agree to keep an eye out for each other. If something goes wrong you are there to help them or alert the group that there is a problem.
5. If you go swimming the best rescue is the Self-Rescue. Never rely on anyone else to rescue you. If you are close to the boat swim aggressively to the boat. Whether it is right side up or wrong side down the boat will float. If you are in the water holding onto the boat, get to the upstream side of the boat as quickly as possible. As you do not want to be caught between the boat and a hard spot.
6. If you go into the water, remember there are two parts to breathing: inhaling and exhaling. Many people will panic and hyperventilate; in other words they forget to exhale. Make yourself exhale, swear; do anything you need to get the air out of your lungs. Swimming in cold water is an exhilarating experience. The way you will survive is to keep your cool, don't lose your head and things will work out fine. Remember to get out of the water as quickly as possible.
7. Get in the sitting position, with your feet downstream. An acronym that is in use is "STOP" (Give Demo).
 - S is sit
 - T is think
 - O is observe
 - P is plan
8. If you do swim to the shore, do not attempt to stand up in moving water, crawl up onto the bank. This will eliminate the chance of foot entrapment. Foot entrapment is when you get your foot caught between a couple of rocks and the moving water pushes you over. This is an extremely difficult position to get out of, and almost impossible to do by yourself.

9. Sweepers: Sweepers are trees in the water, avoid these, and always give them a wide berth. If you are in the sit position, immediately start the crawl stroke, and lift yourself up and over the sweeper. Never go into a sweeper feet 1st.
10. To pull a swimmer out of the water grip them by the top of PFD and pull them into the boat (Give Demo). If you are a swimmer give your rescuer all the assistance you can by kicking and pulling yourself into the boat.
11. Each boat will have a throw bag; make sure that you know how to use it. Check it with practice throws. The ideal throw is across the swimmer's face or slightly upstream, as the bag will float faster than the swimmer. Hold your end of the bag in such a way that you can release it instantly. If you are on the bank, secure your position away from the shoreline to avoid been pulled into the river. You will not be able to pull the swimmer in like a fish; you just direct the rope towards the shore. If you are the swimmer be on your back and hold the rope over your distant shoulder. An air pocket will form around your head, enabling you to breathe. (Give Demo)
12. Make sure the swimmer is warm; get them out of wet clothes and into dry clothes. Light a fire if necessary to warm up the swimmer. Supply them with warm fluids. Keep the swimmer moving on shore.
13. When getting out of the boat onto shore always step out of the front of raft. Be aware when getting out if there is another boat about to beach beside you; sit down if you are standing up, as the impact of the other boat hitting yours will send you into the water.
14. Many of the accidents happen on shore, walking over slippery rocks, sprained ankles, abrasions etc.
15. "High Side" - This is a command used if obstacle cannot be avoided hitting sideways. As a passenger you will immediately jump towards the obstacle, thus shifting the weight from the upstream side of boat to the downstream side. (Give Demo)
16. Rope entanglement is a serious problem. Make sure that all ropes are secured and will not become loose.
17. There are a few hand signals used on the river. (Give Demo)
18. Anytime you blow your whistle 3 times that means you require help.
19. If a kayaker comes to your rescue while swimming, communicate with them. Never attempt to grab the kayakers paddle. Get to the stern of the kayak and assist your rescuer by kicking.
20. Rescue should only be attempted if it is safe for the rescuer. Remember rescue people 1st., equipment recovery 2nd. Only recover equipment if it is safe to do so.
21. Are there any questions, or something that you would like me to explain more thoroughly?