



Paddle Newfoundland Labrador
Health, Safety, and Environmental Policy
Revision 1.0 – Updated: December 14, 2017

A. Purpose

The purpose of this Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) Policy and Procedures document is to outline Paddle Newfoundland and Labrador's (PNL) expectations with respect to the health and safety of its members and its expectations with respect to the protection of the environment.

B. Scope

These policies and associated procedures apply to all Paddle Newfoundland and Labrador (PNL) activities, including both on-land and on-water activities.

C. Revisions

The PNL Health, Safety, and Environmental Policy should be reviewed and updated yearly, as part of year-end\Annual General Meeting procedures. At minimum, the effective date of policy should be updated to reflect current year.

D. Roles and Responsibilities

• **PNL Board of Directors**

- The PNL Board is responsible for ensuring that adequate processes are in place for all PNL activities. They are also responsible for the following:
 - Selection of Trip Leaders;
 - Communication of the policy and procedures to all participants;
 - Development of an annual schedule of activities;
 - Review of trip reports;
 - Implementation of recommendations in response to any feedback provided by participants, and;
 - Maintenance of PNL records and checklists referenced in this Policy for PNL activities.

• **Skill School Instructors**

- Skill School Instructors must be certified as an instructor under Paddle Canada and the minimum number of instructors will be as per Paddle Canada requirements.

• **Trip Leaders**

- A Trip Leader's role is to organize and guide PNL activities. The Trip Leader is considered both a participant and a representative of PNL.
- For ocean-going paddling activities, Trip Leaders should have a) a minimum of Paddle Canada Sea Kayak Level-2 Skills Certification, or b) an equivalent certification, or c) an



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equivalent amount of kayak paddling experience and familiarity with the intended paddle route. The Trip Leader, or another participant, must also have first aid training that is commensurate with the level of risk.

- For fresh-water paddling activities, Trip Leaders should have a) a minimum of Paddle Canada Lake Intermediate Skill Level, or b) an equivalent certification, or c) an equivalent amount of experience and familiarity with the intended paddle route. The Trip Leader, or another participant, must also have first aid training that is commensurate with the level of risk.
- For non-paddling activities (i.e.: snow-shoe activity), the Leader must have an appropriate level of competence and experience to lead an activity. The Trip Leader, or another person in attendance, must also have first aid training that is commensurate with the level of risk.
- When selecting Trip Leaders, the PNL Board must take into consideration the level of risk of the activity being conducted.
- In addition to having the same responsibilities of participants, Trip Leaders are also responsible for the following:
 - **Planning the trip**
 - Discuss trip plans with, and obtain approval of the PNL Board, or Representative of the Board.
 - **Organizing the trip**
 - Ensure that trip participants have the requisite skills to complete the trip (as organized).
 - Inform participants of trip details.
 - Collect Emergency Contact and Medical Information that could impact trip participation from all personnel participating in overnight trips.
 - Inform participants of what to expect with regards to length of time, weather conditions, and difficulty.
 - Designate “Sweeps” and explain their responsibilities and recommended equipment.
 - Provide detailed **PNL Trip Plans** to the PNL Board emergency contact and/or external emergency contact, as required.
 - **Prior to starting the trip**
 - Explain the safety and emergency procedures to participants.
 - Check that all participants have suitable boats and equipment.



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- Equip themselves with PNL First Aid Kit, or equivalent.
- Record the participants and trip details on the **PNL Paddle Trip Checklist** and **PNL Trip Plan** (as required), and leave in vehicle for search and rescue authorities in the case of an emergency.

- **During a trip**
 - Monitor weather conditions.
 - Monitor the physical condition of participants and initiate adequate breaks to accommodate.
 - Ensure that no one is left behind (i.e. keep the group together and if not possible, utilize sweeps).
 - Inform a member of the PNL Board, or designated emergency contact, if the trip route or return time changes.

- **Following a trip**
 - Submitting the completed **PNL Paddle Trip Checklist** and **PNL Trip Plan**, as required, to the PNL Board, which includes the location, time, conditions, list of participants and any recommendations, incidents or issues

- **Sweeps**
 - For canoeing activities, Sweeps should have a minimum of Paddle Canada Lake Intermediate Skill Level certification, or an equivalent amount of experience. They are responsible for ensuring that no one is left behind and that everyone is accounted for. They should equip themselves with additional emergency and rescue equipment. They are also responsible to assist the Trip Leader in the event of an emergency situation.
 - For kayaking activities, Sweeps should have a minimum of Paddle Canada Sea Kayak Level-2 Skills certification, or an equivalent amount of experience. They are responsible for ensuring that no one is left behind and that everyone is accounted for. They should equip themselves with additional emergency and rescue equipment. They are also responsible to assist the Trip Leader in the event of an emergency situation.
 - For ocean-paddling trips, a ratio of 1 sweep for every 6 paddlers is required. This ratio is per paddler, not boat. For example, a double kayak would be considered two paddlers.

- **Participants**
 - This includes all personnel that participate in PNL activities, including Trip Leaders and Sweeps, etc. Participants are responsible for the following:



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- Ensure that they have appropriate equipment and that this equipment is used responsibly (refer to Section D: Equipment).
- Wear appropriate lifejackets at all times while in or near water.
- Wear thermal protection for any paddling trips where water temperature is below 15°C.
- Judge their own capability given the trip length, physical conditions, weather conditions and expected degree of difficulty prior to the trip and during trip and for making the decision whether or not to go on the trip.
- Judge their own capability given personal physical conditions due to illness or fatigue and advising Trip Leader or Sweep of any change in condition or any conditions that may require the administration of medication (e.g. allergies to wasp stings, etc.).
- Ensure that they abide by the trip parameters set by the trip leader.
- Voice immediately any concerns they have about the health or safety of themselves or others.
- Ensure that their actions are in the best interest of protecting the environment – leave no trace.
- In an emergency, are required to take direction from the Trip Leader (and Sweeps).
- Under no circumstances should be impaired by drugs or alcohol while operating a boat or other dangerous activity that puts themselves and possibly others at risk.
- All participants should be familiar with Transport Canada’s Safe Boating Guide - TP 511E. Kayaker should also be familiar with Transport Canada’s Sea Kayaking Safety Guide – TP 14726.
 - The Transport Canada Safe Boating Guide can be found here:
<http://www.tc.gc.ca/media/documents/marinesafety/TP-511e.pdf>
 - The Transport Canada’s Sea Kayaking Safety Guide can be found here:
<http://www.tc.gc.ca/publications/EN/TP14726/PDF/HR/TP14726E.pdf>

E. Equipment

a) Mandatory DOT Participant Equipment

Due to Transport Canada Regulations, the following equipment applies to boats (of all types) that are 6 meters in length or less. For all paddles, the following equipment is required to satisfy Transport Canada requirements:



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1. One Canadian-approved personal flotation device (PFD) or lifejacket of appropriate size for each person on board. PFD's must meet either CAN/CGSB-65.11-M88 or UL 1180. The standards for a PFD intended for use by children must meet CAN/CGSB-65.15-M88.

Highly visible, short models with pockets for distress flares, radio, and whistle are preferable. For children under the age of 16 and for whitewater operations, PFD's and lifejackets must also be inherently buoyant.

2. One buoyant heaving line that is not less than 15 meters in length that is contained in a throw bag (per vessel).
3. One paddle (per participant). The paddle may be made of wood, aluminium, plastic, or composite materials. The blades may be unfeathered or feathered.
4. One bailer or manual hand-pump with sufficient hose and capacity for removing water (per vessel). A sponge can be used to remove remaining water.
5. A sound-signalling device (whistle) (per participant). A foghorn, or compressed air foghorn, can also be used.
6. If operating at night, a waterproof flashlight (per vessel).

b) Mandatory PNL Participant Equipment

In addition to the mandatory equipment specified by The Department of Transport (DOT), PNL requires its participants to have the following equipment:

7. Wear a helmet of an appropriate size (per participant) if operating in rocky waters, waters with other exposed hazards, or Class 3 Rapids and above.
8. Wear thermal protection for any paddling trips where the water temperature is below 15°C.

c) Recommended Participant Equipment

For all paddles, PNL also recommends that participants have the following equipment:

1. Spare Paddle (per boat).
2. Adequate drinking water and high energy snacks/meals;
3. Adequate clothing for anticipated weather conditions (rain, cold, etc.), including footwear for walking. Items should be enclosed in a waterproof bag.
4. Adequate protection against the sun (sunscreen, sunglasses, hats), as required.



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5. For night paddles: In addition to DOT required flashlight, PNL requires participants to have Chem Light (glow stick) affixed to their boat.

d) Mandatory Group Equipment

For all PNL activities, PNL requires Trip Leaders and Sweeps to have the following equipment or ensure that someone else in the group has the equipment, when required:

1. Marine VHF Radio (ocean paddling).
2. Communication aids for leader and sweeps (all paddles).
3. Waterproof First Aid Kit which meets the requirements of Transport Canada Regulations.

e) Recommended Group Equipment

For all PNL activities, PNL recommends that all Trip Leaders and Sweeps have the following equipment, or ensure that another participant in the group has the equipment, when required:

1. 3 Marine Flares (ocean paddling)
2. Compass, chart or topographic map and chart ruler
3. Emergency Response Plans
4. GPS with spare batteries (optional)
5. Cell phone

F. Hazard Reporting, Feedback and Continuous Improvement

All participants in PNL activities are encouraged to raise any HSE concerns or suggestions for improvement to a member of the PNL Board or to a representative of PNL, such as Trip Leaders. Trip Leaders are expected to document any comments and observations on the **PNL Paddle Trip Checklist**.

Feedback from participants will be obtained by the PNL Board, discussed at executive meetings and if warranted, changes will be implemented to address the noted concern or suggestion. As part of the change, consideration should be given to updating policies and procedures to capture any lessons learned.

G. PNL First Aid Kit

Following each paddle, Trip Leaders are required to report any damages or use of the First Aid Kit during a PNL activity. In addition, prior to the Annual Paddlers Retreat (in May), the PNL Board will arrange for the review and update the contents of the First Aid Kits to ensure that contents meet



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the requirements of the **PNL First Aid Kit Checklist** (included in the First Aid Kit) and that none of the medications have expired.

H. Incident Reporting

Any injuries (including first aid) or damages received during a PNL activity must be immediately reported to the PNL Executive or to a representative of the PNL Board. Section 1100 of the Small Vessel Regulations requires that accidents resulting in fatalities, injuries to persons requiring admittance to the hospital, property damage estimated at more than \$5,000 (such as fire) be reported to the RNC/RCMP as soon as possible. The **PNL Incident Report** can be used for this purpose.

I. Trip Reports and Checklists

PNL Trip Leaders must submit all trip reports and checklists to the PNL Board, via mail, scan documents and attach to email, or in person to PNL Board Member.

The PNL Board will save all trip reports and checklists for a period of seven (7) years.

J. Policy Review and Updates

The PNL Health, Safety, and Environmental Policy must be reviewed by the Director of Safety on a yearly basis. Any recommended modifications to the policy must be presented to the PNL Executive for review and adoption.