

REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES FOR ACA SANCTIONED EVENTS

Safety guidelines are, for the most part, simply a matter of common sense and reflect procedures that you probably already follow. Some guidelines may not be applicable for all events and may vary based on the conditions of the day. The activity leaders must take into account the weather, water level, group size, ability of the participants, and much more. At no time does a set of guidelines substitute for the good judgment of the event organizers. Still, the following procedures, guidelines, and checklist will go a long way toward ensuring a safe event.

Required safety procedures:

1. Require all participants, volunteers, safety personnel, media, VIPs, etc. to read and sign the *ACA Waiver and Release of Liability* before the event begins.
2. Require all participants to wear properly fitting US Coast Guard approved lifejackets (PFDs) during on-water activities. (Note: This requirement may be waived for elite level competitions or by Written permission from the ACA National Office.)
3. For activities on Class II or higher whitewater or in coastal surf zones, require all participants to wear properly fitting paddling helmets. (Note: This requirement may be waived for elite level competitions or by Written permission from the ACA National Office.)
4. For activities on Class IV or higher whitewater, event organizers must submit related safety and emergency procedures, and receive Written approval from the ACA National Office before the start of the activity.
5. Prepare a roster of the on-site first aid and rescue personnel, including their qualifications and what emergency supplies they have available.
6. Prepare a list of emergency contacts and the methods of communication available.
7. Any participant who encounters another participant or event personnel whose personal safety is in danger must stop to render assistance.
8. All participants and event organizers shall comply with all local, state and federal regulations.
9. All participants shall be prohibited from consuming any alcohol or illegal drugs immediately before or during an on-water event. Any participant judged to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs shall be immediately disqualified and asked to leave the waterfront area.
10. Report all property damage and serious injuries that require medical attention to the ACA National Office - using the *ACA Occurrence Report Form* - within 7 days of the incident.

Important safety guidelines:

1. Appoint a safety coordinator or committee to oversee the implementation of all safety procedures.
2. Prepare weather contingency plans to handle extreme heat or cold, rain, sun exposure, and lightning. Announce appropriate shelters and drinking water provisions, plus contingency plans to cancel, postpone or relocate an event.
3. Document the number, description and placement of safety boats.
4. Document all required safety, equipment - on-shore, on-water and per participant - including floatation, whistles, throw ropes, etc. Conduct an inspection if necessary.
5. Document the results of your course or site inspections prior to and on the day of the event.
6. Notify local authorities and emergency personnel of upcoming events (e.g. rescue squad or US Coast Guard).
7. For any long distance activities, provide a written float plan to someone who is not participating.
8. Ensure clean and safe entry/exit for participants.
9. Publicize any participant ability requirements and conduct a skills test or require a statement of ability if necessary
10. Conduct a participants' meeting/briefing prior to the start of the event. Announce rules, participant equipment checklist, possible hazards, and required safety procedures.

PRE-EVENT CHECKLIST / PLANNING DOCUMENT

Organizing Party

- _____ Who is the primary event organizer (name, ACA number, address, and phone number)?
- _____ List names and contact information for co-organizers.
- Who is in charge of first aid and emergency response? (List his/her qualifications.)
 - Who is in charge of event safety overall?
- _____ How many event staff will assist during set-up, during the event, and during cleanup? (Give an approximate number of event staff, including volunteers, and the ratio of staff to participants).
- _____ Schedule a pre-event participants meeting. List time, location and person in charge.
- _____ Include any other personnel information.

Event Site

- _____ Prepare a detailed description and/or map of the event site.
- Show first aid stations and emergency access points.
 - Show water access areas, parking, camping and other pertinent areas.
 - Identify known and potential hazards.
- _____ List the names, addresses, and phone numbers of any private owners or public agencies that have given permission for the use of their property during the activity.
- _____ Record the date, description, contact person and phone number for each permit obtained. List the names of vendors, types of goods (food, accessories, souvenirs, etc.), and any signed contracts.
- _____ Include any other site considerations.

Insurance

- _____ ACA event sanctioning was applied for on: _____.
- _____ Names of third-party additional insureds: _____
- _____ Certificate of insurance was received on: _____.
- _____ Copies of certificate were forwarded to: _____
- _____ If the activity includes automobile transportation, are the drivers properly licensed and insured?
- _____ List other insurance details or coverage.

Event Details

- _____ How many participants do you expect? How many spectators?
- _____ When and where will the event take place, including foul weather alternatives?
- _____ Record the average weather and water conditions for this time of year.
- _____ Prepare a safety plan including:
- Safety boats - quantity, private or law enforcement, placement, and ratio to participant boats.
 - Safety equipment - throw ropes, safety rings, flares, spare paddles, etc.
 - Communication - land phones, cell phones, two way radios, PA system, etc.
 - Method for maintaining an accurate count of people on the water.
 - Method for evaluating water and weather conditions to make the "go/no go" decision.
- _____ Prepare an emergency plan including participant and spectator evacuation, and detailed record keeping with an incident report form.
- _____ Copy ACA waivers for signature by all participants (required for insurance through ACA).
- _____ Copy event rules and make them available for distribution.
- _____ List other considerations or conditions that may affect the event.
- _____ List procedures for cleaning up after event.