

**Halton Outdoor Club**  
**Suggested Practices for Paddling Volunteer Trip Leaders**

**Disclaimer**

The Halton Outdoor Club accepts no responsibility for injury or loss of life while using the information contained within this publication. The material presented is for use as reference only. It is the sole responsibility of the paddler to determine whether or not he / she is qualified to safely navigate any water situations, trail and road conditions, and to accurately assess present conditions in relation to the published material. Before choosing to navigate any passage, you must evaluate for yourself the following: water volume, water and air temperature, skills, fatigue, value / waterproofness of load, isolation, feasibility of rescue, and risk to your equipment.

Bring a list of the participants and emergency contacts as provided by the club manager. After the trip, report to the club manager who was present on your trip and who was absent.

Have your phone charged and readily available in the event that you have to make an emergency 911 call. In the event that you are paddling in an area with poor cell reception, obtain one of the club's VHF radios.

After an emergency has been dealt with, document it using the club's Incident Report Form and submit it to the club's manager.

Bring a store purchased first aid kit.

Learn how to communicate your GPS position with the equipment you have access to.

Maintain a ratio of one volunteer trip leader for every six or fewer participants.

Check the wind and weather conditions on the day of the paddle to see if they differ from what was outlined in the trip description.

Bring a printed copy of the HOC Shoreline Safety Meeting with you. It is available on the club's website on the paddling page under the Safety section and Trip Leading Resources section. Although you may access it from your phone, a printed copy is recommended.

Conduct the Shoreline Safety Meeting on the shoreline prior to every paddle including each and every day on a multi day trip. It covers the following

- Introductions
- The required equipment,
- The locations of First Aid Kit,
- The HOC paddle safety rules, which includes the role of the participant in the event of a capsize,
- Whistle signals,
- Paddle signals,
- Hand signals,
- The anticipated conditions for the trip,
- Required skills for a trip,
- A health check in for its participants
- An opportunity to abandon a paddle for some or all of it's participants based on the current paddling conditions

Communicate the route and convey information about paddling speed, timelines, distance and paddling hazards that may exist