

Trip Leader Manual

Chapter 3

Section 5: Rafting Guidelines

- This is in *addition* to Section 4: Guidelines for Boating

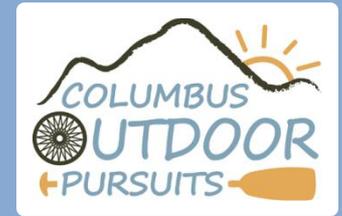
Rafting Guidelines continued



COP is one of the few organizations in this country where a person can learn the skill of rafting without becoming a commercial company employee.

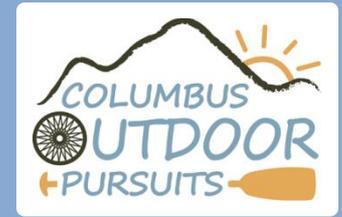
The following is the representation COP made to our insurance company on July 29, 2008 in order to obtain coverage for our rafting program. Based on this information, we now have coverage for rafting on rivers up to and including Class IV rapids. (Note *the rating is for the rapid, not the river.*)

Rafting Guidelines continued



- Our rafts are self-bailers manufactured for whitewater.
- The Avon is suitable for the New River Gorge and Lower Gauley (14', two thwarts, footcups, big tubes, and several inches of kick).
- Our AIRE E143 (the "Tomato") is built for big water like the Upper Gauley (14'6", three thwarts, big tubes, and several inches of kick).
- The Dibs are used mostly on the Yough, being of old technology (12', medium size tubes, 1 thwart, footcups, no kick).

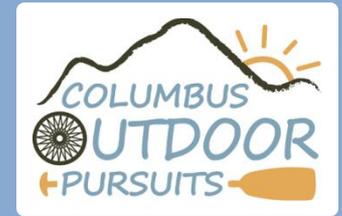
Rafting Guidelines continued



All rafters are required to wear:

- a boating helmet on class III or higher rapids, and also when the river is rocky. In short, everywhere except deep, calm water.
- a class III or V PFD when they are in the boat.
- Helmets and PFDs while on shore near the river or scrambling over rocks.

Rafting Guidelines continued



Throw ropes are part of our standard gear.

Only COP Members may be in our rafts.

First time rafters are encouraged to take the Rafting 101 course. Held on flat water in Columbus, the curriculum includes: what to wear, what to bring, how to inflate/deflate the boat, how to stay in the boat, what to do if you don't and basic paddle strokes

Rafting Guidelines continued



- COP Leader Training, Swift Water Rescue training and Wilderness First Aid are all skills that are considered when we approve a trip and its leader.
- A leader who does not have these skills ***must provide them.***
- All of our members are encouraged to get these skills.

Raft Captains



- In addition, raft captains must have demonstrated skill at handling the boat on the river in question.
- Note the word “Captain”. “Guide” seems to bring out an attitude in the paddlers that someone else is responsible for their safety and getting them down stream.
- “Captain” also implies teamwork and skill development for all paddlers, rather than just supplying power occasionally.

Raft Captains continued



- Ohio has no licensing requirements for raft guides, probably because we have no suitable whitewater.
- Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Washington and California all require that Guides be licensed, but only allow them to do so through employment with a commercial rafting company.

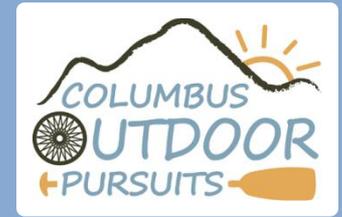
Raft Captain standards



COP aims for their Raft Captains to be able to meet the 2007 standards of the states of Washington and California. both of which required that the training include a minimum of:

- 50 hours on the water,
- Wilderness First Aid (16 hours, available through COP. We encourage, and occasionally offer, Wilderness First Responder [72 hours].)

Raft Captain standards continued



- Leader Training (COP offers this several times a year)
- ACA Swift Water Rescue
- A minimum of three runs down a river including a “check-out” run with an experienced raft captain before being captain on that river
- Ability to pass a written test such as the one published in The Guides Guide. (available from the COP Office)

Safety Talk



- *We give a safety talk before getting in the boat (admittedly a tad shorter on Sunday if everyone was with us Saturday.)
- Even if everyone has been rafting with us before, we go over it before getting into the boat.

Safety Talk continued



The Safety talk includes:

- An explanation of risks involved, potential river hazards eg. strainers, high water, importance of maintaining visual contact with other boats;
- correct adjustment of life jacket, helmet
- footwear and other appropriate clothing
- How to stay in the boat - sitting position and bracing

Safety Talk continued



- Dangers of kneeling and loose T-grips,
- General float plan – lead and sweep boats, regrouping
- River etiquette
- AWA “Universal River Signals.” – come ahead, stop, pointing towards where the person *should* go, not the problem, etc.

Safety Talk continued



What to do if you fall out

- Swim aggressively for the boat, nearest shore, throw rope, eddy or place of safety
- defensive whitewater float position ie. feet up, on back, looking downstream, (mentioning strainers, if applicable), throw bags, other rafts (if applicable). If near your boat, stay at the upstream end and try to get in or on the boat. Consider doing a flip drill in calmer water.
- Do not grab a kayak or canoe until the paddler directs you to. Be sure to follow their directions. Kick!

Safety Talk continued



- What to do if someone else falls out:
 - paddle reach
 - chase
 - throw bag

- Hypothermia

Rafting Guidelines continued



It is customary to do a few paddling drills at the put-in before heading down river. This gives the Captain a chance to feel out the crew, give additional instruction, if necessary, make seating changes.

Bon Voyage!