

Appalachian Mountain Club Delaware Valley Chapter Sea Kayaking Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish a Sea Kayaking Policy for the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. This policy sets standards for trips, leader, participants and equipment.

Scope

This document supplements all existing standards established by the AMC, the Delaware Valley Chapter and the Canoe Committee and commonly practiced and understood leadership, paddling, safety and outdoor skills. It should in no way be construed to replace or diminish any other applicable standards.

Leader Rating

Trip leaders shall be rated on the basis of not only their paddling skills, but also their general leadership skills and their ability to run safe trips in accordance with the rules and traditions of the AMC, the Delaware Valley Chapter and the Canoe Committee. Ratings shall be made by the paddling committee each year at the annual committee meeting, and at other times as deemed necessary by the Canoeing Chair.

Skill evaluation and demonstration for leader rating will normally be made on club trips. Trips often have a skill practice set aside. If necessary, other arrangements may be made for skill demonstration and practice.

Trip Scheduling

Only rated sea kayak leaders may propose level 1 and level 2 trips. Leaders rated level 1 (sea kayak) or class 1 (canoe) may propose flat water trips. All level 1 and level 2 trips must be sent to the Scheduling Coordinator as far in advance as practical for inclusion in AMC publications.

All scheduled level 1 and level 2 trips are subject to approval of the Sea Kayaking Coordinator prior to submission to *Footnotes* or *AMC Outdoors* for publication.

Trips not scheduled in time for publication may be listed on the club web site (paddlenow.com) or arranged by telephone. These must be approved by one of the following: the Sea Kayaking Coordinator, the Canoe Chair, the Canoe Vice-chair or the scheduling coordinator. If not so approved, it is not an official AMC trip.

Trip viability, safety and difficulty evaluation are the responsibility of the leader proposing the trip. It is advisable that leaders paddle the trip in advance of proposing a club trip, or at least have good, recent information from reliable guide books and other paddling clubs.

Float Plan

A sample float plan is included in this document. It is the responsibility of the trip leader to notify a responsible person **not on the trip** of the date, time, location and expected time of return.

Trip Classification

Sea kayak trips have been graded according to the skill and equipment requirements of both leaders and participants. The flat water rating for tidal rivers allows a smooth transition between our river paddling and sea paddling.

Flat Water

Paddlers must have stability in the boat, the ability to control direction and paddle in a straight line on still waters out of the wind and waves and within 100 feet of shore. Paddler demonstrates ability to wet exit or paddles without a spray skirt.

Examples: Pine Barrens Creeks, Pocomoke River.

Equipment required for participants and leaders is the same as for river trips. Life jackets (personal flotation devices) **MUST** be worn at all times while on the water. The leader has the discretion to require wet suits, etc., as appropriate.

Level 1

Beginning paddlers whom can comfortably and safely paddle on protected, flat water environments with conditions not exceeding 1 foot seas and 10 knot winds and be no more than a half mile off shore. The area should be one with little motorboat traffic.

Examples: The bay side of Island Beach State Park, NJ; the bay side of Assateague Island; circumnavigating Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge in the Chesapeake.

Paddlers should have the following skills:

- Launching and landing
- Forward touring stroke
- Sweep stroke
- Draw stroke (in water recovery)
- Reverse stroke and stopping
- Rafting
- Safe group paddling
- On water signaling
- Knowledge of marine hazards
- Basic understanding of the effects weather & tides on the paddler
- Comfort paddling in the described conditions for this rating
- Wet exit

A wet exit must be demonstrated before leaving the put-in area. A list of paddlers who have paddled with the club before and demonstrated this skill will be maintained.

The leader should demonstrate and instruct trip participants in paddling skills, as needed.

Equipment for participants

Life jackets (personal flotation devices) MUST be worn at all times while on the water. Spray skirts may be required. Wet or dry suits may be required at the discretion of the leader. A properly outfitted sea kayak with deck lines and either waterproof bulkheads or flotation bags is required. Participants should have some food and water accessible while paddling. All must carry a dry bag with extra clothing and food, and at least three liters of water. They must carry any personally required medication. Eyeglass straps are required for prescription glasses. *See recommended outfit list.*

Skills for leaders

Leaders should have the skills required of a level two paddler, plus be able to manage groups of boats on open water.

Equipment for leaders

Leaders must carry: a first aid kit, three Coast Guard approved signaling devices (aerial flairs or smoke), a waterproof flash light, a loud whistle, a rescue strobe, an extra three liters of water (not including their personal supply), emergency food, extra clothing as appropriate to the season (in cold weather, carry a hypothermia kit), a VHF marine weather radio receiver (either submersible, or in an easily accessible waterproof case). A two way submersible VHF marine radio is highly recommended. Also, leaders must have and know how to use a towing system with a quick release with at least 40 foot of floating line. Leaders must have a compass that is readable while in the boat.

Level 2

Trips of this type include sheltered open water such as large bays, and may include two foot seas and winds up to 15 knots. Distance from land may exceed a half mile and may be a mile or more. *Examples: trips to Barnagate Bay Islands, Cape Henlopen to Delaware Breakwater, any level 1 trip in higher wind or seas.*

Intermediate paddlers should demonstrate comfortable boat control in flatwater conditions. The paddler must demonstrate the ability to edge the boat with control and comfort. Paddlers should be able to do at least one type of unassisted self-rescue, such as roll, re-enter and roll (with or without a paddle float) or paddle float assisted re-entry. In addition to the requirements of level two, paddlers should be able to:

- T rescue, both as swimmer and rescuer
- Side by side rescue, both as swimmer and rescuer
- Low and high brace
- Low brace turn underway
- Draws stroke with edging
- Sculling draw
- Sculling for support
- High/low brace turn

Equipment for participants

Same as for Level 1.

Skills for leaders

Leaders should have all the skills required of Level 2 paddlers, plus:

- Demonstrate the ability to tow and release boats in two foot waves
- Ability to perform and assist in T and side by side rescues
- Leaders should be able to do several types of unassisted self-recue, such as roll, re-enter and roll (with or without a paddle float) or paddle float assisted re-entry
- Land and launch in moderate surf, up to three foot waves.
- Ability to read and interpret a nautical chart
- Determine bearing and plot a course
- Calculate distance and speed
- Paddle a course on water
- Take range on water to determine drift and set
- Identify marine hazards
- Understand marine navigation and marine traffic
- Understand tides, currents, water depth, weather other conditions that influence paddling, and be able to obtain current applicable information from available sources

Equipment for leaders

Same as for Level 1, except that an assistant leader or co-leader should also carry extra food, water and signaling devices if the group size exceeds five boats. The leader should demonstrate and instruct trip participants in paddling skills, as needed.

Levels 3 & 4

Currently, the Delaware Valley Chapter does not schedule trips higher than level 2. These levels include open water, open ocean and rough water paddling.

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Canoe Chair	Eric Pavlak	_____
Vice Canoe Chair	Eric Girardi	_____
Past Chair	Gary Leander	_____
Scheduling Coordinator	Bob Krisak	_____
Training Leader	Denise Zembryki	_____
Quartermaster	Walt Underhill	_____
At Large	Wayne Albrecht	_____
At Large	Janet Wong	_____
At Large	John Milne	_____