



## Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association

### TRIP GUIDELINES GLSKA TRIP CLASSIFICATIONS

GLSKA trips are classified under the following categories: Pace/Endurance, describing the strength, endurance and fitness required to comfortably complete the trip; Skills Required, describing the paddling skills and seamanship required to handle safely the situations that could be encountered on the trip.

#### PACE/ ENDURANCE:

- A. **Not Strenuous:** Daily paddling typically less than 3 hours, with distances of 10 kilometres or less.
- B. **Moderately Strenuous:** Daily paddling typically between 3 and 5 hours, with distances of 10 to 20 kilometres.
- C. **Strenuous:** Daily paddling typically more than 5 hours, with distances of 20 kilometres or more.

#### SKILLS REQUIRED:

- 1. **Novice:** Requires basic paddling skills, practiced wet exits. Expect protected waters, easy landings, and shelter for resting.
- 2. **Intermediate:** Requires basic paddling skills including the ability to brace, self-rescue, and participate in assisted rescues, comfortable in one-metre waves. Mostly protected waters, some difficult landings, and some sheltered spots for resting.
- 3. **Experienced:** Requires advanced paddling, seamanship and rescue skills. Ability to handle waves greater than 1 metre. Expect exposed waters, open crossings, large waves, moderate to strong winds, surf, fog, and potentially difficult landings. Sheltered resting and landing spots could be few.
- 4. **Expert:** Requires advanced paddling, seamanship and rescue skills. Ability to roll is strongly recommended. Expect long open crossings, rugged and exposed coast, large waves, strong winds, surf, turbulent water, fog and difficult landings.

#### TRIP TYPES:

Most of the Trip Type designations, such as **Day**, **Weekend**, etc. are self-explanatory. Trips are designated **Wilderness** if they involve camping in areas that are not designated campgrounds and/or have no, or minimal, facilities. These trips have lower limits on the number of participants and require minimum-impact camping practices. If a trip is designated **Exploratory**, it means the organizer has not been on the planned route or in the area before; therefore, trip conditions cannot be predicted from past experience. Trips designated **Instructional** are primarily educational in nature.

**NOTE:** Trips are classified in advance. Weather conditions may make it necessary to modify these classifications on the day of the event.

## GLSKA TRIP RULES AND GUIDELINES

1. All GLSKA trip organizers are volunteers. Please respect any special rules or suggestions they have for their trip.
2. GLSKA believes in and practices minimum impact tripping.
3. Each participant must be aware of the Risk Management Program; and must have signed the waiver.
4. GLSKA trips are intended for GLSKA members. Guests accompanied by, or introduced by a member, may participate in up to two day trips or GLSKA events. Guests may participate in multi-day trips by special exemption only, as per the guest policy outlined in the Trip Organizer Guidelines. Guests must sign the waiver for each event.
5. All participants are responsible for their own safety, equipment, boats, transportation and food.
6. Organizers may:
  - a) Limit the number of boats or participants permitted on a trip in order to minimize impact on the environment.
  - b) Advise on the type of equipment and camping techniques to be used
  - c) Terminate a trip or exclude a paddler if personalities and conditions don't seem compatible.
7. For their own safety and their fellow paddlers' peace of mind, participants must wear a PFD and be dressed for immersion at all times while paddling.
8. Some trips may require specific skills or equipment. To avoid disappointment at the put-in, participants should confirm with the organizer that their skills and equipment meet the trip requirements when signing up for the trip.
9. The following signals will be used:
  - One whistle blast – Stop and wait.
  - Two whistle blasts or paddle held straight in the air – Come to me.
  - Three whistle blasts or paddle waived back and forth – Emergency, come now!

## COLD WATER IMMERSION

Transport Canada (TC) has determined that water colder than 15 degrees Celsius poses a risk of hypothermia. **TC mandates that Trip Organizers have plans to mitigate this risk.** Therefore it is recommended that all participants have available either a wet or dry suit when paddling under these conditions. It is up to the Trip Organizer to determine what is appropriate gear and/or procedures to minimize this risk. Noncompliance to the guidelines established by the Trip Organizer can be grounds to refuse your participation in the trip.

## THE LAW

From the 2011 “**Canadian Coast Guard Safe Boating Guide**” at [www.boatingsafety.gc.ca](http://www.boatingsafety.gc.ca)

**Minimum Safety Equipment Requirements** The safety equipment Canada requires you to carry on board is based on the type and length of your boat. It must be on board, in good working order and always easy to reach so that it can be used in an emergency. You can find the length of your boat by reading the manufacturer's product information or by measuring it yourself (from the front outside surface of the hull shell to the back outside surface of the hull shell — bow to stern). Remember that these requirements apply only to pleasure craft and are the same whether you own, rent or borrow the boat.

Canoes, Kayaks, Rowboats, Rowing Shells and Other Human-Powered Boats

1. One (1) lifejacket or PFD for each person on board
2. One (1) buoyant heaving line at least 15 m (49'3”) long

3. One (1) reboarding device
4. One (1) bailer or manual bilge pump
5. One (1) watertight flashlight
6. One (1) sound-signaling device or appliance
7. Navigation lights (that meet the applicable standards set out in the Collision Regulations: if the pleasure craft is operated after sunset and before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility. Flashlight or white light mounted to be visible all around.)

### Transport Canada Vessel Regulations for Guided Excursions

The Small Vessel Regulations state:

*“Guided excursion means a non-competitive outdoor recreational activity or excursion led by a person in charge of the activity or excursion during which the participants use a human-powered vessel.”* ([Small Vessel Regulations, sec 300](#))

If you are leading or guiding a trip, teaching a course, or on the water in any type of leadership position (volunteer or paid) the vessel is considered not a pleasure craft, as defined in the Canada Shipping Act, 2001, you are now classified as being on a “guided excursion” and thus fall under the new regulations.

This may include, but is not limited to: instructors, guides, teachers, paddling schools, club volunteers, boy scouts, girl guides, church groups, camps, outfitters, or any other commercial or non-profit organized group on the water. Note that these new regulations only come into effect when you are leading an organized activity on the water. You are not classified as a “guided excursion” if you are on the water with family or close friends where you are not looked upon as the leader, guide, or instructor. Please contact Transport Canada directly with any questions if you need more clarification.

#### *Guided Excursions*

**303 (1)** A person responsible for an enterprise that conducts guided excursions and the leader of a guided excursion shall ensure that

(a) every participant in the excursion wears the following safety equipment:

(i) a personal flotation device or lifejacket of an appropriate size, and

(ii) when on class 3 or above waters, a helmet of an appropriate size; and

(b) any equipment or material that is carried on board the vessel and that is not being used is secured in place when the vessel is moving.

(2) If the water temperature is less than 15°C, a person responsible for an enterprise that conducts guided excursions and the leader of a guided excursion shall ensure that equipment is immediately available or that procedures are established to protect the participants from the effects of hypothermia or cold shock resulting from swamping, capsizing or falling overboard.

**304** A person responsible for an enterprise that conducts guided excursions and the leader of a guided excursion shall, before the beginning of the excursion, ensure that all participants are briefed in either or both official languages, according to their needs, on the safety and emergency procedures relevant to the guided excursion.

**305 (1)** The leader of a guided excursion shall, before the beginning of the excursion, report the number of participants in the excursion to a person on shore who has been designated by the leader to be responsible for communicating with search and rescue authorities in case of an emergency.

(2) If the guided excursion takes place in a remote area and it is not possible to report the number of participants to a person on shore, the leader of the excursion shall leave a record of the number of participants and the area of operation in a known location on shore that is accessible to search and rescue authorities.

(3) If the guided excursion departs from a support vessel, the leader of the excursion may designate a person on board the support vessel to be responsible for communicating with search and rescue authorities in case of an emergency.