



International Rafting Federation

Recommended Minimum Content for a Guide Training Program

Augrabies Workshop, August 1999

1. Purpose

To provide guide trainers with a checklist of the essential skills and knowledge that a guide trainee must learn in order to safely and competently guide a raft.

2. Content (as stated in the Recommended Minimum Requirements for Guides)

A. Skills

- i) Rafting techniques
- ii) Crew training and management
- iii) Emergency and rescue techniques

B. Knowledge

- i) Equipment
- ii) Safety and emergency procedures
- iii) Rapid theory
- iv) Leadership
- v) Signals

A. Skills

- i) Rafting techniques
 - a) Paddling strokes - forward, back, rudder, draw, forward and reverse sweep, pry and/or Rowing techniques - pulling, pushing, turning;
 - b) Ferry glides - forward and reverse;
 - c) Breaking in and out of eddies;
 - d) Rapid reading - identifying whitewater features from the boat and from shore (scouting);
 - e) Rapid running - choosing and running a line using appropriate angles and positioning in relation to currents, rocks, waves, holes and hazards;
 - f) Setting off/landing - in a controlled manner, securing a boat;
 - g) High sides/overs;
 - h) Lining/ portaging.
- ii) Crew training and management
 - a) Safety talk - including explanation of risks involved, correct adjustment of life jacket, helmet, footwear and other appropriate clothing, sitting position and bracing, dangers of kneeling and T-grips, "whitewater float position" ie. feet up, on back, looking downstream, swimmer rescues using outside line, extended paddle, defensive/active swimming (mentioning strainers, if applicable), throw bags and safety kayaks (if applicable), flip drill;

- b) Crew placement - considering experience, strength, weight, agility, confidence, physical and medical condition;
- c) Paddling technique - clear demonstration of strokes, practice, correction;
- d) Other instructions - overs/highsides, holding on;
- e) Assessment - recognising and understanding the strengths and limitations of a crew then choosing appropriate lines;
- f) Motivation - getting a crew to do what you want.

iii) Emergency and rescue techniques

- a) Specific skills - swimming in rapids, getting self/others into/onto a boat, shallow water crossings, rope techniques including knots, use of throw bags, belaying, anchors, mechanical advantage systems, vector pulls, strong swimmer rescue, tag lines and tension diagonals, re-flipping a boat.

B. Knowledge

i) Equipment

- a) Raft - design, construction, materials, correct inflation/deflation sequence, working pressures, valves, name and function of components, repair.
- b) Guide - appropriate clothing and footwear, life jacket, helmet, paddle, throw bag, knife, whistle, flip line;
- c) Client - appropriate clothing and footwear, life jacket, helmet, paddle;
- d) Rescue - use and storage of ropes, slings, prussic, pulleys, karabiners, other hardware;
- e) First aid - use (to level specified in Recommended Minimum Requirements for Guides) and storage of kit, appropriate position within trip;
- f) Repair - use and storage of kit;
- g) Rigging - safe and secure rigging of frames and any equipment carried in a boat;
- h) Maintenance/care - on and off the river especially during transport.

ii) Safety and emergency procedures

- a) General safety - factors contributing to accidents e.g. alcohol/drugs, inappropriate/poorly maintained equipment, potential river hazards e.g. strainers, high water, importance of maintaining visual contact with other boats.
- b) General emergency procedures - situation assessment, deciding on and conducting a rescue considering resources available, time limitations and safety priorities, informing and motivating a crew.
- c) Swimmers - recovery of short swimmers by guide or crew, long swimmer options include instructions to swim, paddle reach, chase, throw bag, safety kayak, other rafts.
- d) Surfs - use appropriate highsides/overs, head count, communicate with other guide(s), rope rescues.
- e) Flips - get on boat, head count, communicate with other guide(s), re-flip or pull up swimmers;
- f) Wraps - stabilise, head count, communicate with other guide(s), consider likely fate of boat if released by chosen method and take adequate precautions, release boat by upsetting balance/stability of wrap;
- g) Foot entrapment - options include shallow water crossing, tag line;
- h) Stranded crew - best method according to reach, throw, row, go, tow principle;
- i) Hypothermia/hyperthermia (if applicable) - avoidance and treatment.

iii) Rapid theory

- a) International grading system - know and be able to give local examples;
- b) River features - understand hydraulics and potential dangers (if applicable) of the following: pool, tongue/V channel, eddy, eddy line/fence, boil, whirlpool, standing wave, crashing wave, stopper, hole, pour over, wrap rock, undercut, strainer, sieve, ledge drop, drop/waterfall, constriction, chute, corner, cushion/pillow.

iv) Leadership

- a) Understand theories of leadership and group dynamics.
- b) Responsibilities.

v) Signals

- a) Visual - all clear (direction), eddy out, stop, emergency, first aid required, all OK, swimmer(s) (number and location), boat surfing, boat wrapped, boat flipped, cover required, lost paddle, need a pump, last boat, spread out, close gap, speed up;
- b) Whistle - 1 blast - Stop/Attention, 3 blasts - Emergency.