



## CHALLENGE AND ADVENTURE ACTIVITY

### WATER ACTIVITIES

County Operating Procedures (COPs) will determine the craft/board to be used. All water-craft participants must wear USCG approved PFD. A minimum instructor to boater ratio, for programs at or near the waterfront, is 1:15, required. For water-craft trips the minimum instructor to boater ratio is 1:5. Additionally, all boating activities must be supervised by an adult who has the following qualifications: instructor rating in the appropriate craft (e.g., canoeing, sailing, rowing) from a nationally-recognized certifying body (American Canoe Association, American Sailing Association, etc.) or documentation of experience indicating knowledge and skill in teaching and supervision specific to the watercraft activities conducted upon approval of county 4-H staff. Some activities require a certified lifeguard. Facilitators are responsible for confirming the 'standard' that applies to their setting/activity.

Water activities may take place in/on a variety of crafts and environments; 4-H Challenge and Adventure programs are run in either open or closed water capacities. Commonalities which should be considered in facilitation of all water based activities are:

- Check in as a group on each participant's health and their comfort with water based activities.
- Dry-Land Skills and Safety Brief - discuss outfitting a boat, carrying boats/boards, entering and exiting boats/boards, posture, paddle size, row/paddle technique, storing water bottles/gear etc., partnering, communication, basic strokes, wet exit technique, water-safety, rescue technique, and safety concerns including the following:
  - Equipment - Personal Floatation Devices (PFD) are **REQUIRED** and must always be worn before boats are pushed off and until after they are beached at the takeout. Never use them as cushions. Check PFD's for fit and wear and tear.
  - Footwear & Clothing - sandals or shoes are required. Each participant should have adequate clothing for conditions (pants, wool/synthetic socks, a spray jacket or rain coat and a wool or fleece top layer). Closed toe footwear is recommended. Flip-flops are not allowed.

- Hypothermia - discuss need for proper layers and communicate about water and air temperature and their effect on the body. When weather conditions change, check in with participants to evaluate hypothermia risk.
- Food and Hydration - require all participants to have a water bottle and bring food for them. Do not allow participants to drink untreated water.
- Weather - encourage communication about body temperature. Discuss proper safety procedures for a thunderstorm (immediate take-out, seek shelter above beach in wooded areas. PFDs can be used as ground insulation in emergency situations, while away from the waterfront).
- Supervision - participants are only allowed on the water when a group leader is also on the water. No one should be out of visual range, whistle or shouting distance.
- Swimming/Wading - entry into chest-deep (or deeper) water is prohibited without wearing PFD. Beware of wading into water with a current.

### **PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICE (PFD)**

PFD must be in good working order and issued to each participant in an off-shore setting/location. PFD inspection and fitting is the responsibility of the facilitator/group leader prior to the beginning of activity and throughout to the return of the equipment. Visual inspection is done by facilitator/group leader, and PFD use is consistent with the manufacturer's recommendation as well as United States Coast Guard rating.