



**ST. ALBERT  
CANOE  
KAYAK  
CLUB**



## **Participant Safety & Operational Risk Management**

The St. Albert Canoe & Kayak Club implements structured risk mitigation and management practices to ensure a safe, controlled, and respectful environment for all school and community participants. Safety procedures are built around certified coaching supervision, progressive skill instruction, proactive environmental monitoring, and clearly defined behavioral expectations.

### **1. Pre-Session Planning & Risk Assessment**

Before each session, coaches conduct a structured safety review that includes:

- Weather monitoring (wind, lightning risk, temperature, visibility).
- Water condition assessment and designated paddling zones.
- Participant readiness and group size evaluation.
- Equipment checks including boats, paddles, adaptive seating, and safety gear.

Sessions may be adjusted, delayed, or cancelled if safety thresholds are not met. Coaches maintain discretion to modify activities at any time to reduce risk.

### **2. Orientation & Dry-Land Safety Briefing**

Every program begins with a mandatory dry-land safety orientation covering:

- Proper entry and exit from docks.
- Paddle handling and boat stability techniques.
- Emergency stop signals and communication procedures.
- Boundaries of safe paddling areas.
- Respectful behavior expectations and coach authority.

Participants must demonstrate understanding before entering the water.

### **3. Personal Protective Equipment & Boat Setup**

- Transport Canada–approved life jackets (PFDs) are mandatory for youth participants and strongly encouraged for all paddlers.
- Staff ensure correct PFD fit prior to launch.
- Adaptive seating, back support, or specialized equipment are fitted by coaches when required.
- Equipment is maintained according to regular inspection schedules to prevent mechanical hazards.

### **4. Supervision Structure & Staffing Ratios**

- Certified coaches maintain active visual supervision of participants at all times.
- Coaches are the designated safety authorities and have full decision-making authority regarding activity changes or stoppage.
- Supervision applies only during scheduled program hours and within club premises.
- Larger groups may require additional instructors or deployment of a safety motorboat to enhance monitoring and rapid response.

### **5. Dock, Facility & Environmental Safety**

- Docks are designated launch zones only and are not swimming areas.
- Rough play, pushing, or unsafe movement on docks or equipment is prohibited.
- Participants receive instruction on proper lifting, carrying, and storage of boats.
- The facility is monitored to ensure safe movement between land and water areas.

### **6. On-Water Risk Management**

- Progressive skill development ensures paddlers remain within appropriate safety limits.
- Coaches position themselves strategically to maintain clear visibility of all boats.
- Groups remain within defined paddling boundaries.
- Safety instructions are reinforced throughout sessions to maintain awareness and control.

### **7. Behavioral Safety & Respect in Sport**

- Participants are expected to demonstrate respectful conduct toward staff and peers.
- Bullying, unsafe behavior, or disregard for instructions may result in removal from the activity.
- Coaches maintain authority to intervene immediately when behavior increases risk to individuals or the group.

## **8. Emergency Response & Incident Management**

In the event of an incident:

1. Immediate response by the nearest certified coach or safety boat operator.
2. Stabilization of the participant and removal from risk area if necessary.
3. First Aid administered by staff certified in CPR and First Aid.
4. Emergency services contacted when required.
5. Incident documented and communicated to the school/group representative.

Emergency equipment and communication protocols are maintained on-site.

## **9. Weather & Environmental Contingency Planning**

- On-water activity is immediately suspended in thunder, lightning, or severe weather conditions.
- Participants may remain on land under supervision until safe or until early pickup arrangements are made.
- Indoor space is limited; therefore, alternative activities may be adjusted based on conditions.

## **10. External Safety Support**

- Lifeguards may be arranged through a third-party provider for an additional fee and must be booked in advance.
- Schools or organizations may bring their own lifeguards in accordance with their policies.

## **11. Continuous Monitoring & Program Improvement**

- Coaches continuously evaluate safety performance and participant comfort levels.
- Procedures are reviewed annually and updated based on experience, evolving standards, and operational needs.
- Feedback from schools and participants informs future risk mitigation strategies.