Inland Water

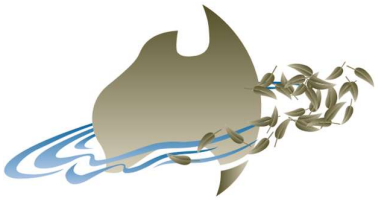
Paddle-craft

Australian

Adventure Activity

Good Practice Guide

Guidance for canoeing, kayaking (including inflatable craft and sit on tops), rafting and stand up paddleboarding on *inland waters*.



Outdoor Council of Australia

Representing the Outdoor Sector Nationally

Traditional Owner Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the *Traditional Owners* of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past and present.

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Version details

Version	Date	Details
1.1	23 Sept 2019	Appendix A2.2.1 Inflatable Lifejackets updated to be consistent with Enclosed and Coastal Waters Paddle-craft GPG.
1.0	Pre-release 14 Dec 2018	Pre-release version one.
2.0	2026	

Foreword

"When I experience dadirri, I am made whole again. I can sit on the riverbank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no need of words. A big part of dadirri is listening."

Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard and Good Practice Guides are designed to ensure effective, responsible, sustainable and safe delivery of adventure activities to *dependent participants*. They can help people across the outdoor sector to develop appropriately managed adventure activities which enhance individuals and our communities, while protecting the environment and culturally significant places. In doing this, these documents can help ensure that people will continue to enjoy the benefits of adventure activities well into the future.

Best wishes for all your adventures.

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard Steering Committee
Outdoor Council of Australia.

Creation

The Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAAS) and accompanying Good Practice Guides (GPGs) were developed through a national project and launched in 2019. They drew together, and built upon, the various state and territory-specific adventure activity standards that had previously operated across Australia, replacing a fragmented set of arrangements with a single, nationally consistent voluntary framework. The original development drew on the input of a wide range of outdoor and adventure activity experts with extensive experience, supported by expert advisory groups and informed by open consultation across *activity providers*, education authorities and other stakeholders.

The Steering Committee gratefully acknowledges the members of the various focus groups, industry consultation, working groups and expert advisors for their work and contributions, and thanks the State and Territory Governments for funding the original development.

The AAAS and GPGs are now maintained by the Outdoor Council of Australia (OCA). They are subject to comprehensive review at least every five years, with targeted reviews undertaken in response to serious incidents, fatalities, relevant court decisions, or material changes in regulation or practice. Reviews are overseen by the Steering Committee and conducted in accordance with the AAAS Review and Update Methodology — a pragmatic, mixed-methods process combining legislative and regulatory analysis, currency checking of cited standards and instruments, stakeholder consultation, data-informed *risk assessment*, and structured expert input through the Expert Advisory Group, followed by open public consultation before endorsement.

The first comprehensive review under this methodology was undertaken in 2025–26. The review was facilitated, and the Standard and Good Practice Guides drafted, by The OREAS Group Dr David Marsden for and on behalf of the Outdoor Council of Australia. The Outdoor Council of Australia gratefully acknowledges the contributions of all who took part in the review:

- Dr David Marsden (PhD), Lead Consultant (The OREAS GROUP)
- Lori Modde, Project Sponsor (OCA Chair)
- the members of the AAAS Steering Committee, who provided governance, direction and endorsement of the reviewed documents;

  Lori Modde, OCA Chair, Outdoors NSW, ACT
  David Marsden, Lead Consultant, The OREAS Group
  Andrew Atfield, Tasmania Government
  Andrew Knight, Outdoors Victoria
  Dom Courtney, Outdoors Queensland
  Jodie Freund, South Australian Government
  Katie Brown, Outdoors WA
  Mitchell Hardy, NT Government
  Neil Le Febvre, Outdoors WA

- the members of the Expert Advisory Groups, who contributed specialist knowledge and reviewed drafts across the Core and activity Good Practice Guides; and
- the *activity providers*, education authorities, peak bodies and individuals who contributed through public consultation, focus groups, and submissions.

Further details of the creation and review of the AAAS and GPGs can be found at www.australianaas.org.au, where updates are also published.

Funders

The Steering Committee gratefully acknowledges and thanks the State and Territory Governments for funding the original development and 2026 review.

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Preface

About these documents

The Australian Adventure Activity Standard (AAAS) and related Good Practice Guides (GPGs) are an industry good-practice framework for safe and responsible planning and delivery of outdoor adventure activities with *dependent participants*.

The AAAS and related GPGs provide guidance on responsible activity delivery, including safety and respect for the environment, cultural heritage and other users. They are not a full legal compliance framework.

Activity *providers* are encouraged to obtain independent professional and legal advice in relation to their obligations and duties in delivering adventure activities and should reference the relevant laws to the area in which they intend to undertake the adventure activity.

Dependent Participants

A *dependent participant* is a person who is owed a *duty of care* by the *activity provider* and who wholly or partially on the provider's systems, processes and operational practices for the support, supervision, guidance or instruction needed to take part in an activity. In most cases this means a participant who reasonably relies on the provider for their safety. The degree of dependence may vary over the course of an activity.

Considerations for determining whether a person is a *dependent participant* may include, but are not limited to:

- whether the organisation is providing a service or product to the person
- whether the organisation owes the person a *duty of care* in the circumstances
- whether the person reasonably relies on the provider for the support, supervision, guidance or instruction needed to participate safely.

Considerations for determining the **level of dependence** may include, but are not limited to:

- the foreseeable level of competence of the participant in the activity, and the degree of reliance this creates on the provider's work system, including reliance on *activity leaders*
- the foreseeable level of self-reliance of the participant to reasonably manage their own safety
- the variation, or possible variation, in the degree of dependence or self-reliance throughout the activity
- the individual context, nature and circumstances of the activity
- the relevant circumstances and particular facts relating to the responsibilities assumed by the provider.

Does the Standard and Good Practice Guides apply to me?

The Australian Adventure Activity Standards (AAAS) and associated Good Practice Guides (GPGs) are primarily designed to support activity *providers* conducting lead or supported adventure activities involving *dependent participants* with the aim of delivering safe, responsible and well-managed experiences. Each *provider* must determine, based on their specific circumstances, whether the participants they work with are dependent and/or their level of dependency on the provider's systems and operations. Providers should use the AAAS and relevant GPGs to ensure that the activities they lead are planned and delivered in accordance with the Standard.

Australian *providers* operating internationally can use the AAAS and GPGs as a benchmark for safe practice, while complying with the laws and relevant standards of the jurisdiction in which the activity is conducted. Legal advice should be obtained where activities cross jurisdictions.

Activity providers include outdoor education and adventure businesses, schools, universities, TAFEs, camps, clubs and organised "meet-up" groups, youth organisations, not-for-profits, and community-based organisations that deliver adventure activities to *dependent participants*. An individual may also be an *activity provider* where they hold the ultimate legal *duty of care* to participants. "The Standard" and the GPGs apply to a provider as a "whole organisation" rather than to "specific roles" within it.

Some providers may have their own standards or guidelines appropriate to their *duty of care*. These should be reviewed periodically to ensure current *duty of care* expectations are met, and "the Standard" and the GPGs may assist with such reviews.

Are they legally binding?

The AAAS and GPGs are not legal requirements. However, they may refer to specific laws and regulations which may be legally binding on activity *providers*. Some *land managers* and other organisations may require compliance. This may be as a condition of obtaining a licence, permit or other permission, or some other condition (e.g. a contract).

Under Australian common law and relevant legislation, *providers* have a legal *duty of care* towards *dependent participants* in some circumstances. In broad terms, the legal duty requires *providers* to take reasonable care that their actions and omissions do not cause reasonably foreseeable injury to *dependent participants*.

It is important to be aware that adventure activities in Australia operate within a complex legal landscape. *Activity providers* must understand the obligations that apply to them and seek independent professional and legal advice where any obligation is unclear.

The following obligations include, but are not limited to, those set out in detail in Appendix A — Principal legal obligations, grouped by the function each obligation performs:

- Work health and safety — the foundational legal duty for the majority of providers, including the primary *duty of care*, officers' due-diligence duty, consultation, safe systems of work, and notifiable-incident reporting.
- *Duty of care*, negligence and consumer protection — the common law *duty of care*, the Civil Liability Act (or equivalent) of each state and territory, and the Australian Consumer Law.
- Protection of children and vulnerable persons — Working with Children and Working with Vulnerable People schemes, Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Schemes.
- Transport of participants — land, water and air — heavy vehicle, road transport, domestic commercial vessel, recreational marine and civil aviation obligations.
- Land access, environment and cultural heritage — park, Crown land and reserve licensing, the EPBC Act, Aboriginal cultural heritage law(s) and/or regulation(s), and biosecurity duties.
- Information privacy, equity and employment — the Privacy Act and Australian Privacy Principles, anti-discrimination law(s) and/or regulation(s), and the Fair Work Act and relevant award.
- Substances, food and licensed items — medicines and poisons, food safety, liquor and tobacco, and firearms obligations.
- Activity-specific licensing — fisheries and recreational fishing licensing, and animal welfare duties.

Appendix A is an orientation only and is not exhaustive. It does not constitute legal advice, and the relevant law(s) and/or regulation(s) of the jurisdiction(s) of operation must in each case be determined and complied with.

Structure of the Standard and Good Practice Guides

The guidance for adventure activities comprises several related documents. For any activity, the AAAS (the Standard), the Core GPG, the relevant activity GPG, and any applicable Explanatory Notes issued by the Outdoor Council of Australia, from time to time, should be consulted.

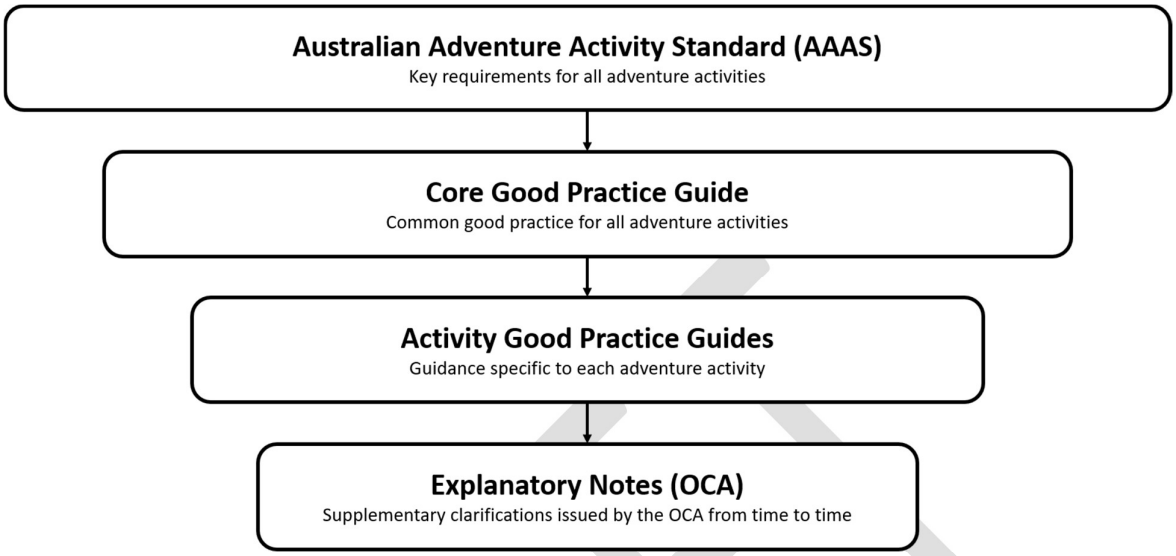

Figure 1.1: Structure of the Standard and Good Practice Guides

The documents present cumulatively more specific information. Providers should determine how they use the AAAS and GPGs based on their context and need, and are encouraged to draw on them when developing and reviewing their standard operating procedures. Activity providers are encouraged to obtain independent professional and legal advice on their obligations and to reference the laws relevant to the area in which they operate.

Interpretation of the Standard and Good Practice Guides

The following words and phrases are used in all documents and have specific meanings:

Must: used where a provision is mandatory, if the provider is to operate fully in accordance with AAAS or GPGs. (This is equivalent to the keyword “shall” used in other voluntary standards e.g. Standards Australia, other International Standards Organisations (ISOs) etc.)

Should: used where a provision is recommended, not mandatory. It indicates that the provider needs to consider their specific situation and decide for themselves whether it applies or is relevant. A “should” statement describes good practice. Departure from a “should” statement does not of itself establish a breach of duty — a provider may meet its obligations by other means appropriate to its context — but providers should be able to explain the basis for a different approach.

Can/cannot: indicates a possibility and capability.

May/need not: indicates a permission or existence of an option.

But are/is not limited to: used to indicate that a list is not definitive and additional items may need to be considered depending on the context.

The following formatting is used throughout:

Defined words are in italics. They are defined in the Glossary.

Examples are in smaller italic 9-point font.

In document references are underlined. References are to section heading titles.

External web or Australian AAS & GPG document links are dotted underline italic.

1 Introduction

1.1 Activity

Paddle-craft activities include canoeing, kayaking and rafting and other similar waterborne activities. The aim of the activity can vary and may include but not limited to for pleasure, challenge, experience, journeys and/or educational or other outcomes.

This document covers activities that are identified by three considerations:

- it relates to activities involving *dependent participants*
- the type of body of water being paddled – this activity Good Practice Guide (GPG) relates to paddling *inland water*, either on *flat-water* or *white-water*
- the type of paddle-craft being paddled – this activity GPG relates to craft suitable for paddling *inland waters*.

1.1.1 Type of craft

Paddle-craft are a type of watercraft propelled and manoeuvred by the user(s). The "types" of paddle-craft covered include but is not limited to:

- canoes including inflatable canoes
- kayaks including inflatable kayaks, enclosed kayaks (i.e. sit in) and sit on top kayaks
- sea kayaks when used on *inland waters*
- rafts
- pack rafts
- river tubes (single-rider inflated rings)
- other inflatable paddle-craft (e.g. river sleds etc.)
- stand up paddleboards (SUPs)
- paddle-craft using oar rigs
- other emerging paddle-craft with similar design.

The type of paddle-craft being used may effect the hazards and risks involved and relevant safety requirements.

1.1.2 Type of body of water

The hazards and risks involved, relevant safety requirements and type of *paddle-craft* suitable may change depending on the body of water being paddled.

In using this document, it is important to understanding the difference between *inland water* and *enclosed waters*. The difference between *inland water* and *enclosed waters* generally corresponds with specific requirements for safety equipment and other safety measures due to the different environmental conditions, required by the relevant *marine safety agency* for the jurisdiction of operation.

Inland water is also known as smooth waters, protected waters or inland waterways.

These waters include rivers (inside the seaward entrance), creeks, canals, lakes, reservoirs and any similar waters either naturally formed or man-made and which are either publicly or privately owned, but does not include any navigable rivers, creeks or streams within declared port waters. Refer to the relevant *marine safety agency* for the jurisdiction of operation for details of declared port waters and declared *inland waters*. See Marine safety terminology for waters throughout Australia in Appendix X.

For the purposes of using this document, *inland water(s)* is used to identify:

- any *marine safety agency* declared *inland waters*, smooth waters, protected waters or inland waterways
- any *inland waters* (as defined by the definition provided above) but excluding waterways at the point at which the water current becomes affected by tides to the extent it changes the activity hazards and risks.

(Also see Important considerations in section 1.1.4 Important considerations.)

Inland water can be *flat-water* or *white-water*.

Flat-water is any body of water or waterway that is not *white-water*. The same waterway can have sections of flat-water and white-water.

White-water is a section of a waterway where the water current or tidal movement is sufficient to create hydrological feature(s) such as, but not limited to rapids, eddies, waves, whirlpools etc.

Enclosed waters is also known as partially smooth, semi-protected, intermediate and sheltered.

These waters include enclosed coastal bays, harbours, declared port waters and similar waters that are generally offer some form of limited protection from the environment or weather. *Enclosed waters* can be the interface between *inland waters* and/or *coastal waters*. The relevant *marine safety agency* for the jurisdiction of operation will generally declare what areas are considered *enclosed waters*. Refer to the relevant *marine safety agency* for details.

For the purposes of using this document, *enclosed waters* are considered:

- any *marine safety agency* declared *enclosed waters*, partially smooth, semi-protected, intermediate and sheltered
- declared coastal lakes, as well as salt water inlets, enclosed coastal bays, harbours and declared port waters
- rivers inside the seaward entrance up to the point at which the water is no longer affected by tides to the extent it changes the activity hazards and risks.

Confined body of inland water. The description "confined body of *inland water*" is used in this document for special environment situations involving *flat-water*. This normally refers to situations like small private dams located at a residential camp. The location and environment features are such that many - but by no means all - of the hazards or risks normally associated with paddle-craft are mitigated. The location and confined nature mitigate hazards and risks such as becoming lost or separated, being blown in high winds into hazardous situations, having to interact with other types of watercraft or water users, the *activity leader* being unable to see all the craft due to blocks to line of sight etc. Refer to 5.1 Environment considerations section for more details.

(Also see Important considerations in section 1.1.4 Important considerations.)

1.1.3 Types of activities

Canoeing involves watercraft which are typically open craft (e.g. canoes) and paddled with a single blade paddle.

Kayaking involves watercraft which can be sit in or sit on craft and paddled with a double-bladed paddle.

A key feature of canoeing or kayaking is that participants generally operate a separate paddle-craft to that of the guide or instructor. With *dependent participants* canoeing and kayaking generally occurs on *flat-water* and/or up to Grade 3 *white-water*.

Sledding is the use of an inflatable mattress or "river sled" with the participant using their hands to paddle or swim the sled in *white-water*. Participants each operate a separate paddle-craft. It generally occurs when river levels are low and impassable for other paddle-craft in *white-water* up to Grade 2.

Stand up paddleboards (SUPs) uses a rigid or inflatable board to stand on and paddled with a single bladed paddle. Participants each operate a separate paddle-craft. It generally occurs on *flat-water* and/or on *white-water* up to a Grade 1.

Rafting refers to the use of multichambered, inflatable, open watercraft designed to hold multiple people. Rafts are generally paddled on *white-water* with a Grade greater than 1. A key feature of rafting is that in most cases the guide or instructor is located in the raft with the participants and operates the raft, generally with the help of the participants.

In some situations:

- rafts are guided by a participant and the guide or instructor is in a separate watercraft. This is known as a self-guided raft and generally occurs on *flat-water* and/or up to Grade 3 *white-water*
- rafts using oar rigs operated by the guide/instructor and any passengers are not required to paddle.

While inflatable kayaks and pack rafts have many features similar to rafts, there operation has similarities to canoes and kayaks. The paddle used may be single or double bladed. The participants operate a separate paddle-craft to that of the guide or instructor for pack rafts and this also generally occurs for inflatable kayaks.

1.1.4 Important considerations

There may be ambiguity as to if this activity GPG (i.e. *inland water* paddling) and/or another activity GPG (e.g. Enclosed and *Coastal Waters* GPG i.e. *sea kayaking*) is suitable for:

- a particular type, style or design of paddle-craft (e.g. new designs that are emerging etc.)
- the type of body of water the activity being operated on (i.e. the interface areas between *inland water* and *enclosed water* is unclear)
- situations where the activity operates in both *inland water* and *enclosed water* at different times.

An appropriate assessment of the paddle-craft, body of water and activity context needs to be completed to determine the appropriate activity GPG or standards that apply.

Where there is no suitable activity GPG or standard, an appropriate *risk management plan* needs to be completed to address the hazards and risks associated with but not limited to the paddle-craft, the body of water, the activity type and the activity context. The paddle-craft needs the be confirmed as being a suitable design and manufacture for the context of the activity it is being used. The Core GPG and any closely related activity GPGs may assist in developing such a *risk management plan*.

1.2 Exclusions

Activities that are not covered by this GPG are:

- *sea kayaking* – kayaking on waters that are not *inland waters*
- activities that occur in *enclosed waters* or *coastal waters*
- activities involving competitive events including adventure races
- sailing watercraft
- motor propelled craft (e.g. motor boats, personal watercraft like jet ski, etc.)
- activities associated with “camping” (e.g. tent sites, cooking, etc.) while on overnight or extended *inland water* paddle-craft activities (Refer the Camping GPG).

1.3 Related activities

Related activities are:

- camping when undertaking overnight or extended activities - Refer the Camping GPG.
- activities in *enclosed waters* or *coastal waters* (e.g. *sea kayaking*) - Refer Enclosed and *Coastal Waters* Paddle-craft GPG).

- bushwalking when access, egress or land-portage legs form part of the activity - Refer the Bushwalking GPG.
- cycling/mountain biking when forming part of a journey (e.g. cycle-rafting) - Refer the Cycling/Mountain Biking GPG.

2 Management of Risk

Risk management in outdoor and adventure settings is highly context-specific. In natural environments there is an almost infinite range of combinations of participants, purpose, weather and local conditions, and every provider differs in structure, size, philosophy and operating environment. *Risk management* therefore cannot be a 'tick-the-box' exercise or a 'one size fits all' approach; risk systems should be flexible, adaptive and highly responsive to the circumstances of each activity, drawing on recognised frameworks such as AS ISO 31000:2018 and AS ISO 4980:2023.

The section guides providers to build a risk system that fits their own structure and operating environment rather than copying another organisation's. A volunteer-led club might apply it as a lightweight but documented plan with strong dynamic assessment in the field; a commercial operator might use it to underpin a formal, audited *risk management* system. In every case it directs the provider to make risk thinking flexible, adaptive and responsive to the actual circumstances of each activity.

- Management of risk

See Core GPG (2 Management of Risk).

2.1 Context Matters

See Core GPG (Management of Risk).

2.2 Risk management framework and process

See Core GPG (Management of Risk).

2.3 Risk management plan

See Core GPG (Management of Risk).

2.4 Dynamic risk assessment

See Core GPG (Management of Risk).

2.5 Incident reporting

See Core GPG (Management of Risk).

3 Planning

Sound planning is what turns intent into safe and consistent delivery. Clear management and approval processes help a provider manage risk, with the people responsible for approving processes, plans and procedures varying according to the organisation's context. Good planning considers the purpose of the activity, the people involved, group size, the cultural and environmental values of the place, and what to do when conditions change or things go wrong.

Here the guidance helps a provider translate intent into a repeatable, defensible process. Approval roles can be scaled to context — a single coordinator in a small operation, or a tiered sign-off structure in a larger one. The material can shape activity-plan templates, prompt early engagement with *Traditional Owners* and *land managers*, and ensure emergency planning and field documentation are in place and reviewed before participants arrive.

3.1 Management and approval of activities

See Core GPG (Planning).

3.2 Activity plans

The *marine safety agency*, *land owner* and/or *land manager* law(s), regulation(s) and/or requirements must be determined and complied with.

Inland water paddle-craft activity planning considerations may include but are not limited to:

- watercourse hazards and risks
- the Grade of the watercourse or rapids and associated difficulty
- likelihood and consequences of changing water levels including *flash flooding*
- possible changes to any natural formations which may effect on hazards, risks and/or Grades
- the supervision required
- paddle-craft type and other associated equipment required
- appropriate outfitting of the paddle-craft for the activity context (e.g. spray decks for kayaks in waves, airbags for canoes on white-water, leashes appropriate to the environment)
- *personal thermal protection* necessary
- *land manager* and *marine safety agency* regulation and requirements
- any other relevant considerations listed in this document and in the Core GPG.

Inland water paddle-craft activity plans should include:

- appropriately detailed maps or river information identifying specific known hazardous rapids or features, and access/egress points
- standard operating procedures for managing hazards
- environmental *trigger points* (See Weather *trigger points* in 5.2 Weather trigger points) for reassessment of plans.

Activity plans must establish maximum and minimum water level *trigger points* for relevant types of activities and paddle-craft.

See Core GPG (Planning) for the general requirements and further detail.

3.3 Group size

See Core GPG (Planning). Group size for this activity is addressed under Participants in this guide.

3.4 Cultural, environmental and historical values

See Core GPG (Planning).

3.5 Emergency management planning

3.5.1 Emergency management plan

Emergency management plan requirements must be based on the outcome of the *risk management plan*.

Considerations when developing emergency management plans may include but is not limited to:

- types of emergencies the *risk assessment* plan identifies
- remoteness of the activity
- need for an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and/or oxygen based on the activity context and profile of likely participants
- the practicality of carrying emergency management equipment e.g. remote first aid supplies, oxygen, AEDs etc.

A *non-participating contact* must be used as part of the emergency management plan.

An activity intentions plan must be:

- provided in accordance with any *land manager* or *marine safety agency* requirement
- provided to the *non-participating contact* along with any relevant information needed.

The use of relevant rescue systems and procedures must be practiced periodically.

Considerations for rescue scenario training may include:

- general rescue scenarios for the type of waterway and Grade
- site specific rescue scenarios where known hazards require specific rescue methods.

Where there is only one *activity leader*, the emergency management plan must have arrangements that allow participants an adequate and appropriate communication system if the leader becomes incapacitated.

Also refer to the Core GPG.

3.5.2 Reporting notifiable incidents

The *land manager* or *marine safety agency* may have incident reporting requirements.

A reportable incident must be reported to all relevant authorities in the jurisdiction it occurred, in accordance with the requirements for the jurisdiction.

Also refer to the Core GPG.

3.6 Activity leader required documentation

See Core GPG (Planning).

4 Diversity, equity and inclusion

Adventure *activities* are delivered by, and for, people of diverse identities, abilities, cultures, life experiences and circumstances. Recognising that diversity, and providing equitable opportunities for safe and meaningful participation, is fundamental to safe and effective practice.

In practice this section guides providers to design activities that include rather than exclude, applying across interactions between leaders, participants and others encountered during an activity. A provider can use it to review enrolment and communication practices for barriers, build cultural and psychological safety into leader briefings, and ensure complaint and review mechanisms are visible and accessible. It is intended to be read alongside the Participants and Responsibilities sections rather than in isolation.

The recommendations in this section apply alongside, and inform the application of, the subsequent sections of the Core, including without limitation 5 Participants, 5.3 *Vulnerable participants*, 5.5 Privacy of information, 4.3 Cultural safety, 4.4 Psychological safety and dignity, and 8 Responsibilities and roles. Those sections continue to apply in their own terms; where requirements overlap, the more onerous applies.

4.1 Diversity of participants and leaders

See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).

4.2 Inclusive practice

See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).

4.3 Cultural safety

See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).

4.4 Psychological safety and dignity

See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).

4.5 Information, communication and consent

See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).

4.6 Leader competence

See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).

4.7 Concerns, complaints and review

See Core GPG (Diversity, equity and inclusion).

5 Participants

Every activity depends on the people taking part, and on the information and support they receive before and during it. Pre-activity information and communication help potential participants, parents or legal guardians and client organisations make an informed decision about taking part, and continue through consent, acknowledgement of risk, and the care of those who may be vulnerable. Supporting participants well — from first enquiry to supervision in the field — is central to safe and respectful practice.

Its purpose is to help a provider ensure people know what they are signing up for and are appropriately supported once they arrive. Pre-activity information can be adapted to the audience and activity, participation restrictions set defensibly, and additional safeguards put in place for *vulnerable participants* and minors. The supervision guidance lets a provider calibrate direct versus *indirect supervision* to the activity, environment and group.

5.1 Information provided pre-activity

Pre-activity information should communicate:

- information as detailed in the Core GPG - Information provided pre-activity
- possible aquatic and *river hazards* and risks
- clothing and footwear requirements.

See Core GPG (Participants) for the general requirements and further detail.

5.2 Activity briefing

See Core GPG (Participants).

5.3 Recognition pathways

Refer to considerations for recognition pathways outlined in Core GPG - Recognition pathways.

5.4 Activity leader to participant ratios and group size

5.4.1 Canoeing and kayaking recommended supervision ratios and group size

Kayaking includes the use of inflatable kayaks.

5.4.1.1 Canoeing and kayaking supervision ratios and group size considerations

Considerations when determining the ratio and group size for canoeing and kayaking must include:

- the type of water of waterway being paddled
- participant swimming ability and confidence

- the size of the paddle-craft
- the design of the paddle-craft
- the number of participants in each paddle-craft
- the suitability of the paddle-craft for the type of activity and environment
- the suitability of the paddle-craft for the participants
- the *activity leader's* experience and locational knowledge of the specific waterway
- access to shore and available egress points
- age of participants
- any language or communication factors that may affect supervision
- considerations for determining supervision requirements in Core GPG.

5.4.1.2 Canoeing and kayaking supervision ratios recommendations

The following table outlines the recommended supervision that should be used when canoeing and kayaking.

Table 5.1: Canoeing and kayaking recommended supervision ratios and group size

Grade/ situation	Leader requirements	One seat craft	Two seat craft	Three seat craft
"Confined body of inland water"#	1 guide/instructor	Up to 8 craft*, Up to 8 Participants	Up to 6 craft*, Up to 12 Participants	Up to 6 craft*, Up to 12 Participants
Inland water that is not white-water	Per guide/instructor	Up to 6 craft*, Up to 6 Participants	Up to 4 craft*, Up to 8 Participants	Up to 4 craft*, Up to 12 Participants
Grade 1	Per guide/instructor	Up to 4 craft*, Up to 4 Participants	Up to 4 craft*, Up to 8 Participants	Up to 4 craft*, Up to 8 Participants (See Note 1)
Grade 2 and 3	Per guide/instructor, and a minimum of 2 guides/instructors	Up to 4 craft*, Up to 4 Participants	Up to 4 craft*, Up to 8 Participants	Not recommended
Grade 4 and 5		Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended

Refer notes next page.

Notes canoe and kayaks:

- *= excludes guide/instructor craft
- #= Refer environment section for clarification of "confined body of *inland water*"
- Note 1 - Where there is only a single guide/instructor, the recommended ratio for 3-seater craft on Grade 1 water is – "up to 2 craft, up to 6 participants" – given the potential for a large number of participants in moving water requiring assistance at the one time. Where there is more than one guide/instructor, the recommended ratio for each guide/instructor is as listed in the table i.e. "up to 4 craft, up to 8 participants per guide/instructor"
- For considerations relating to minors refer to Core GPG regarding child safety and supervision requirements when related to *responsible persons*.
- The supervision ratios in this table are minimums for dependent-participant activities. Where participants are not dependent (e.g. trained paddlers on Grade 4 or 5 in a coaching context), this table does not apply — refer to Paddle Australia Safety Guidelines for non-dependent contexts.
- Where the group includes minors, a minimum of one *activity leader* plus one *responsible person* must be present at all times, regardless of the supervision ratios above. For "confined body of *inland water*" and *inland water* that is not white-water, this applies in addition to the ratios specified. For Grade 1 and above white-water, the two-activity-leader requirement at the relevant grade applies (see table) plus a *responsible person* is recommended.

5.4.2 Rafting recommended supervision ratios and group size

The use of inflatable kayaks is covered above in canoeing and kayaking ratios section.

5.4.2.1 Rafting ratios and group size considerations

Considerations when determining the ratio and group size for rafting must include:

- the size of the raft(s)
- the design of the raft(s)
- the number of participants in each raft(s)
- the suitability of the raft(s) for the type of activity and environment
- considerations relating to participants, leader experience, access to shore, age and other factors listed at Section 8.4.1.1 also apply to rafting and should be considered when determining the ratio and group size.

5.4.2.2 Rafting ratios and group size recommendations

The following table outlines the recommended supervision that should be used when rafting.

Table 5.2: Rafting recommended supervision ratios and group size

Grade/situation	Leader requirements	Craft/participants
Inland water that is not white-water	Per raft guide/ raft instructor for group	Up to 3 craft*, Up to 12 participants#, 1 responsible person per craft without guide/instructor
Grade 1 – self guiding	Per raft trip leader/ raft instructor or guide	Up to 3 craft*, Up to 12 participants#, 1 responsible person per craft without guide/instructor
Grade 2 and 3 – self guiding	Minimum of 1 trip leader and 1 guide	Up to 4 craft*, Up to 16 participants#, 1 responsible person per craft without guide/instructor
	Per additional activity leader^ above the minimum (either raft trip leader/ raft instructor or raft guide)	Up to 2 additional craft*^, Up to 8 additional participants#, 1 responsible person per craft without guide/instructor
Grade 3 -guided	A minimum of 2 craft (one of which may be a safety boat) with an *activity leader* per craft. A minimum of 1 raft trip leader and 1 raft guide.	1 craft per activity leader, Maximum 10 participants per craft
Grade 4 and 5 – guided	A minimum of 2 craft (one of which may be a safety boat) with an *activity leader* per craft. A minimum of 1 raft trip leader and 1 raft guide.	1 craft per activity leader, Maximum 8 participants per craft

Notes for rafting:

- *= excludes the raft guide/trip leader/instructor craft where they are not guiding a raft (e.g. supervising from a kayak)
- **= a raft trip leader/ raft instructor guiding a raft excludes the need for a raft guide for that craft (e.g. 1 trip leader and 3 raft guides would be the recommended requirement for 4 rafts)
- ^= where a group has 6 or more craft there should be 2 *activity leaders* with trip leader competencies appropriate for the activity context
- #= responsible persons are included in participants total (e.g. 1 responsible person and 8 students is 9 participants)

- For considerations relating to minors refer to Core GPG regarding child safety and supervision requirements when related to *responsible persons*.

5.4.3 Other paddle-craft supervision ratios and group size considerations

Considerations when determining the ratio and group size for paddle-craft that are not canoes, kayaks or rafts must include:

- the size of the paddle-craft
- the design of the paddle-craft
- the number of participants in each paddle-craft
- the suitability of the paddle-craft for the type of activity and environment
- the suitability of the paddle-craft for the participants
- considerations for determining supervision requirements in Core GPG.

5.4.3.1 Sledding supervision

The following table outlines the recommended supervision that should be used when sledding.

Table 5.3: Other paddle-craft supervision ratios and group size considerations

Grade	Leader requirements	Supervision
Inland water that is not white-water	Per activity leader	Up to 8 craft*, Up to 8 Participants. Maximum group size (incl. leaders) 12.
Grade 1 and 2	Per activity leader	Up to 8 craft*, Up to 8 Participants. Maximum group size 12.
Grade 3	Per *activity leader*, minimum 2 *activity leaders*	Up to 6 craft*, up to 6 participants per leader. Maximum group size 12.
Grade 4 and 5		Not recommended

Notes:

- *= excludes guide/instructor craft
- For considerations relating to minors refer to Core GPG regarding child safety and supervision requirements when related to *responsible persons*.

5.4.3.2 Stand Up paddleboards supervision

The following table outlines the recommended supervision that should be used when stand up paddleboarding.

Table 5.4: Other paddle-craft supervision ratios and group size considerations

Grade	Leader requirements	Supervision
Confined body of inland water	1 guide/instructor	Up to 8 craft*, up to 8 participants
Inland water that is not white-water	Per guide/instructor	Up to 6 craft*, up to 6 participants
Grade 1	Per guide/instructor	Up to 4 craft*, up to 4 participants
Grade 2 and 3	Per guide/instructor, minimum 2 guides/instructors	Up to 4 craft*, up to 4 participants
Grade 4 and 5		Not recommended

Notes:

- *= excludes guide/instructor craft
- For considerations relating to minors refer to Core GPG regarding child safety and supervision requirements when related to *responsible persons*.

5.5 Pre-activity communication

See Core GPG (Participants).

5.6 Participation restrictions

See Core GPG (Participants).

5.7 Vulnerable participants

See Core GPG (Participants).

5.8 Health and wellbeing

See Core GPG (Participants).

5.9 Privacy of information

See Core GPG (Participants).

5.10 Supervision and management during the activity

5.10.1 Management of activities

A procedure must be in place to monitor the weather and waterway conditions.

A procedure should be in place to monitor relevant weather forecasts and warnings, including flood and flash flood warnings where possible.

Procedures must be used to limit the number of craft either moving through a rapid or through the crux point of a rapid to ensure an effective emergency response can be implemented if needed.

Procedures must be used to limit the group becoming too spread out.

Appropriate access (entry points) and exit points must be used.

Appropriate manual handling procedures must be used when handling heavy equipment.

Dynamic risk assessment(s) must be used to consider the following hazards and risks:

- loose rope/tape or loops that could cause entanglement or entrapment
- wind strength and direction that could affect the crafts performance
- changes in waterway levels
- changes in water levels affecting the *river hazards*
- new or changed in *river hazards*
- ongoing correct operation of the paddle-craft
- loose items are properly stowed and secured.

5.10.2 Activity leader familiarity of the waterway

The *risk assessment* must identify the *activity leader* familiarity with the waterway requirements.

Considerations when identifying the *activity leader* familiarity with the waterway requirements must include:

- the type of waterway and its characteristics (e.g. river type — volume, gradient, rocky, creek environment — or open waterway — fetch, depth, exposure)
- the river Grade involved
- local hazards and risks
- the ability to use procedures to manage hazards (e.g. easily identifiable, can pull out and scout rapids etc.)

- knowledge and ease of identifying access, egress and emergency egress points throughout the activity
- the potential for hazards and risks changing based on differing water levels
- the ratio of activity guides with familiarity of the waterway to activity guides who are not
- the varying level of experience and competence of the *activity leaders*.

Trip leaders must be familiar with the specific waterway being used.

5.10.2.1 Activity leader experience

The experience of *activity leader(s)* should be confirmed as being suitable for the activity context.

5.10.3 Aquatic hazards

A *risk assessment* must be undertaken — including ongoing dynamic assessment — that addresses aquatic hazards. Considerations include but are not limited to:

For rivers and other moving water:

- level of *aeration* of the water
- water speed and current direction
- water volume
- gradient
- obstacles in the water (e.g. rocks, logs)
- portage hazards or unpaddleable sections (e.g. rapids beyond the capacity of the group, leaders or craft)
- blockages (e.g. trees across the river)
- water temperature
- debris and floating objects
- water quality and contamination (e.g. E. coli, blue-green algae, urban runoff)
- water clarity
- depth (including too-shallow and too-deep)
- the lifejacket buoyancy available to participants relative to the level of water *aeration*.

For open inland waterways (lakes, dams, reservoirs):

- wind strength and direction
- fetch (with depth as a modifying factor)
- depth
- water clarity and quality
- other water users (e.g. powered watercraft).

5.10.4 Activity briefing

Before undertaking an activity, the information and requirements to be communicated may include but are not limited to:

- correct fitting of lifejackets
- when lifejackets are to be worn
- correct fitting of helmets where necessary
- footwear requirements
- storage of personal medication
- securing loose items (e.g. glasses, sunglasses, hats, watches, electronics in waterproof cases)
- relevant *personal thermal protection* requirements
- other essential equipment and clothing requirements
- confirmation of participants' swimming ability and confidence in water, and any relevant prior paddling experience
- correct procedure(s) in the event of a capsize or falling out of the craft
- suitable information and instruction on hazard avoidance including but not limited to:

    - ways to recognise hazards where appropriate
    - hazard avoidance techniques (e.g. 'white-water float position' and 'active swimming')
    - rescue techniques including self-rescue
- the correct handling and navigation of the craft
- relevant crew communication within the craft
- the group management process including but not limited to:
    - group conduct
    - spacing where relevant
    - relevant communication between craft
    - methods and signals to communicate over longer distances or noisy environments
- any relevant methods of waterproofing equipment
- any requirements relating to associated activities such as swimming and/or
- diving, jumping, swinging or sliding into water
- relevant other safety and communication equipment details.

5.10.5 Associated activities

Procedures must address the hazards and risks associated with:

- swimming when it occurs while not using a paddle-craft (Refer Appendix Y)
- jumping, sliding or swinging into water (Refer Appendix Z).

5.10.5.1 Diving

Diving into water must be avoided.

5.10.5.2 Swimming while not using a paddle-craft

Refer Appendix Y for considerations regarding swimming while not using paddle-craft.

5.10.5.3 Jumping, sliding or swinging into water

Refer Appendix Z for considerations regarding jumping, sliding or swinging into water.

5.11 Activity leader to participants ratios

See Core GPG (Participants).

6 Environment

Environmental conditions can directly affect the safety of an activity, and everyone involved shares responsibility for protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the places they visit. Weather, fire, water, terrain, wildlife and the requirements of *land owners* and managers all shape what can be done safely and respectfully. Providers must actively identify, reduce and manage both the risks the environment poses and the impact an activity has upon it.

For providers, the guidance encourages planning around the localised, in-situ conditions at the specific time and place of an activity, rather than relying on general assumptions. The trigger-point approach can set clear go/no-go and modification thresholds, fire and severe-weather planning can be aligned with the relevant guidance material, and *land manager* requirements confirmed. Activity-specific detail is expected to come from the relevant activity GPG, with this section providing the common baseline.

6.1 Environment considerations

Environmental considerations for *inland water* paddle-craft may include but is not limited to:

- the type and features of the body of water used for the activity
- if white-water is present
- if rapids are present and the Grade
- *river hazards* present or likely to be present
- river levels including the potential for rapid changes in level
- wind strength and direction
- the effect of falling out of or off the paddle-craft
- the effect of getting wet during the activity
- climate and weather
- the effect of flora (e.g. strainers etc.)
- the fauna expected (e.g. risks associated with venomous snakes, ants etc.).

Environment hazards that must be addressed in the *risk management plan* include:

- level of aeration of the water
- drops
- entrapment points
- entrapment in or under paddle-craft
- fast flowing water
- floating objects
- undercut rocks
- re-circulations
- rapids
- sieves
- strainers
- submerged objects and dumped rubbish
- walking surface for entry, exist or moving about out of the paddle-craft
- water and environment temperature
- water contamination.

Water contamination may include but is not limited to:

- parasites (e.g. giardia etc.)
- water borne diseases (e.g. cholera etc.)
- chemical run off or waste
- animal waste or carcases
- algal blooms.

6.1.1 Confined body of inland water

A "confined body of *inland water*" is a special environment situation involving *flat-water*. This normally describes situations such as small private dams located at a residential camp. It is used to describe a location where many - but by no means all - of the hazards or risks normally associated with paddle-craft are mitigated due to the features of that location.

Considerations in determining if a body of water is a "confined body of *inland water*" should include:

- the body of water is not *white-water*
- participants are unable to paddle out of the location
- participants are unable to be blown out of the location or into hazardous locations
- participants cannot become lost or separated from the group
- participants wearing a lifejacket could generally reach a bank swimming from the middle of the body of water without assistance
- clear line of sight or verbal communication to all parts of the body of water
- when line of sight is blocked for someone on the bank, this can generally be mitigated by changing position on the bank

- for the majority of the location, there is easy exit from the water on to the bank (e.g. not steep sided, overgrown with blackberry, etc).
- foot or vehicle access is available to the majority of the perimeter of the location
- there are no outlet hazards from the body of water (e.g. hydro water release intake, spillway, etc.)
- water levels do not fluctuate rapidly
- no interaction between other water users in powered or sailing watercraft.

Where any of the considerations above are not met, the body of water should not be treated as a confined body of *inland water* and the broader *inland water* provisions of this GPG apply.

6.2 Weather trigger points

The *risk management plan* and emergency management plan must include guidance on *trigger points* and associated actions for water levels. (Also refer 5.6.1 Water levels section below).

The *risk management plan* and emergency management plan should include guidance on *trigger points* and associated actions for relevant *severe weather* conditions. Refer to the *Severe Weather* Guidance Note for current advice and trigger thresholds.

Any weather-related *trigger points* must be based on the relevant Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings and information, as well as actual weather conditions.

Actions for the possible *trigger points* may include but is not limited to:

- cancellation of activity
- modification of activity
- avoiding areas that have the potential for *flash flooding*
- preparations to avoid the risks associated with blizzards
- moving to areas that are protected from strong winds
- managing risks of flying or falling items during strong winds
- moving to areas that are protected from hail
- preparations to avoid the risks associated with lightning
- evacuating to a safe location.

6.3 Lightning

Lightning protocol — refer to the *Severe Weather* Guidance Note for thunder timing rules and shelter recommendations. The following are activity-specific considerations:

- Whilst thunder is audible groups should avoid being on the water
- Whilst thunder is audible groups should avoid handling paddles or metallic equipment (e.g. raft gear frames, paddles with metal shafts)
- When seeking shelter: avoid the highest ground in the area, tall trees or structures that may act like a lightning rod, water-saturated ground near watercourses, caves and locations where the group is unable to spread out.

6.4 Weather and water level information

6.4.1 Weather information

Appropriate sources must be used for:

- current and forecast weather
- current and forecast weather warnings
- current and forecast water levels.

Also see Appendix W Weather information.

6.4.2 Water level information

Sources of water level information to assess the suitability of the waterway for the activity should include but is not limited to:

- the Bureau of Meteorology relevant water level information and flood warning information
- local information sources (e.g. river gauges, dam operators etc.)
- inspection of the site.

6.5 Bushfire, prescribed fire and fire danger

See Core GPG (6 Bushfires/fire danger).

6.6 Water and flooding

6.6.1 Water levels

Risk management plans must include procedures to mitigate relevant hazards and risks relating to the:

- water level being too high (e.g. water flow too great, new *river hazards* forming etc.)
- water level being too low (e.g. insufficient water etc.)
- water level rising rapidly
- flooding.

Considerations relating to water level rising rapidly or flooding must include:

- the current water level conditions
- the possibility of further water release into the catchment area
- the effect of the changing water level on the activity.

Considerations relating to the current water level conditions must include:

- the degree of accuracy and/or certainty of what the current water level is
- the ability to conduct the activity at the current level.

Considerations relating to the possibility of further water release into the waterway catchment area must include:

- the characteristics of the catchment including but not limited to:
    - size
    - gradient
    - vegetation types and levels
    - soil type, character and depth
    - existence of water bodies (e.g. lakes)
    - man-made features (e.g. dams, spillways, hydro power stations etc.)
    - natural dams (e.g. soil, logs, vegetation, rocks etc.)
- the current conditions within the catchment including but not limited to:
    - current rainfall:
        - volume
        - intensity (volume of rainfall during a given period of time)
        - rainfall location
        - recent rainfall upstream in the catchment
    - water saturation levels of the soil
    - snow conditions and amount of snow available
    - likelihood of snow melt adding to water levels
    - forecast weather
        - rainfall occurring
        - rainfall amount
        - thunderstorms occurring

        - flooding or *flash flooding*
        - temperature
    - effect of other prior events:
        - bushfires
        - drought
        - heavy rain or flooding
        - heavy snow falls
    - the characteristics of the waterway including but not limited to:
        - profile
        - width
        - depth
    - the operation of man-made features including but not limited to:
        - release of water from dams, spillways or hydro power plants
        - current water levels of dams
        - expected inflow of water to the dams.

Considerations relating to the effect of the changing water level on the activity must include:

- the current water level
- gradient
- formation
- narrow points
- the time required to exist the waterway
- the availability of high ground
- obstacles creating water hazards.

6.6.2 Water quality

Areas where the water is polluted or contaminated, and may pose a risk to human health should be avoided.

Polluted or contaminated water may include water effected by:

- chemicals
- rubbish
- sewage
- upstream runoff (e.g. urban runoff such as oil from roads, industrial operations etc.)
- dead animals
- waterborne microorganisms such as:
- microbial or bacteria (e.g. E.coli)
- protozoa (e.g. Gardia)
- cyanobacteria (e.g. blue-green algae)
- viruses (e.g. Hepatitis).

6.6.3 Flash flooding

Areas likely to experience *flash flooding* which would effect activity safety should be avoided during *severe weather* or thunderstorms.

The suitability of water for drinking during and after flooding should be assessed.

6.7 Environmental conditions, safety and impact management

See Core GPG (Environment).

6.8 Tree safety

See Core GPG (Environment).

6.9 Drinking water safety

See Core GPG (Environment).

6.10 Food safety

See Core GPG (Environment).

6.11 Wildlife safety

Procedures should be in place to minimise the risks associated with wildlife that may be encountered.

The types of wildlife encounters that may need to be considered include but is not limited to:

- buffaloes
- cattle
- crocodiles
- horses
- pigs
- snakes
- relevant aquatic animals.

See Core GPG (Environment) for the general requirements and further detail.

6.11.1 Aquatic biosecurity

Procedures should be in place to minimise the risk of transferring invasive aquatic species or pathogens (e.g. didymo, phytophthora) between waterways. This should include cleaning paddle-craft, paddles, footwear and personal equipment before changing waterways, in accordance with the relevant *land manager* and biosecurity authority requirements.

6.12 Environmental sustainability procedures

See Core GPG (6 Env. sustainability (App L)).

6.12.1 Travel and camp on durable surfaces

Travelling in an area on durable surfaces may include but is not limited to:

- use recognised access (put in), exit (take out) and rest locations
- put in and take out wherever possible from areas with a durable surface
- use a system to tie up paddle-craft that avoids damage to the bank or vegetation used
- carrying paddle-craft wherever possible rather than dragging them.

6.12.2 Dispose of waste properly

Dispose of waste properly may include but is not limited to:

- carry out food and general waste
- carry out human waste and personal hygiene waste.

6.12.3 Leave what you find

Leave what you find may include but is not limited to:

- avoiding introducing or transporting non-native species of flora, fauna and/or pathogens (e.g. before changing waterways: emptying water, cleaning paddle-craft and equipment, following *land manager* requirements or recommendations etc.).

6.12.4 Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors

Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors may include but is not limited to:

- when accessing waterways use gates in preference to climbing over a fence
- leave gates as you find them.

6.13 Land owner and/or manager requirements

See Core GPG (Environment).

6.14 Water environments

See Core GPG (Environment).

7 Equipment and logistics

The right equipment, well chosen and well maintained, is fundamental to safe delivery. Equipment requirements differ from one activity and context to another, spanning personal and group gear, first aid and medication, communications and transport. Deciding what is genuinely needed, keeping it fit for purpose, and organising the logistics around it are everyday responsibilities for any provider.

It helps a provider decide what equipment is genuinely needed, who is responsible for it, and how it is kept fit for purpose. The framework can drive equipment checklists matched to each activity, inspection and maintenance schedules appropriate to scale, and communications and first aid provisions matched to the remoteness and risk of the activity. It supports consistent logistics decisions without imposing a single equipment list on every provider.

7.1 Framework for equipment requirements

See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics).

7.2 Equipment requirements

7.2.1 Personal attire

Procedures must be in place to ensure appropriate clothing and *personal thermal protection* is available and fit for purpose for the expected and foreseeable weather conditions.

Clothing should be of a colour that makes it easily visible for other water users or rescue services.

Procedures must be in place to ensure reasonable and appropriate sun safety measures are taken.

Procedures must be in place to ensure appropriate footwear that is fit for purpose for the expected and foreseeable terrain and hazards is used.

Footwear considerations may include:

- the type of waterway
- the type of paddle-craft
- the weight of the footwear should the wearer become immersed
- the appropriateness of the means of securing the footwear to the foot
- the possibility of the current dislodging the footwear.

Prescription spectacles and sunglasses if worn should be secured with a suitable restraint.

7.2.2 Activity equipment

Any *marine safety agency*, *land owner* and/or *land manager* law(s), regulation(s) and/or requirements must be complied with for:

- paddle-craft design
- lifejackets
- rescue equipment.

Equipment must be manufactured for use in the context of the activity:

- *paddle-craft*
- helmets to protect from *white-water* hazards and risks
- lifejackets
- rescue equipment.

Equipment must be used in the context for which it was designed and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, including any limitations on use.

An appropriate design standard for equipment must be used where one is available.

Refer details of standards that may be relevant in Appendix U Equipment standards.

Prior to use of equipment, all relevant people must receive appropriate training and advised of any relevant manufacturers instructions or limitations.

7.2.3 Paddle-craft

The type of *paddle-craft* used must be appropriate for use in the context of the activity.

Considerations for paddle-craft should include but is not limited to:

- the design is appropriate to the context of the activity
- possess the strength to withstand all foreseeable forces.
- does not impede exit in the event of capsize
- means of exit is suited to the paddlers capabilities
- where appropriate has a means of bailing water
- has appropriate buoyancy aids installed where necessary
- does not sink, remains horizontal when swamped and remains suitable as buoyancy for its crew
- capable of being towed by rope and grasped by hand
- fitted with appropriate end loops or toggles that do not form entrapment hazards
- any grab or outside lines are appropriate, suitably attached and do not form entrapment hazards
- any lines can be appropriately stowed to prevent them becoming an entrapment hazard
- any line, leash or tether attached to a person must include a means of quick release and must be positioned appropriately for the environment (e.g. waist-mounted quick-release leashes for stand-up paddleboards on moving or white-water, rather than leg-mounted leashes)
- the stability of the craft is suited to the paddlers capabilities
- the material or finish does not cause injury
- where necessary, has a means to be secured to prevent floating away
- where necessary are fitted with appropriate footrests
- where integral to the design, has the appropriate fittings (e.g. covers, plugs or hatch covers)
- preferably of a colour that is clearly visible to other water users or rescue authorities.

Where a means of bailing water out of the paddle-craft is required to remove water, a suitable means of bailing must be provided to each individual paddle-craft.

The use of improvised paddle-craft (e.g. inflatable mattresses, initiative activity/home-made rafts, etc.) must only occur where:

- the waterway is *flat-water* or Grade 1 *white-water*
- the environmental hazards and risks can be suitably mitigated through the *risk management plan*
- any equipment hazards and risks can be suitably mitigated through the *risk management plan*
- appropriate rescue equipment and procedures are available.

7.2.4 Paddles

The type of paddle used must be appropriate for use in the context of the activity.

One or more spare paddle(s) as appropriate for the activity context must be carried.

7.2.5 Lifejackets

The type, level and design of lifejacket used must be appropriate for the activity context and must comply with the *marine safety agency* requirements for the jurisdiction.

Refer to Appendix A2.2 for current standards and selection considerations.

7.2.6 Helmets

The type of helmet used must be appropriate for use in the context of the activity.

7.2.7 Rescue equipment requirements

The rescue equipment to be available to *activity leaders* must be appropriate for use in the context of the activity.

Rescue equipment must be fit for purpose and appropriate for use in the context of the activity. Where rescue equipment is used in static-load applications (e.g. abseil rescue or rope ascent in canyon environments), refer to the Abseiling and Climbing Good Practice Guide for safe working load considerations.

Rescue equipment each *activity leader* must have readily available for use includes:

- a whistle appropriate for water environments
- a suitable means of cutting rope
- a throw-bag for Grade 1 or above waterways or rapids
- when canoeing, kayaking or using similar paddle-craft, a releasable means of towing a paddle-craft
- when rafting a flip line.

Throw bags must be of an appropriate design and use floating rope.

Additional rescue equipment that may be required includes but is not limited to:

- life jackets with a releasable rescue harness for *activity leaders*
- carabiners
- pulleys
- slings
- a static low stretch rope of appropriate length for the river width or environment
- additional throw bags.

The additional rescue equipment:

- must be available when paddling on white-water Grade 2 or above
- should be available when paddling on white-water Grade 1.

7.2.8 Navigation equipment

The type of navigational equipment and aids must be appropriate for use in the context of the activity.

Refer to a list of equipment to consider in Appendix A3 Equipment.

7.2.9 Other equipment

Carrying appropriate extra clothing or *personal thermal protection* must be considered.

Consideration for carrying extra clothing or *personal thermal protection* may include:

- the participants involved
- the paddling conditions
- the duration of the activity.

Refer to a list of equipment to consider in Appendix A3 Equipment.

7.3 Pre-use checks, serviceability and hygiene

All equipment must be checked for serviceability prior to its use.

Procedures must be used so that relevant provided equipment is hygienic.

Provided equipment that may require hygiene procedures includes but is not limited to:

- wetsuits
- footwear
- helmets
- other personal attire.

7.3.1 Paddle-craft

Consideration for checking the serviceability of *paddle-craft* should include:

- the suitable type of paddle-craft for the activity
- they are in an appropriate condition for the activity
- have appropriate attachment points to tow or grasp by hand
- have the appropriate buoyancy to float should they capsize
- any fittings to make the craft watertight are in place.

7.3.2 Rafts and inflatable kayaks

All rafts must have:

- a bailer system
- a bow line and stern line
- an appropriate system to stow any lines so they cannot become an entrapment hazard including if a raft flips or wraps
- an outside line.

A group of rafts rafting together must have:

- spare paddles
- an inflation pump
- appropriate additional rescue equipment (refer 6.1.7 Rescue equipment requirements)
- an appropriate raft repair kit.

Consideration should be given to fitting rafts and inflatable kayaks with *tab handholds* underneath the floor to assist climbing onto it if it flips upside down.

7.3.3 Paddles

All paddles must float.

7.3.4 Life jackets

Life jackets used must be:

- the correct size for the person
- adjusted and used correctly.

Life jackets must be worn at all appropriate times during the activity.

Inflatable lifejacket (i.e. automatic or manual inflating lifejackets) designs should not be used with paddle-craft. (Refer to Inflatable lifejackets in Appendix A2.2.1).

7.3.5 Helmets

Helmet use must be based on a *risk assessment* of the potential for head injury during the activity.

Helmets should be worn:

- on white-water
- where during the activity obstructions could impact the head (e.g. shallow fast-flowing rivers with submerged rocks, logs across rivers, large *open water* with breaking waves)
- where movement outside the craft occurs on very slippery surfaces.

Helmets used must be:

- the correct size for the person
- adjusted and used correctly.

The *activity leader* should be easily identifiable to the group within the activity context (for example by helmet, jacket, rashie or other clearly distinguishing item).

7.3.6 Rescue equipment use

Appropriate rescue equipment must be readily available for use.

7.4 First aid equipment and medication

See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics).

7.5 Communications equipment

See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics).

7.6 Use of equipment

See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics).

7.7 Transport

See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics).

7.8 Maintenance of equipment

Equipment and inspection records must conform with any law or regulation requirements.

The harshness of the environment must be considered in developing procedures relating to equipment maintenance and serviceability.

All equipment should be inspected periodically that it is serviceable.

Personal equipment (e.g. *personal thermal protection*, wetsuits, helmets etc.) should be hygienically cleaned after use.

It is recommended that relevant equipment should be individually identifiable to assist manage equipment maintenance and serviceability.

A retirement of equipment procedure should be developed.

Considerations for a retirement of equipment procedure may include but is not limited to:

- type of use
- frequency of use
- prevailing conditions when used
- actual deterioration, wear and tear
- extreme usage events or patterns
- age
- years in service

- manufacturers recommendations.

See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics) for the general requirements and further detail.

7.9 Storage of equipment

Activity equipment should be stored in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations or instructions.

Considerations for storage of equipment may include but is not limited to:

- equipment is clean and dry
- the storage is free from harmful chemicals
- the storage is free from damp conditions
- the storage is free from environmental exposure including Ultra Violet (UV) light
- and avoids extremes of temperature
- the storage is free from interference of fauna or vermin.

See Core GPG (Equipment and logistics) for the general requirements and further detail.

8 Responsibilities and roles

This section sets out the responsibilities and roles of persons involved in the planning and delivery of *inland water* paddlecraft activities under this guide. It should be read in conjunction with the Core Good Practice Guide (Core GPG), which establishes the generic framework applying to all outdoor activities.

8.1 Responsibilities and roles framework

See Core GPG Section 8.1 — the responsibilities and roles framework, including the three-tier structure of Leader, *Assistant Leader* and *Support person*, applies without modification to *inland water* paddlecraft activities delivered under this guide.

8.2 Naming conventions

See Core GPG Section 8.2. This guide uses the following activity-specific titles in place of the generic Core GPG role terms:

Paddling guide — equivalent to Leader in the Core GPG.
Paddling support — equivalent to *Assistant Leader* in the Core GPG.
Support person — the Core GPG term is used unchanged (see Core GPG Section 8.4.3).

Industry equivalent titles for the paddling guide role include river guide and trip leader. Where a provider uses any of these titles, the equivalent role for the purposes of this guide is the paddling guide as described in this section.

8.3 Provider responsibilities to prepare and support leaders

See Core GPG Section 8.3 — the provider responsibilities to prepare and support leaders apply without modification to *inland water* paddlecraft activities delivered under this guide.

8.4 Leader responsibilities and role descriptions

See Core GPG Section 8.4 — the leader responsibilities and role descriptions, including the role descriptions for Leader (8.4.1), *Assistant Leader* (8.4.2) and *Support person* (8.4.3), and the leader fitness for work requirements (8.4.4), apply without modification to *inland water* paddlecraft activities delivered under this guide.

8.4.1 Leader — operational responsibility in the field

The Leader carries operational responsibility in the field for the activity and all participants, working within the provider's system and direction; see Section 8.4.1 of the Core GPG for the full role description.

8.4.2 Assistant Leader — delegated responsibility

The *Assistant Leader* supports the Leader and carries delegated operational responsibility for defined elements or participant groups, operating under the Leader's direction; see Section 8.4.2 of the Core GPG for the full role description.

8.4.3 Support person

The *Support person* is a non-technical role that assists *activity leaders* in managing participants and does not carry the technical responsibilities of a Leader or *Assistant Leader*; see Section 8.4.3 of the Core GPG for the full role description.

8.4.4 Leader fitness for work

Leaders must be physically and mentally fit for work; providers must take reasonable steps to manage risks arising from alcohol, medication, other substances and fatigue; see Section 8.4.4 of the Core GPG.

8.4.4.1 Physical and psychosocial fitness

The provider must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that each person assigned to a Leader or *Assistant Leader* role is physically and psychosocially capable of the demands of the activity — including the physical demands of paddling in moving water conditions and managing participants in water-based environments; see Section 8.4.4.1 of the Core GPG.

8.4.4.2 Alcohol, medication and other substances

Alcohol and other substance consumption should be discouraged during or immediately before an activity where it could impair a leader's performance; see Section 8.4.4.1 of the Core GPG.

8.4.4.3 Fatigue

Physical and mental fatigue creates significant risk; providers must implement reasonable controls including appropriate scheduling, role allocation and self-assessment procedures; see Section 8.4.4.2 of the Core GPG.

8.5 Leader readiness and capability

See Core GPG Section 8.5 — the leader readiness and capability requirements, including the leadership KSE principle (8.5.1), the KSE framework (8.5.2), first-aid requirements (8.5.3), knowledge and skill acquisition (8.5.4), verification (8.5.5), currency (8.5.6) and records (8.5.7), apply without modification to *inland water* paddlecraft activities delivered under this guide.

The detailed knowledge, skill and experience required of a Leader (paddling guide) is set out in Appendix M of this guide, and of an *Assistant Leader* (paddling support) in Appendix N.

8.5.1 Leadership knowledge, skill and experience

The provider must ensure each person in a Leader or *Assistant Leader* role holds integrated knowledge, skill and experience across the nine domains of the Outdoor Leader KSE Framework appropriate to the activity and context; see Section 8.5.1 of the Core GPG.

8.5.2 Provider responsibilities under the Outdoor Leader KSE Framework

Providers must verify the capability of every person assigned to a Leader or *Assistant Leader* role across the nine domains of the AAAS Outdoor Leader KSE Framework, scaled to the activity variant, setting and participant group; see Section 8.5.2 of the Core GPG.

8.5.3 First aid

Leaders must hold a current first-aid qualification appropriate to the activity, environment and applicable work health and safety law(s) and/or regulation(s); see Section 8.5.3 of the Core GPG.

8.5.4 Knowledge and skill acquisition

Knowledge, skill and experience may be developed through, but is not limited to, formal qualifications, industry training, provider-based programs or a combination; see Section 8.5.4 of the Core GPG.

8.5.5 Verification

For each person in a Leader or *Assistant Leader* role, the provider must verify knowledge, skill, experience and currency in context before the person carries the role; see Section 8.5.5 of the Core GPG.

8.5.6 Currency

Knowledge, skill and experience must be current. The provider must determine the minimum currency and recency requirements for each Leader and *Assistant Leader* role and verify these before each activity; see Section 8.5.6 of the Core GPG.

8.5.7 Verification and Currency Records

Providers must maintain records of how verification was conducted — including the basis, method, date and person responsible — for each person in a Leader or *Assistant Leader* role; see Section 8.5.7 of the Core GPG.

Glossary

Also refer to terms and definitions in Core GPG.

AAAS: Australian Adventure Activity Standard – See Introduction for details.

Aeration: mixing of air and water to form bubbles and froth. The level of aeration of water effects the amount of buoyancy the water provides to a swimmer or watercraft. Paddling in white-water that involves higher levels of water aeration may indicate the need for wearing lifejackets with higher levels of buoyancy.

Camping: the use of a temporary site for overnight camping.

Coastal Waters (Also known as open water, unprotected): All waters other than *inland waters* or *enclosed waters* and extending a specific number of *nautical miles* seaward. Refer to the relevant *marine safety agency* for the jurisdiction of operation for details. (Jurisdictions define the *coastal waters* number of *nautical miles* seaward differently but generally this is between 2 and 3 *nautical miles*.)

Enclosed waters (also known as partially smooth, semi-protected, intermediate and sheltered.): waters that include enclosed coastal bays, harbours, declared port waters and similar waters that are generally offer some form of limited protection from the environment or weather. *Enclosed waters* can be the interface between *inland waters* and/or *coastal waters*. The relevant *marine safety agency* for the jurisdiction of operation will generally declare what areas are considered *enclosed waters*. Refer to the relevant *marine safety agency* for details.

Flash Flooding: is flooding in a localised area with a rapid onset.

Flat-water: a waterway or body of water that is not *white-water*.

GPGs: Good Practice Guide(s) – See Introduction for details.

Grade: an indication of the degree of difficulty of a rapid and/or waterway based on the International Scale of River Difficulty as adopted in the international river grading system (refer Appendix T for the scale used in this GPG and source citation).

Inland waters (Also known as smooth waters, protected waters or inland waterways): waters that include rivers (inside the seaward entrance), creeks, canals, lakes, reservoirs and any similar waters either naturally formed or manmade and which are either publicly or privately owned, but does not include any navigable rivers, creeks or streams within declared port waters. Refer to the relevant *marine safety agency* for the jurisdiction of operation for details of declared port waters.

Handhold: a short length of permanently fixed tape that is just long enough to hang onto and create a handhold. Permanently attached to the underside of a raft or inflatable kayak, they are used as a handhold to help a person to climb onto of the upside-down craft. As the tab does not form a loop, it flows through the water and does not become an entrapment hazard or potential snag.

Inline paddle-craft: *paddle-craft* designed so that all persons on-board are positioned one behind the other. For example, two person canoes, kayaks, inflatable kayaks etc.

Land manager: the party that has legal responsibility for managing a particular environment. This may include the power to restrict access or place conditions and/or requirements on anyone accessing that particular environment. Includes managers of rivers, waterways and other bodies of water (also see *land owner*).

Lifejacket: a worn device that provides the wearer with additional buoyancy in water. (Also known as Personal floatation device (PFD))

Marine safety agency: the statutory organisation that regulates the safety of watercraft and their operations, in the jurisdiction the activity is conducted.

Nautical Mile: a *nautical mile* (M) is a unit of distance equal to 1,852 metres (1.852km).

Open waters: All waters that are not *coastal waters*, *inland waters* or *enclosed waters*.

Paddle-craft: a type of watercraft propelled and manoeuvred by the user.

Personal thermal protection: clothing worn to mitigate the effects of the temperature of the environment.

Rapid(s): part of a waterway where the geological features cause increased water speed, turbulence and/or other hydrological feature(s).

River hazard(s): a hazard created by a watercourse's geology and flora, the water within it or a combination of both. Common *river hazards* include but is not limited to: level of aeration of the water, drops, entrapment points, fast flowing water, floating objects, undercut rocks, re-circulations, rapids, sieves, strainers, submerged objects etc.

Safety boat: a watercraft operated by a *safety boater* that has been specifically designated to providing safety coverage during an activity. For example, a safety kayaker using a white-water kayak providing on-river safety coverage during a raft trip, a rescue boat used to assist canoe activities on a lake etc.

Safety boater: an *activity leader* who has the additional skills, knowledge and experience necessary to provide safety support from a *safety boat*. (Refer *safety boat* for examples.)

Sea kayaking: involves paddling a *paddle-craft* on waters that are not *inland waters*.

Self-guide raft: a raft guided by a *participant*, with the *activity leader* in a separate watercraft.

White-water: a section of a waterway where the water current or tidal movement is sufficient to create hydrological feature(s). Hydrological feature(s) may include but not limited to rapids, eddies, waves, whirlpools etc.

Acronyms

The following acronyms are used in this Good Practice Guide.

AAAS: Australian Adventure Activity Standard

AED: Automated External Defibrillator

EPIRB: Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon

GPG: Good Practice Guide

ISO: International Organization for Standardization

NATA: National Association of Testing Authorities

OCA: Outdoor Council of Australia

PFD: Personal Floatation Device

PLB: Personal Locator Beacon

SWL: Safe Working Load

UV: Ultraviolet

Appendices

Appendix A Principal legal obligations

See Core GPG (Appendix A).

Appendix B Management of Risk

See Core GPG (Appendix B).

Appendix C Summary of AS ISO 31000 – risk management

See Core GPG (Appendix C).

Appendix D Risk management process

See Core GPG (Appendix D).

Appendix E Risk analysis information

See Core GPG (Appendix E).

Appendix F Risk management plan template examples

See Core GPG (Appendix F).

Appendix G Dynamic risk assessment process

See Core GPG (Appendix G).

Appendix H Benefit–Risk Assessment

See Core GPG (Appendix H).

Appendix I Emergency management planning framework

See Core GPG (Appendix I).

Appendix J Health & wellbeing considerations for risk management

See Core GPG (Appendix J).

Appendix K Privacy of information

See Core GPG (Appendix K).

Appendix L Environmental sustainability procedures

See Core GPG (Appendix L).

Appendix M First aid and medication considerations

See Core GPG (Appendix M).

Appendix N Knowledge, skill and experience — Leader

Each knowledge, skill and experience requirement in this appendix is to be applied by the provider within the context of the planned inland water paddlecraft activity — including the activity variant, setting, participant group and operational context. Providers must scale the requirements of this appendix to the scope and complexity of their program.

Activity scope and leader requirements

Inland water paddlecraft activities encompass a wide range of craft types (canoes, kayaks, rafts and stand-up paddleboards) and water environments, from flat-water lakes and calm rivers through to Grade 3 moving water. The knowledge, skill and experience required of a paddling guide varies with the craft type and water grade in which they operate.

The table below identifies the primary activity variants and their implications for the technical requirements of the Leader role. A Leader must hold competence appropriate to the highest craft type and water grade in which they operate.

Table N.1: Activity variants and operating settings — inland water paddlecraft

Activity variant	Setting and characteristics
Flatwater paddling — lakes and calm rivers	Still or slow-moving water; sheltered from wind; close to shore; single-day; suitable for all craft types.
Open water paddling	Lakes and reservoirs with wind fetch; distance from shore; canoes, kayaks and SUPs; single-day.
Moving water — Grade 1–2	Gentle to moderate current; defined channels; some hydraulic features; canoes and kayaks; single-day.
Moving water — Grade 2–3	Moderate to difficult rapids; defined hydraulic features; technical line selection required; kayaks and rafts; experienced groups.
Multi-day river or lake touring	Remote waterways; loaded craft; portage; campsite management; permit requirements; extended logistics.

For the purposes of this guide, open water means a water body where participants may be exposed to significant wind fetch, wave action or distance from shore. Providers must determine whether the specific water body meets this definition and apply the requirements of the relevant activity variant accordingly.

The program planning matrix (leader-matching tool), which scales leader requirements by the operational context — provided in Appendix O — must be applied when determining the Leader required for a specific paddlecraft program.

Safety and risk management

the Leader identifies and manages hazards specific to inland water paddlecraft activities, including hydraulic features, cold water immersion, entrapment and flood risk.

Knowledge

The Leader understands the mechanisms by which hydraulic features, cold water, strainers and flood events create risk for paddlers across the water grades and craft types used in the program.

This should include, but is not limited to: holes, stoppers, weirs, siphons, undercut rocks and entrapment dynamics in moving water; strainer and sweeper identification, avoidance strategies and self-rescue options for different water grades; cold water immersion including physiological effects of cold shock and hypothermia, incapacitation timelines and their implications for rescue response; flood risk indicators including rising water levels, changed water grade, debris loading and the relationship between upstream rainfall and downstream conditions; capsizing and swimming risks in flatwater and moving water including self-rescue and assisted rescue capability for each craft type; weather hazards on open water including

wind and lightning risk; and higher-risk participant characteristics including non-swimmers, low body mass, cold sensitivity and relevant medical conditions.

Skills

The Leader applies hazard identification, condition assessment and go/no-go decision skills to manage the primary risks of inland water paddlecraft across the water grades and waterways used in the program.

This should include, but is not limited to: identifying hydraulic hazards from the bank and on the water and positioning the group to avoid or manage exposure; communicating identified hazards to participants and the Assistant Leader before the group approaches; assessing water grade and flow conditions against the capability of the group and craft and adjusting the itinerary if conditions have changed; and monitoring weather conditions throughout the activity and applying pre-determined go/no-go criteria.

Experience recommended

The Leader has paddled across the water grades used in the program, managed capsize situations in moving water and made consequential go/no-go decisions based on hydraulic and weather conditions.

This should include but is not limited to: paddling across the water grades used in the program in conditions representative of those encountered in the activity; managing capsize and swimmer situations in moving water; and making consequential go/no-go decisions based on hydraulic and weather conditions.

Technical activity leadership

This domain covers the technical knowledge, skill and experience specific to inland water paddlecraft. The primary variables are craft type (canoe, kayak, raft, SUP) and water grade. Capability must extend to the highest craft type and water grade in which the Leader operates.

Knowledge

The Leader understands the handling characteristics, capsize dynamics and rescue implications of each craft type used in the program, as well as the paddle strokes, river reading skills and rescue equipment applicable to the water grades in which they operate.

This should include, but is not limited to: craft type characteristics including handling, capsize dynamics, appropriate use and rescue implications of open canoes, sea/touring kayaks, whitewater kayaks, rafts and stand-up paddleboards; paddle strokes including forward, sweep, draw, brace, rudder and sculling for each craft type, correct technique and instruction methods; river reading including identifying hydraulic features, assessing water grade, scouting rapids and selecting lines for the group; capsize recovery and rescue including wet exit, assisted re-entry and eskimo roll where applicable for each craft type; rescue equipment including throw-bag deployment and retrieval, tow lines, rescue vests (life jackets) and Z-drag systems; lifejackets and helmets including selection, fitting and condition assessment for all participant types and water grades; and whitewater techniques for Grade 2 and above including eddy turns, ferry glides, peel-outs and breakout technique.

Skills

The Leader applies craft-specific paddling, rescue and instruction skills across the water grades and craft types used in the program.

This should include, but is not limited to: performing craft-specific paddle strokes and demonstrating correct technique to participant groups; executing capsize recovery for each craft type and water grade used including wet exit, assisted re-entry and eskimo roll where applicable; deploying throw bags and rescue equipment effectively in moving water; and managing a group through Grade 2 to 3 rapids using eddy turns, staged progression and lead-sweep positioning.

Experience recommended

The Leader has guided groups across the water grades and craft types used in the program, conducted capsize and rescue practice sessions and managed throw-bag rescues in field conditions.

This should include but is not limited to: guiding groups across the water grades and craft types used in the program; conducting capsize and rescue practice sessions for participant groups; managing throw-bag rescues and assisted re-entry in conditions representative of the program environment; and paddling solo in each craft type and across each water grade used in the program, moving with ease and confidence in conditions representative of the program environment.

Leadership and group management

This domain covers the group management challenges specific to inland water paddlecraft, including lead-sweep positioning, mixed craft management and rapid sequencing.

Knowledge

The Leader understands lead-sweep positioning systems, mixed craft and ability group management requirements and the rapid sequencing principles that apply to moving water environments.

This should include, but is not limited to: lead-sweep positioning and visual coverage models for flatwater and moving water using a lead guide and sweep support person; mixed craft and ability group management including adapting group formation, spacing and pace to the least capable paddler; and rapid management for Grade 2 and above including staged group progression through rapids, holding eddies and positioning rescue coverage before the group proceeds.

Skills

The Leader applies lead-sweep positioning, group formation and coordination skills to manage paddlecraft groups safely across the water grades used in the program.

This should include, but is not limited to: positioning the group using lead-sweep coverage and adjusting formation for the water grade and craft types; managing participant spacing and pace on moving water to prevent compound incidents in rapid sequences or narrow channels; and coordinating the Assistant Leader in a sweep position and briefing responsibilities before the activity commences.

Experience recommended

The Leader has led groups on moving water using lead-sweep positioning, managed mixed craft groups and coordinated an Assistant Leader in a sweep role.

This should include but is not limited to: leading groups on moving water across the water grades used in the program; managing mixed craft groups on rivers and lakes; and coordinating an Assistant Leader in a sweep role in field conditions.

Decision-making and judgement

This domain covers decision-making requirements specific to inland water paddlecraft, including go/no-go criteria for water grade, flow and participant capability.

Knowledge

The Leader understands the go/no-go thresholds, scouting and portage decision criteria and mid-activity modification triggers applicable to the waterways and water grades used in the program.

This should include, but is not limited to: pre-determined go/no-go thresholds for water level, flow rate, weather and participant and group capability for the waterways used in the program; scouting and portage decision criteria including indicators requiring mandatory scouting before group entry and mandatory portage around hydraulic hazards; and mid-activity modification triggers including criteria for changing the route, turning back or evacuating based on changed conditions.

Skills

The Leader applies river gauge assessment, scouting and decision-making skills to make and communicate go/no-go, portage and route modification decisions.

This should include, but is not limited to: reading river gauges and assessing flow data against go/no-go thresholds for the planned waterway; scouting rapids before the group proceeds and making portage

decisions based on rapid assessment; and making and communicating mid-activity route modifications or early exit decisions in response to changed conditions.

Experience recommended

The Leader has made go/no-go, portage and plan change decisions in moving water environments in conditions relevant to the program.

This should include but is not limited to: making go/no-go and portage decisions on moving water in conditions relevant to the program; and managing at least one significant plan change or early exit due to water level or weather change in a field context.

Planning and program management

This domain covers planning requirements specific to inland water paddlecraft that extend beyond the generic planning framework in the Core.

Knowledge

The Leader understands the permit, logistics and emergency communication planning requirements for inland water paddlecraft activities in the environments used.

This should include, but is not limited to: waterway permits, access agreements and land manager requirements for the specific rivers or lakes to be used; multi-day touring logistics including food and water supply, portage planning, campsite selection above flood level, resupply and equipment for extended journeys; emergency communication planning for remote waterways including satellite communicators, PLBs, pre-departure notification arrangements and evacuation routes with limited vehicle access; and participant screening including swimming ability, relevant medical conditions and prior paddling experience appropriate to the activity.

Skills

The Leader applies permit management, multi-day logistics planning and emergency communication planning skills to paddlecraft activity preparation.

This should include, but is not limited to: confirming waterway permits and access requirements and integrating these into the activity plan; planning multi-day food, water and portage logistics for river and lake journeys; and planning emergency communication for areas without mobile coverage and completing pre-departure notification requirements.

Experience recommended

The Leader has planned and delivered multi-day paddlecraft journeys with permit, logistics and emergency communication requirements.

This should include but is not limited to: planning and delivering multi-day paddlecraft journeys with permit, logistics and emergency communication requirements; and completing pre-departure notification requirements for remote waterway activities.

Environment and place-based knowledge

This domain covers the environmental and waterway knowledge specific to inland water paddlecraft environments.

Knowledge

The Leader understands river hydrology and flood dynamics, site-specific structural hazards on regulated waterways, invasive aquatic species management and navigation requirements for the waterways used in the program.

This should include, but is not limited to: river hydrology and flood dynamics including reading river gauges, flood warning systems, seasonal flow patterns and the relationship between upstream rainfall and downstream water level; site-specific structural hazards on regulated waterways including weirs, irrigation intakes and hydroelectric release schedules; invasive aquatic species management including identification

and biosecurity protocols for priority invasive species at put-in and take-out points; and navigation for remote waterway journeys including map reading, GPS use and river kilometre markers.

Skills

The Leader applies river gauge assessment, structural hazard identification, biosecurity and navigation skills to paddlecraft activity planning and delivery.

This should include, but is not limited to: reading and interpreting river gauge data and flood warning information and applying to the activity plan; identifying site-specific structural hazards and integrating these into the hazard briefing and route planning; and applying aquatic biosecurity protocols at put-in and take-out points.

Experience recommended

The Leader has paddled the activity waterway or equivalent environment across a range of conditions and seasons and is familiar with its site-specific hazard patterns.

This should include but is not limited to: paddling the activity waterway or equivalent environment across a range of conditions and seasons; and familiarity with seasonal hazard patterns and site-specific structural hazards for the relevant waterway.

Communication and interpersonal skills

This domain covers communication requirements specific to inland water paddlecraft, where moving water and rapid noise frequently limit voice communication between leader and participant.

Knowledge

The Leader understands paddle and whistle signal conventions, on-water briefing techniques and emergency communication options for remote waterway environments.

This should include, but is not limited to: universal and provider-specific paddle and whistle signal systems and the signals used to manage a group in rapid sequences; techniques for briefing participants at river-noise locations including positioning, voice projection and the use of eddies as natural briefing points; and emergency communication devices for remote waterway environments including satellite communicator operation, PLB registration and use and radio communication where available.

Skills

The Leader applies on-water briefing, paddle and whistle signal and emergency communication device skills in program delivery.

This should include, but is not limited to: delivering effective pre-activity and in-river briefings using paddle and whistle signal protocols; using paddle and whistle signals to manage the group in a rapid sequence when voice communication is impractical; and operating satellite communication devices and PLBs in a remote waterway environment.

Experience recommended

The Leader has used on-water communication systems in active program delivery and has prior experience with satellite communication or PLB use in a remote paddling context where relevant.

This should include but is not limited to: using paddle and whistle signals in active program delivery across the water grades used in the program; and prior experience with satellite communication or PLB use in a remote paddling context where relevant.

Self-management and professional practice

Not modified for inland water paddlecraft — the requirements of Core GPG Appendix M (domain M.8) apply in full.

Outdoor living, activity and travel skills

This domain covers the field skills specific to inland water paddlecraft, including loaded craft management and remote river camping.

Knowledge

The Leader understands the loaded craft management, remote camping and tidal flatwater requirements for multi-day and specialist paddlecraft programs.

This should include, but is not limited to: loaded craft trim and stability management for multi-day touring with camping gear in canoes, kayaks and rafts; remote river camping logistics including campsite selection above estimated flood level, food storage, waste management and leave-no-trace practice on remote waterways; and tidal flatwater considerations for estuarine and coastal lake environments including managing tidal current, wind-against-tide conditions and landing on exposed tidal shores.

Skills

The Leader applies loaded craft management, campsite selection and minimum-impact skills in multi-day and remote paddlecraft programs.

This should include, but is not limited to: packing, trimming and managing loaded touring craft for multi-day journeys; and selecting campsites above flood level and applying leave-no-trace practice in remote river and lake environments.

Experience recommended

The Leader has conducted multi-day paddlecraft touring with loaded craft and selected and managed campsites in remote waterway environments.

This should include but is not limited to: conducting multi-day river or lake touring with loaded craft in conditions relevant to the program; and selecting and managing campsites in remote waterway environments.

Appendix O Knowledge, skill and experience — Assistant Leader

This appendix sets out the knowledge, skill and experience expected of an Assistant Leader (paddling support) for inland water paddlecraft activities. The Assistant Leader operates under the direction of the Leader and carries delegated operational responsibility for defined tasks or participant subgroups. The requirements in this appendix are to be read in conjunction with Appendix M and the Core GPG.

Safety and risk management

As for Safety and risk management — applied at the level of the delegated tasks. The Assistant Leader must be able to identify the primary hydraulic and environmental hazards for the water grade on which they are operating and alert the Leader promptly to any developing hazard, changed condition or participant safety concern.

Technical activity leadership

As for Technical activity leadership — applied to the delegated tasks only. The Assistant Leader must hold paddle skills and capsize recovery capability appropriate to the craft type and water grade on which they are operating and must be able to assist participants in their assigned area.

Leadership and group management

As for Leadership and group management — applied to the sweep or flank position assigned by the Leader. The Assistant Leader maintains visual coverage of the rear of the group, relays communications and manages individual participant concerns within their assigned area.

Decision-making and judgement

As for Decision-making and judgement — limited to the scope of decisions delegated by the Leader. The Assistant Leader applies the go/no-go and portage criteria established by the Leader, communicates changed conditions promptly and makes immediate safety decisions within the scope of their assigned role.

Planning and program management

As for Planning and program management — limited to supporting the Leader's plans. The Assistant Leader must be familiar with the activity plan, emergency response plan, communication protocols and their assigned role within those plans.

Environment and place-based knowledge

As for Environment and place-based knowledge — sufficient for the assigned role. The Assistant Leader must understand the environmental hazards relevant to the specific waterway and season including site-specific structural hazards, and must be able to apply biosecurity protocols at put-in and take-out points.

Communication and interpersonal skills

As for Communication and interpersonal skills — applied to the Assistant Leader role. The Assistant Leader uses the paddle and whistle signal protocols established for the activity, maintains communication with the Leader throughout and communicates promptly with participants in their assigned area.

Self-management and professional practice

As for Self-management and professional practice — applied to the Assistant Leader role. The Assistant Leader must self-assess fitness for work, maintain paddling and rescue currency appropriate to the water grades and craft types in which they operate and perform within the boundaries of the delegated role.

Outdoor living, activity and travel skills

As for Outdoor living, activity and travel skills — applied to the delegated tasks. For multi-day programs, the Assistant Leader must be able to manage a loaded craft and apply leave-no-trace practice in remote waterway environments within the scope of the tasks delegated by the Leader.

Appendix P Recognition of competence: pathways to verification

See Core GPG Appendix P. The recognition-of-competence pathways — formal qualifications and training, provider-based assessment and prior learning — apply without modification to inland water paddlecraft activities.

Appendix Q Indicative experience bands and evidence expectations

See Core GPG Appendix Q. The indicative experience bands and evidence expectations support the provider's verification of leader experience for inland water paddlecraft activities.

Appendix R Australian Bureau of Meteorology weather warnings and trigger points

See Core GPG (Appendix R).

Appendix S Program planning matrix: leader-matching tool

See Core GPG Appendix O. The program planning matrix (leader-matching tool) applies without modification to inland water paddlecraft activities.

Appendix T River Grading based on the International River Grading System

See the Core GPG.

Appendix U Equipment standards

Relevant equipment standards (or the equivalent) that must be considered:

Helmets

EN 1385:2012 Helmets for canoeing and white water sports

Considerations for helmets must include but is not limited to:

- provide ample protection to the head from impacts
- have a good system to absorb the shock from impacts
- be adjustable to provide a good fit and remain comfortable
- have an effective fastener to secure the helmet in place
- have enough positive buoyancy to float
- be made of a suitable, strong, lightweight material.

Lifejackets

The *marine safety agency* lifejacket standards or specifications for the jurisdiction of the activity must be complied with.

Considerations for lifejackets used for paddle-craft must include but is not limited to:

- the appropriate type, features and level is used for the activity
- provides sufficient additional buoyancy for the type of water environment
- does not restrict essential movement or ability to exit the paddle-craft if required
- the design allows the wearer to use the 'white-water float position' and swim both offensively and defensively.
- is of a high-visibility colour and may include reflective tape to assist rescue authorities in low-light or poor-visibility conditions.

Lifejacket level 100+ (formerly known as Type 1)

Relevant standards for Lifejacket level 100+ (formerly known as Type 1):

- the current Australian Standard for Lifejackets (currently AS 4758.1:2022; AS 4758.1:2015 remains accepted in some jurisdictions during transition periods — check with the marine safety agency for the jurisdiction of the activity)
- any standard or specifications approved by the *marine safety agency* for the jurisdiction of the activity
- where approved by a "recognised appraiser" (see A2.2.2 below):
- International Standard ISO 12402-2:2020 Personal flotation devices Part 2: Lifejackets, performance level 275 – Safety requirements
- International Standard ISO 12402-3:2020 Personal flotation devices Part 3: Lifejackets, performance level 150 – Safety requirements
- International Standard ISO 12402-4:2020 Personal flotation devices Part 4: Lifejackets, performance level 100 – Safety requirements
- New Zealand Standards NZS 5823:2005 Specification for buoyancy aids and marine safety harnesses and lines

Lifejacket level 50 and 50S (formerly known as Type 2 and Type 3)

Relevant standards for Lifejacket level 50 (formerly known as Type 2) and Lifejacket level 50S (formerly known as Type 3):

- the current Australian Standard for Lifejackets (currently AS 4758.1:2022; AS 4758.1:2015 remains accepted in some jurisdictions during transition periods — check with the marine safety agency for the jurisdiction of the activity)

- any standard or specifications approved by the *marine safety agency* for the jurisdiction of the activity
- where approved by a "recognised appraiser" (see A2.2.2 below): International Standard ISO 12402-5:2020 Personal flotation devices Part 5: Buoyancy aids (level 50) – Safety requirements

As of the date of publication, Australian Standard AS 4758.1:2022 has been issued. Some jurisdictions retain transitional acceptance of AS 4758.1:2015 (e.g. Victoria until July 2028). Confirm current jurisdictional acceptance with the marine safety agency before relying on this Appendix.

U2.2.1 Inflatable lifejackets

It is strongly recommended that inflatable lifejacket designs (i.e. automatic or manual inflating lifejackets) are NOT used with paddle-craft.

U2.2.2 Recognised appraiser

A "recognised appraiser" may include:

- a certifying body accredited by the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS–ANZ), or
- a laboratory with National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accreditation, or
- a notified body in accordance with the European Union Maritime Equipment Directive, Module B (MED–B), or
- a body approved by *marine safety agency*.

Rafts and inflatable kayaks

ISO 6185-1:2001 Inflatable boats —Part 1: Boats with a maximum motor power rating of 4.5 kW

Other types of craft

All other craft: Where there is no craft design standard the craft needs to appropriate for the activity and conditions. Guidance as to what are the key requirements for various types of craft can be found at Paddle Australia website. See https://paddle.org.au/education-safety/safety-guidelines-v2/#Equipment

For inflatable kayaks refer to raft and inflatable kayak standards above.

Items requiring an appropriate safe working load

Some equipment may be placed under load during rescues and recoveries. Equipment that is placed under load needs to designed and manufactured to work under load and have an appropriate *safe working load* (SWL) to avoid it failing during a critical task or creating other risks (e.g. injuring users). Additional details regard SWL and equipment requirements for equipment working under load can be found in the Abseiling and Climbing Good Practice Guide. Equipment requiring an appropriate SWL may include:

- accessory cord
- braking devices
- carabiners or other connectors
- descending devices
- lanyards
- rope clamps
- rope – dynamic or static
- pulleys
- slings, tape or webbing.

Appendix V Equipment

Paddles

Considerations for all types of paddle-craft should include but is not limited to:

- appropriate for the type of craft
- appropriate to the build and skill levels of the participants
- the paddle will float if lost overboard.

Paddle-craft related

Additional paddle-craft equipment may include but is not limited to:

- spray decks when applicable
- suitable spare paddles
- suitable inflation pump(s) for inflatable paddle-craft
- where appropriate a suitable means of securing craft to prevent it floating away.

Emergency response equipment

Emergency equipment must include:

- appropriate rescue equipment (see 6.1.7 Rescue equipment requirements)
- an appropriate communication device (see Core GPG - Equipment/Communication equipment and communication equipment list below)
- first aid kit (see Core GPG - Equipment/First aid equipment and medication) in waterproof storage
- documentation (see Core GPG - Emergency management planning and Activity leader required documentation)
- a waterproof method of storing and carrying documentation and communications equipment.

Additional emergency equipment may include but is not limited to:

- waterproof matches
- fuel stove and associated equipment for heating water and/or food
- shelter for injured person (e.g. small tent, bivvy bag, tarp or space blanket)
- insulated mat
- sleeping bag.

Navigation equipment

Navigation equipment may include but is not limited to:

- compass
- GPS
- appropriate maps
- spare batteries for GPS.

Communication equipment

Communications equipment may include but is not limited to:

- emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB)
- flares
- light source (e.g. torch, strobe light, chemical light stick)
- mobile phone
- personal locator beacon (PLB)
- satellite phone/communicator
- signalling mirror
- two-way radio (marine or UHF as appropriate)
- whistles appropriate to water environment.

Repair kit

Repair equipment may include but is not limited to:

- duct tape
- inflatable paddle-craft material repair kit
- paddle repair kit
- spare fittings (e.g. valve, plug or bung)

- tools appropriate to assist repairs.

Personal items

Personal items may include but is not limited to:

- contact lens or glasses
- drink bottle
- lip balm
- medication
- personal hygiene products
- sun glasses
- sun screen.

Clothing

Clothing may include but is not limited to:

- appropriate footwear
- personal thermal protection clothing (e.g. wetsuits, dry suits, thermal underwear, fleece, beanies etc.)
- sun hats
- sun protection clothing (e.g. 'rash' shirts, long sleeve shirts, board shorts, long pants etc.)
- wind protection clothing (e.g. spray jacket, rain jacket etc.).

Other

An appropriate supply of drinking water must be available.

Other items may include:

- food related equipment (e.g. storage, preparation, cooking, serving and cleaning)
- hygiene related equipment (e.g. hand wash system etc.)
- toileting and personal hygiene systems and products (e.g. toileting removal or disposal system, personal hygiene product removal or disposal system etc.)
- waste (e.g. rubbish, food waste etc.) removal system
- camping related equipment (refer Camping GPG).

Appendix W Weather information

See the Core GPG.

Appendix X Marine safety terminology for waters throughout Australia

Marine safety terminology varies by Australian jurisdiction. Refer to the Core GPG Appendix on Marine Safety Terminology for the consolidated table. For inland-water paddle-craft purposes, refer also to Section 1.1.2 (Type of body of water) for definitions used in this GPG.

Appendix Y Swimming while not using a paddle-craft

See the Core GPG.

Appendix Z Jumping, sliding or swinging into water

Procedures must address risks associated with jumping, sliding or swinging into water (e.g. jumping from watercraft, jumping from rocks during breaks etc.)

Procedures to assess the suitability and safety of water jumps, slides or swings must be used.

Appropriate assessment by a suitably competent person must be undertaken of the 'take-off area' and 'fall area' prior to jumps, slides or swings.

Considerations when assessing the take-off area must include but not limited to:

- difficulty and exposure of access routes
- exposure to potential falls from height
- the features of the take-off areas
- accidental falling outside of the fall area
- potential for unexpected or uncontrolled take-offs or landings
- the hazards and obstacles on route between the take-off area and fall area
- the horizontal travel distance of the fall area from the take-off position
- the safety of the swing material
- the spacing between and the progress of participants so they do not cause each other to fall and/or land on others in the fall area.

Considerations when assessing the fall area must include but not limited to:

- depth of the water in the fall area
- obstacles and river hazards in the fall area
- the depth of and obstacles within the fall area
- level of aeration of the water
- the fall height
- impact forces on entering water
- the speed of the water
- is fast flowing water flowing into downstream river hazards
- clarity of water to see if obstacles are present
- potential for floating objects to move into the fall area.

Instruction on how to avoid any river hazards must be provided.

Jumping, sliding or swinging activity management considerations should include but is not limited to:

- appropriate assessment of the activity
- clarity of the water to view the person while they are under water
- participant management ensures they do not interfere with each other's stability in access and take-off areas
- the fall zone is clear of other people before each person jumps
- difficult access, take-offs and/or landings have direct supervision
- actively managing jumps into difficult fall zones including but not limited to positioning an activity leader at the bottom to indicate the required fall zone and/or mark a hazard
- using buoyancy aids for particularly high jumps
- suitable instruction in take-off and landing positions including body, head and limb positions
- providing a suitable alternative where relevant, such as a lower jump
- use of appropriate padding as protection when sliding.

Where participants are jumping, sliding or swinging into water without lifejackets, at least one supervising activity leader should hold a current bronze-medallion-equivalent (or higher) lifesaving qualification suitable for the environment.

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