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REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES FOR ACA SANCTIONED EVENTS

Safety guidelines are, for the most part, simply a matter of common sense and reflect procedures that you probably already follow. Some guidelines may not be applicable for all events and may vary based on the conditions of the day. The activity leaders must take into account the weather, water level, group size, ability of the participants, and much more. At no time does a set of guidelines substitute for the good judgment of the event organizers. Still, the following procedures, guidelines, and checklist will go a long way toward ensuring that the event is appropriate and free of undue hazards.

Required safety procedures:

1. **Require all participants, volunteers, safety personnel, media, event organizers, VIPs, etc. to read and sign the *ACA Waiver and Release of Liability* before the event begins.**
2. Require all participants to wear properly fitting US Coast Guard approved lifejackets (PFDs) during on-water activities. (Note: This requirement may be waived for elite level competitions with written permission from the ACA National Office.)
3. For activities on **Class II or higher whitewater** or in coastal surf zones, require all participants to wear properly fitting paddling helmets. (Note: This requirement may be waived for elite level competitions with written permission from the ACA National Office.)
4. For activities on **Class III or higher whitewater**, event organizers must submit related safety and emergency procedures, and receive written approval from the ACA National Office before the start of the activity.
5. Prepare a roster of the on-site first aid and rescue personnel, including their qualifications and what emergency supplies they have available.
6. Prepare a list of emergency contacts and the methods of communication available.
7. Any participant who encounters another participant or event personnel whose personal safety is at risk must stop to render assistance.
8. All participants and event organizers shall comply with all local, state and federal regulations.

9. All participants shall be prohibited from consuming any alcohol or illegal drugs immediately before or during an on-water event. Any participant under the influence of alcohol or drugs shall be immediately disqualified and asked to leave the waterfront area.
10. All participants shall disclose use of any prescribed medication that may potentially impact on-water event.
11. Report all property damage and serious injuries that require medical attention to the ACA National Office -using the *ACA Occurrence Report Form* - within 7 days of the incident.

Important safety guidelines:

1. Appoint a safety coordinator or committee to oversee the implementation of all safety procedures.
2. Prepare weather contingency plans to handle extreme heat or cold, changing water levels, rain, sun exposure, and lightning. Announce appropriate shelters and drinking water provisions, plus contingency plans to cancel, postpone or relocate an event.
3. Document the number, description and placement of safety boats.
4. Document all required safety, equipment - on-shore, on-water and per participant - including floatation, whistles, throw ropes, etc. Conduct an inspection if necessary.
5. Document the results of your course or site inspections prior to and on the day of the event.
6. Notify local authorities and emergency personnel of upcoming events (e.g. rescue squad, local law enforcement and/or US Coast Guard).
7. For any long distance activities, implement a written float plan to someone who is not participating.
8. Ensure clean and safe entry/exit for participants.
9. Publicize any participant ability requirements and conduct a skills test or require a statement of ability, if necessary.
10. Conduct a participants' meeting/briefing prior to the start of the event. Announce rules, participant equipment checklist, possible hazards, and required safety procedures.
11. Ensure participants are informed prior to the event about expected conditions and skill levels needed.
12. Make use of properly placed signage where needed and appropriate.