[Name of Race]

Safety Strategy

[date prepared]

[date revised]

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# Introduction

The [name of race] is a [xxxxx, e.g. marathon paddling] event. While participants are ultimately responsible for their own safety, the [name of race] organization will take steps to ensure the event is organized with racer and volunteer safety in mind.

The race Safety Strategy document provides a planning view of safety. Its purpose is to identify risks to racers and volunteers and recommend clear steps which can be implemented by race organizers before the race to reduce the chances of incidents occurring during the race.

The Safety Strategy document is supplemented by an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) whose purpose is to identify clear actions to be taken if an incident were to occur.

# Life Cycle of Race Safety

Race Safety is divided into four phases.

Plan

Prepare

Execute

Refine

## Plan

The goal of the race planning phase is to minimize chances of incidents before they happen. It identifies risks and scenarios and defines methods to mitigate and react. The Race Safety Strategy document is the main component of the race safety planning phase.

## Prepare

The goal of the preparation phase ensures race volunteers and race course are prepared to execute a safe race. It organizes the race such that the recommendations of the Safety Strategy are implemented.

## Execute

The goal of the execution phase is to ensure safety precautions are followed, that safety of participants is monitored and that proper actions are taken if an incident occurs.

## Refine

The goal of the refine phase is to systematically learn and improve the safety of the race for future years.

# Race Context

[provide context for the race in a few sentences : time of year, type and experience level of paddlers, how long has event been running, basics of race course, spectators, etc.]

# Complicating Factors

The following complicating factors have been identified for special consideration for safety planning. The following are examples only. Please think carefully about these for your race and fill in details as required.

* **Water Levels**: provide detail
* **Water temperature:** provide detail
* **Air temperature**: provide detail
* **Technical difficulty**: provide detail
* **River access:** provide detail
* **Skill level of participants**: sample wording only – please update accordingly. The race is open to participants of all ages and skill levels including beginners and parents participating with their children. Some racers may overestimate their abilities or underestimate the difficulty of the river. Race organizers are not in a position to assess racer skill level ahead of the race.
* **Other factors** : provide detail

# Scenarios

Note : provide some possible scenarios that might be encountered, along with mitigation and actions. Some examples are provided, but please update accordingly.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Scenario** | **Mitigation** | **Action** |
| Capsize | Participants are never far from shore.  Mandatory wear of life jacket throughout race  High concentration of nearby racers can assist.  Volunteers positioned at main rapid near end of race can assist.  Phone service available in most areas. | Team to recover as possible.  Nearby participants to help team in distress.  Retrieve boat and continue race if possible.  Follow hypothermia procedures if required. |
| Sickness |  |  |
| Hypothermia |  |  |
| Minor Injury |  |  |
| Lost paddle/broken craft |  |  |
| Severe weather |  |  |
| Major Injury |  |  |
| Heart Attack |  |  |
| Other Scenarios |  |  |

# Elements of the Safety Strategy

The following are elements of the [name of race] Safety Strategy. Note: the following is provided as a template only. Please update according.

1. Safety Strategy (PLAN) – Preparation is one of the most important elements of preventing incidents. Identifying risks early and systematically mitigating them is therefore foremost in ensuring a safe race environment. The development of the safety strategy described by this document is key to proactively include safety in race planning.
2. Emergency Action Plan (EXECUTE) – An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) will be defined to deal with emergencies that may arise during the event. The EAP will list emergency contacts and named extraction points in case of incident. It will be communicated to all race personnel ahead of the race and should be carried by them during the race.
3. Complicating factors (PLAN) – Complicating factors specific to the [name of race] must be identified and understood as they directly increase risks for the race. These factors are listed in Chapter 4 of the Safety Strategy and are taken into account during safety planning.
4. Scenarios and Risk Mitigation (PLAN) – Likely scenarios concerning race safety must be identified and mitigation plans identified where possible. Eliminating surprises is an assured way to increase safety. Scenarios and mitigations are listed in Chapter 5 of the Safety Strategy document.
5. Racer awareness and education (PLAN) – Information to better prepare racers, particularly first time [name of race] racers will be made available before the race (e.g. via website and newsletter). This should include (the following are examples only, please update accordingly)
   1. List of mandatory gear
   2. Recommendations for additional gear (e.g. extra clothes)
   3. Cold water immersion information
   4. Videos of rapids
   5. Racecourse maps
   6. other
6. Staff Pre-race briefing (EXECUTE) – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.] A pre-race briefing will be held on race morning with race staff to communicate key safety aspects of the race, last minute changes, and to provide staff with the opportunity to ask questions that may remain. The briefing is to include at a minimum the following information:
   1. River conditions including water levels, known new obstacles (downed trees, sweepers, log jams)
   2. Weather conditions including if there is rain or significant weather pattern change expected
   3. Updated race maps with extraction point
   4. List of contact numbers (Race Director, RACCC, emergency, etc…)
   5. Number of participants in the race
7. Racer Pre-race briefing (EXECUTE) – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.] A pre-race briefing will be held immediately before the race with participants to communicate key safety aspects of the race, last minute changes, and to provide racers with the opportunity to ask questions that may remain. The following at a minimum should be announced during the pre-race briefing:
   1. River conditions
   2. Weather conditions
   3. EAPs
   4. Race abandonment procedures
   5. Wearing of PFDs for the entirety of the race is mandatory
8. Rules and race procedures (PREPARE) – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.] Race rules and river procedures will be used to list mandatory safety gear and spell out safety behaviors which all competitors will be required to follow.
9. Emergency Response Team (PREPARE/EXECUTE) – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.] Emergency response teams will be notified in advance of the event and if possible, arrangements will be made for their presence at the race.
10. Race Course Preparation (PREPARE) – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.] The race course will be inspected in the days leading up to the race for log jams and other obstacles that could add unexpected risk to racers. Obstacles will be cleared or clearly marked as required.
11. Assistance at Rapids (EXECUTE) – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.]Rapids increase the risk of racers capsizing. Someone prepared to assist racers if necessary, will be placed at
12. Identification of Extraction Points (PLAN) – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.]Possible extraction points will be identified ahead of the race and will be communicated to both race staff and the Emergency Response Teams.
13. Race Incident Reporting Form (REFINE) - [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.]A form will be developed and made available to race officials to capture safety incidents that occurred during the race. This form will collect a standard set of information that can be used to improve safety in future races.
14. Post-Race Safety Review (REFINE) -[The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.] A Post-Race Safety Review will be held in the weeks following the race. This review will look at incidents that occurred and take into consideration safety feedback from racers and volunteers with an eye to improve safety for future races. Results will be captured in revisions of the Safety Strategy document.
15. Monitoring of race conditions (EXECUTE) – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.] Race organizers will monitor race conditions, weather related, water related and other in the weeks leading up to the race and react accordingly. Day of race conditions will be communicated during the pre-race briefings to volunteers and racers. In the event of severe race conditions, race organizers must consider to postponing or canceling the race.
16. Sweep boat (EXECUTE) – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.] A sweep boat will be utilized to monitor the progress of the slowest racers and provide assistance as required to racers in distress. Sweep boat equipment and procedure are detailed in the Sweep Boat chapter of this document.

1. Other Racers EXECUTE – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.] Some sections of the race are narrow. To ensure racers are not congested in certain areas which would increase risk of capsize, the race will have staggered starts.
2. Mandatory Equipment (EXECUTE) – [The following is a template that can be used. Please update accordingly.] Minimum boating equipment will be required for all participants. Canadian Government concessions on boating equipment for racers will be ignored, that is, normal non-race requirements will apply. Life jackets are to be worn by participants at all times. Racers are to be reminded before race day of the need for mandatory equipment and that PFDs must be worn.
3. Other considerations

# APPENDIX A - Sweep Boats

The following is a template to be used if Sweep Boats are part of the Safety Plan. Please update according. Sweep boat(s) will be organized to monitor progress of the last boat and provide assistance to paddlers in distress. The boats should have two paddlers per canoe who are preferably whitewater paddlers have first aid certification and river rescue training.

Sweep boat equipment

1. Stable canoe(s) with room for to carry safety gear.
2. 60 L barrel with towels, extra clothes, hot sweet tea, snacks - powerbars (no peanuts), cookies..., tarp, ensolite pad, sleeping bags,
3. Cell phone
4. Copy of the EAP including telephone numbers
5. Map of the course - noting exit points
6. First Aid Kit
7. RACCC Hypothermia kit
8. Written copy of the emergency action plan
9. SOAP notes - for first aid kit- to document injuries/first aid
10. Notepad and pen to document any safety-related events
11. GPS (optional) - Can be used to note where we are on the race and provide coordinates to rescue teams
12. Pin kit (optional)- webbing, carabiners, pulleys, ropes, prussic loops)

Sweep Boat Procedures

* Monitor race start and note teams that could have difficulty
* Remind all paddlers that PFDs must be worn at all times
* Follow the race course - ensuring all paddling teams are in front of the sweep boat
* Assist paddlers as required
* Use the EAP as required
* Provide first aid, rescue support as required
* Watch for hypothermia - provide tea/snacks as might be helpful
* Confirm all paddlers are accounted for at finish line
* Provide written report of safety incidents
* Provide recommendations as input for future Safety Strategy Documents

# APPENDIX B – [previous year] Safety Recommendations and Feedback

If the race is an annual event, please consider adding this Appendix to your safety plan. Some examples are provided.

The following were recommendations received following the race and the actions taken.

1. **Each sweep team boat NEEDS a detailed map of the course** - noting rapids and especially any check points and/or take out opportunities: roats, houses by the river. Will be included in new safety plan.