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## **Paddle Canada Courses During Covid-19**

All outdoor activities including paddlesports, involve inherent risks. As professionals in the industry we do what we can to mitigate these risks (wearing PFD's, helmets, getting skills training, carrying & knowing how to use the contents of our first aid kits, pre-launch safety talks and float plans, etc). We are not actually capable of 'guaranteeing' anyone's safety on courses, but we do our due diligence to ensure that we have the proper training, equipment, and instruction happening to minimize those risks. With COVID we are operating in a new risk landscape, but the same idea applies. Here are some guidelines to help instructors

- a. decide whether running a specific course is acceptable given all applicable national, regional, and local regulations and guidance, and
- b. decide whether they are capable of 'ticking all the boxes' of risk mitigation as outlined by public health authorities (distancing measures, sanitizing of people and gear, etc.).

Realistically, there is no guarantee that the measures we take will be effective in stopping the virus from spreading if a carrier arrives on course. But these measures should significantly reduce the risk of infection.

*To determine if you may register and deliver a sanctioned Paddle Canada course, please answer the following questions:*

**Y N** Has your Province or Territory "opened" and indicated that you/your business can operate?

**Y N** Are you following your local guidelines for opening your business with regards to gathering size, health and sanitation, and any other items required?

**Y N** If you offer your course on public lands, are they open to you? (ie parks, beaches, marinas)

**Y N** Are you, and your students welcomed where you intend to deliver this course (ie remote areas and/or indigenous communities; have you asked for permissions)?

**Y N** Are you confident the course can be run in a manner that minimizes exposure to, and transmission of, COVID-19?

**If you cannot answer YES to all the above, Paddle Canada will not sanction your course. If, at anytime a YES answer above changes to NO, the course shall be immediately cancelled.**

If you can answer YES to all the above, consider the following before, during and after your course(s):

- You will maintain a 2m distance **at all times possible**. As the instructor you must recognize that a situation may arise that you may HAVE TO close this distance in the

interest of safety (ie. assisted rescues, first aid situations). Are you, and your student, willing to take that risk, and have you considered extra precautions? If the answer is NO, then the course should not occur.

- Does the course you are going to teach require that social distancing measures would be breached? (i.e. white water or advanced sea kayak courses whose curriculum involves students and instructors being within close range/touching, or Big Canoe etc.). If so, do you have strategies and course adaptations in place to limit possible transmission of COVID 19?
- Can you limit your course/clinic to local clientele only, to avoid travel between communities?
- Do you have a pre-screening/self-disclosure procedure in place for clients and instructors, such as this [self-assessment](#) from Health Canada, and assurance that they have not travelled outside of the province/country in the 14 days previous to the course?
- Before, during and after the course, do you have the equipment necessary to follow recommended sanitary measures? If you are providing PFD's and other gear, how will they be sanitized between uses? Consider adding non-medical face masks and hand sanitizer to the gear lists you provide your clients.
  - On wearing [masks](#) from Health Canada, they are now recommending that everyone should wear a mask when 2m of distancing cannot be followed
  - On [cleaning gear](#) from NRS

In the wake of COVID-19 and the new risks it now represents to both staff and students, consider how you may need to add to, or revise your operational plan:

- Operational procedures: staff/student ratios, meet and greet, equipment checks, transportation to and from instruction site, PPE
- First Aid and Emergency Action Plans, including a student with symptoms
- Waivers: Do you need to update or revise your waiver, or consider an online waiver
- Insurance: if you do not use Paddle Canada insurance, does your Commercial Liability cover you during Covid-19?

**BECAUSE OF COVID-19, any instructor, guide or business that does not follow the above recommendations, and offers paddling clinics, courses or tours may be operating without due diligence and will, therefore, be vulnerable to any and all legal action should an incident occur. Recognize that negligent actions significantly lower the standards and reputation of the paddling instruction industry.**