



Whitewater NZ

NZOIA
Excellence in Outdoor Leadership

River Rescue – Level 1



Photo: Oliver Weber Photography

A Guide For Trainers and Participants (Canoe Version)

Trainer Notes

This Guide is to assist Trainers with establishing standards, running courses and judging a participant's competency. All training must be based on current best practice and industry standards. This guide is also to help participants know what they will be taught to do and what tasks they will be asked to complete.

While this is not an assessment of competency it is the Trainer's role to provide participants with a clear picture through formal feedback of their level of personal competency; such as areas where they are at or above current best practice, and areas in which improvement is required. Personal competency will be established through:

- Oral questions and discussion
- Observation of practical tasks

As this course is a prerequisite for NZOIA Canoe Instructor Level 1, participants preparing for this assessment will need coaching and feedback appropriate to achieving a pass on their Canoe 1 assessment.

Site selection: It is the trainer's responsibility to select venues for this course appropriate to the skill and experience level of participants.

Participant Notes

This Guide is to assist you in understanding what will be covered during your River Rescue 1 course. To enjoy and benefit from the programme you need to be sufficiently skilled and experienced as a paddler to participate fully; for this reason it is essential that you are competently paddling Class 2 and comfortable in this environment both in your canoe and as a swimmer.

Please refer to the Scope and Syllabus about the course pre-requisites.

Technical Skills

1. Self, boat and bank based rescues

The participant will learn the following river rescue skills at a given location on a Class 2 river section:

Self rescue:

- Swim to shore with tow and fully loaded canoe using painter line then bail the canoe
- Right a fully loaded boat (with leashed gear) and re-entry without shore access (open water technique)

Boat based rescue:

- Tow canoe
- X-rescue
- Curl
- Effectively manage the group while dealing with a canoe over (multiple swimmer)
- Rescue of an unconscious swimmer

Bank based rescues.

- Rescue a swimmer using a throw bag - attention gained, accurate throw, stable belay, safe pendulum
- Set up a simple hauling system / Z- drag / 3:1 system with a pin kit. For efficiency this can be done as a simulated rescue on land
- Methods for dealing with foot entrapments

2. Selection and correct use of canoeing gear and safety equipment commonly used in New Zealand

The participant will learn:

- About equipment commonly used in New Zealand, including the types, characteristics, advantages, limitations, cost, care, maintenance and storage for a range of equipment e.g. canoes, PFD's, paddles, helmets, dry tops/ paddle jackets and other clothing and footwear suitable for canoeing
- The importance of using gear and equipment that is in good condition, well maintained and to wear clothing and footwear that is appropriate for use in a Class 2 whitewater environment
- About and gain a working knowledge of a range of simple safety equipment e.g. buoyancy, survival bags, tow-lines, throw-bags, slings, karabiners, Prusiks, knife, saw, spare paddles, bailer and painters
- The use and care of emergency communication equipment appropriate for use on a day trip e.g. flares, VHF radio, satellite phone, Personal Locator Beacon

3. Common river hazards

The participant will learn:

- How to identify common river hazards e.g. recirculating hydraulics, undercuts, sieves, sweepers, strainers, entrapment features
- To establish the 'real' risk of river hazards
- Methods to manage, remove and reduce the risk of river hazards

4. Controlled river running

The participant will learn:

- Selecting a suitable river trip
- Preparing for and executing a safe, well managed river trip
- Identifying river features and hazards and how to use and/or avoid them
- River running strategies, including scouting and choosing safe lines through rapids

Rescue Management

5. Working within a team to deal with rescue scenarios

The participant will learn:

- Accepted / commonly used river communication signals
- To identify the situation and appropriate course of action
- Prioritisation of tasks e.g. self, victim, paddle, boat
- Their strengths and limitations in a rescue situation
- The purpose and role of clear leadership

6. Organise and lead a group to deal with rescue scenarios

The participant will learn to:

- Identify the required rescue and best approach
- Maintain the safety of self and other group members
- Decisive decision making
- Deliver clear and concise information in a river environment
- Delegate tasks
- Know the limitations of, or potential for getting external help (who, how and when)