



# RAFTING SPORTS ASSOCIATION

Promoting Rafting As Olympic Sport



## ***RIVER RAFTING CODE OF PRACTICE***

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(Revised 2015)

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INTRODUCTION:

Rafting sports association of Pakistan is an independent non-profit organization formed to promote rafting as Olympic sport, & thrill exposure to tourist visiting the and exploring rivers of the country and to restore, conserve and protect the rivers of the country through positive action and education along with maintaining the cultural integrity of local riverside communities. RSA is one of its kinds working with dedication for the promotion of Safe River rafting and the conservation of the Rivers of Pakistan. Since the event will impact on the natural environment, all rafting operators must follow standard RSA practices to minimize impacts on the local landscape in use, and set a model for other user groups to follow. The code of practice will cover all relevant aspects of employing rafts including training of crews to operate them. This will be considered under the following heads;

1. Land use of River banks.
2. Rafting Operational Procedures.
3. Rafting Safety Code.
4. Training Schedule of Rafting Crew.
5. River Rescue Practice.
6. First Aid and Emergency Procedures.

### **RAFTING SAFETY CODE: (Adopted 1959 revised 2015)**

This code is based on the safety code of the American White Water Affiliation as adopted for recreational Rafting on the rivers of Pakistan. It consists of guidelines to minimize risks in the handling of rafts and inexperienced passengers. Practical experience may make it necessary to adopt alternative procedures which will modify or amend the set of rules suggested in the code that follows.

#### **1. PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY OF RAFTING CREW.**

- a. To carry untrained passengers, the crew of the raft must qualify to whitewater Class (iii) standards on the water difficulty scale, and be able to swim 50 Meters.
- b. When over the water wear a life jacket (PFD), correctly fitted helmet and protection garments as required.
- c. Always maintain control of the raft and have a frank knowledge of your rafting ability. Develop paddling skills required for the river conditions in use.
- d. Be in good physical and mental condition consistent with the difficulties which are expected. Any health limitations must exclude rafting as member of the crew.
- e. Be practical in self-rescue, including escape from beneath an overturned raft.
- f. Be trained in rescue skills, CPR and first aid with special emphasis on recognizing and treating hypothermia.
- g. Carry equipment needed for unexpected emergencies.
- h. Be familiar with the stretch of the river in use so as to maintain paddling drill on the part of unskilled passengers.
- i. Constantly evaluate their own and the passengers safety.
- j. Be prepared to assume any role given by the Crew Master and apply themselves accordingly.

#### **2. RAFT AND EQUIPMENT PREPAREDNESS:**

- a. Be sure of the good condition and inflation of the raft and its equipment before commencing a river run. Inspect the raft and its equipment after river run.
- b. Ensure raft safety over the water by stowing away equipment carried to avoid entrapment in case of upset raft.

- c. Know the carrying capacity of the raft and the size of crew plus passengers that may be permitted for the water conditions encountered.
- d. The raft in use to carry two crew members and six passengers as a maximum. In rough conditions passengers may be reduced to four.
- e. To avoid accidents run only 5-6 Rafts at a time in the area of 1000 meters in the river.

### 3. PASSENGERS PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY:

- ✓ All the participants in a raft share responsibility over the water under the guidance of the crew. Some preparatory instructions will be imparted by the crew prior putting the raft afloat.
- ✓ Participants will wear a well fitted life jacket (PFD) helmet, footwear and garments as provided will over the water.
- ✓ Participants must be in good health and aged between 07-65 years.
- ✓ Basic of paddling and raft control will be practiced over the water (eddies) prior to the specified run. During the run on the river the crew will ensure that the passengers do not over exert themselves.
- ✓ Seating plan for the occupants of the rafts and their functions will be carefully explained and practiced.
- ✓ The lead paddler (Crew) sets the pace. Control paddler (Crew) acts as the Captain, weak paddlers should stay in the center of the raft.
- ✓ No vacation of seat or standing erect in the raft is permitted (unless engaged in rescue work)
- ✓ Will read, listen & fully understand the trip information provided to them by operator in order to make an informed choice prior to joining any trip.
- ✓ Will read, agree & sign the terms & conditions on booking form prior to joining.
- ✓ *If under 18 years of age – a parent or guardian will read, agree & sign on behalf of the participant*
- ✓ Will provide accurate CNIC/passport information & emergency contacts
- ✓ Will inform Operator of any pre existing medical, mental or physical conditions ✓ Will actively participate, cooperate & follow instructions provided to them by guides.
- ✓ Will wear appropriate footwear & clothing as recommended by RSA.
- ✓ Will inform Trip Leader if going away from the group at anytime.
- ✓ Will abstain from the use of drugs during rafting activities

### 4. OPERATORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- ✓ Operators will provide adequate management & supervision to be satisfied that all guides are trained, qualified & competent to lead each activity.
- ✓ Will maintain records of all guides' certifications, qualifications and government ID.
- ✓ Will assess guides prior to approval work on each guiding position for related activity.
- ✓ Will ensure all guides are familiar with standard operating procedures.
- ✓ Will provide CE or ISO certified safety equipment over & above local industry standard.
- ✓ Will maintain all safety equipment per the manufacturers' recommendations and will be confident in the condition & quality of all equipment for both river crew & participants.
- ✓ Will provide adequate first aid kits and ensure guides are knowledgeable of contents and competent to administer first aid.
- ✓ Will stay aware of weather forecasts as they develop in river & canyon conditions.
- ✓ Will maintain up to date emergency contact information and follow communications protocols in accordance with standard operating procedures.

- ✓ Will provide participants with honest & adequate pre-departure information to help ensure participants are fully aware of the adventure level they choose to participate in.
- ✓ Will be available 24 hours a day in case of emergency.
- ✓ Checking river levels before trips and ensuring guides allocated to the trip are appropriately qualified and experienced.

#### 4.1.EQUIPMENT STANDARDS

RSA strives to operate with an international level of professional standards over and above the minimal Pakistani industry requirements. All operators must use international brand name CE or ISO certified equipment for all activities.

#### 4.2.GUIDE SAFETY EQUIPMENT

The following equipment is required on all rafting trips.

- ✓ PFD (with quick release integrated chest harness)
- ✓ Helmet
- ✓ Paddle
- ✓ Whistle
- ✓ River Knife
- ✓ Cow Tail (optional – recommended)
- ✓ Throw Bag (minimum 15 meters)
- ✓ 4 karabiners
- ✓ 2 Prussic
- ✓ 1 Flip Line

#### 4. 3.SAFETY BRIEFINGS & DEMONSTRATIONS.

It is the Trip Leader's responsibility to conduct the activity safety briefing. This is one of the most important communications jobs we have. This is not just a briefing – it should be a comprehensive and interactive demonstration. Procedures should be practiced. Questions should be asked to ensure understanding.

**“I will now do the safety talk. It is important you listen so that you enjoy the trip and know what to do if you fall out or if the raft flips. Please listen and let me know if you have questions. Thank you”...**

- ✓ SPEAK SLOWLY. It is essential that ALL participants fully understand these instructions.
  - ✓ Explain what you what you are doing and why you are doing it
- ✓ Position the raft & participants in a place where it is easy to follow the safety briefing
- ✓ Make sure you have all participant attention. Stop if you do not, and politely ask for quiet
  - ✓ full attention
- ✓ Make sure you can make eye contact with all participants
- ✓ Remember 80% actions & demonstrations – 20% talking
- ✓ SIT DOWN IN THE RAFT TO DELIVER YOUR SAFETY TALK DO NOT STAND ON THE RAFT
- ✓ Summarise the safety briefing at the end by using 3 key points for participants to remember
  1. IF you fall out **smile** hold your paddle and swim back
  2. IF you cannot get back to the raft – **smile** hold your paddle, get on your back with your feet up (whitewater swim position)
  3. IF the raft flips – **smile** hold the raft, hold your paddle & keep your feet up **Invite questions.**

The more your participants understand this briefing, the better they will perform as a team, helping to make the trip the most fun and safe as possible. Re-brief and practice all points as necessary throughout trip.

## 5. TRAINING & CERTIFICATION STANDARDS:

All River Guides must maintain the following training & certification.

### Raft Guides:

- ✓ RSA (Guide – class III & above)
- ✓ Rescue 3 WRT
- ✓ First Aid & CPR
- ✓ Raft Guide Logbook (RGLB)
- ✓ RSA 'in-house training'

RSA offers guides training and education (GT&E) programs on different rivers of the country, in order to capacitate the commercial operators to meet the international standards. RSA's GT&E program is open for all operators and is scheduled below.

RIVERS	LOCATION	DURATION	MONTH
Kunhar River	Balakot	10-30 Days	October, Nov, March
Jehlum River	Muzafarabad	10 Days	Oct, Nov
Sindh River	Basin Valley	10 Days	Oct

Raft Guides, Inline Raft Guides, and Safety Crafters must:

- ✓ Be at least 18 years old, trainees must be at least 16 years old;
- ✓ Be able to swim 50 meters in the river;
- ✓ Hold a current (not older than 2 years) RSA/Red Cross First Aid Certificate (FAC) or equivalent with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR);
- ✓ Trip Leaders, Instructors and Assessors must hold advanced certification such as Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Responder (WFR) or Red Cross FAC level 2.
- ✓ Maintain a log book recording each run, signed by the crew master or Operations Manager of the company, as proof of experience. This is to be presented as proof of experience before an assessment;
- ✓ Complete a familiarization run and know the evacuation routes and procedures on any new stretch of whitewater they intend to Guide or Trip Lead on. (Note that an exception to this requirement is made in the case of highly experienced guides running exploratory or infrequently run expedition-style trips where a familiarization run may be impractical.)

### 5. 1.RAFTIG GUIDES TRAINING & EDUCATION:

Training of personnel for operating Rafts on placid as well as white water is designed to cater for recreational as well as adventure operating activities. Training follows the precepts of the American White water Affiliation practice and standards.

No course can replace on-the-river application to gain experience. When sound judgment and finely developed skills white water rafting will provide an endless source of thrilling pleasure. Professional aptitude, when acquired will further develop one's market value as a Rafter.

The basic course of 10 days duration is introductory in nature. The advance course with duration on one month will provide adequate level of skills to be graded Class 2 in the water level of difficulty. However, to carry untrained passengers, the crew of the raft must qualify to class 3 on the water difficulty scale. The advance course of introduction must be followed by a repeat extendable by short

refresher intervals. Certification in any grade will be ratified by qualified personal of RSA. To qualify for Class 3 in rafting scale the rafter must:

- a. Be able to swim 50 meters.
- b. Qualify in First Aid-Certified Red Crescent/RSA Course.
- c. Qualify Advance course in Rafting (RSA)
- d. Have river guide logbook (RGLB) showing min of 2 years experience in Rafting on White Water-Class ii.

**SYLLABUS: TRAINING OF RAFTING CREW (PERIOD: 30)**

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Mode</u>
1. Rafting its Equipment	L/D
2. Setting up the Raft for operation	D/P
3. River Morphology	L/D
4. Propulsion Basics	D/P
5. Raft Control over Water	D/P
6. Running the Rapids	D/P
7. Safety and Basics of Rescue	D/P
8. Maintenance & Repair	D/P
9. River Camping and Site Management	D/P
10. Conservation of River Resources	L
11. Becoming a Professional Guide	L

**Note:**

1. Opening, evaluation, tests and closing of course excluded.
2. Rescue operations and First Aid covered in full in separate courses of 6 days duration.

**6. RIVER RARFTING RESCUE PRACTICE:**

Whitewater rafting involves many risks and to keep clear of them is the constant concern of the paddlers of varying abilities. It becomes even more of a concern for trained crew members responsible for recreational rafting. Training follows the precepts of the American White Water affiliation standards.

To stay out of trouble the rafter must.

- a. Develop judgment- individual judgment is the most important component of river safety.
- b. Accept personal limits- never exceed the limits of their skill.
- c. River classification- the six point international scale of river difficulty.
- d. Paddling within a group- is usually done as part of self sufficient group. Except when novices are present, few members (crew) adopt a defined leadership or command structure. However, the actions of each individual affect the well being of the entire group.
- e. Group management- when experienced paddler is leading novice, LEAD and SWEEP rafters are designated.
- f. Importance of Rescue- When skill and judgment fail, rescue skills must fill the group. Teamwork involves making the best use of the available people and gear.

**SYLLABUS: RIVER RESCUE TRAINING (PERIODS: 30)****Topics: \_\_\_\_\_ Mode**

1. Rescue Equipment L/D
2. Swimming and wading L/D
3. River sense L/D 4. Self rescue L/D
5. Rescue by rope L/D
6. Raft based rescue L/D
7. Recovering pinned raft L/D
8. Organizing rescue L/D
9. First aid and evacuation L/D

**NOTE:** Opening, evaluation, test and closing of course excluded.

**6.1. THE FIRST AID KIT:**

All the operators must carry below listed first aid kit when they head out on the water. Like all things, the contents of a first aid kit vary from paddler to paddler, so think of this list as a general outline. Depending on the size of your group, the distance you'll be traveling, your group's first aid experience, and other variables, you'll need more or less of certain items.

ITEM	WHY?
Small First Aid Book	Knowledge is power!
Band Aids (10)	Small wounds
Pyodine	Small wounds
Pain Killer Tab	For instant relief
Steri Strips (5)	Closing deep wounds
4x4 Gauze Pads (2)	To help cover wounds
First Aid Tape (1-2 rolls)	Everything
Gloves (3 pair)	Body Substance Isolation (BSI) - keep yourself stay safe!
Chap-stick	Chapped lips are no fun
Small Sunscreen	Emergency backup
Aloe Vera/Sun block	Sunburn
Lighter	Accidental overnighters or to sterilize the tip of a safety pin
Small Irrigation Syringe	Cleaning deep wounds
Ace Bandage	To help with splinting or a quick immobilization of a joint
Triangular Bandages (1-3)	To create a sling
Safety Pins (3)	Great for splinting, but also great for getting splinters out
Pencil	Keeping notes

# RIVER GRADING

## BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL RIVER GRADING SYSTEM

### **Grade 1:**

Slow flowing rivers, pebble races and small rapids with a few riffles or low regular waves. Channels are wide and clear with little or no maneuvering require avoiding obstacles.

### **Grade 2:**

Easy Rapids with waves up to 1 meter. Clear channels obvious without scouting, some maneuvering maybe required avoiding obstacles.

### **Grade 3:**

Semi-complex sections of rapids with high or irregular waves, broken water, eddies and stoppers. Maneuvering will be required to follow the correct path which may be technical in nature and which is not easily recognizable. Inspection from the bank often required.

### **Grade 4:**

Long and extended stretches of rapids with high irregular waves, stoppers and eddies. The path must be inspected from the bank and it is often very technical.

### **Grade 5:**

Very difficult, long and violent rapids. Close inspection is mandatory. Definite risks in the event of a mishap. Requires a series of controlled, precise, 'must make' moves to navigate successfully.

### **Grade 6:**

All the above features increased to a level where the river cannot be paddled without severe risk to life.

## Environmental Policies

In Pakistan especially Northern areas are challenging place to follow perfect practice to help protect our environmental; however, we can do our best to lead by example and LEAVE LESS TRACE to help protect our rivers for future generations

### REDUCE RUBBISH

- ✓ Reduce and remove all unnecessary packaging prior to bringing supplies to the river.
- ✓ Use reusable bags for shopping and carrying.
- ✓ Carry out all garbage out with us. ALSO carry out the garbage left behind by others.
- ✓ Treat local stream water & discourage participants from use of disposable water bottles.

### TOILET

- ✓ Build toilet tents as far away from river sources as possible and in active soil when available.
- ✓ Bury waste appropriately, burn toilet paper and avoid the use of chemicals.

### WASHING UP

- ✓ Wash dishes water well away from river.
- ✓ Strain food scraps as much as possible from dirty dish water and dispose of with the rest of food scraps appropriately.
- ✓ Throw dirty water well away from river.

### FOOD SCRAPS

- ✓ Try to give to local villages for personal or livestock consumption when possible.
- ✓ Bury in active soil if no village / villagers available.
- ✓ Bury in toilet if no active soil available.
- ✓ Strain food scraps as much as possible from dirty dish water and dispose of appropriately.
- ✓ NEVER throw food scraps in river!

### BATHING

- ✓ Wash well away from river.
- ✓ Request participants to bring biodegradable soaps for personal use.
  - ✓ Crew NEVER to bathe or wash equipment in river with soap.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

- ✓ Use gas for cooking meals (when available).
- ✓ Minimize campfires based on sustainable availability of wood in local area.
  - ✓ Use Himalayan Bricks (sustainable fuel source – when available).