

# **Safety Plan**

**For the  
Prince Edward Island  
Paddle Brigade (PEIPB)  
July 27-29<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**07 May 2018**

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## Introduction

### *Purpose*

- The purpose of this plan is twofold: a) to provide safety procedures and contact information to be used in response to any medical or environmental issues that may arise; b) to provide an appropriate procedure for the conduct of the Brigade, outlined by the PEI Paddle Brigade Planning (PEIPB) Committee and drawing upon the experience and direction of identified Canoe Leaders and First Aid trained participants.
- The expectation will be that all participants will purchase membership with the Voyageur Brigade Society and register for the Brigade on the site which will provide both a list of participants and insurance/liability coverage for this Brigade event.

### *Event Overview*

- The PEIPB will take place over the course of three (3) days from 27-29 July 2018. The PEIPB is envisioned to involve 4 to 6 large canoes, from the Maritime region with 6-10 paddlers each, as well as possible smaller tandem canoes and kayaks. The event will include paddling Tracadie Bay, a portion of the Hillsborough River and the “Three Rivers” region of Eastern PEI, including the Montague River, Brudnell River and Cardigan River. The trip will involve tidal river and some open water paddling on the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Northumberland Strait. Weather permitting, a short trip is included on the Strait to Boughton Island which was the site of lobster canneries in the 1800s and is now a protected area, home to several species of birds and surrounded by lobster and shellfish grounds as well as warm sandy beaches. Our main campsite for all events will be at Brudnell Provincial Park.
- Both the Tracadie/Hillsborough and Three Rivers regions are historic areas extending back to the seasonal visits and settlements of the Mi’kmaq people, to French fishing and farming settlements in the 1700s and the shipbuilding era of the 1800s reaching up to the present day at locations like Georgetown, Prince Edward Island’s only deep-water port. An active and important fishery has been ongoing for well over two centuries, including lobster, groundfish and a variety of shell fish. The regions are home to significant seal populations and sightings of bald eagles, ospreys and a range of small wildlife are common.

### *Responsibilities of Safety Officials at PEIPB Events*

Official Title	Individual Assigned - Source	Overall Responsibility
PEIPB Planning Committee	Rob Redmond, Shawn Shea, John Hughes, Philip Pierlot, June Sanderson, Dave Morris.	Planning, publicizing and organizing the PEIPB. Planning routes, campground areas and providing mapping and information on tides. Make ultimate decisions regarding alternative plans due to winds, tides or other circumstances. Determine and provide contact information for Emergency and Hospital Ser-

Official Title	Individual Assigned - Source	Overall Responsibility
		vices.
PEIPB Canoe Leaders Rob Redmond Philip Pierlot John Hughes Michael Murphy and others as they join	One per large canoe. Leaders will work with the group to plan daily route, handle adjustments due to weather and tides and assign lead and sweep. Navigation, crew guidance and rest breaks, etc. On water instruction as needed.	All Canoes travel as a Brigade in groups of 2 boats minimum. Daily start and end meetings and decisions concerning lead/sweep, routes, tide, winds and advice to paddlers. Clarify safety issues and determine any training needs for safety and recovery procedures as well as if a planned paddle should be cancelled in advance, or a day's paddle should be abandoned on route.
Canoe Safety	Canoe Leaders and first aid trained people. Including Rob Redmond, Philip Pierlot,	First Aid and safety: Rescue throw bags, whistles, and first aid kits to be carried on all large boats as per Paddle Canada standards. Wearing of PFDs mandatory. Contact information for emergency and hospital services. Cell phones for lead, sweep and more as needed depending upon number of boats.

### Location of the Safety Plan during the Event:

- A copy of the Safety Plan together with all emergency contact information and a working cell phone will be carried by each canoe leader.

## Contact Information

**PEIPB:** Philip Pierlot – [papierlot@edu.pe.ca](mailto:papierlot@edu.pe.ca) (902) 218-9950 call or text;  
Rob Redmond – [rwredmond@edu.pe.ca](mailto:rwredmond@edu.pe.ca)

## Emergency Response Contacts

Official Title	Contact
RCMP/Local Police	911 – All Fire/Rescue crews (Montague region) to be contacted and made aware of brigade schedule and locations. In place before start date.
Ambulance	
Hospital/Health Centre	
Identify First Aid or Medical Trained Participants	Identified on PEIPB Planning Committee and updated as entrants join.

- The PEIPB Planning Committee will update information on numbers, routes, camp area(s) and directions with the above Contacts up to the start date of the PEIPB Brigade.

## Site & Route Safety

Prior to the event, the PEIPB Planning Committee will assess the best paddling routes, access points and safety issues relevant to tide, wind, current and weather anticipated for the event.

During the Brigade, Canoe Leaders will discuss and manage identified risks due to river hazards; wind and tides; plant and animal hazards, sun exposure; potential for hypothermia on water or in camp and all associated risks with the event. Communication and feedback from all crews will be expected.

## Canoe and Rescue

### *The Canoes*

- Canoes for this event are to be of the 22-25' North Canoe or similar type, up to possibly the 36' Montreal Canoe models. These canoes will include five, six or more seating benches.
- Smaller tandem canoes will be permitted, subject to the safety equipment requirements for small canoes, including, bailer, throw rope and noise-making device. Mooring lines must be attached and gear must be secured to the canoe. Paddlers must be familiar with recovery procedure in the event of swamping, tipping, etc. as below.
- Canoes should be rendered through the use of supplementary buoyancy material as needed.
- Paddlers should carry a dry bag with change of clothes, snack and sufficient water for the trip. Sunscreen and bug repellent are recommended. Packs must be secured to the canoes in the event of tipping.
- Canoes are to have on board at all times:
  - Spare paddles – minimum 2 large canoes, 1 for tandem or solo.
  - Approved PFD for each paddler. Paddlers are required to wear their PFDs at all times when on the water.
  - A sound making device, whistle or similar
  - A minimum of two manual bailing devices – buckets or hand pumps. Two 10-20 litre buckets and a hand pump are recommended for large canoes. One bailing device for small canoes/kayaks.
  - A first aid kit with Canoe Leaders
  - A working cell phone for each canoe leader.
  - A minimum of two 15 meter Throw Bags per large canoe, one per small canoe, with floating line appropriate to large canoe or small canoe. Normally one bag shall be secured at one end to a grab loop, and the second shall be immediately available mid-canoe for rescue work.
  - 2 locking carabineers with each throw-bag
  - A repair kit of materials appropriate to the construction of the canoe. Duct Tape, wire, rope, multi-tool, flashlight and spare batteries.

- “Grab loops” near each end of the large canoes for attaching rescue lines. These grab loops must be strongly secured and capable of taking the full weight of the canoe when swamped.
- Grab ropes or loops for each end of small canoes or kayaks.
- One “re-entry” strap per large canoe

### ***General Paddling Practices***

At all times during the brigade canoes are to paddle in units of, three or more canoes. At no times should a canoe or kayak be traveling alone, if one boat stops, all boats in the sub-unit stop! Canoe crews should find other crews of similar capability (speed, motivation, etc.) to travel with. At no time should canoes be ahead of the designated ‘lead’ canoe, or behind the designated ‘sweep’ canoe.

River signals will be reviewed with all participants before departure on day one. In particular, all participants will be expected to recognize paddle signals for Stop, Emergency, River Right/Left, All Clear/Resume and Paddler OK. As well, whistle signals will be reviewed including One Blow – Attention; Two Blows – Stop; Three Blows – Emergency.

At times of greater risk or difficulty paddlers MUST follow the instructions of the Canoe Leaders who will collaborate to deal with emergencies or other needs.

- will attempt to balance canoes for physical ability and experience.
- may direct the order of canoes for approaching landings and portages.
- may direct rescue attempts.

### ***Big Canoes – General***

Some pointers provided by the Voyageur Brigade Society include:

- At a flat water practise we had one paddler hit in the head by the far gunwale as the boat rolled over. Paddlers should be advised when possible to grab the far gunwale as it comes across and duck, or push out hard early.
- In a swamped canoe on the river, the flags created a problem for “righting” the canoe. If paddling with flags these should not be firmly tied in, but should be able to be easily pulled out of the flag holder.

### ***Flat water Rescue***

Flat water rescue can be problematic: the conditions (wind and waves usually) that necessitate rescue also make it difficult to effect a safe rescue. The victims from a swamped canoe must attempt to remain with their boat. The canoe is the most visible item for rescuers to locate.

Under most mild conditions the quickest large canoe rescue is for the rescue canoe or boat is to help stabilize the upset canoe, and one or two paddlers clamber in and begin to bail the canoe dry. As the gunwales lift additional paddlers can climb in to help with the bailing. This assumes that the canoe does (as it should) float with the gunwales above the water line even when swamped.

If conditions are not too severe, one or two rescue canoes may try to effect a T-Rescue. Rescue canoes should approach the upset canoe from the downwind side. If two canoes are effecting the rescue they may raft up to form a more stable platform. **Paddlers must be given first consideration**, and should be removed from the water if they appear to be suffering injury or hypothermia. Two paddlers near the middle of the rescue canoe should be directed to assist victims into their canoe. Other middle paddlers can change position to help with boat stability, and may either brace to the side away from the attempted entry, or grab the second rescue canoe to stabilize their own boat. A “T” Rescue may require as many as four strong paddlers in the rescue canoe to attempt the lift-and-drag of the swamped canoe across the rescue canoe’s gunwales. Unlike tradition T rescues, the upset canoe may have to be first lifted from an oblique angle due to the upturned ends. The stern paddler of one of the rescue canoe, who should have the best view of the rescue attempt, should be the paddler in charge of the rescue attempt and coordinate all activities. Bow paddlers are to assist with control and stability of the rescue canoe.

If conditions are too severe for a T-Rescue, or a “pump-out”, then a towing rescue may be considered. Under more severe conditions the swamped canoe will have to be abandoned. And under the most severe conditions the rescue canoe may only be able to assist the swimmers to shore by towing them, either off the side of the rescue canoe, or on a rescue line behind.

If a larger rescue boat is available, the rescue attempts should be from the side of the boat, towards the stern. Consideration must be made for the location of the propeller on the rescue boat.

*Note: the above directions apply to large canoes primarily. For small canoes, either side or T rescue technique may be used.*

### ***Moving Water Rescue***

Though the PEIPB Brigade will not encounter rapidly moving river water, these directions are included for review. Tidal currents may create similar conditions to moving river water.

On the river if a canoe is upset all paddlers should move away, and to the upstream of the upset canoe. Being pinned between a swamped North Canoe (or even a tandem) and a rock or log jam will surely result in injury. Thus the first consideration of any swimmer from an upset canoe is for their immediate safety, and the avoiding of any further downstream dangers. The paddlers/swimmers from the upset North Canoe should attempt to grab the upstream throw bag on the swamped canoe, and if available they should attach the second throw bag and head to the nearest shore, preferably the next inside of a bend of the river. Swimmers may not be able to tow a North Canoe, but they may be able to reach

shore and two or three paddlers may be able to hold the canoe so that it does swing to shore pushed by the river flow.

Rescue canoes should attempt a towing rescue from the upstream end of the swamped canoe. The Rescue canoe should swing around and back down to the swamped canoe to effect a towing rescue. The towed rescue is more effective if additional throw-bags are available to be linked together, it is much easier to paddle a long rope to shore and then attempt to hold the swamped canoe, than to tow a swamped canoe. Once the tow ropes are joined the rescue canoe should head directly to shore, and a slightly downstream angle and sprint to shore is better than to attempt a classic ferry angle tow to shore.

If a motorized boat is available to assist with a rescue it too must attempt the towed rescue from the upstream end or side of the upset/swamped canoe.

*Note: rescue techniques for small canoes and kayaks will be similar but will not involve as much difficulty in recovering the boat.*

## **Medical Conditions/Allergies**

Participants with allergies or other medical conditions requiring emergency response in the event of problems must provide this information and appropriate medical emergency response procedures to Canoe Leaders to incorporate in the Safety Plan, all copies.

On a voluntary basis participants may disclose other medical conditions that may affect their physical capacity and/or conditions and protocol for emergency treatment. It is recommended that these conditions be made known to their own particular Canoe Leader and that participant emergency contact information and correct response procedure be written down and kept in the relevant canoe first aid kit.

Necessary medicines are to be provided and carried by the person and a backup held by another participant is strongly encouraged.

In the event of shared food, utensils and camping area, participants will be made aware where possible of risk factor food items not to be shared or, potentially, to be omitted from their meal plans

## **Medical Emergency**

### ***Prior to:***

- The PEIPB Planning Committee will ascertain which members of the Brigade have current First Aid Training
- These people will be identified with the Brigade members



- First Aid people will check First Aid Kits, Safety equipment in boats and contact information. They will also make a list of known allergies or medical conditions among paddlers and carry a pack capable of holding backup medication, epi-pens, etc. as required.
- First Aid people will carry a charged cel phone in a watertight container in addition to those carried by Canoe Leaders.

### ***During***

- It will be the responsibility of the first aid volunteers to deal with all first aid issues. First Aid volunteers are to work within their training, and in any serious incident that exceeds their training “hand-off” the patient to a more senior medic at the first opportunity.
- It will be the responsibility of the Medical Lead and the Ambulance Crew to determine whether and when additional medical help or transportation is needed. The decision should be made in conjunction with the Canoe Leaders and PEIPB Committee.

### ***Post***

- Debriefing shall take place regarding safety and any medical concerns that arose on the trip, carried out by Canoe Leaders, PEIPB Planning Committee and First Aid people.
- A PEI Paddle Brigade Incident/Injury Report Form (attached) will be filled in with details regarding any first aid or safety incident(s).

## ***Campsite Emergency***

- Campsite(s) on the PEIPB Brigade will all be accessible by road and emergency vehicles. The location of First Aid people and kits will be made known at the site(s).

## **Cancellation**

### ***Conditions Leading to Cancellation***

- Cancellation and immediate termination of the Brigade, including exit from the water and securing of all equipment may occur for a number of reasons, including:
- Bad weather: high winds that result in considerable risk to paddlers or even make paddling impossible, particularly in open tidal water, as well as very high winds with risk of windfall (portages); severe rain or hail with risk of lightning, tornadoes, or hypothermia.
  - Forest fire, flooding (High Water, Debris), or other natural disasters
  - Marine weather advisories for the Northumberland Strait or Gulf of St. Lawrence
  - Other conditions that create inappropriate risk or result from the direction of a Marine or similar authority

### ***Who Makes Decision to Cancel***

- Canoe Leaders will make the decision to cancel, including experienced paddlers in consultation and taking safety and skill level of all participants into account in such a decision.

### ***Procedures to Follow in the Event of Cancellation***

- Each morning prior to scheduled departure, the Brigade Canoe Leaders shall meet and determine if weather conditions are conducive to safe paddling. This group shall have the best available weather reports and route maps.
- An evening meeting may be held to discuss the day's paddle and look at weather forecasts or other conditions that may affect the next day's paddle. Plans to adjust or alter the routes will also be discussed at this time if needed.
- If the decision is made during a day's paddle to suspend paddling, the Lead Canoe Leader shall locate and lead the Brigade to a suitable safe exit point. The Sweep Canoe Leader shall ensure that all canoes and paddlers are off the water before landing.
- Cell phone contact will be available for communication but standard canoe signals will be used as well to provide rapid visual direction for all canoes. These will be reviewed with all participants prior to departure on day one.

## **Communication**

### ***General***

- For reliable contact the following shall carry a cell phone:
  - Canoe Leader or First Aid person on the water
  - Sweep and lead canoes/boats– on the water
- All of the above must be familiar with their cell phone operation and have entered each others' numbers and emergency contact numbers.
- A test of the appropriate phones shall be done each morning before, or as part of the brigade departure.

## PEIPB – Incident or Injury Report Form

1 – Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time/ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2 – Reported by: \_\_\_\_\_ Time/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3 – Initial Response by: \_\_\_\_\_ Time/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

4 – Nature/Type of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

5 – Action(s) taken: \_\_\_\_\_

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6 – Location / Site of Incident and responses: \_\_\_\_\_

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7 – Name(s): of victims/patients (Age, Gender, Condition, Contact info'): Total # involved: \_\_\_\_\_

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8 - Further Response by / and Actions taken: \_\_\_\_\_

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9 – Incident Details:

Description (What happened): \_\_\_\_\_

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Presumed Cause: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Factors/Details: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10 – Witnesses (Name, address, phone #, how involved)

1 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11 – Incident Report Form Completed by:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Role in PEIB \_\_\_\_\_

\*Attach additional pages as required.\*