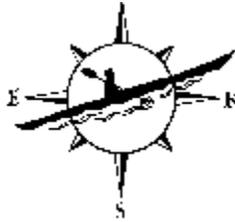


Sebago Sea Kayak Committee



Committee Policies

Club Boat and Equipment Use – Jamaica Bay & Lake Sebago

Club boats are available for the use of **Safety Certified** members. To be approved, a member must demonstrate basic kayaking safety skills and should have knowledge of Sebago policies. (See Safety Certification below)

Members not yet certified to use club boats on their own must be accompanied by a Trip Leader. Safety Certified members may use club boats without restriction.

All boats and equipment must be checked out each time they are used. Any missing or damaged equipment should be noted and reported to the Chair.

Boats must be available for Blade published group activities, including Wednesday night and Saturday morning paddles. Individuals are encouraged to use the boats during off-peak hours, or to check carefully that they not conflict with club trips or activities.

All general club policies, such as the Sebago Safety rules, must be followed at all times.

Club boats and other club equipment may not be taken from Jamaica Bay or Lake Sebago without the permission of the Fleet Captain. No other club officer has the authority to grant this permission. Permission is normally automatic for Blade-published club trips, and rare for any other purpose. The Fleet Captain will inform the SKC chair of any unusual request to use boats.

Safety Certification

Safety Certification status is designated by the SKC chair or another senior member the chair designates. To be Safety Certified, a member should understand all Sebago Kayak Committee policies and either take the Level 1 instruction course (ACA Level 1) or demonstrate knowledge of those skills. Level 1 skills include getting in and out of a boat safely; self-rescue; group rescue, the ability to paddle straight, both forward and backward; and the ability to turn on command including boat maneuvering with draw and sweep strokes.

Any member who, in the sole opinion of the SKC chair, disregards SKC safety or use policies will lose their certification and boat use privileges. The Chair's decision may be

appealed to the Sebago Board of Directors, but will stand unless and until the Board decides otherwise.

A Safety Certified member may be asked at any time by the Committee Chair to demonstrate continued maintenance of the required skills.

A chart of all Safety Certified members will be maintained at the Club.

Trip Leader Certification

Trip Leader Certification status is designated by the SKC chair or another senior member the chair designates. ***Only an authorized Trip leader may take non-certified members or guests out in club boats.*** The Trip Leader is responsible for the safety of the group and protection of club equipment.

The club maintains a Trip Leader's Locker with group safety equipment. Such equipment includes first aid kits, repair materials, night illumination; paddle floats, pumps, and spray skirts. Spray skirts should be used only by those members who have practiced a wet exit and are comfortable with a self rescue.

Jamaica Bay Trip / Lake Sebago Leaders should be ACA Level 2 certified or have equivalent Level 2 skills, with good judgment, leadership, and experience. Canoe Safety certification is highly desirable. At a minimum, you must have taken Canoe Safety or demonstrate the skills required. These skills include the ability to maneuver your boat in any direction on command, group rescues, towing, bracing skills and some knowledge of charts, weather and tides and in the use of VHF radios and safety devices.

Regional Trip Leaders should be ACA Level 3 certified or have equivalent Level 3 skills; a wider experience in a variety of conditions; strong leadership abilities; and Canoe Safety training. These skills include everything noted above plus advanced paddling skills in rougher waters, ability to reach charts and plot a course, experience in reading weather and tides

Assistant Trip Leaders should be ACA Level 2 certified or have equivalent Level 2 skills, with good judgment, leadership, and some experience. Canoe Safety certification is highly desirable. At a minimum, you must have taken Canoe Safety or demonstrate the skills required. These skills include the ability to maneuver your boat in any direction on command, group rescues, towing, bracing skills and some knowledge of charts, weather and tides and in the use of VHF radios and safety devices.

Upon completion of all required instruction classes, you will be noted as a Trip Leader in Training. You will then be required to lead 3 trips under the guidance of authorized Trip Leaders. Once you have lead these trips and the authorized Trip Leader has signed off on your ability to lead, you will then be designated as an authorized Trip Leader.

ALL Trip Leaders must be re-certified every 5 years

A chart of all authorized Trip Leaders and leaders in training will be maintained at the clubhouse.

SKC Trip Guidelines

The Trip Leader has ultimate authority over all major decisions. To go or not to go; to accept any participant into the group; who to select as an Assistant; deciding when and where to launch and land; to modify the itinerary as conditions indicate; and when and where to take breaks.

The Trip Leader should designate an Assistant and clarify mutual roles before the trip begins. One suggested (though not required) method is for the Leader to bring up the rear as sweep. The Assistant would then be in middle of the group. Use a competent club member to act as the lead paddler. Sometimes having the other boats buddy up is useful. No boat should go in front of the lead boat or behind the sweep boat. The Assistant makes sure that the boats don't get too spaced out. The lead boat should constantly check the group behind him and pause as needed to bring the group together, and receive direction and wisdom from the Leader. The Lead boat, the Assistant trip leader and the trip leader SHOULD all carry VHF radios to keep in contact with each other.

All trip members are ultimately responsible for their own safety. Almost always, however, a bad group decision will still be better than an individual's decision to break away from the group. A Leader can encourage group input, but decisions are the Leader's alone. An individual who decides to join a group trip, but then does not follow the Leader's decisions, will not be welcome on future Sebago SKC trips.

If a trip is not made up completely or primarily of Sebago members who are well known to the Leader, the trip should begin by bringing all the participants together. For Jamaica Bay trips, this can be on the lawn in front of the boathouse. The Leader should have participants introduce themselves and describe their experience. The Leader can then assign boats based on skills, and participants can adjust foot pegs and make sure spray skirts (not be used on Open Paddle Trips) fit while still on the grass. This is also a time to describe the proposed trip, outline SKC policies, and detail trip rules. Basic safety periodical such as whistle signals, what to do in case of a capsized should be explained to all participants.

It should be made clear that anyone who isn't comfortable with SKC policies or trip rules doesn't have to go. This applies equally to senior members: they must accept direction from the Leader. If they do not intend to stay with the group for the whole trip (for instance, they wish to extend a beginner trip into an intermediate trip by breaking away midway through), they should ask permission from the Leader before it begins.

Trip leaders should have a safe boat and equipment. For their group, they should have a tow line (either quick-release belt style, or attached to their boat) and know how to use it. They should also have a basic first-aid kit suitable for treating cuts and gashes, a whistle, a pump, a paddle float, and an extra paddle. The trip leader and assist will also have VHF radios for communications and air horns for emergency situations. In Jamaica Bay stay on channel 68 so that the other boaters in the area are aware of your presence.

All non-Sebago members must fill out a waiver form for each trip. The Trip Leader is responsible for putting the signed waivers in a safe place before each trip.

Guidelines specific for Jamaica Bay Paddles. Groups leaving or approaching our dock should generally hug the West side of the basin. All paddlers should stay in the center of the channel until they reach the end of the last powerboat marina. This gives power boaters more room, and in case of trouble the Western shore is friendlier. Kayaks should never use the power

boat channel (the one with the RED marking) directly under the bridge: cross under the openings one (low tide) or two (high tide) sets of pilings to the West. Beginner trips can be enlivened by practicing skills: the Leader and Assistant can consider demonstrating bracing, rolling, or rescues before heading for home. Wednesday night paddle Trip Leaders should always have lighting for themselves, even if they intend to bring the group back before nightfall. They should also check to see that others carry emergency lighting, as well.

Guidelines specific for Regional Trips. The Trip Leader should develop an information package well ahead of time to mail to interested participants. It should include all necessary information—time and place to meet; directions to put-in; length and expected duration of trip; special equipment or food needs—as well as any general or historical background on the area to be paddled. Participants should register for regional trips at least two weeks in advance. That way a leader will have the information to more easily cancel a trip ahead of time for lack of interest, or the night before for poor expected weather.

Trip Calendar and Scheduling Considerations

Saturday morning paddles. Regular Saturday morning paddles provide us an important continuity. Conditional members and the public know without having to consult a calendar that they can get out on Jamaica Bay almost any week. Recruiting new paddlers is also easier if there is an activity coordinator and a standard launch time to refer them to. This year paddlers will meet at 9:00 am, leave by 10 am, and return by 12:30 PM. These trips should all be beginner trips and last approximately two to three hours. This also will allow a second round of trips (if scheduled) to begin at 1:30 pm for the afternoon. Senior members who wish to use boats early Saturday morning must get return them before 9 am.

Wednesday Night Paddles. Expect to leave the dock about 6 pm. These are great in extending use of our boats at a time when they would otherwise be idle, and in giving non-weekenders a regular activity.

Jamaica Bay Cruises and Regional Trips. Trips will usually be scheduled during the months of April to October. Jamaica Bay Cruises and Regional Trips MUST not interfere with regular scheduled Open Paddles on Wednesday and Saturdays We will make exceptions, but want to be cautious about disrupting the continuity of these paddles. Exceptions include overnights, trips with personal boats only, trips needing only a limited number of club boats, and trips coordinated with other organizations.

Weather Standards

Small craft warnings	No beginners	Protected waters only, with caution
Gale Warnings	Nobody	
Winds: Force 1-4	0-18 MPH	Okay for beginner trips. Over 10MPH may need to modify beginner trips
Force 5-6	19-31	Caution: Cancel beginner trips
Force 7-8	32-46	Intermediate trips in protected waters only Expert territory only: no SKC trips.

All Sebago kayakers should go to our website and read the Open Paddle information.