

2024

# Kootenay Rhythm Dragons Paddler Handbook



KRD

Executive Committee

5/30/2024

# WELCOME TO THE KOOTENAY RHYTHM DRAGONS



## VISION

**Empowerment, Optimal Health, and Wellbeing  
For All Women**

**Kootenay Rhythm Dragons (KRD) celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2024. KRD welcomes women of all ages and abilities. Whether a member of the recreational team or competitive team, enjoying Kootenay Lake in a 48 foot dragon boat powered by a team of 20 paddlers, a drummer/coach, and a steersperson is an experience like no other.**

**Welcome on Board!**

## Registration

Club registration usually takes place in March. A notice will be sent out in various papers, on Facebook, and members will also have the information. If the initial registration day is missed, the KRD website has copies of the two forms that need to be filled out. Registration can take place in person or on line.

<https://kootenayrhythmdragons.ca>

At registration day, paddling information is provided, and several paddlers and coaches are in attendance to describe the paddling experience, answer questions, discuss equipment and explain options.

A prospective paddler needs to decide whether to paddle on the competitive or recreational team.

The cost to be a competitive team member is \$175; the cost for a recreational paddler is \$85.

Normally, the paddling season begins in May and ends in September.

The competitive team practices are two evenings during the week, 5:30-7 pm. (the practice days are set at the start of the season); the recreational team practices are Saturday, 8:30-10 am.

Refunds are available only until June 1 or under special circumstances which will need to be discussed with the Treasurer.

## Communication

Club communication is done primarily by email.

**IT IS CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE WHOLE MESSAGE BE READ.** It may be necessary to schedule or cancel an event/activity/meeting on SHORT notice.

If a paddler does not have an email address, a phone number (or alternate email address) needs to be provided to the coaches and/or captains.

## Dryland Training

Dryland training takes place in April, normally on Tuesday evenings 5:30-7pm., at the Wildflower School gym at 811 Stanley St.

It is recommended all new paddlers participate in these practices; it is also an opportunity for experienced paddlers to refresh their skills. Information is provided that will help new paddlers to paddle correctly and safely. Warm up exercises, positions in the boat, commands used in the boat, dragonboat etiquette, paddling techniques, and important safety guidelines are provided. It is also a time to meet other paddlers, the coaches, and steerspersons.

## Boat Launch and Maintenance

The boat is stored on land upside down on the trailer during the winter.

The boat is launched near the end of April or in early May, depending on lake water depth, weather conditions, and the dock being afloat. It takes a large number of people to turn the boat over on the trailer, before it is launched; it weighs 800 lbs. The coach chair and steering lock are attached after the boat is flipped but prior to the boat being launched.

This process is reversed at the end of the season.

The dragon head and tail are attached on special occasions.

## Financial Assistance

KRD strives to enable anyone to have access to paddling.

The Treasurer arranges financial support for paddlers as needed, and all transactions are protected by privacy.

Registration may be paid in installments. Purchase of a life jacket (PFD) or wooden paddle can also be done through installments arranged with the Treasurer. FYI, Hellman Canoes and Kayaks, 2645 hwy 3a North Shore Nelson, provides to paddlers who identify themselves as registered KRD members, a 10% discount on any item.

## Paddlers Assistance Fund (PAF)

See the KRD Paddlers Assistance Fund Policy and Application form *in the end pages of the Handbook*.

## Guidelines for the Paddler Experience

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION VERY CAREFULLY.

1. Practices are normally held at the City wharf at the bottom of Hall St. on the dock down the ramp on the left or west side. Temporarily, paddling practices may be held at the wharf of the Nelson Rowing Club
2. Be sure to visit the bathroom before leaving for practice, there are no facilities at the dock, and none on the water.
3. ALWAYS show up to practice; if unable to attend, notify, in a timely way, the designated team member (captain, manager, or coach). The coach needs to know who will be present in order to assign seats.

*Practice occurs in all weather, except lightening and thunder storms and severe water conditions. “Cancellation” is decided at the dock by the steersperson and the coach.*

4. Please arrive early to practice and sign in. There will be a sign-in sheet in plain sight; it lists the paddlers who indicated they would be attending; it is for safety and accountability in case of an accident.
5. Clothing, gloves, footwear should be water resistant. A water bottle that does not make any noise in the boat, a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, may be required, depending on the weather. **The paddler’s name should be on all gear, clothing and water bottles.**
6. Any necessary allergy medicine should be with the paddler on the water and the coach and paddle partner should be aware of any potential problems. Paddling seat partners need also to share if they are comfortable being in the water should a boat upset occur.
7. While waiting for practice to begin, be prepared to clean out the boat at the dock; the boat is cleaned before every practice. Cloths and buckets are provided; there may be water in the boat to bail out, and dirt in the bottom. The dock can also be swept and a mat put at the bottom of the ramp to wipe shoes and minimize the amount of dirt in the boat.

8. Arrive 15 min. before the start of practice to ensure you have the proper gear; the club has several paddles and paddler life jackets available to borrow/use. Once a paddler makes the commitment to be a dragonboat team member, it is expected that the paddler will purchase their own equipment.

9. The coach or other designated paddler will lead warm-up exercises prior to going on the dock.

10. It is expected that paddlers will listen quietly to the coach, and be alert to directions given by the coach and steersperson, during warmup, loading the boat, switching positions, paddling, docking, and disembarking from the boat. The coach will designate paddlers' seating places. It is useful if a paddler can practice paddling in any seat.

11. On Saturdays (and all-year round), after practice on the lake and cool-down exercise, all paddlers are invited to meet at Finley's Bar and Grill, 705 Vernon St., for coffee, brunch, and chatting.

## Club Expectations

A paddler is expected to abide by the KRD Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy, and Safety Policy. *Please see attached in the end section of the Handbook.*

Policies are in place to manage disputes, communication, paddler etiquette and expected behaviours, safety and equipment.

The Kootenay Rhythm Dragon Boat non-profit Society is involved in community events. It is expected members will volunteer and help on these occasions.

The KRD executive oversees the work and activities of the Society; there are Board members, Committee Chairs and members, coaches, steerspersons, captains, managers, boat cleaners, videographers, planners. It is important that members step forward to volunteer.

Members are encouraged to ask questions if necessary; they can be directed to coaches, or members of the executive.

## **Tasks that need to be done at every practice:**

Check to see if there is water in the boat. Bail the water, dry the seats, including the drummer's seat. Mats to wipe your feet on need to be put at the bottom of the ramp and returned to the storage box after practice. Towels need to be taken home, washed and returned to the box each week. Sweep the dock and clean up litter.

Each team of paddlers chooses a captain

A team member can volunteer to lead the warm up for each practice

The coach determines the goal(s), the content, the order of drills, etc. for each practice.

The coach is responsible for seating and practice on the water and the land. The steersperson is responsible for safety at practice on the water. The steersperson can override the coach if the paddlers and boat are in danger.

If a paddler is unable to swim, is uncomfortable in the water, or might panic in the water, the coach needs to be informed, as does the paddler's seating partner. It is recommended the paddler try out their personal flotation device at the pool.

## **Choosing the right length dragon boat paddle**

It is recommended that paddlers use/practice with the club paddles during the first few paddling practices on the water; coaches will assist with measuring for and determining the correct length of paddle for a paddler.

## **Festivals**

Every year the competitive teams determine what festivals to enter.

Competitive paddlers on the team vote for the team festivals they want to attend.

The boat needs 18 or 20 paddlers to compete, a drummer/coach and a steersperson. Paddlers can put their name on a list to be part of the festival teams. Every festival list may have 1-4 spares/substitutes named depending on the festival and the coach.

The coach is in charge at the festival; the coach is in charge of seating on the boat and will choose who will sit in what row.

If a race team needs a sub(s) for any given festival, the following will be the order in which subs will be invited:

1. Firstly, if there is more than one competitive team, paddlers not able to attend their own team's chosen festivals will be invited to sub.
2. Secondly, recreational paddlers wanting to race will be invited.
3. Thirdly, race paddlers in general will be asked to sub if no subs are found in 1 & 2 as above.

The requirement for subs will be communicated by email and sent out to all club members.

At festivals, spares are dressed and ready to paddle right up to loading the boat, in case a paddler has an issue in the marshalling area and requires substitution.

The team manager is responsible for booking hotel rooms and collecting festival fees. Each team will meet several times to plan who will share rooms, who needs a ride and who has room available. The ones who share rooms share the cost. Gas costs are also shared.

Some expenses are covered by the club. Coaches and steers persons are compensated for rooms, gas and registrations. Coaches and steers usually share a room and vehicle to reduce costs.

The equipment is transported by someone whose gas costs will be covered. If traveling with the equipment as a passenger, you are still expected to contribute to the gas costs. Everyone at the festival is expected to help set up the tents, paddle holders, tables, notice board and clock. Everyone brings munchies to share between races.



Paddlers and spares need to stay close to the tents. Festival schedules can speed up as well as slow down depending on weather. Do not leave the tent area until racing is over or your seat may be filled by a spare. If you have to go to the bathroom at the last minute, make sure someone knows but try and plan ahead.

Following a race, the team meets with the coach to debrief.

Anyone paddling at a festival should have their own equipment so that the club equipment is left for recreational practices. The club has enough race jerseys and racing paddles to equip a team which can be signed out for festivals. Paddlers are required to have their own pfd for races.

Anyone going to a festival is expected to show up for all practices (unless there are extenuating circumstances). Paddlers are expected to be in good shape to compete and prepared for as many races a day as necessary.

**Paddlers are expected to be quiet and listen to the coach and the steersperson.**

The team often eats meals together and communal dinner menus are voted on as a team at each festival.

Borrowed equipment may be collected at the end of the festival or on return to Nelson. The paddler is responsible for any club equipment signed out;. racing paddles are not to be shared or exchanged.

## Safety

Please see the *KRD safety policies listed at the end section of the Handbook.*

Before going out on the water, safety issues will be reviewed and discussed at the team meeting.

## Code of Conduct

The Kootenay Rhythm Dragon's Club is committed to fairness, equity and good sportsmanship, and aims to provide the best possible environment in which its members can excel. The Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that appropriate forms of behavior are adopted and remain the norm for all persons associated with the club. Every member of the KRD has a responsibility to ensure their own behavior is in accordance with the conduct outlined hereunder, and any breach of the Code will be subject to disciplinary action.

1 Be subject to the management and direction of the team captain or coach or any other person appointed by either of them.

2 Observe and comply with all reasonable directions and orders given by the team captain or coach or any other officiating person.

3 Conduct themselves in a proper manner so as not to bring themselves or the club into public disrespect or censure.

4 Not to make, comment, issue, authorize, offer or endorse any public criticism or statement designed to have an effect prejudicial to the best interest of the club.

5 Respect the law and customs at all times and in all places including in foreign countries.

6 Respect the rights, dignity, privacy and worth of all participants and officials regardless of their ability, gender, sexual orientation or cultural background. Abusive or

violent conduct of any nature toward any paddler, club, race official or spectator will not be tolerated.

7 Perform all duties and responsibilities in a mature, fair and professional manner.

8 Demonstrate and ensure a positive commitment to the KRD club and its programs and policies.

9 Not disclose to any unauthorized person or organization, information which is of a confidential or privileged nature.

10 Not to defame or injure any person.

11 Not to consume alcohol to excess nor to encourage other persons to use or consume alcohol to excess while participating in a KRD activity.

12 To act in all times in a manner beyond reproach and in such a way as to ensure good relations within club and between teams.

## KOOTENAY RHYTHM DRAGONS

POLICY TITLE: Paddlers Assistance Fund  
Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 2019

SUPERSEDES: None

### **POLICY:**

This policy provides a confidential, fair and consistent process for Kootenay Rhythm Dragon members to access the Paddlers Assistance Fund (PAF).

### **PURPOSE:**

In accordance with Kootenay Rhythm Dragon's (KRD)'s guiding principle of inclusivity for all members, the membership of KRD has created a Paddlers Assistance Fund to assist with removing the barrier of financial hardship to participate in club and team festivals. KRD executive has the responsibility of stewardship for the PAF on behalf of the KRD membership who voluntarily contribute to the fund. This policy will identify the criteria and process for members to access the PAF.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. KRD members applying for PAF must have paid their annual KRD membership fees in full for the season.
2. KRD members can apply to PAF a maximum of one festival per season.
3. PAF funds can be used to pay for 50% of race fees and 50% of accommodation costs at a festival. PAF funds cannot be used for food, gas or other miscellaneous expenses at a festival.
4. Applications for PAF funds must be completed on the attached form and submitted to KRD's Treasurer for approval.
5. KRD's Treasurer is required to keep information and records regarding PAF requests confidential.
6. The application form can be accessed by:
  - a. Confidential email to the Treasurer;
  - b. Request to the team captain;
  - c. Hard copy on registration day.

KRD Paddler's Assistance Fund Application

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \_\_\_\_\_

**Festival Budget:**

	<b>Actual Cost</b>	<b>Funds Requested</b> <small>(max 50% of actual cost)</small>
Festival Registration	_____	_____
Accommodation	_____	_____
<b>Total Funds Requested</b>		<b>=====</b>

Member signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

THESE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WERE DEVELOPED TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF KOOTENAY RHYTHM DRAGONS TEAM MEMBERS AND GUESTS PADDLING WITH THE TEAM.

## Policies

- The Kootenay Rhythm Dragons will have an Emergency Plan in place.
- At the beginning of each season the Nelson City Police, Nelson Fire Department, Nelson Ambulance and Nelson RCMP will be informed of the paddling schedule of the Kootenay Rhythm Dragons.
- KRD will establish a Safety Committee for review of the procedures annually.
- Safety Committee members will take Pleasure Craft Certification course.
- Safety Committee members will review safety measures with team members at the beginning of each season and provide copies of safety procedures to each member.
- Each team member and guest will sign a waiver prior to the paddling.
- Each team member and guest is required to wear proper pfd during paddling practices and races.
- There is a minimum of 16 paddlers in the boat each time it is taken out.

## Procedures

### *Administration*

- Safety Committee will ensure each member has signed a waiver of responsibility prior to paddling in the boat.

### *At the Dock*

- Safety Committee will ensure each paddler has proper pfd.
- Each team member and guest will sign roster sheet, to be left on the dock
- Each paddler will know their seat partner
- Row 10 is responsible for steersperson
- Row 1 is responsible for drummer/coach
- Count off rows and number of team members in the boat before leaving the dock.
- Non swimmers will be identified prior to leaving the dock
- Coach is responsible to ensure boat is properly loaded/balanced

## SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- Sound signaling devices - recommend everyone carry a pea-less whistle
- Bailers - minimum of 2
- Buoyant weighted throw rope 25 ft - marine safety line with float
- Two extra paddles
- SAFETY bag (waterproof)/First Aid kit - containing dressings, cold and heat compresses, medications (Tylenol, Gravol, Benadryl, glucose tabs), boat airhorn
- Waterproof cell phone container attached to outside the Safety bag - the steersperson brings a cellphone to every practice

## BOAT COMMANDS

Each team member must learn and understand the basic commands of the boat. The steersperson is in charge of the boat; the steersperson's commands must be obeyed to ensure everyone's safety.

### Emergency Back Up Plan

In case of capsize or collision, the following measures will be taken:

- **STAY CALM**
- **ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR STEERSPERSON FOR DIRECTION**
- **Buddy System** - Each paddler will ensure location of their seat partner. The first and last seats in the boat must check for the Coach and Steersperson
- **If the Boat Rolls Over** - It cannot stop once it starts to turn. Paddlers on the higher side of the boat when it begins to go over try to jump clear of your seat partner to avoid injury. If a paddler comes up under the boat there will be an air pocket available to catch a breath, get bearings and feel the way to the side of the boat and then surface on the outside. Immediately call out to your buddy to let them know where you are.

- **Stay With the Boat** - Paddlers will hold onto the boat spread out even around both sides of the capsized boat holding onto the top edge (gunwale). The boat has the capacity to support a full crew even when fully submerged. If the dragon boat is upside down after capsizing spread evenly around the outside and gently roll it over. Look out or call out to your seatmate and obey the instruction of the rescue boat. Once the Rescue Boat has arrived, they are in charge. If other paddlers are injured or having difficulty reaching the boat give them assistance and make the rescue boat aware of the situation.

**Listen to Instructions from the Rescue Boat** - rescue boat will help you right the boat and get it bailed enough to paddle it back to shore. In the event the boat must be towed, listen to instructions from the rescue boat as to where to proceed. Do not go elsewhere or valuable time may be wasted looking for you even though you are safe.

## **OTHER BASICS TO HELP MAKE DRAGON BOATING SAFE AND ENJOYABLE**

- Always carry a bottle of water with you. Dehydration can happen quickly while paddling.
- Dress appropriately. Dress in layers to insulate your body. Water repellent or waterproof clothing is best - cotton is not a good choice.
- Apply proper sun protection. Sunburn can happen quickly on the water and a hat for sunstroke protection is advisable on hot days.
- Keep a spare paddle on board in the event of a break

*Have a fun and safe Dragon Boating season, Kootenay Rhythm Dragons Safety Committee*