Safety reminders

Anyone violating safety guidelines will be sent home.

Qualified Supervision, Discipline: There are no drugs or alcohol ever permitted in any Scouting activity. At the Batteau Festival campsites, there are (regrettably) many opportunities to cross this line. Nope—don’t do it and see to it that no one else does either.

Safety Afloat: If you’re in or on the water everyone will always wear their PFD (lifejacket). We organize boats into pods; the lead boat must have the sweep boat in sight at all times. If a boat falls behind, it is the responsibility of the boats ahead to STOP; it is not responsibility of the trailing boat to catch up.

Buddies: Every person and every boat will have a buddy. Definition of a buddy: near enough to render emergency assistance.

Safe Swim Defense: We are not officially “swimming” but following those rules is still a good idea.

Sunscreen/hydration: Wear clothes that cover, including a wide brim hat—wear sunscreen. Sunglasses will keep from you from getting a headache from glare on the water. Drink plenty of water.

Bugs: Use a mosquito repellant with at least 30% DEET.

Diving: Only feet-first entry; never head first. Do not jump into water from heights greater than you are tall, and should jump only into water chest deep or greater with minimal risk from contact with the bottom. No elevated entry is permitted where the person must clear any obstacle, including land.

Lightning: Check the weather forecast just before setting out, and keep an alert weather eye. Anticipate changes and bring all craft ashore when rough weather threatens. Wait at least 30 minutes before resuming activities after the last incidence of thunder or lightning.

Batteaus: These boats weigh 3 tons and have NO brakes. NEVER get in front of a batteau and between the batteau and rocks; if you get stuck then 3 tons of wood will kill you. Do not come within 15 feet of a batteau without permission. Never step onto a batteau without the permission of the captain or crew. Ever. Ask, “Permission to come aboard?”

Stuck: if your canoe gets stuck, get out and move it. Don’t drag a gouge into the bottom.

Water fights: No ramming other boats. Each boat can opt out of water fights (for the whole day).

No one-on-one contact with youth. The only youth that can be in your tent is your child.

Consider whether you are prepared to render First Aid, including CPR?

Maps: Take a map and know where you are. Plan your day, but be flexible.

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1 from the BSA guide to safe scouting (www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/GSS/toc.aspx).
Coming and going: At last count the trip leader is responsible for 15 people; all in this high-risk situation with many folks coming and going at various schedules. We’ll be spread across 125+ miles of river over 8 days! We want to keep our record of not talking with coroners or lawyers after a trip. So, whenever you or your child arrives: check in with the Scoutmaster; whenever you or your child departs: check out with the Scoutmaster. Only me; face to face. Really.

Serious violations: I have the HOV Council Scout Executive’s phone number on my cell and must report any serious violations.

Thanks for all your help! Any concerns? Talk to the SPL and then talk with me.

Not to end on a negative note:

The Zen of Canoeing

The river teaches those who listen. Here is some of what she says.

You are on “River time” You are on vacation. Listen to the river and you will hear that life is good; your friends are at your side. They are there for you; and you for them. The river is always there.

It usually takes about two days to realize that you are back to being part of the river. It’s OK if it takes longer, the river will wait.

“Paddle your own boat” Others depend on you to do your part and it’s more pleasant for everyone if you do a bit more. If you keep up with what you need to do in whatever “boat” you are in, you’ll be free to relax and have a good time knowing that everyone else is doing the best they can too.

“Go with the flow” Water is one of the most powerful forces in nature yet it moves on without haste and effort. It just moves around all obstacles in its quest of low places. Be with it. Perhaps that feeling of hurry or impatience means that you need to take a little swim.

A kōan to consider: “Be Here Now”