

PRANZ Safety Management Plan

Version 1.1 published 03 Jan 2019

Introduction

The Packrafting Association of NZ (PRANZ) is the national organisation for recreational Packrafting in New Zealand.

It is an unincorporated volunteer organisation, with no paid staff, which is affiliated to the Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ (FMC) and is a member club of White Water NZ (WWNZ).

PRANZ and WWNZ have a memorandum of understanding which details that WWNZ offers financial, member management and reporting functions on behalf of PRANZ.

As such, PRANZ has no bank account and any funds raised by PRANZ are held by WWNZ and spent by WWNZ on advice from PRANZ, for the benefit of packrafting in New Zealand.

PRANZ seeks to advocate for the interests of Packrafting and for Packrafters through the support of FMC and WWNZ, to ensure access, advocacy and safety initiatives keep Packrafting in New Zealand, available, fun and safer for all.

As part of this mission, PRANZ may from time to time organise and run volunteer led packrafting events including meetups, trips, workshops, trainings and similar such activities. These activities are only for members, or for the express purpose of encouraging people to become members.

This safety management plan relates to volunteers running these events in a safe manner, to minimize harm to members and non-members, with reference to current packrafting practices in New Zealand.

Legislation and requirements

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

As defined in section 17 of the Act, the PRANZ is not a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) and therefore exempt from the requirements of the act. This exemption is only valid where the association does not *employ* any person to carry out work for the association. PRANZ will not conduct any packrafting related activity where participants are paying a person, or paying PRANZ to provide that activity.

As defined in section 19 of the Act, any volunteer leaders of PRANZ activities are not 'workers' or 'volunteer workers' and therefore are exempt from any duties under the act.

Health and Safety at Work (Adventure Activities) Regulation 2016

As defined in section 4 of the regulation, a recreational association providing activities to members is exempt from having to comply with the Adventure Activities Regulation 2016. Therefore participants in official activities of PRANZ must be bona-fide members of the club.

According to the regulation, non-members may participate in activities provided the participation is only to encourage membership of the association or interest in the association's activities, or for the purposes of a competition; and is provided to any 1 person on no more than 12 days in any 12-month period.

Although the PRANZ is exempt from this legislation, the association recognizes that rivers and mountains have significant hazards that require experience in sound risk management in a dynamic environment. For this reason, the PRANZ has decided to implement a safety management plan to appropriately manage the risk for its activities.

Our health and safety goals

Our aim is to keep our members, non-members and contracted instructors or guides safe. We aim to have no accidents or incidents beyond requiring first aid assistance.

Responsibilities

All persons

To take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety; and take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons.

Executive

The executive will be responsible to make sure a safety management plan is operational.

Event Managers

Where one is appointed, they will be responsible for implementing the safety management plan for the duration of the event.

Leaders and Assistants

Responsible for implementing the safety management plan during the activity they are conducting.

Members and non-members

Responsible for their own safety and following the safety management plan for the activity they are conducting.

Policies and procedures

Outdoor Activities

Policy

- Each outdoor activity shall have a leader with the appropriate human and technical skills for the environments being visited (see Appendix 1 Recommended skill sets).
- Each participant must have the minimum skill set for the difficulty of trip being organised. (see Appendix 1 Recommended skill sets).
- The leader is responsible for leaving trip intentions and emergency contact information with a responsible person prior to leaving for each trip.
- The maximum compulsory river difficulty for any official PRANZ trip is class II+.
- Any class III water must have a safe re-grouping point prior, a suitable portage, a safe run-out and must be actively managed.
- Every person on a PRANZ trip must have verified competence for the activity to be conducted.

Guidelines

PRANZ runs activities for the benefit of its members and for potential members. There could be a wide variety of experience in the group conducting activities of varying difficulty.

- There should be at least one assistant in addition to the trip leader.
- A maximum ratio of 1 leader/assistant to 5 members/participants is usually appropriate. This is dependent on the difficulty of the activity, experience of the leaders, assistants and participants and the expected conditions during the activity.
- Competency can be verified for the activity through any combination of; observation of skills demonstrated, questioning of participants, citing of appropriate qualifications, as appropriate for the nature of the trip conducted.
- Verification of competency should be completed before a participant needs to perform a certain skill. I.e, verify self-rescue ability prior to the first rapid of significance.
- Any paddling on class III water is intended for actively managed coaching/training opportunities on one or two distinct features on a river, rather than as a part of river-running trip with many class III rapids.

Leader procedures

Depending on the type of activity, this may involve a combination of the following:

In preparation for the activity:

- Obtain participant experience and health information.
- Choose an appropriate location for the activity.
- Send recommended personal skill and equipment lists to the participants if required.
- Obtaining sufficient up to date information about the proposed activity location, including any known hazards, river put on, take out, portages and escape points.
- Devise a plan to manage any participants who cannot demonstrate competence in sufficient time for the challenges on the water. I.e, if they prove to be in-competent, how will you manage them? Will they need to walk out? Can they walk out? Can they portage rapids or paddle under close supervision?
- Checking for weather, rain and river levels as appropriate.
- Arrange group equipment which is appropriate for the activity, including emergency equipment and communication device(s).
- Obtain appropriate permission for activity location access if needed.
- Communicate with any commercial operator or local clubs which also uses the proposed activity location.

On the day:

- Final check of river level, forecast and actual weather.
- Fill out a PRANZ official activity sheet which records information such as;
 - Location of activity, including start and end points
 - Location, registration and colour of group vehicles
 - Intended return time, and the time when the police should be contacted.
 - Each group members full name, with emergency contact information and any medical conditions.
- Send a copy of the activity sheet to a trusted person, who would raise the alarm if the group does not report out by the report time.
- Gear check – member, group, emergency, communication device(s).
- Safety brief – Intro of group, activity location, difficulty, portages, hazards, put on, take out and escape points, trip member roles, responsibilities, emergencies.

During the trip:

- Provide technical brief/coaching/group management.
- Verify competency for the trip through any combination of; observation of skills demonstrated, questioning of participants, citing of appropriate qualifications.
- Verification of competency should be completed before a participant needs to perform a certain skill. I.e, verify self-rescue ability prior to the first rapid of significance.
- Manage in-competent participants by requiring them to portage or walk out as appropriate.

Class III - active management

- Communicate sufficient information about the safe re-grouping point above any class III water, with enough time for all to safely get out of the flow.
- Conduct a thorough scout of the rapid with the participants who intend to run the rapid.
- Identify and discuss, lines, techniques and any hazards, as well as methods of managing those hazards.
- Any rapid with a 'must make' move to avoid a serious (life threatening) hazard should not be paddled.
- Any rapid with sustained class III water, a poor run-out, or poor visibility (goes round corners/in a gorge) should not be paddled
- Decide, based on the hazards, the risk, the competency of the paddlers and competency of safety/rescue people whether or not to run the rapid.
- Conduct a briefing to all paddlers, safety people and observers about how the rapid will be actively managed.
- Set up sufficient safety measures, with suitably competent people to actively manage any hazards.
- Ensure only those who have demonstrated suitable competency paddle the rapid. All others must portage.
- Control the flow of paddlers, so that exposure to the hazard is minimised to the smallest number of people necessary.
- Conduct a debrief of the rapid and it's management immediately after all participants are below the rapid.

After the trip:

- Conduct a debrief with the participants (any safety concerns, any unclear communications before/during activity, anything we can learn from for the future?)
- Pass on any debriefing points from participants to PRANZ event manager or executive to help improve procedures and safety management.

In an Emergency:

- Coordinate the rescue effort, ensuring the safety of the remainder of the group.
- Bring the people out of danger and undertake first aid if required.
- Consider whether to continue the activity, or to stop the activity and evacuate any casualty.
- Coordinate any evacuation.
- Make a plan for other participants that are not injured.

Duty of care and individual responsibilities

“On the river, you are responsible for me, and I am responsible for you” - Hugh Canard

Policy

Event Managers accept the responsibility to:

- Check that activity leaders equipment, fitness, health and skills are suitable for the activity.
- Compile and make available to all leaders, participants and local SAR authorities, an incident response plan appropriate to the event.
- Check that all groups have returned safely after an activity.

Activity leaders accept the responsibility to:

- Help organize activities.
- Verify that individual participant's equipment, fitness, health and competencies meet the minimum standard for the activity.
- Coordinate any group gear for the activity.
- Conduct pre-activity briefings
- Coordinate the group in the event of an emergency.
- Provide appropriate leadership and risk management depending on the competence of the participants, the type of activity being run (e.g. hosted packrafting, training, workshops,) and the hazards in the activity location.
- Manage their own safety to the best of their ability and knowledge.
- Assist in the safety of others in the group to the best of their ability and knowledge.
- Report that the group has returned safely to the contact person.

Participants accept the responsibility to:

- Develop and maintain the minimum skills and abilities for the trips they intend to do.
- Honestly discuss their ability, experience and knowledge with the trip leader, to ensure they do not participate in activity beyond their ability.
- Manage their own safety to the best of their ability and knowledge.
- Assist in the safety of others in the group to the best of their ability and knowledge.
- Tell the trip leader as soon as possible if they are unsure of their ability in relation to the environment they are in.
- Participate in group safety decision making throughout the activity.

Guidelines

- The trip leader should include clear information about the leaders and the individual's responsibilities for the activity at the pre-activity safety briefing.
- Trip leaders should closely observe the actions of participants until the leader is satisfied that actual level of participant skill is appropriate for the activity.

Transport

Policy

Where a vehicle is hired or shared for member activity:

- All member drivers must have appropriate licenses for the class of vehicle they are driving.
- Vehicles must be road-worthy with the appropriate warrant or certificate of fitness.
- Drivers must follow the road rules, drive to the conditions and the situation.

Guidelines

- Members should drive themselves and take responsibility for their own vehicles, driving and licenses.
- Consider swapping drivers and having breaks for longer journeys.

Age

Policy

PRANZ acknowledges that having young people coming into the sport is positive. This needs to be done in a safe manner. Participants under 18 need:

- Permission from parents or guardians to attend, and
- Be directly accompanied during the trip by a suitable person 18 years or over.

Guidelines

Minimum age for solo paddlers should usually be 10 years.

Drugs and alcohol

Policy

The use of alcohol or non-prescription drugs while on a PRANZ trip is not acceptable.

- Where the health or safety of an individual is endangered a leader may choose to remove a member from the trip.

Accident and incident reporting

Policy

Leaders will report all accidents, incidents that involve more than first aid assistance.

- This includes accidents and incidents involving leaders, contractors, members and non-members.
- Reporting will be to the event manager (where one exists) or to an executive member.
- The executive will:
 - Decide if there needs to be an investigation and what this process will be.
 - Consider what learning can be taken from the accident, incident or near misses that could benefit other members and improve packrafting safety.
- Any media contact will be through the spokesperson appointed by the executive.

Guidelines

Near misses that could have resulted in an accident or incident should be reported.

Hazard, risks and controls

Hazard Human factors - general	
Risks Insufficient leader/participant ability Existing injuries Existing medical conditions	Controls Leader ability assessed by a PRANZ executive member prior to trip. Participant ability/health assessed by leader prior to trip at pre-trip briefing. Appropriate medication carried by individuals with medical conditions
Hazard River environment – cold and wet	
Risks Hypothermia Exhaustion	Controls Wear appropriate cold water protection for the type of trip, time of year, experience of participants and likelihood of capsize. Take extra layers and emergency shelter/firestarters Choose shorter trips on cold days early and late season Take food and drinks for length of day out expected
Hazard River environment – slippery and loose.	
Risks Slipping and tripping on river banks Overhead hazard of falling objects from steep sided river banks	Controls Aware of slippery environment that can cause falls, sprained ankles If needed shown how to and where to walk in river bank environment Wear helmets Avoid lingering in areas with overhead hazards

Hazard Whitewater environments	
Risks River hazards; strainers, sieves, siphons, undercuts, hydraulic hazards Rising water levels Foot entrapment	Controls Enforcement of minimum participant skill sets Identify hazards and avoid them Weather check e.g. forecast, river flows, rain radar, rainfall Escape routes are known in case of rising water Monitor the weather while on the river Leader needs to consider and ensure enough equipment and skills to use it are available within the group for performing a water rescue
Hazard Emergency events	
Risks Leader incapacitation Member injury High water / Rising water / flash flood	Controls Assistant leader on all trips. Carry a suitable means of emergency communication in the the group Group to carry suitable first aid kit and rescue equipment. Leave intentions Brief members as needed on emergency procedures for the trip, with what to do, location of communication devices, first aid kit, how to escape the river and location of vehicle keys
Hazard Transport	
Risks Driving in an unsafe manner Colliding with other objects Driving for long periods of time Faulty vehicles	Controls As a preference all members drive themselves and are responsible for their own vehicles, driving and licenses Where a vehicle is hired for member activity: All member drivers to have appropriate licenses for the class of vehicle they are driving Follow road rules Drive to the conditions and situation Swapping drivers and having break for longer journeys

Appendix 1: Competencies

These skills are a small subset of current packrafting skills. These should be read in context with current packrafting practices in NZ, and any further guidance material published on the PRANZ website.

Minimum competency to join a PRANZ trip with a leader

PRANZ trips are often intended to help lesser skilled and experienced packrafters to develop skills, experience and judgment. Therefore, these **minimum competencies** are set at a level which allows the person to have sufficient understanding and skill to be legitimately able to accept responsibility for their own risk management. Leaders will still need to offer guidance and leadership, but individuals will not need to have their hand held at every moment on the water.

These form a checklist for leaders and participants, to help decide if someone is suitable to join a specific trip.

Lakes/flat water

Able to:

- Describe and correctly use the appropriate equipment and clothing for the activity.
- Describe the hazards when paddling on lakes/flat water (separation from boat, entanglement, wind/waves/tides)
- Exit the packraft in the event of a capsize
- Get back into a packraft which is being stabilised by a team member
- Swim the distance from any capsize to land in the event of a lost packraft.
- Know the HELP position (Heat Escape Lessening Posture)

Class I

Able to;

- Describe and correctly use the appropriate equipment and clothing for the activity.
- Understand and follow river signals
- Exit the packraft in the event of a capsize
- Adopt the whitewater float position.
- Swim 50m in paddling gear.
- Describe the hazards found on a class I/II river. (strainers, foot entrapments etc)
- Be able to avoid hazards found on class I rivers when paddling and when swimming.

Class II

All of the skills in class I plus be able to:

- Paddle to reliably catch the next large eddy in class II water when told to do so.
- Reliably identify and maneuver to avoid, any hazard on the river.
- Usually self rescue in slowly moving water.
- Swim to a large eddy if self or buddy rescue had not succeeded.
- Hold on to a thrown rope and adopt the correct body position for rescue.

Class III

All of the skills in class II plus be able to:

- Paddle to reliably catch any eddy on class II water, using correct techniques.
- Reliably self rescue within a class II rapid, and retain hold of boat and paddle.
- Confidently swim class II rapids, identifying and catching eddies, avoiding hazards and managing rock impacts.
- Effectively perform a throw-bag rescue.
- Be able to independently 'sweep' and recover paddles and packrafts in class II water.
- Describe the hazards found on a class III river.

Minimum leader skill sets

Leadership and organisational skills

- Organising the assistants and members so everyone knows what's happening.
- Facilitate a trip that is appropriate to the needs and ability of the group compared to the challenges of the environment for example fun, safe and learning by doing.
- Manage and coach during the trip, both on group travel and individual travel techniques
- Able to engage and communicate the necessary information to the group.
- Would generally know the activity environment and local area.
- Understand and follow the guidance in the Safety Management Plan.

River Skills

- Personal paddling competence at a grade higher than the trip to be lead.
- Ability to coordinate and perform any type of water rescue quickly and effectively on the grade of river to be paddled.

Emergency management skills

- Hold a current first aid certificate
- Competent to operate emergency communication devices and arrange a rescue
- Able to manage the safety of a group if the group is delayed or benighted.