Outdoor Education Programs
Outdoor Center
Minor in Outdoor Education

Outdoor Pursuits and Tripping Handbook

Effective May 4, 2020

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Introduction

This Outdoor Pursuits and Tripping Handbook serves as the staff manual for Outdoor Center programs and outdoor education academic classes that use land- and water-based activities. A separate Challenge Course Facilitator Handbook provides similar guidance for Outdoor Center programs and outdoor education academic classes that use group development and challenge course activities.

This document is formatted to differentiate between the four types of information.
1. **Definitions** are stated at the beginning of most sections or sub-sections. They provide common language for faculty, staff, and students to use when reading this manual and other related documents, in classes or training, and delivering programs to professional colleagues or clients.
2. **Policy** describes "what" facilitators will do. Policy is the least flexible expectation and uses words like *will*, *must*, or *shall*. Policy statements are organized using numbers.
3. **Procedures** describe "how" policy is typically implemented. Procedures provide flexibility by using words like *should*, *may*, or *includes, and is not limited to*. Adjustments to procedures are based on factors such as client group characteristics and readiness, contextual factors such as weather, and program or course outcomes. Procedures are organized using lower case letters and are normally as subsets of the policy statements to which they refer.
4. **Curriculum** is the highest level of detail and may include instructional content, strategies, or specific outcomes associated with implementing policy and procedures. Curriculum is organized using bullets and is normally a subset of the policy or procedural statement to which it refers.

Information contained within this document is assumed to be consistent with Georgia College policy, University System of Georgia policy, and State of Georgia and federal law. In case of divergence from or conflict with any of these authorities, they (not this document) are considered prevailing.

Throughout this handbook, the concept of wilderness context is explicitly stated to differentiate the environment in which some tripping experiences take place. Wilderness context is a concept that recognizes that reasonable access to definitive care may not be possible in some locations in which programs take place. Therefore, a decision to consider a program location to be in a wilderness context is a decision to define it as an unreasonable time to definitive care. This decision is based on a set of complex factors that dictate action.

1. For each program, the lead facilitator and field supervisor will determine jointly if the program site and activities constitute a wilderness context. Factors that will be considered when assessing whether a program is to be managed as a wilderness context include, but are not limited to:
   - nature and scope of the medical emergency;
   - patient assessment data or progressive deterioration;
   - access to local EMS;
   - leadership or participant credentials;
   - participant characteristics and ability to respond to an emergency situation such as a long, rough distance to evacuate, skill level, age, or affect;
   - unavailability or stress on resources on hand to support emergency response; and
   - environmental factors such as darkness, cold, heat, wind, rain, storms, or altitude.

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Section One: Personnel Responsibilities

Program Staff

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Program Staff refers to faculty, professional staff, students, and others who work for the Outdoor Center or deliver outdoor education academic courses. Program staff designations include lead facilitator and assistant facilitator. Each program will have a designated lead facilitator. Each program staff may be paid or volunteer.

Program Staff Responsibilities
1. Program staff will maintain complete and current personnel files and complete all required paperwork and training through Georgia College Human Resources.
   a. Submit copies of certifications, certificates of training, or refresher training cards;
   b. Update the personnel file checklist annually.
2. Program staff will maintain competency in knowledge, skills, and values associated with program activities for which they are designated.
3. Program staff will plan and implement programs and services in compliance with relevant outdoor education and Georgia College policy.
4. Program staff will participate in program planning meetings to discuss:
   - client or course goals and objectives;
   - client group characteristics, needs, and potential expectations;
   - relevant policy and procedures;
   - relevant participant, program administration, and personnel forms;
   - rules, regulations, and access and legal statutes for the area in which the activity is conducted;
   - local hazardous flora and fauna;
   - field supervisor logistics and contact information;
   - program and personnel evaluation/assessment processes.
5. Program staff will develop program designs considering the following:
   - activities, sites, and processing strategies that are appropriate for participant characteristics and program goals;
   - environmental, facility, and equipment stewardship as a component of program design;
   - emotional, social, intellectual, and physical safety as a component of program design;
   - program staff roles and responsibilities.
6. Program staff will meet prior to participant arrival to inspect and prepare facilities and equipment and to review program logistics.
7. Program staff will conduct a program briefing at the beginning of the program or during a pre-trip meeting and safety briefings at the beginning of activities.
8. Program staff will adjust program design and specific activity dimensions based on ongoing participant assessment, environmental factors, and program goals.
   - Program design elements such as, but not limited to, challenge progression, specific activities, breaks, and event location may be adapted accordingly.
   - Activity dimensions such as, but not limited to, travel speed, level of processing, and participant roles, may be adapted accordingly.
9. Program staff will teach appropriate skill sequences, safety procedures, and equipment management based on program and instructional goals, client characteristics, and context and environmental factors.

Lead Facilitator Responsibilities
1. The lead facilitator will communicate with participants, client sponsors, and students.
    a. Establish or review program goals.
    b. Obtain relevant participant information.
    c. Communicate program logistics such as transportation, facilities, equipment, clothing, accommodation, alcohol and drug policies, and food requirements.
2. The lead facilitator will provide oversight and supervision to program design, implementation, and evaluation; group management, site safety and security; and equipment and personnel management.
    a. Disseminate, collect, and review participant, student, and personnel forms as appropriate.
    b. Arrange program or course logistics
    c. Arrange and facilitate meeting(s) with program staff.
    d. Communicate supervision and emergency action plans to program staff.
    e. Interpret the American's with Disabilities Act considering reasonable accommodations that do not jeopardize program outcomes or the safety of program staff or participants (see Appendix 2).
    f. Interpret Leave No Trace principles that enhance program goals and environmental and social awareness (see Appendix 1).
    g. Arrange for the completion of program evaluation and personnel assessments.
    h. Return equipment and complete equipment reservations forms.
    i. Submit the completed program file.

Ethical Guidelines
1. Program staff is expected to exhibit a high level of integrity in their practice.
    a. Be fair, honest, and respectful during interactions with participants and other professionals.
    b. Represent personal and professional competency honestly and provide programs within the boundaries of one's competence.
    c. Stay current about information in the field and participate in ongoing professional efforts to maintain knowledge and skills.
    d. Strive to be aware of personal belief systems, values, needs, limitations and the effect of their impact on participants and other professionals.
    e. Accept responsibility for personal behavior and decisions.
    f. Avoid situations where personal problems or conflicts may impair work performance or judgment.
2. Program staff is expected to be socially responsible for their actions and serve as effective advocates for the field of outdoor education.
    a. Avoid misrepresenting the profession.
    b. Avoid making statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive when describing services, products or fees.
    c. Be aware of professional responsibilities to community and society.
    d. Conduct programs in a manner that has minimal impact on the environment.
    e. Obtain permission or permits to use land from private landowners or public land managers as required.
    f. Comply with relevant local regulations or laws.
3. Program staff is expected to be responsible for the overall quality of their professional work.
    a. Plan experiences with the intent that decisions made during and after the experience are in the best interest of the participant.
    b. Offer a program only if it is reasonably clear that the participant will benefit from the experience.
    c. Adapt programs to best meet the needs of participants.
    d. Be aware of and tactfully dealing with inappropriate behavior from others.
    e. Clarify roles and responsibilities with other staff and holding self and others accountable for these responsibilities.
    f. Comply with all Georgia College policy and procedures.

4. Program staff is expected to respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all people.
   a. Provide participants with appropriate information about the nature of programs, their rights, the actual risks associated with the activity, and the responsibilities of the provider.
   b. Ensure that participants understand anything that they are signing.
   c. Respect participants' rights to refuse or consent to services or activities.
   d. Respect participants' rights to make decisions and understand natural consequences.
   e. Respect participant's rights to decide the extent to which confidential material can be made public, except under extreme conditions such as when required by law, to prevent a clear and immediate danger to a person or persons, or if permission has previously been obtained in writing.
   f. Strive to be sensitive to cultural and individual differences, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic status.
5. Program staff is expected to provide for the welfare of participants and other staff.
   a. Provide for the physical needs of participants (water, nutrition, clothing, shelter, rest, or other essential needs).
   b. Avoid exploitation, misleading, or harassing participants or other staff.
   c. Avoid dual relationships with participants that could impair professional judgment (e.g. sexual relationships, inappropriate physical contact, etc.).
   d. Recommend that participants needing services beyond the scope of service provided by program staff should seek assistance from the appropriate student service at Georgia College or an appropriate medical professional.

<h1 style="text-align:center"><u>Section Two: Risk Management</u></h1>

<u>Risk management</u> is a system that maximizes the effectiveness of programs while minimizing the number and severity of program incidents and accidents. Policy and procedures are central to risk management and together with good judgment, training, and administrative support provide a framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and services. <u>Program management</u> (covered in this section) includes processes that are used to proactively anticipate risk and minimize incidents and accidents during the planning and delivery of programs and services. <u>Emergency response</u> (covered in the next section) includes emergency action processes for responding to specific incidents or accidents.

<h2 style="text-align:center"><u>Field Supervisor System</u></h2>

The field supervisor system will provide redundancy during planning, program delivery, and emergency response. The field supervisor system will support safety, program effectiveness, logistics, facilitator decision making for trips and workshops. The field supervisor system will include the lead facilitator and a field supervisor. The field supervisor system will be used for all programs that are both off-campus and include overnight supervision or participants. Other programs may use an adapted version of this system as appropriate. In cases where a field supervisor is not necessary, the lead facilitator will contact the appropriate administrator instead.

<u>Roles and Responsibilities</u>
Lead Facilitator
1. The lead facilitator will provide communication between the group in the field and the field supervisor.
   a. Activate and deactivate the field supervision system ("on belay" and "off belay").
   b. Notify the field supervisor of significant changes to the program (e.g., route or campsite changes).
   c. Consult with the field supervisor in the event of an emergency.
   d. The lead facilitator will check for messages from the field supervisor at least once a day or as negotiated.
2. The lead facilitator will develop a complete program file that includes the required forms and necessary supplementary information as indicated on the Master Trip Checklist.
3. The lead facilitator will review and approve the completed program file with the field supervisor at least 24 hours in advance of the start of the program.
4. The lead facilitator will obtain the program file from the field supervisor after the program to prepare it for submission for Outdoor Education Professional Staff review within two weeks of the end of the program.

Field Supervisor
1. The field supervisor will be accessible and ready to support the lead facilitator on a 24-hour basis for the duration of the trip or workshop.
2. The field supervisor will review and approve the program file.
   a. Review the file and its contents with the lead facilitator to ensure proper planning has occurred.
   b. Request additional information as necessary in order to respond to emergencies effectively.
   c. Sign Master Trip Checklist indicating approval to implement the trip or workshop.
   d. Ensure that the program file is accessible at all times.
3. The field supervisor will transfer the program file to the lead facilitator at the conclusion of the trip or workshop.
   a. Complete relevant sections of the Program Summary form.
4. Maintain communication between the group in the field and Georgia College.
   a. Provide the following information via email prior to departure (normally 24 hours) to the Director of Public Safety and either the Vice President for Student Affairs (for Outdoor Center programs) or the Director of the School of Health and Human Performance (for academic programs):
      • program name, location and dates;

- estimated time of departure and arrival;
- names of facilitation team;
- names of participants; and
- field supervisor contact information.
b. Maintain communication with the lead facilitator in the event of a severe weather warning at the trip or workshop location, a campus emergency, a family emergency, or other significant event.
5. Implement emergency response procedures in accordance with Georgia College and outdoor education programs policy and the specific of the situation.
a. Consult with field staff to determine and implement the appropriate course(s) of action.
b. Implement emergency action procedures if the group does not return within two hours of the estimated time of program completion.
c. Assist with, manage, or obtain appropriate professional assistance, for emergency debrief processes.

Staff : Participant Ratios

Minimum of 2 staff for all programs.	
Activity	*Staff : Participant*
Land	
Camping	1 : 10
Caving	1 : 6
Hiking and Backpacking	1 : 8
Top Rope Climbing, Bouldering, and Rappelling	1 : 6
Water	
Dipping and Swimming	1:10
Flatwater Canoeing, Kayaking, and Rafting	1 : 8
Coastal Kayaking	1 : 6
Whitewater Canoeing, Kayaking, or Rafting	1 : 6

Program Briefing

The program briefing provides participants with relevant information before the program begins. It is an opportunity to establish rapport, assess participant behaviors, and answer participant's questions.

1. Program staff will present the program briefing prior to the commencement of a program.
a. The program briefing may incorporate selected initial stages of program elements such as icebreakers or goal setting activities.
b. Program briefing materials may be sent to participants, provided there is a face-to-face review of the materials at the beginning of the program.
c. Workshop program briefings normally take place on-site at the beginning of the workshop.
d. Trip program briefings (a.k.a. Pre-Trip Meetings) normally take place at least 24 hours before the start of the trip.
2. Program briefing topics will include, but are not limited to:
- overview of program including program goals and schedule;
- participant pre-requisites and expectations including physical conditioning, functional abilities, or behavioral expectations or contracts;
- program logistics including transportation, equipment, food, and other "housekeeping" topics;
- general information about local flora and fauna at the program location and situations to be avoided including fauna habits and habitats, seasonal blooming, rutting, and migration, as well as general LNT principles;

- general program safety briefing including overview of challenge of and by choice, medical screening, completion/review of risk management waivers; and overview of relevant policies (e.g. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs policies).

3. Participants will be made aware of the nature and scope of risks involved in program prior to the beginning of a program.
   a. State that waivers are important documents that must be completed by all participants.
   b. Review relevant information related to informed consent and assumption of risk out loud, answering questions, and allow time for participants to read and sign the forms that are incomplete.
   c. Communicate to participants that informed consent means that participants have been informed of and understand risks associated with an activity, and that they are participating in the activity voluntarily.

Safety Briefings

1. Program staff will conduct activity-specific safety briefings at the beginning of an activity and when subjective or objective factors change during an activity.
2. The lead facilitator is responsible for checking that all participants hear and have an opportunity to ask questions about a safety briefing.
3. A safety briefing should include, but is not limited to, the following information:
   - inherent dangers in the area, along with preventative information (flashflood, poisonous flora and fauna, lightning and other weather-related dangers, widow makers, and natural disasters, etc.);
   - inherent dangers in the activity, along with preventative information (staying found, water safety, site management, accident prevention, etc.);
   - participant & staff responsibilities related to the conduct of the activity and emergency procedures;
   - safety equipment use and location; and
   - challenge of and by choice.

Medical Screening

Medical screening is a review of participant and program staff medical information. The process helps to ensure that pertinent medical information is compete and available to staff and to medical providers in the case of an accident. Relevant medical history may also allow staff to adapt program activities to better meet participant needs. Finally, medical screening may help participants to make informed decisions about appropriate participation in program activities.

1. Program staff will comply with HIPAA Privacy Rule (http:www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/) in all matters pertaining to health information privacy before, during, and after a program.
2. All program participants and staff will complete a medical screening process.
3. Completed medical information forms are reviewed and signed by the lead facilitator.
   a. Ensure the forms are complete and signed by the participant or parent/guardian.
   b. Note the need for additional information or actions about medically related conditions that may include, but are not limited to:
      - clarification about medication or side effects;
      - explanation of items answered in the affirmative (see Medical Screen Follow-up Questions and Actions);
      - equipment constraints or adaptations; or
      - the need for medical clearance from a physician.
4. Requests to participants for additional information will be addressed in a sensitive manner with regard for participant confidentiality and emotional safety.

5. It is the responsibility of the lead facilitator to ensure that medical information is located in a secure location and available for emergency response.

Medical Screening Follow-up Questions and Actions
Have you experienced an asthma attack at any time in your life?
1. Have you visited the emergency room in the last year due to your asthma?
2. Have you had to use epinephrine following an asthma attack in the last year?
3. Were you diagnosed with asthma in the last year?
4. How often do you use your inhaler to treat your asthma or wheezing?
5. Is there anything else you think we should know about your asthma?
Response: *If the participant has a prescribed rescue inhaler and has needed it, epinephrine, or emergency treatment in the past six months, he or she must bring the inhaler to the program.*

Have you ever been diagnosed with type I or type II diabetes?
1. Have you visited the emergency room in the last year because of your diabetes?
2. Do you have poor circulation due to your diabetes?
3. Were you diagnosed with diabetes in the last year?
4. Will you be carrying insulin or wearing an insulin pump during your outing?
5. Is there anything else you think we should know about your diabetes?
Response: *Make sure the participant has opportunities to eat, drink, and test blood sugar if necessary.*

Have you ever visited a medical professional for a serious allergic reaction, or have you ever been given a shot of epinephrine for an allergy or anaphylaxis?
1. What triggers your allergies?
2. Have you had a serious allergic reaction in the last year?
3. Have you ever been given epinephrine because of your allergies or anaphylaxis?
4. Will you be bringing/carrying epinephrine on the outing?
5. Is there anything else you think we should know about allergies?
Response: *If the participant has a prescribed Epi Pen, he or she must bring it to the program. Facilitators should monitor for potential exposure to the allergen.*

Have you ever received medical treatment for angina, a heart attack, any type of heart disorder/disease, or high blood pressure?
1. Were you diagnosed with a heart condition within the past year?
2. Are you able to exert for long periods without experiencing angina pain?
3. Have you had chest pain in the past six months? If so, did you see a doctor?
4. How often do you take medication for chest pain?
5. Have you been hospitalized within the last year because of a heart condition?
6. Is your blood pressure under control?
7. Has your physician ever asked you to limit your physical activity? Are these limitations current?
8. Is there anything else you think we should know about your heart condition or blood pressure?
Response: *Any participant who has been instructed by a physician to limit his or her activities must obtain that physician's clearance to participate in the program.*

Have you ever seen a medical professional following a seizure, or are you currently being treated for any type of seizure disorder?
1. Are you currently taking medication for your seizures?
2. When is the last time you had a seizure?
3. Were you diagnosed with a seizure disorder in the last year?
4. Has your physician ever asked you to limit your activities?
5. Is there anything else you think we should know about your seizures?

Response: Any participant who has been instructed by a physician to limit his or her activities must obtain that physician's clearance to participate in the program.

Have you had broken bones or joint injuries that cause recurring problems?
1. Has your physician asked you to limit your physical activity?
2. Is there anything else you think we should know about your injury?

Response: Any participant who has been instructed by a physician to limit his or her activities must obtain that physician's clearance to participate in the program.

Are you currently pregnant?
1. At what stage is the pregnancy?
2. Have you had any complications?
3. Has your physician asked you to limit your physical activity?

Response: Any participant who has been instructed by a physician to limit her activities must obtain that physician's clearance to participate in the program. Women in their third trimester of pregnancy should not participate in most of our programming.

Have you been diagnosed with any other medical condition or asked by your physician to limit your activities in any way?
Response: Any participant who has been instructed by a physician to limit his or her activities must obtain that physician's clearance to participate in the program. Other conditions should be monitored as necessary.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

1. Georgia College promotes and requires a drug-free and alcohol-free work campus particularly amongst its employees. Therefore, alcohol and drugs are not permitted for use by participants or staff during outdoor education programs.
2. Georgia College is also a Tobacco and Smoke-Free Campus. Georgia College students, faculty, and staff as well as campus visitors (including all program participants) are not allowed to use tobacco products on campus or in campus-owned vehicles.
   a. "Tobacco Product" is defined as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, all forms of smokeless tobacco, clove cigarettes, and any other smoking devices that use tobacco such as hookahs or simulate the use of tobacco such as electronic cigarettes.
   b. Outdoor education programs that occur off campus will follow appropriate laws and regulations for that area. Even in areas where tobacco use is allowed, the following guidelines will be followed:
      - Tobacco in any form will *not* be used during scheduled program times.
      - Tobacco may be used during breaks in off-campus programs in an appropriate area designated by the lead facilitator.
      - Tobacco users will be instructed to dispose of all tobacco-related waste in an appropriate manner.
3. Prescription drugs will be labeled appropriately with the name of the drug and the dosage (including amount and frequency) and will be used only by the person in whose name the prescription was issued.
4. Program staff or client supervisory staff will carry and administer prescription and non-prescription drugs for minors.
   a. Medication necessary for immediate administration such as asthma inhalers and Epi-pens should be carried by minors as appropriate.
   b. Drug tracking systems will be used at the discretion of the lead facilitator in consultation with the field supervisor.

5. Participants over the age of 18 will carry and administer their own prescription and non-prescription drugs.
   a. Program staff may carry an extra supply of prescription drugs at the request of a participant.
   b. Program staff will ask participants to communicate with program staff when they are taking prescription or non-prescription drugs.
   c. Program staff should be aware of the improper use of prescription or non-prescription drugs, including, but not limited to:
      - sharing medications with other participants;
      - possession of prescription drugs belonging to someone else; and
      - overuse of prescription or non-prescription drugs.

Child Protection

Georgia College has specific policy for the protection of minors and requires additional risk management when minors are involved in any programming. Most Outdoor Center and academic programs are exempt from this policy because they either 1) only include Georgia College students (even those under 18 years old) or 2) are groups that are supervised by parents, teachers, or other leaders who remain with the youth throughout the program. Additional information about this policy may be found at https://www.gcsu.edu/protection-minors.

Challenge by Choice

Challenge [of and] by choice is a request of participants to challenge themselves and participate fully in an experience. It recognizes that any activity or goal may pose a different level and type of challenge for each group member and that authentic personal change comes from within. It contributes to an environment where participants are asked to search for opportunities to stretch and grow during an experience. It challenges each group member to seek optimal learning opportunities. All group members are asked to add value to the group experience by finding a way to contribute to the group's efforts while also seeking to find value in an experience.

1. Program staff will discuss challenge of and by choice in the program briefing and as appropriate throughout program implementation.
2. Staff will not force, pressure, or coerce program participants to engage in an activity.
   a. Encourage participants to examine and respect thoughtful choices.
   b. Provide a supportive and caring atmosphere in which participants can stretch themselves.
   c. Encourage individuals and the group to accept responsibility for decisions about challenging themselves.
   d. Encourage individuals and the group to set goals that provide the greatest opportunities for growth and learning.
   e. Present participants with appropriate challenges.
   f. Communicate to participants any limits to choices when they are known in advance.
3. Program staff will acknowledge a participant's decision not to participate in specific activities without pressure or coercion.
   a. Discuss options for engagement at some level.
   b. Define success as committed engagement.
   c. Take into account a participant's physical, emotional, and social abilities.
   d. Celebrate success.
4. Program staff will not compromise the emotional, social, intellectual, and physical safety of other participants or staff when negotiating a level of challenge that is appropriate for a group member or group.

Section Three: Emergency Response System

Emergency response is a comprehensive plan for the management of a complex and potentially dangerous situation for staff or participants. The first line of defense is prevention in the form of good planning and participant preparation.

1. The lead facilitator shall ensure that a context specific first aid kit is accessible at all times.
2. First aid will be administered by trained personnel and in accordance with procedures set forth by the training organization.
    a. A Wilderness First Responder shall be present at all outdoor education programs that operate in wilderness contexts.
    b. All other program staff will have a minimum of first aid, and CPR.
3. The lead facilitator will manage the Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
    a. An assistant facilitator will manage the EAP in the event that the lead facilitator is unable to do so.
    b. General Emergency Action Plan (EAP) procedures shall include:
        - Survey the situation.
        - Eliminate dangers or remove people from dangerous situations.
        - Develop an action plan considering the nature of the emergency, size of group, terrain, weather, and the time and distance from help.
        - Implement first aid, rescue, or search procedures as appropriate.
        - Triage multiple patients to determine who to help first based on two criteria: 1) triage implies making the most efficient use of available resources and 2) do the most good for the most people.
        - Attend to the physical and emotional needs of group members. Consider setting up a temporary base camp and keep the group informed, protected from elements, well-fed, etc. Keep group members safe and busy to reduce anxiety levels.
        - Complete appropriate forms, e.g., incident report, SOAP note, etc.
        - Obtain written statements from eye witnesses to the accident and ask for signatures and printed names at an appropriate time.
        - Facilitate emergency debrief with group members as needed.
        - Communicate with the field supervisor continuously.

Communication

Notification Protocol for Fatalities and Serious Accidents
1. In the event of a fatality or serious, life threatening accident the lead facilitator will implement the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and notify the field supervisor. The field supervisor will notify the next administrator in order of chain of authority as available. The administrator will determine if it is necessary to alert the next administrator in the chain of authority, Public Safety, the Director of University Communications, and/or relevant support services.
2. The field supervisor, in conjunction with the next administrator in order of chain of authority as available, will determine who will contact the patient's emergency contact. Depending on the situation, this may be the lead facilitator, the administrative backup, an administrator in the chain of authority. or the Director of University Communications.
3. Information about any accident or fatality will be released to the press by the Director of University Communications or an appointed representative of GC.
    a. Program staff will direct inquiries from the media to the field supervisor and return to supporting participants and staff in the field.
    b. Program staff will avoid speaking to anyone about:
        - assessment of fault or criticism of conduct;

- assessment of Georgia College policy, equipment, or facilities;
- information regarding the nature of the injury or illness;
- names of participants or parties involved; or
- estimates of property damage.

3. If the group is unable to manage an emergency situation on its own, external assistance shall be requested.
   a. Either the field supervisor or program staff may manage a request for external assistance. Call 911 and ask for emergency personnel and/or notify appropriate land management authorities listed on the Route Plan.
   b. If phone access is not available, a messenger party should be sent to the most effective point of communication.
      - Leave at least one medically qualified person with the patient.
      - If possible assign three members to the messenger party including one staff member.
      - Carry detailed information about the location of the accident or emergency response base (coordinates, map, description, etc.).
      - Carry detailed information about the context and the situation.
      - Carry field supervisor contact information.
      - Use a SOAP note.
      - Carry supplies and equipment as appropriate including, but not limited to, food, water, extra clothing, and emergency shelter;
      - Move quickly but without rushing and avoid potential injury.
      - Avoid splitting up.
      - Conserve energy to lead the rescue party back to the emergency base camp.

Notification Protocol for Minor Accidents
1. In the event of a minor accident (not life threatening), the lead facilitator will implement the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) as necessary. The lead facilitator, in conjunction with the patient and/or field supervisor, will determine if it is necessary to contact the patient's emergency contact.
2. The following guidelines will be used when speaking to an emergency contact person in the event of a minor accident.
   a. The opening statement to an emergency contact should immediately convey the wellbeing of a participant if possible (e.g. this is [your name] with GC, [student or participant name] is fine, but I need to inform you of a situation]
   b. Think through what you will say before speaking.
   c. Organize the facts and be accurate in conveying them.
   d. Explain the situation using precise, objective language.
   e. Explain what is being done in response to the situation.
   f. Anticipate possible questions.
   g. Be sensitive to feelings and concerns.
   h. Provide appropriate follow up contact information if possible.
   i. Direct follow up conversations to appropriate Georgia College personnel and when possible provide contact information.
   j. Avoid stating conclusions, causes, or interpretation of the event.

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Medical Emergencies

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1. The lead facilitator or designee will provide appropriate first aid in the event of a medical emergency.
   a. Complete an initial patient assessment.
   b. Apply first aid according to approved medical protocols.
   c. Treat symptoms in order of priority or simultaneously if possible: airway, breathing, circulation, severe bleeding, shock, and stabilize the neck as appropriate.

      d. Attend to environmental hazards.
      e. Maintain body temperature and make the patient as comfortable as possible.
      f. Complete detailed patient assessment and documentation.
      g. Use SOAP note protocol as appropriate.
      h. Monitor the patient and administer first aid as appropriate.
      i. Assess and record vitals at regular intervals.
2. Contact the field supervisor to discuss program continuation or cancellation.
3. In the event of a fatality do not move the body unless instructed to do so by legal authority.
4. Program staff should act according to their specific training when providing first aid and medical-approved protocols.

Medical-Approved Protocols

The following protocols for use by certified Wilderness First Responders trained by WMA, WMI, or SOLO are approved when facilitating a program if transportation time to primary care is unreasonable. The anaphylaxis protocol for use by staff with American Red Cross epinephrine administration or Wilderness First Responder certification is approved with no minimum transport time required.

- Anaphylaxis
- Spinal Injuries
- Joint Dislocations
- Wound Management
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
- Severe Asthma

Universal Precautions to Prevent Transmission of Blood-borne Pathogens

Universal Precautions require that staff administering aid consider every person and all blood and body fluids, to be a potential carrier of infectious disease. Universal precautions apply to blood, other body fluids containing visible blood, semen, and vaginal secretions. Universal precautions also apply to tissues and to the following fluids: cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, and amniotic fluids. Universal precautions do not apply to feces, nasal secretions, saliva, sputum, sweat, tears, urine, and vomitus unless they contain visible blood.

1. Use protective barriers (gloves, masks, and protective eyewear) to prevent exposure to blood, body fluids containing visible blood, and other fluids to which universal precautions apply. The type of protective barrier(s) should be appropriate for the procedure being performed and the type of exposure anticipated.
2. Handle needles and other sharp objects carefully. Use caution to prevent needle stick injuries when using, cleaning, or disposing of needles or other sharp instruments.
3. Wrap disposable items contaminated with blood or other body fluids in gauze and place them in a biohazard or sealed container that prevents leakage for storage and transportation back to Georgia College.
4. Report immediately all needle stick accidents, mucosal splashes, or contamination of open wounds with blood or body fluids.
5. Participants and staff should refrain from sharing items such as water bottles and eating utensils.

Evacuation

1. The lead facilitator will determine the need for and feasibility of implementing an evacuation system to transport a patient directly to a hospital or to EMS.
      a. An evacuation system may involve program staff, participants, the field supervisor, and/or EMS authorities.
      b. An evacuation system may be developed and implemented by staff and participants based on available resources and equipment, context, participant characteristics, environmental conditions, and nature of the emergency.

2. EMS will be in charge of medical issues once on the scene.
3. Program staff will assist EMS authorities as appropriate.
4. EMS will determine the need for and manage helicopter evacuation logistics.
5. EMS authorities will manage evacuation from the point of transfer to definitive care.

Technical Rescues

A **technical rescue** is one in which some level of technical competency is required to bring a participant(s) to a safe place. Remember, the first line of defense is prevention. The best rescue is the one that is not needed.

Most rescues, regardless of activity or environment, may be categorized into one of four levels that are normally implemented in sequence. However, there may be cases in which the decision to proceed to a more complex response is appropriate. Determine the level of rescue that is necessary based on the nature and context of the situation and the type of activity. Consider speed, safety, and simplicity because generally, the faster, safer, and simpler an option is, the better it is.

Level I rescues are assisted self-rescues in which the responder provides psychological support to a person from a position of relative safety in order to help a participant help them self. The responder normally provides verbal, emotional or technique support to increase the participant's ability or desire to self-rescue.
- **Verbally** encouraging a rock-climbing participant to trust their belay system and be lowered, or to gain a position from which they can continue.
- Verbally encouraging a capsized paddler to swim aggressively to an eddy or shore.

Level II rescues are assisted self-rescues in which the responder provides physical or equipment support from a position of relative safety in order to help a participant to help them self. The responder normally provides equipment and instruction to aid self-rescue.
- Throwing a rope to a capsized paddler to bring them to shore quickly.
- Applying a vector pull to a belay system to help a rock climber reach a hold and continue climbing.

Level III rescues increase the complexity, time to respond, and relative safety of responders who make physical contact with the participant to provide a basic mechanism for moving the participant to a safer place.
- Going out in a boat to bring back a capsized paddler who is separated from their boat.
- Rappelling to a stuck rappeler to help release a jammed rappel device.

Level IV rescues further increase the complexity, time to respond, and relative safety of responders who make physical contact with the participant to provide a more advanced mechanism or procedures for rescue that involves greater risks for both the rescuer and the participant.
- Wading into surf to bring back a distressed swimmer capsized by surf.
- Performing a belay escape and climbing self-belayed to a pinned climber.

Missing Person

Prevention
1. In wilderness contexts, participants will be informed in the safety briefing about procedures for leaving the group and what to do if they become lost.
   a. Do not panic; help is on the way.
   b. Stay put or find a visible location in close proximity and await rescue.
   c. Do not wander; limit the area that will need to be searched.

d. Returning to a familiar place may be dangerous; do so only if it is a safe, short distance and you are absolutely sure that you can recognize the place (trailhead, stream crossing, lake, or other feature).
e. Blow three strong whistle blasts spaced by 2-3 seconds every few minutes, look and listen for rescuers and be prepared to respond by increasing the time and spacing of blasts, calling, or making signals to the rescuers.
f. Take inventory of equipment and supplies and keep all equipment with you.
g. Conserve heat and energy. Put on more clothes at the first sign of a chill. Stuff dry leaves or moss in the open spaces in clothing. Think about finding a shelter and building a small fire for warmth and to serve as a signal to rescuers about an hour before darkness sets in.
h. In the event of an accident, try to self-administer first aid.
2. Groups will implement preventive measures such as a buddy system, safe trail hiking behavior, communication systems, and signaling throughout the program.
3. Participants will carry a whistle attached to the backpack, belt, boot or lifejacket while traveling in the backcountry.
4. Participants will be informed about the universal distress signal (three of anything – whistle blasts, shouts, ground signals, etc.).

Search Procedures
1. The lead facilitator or designee will manage search procedures and communication with the field supervisor, land management, and Emergency Medical System (EMS) authorities as appropriate.
2. The lead facilitator or designee will implement search and rescue (SAR) guidelines.
   a. Gather pertinent information including:
      - when and where the person(s) was last seen;
      - what they were doing;
      - physical or emotional state;
      - clothing description;
      - gear description;
      - food and water availability;
      - footwear and footwear print description.
   b. Appoint a leader of search teams.
   c. Maintain a log of SAR events.
3. Missing person land search procedures will include three, normally sequenced, increasingly more complex search protocols that require increased coordination, time, and resources. The first two steps are usually managed internally. The third step is to involve external assistance usually via land managers. This step will be initiated in consultation with the field supervisor.
4. Missing person water search procedures will normally be conducted by land management or Coast Guard authorities with the aid motorized vehicles.
5. The lead facilitator will complete an Incident/Accident report.

Initial Search
Initial searches are fast, efficient, searches of the immediate area where the person was last seen or is likely located.
1. Search teams are dispatched quickly with specific, controlled areas to search and time limits for returning to a designated base of operations.
2. Assign teams of two or more people to search the immediate area such as:
   - camp sites;
   - on-trail rest stops;
   - sleeping, cooking, latrine, and water gathering areas that can be checked quickly; and
   - other local trails and rest stops within 300 ft (100m).

3. Instruct teams to clearly and loudly call the person's name at regular intervals (approximately 30 seconds) and to remain silent in order to hear a reply or the use of a whistle by the missing person.
4. Instruct teams to look around for evidence of the person leaving the trail or creating a distress or a signal.
5. Instruct teams to pay close attention to making verbal contact around obvious hazards without jeopardizing the safety of searchers.
6. Instruct teams to coordinate watches, or in their absence, use another method for determining distance and time to return to the designated base of operations.

Hasty Search
Hasty searches extend the range of the initial search to time controlled visual/vocal searches of immediate trail systems and accessible hazardous areas.
1. Search teams are dispatched as quickly as possible after the initial search to areas that require a higher level of investigation and respect for environmental hazards.
   a. Time limits for returning to a base of operations should be lengthened on the basis of terrain, time of day, weather, relevant information about the missing person, and the potential need to organize an extensive search.
   b. The search manager may consider, in consultation with the field supervisor, placing EMS on alert at this time.
2 Assign teams of two or more people to search the trail 1500 ft (500m) in both directions looking to both sides for evidence of entry and distress signals.
3. Instruct teams to search with caution hazardous areas such as cliffs, stream beds, slides, and rock outcroppings within 50-100' from the trail.
4. Instruct teams to clearly and loudly call the person's name at regular intervals (approximately 30 seconds) and to remain silent in order to hear a reply or the use of a whistle by the missing person.
6. Coordinate watches, or in their absence, use another method for determining distance and time to return to the designated base of operations.
7. Communicate with the field supervisor and EMS authorities as appropriate.

Exiting a Participant, Student, or Staff Member

1. Grounds for exiting a participant, student, or staff member from a program include, but are not limited to:
   - possession of or use of alcohol or illegal drugs;
   - use of illegal or prescription drugs that are prescribed to someone else;
   - consistent behavior that compromises the health and safety of self, participants, staff members, or program effectiveness; or
   - consistent non-compliance with outdoor education and Georgia College policy.
2. Prior to a decision to exit a participant, student, or staff member from a program, the lead facilitator will consult with the field supervisor to consider:
   - details of the behavior, context, and program;
   - attempted or potential strategies for continuance in a program;
   - impact on the participant, student, or program staff member, other participants, students, or program staff members; the program or class; or
   - factors related to the exit logistics.
3. In the event that it is determined that a participant, student, or staff should leave the program, the following guidelines will be implemented.
   a. Speak to the individual in a confidential context.
   b. Attempt to dismiss the individual from further participation in the program as quickly as possible.
   c. Escort the individual to a safe place and provide supervision as necessary.
   d. Arrange transportation to the program start location or another agreed upon location in conjunction with the field supervisor.

4. Individuals who are exited from a program for the above reasons are responsible for travel expenses.
5. The lead facilitator will discuss program continuance with the group and inform the field supervisor.
6. The field supervisor will notify the emergency contact person listed on the Medical Information form in compliance with HIPAA Privacy Rule (http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/).
7. The lead facilitator will complete the I/A form.

Inclement Weather

Program staff are expected to adapt or postpone programming for inclement weather. Inclement weather may include heavy winds, precipitation, snow and ice, fog, and many other conditions. Below is policy for specific types of inclement weather.

Lightning

Lightning strikes accompany thunderstorms; therefore, the best line of defense is to anticipate inclement weather in planning and field observation of weather conditions. Lightning strikes are the leading direct meteorological cause of casualties in the United States. Lightning may take the form of a direct lightning strike, an induced current near a direct strike, and/or ground currents.

1. Anticipate inclement weather during planning process.
    a. Note potential storm patterns and obtain weather forecasts.
    b. Know locations of potential shelters or protective natural features for the program destination.
    c. Listen to radio and television newscasts for the latest information or check radar information from the National Weather Service.
2. Instruct participants about specific lightning protocol during the program briefing if a storm is forecasted or in a safety briefing at the first sign of an unexpected storm.
    a. Determine the distance between the group and nearby lightning by counting the interval between a flash and the following thunder and dividing the number by five to estimate the distance (in miles) that the lightning is away from your group.
    b. Groups should prepare to stop travelling and move into lightning drill when a storm is five miles away or less (25 seconds or less between flash and boom).
    c. Groups may get out of lightning drill position when the storm is three miles or more away and commence activity when the storm is five miles or more away.
    d. Groups should be in lightning drill position when the storm is three miles away or less (15 seconds between flash and boom).
        - Sit with arms folded across legs.
        - If possible, squat, crouch, or sit on an insulated object such as a sleeping pad or camp chair.
        - Avoid touching metal objects.
        - Disperse group members at least 15 feet apart with facilitators spaced among the group.
    e. Be prepared for a lengthy stay in lightning position if a storm is not moving fast. Prepare for hypothermia by using raingear and insulating clothing. Encourage consumption of water and food/snacks.
    f. If a storm occurs at night while participants and staff are sleeping it is best to stay inside shelters in lightning drill position unless shelters are in an exposed location such as a peak or along a beach.
3. Utilize a verbal check-in system at regular intervals to ensure participants and staff are accounted for in the event that visual contact is impaired.
4. Wait out the storm or call for emergency assistance as necessary.

Land-Specific Protocols
1. Seek a sheltered location or move indoors until activity can resume.

a. Avoid high, exposed areas such as summits, ridges, tops of cliffs, overhangs, shallow caves, ditches, gullies, streams, tall trees, poles, large boulders, and high open areas such as fields and meadows to avoid splash injuries or ground currents. Get below tree line.
b. Avoid long conductors such as fences; power, phone or rail lines; wet extended ropes; wet lichen covered rock, cracks, crevices; and overhangs, caves and tree roots.
c. Avoid contact with exposed metal such as climbing hardware, pack frames, and personal gear.
d. In wide open spaces or gently rolling hills, the safest place is a ravine or relative depression.
e. Seek shelter under a uniform tree canopy where possible. When between trees of equal height, the best position is equidistant from both.

Water-Specific Protocols
1. Paddle toward the nearest accessible point of land.
    a. If getting off the water is not possible, get as close to a protective shoreline as possible and assume convoy position assuring that boats are at least one boat length away from each other to avoid multiple injuries from a strike.
    b. In open boats, insulate the seat with a foam pad or spare life jacket and elevate feet with a pad or pack.
    c. Avoid contact with exposed metal boat parts.
    d. Anchor boats to a separate fixed non-metal object if one is available.
    e. It may be best to stay on the water when on steep river gorges if getting onto land is hazardous.
2. Once land is reached follow land protocols.

Flash Floods
Flash floods normally accompany thunderstorms; therefore, the best line of defense is to anticipate inclement weather in planning and field observation of weather and topographical conditions. They are primarily a function of topography and rain. Rain occurring miles away may cause a flash flood if there is a large drainage area upstream.

1. Anticipate inclement weather during planning process.
    a. Note potential flood risks and elevation above flood stages in route planning.
    b. Know locations of potential shelters or appropriate natural features for the program destination.
    c. Listen to radio and television newscasts for the latest information or check Doppler information from the National Weather Service.
2. Instruct participants about flash flood protocol during the program briefing as appropriate or in a safety briefing at the first sign of an unexpected storm in potential flash flood areas.
    a. Begin preparations to move to a place of safety.
    b. Identify flood-safe zones and evacuation routes.
    c. Travel and camp above the high-water mark if possible.
    d. Avoid waterways, low lying enclosed areas, canyons, ravines, ditches, and areas downstream of dams or causeways.
    e. Prepare emergency supplies.
3. Watch for signs of an imminent flash flood including a rise in water level, changes in water turbidity, distant thunderstorms and local changes in environmental conditions such as changes in wind direction and speed, barometric pressure and temperature, or hear rumbling or feel the ground shaking.
4. Avoid driving into water more than two feet deep.
    a. Abandon vehicles immediately if stalled in water and move to high ground.
    b. Turn around when roads are flooded and use additional caution at night when it is difficult to determine water levels.
5. Wait out the flood or call for emergency assistance if necessary.

Tornados

Tornados form as a thunderstorm's gust front kicks air up into a skinny, twisting, stringy funnel that may last only a few minutes or as the spin that keeps a massive storm going spawns one that can last for hours and do significant damage. The National Weather Service issues tornado watches and warnings. A tornado watch indicates that conditions are conducive to the development of tornadoes in and close to the watch area. A tornado warning indicates that a tornado has actually been sighted by spotters or indicated on radar and is occurring or imminent in the warning area.

1. Anticipate inclement weather during planning process and program implementation.
   a. Know locations of potential shelters or appropriate natural features for the program destination.
   b. Listen to radio and television newscasts for the latest information or check Doppler information from the National Weather Service.
2. In the event of a tornado watch or warning prior to a program, postpone the program.
3. In the event of a tornado watch during a program, adapt activities to move inside a sound building or postpone.
4. In the event of a tornado warning or sighting during a program, instruct participants about tornado protocol
   a. Seek shelter inside a sound building if possible.
   b. Lie down in a ditch or other low area.
   c. Protect the head from falling objects or flying debris.
   d. Get out of vehicles.
   e. Prepare emergency supplies.

Incident/Accident Reporting

Incident and accident reports are used to identify trends that require immediate or future action, monitor policy and procedures, evaluate program quality, and establish professional development priorities.

1. The lead facilitator will complete reports for an incident that requires:
   - more than simple first aid such as the application of a band aid;
   - more than cursory staff attention;
   - follow-up care by staff in the field, a medical professional, therapist, psychologist or social worker;
   - use of prescription and non-prescription medications counter to labelling;
   - evacuation from the field;
   - a loss of a day or more of participation in the program or interference with active participation in a program for a significant period of time; or
   - are considered a near miss.
2. I/A reports will be complete, objective, and include a full description of relevant information to enable Outdoor Education Professional Staff to review the form and determine action as necessary.
   a. Complete I/A reports as soon after the incident as possible. Update the form with any additional information that later becomes available such as follow-ups with medical providers.
   b. Additional relevant information may be submitted with the incident report such as SOAP notes, witness accounts, incident notes.
   c. Record first and last names of all parties and print the name under potentially illegible signatures.
   d. Write narratives in a clear and professional manner. State the facts; do not indicate fault or responsibility.
   e. Make every effort to obtain the injured party's signature or have a witness sign the form if the injured party is in transport or unable to do so.
3. In the case of an accident where a participant is transferred to EMS personnel:
   a. Provide EMS personnel with relevant insurance and medical information, but retain all Medical Information Form, SOAP notes, and I/A reports.

     b.   Record the name of EMS personnel and the location of the primary care facility to which the injured party is being transported on the Medical Information Form.

     c.   If the person returns to the program, note the name of the physician giving permission to do so on the I/A Report.

4. Completed Incident/Accident Report forms are submitted with the program file for review at outdoor education risk management meetings.

5. Incident/accidents that involve staff getting hurt also must be reported to Human Resources for purposes of Worker's Compensation claims.

Section Four: Logistics

Equipment Management

Program Equipment
1. Lead facilitators will review and submit equipment reservation forms for specific programs one week prior to a program to ensure that the request can be met.
2. Program staff are responsible for using program equipment and monitoring student use of equipment according to manufacturer specifications and outdoor education policy and procedures.
   a. Inspect program equipment prior to use.
   b. Emphasize the importance of equipment stewardship.
   c. Model behavior that demonstrates a high regard for equipment.
   d. Teach participants appropriate procedures for using and caring for equipment.
3. Program staff are responsible for returning equipment after a program.
   a. Clean and inspect equipment prior to returning it.
   b. Include information on the form for maintaining rope use logs for climbing programs.
   c. Clearly state or graphically identify maintenance and repair requirements on the equipment reservation form and program summary form.
   d. Note lost or destroyed equipment on the program summary form.
   e. Note use of first aid supplies in the WFR/FA kit.

Use of Personal Equipment
1. The lead facilitator will approve, prior to use, equipment owned by staff or participants.

Staff Use of Program Equipment
1. Program staff will be permitted to reserve equipment on a per case basis for use during approved professional development activities such as technical training, certification workshops, scouting trips, or personal skill development associated with an academic requirement.
2. Program staff may not reserve equipment for use by others.
3. Program staff will agree to the terms and conditions for equipment use, care, maintenance, and replacement as outlined on the equipment reservation form.

Transportation

University Vehicles
1. Staff must be approved by Georgia College prior to driving university vehicles.
2. Use of university vehicles will comply with Georgia College and State of Georgia policy.
3. Staff will complete a vehicle familiarization drive with the Outdoor Education vehicles prior to their use with participants.

Personal Vehicles
1. Participants may elect to use personal vehicles to transport themselves to and from outdoor education programs and courses that take place at a location other than a Georgia College facility.
   a. Participants will complete an Assumption of Risk and Informed Consent: Use of Personal Vehicles for outdoor education courses or programs.
   b. Lead facilitators are advised to obtain the names of students and en route contact information using the Outdoor Education Personal Vehicle Log for extended travel.
   c. Lead facilitators will provide complete and appropriate directions to a designated start site.
   d. Lead facilitators should encourage students to drive safely and allow adequate time to get to a start site.
2. Fuel for personal vehicles may not be purchased with a Georgia College fuel card.

Vehicle Operation

1. Drivers are expected to obey the law at all times. Drivers are responsible for paying tickets and fines.
2. Drivers are responsible for completing the Vehicle Use Log for all travel to track mileages, purpose of travel, and fueling information.
3. Drivers will complete the pre-flight checklist prior to departure and the post-flight checklist upon return.
4. Drivers will be alert and minimize distractions while driving.
    a. Drivers should change or rest at four-hour intervals (maximum) to avoid fatigue.
    b. The person in the passenger seat should remain alert and assist with navigation and passenger supervision.
    c. Drivers should refrain from using cell phones and eating while driving.
5. Drivers are responsible for ensuring that passengers are wearing seat belts when a vehicle is in motion.
    a. Ask passengers if their seatbelts are fastened and get a verbal response from <u>all</u> passengers.
6. Vehicle doors will be locked when a vehicle is in motion.
7. Secure gear in passenger areas to minimize shifting.
8. The lead facilitator is responsible for the security and care of all program vehicles.
    a. Doors should be locked when a vehicle is left unattended.
    b. Unattended vehicles should be parked in a public area or designed parking lot.
    c. Valuable items should not be left in an unattended vehicle.
    d. The lead facilitator is responsible for vehicle keys and fuel card security.
9. Tobacco products, alcohol, and illegal drugs are prohibited in all vehicles.
10. The lead facilitator is responsible for ensuring that vehicles are cleaned and inspected at the conclusion of a program.
11. The lead facilitator is responsible for ensuring that gas card receipts are completed and left in an Outdoor Education vehicle. Note the purpose of the travel (e.g. the name of the program) on the receipt.

Breakdowns and Accidents

1. In the event of a mechanical issue with a Georgia College vehicle contact the field supervisor.
    a. Do not continue to operate the vehicle unless it is safe to do so.
    b. The driver is responsible for completing an I/A report for review by Outdoor Education Professional Staff.
2. In the event of a vehicular accident, follow the Emergency Action Plan and consider the following:
    a. Call 911.
    b. Get passengers to a safe place.
    c. Contact the field supervisor.
    d. Stay on the scene until police arrive.
    e. Do not assess blame.
    f. Do not attempt to push a vehicle to safety.
    g. Do not operate a vehicle unless instructed by authorities.
    h. The driver is responsible for completing an I/A report.
3. In the event of an accident in a university vehicle follow the instructions on the yellow card in the glove compartment for insurance reporting purposes.

Trailers

1. Program staff will successfully complete trailer training. Trailer training shall include:
    a. Instruction about how to compensate for the extra length and weight of a trailer when passing vehicles, stopping, parking, or turning.
    b. Instruction about how to correctly attach trailer to towing vehicle.
    c. Instruction about how to correctly load trailer.

d.   Observation of the trailer trainee driving with a trailer.
2.   Approved drivers are responsible for hooking up a trailer to the towing vehicle correctly.
     a.   Attach trailer to vehicle using the correct sized ball hitch.
     b.   Secure hitch with padlock in "down" position.
     c.   Attach safety chains and lighting harness.
     d.   Complete preflight check of vehicle and trailer.
3.   Approved drivers are responsible for supervising the loading and unloading of trailers.
     a.   Select loading and unloading zones with minimal hazards such as parking lots, designated pull outs, or rest areas.
     b.   Do not stand close to or on a roadway to unload a trailer.
     c.   Pull the trailer well off the road or find a more suitable area.
     d.   Spot people as necessary when loading and unloading equipment.
     e.   Confirm that all loads are secured.
     f.   Use tarps to cover equipment in an open trailer to avoid losing or damaging equipment.
     g.   Secure equipment that flaps and tie cord-ends away from tires.
5.   Approved drivers are responsible for damages to other people, property, and vehicles that are a result of objects coming off trailers or collisions.
     a.   Check the load at every stop.
     b.   Use spotters when backing up trailers.
6.   Approved drivers are responsible for loading canoes and kayaks appropriately.
     a.   Canoes should rest on their gunwales.
     b.   Coastal kayaks should be loaded stern-forward with the innermost kayak's cockpit facing the interior of the trailer and the outer kayak(s)' cockpits facing out. Individual kayaks may be loaded with the cockpit down.
     c.   Boats should be transported empty of equipment.
     d.   Boats should be secured with at least 2 tie-downs

Pre-flight Vehicle Checklist	**Post-flight Vehicle Checklist**
• Inspect the overall external and internal condition of the vehicle and trailer, noting damage or maintenance needs that should be reported. • Check fluid levels as appropriate. • Inspect tires and add air as necessary to specifications on tire wall. • Turn on windshield wipers and note the presence of adequate washer fluid delivery. • Inspect head, running, turn, and brake light functions on vehicles and trailers. • Double check the trailer connection and security of any load. • Locate and inspect emergency equipment in the vehicle. A basic first aid kit, fire extinguisher, and roadside emergency kit should be available in at least one vehicle per program. Trailers should include a spare tire, jack, and lug wrench.	• Return the vehicle and trailer to the appropriate location. • Inspect the overall external condition of the vehicle following the trip, noting any damage or maintenance needs. • Remove trash and equipment from interior and cargo areas. • Leave any gas card receipts with the gas card in the vehicle. • Return any borrowed keys to their proper location. • Report any damage, maintenance needs, or incidents immediately within 48 hours of returning.

Section Five: Land-based Activities

Camping

1. The staff : participant ratio for camping activities is 1:10 with a minimum of two staff.
2. Program staff will prepare participants for camping activities. The curriculum might include, but is not limited to:
   - camp site selection and organization;
   - selection and use of clothing and equipment;
   - menu planning and food preparation;
   - water treatment;
   - personal hygiene;
   - waste disposal;
   - shelters;
   - fire building;
   - minimal impact principles; and
   - safety and emergency procedures.
3. Program staff will select campsites based on program goals and environmental factors and conditions.
   a. Developed campsites should be used when available unless the use of a pristine campsite enhances program goals.
   b. Sites should be free from potential hazards such as loose rock, dead trees and widow makers, flash flood potential, poisonous plants, and dangerous fauna.
4. Program staff will use location-appropriate practices for campsite organization. Where possible, these practices include
   a. Establishing campsites 200 ft. from small freshwater sources such as creeks and streams. Campsites along larger bodies of water such as lakes and rivers may be better nearer to the water source.
   b. Separate areas for shelters, cooking, food storage, and toilet areas 200 ft. apart.
5. Program staff will ensure that groups leave a campsite better than it was found.
   a. Remove trash to a location at which it can be disposed of appropriately.
   b. Fluff ground cover to discourage others from camping in pristine settings.
   c. Complete a final sweep of the campsite before leaving to ensure nothing is left behind.
6. Program staff and participants will maintain appropriate personal hygiene.
   a. Wash or sanitize hands prior to preparing or eating food and after urinating or defecating.
   b. Clean or sterilize food pots, bowls, and utensils daily.
   c. Do not share eating utensils, bowls, cups, mugs, bottles.
7. Program staff will develop menus to meet nutritional needs, address limitations (e.g. Kosher, vegan, allergies, etc.), and provide for taste and variety.
8. Program staff and participants will use appropriate water treatment techniques for non-potable water sources such as boiling, commercial water pumps/filters, and/or chemicals.
9. Program staff and participants will use appropriate techniques for stoves, gas lanterns, and fires.
   a. One program staff member should be present in the cooking area.
   b. Follow manufacturer instructions for priming, lighting, regulating, and fueling camp stoves and lanterns.
   c. Do not use portable cook stoves, lanterns, or candles inside tents.
   d. Store fuel outside of shelters and away from sources of flame or sparks.
   e. Wear closed-toe shoes when operating stoves.
   f. Use single burner or liquid fuel stoves on the ground, not on tables.
   g. Use the jump-back position when lighting single-burner or liquid fuel stoves.
   h. Maintain a "circle of safety" around the stove. One person may be inside the safe-circle at a time. No one should be sitting within the circle.

      i.   Do not leave a lit stove unattended.

      j.   Stoves should be cool to the touch before they are disassembled or refueled.

10. Program staff and participants will secure food from animals at night using appropriate methods such as hanging bags, locking storage containers, nearby vehicles, or kayak bulkheads.

11. Program staff will model and teach techniques for heat regulation.
    a. Provide a clothing and equipment list that is appropriate for weather expectations.
    b. Inspect participant clothing and equipment prior to program implementation.
    c. Discuss appropriate clothing for weather expectations prior to and throughout program delivery.
    d. The group will carry backup clothing for inclement weather or emergency response.

12. Program staff will provide oversight to the use of knives, axes, hatchets, or saws.

13. Program staff will provide oversight to the disposal of human waste.
    a. Use restroom or pit toilet facilities if available.
    b. Discuss impacts of human waste disposal in the backcountry such as spread of illness, aesthetic and social impacts, and pollution of fresh water sources.
    c. If possible, urinate in rocky or sandy areas away from camp sites, water sources, and trails.
    d. Dispose of solid waste (feces and vomitus) using the "cat hole" method. In most environments in the southeast, this includes:
       • Disperse cat holes a minimum of 200' away from camp sites, water sources, and trails.
       • Dig 4-6' diameter and 4-8' deep cat holes in organic, non-mineral soil.
       • After use mix some soil into the hole with a stick, cover with the soil plug, and disguise the area with natural materials.
    e. Some areas allow individuals to bury toilet paper in cat holes while other areas require that the toilet paper be carried out in a plastic bag. Follow local land management requirements and consider encouraging individuals to carry out used toilet paper even when it is not required. Used sanitary napkins and tampons should be carried out in a double bag. Consider placing a crushed aspirin or used tea bag in the plastic bag to reduce odor.

Caving

1. The staff : participant ratio for caving activities is 1:6 with a minimum of two staff.

2. Program staff will prepare participants for caving activities. The curriculum might include, but is not limited to:
    • travel techniques;
    • speleological navigation;
    • cave geology and biology;
    • cave conservation issues; and
    • relevant curriculum noted in the Camping section.

3. Program staff will select caves that are appropriate for participant characteristics and skill levels, program goals, and environmental conditions and impact.
    a. "Sacrificed" caves are preferred over pristine caves for novice participants.
    b. Caves that are not prone to flood are normally preferred.
    c. Vertical caving requiring ascending and rappelling will only be conducted under the direction of a third-party vendor.
    d. Program staff will have reliable information about weather conditions that may influence the cave environment.
    e. Program staff will have previously scouted sites prior to program use.

4. Program staff will notify an outside monitor of the group's entrance into and exit from a cave.
    a. Program staff will use the check-in and check-out procedures established by the managing agency for caves managed by an external authority.
    b. Program staff will notify the field supervisor when entering and exiting a cave that is not managed by an external authority.

5. Program staff will implement systems to ensure the group remains together and travels appropriately in a cave.
   a. Develop and practice a monitoring system to account for members of the group.
   b. Conduct head counts at regular intervals.
   c. Program staff will normally be in the "lead" and "sweep" positions while traveling in a cave.
   d. Persons in the lead and sweep positions should regularly communicate with the group to ensure an appropriate pace and to prevent the group from becoming separated.
   e. Avoid delays and bottlenecks that may cause people waiting to get cold.
   f. Familiarize participants with techniques for climbing, balancing, and negotiating difficult terrain in a cave and the use of a hand-line on slick slopes or climbs prior to entering the cave.
   g. Move cautiously while in a cave to prevent injury and accidental damage to cave formations.
6. Program staff and participants will follow location-specific practices for minimum impact in caves and surrounding areas.
   a. Discuss fragile cave environments and techniques for avoiding damage to cave features.
   b. Communicate the NSS Conservation Policy and/or LNT principles prior to cave entry.
   c. Discuss minimum impact processes for eliminating body fluids while in the cave.
7. Program staff and participants will wear appropriate clothing and equipment for caving including, but not limited to:
   - helmet approved by UIAA;
   - two helmeted mounted lights with enough batteries/fuel to last for twice as long as a planned trip into a cave;
   - synthetic or wool undergarments for warmth;
   - outer layer such as rain gear or overalls for abrasion resistance; sturdy footwear for traction and ankle support;
   - gloves that buffer oils from the hands from of cave features; and
   - a large trash bag for a personal heat shelter.
8. Program staff will have access to extra equipment and emergency supplies including:
   - extra food and water;
   - containers for carrying out human waste;
   - extra lights and batteries;
   - extra clothing; and
   - WFR kit.

Hiking and Backpacking

1. The staff : participant ratio for hiking and backpacking activities is 1:8 with a minimum of two staff.
2. Program staff will prepare participants for caving activities. The curriculum might include, but is not limited to:
   - foot travel and energy conservation techniques;
   - backpack fitting and packing;
   - land navigation;
   - emergency response;
   - land management regulations and resources; and
   - relevant curriculum noted in the Camping section.
3. Program staff will select trails appropriate for participant characteristics, program goals, and environmental conditions.
4. Program staff will implement systems to ensure the group remains together and travels appropriately.
   a. Develop and practice a monitoring system (e.g. buddy systems or head counts) to account for members of the group.

b. Set a pace that is appropriate for all members of the group. Persons in the lead and sweep positions should regularly communicate with the group to ensure an appropriate pace and to prevent the group from becoming separated.
c. Be mindful of pack weights and distribute group gear and food as equitably as possible. Pack weights greater than 30% of the hiker's body weight require additional safety considerations.
d. Model appropriate foot care practices to minimize blisters and other foot injuries. Footwear should be worn at all times except while seated. Regular foot checks for hot spots and blisters are appropriate for overnight trips.
e. Trails covered in snow or loose rock or hiking at night or at high altitude each require additional safety considerations.
5. Any specific equipment that program staff should always carry specific to hiking? Not so much FA kit, but 10 essentials, maps, bug spray, hypo kit, etc.? Maybe equipment for hikes of a certain duration/distance require something?
6. Program staff will have reliable information about weather conditions that may influence trail and off trail travel.
7. Program staff and participants will follow location-specific practices for minimum impact during on-trail and off-trail travel.
   a. On-trail travel should be single file and avoid leaving the trail to move around obstacles such as fallen trees and puddles.
   b. Off-trail travelers should spread group members out rather than travelling in single file.
   c. Off-trail travelers should set group control boundaries using appropriate landmarks.

River Crossing
1. Program staff will manage river crossings to ensure that they are appropriate for participant characteristics and skill levels, program goals, and environmental conditions.
   a. Monitor river conditions and weather reports prior to and during programs in areas where river crossing is planned for or may occur.
   b. Be intentional about when and how to cross challenging rivers.
   c. The overall physical condition of group members should be assessed prior to crossing a river.
   d. Assess environmental conditions such as, but not limited to:
      • rate of flow and depth;
      • downstream hazards;
      • riverbed and shoreline characteristics; and
      • air and water temperature.
   e. Assess available resources such as, but not limited to:
      • rescue personnel and gear; and
      • clothing and equipment for immersion incidents.
2. Program staff will select the appropriate location for crossing. Program staff may need to scout up and downstream to select the best location for crossing.
3. Program staff will prepare participants for river crossing activities.
   a. Program staff should be available and ready to intervene on significant river crossings.
   b. Program staff should attempt questionable river crossings before participants cross.
   c. Wear appropriately secure and stable footwear such as camp shoes, boots, or water shoes during river crossings.
   d. Swimming policy should be followed when crossing rivers greater than waist deep.
   e. Place a person without a pack on each side of the crossing in a position to give assistance to crossers.
   f. Consider placing a strong swimmer downstream as a backup.
   g. Undo the waistband and sternum strap, and loosen the shoulder straps so the pack can be quickly and easily removed if there is a chance of falling into or being knocked down by a strong current.

4. Program staff will select appropriate river crossing techniques based on and assessment of hazards, presence of rapids and their characteristics, human-made objects and structures, river bank structure, and water depth and flow. Common techniques include:
   - Pairs Wading-Two people face each other and hold shoulders. The larger person faces downstream to create an eddy for the smaller person. Small side-steps are taken alternately beginning with the upstream person, each supporting the other while moving.
   - Triangle Wading-Three people form a triangle, with the strongest person as point, facing upstream. The point calls step right, step left as the triangle moves across the river.
   - In-Line Wading-At least three people form a line with the strongest person in the front facing upstream and using a long stick or paddle to support themselves if necessary. Waders carefully follow holding the shoulders of the person in front.
   - Rope Crossing-A wading technique indicated above allows the group to establish a fixed line across the river. Individuals then cross facing upstream and on the downstream side of the rope. A final group releases the rope and cross to the other side using a technique above. At no time should a crosser be tied to a rope.

Rock Climbing

1. The staff : participant ratio for rock climbing activities is 1:6 with a minimum of two staff.
2. Program staff will select climbing activity sites and routes that are appropriate for participant characteristics and skill levels, individual group member and group goals, program goals, environmental conditions and impact, and locations at which climbing activities take place.
   a. Scout sites prior to program use to ensure that they are free and clear from obvious hazards such as water, loose rock, debris, and insects or poisonous flora.
   b. Select climbing sites that minimize impact to native flora and fauna.
   c. Pad trees used as anchors to protect them from damage.
3. Program staff may lead climb to set up a top rope anchor with the approval of Outdoor Education Professional Staff.
4. Program staff will establish appropriate safe zones at climbing activity sites.
   a. A rock fall zone should be at least 15' from a cliff line.
5. Program staff and participants will wear properly fitted helmets when participating in climbing activities or anywhere in the rock fall zone.
6. Program staff and participants will be belayed or otherwise anchored when moving or standing within six feet of a cliff edge.
7. Program staff will teach and model appropriate equipment use and clothing needs for climbing activities.
   a. Follow manufacturer specifications for equipment use.
   b. Inspect ropes and hardware prior to use.
   c. Teach participants to check ropes and other soft goods for damage prior to use.
   d. Avoid stepping on ropes, exposure to excessive sunlight, and wear on ropes and webbing from sharp edges.
   e. Wear clothing that is appropriate for the climate in general and the weather in particular.
   f. Footwear should be closed at the toe and secured at the heel.
8. Program staff will ensure that staff and participants use only Outdoor Center helmets, harnesses, belay devices, carabiners, climbing ropes, and anchoring materials.
9. Program staff will ensure access to appropriate safety and rescue equipment.
   a. Locate first aid and rescue equipment in an area accessible to all facilitators.
   b. Carry appropriate rescue equipment including, but not limited to:
      - extra carabiners;
      - cordelette loops and slings;
      - a friction device; and

- rescue knife or shears.
10. Program staff will teach and use a consistent communication system for all climbing activities.

Climber says:	Belayer says:	Meaning and Response Needed
on belay?		Are you ready? Is the belay on?
	belay on	All set. The belay will now catch you if you fall.
climbing or rappelling		I am ready to climb/rappel.
	climb or rappell	Go ahead, the rope will be controlled by the belayer.
tension		Take up all slack. My weight is coming onto the rope. *Take up slack until the climber indicates that's me. Assume brake position and hold until the climber indicates slack. No verbal answer required.*
that's me		You have me where I want you to have me. *No verbal answer required.*
slack		I need some slack in the rope. *The belayer should feed out a small amount of rope. No verbal answer required.*
watch me		I'm attempting a difficult move. I may fall.
rope or rock		A rope or another object is coming down.
	clear	You may drop the rope, the area is clear.
off belay		I am secure and indeed I will no longer need the belay. *Take off the belay.*
	belay off	The belay is off, *echoed to ensure there is not misunderstanding.*

Top Rope Climbing
1. Program staff will prepare participants for top rope climbing activities. The curriculum might include, but is not limited to:
   - appropriate verbal commands;
   - physical and psychological demands of climbing;
   - backup belay and anchoring techniques;
   - proper spotting techniques;
   - movement on rock concepts such as types of holds, maintaining balance, three points of contact, and resting;
   - rope ties and their uses such as figure eight family, water knot or ring bend, Prussik hitch, clove hitch, Münter hitch, and double fisherman;
   - proper fit, care, and inspection of helmets and harnesses;
   - clipping or tying the rope and belay device into the harness;
   - proper belaying techniques and use of belay devices such as Münter hitch, ATC, and Gri Gri;
   - building and placing top rope anchors;
   - basic rescue techniques; and
   - relevant curriculum noted in the Camping section.
2. Program staff and participants will use accepted belay techniques for top rope climbing.
   a. Use belay devices that are approved by Outdoor Education Professional Staff.
   b. Secure loose hair and clothing and remove loose or large jewelry before ascending.

    c.   Check staff and participant helmets, harnesses, knots, and carabiners prior to each climb including.
    d.   Use backup belayers.
    e.   Spot participants where rope stretch may cause a climber to land on the ground if a fall occurs.
3. Program staff will teach and use stable and appropriate top rope anchor systems.
    a.   Use a minimum of two separate natural and/or permanent artificial anchor points
- well-rooted, live trees at least six inches in diameter; large, immobile boulders; or other secure natural features for natural anchors;
- well-placed, permanent climbing bolts

    b.   Use a minimum of three anchor points for temporary, artificial anchors such as spring-loaded camming devices, stoppers, or hexes anchors.
    c.   LEADSTER anchor systems that limits extension, have an angle of less than 90 degrees, are built directional to the climb in use, are solid and strong; are built in a timely manner; and are equalized and redundant.
    d.   Two program staff will inspect anchors and artificial placements prior to top rope climbing.

Bouldering

1. Program staff will prepare participants for bouldering activities. The curriculum might include, but is not limited to:
- climbing techniques and movement on rock such as weight distribution, three-point stance, upper body positioning, breathing, mantling, lay-backs, balance, opposition, or friction;
- spotting and falling techniques such as protection of the climber's head and neck area, spotting stance, use of crash pads, and being focused and attentive;
- communication systems; and
- relevant curriculum noted in the Camping section.

2. Program staff will assess and approve bouldering sites prior to participant use.
    a.   Determine if direct program staff supervision is required or if participants may spot bouldering activities.
    b.   Determine a maximum height for bouldering. The height should not exceed 12 feet from the ground to the highest hand hold. Shorter maximum heights may be necessary based on bouldering route, spotting, and ground conditions.

Rappelling

1. Program staff will prepare participants for rappelling activities. The curriculum might include, but is not limited to:
- physical and psychological demands of rappelling;
- appropriate verbal commands;
- proper spotting techniques;
- backup belay techniques;
- proper fit, care, and inspection of helmets and harnesses;
- attaching the rope and rappel device into the harness;
- proper use of rappel devices such as ATC, Figure 8's, and rappel racks;
- building rappelling anchors;
- body position for rappelling;
- negotiating the edge;
- landing at the bottom of the rappel;
- use of appropriate backups; and
- basic rescue techniques; and
- relevant curriculum noted in the Camping section.

2. Program staff will use commonly accepted rappelling techniques.
    a.   Use rappel devices that are approved by Outdoor Education Professional Staff.

b. Secure loose hair and clothing and remove loose or large jewelry before descending.
c. Check staff and participant helmets, harnesses, knots, and carabiners prior to each rappel.
3. Program staff will use appropriate backup belays for rappelling activities including, but not limited to:
   - autoblock backups;
   - ascender backups;
   - external dynamic belays; and
   - bottom or fireman's belays.
4. Program staff will teach and use stable and appropriate rappelling anchor systems.
   a. Use a minimum of one natural anchor points such as well-rooted, live trees at least six inches in diameter; large, immobile boulders; or other secure natural features for natural anchors;
   b. Use a minimum of two anchor points for permanent, artificial climbing bolts or temporary, artificial anchors such as spring-loaded camming devices, stoppers, or hexes anchors.
   c. LEADSTER anchor systems that limits extension, have an angle of less than 90 degrees, are built directional to the route in use, are solid and strong; are built in a timely manner; and are equalized and redundant.
   d. Two program staff will inspect anchors and artificial placements prior to rappelling.

Section Six: Water-based Activities

Dipping and Swimming

Dipping takes place water that is shallower than waist-level. Dipping will normally be an incidental activity that takes place in conjunction with another land or water-based activity. **Swimming** takes place in water that is deeper than waist-level. Swimming may be an incidental activity that takes place in conjunction with another land or water-based activity, a curriculum component of a water-based activity, or a stand-alone program.

1. The staff : participant ratio for dipping and swimming activities is 1:10 with a minimum of two staff.
2. Dipping and swimming activities will be appropriate for participant characteristics, program goals, environmental conditions and impact, and the locations at which dipping or swimming will take place.
   a. Dipping or swimming activities may take place to refresh program staff and participants; for exercise, fun or relaxation; to develop or improve swimming skills or confidence in the water, or to teach water safety skills.
3. Program staff will consider swimming ability and level of comfort in the water environment in which dipping or swimming will take place.
   a. Review medical information forms that include self-report of swimming ability and follow up as appropriate to discuss swimming ability and level of comfort with participants prior to dipping or swimming.
4. Program staff will prepare participants for informal dipping and swimming activities and potential swimming activities associated with other water-based program activities.
   a. Teach introductory skills before going on the water or in a calm, controlled water environment.
   b. Swimming curriculum may include, but is not limited to:
      - basic and site-specific water safety;
      - safety equipment such as life jackets and flotation devices;
      - buddy system;
      - ongoing communication;
      - boundaries;
      - appropriate behavior; and
      - self and aided rescue procedures.
5. Program staff and participants will wear properly fitted Coast Guard approved Type III or Type V life jackets when swimming in natural water environments or when a certified lifeguard is not present.
   a. It may be advisable to wear a life jacket when placing boats in or taking boats out of the water.
6. Locate first aid and rescue equipment in an accessible location.
7. Implement common water safety procedures for dipping and swimming activities.
   a. Monitor all dipping and swimming activities.
   b. Permit dipping and swimming activities between sunrise and sunset.
   c. Establish a buddy system.
   d. Inspect dipping and swimming areas for hazards and dangerous conditions.
   e. Maintain an unobstructed view of swimmers.
   f. Discuss relevant safety consideration and procedures.
   g. Head-first diving is not permitted in natural bodies of water and only where explicitly allowed in pools.
8. Swimming in whitewater is permitted as part of whitewater canoeing, kayaking, and rafting based on program goals, environmental conditions, and the availability of appropriate supervision.
9. Swimming in coastal waters is permitted as part of coastal kayaking based on program goals, environmental conditions, and the availability of appropriate supervision.

Canoeing, Kayaking, and Rafting

1. The staff : participant ratio for flatwater canoeing and kayaking is 1:8 with a minimum of two staff.
2. Program staff will prepare participants for canoeing, kayaking, and rafting activities. Use appropriate American Canoe Association course curriculum to guide program development and delivery. The curriculum might include, but is not limited to:
   a. Selection of paddling sites and evaluation of hazards;
   b. Life jacket use;
   c. Inspecting and preparing the boat prior to use;
   d. Entering and launching the boat;
   e. Strokes and maneuvers for moving the boat forwards, backwards, and sideways; stopping the boat; and turning the boat;
   f. Exiting and securing the boat;
   g. Accident prevention and rescue strategies; and
   h. relevant curriculum noted in the Camping section.
3. Canoeing, kayaking, and rafting activities will be appropriate for participant characteristics, swimming ability and level of comfort in the water, program goals, environmental conditions and impact, and the locations that canoeing, kayaking, and rafting will take place.
4. Program staff will consider swimming ability and level of comfort in the water environment in which canoeing, kayaking, and rafting will take place.
   a. Review medical information forms that include self-report of swimming ability and follow up as appropriate to discuss swimming ability and level of comfort with participants prior to canoeing or kayaking.
   b. Determine if an in-water swim test is appropriate for a specific program.
5. Program staff will prepare participants for canoeing, kayaking, and rafting activities.
   a. Determine and communicate to potential program participants the skill level required to participant in a program.
   b. Teach introductory skills before going on the water or in a calm or controlled water environment.
   c. Review what to do in the case of a capsize including self and other-assisted rescue procedures.
6. Program staff and participants will wear properly fitted Coast Guard approved Type III or Type V life jackets that are designed for the program specific water-based activity.
7. Program staff will develop a program route that minimizes exposure to common hazards.
   a. Avoid areas with heavy boat traffic when possible.
   b. Cross boating channels as a tight group, moving at the pace of the slowest paddler with staff corralling participants on all sides.
   c. Night paddling may be considered appropriate based on program outcomes and should be authorized by Outdoor Education Professional Staff.
   d. Inspect landing and exit points for environmental hazards and conditions.
8. Program staff will carry appropriate first aid and rescue equipment such as:
   - water-tight first aid kit;
   - rescue sling;
   - hypothermia kit which may include spare clothing, shelter, food, and/or warm drinks depending on environmental conditions;
   - maps and compasses;
   - repair kit.
9. Program staff will carry or store a minimum of one extra life jacket and two extra paddles in an accessible location such as a vehicle.
10. Program staff will teach and model appropriate use and care of equipment.
    a. Teach the proper use of paddles including:
       - paddle sizing;

- paddle orientation;
- avoid using paddles as walking sticks or leaning poles, except in rescue situations; and
- storage of paddles in a secure, out of the way place where they cannot be stepped on and, when possible with the blade up.
  b. Teach the proper use of life jackets including:
- adjusting for proper fit;
- how to secure life jackets at all times;
- avoid using life jackets as kneepads or seats; and
- cleaning and storage of life jackets and wet or dry suits to permit adequate ventilation.
  c. Teach the proper use of paddle craft including:
- avoid dropping or dragging paddle craft;
- avoid ramming the shores or docks;
- avoid sitting on or in a paddle craft on dry land; and
- how to trim packs and other equipment to maximize balance and security for travel.

Coastal Kayaking
1. The staff : participant ratio for coastal kayaking activities is 1:6 with a minimum of two staff.
2. Program staff will prepare participants for coastal kayaking. Use appropriate American Canoe Association course curriculum to guide program development and delivery. The curriculum might include, but is not limited to:
   a. Coastal weather and water conditions,
   b. Navigation and rules of the nautical road,
   c. Strategies for paddling in current, surf, and wind,
   d. Advanced strokes and maneuvers such as bracing and side slips.
   e. Advanced rescue techniques such as towing and rolling.
3. Program staff will brief participants about safety concerns that may not be as obvious when paddling in coastal settings including, but not limited to:
- hazardous flora and fauna such as sting rays, jelly fish, and oyster beds; and
- prevention of sunburn, dehydration, and motion sickness.
4. Program staff will have reliable information about weather, tide, and current conditions that may influence coastal kayaking activities.
5. Program staff will comply with American Canoe Association risk management requirements.
   a. In protected coastal waters, carry 1 bilge pump or bailer for every 2 boats and outfit boats with additional flotation (usually bulkheads).
   b. In unprotected coastal waters, carry a bilge pump and paddle float in each boat and outfit boats with additional flotation (usually bulkheads).
6. Program staff will carry appropriate first aid and rescue equipment for the context such as:
- water-tight first aid kit;
- rescue sling and tow system;
- spare spray skirt and paddle;
- hypothermia kit which may include spare clothing, shelter, food, and/or warm drinks depending on environmental conditions;
- charts and compasses;
- VHF marine radio in unprotected coastal waters;
- repair kit; and
- emergency signal kit.

Whitewater Canoeing, Kayaking, & Rafting
1. The staff : participant ratio for whitewater canoeing, kayaking, and rafting is 1:6 with a minimum of two staff.

2. Program staff will prepare participants for whitewater canoeing, kayaking, and rafting activities. Use appropriate American Canoe Association course curriculum to guide program development and delivery. The curriculum might include, but is not limited to:
   a. Hydrology and river features,
   b. River maneuvers such as ferries, eddy turns, peel outs, and surfing;
   c. River running strategies;
   d. Advanced strokes and maneuvers such as bracing and side slips, and
   e. Advanced rescue techniques such as whitewater swimming, towing, and rolling.
3. Program staff will use and teach participants AW river signals including:
   - Vertical paddle – come center;
   - Horizontal paddle – stop, hold until further notice;
   - Paddle at a 45° angle – go in the direction the paddle is pointing;
   - Vertical paddle waving from side to side – help, get to shore and come to where assistance is needed;
   - Patting head – asking are you OK? Response by patting the head to indicate yes, I am OK.
4. Program staff will comply with American Canoe Association risk management requirements for specific venues and activities.
   a. Wear properly fitted paddling helmets, not bicycle helmets.
   b. Ensure an appropriate level of boat floatation for the venue.
5. Program staff will carry appropriate first aid and rescue equipment for canoeing, kayaking, and rafting such as:
   - extra paddle;
   - water-tight first aid kit;
   - hypothermia kit which may include spare clothing, shelter, food, and/or warm drinks depending on environmental conditions;
   - cordelette slings or webbing;
   - locking carabiners;
   - rescue knife; and
   - 2 throw ropes.

Section Seven: Supplemental Activities

Many outdoor education programs include supplemental activities that support the primary activities. A coastal kayaking trip may include extensive environmental education. Program staff may start a rock climbing activity block with an initiative task for the group. Participants may engage in a solo during a backpacking expedition. The following section highlights policy for these supplemental activities.

1. The staff : participant ratio for supplemental activities is 1:12 with a minimum of two staff or the ratio for the primary activity, whichever is smaller.
2. Program staff will prepare participants for all supplemental activities.
3. Supplemental activities will be appropriate for participant characteristics, program goals, environmental conditions and impact, and the locations that the primary activity will take place.
4. Program staff will carry appropriate first aid and rescue equipment for the supplemental activity.
5. Program staff will implement activity-specific policy for technical activities conducted during supplemental activities.

Environment Education/Interpretation

1. Program staff will provide opportunities for participants to develop social and place-based connections via environmental education and interpretation.
   a. Informal, voluntary, or required environmental education may be incorporated into program activities.
   b. Themes that relate to program goals or context like logging in national forests, water resources in the southeast, population growth impact on Lake Sinclair, or global issues that impact local communities may provide opportunities for integrative learning.
   c. Processing strategies may include opportunities to discuss and define socially acceptable behavior and foster an understanding about how one's behaviors affect others.
2. Program staff will research and share information about the natural and cultural heritage specific to program contexts including, but not limited to:
   - local and regional ecosystems;
   - historical and physical geology;
   - hydrological processes;
   - past and present human cultures;
   - human impact on natural settings; and
   - weather and climate patterns and trends.

Initiative Tasks

1. Program staff will plan, implement, and evaluate initiative tasks in compliance with outdoor education policy, related documents, and industry standards.
2. Program staff will ensure initiative tasks will be appropriate for participant characteristics and skill levels, program goals, environmental conditions, and locations.
3. Program staff will select and sequence initiative tasks to maximize transfer of learning, regard for participant safety, and ongoing group assessment.
   a. Exceptions to time or emphasis placed on specific components in the program design sequence may be indicated based on group readiness, program length, or program goals.
4. Program staff will inspect sites, facilities, and equipment, components prior to program delivery.
5. Program staff will explain the purpose of an activity and present instructions in a clear manner.
   a. Review challenge of and by choice.
   b. Discuss safety considerations including using appropriate communication.
   c. Answer questions prior to starting the activity and throughout as they arise.
   d. Encourage participants to ask for what they need.
6. Program staff will process activities as appropriate.

7. Program staff will monitor activities closely for unsafe behavior such as pushing or pulling, inappropriate spotting, distracting behavior, inappropriate touch, inappropriate communication sequence, or horseplay.
   a. Intervene in a timely and purposeful fashion as necessary.
   b. Provide backup spotting support as necessary.

Service Learning

1. The lead facilitator will coordinate service learning experiences with host agencies and land management personnel.
   a. Select service learning experiences based on program or course goals and client characteristics.
   b. Conduct host agency orientation to Georgia College and student orientation to host agency services, cliental, mission, and context.
   c. Insure that logistics are complete and communicated to the appropriate people including, but not limited to, fees or fundraising expectations, clothing, equipment, accommodation, travel, food, and water.
2. Ensure that participants have the skills and knowledge needed to perform the service.
3. Implement safety and emergency procedures specific to the activity.

Solo[1]

1. Program staff will use solo activities that are appropriate for participant characteristics and skill levels, individual group member and group goals, program goals, environmental conditions and impact, and locations at which solo activities take place.
   a. Consider opportunities for reflection.
   b. Consider the application of skills learned in other components of the program such as primitive living, survival, emergency response, or land navigation.
   c. Consider solo opportunities following a high-impact or stressful experience.
   d. Consider solo opportunities at the beginning and end of a program.
   e. Consider the impact of the solo experience on subsequent program events and group dynamics.
   f. Consider fasting an option, not a requirement.
2. Program staff will prepare participants for solo activities.
   a. Discuss participant expectations prior to the solo.
   b. Provide a clear rationale for the solo and associated activities.
   c. Discuss communication procedures and program staff visitation options.
   d. Discuss safety concerns that may not be obvious when moving off-trail to or from solo sites such as environmental hazards.
   e. Clarify unacceptable or unsafe behaviors such as climbing trees, bouldering, fires, visiting neighboring participants, and wandering beyond established individual solo site boundaries.
   f. Check individual solo equipment and supplies that may or may not be considered part of the solo experience such as survival kits, clothing, and shelters.
   g. Discuss expectations for the use of journals, cameras, or a check-in system that are intended to enhance reflection on the solo experience.
   h. Provide participants on extended solos with base-camp location finding information such as coordinates and marker locations.
   i. Explain emergency response systems.
3. Program staff will discuss their roles and responsibilities prior to solo activities including:
   • emergency response;

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[1] Some content is adapted from: Bobilya, McAvoy, & Kalisch. (2005). The Power of the instructor in the solo experiences: An empirical study and some non-empirical questions. Journal of Adventure Education & Outdoor Learning, Volume 5, Issue I, pages 35 – 50.

- frequency and procedures for checking in and visiting participants; and
- post-solo debrief strategies and considerations such as a one-on-one conversation with participants prior to a group discussion.

4. At least one program staff member will provide constant supervision during solo activities.
5. Program staff will select and mark appropriate solo locations.
   a. Select sites that are adequately separated and/or screened from one another to provide appropriate isolation.
   b. Scout sites prior to program use to ensure that they are free and clear from obvious hazards such as water, loose rock, debris, and insects or poisonous flora.
   c. Select sites that minimize impact to native flora and fauna.
   d. Locate solo site markers at locations that are easily recognizable.
   e. Log the location of each participant on a GPS and/or map.
6. Program staff and participants will use appropriate communication systems for solo activities based on the purpose and length of the solo experience such as, but not limited to:
   - trail note exchange containers;
   - visual, audio, and/or verbal signals; and
   - brief visitations.
7. Program staff will establish a base camp for extended solo experiences that include at least one overnight.
   a. Consider extreme weather conditions or otherwise potentially hazardous locations when deciding to set up a base camp for solos that do not include an overnight.
   b. Locate the base camp in an easily accessible location such as a trail junction or significant natural feature.
   c. Provide participants with base camp coordinates or bearings (Grid Ref or UTM) and proper equipment to assist with solo navigation back to base camp.

Appendix 1: Leave No Trace Principles

Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you will visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups or split larger parties into smaller groups of 4-6.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
- Keep campsites small.
- Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
- In popular areas:
  o concentrate use on existing trails and campsites;
  o walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
- In pristine areas:
  o disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails;
  o avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

Dispose of Waste Properly
- Pack it in, pack it out.
- Inspect campsites and rest areas for trash or spilled foods.
- Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Deposit solid human waste in cat holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails.
- Cover and disguise the cat hole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- Wash yourself and dishes 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap.
- Scatter strained dishwater.

Leave What You Find
- Preserve the past.
- Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors
- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry.
- Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small by using sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, and then scatter cool ashes.

Respect Wildlife
- Observe wildlife from a distance and do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals because feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

Appendix 2: Universal Access

The Americans with Disabilities Act focuses primarily on public accommodations and employment of persons with disabilities. Outdoor education programs at Georgia College support efforts to make outdoor education activities accessible to persons with disabilities. However, the issue of accessibility is one that must be judged on the basis of risk management. Therefore, accommodations for people with disabilities may be reasonable in some cases and in other cases they may not, depending on facilities, equipment, or staff competency.

1. Rynders and Schleien[2] offer guidelines for assessing accommodations for people with disabilities that form the basis for decision making:
    a. Adapt only when necessary. Do not assume that every activity will need to be adapted to meet the needs of the person with a disability. The goal should be to keep the participant's experience as realistic as possible. If an adaptation is warranted, seek participant input. In most cases the participant will be eager to communicate needs;
    b. View adaptations as temporary, transitional changes. Whenever possible, facilitators should work toward engaging persons with disabilities in the activity as it was originally designed. If adaptations have been made to get the participant involved, the goal should be to reduce dependency on the adaptation;
    c. Adapt on an individual basis. Do not assume that every participant with a disability will have a problem with eye/hand coordination or some other condition that requires special consideration. In consultation with the participant, and through careful observation, adaptations may be devised that meet particular needs;
    d. Adapt for normalization. If a modification for an activity is found to be appropriate for an individual with a disability, care should be taken to keep the activity as close to the original version as possible. By using unnecessary adaptations or modifications, the participant may be made to stand out from his/her peers unnecessarily.
2. Should an adaptation be unreasonable because it may create unsafe conditions for staff or participants, the lead facilitator should inform the participant in private that he/she may not be directly involved in an activity program. The situation should be explained in such a way that the participant understands that there is a safety issue for which adaptation is not possible at this time and encouraged to participate in another way. Every effort should be made to prevent a situation of this kind prior to the program.
3. Appropriate confidentiality should be maintained. It is the option of a person with a disability to share information with a group.

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[2] Rynders, J.E. & Schleien, S.J. (n.d.). *Together Successfully.* Association for Retarded Citizens of the U.S (now the National Association of Parents with Children in Special Education).