

Raft Race Rules & Safety Advice

Raft Race Rules

1. No pets are allowed at the Captains' Meeting or during the Raft Race. Service animals are exempt by law.
2. No glass containers are allowed at any time.
3. All entries must have enough designated drivers for their crew at all Raft Race functions.
4. All minors must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
5. All rafts must be human powered only. Propulsion may include poles, oars, paddles, paddlewheels, sails, propellers, flippers, or any combination of these.
6. Sweeper boats can be power-driven but cannot pass any human-powered raft unless they are performing official duties or providing emergency assistance.
7. All sweepers must be state-registered and meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements.

Safety Requirements

8. Captains must show all crew members where the Coast Guard-approved life jackets are stored and conduct an "abandon ship" drill before launching.
9. Every participant must have a Coast Guard-approved life jacket in their possession and should always wear it during the race.
10. All crew members must wear sneakers or other closed-toe footwear suitable for water and rough surfaces.
11. All minors must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
12. Sun-sensitive participants should wear sunscreen, a hat with a brim, and appropriate sun protection.
13. Each raft must carry enough drinking water for the entire crew for the duration of the race.
14. Every entry must carry a basic first aid kit and garbage bags for their own trash.

Raft Construction & Inspection

15. All rafts must be homemade construction. No commercially manufactured hulls are allowed.
16. Minimum raft size is 4 ft x 8 ft (measured at the waterline) and must safely support the entire crew.
17. The raft deck must be securely fastened to the frame, and the frame must be securely fastened to the hulls or flotation devices.
18. No inner tubes or inflatable devices are allowed as flotation.
19. Nails are prohibited from below the waterline. All sheet metal edges must be turned over and taped. Any protruding bolts must be cut, filed, and taped.
20. Rafts with open hulls (no bulkheads) must have Styrofoam flotation securely fastened under the deck.
21. Each raft must have a suitable anchor with line and a strong towline, both securely attached.
22. Kayaks and canoes have no construction restrictions and do not require pre-launch inspection.
23. Rafts may be inspected prior to launching and may require modifications at the discretion of the Race Committee.

During the Race

24. All crew members must remain aboard their raft for the entire race.
25. Single kayaks and canoes should use the buddy system or team up with other entries.
26. All entries must complete the entire course under their own power to be eligible for awards. Inform scorers if your raft has accepted a tow.
27. No diving or jumping into the water from any vessel at any time.
28. All entries must have a support boat for towing to the start, emergency assistance, and takeout.
29. Any raft that is floundering or has not finished by 2:00 p.m. will be towed in.
30. All entries must clearly display their class designation and race number in plain view.

General

31. Anyone exhibiting unsafe behavior will be disqualified and may be permanently banned from future events.
32. All vessels must be removed from the river by the end of the day unless other arrangements have been made with the marina.
33. Derelict or abandoned vessels are subject to police action, fines from the D.E.P., and permanent disqualification.

The Raft Race Committee promotes a safe, family-friendly event. We ask all participants to compete responsibly and sportsmanlike: follow the safety rules, assist fellow rafters when needed, and above all, enjoy the day. Our excellent safety record makes this annual event possible — and it depends on everyone's cooperation. Safety comes first! Watch out for one another, lend a hand when needed, and have fun.