



Employee Handbook

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Land Acknowledgement

Venture Outdoors and Kayak Pittsburgh recognizes it operates on land stolen from the Osage and Shawandasse Tula peoples and would like to pay our respects to the original stewards of the land.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Venture Outdoors works to remove barriers that inhibit outdoor access while making the outdoors an equitable and inclusive space. We are committed to creating a work environment that reflects those same values. As an organization, we welcome and respect diversity of individuality and prioritize the equitable treatment of all staff. Our full Equity Statement can be found in the Appendix.

Introduction

This handbook has been created to inform you of your responsibilities as a Kayak Pittsburgh employee and to notify you of the standard operating procedures we have in place. This handbook is not all-inclusive but should offer support in your role with the organization this season.

Kayak Pittsburgh is a project of Venture Outdoors, a Pittsburgh-based, member supported, non-profit organization working to create access to outdoor experiences for all. In addition to the Kayak Pittsburgh rental operation, we offer public, custom, and youth programming (hiking, biking, fishing, and more) that introduce people to the benefits of outdoor recreation. Programs are catered to all age groups and skill levels and are held in city, county and state parks and greenspaces around the region.

As Kayak Pittsburgh staff, you are responsible for understanding and promoting the mission of the organization while providing excellent customer service and creating a memorable outdoor experience to all who enter our concessions.

The purpose of this handbook is to help you feel connected to the Venture Outdoors organization, as well as to provide an outline of the daily procedures used by supervisors and attendants at Kayak Pittsburgh. This handbook is a live document – any major changes will be communicated to you at the same time they are changed within the handbook. This document should be used in addition to the Venture Outdoors Employee Handbook and Safety Manual. Please contact the Paddlesports Director, Paddlesports Manager, or Assistant Manager with any questions.

Inspire. Educate. Equip. We create access to outdoor experiences.

-Venture Outdoors' Mission

Staff

The full time staff members of Kayak Pittsburgh are listed below. While you might not be interacting with all Venture Outdoors staff individually on a regular basis, it is important to get to know them and their roles in the organization as their departments will always be working closely with the Kayak Pittsburgh operation. An orientation meeting will be held at the beginning of the season where the staff can explain their roles and how you might be interacting with them during the season.

The staff members you will be in contact with the most are the Paddlesports Director, Manager and Assistant Manager. The Director oversees all operations and high-level planning for Kayak Pittsburgh rental concessions and programming. The Manager and Assistant Manager are responsible for training, scheduling, and assisting in day-to-day operations of both concessions and programming. Both the Manager and Assistant Manager will work closely with Supervisors and Lead Supervisors. Any questions, comments, and concerns should be directed to the Assistant Manager. Attendants directly report to the supervisors, but should also address any issues to (and will be in frequent communication with) the Assistant Manager and Manager.

Paddlesport Director– Luke Borowy (he/him) - Luke@ventureoutdoors.org

- 412-255-0564 ext 232

Paddlesport Manager – Brianna Black (she/her) - bri@ventureoutdoors.org

- 412-255-0564 ext

Kayak Pittsburgh Assistant Manager – Sam Soergel (he/him) - Sam@ventureoutdoors.org

- 412-255-0564 ext 233

Visit the Staff page on the Venture Outdoors Website to meet the rest of the organization!

Hiring Packet, Clearances, and Trainings

When you receive the email confirming you have been hired, a hiring packet will be attached. Please complete the forms in this packet within four days of receiving it. Reach out to the Kayak Pittsburgh Manager with any questions or issues.

In addition to completing the hiring packet, all Kayak Pittsburgh staff members are required to acquire a set of clearances - PA Criminal Background Check (Act 34), PA Child Abuse Background Check (Act 151). Additionally, those interested in being KP Excursionists are required to get their FBI Fingerprinting (Act 114) clearance. An employee cannot begin to work until these clearances are completed and submitted. Any findings on the background checks do not immediately disqualify an employee from further work. Instead, this will open the door to conversation between the staff member and management.

Before beginning the season at Kayak Pittsburgh, there are virtual and in-person trainings that employees will have to attend. These include a virtual Kayak Pittsburgh Orientation, virtual technology training (how to use the scheduling app, etc.), and site walkthroughs. Dates for these trainings will be communicated to you (virtual trainings will be recorded and can be watched at any time by employees joining mid-season).

Anyone interested in the KP Excursionist position will also have to attend Kayak Trip Leader Training. KP Excursionists *and* Supervisors both have to attend paddle training as well as First Aid/CPR training every two years. All of these trainings are available multiple times throughout the year.

General Info

Venture Outdoors operates multiple Kayak Pittsburgh rental concessions. One of them is located in Allegheny County's North Park and two of them are along the Allegheny River in Downtown Pittsburgh and Sharpsburg. Information about operating these concessions will be covered in later sections, but general Kayak Pittsburgh info can be found below.

Kayak Pittsburgh North Park - 10301 Pearce Mill Road, Allison Park, PA, 15101

Located north of the city, Venture Outdoors has operated a Kayak Pittsburgh concession at the North Park Boathouse since 2006. At this location, stand up paddleboards, canoes, and pedal boats are available for rent in addition to multiple types of solo and tandem kayaks. KPNP is the largest of the rental concessions and also hosts many youth, public, and custom trips throughout the season.

Parking for this location is available in the boathouse parking lot directly outside the concession. In the summer, the lot can get very crowded quickly, especially on weekends. If you arrive and cannot find a spot, there is overflow parking along Tennis Courts Rd as well as in the lot across Pearce Mill Road. Additionally, throughout the season, the lot will occasionally be closed for races being held in the park. If this is the case, parking will only be available along Pearce Mill Road or in the overflow lot until the race has concluded. A supervisor or manager will notify staff of these dates in advance.

Kayak Pittsburgh Sharpsburg - 1301 Main Street, Pittsburgh PA 15215

Kayak Pittsburgh Sharpsburg is located at James Sharp Landing in the Borough of Sharpsburg. We have operated a concession there since 2022. This location only rents solo, tandem, and sit on top kayaks. It is operated out of 3 shipping containers and, like North Park, hosts many trips throughout the summer.

Due to limited space in the James Sharp Landing parking lot, staff working KPSB should park in the neighborhood across the street from the entrance to the area. Parking is free, but staff should be sure to not park on a street with signs that say “Residential Permit Required.” Participants can park in the parking lot as long as they avoid the side reserved for boat trailers only.

Hours (subject to change)

Below are Kayak Pittsburgh’s operating hours. These are the same at both locations. Sharpsburg is only open on weekends for 2024. The last boats for the day go out an hour before closing. So for example, if the concessions close at 7:00 PM on Mondays, the last boats will go out at 6:00 PM and the system will not let reservations be made after that time (reservations arriving 5-10 minutes late can be set out at the discretion of the supervisor on duty).

North Park and Downtown (2024):

Monday: 1-7
Tuesday: CLOSED
Wednesday: CLOSED
Thursday: 1-7
Friday: 1-7
Saturday: 11-5
Sunday: 11-5

Sharpsburg (2024)

Monday – Thursday: CLOSED

Friday: 4-7

Saturday: 9:30-3

Sunday: 9:30-3

Staff shifts at North Park will begin 1 hour prior to opening. Sharpsburg shifts will begin 45 minutes before opening. The difference is due to the amount of setup involved in operating the concessions. Shifts will cover the entirety of operating hours (unless discussed with the Assistant Manager), and end 30 to 45 minutes after close unless cleanup is finished before that.

Age Restrictions

Age restrictions for rentals are listed below. If you are unsure about any situation involving ages, please ask your supervisor.

- < 35lbs: Can NOT go out on the water
- 35lbs-12 years old: MUST be in the same boat (tandem/canoe/pedalboat) as a parent/guardian. Parent/guardian must fill out and sign the waiver for minor participants.
- 13 – 15 years old: May be in an individual boat or SUP, but a parent/guardian MUST be on the water with them. Parent/guardian still must fill out and sign waiver for minor participants.
- 16-17 years old: Participant may go out on water alone, but parent/guardian must sign waiver BEFORE participant gets on water.
- 18 years and older: Must fill out and sign a Risk Waiver before going on the water.

Weight Restrictions

Weight limits for the watercraft are listed below. Larger and taller individuals (even within the weight limit) can become top heavy and more likely to tip in some solo kayaks. To prevent this, tandem kayaks are able to be used as solo kayaks for larger individuals if needed. If you are ever unsure about sending a participant out in a certain type of watercraft or how to have that conversation with a participant, please talk to your supervisor.

- Solo kayak - 325 lbs
- Intermediate Solo: 300lbs
- Sit on top Solo: 275 lbs
- Tandem kayak - 575 lbs
- Sit on Top Tandem: 500 lbs
- Pedal boat - 740 lbs (spread evenly; the MAX capacity for a pedal boat is 2 adults and 2 children)
- SUP - 300 lbs
- Canoe - 750 lbs

- Canoe Catamaran: 1500 lbs

Pet Policy

Kayak Pittsburgh allows pets to be on the water in kayaks, canoes, and pedal boats (NOT on stand-up paddleboards). We strongly encourage participants to supply a PFD for their pet. A handful of pet PFDs are available at each location, but we cannot guarantee a proper fit for the pet.

Prices (subject to change)

Solo Kayak	\$22/hr / \$18/hr @SB
Tandem Kayak	\$31/hr / \$28/hr @SB
SUP*	\$23/hr
Pedalboat**	\$38/hr
Canoe**	\$28/hr
Canoe Catamaran*	\$46/hr
Sit on Top Solo*	\$24/hr
Sit on Top Tandem*	\$34/hr
Intermediate Solo*	\$24/hr

*North Park and DT only

** North Park only

Reservations are made online and charged by the hour. Half hour rentals are not available, and any time added on to a rental must be in hour increments. It is uncommon for customers to want to extend their reservation as they arrive, but it does occur. If this happens, the change needs to be made BEFORE they get on the water, and if you are ever adding time to a rental, remember to make sure that boat is not reserved by someone else during that time.

Memberships, Passes, and Discounts

In addition to other benefits, a Venture Outdoors membership gets Kayak Pittsburgh customers \$5 off their first hour for every rental. If you encounter a member who did not apply the discount on their reservation, entering their email in the promo code section of the reservation in Fare Harbor will apply the discount. The member code is the same for all members.

Kayak Pittsburgh also offers Season Passes. Season Pass holders pay for the pass at the beginning of the season and are able to utilize the pass by making a reservation at any location throughout the summer. If purchased after the start of the season, the pass is valid for a calendar year. Season Pass holders should not be charged for any rental if they make their reservation correctly. The unique code for each season pass is the user's phone number. If they made a reservation and were charged, entering their phone number will apply the discount (remember to initiate a refund in these instances).

Gift cards for Kayak Pittsburgh are available for purchase in the same way reservations are made. This page can also be accessed by clicking on the "Become a Season Pass Holder and Purchase Gift Cards" link on the Kayak Pittsburgh homepage on the Venture Outdoors website.

Kayak Pittsburgh does not offer any military or senior discounts. Management will alert staff to various discount codes that are applicable throughout the season.

Kayak Pittsburgh employees are given 5 free hour rentals to use throughout the season and 25% off Venture Outdoors programs. The codes for these will be distributed to you during the season.

Supervisor Responsibilities

Communication between staff members

The Kayak Pittsburgh Site Supervisor is responsible for the daily management of Venture Outdoors' kayak, canoe and stand-up paddleboard rental concessions. This position manages the day-to-day business operations including customer service, staff oversight, evaluation of all rental activities, helping to ensure that the concessions provide an excellent experience for all customers and continue to be a noteworthy addition to the Pittsburgh community. Working in cooperation with other Venture Outdoors staff, the site supervisor fulfills Kayak Pittsburgh's goals and objectives as part of Venture Outdoors' overall mission.

Supervisors report directly to the Assistant Manager, but will work closely with all Paddlesports management throughout the season to ensure the concessions are running as smoothly as possible. As one of the main lines of communication between the managers and the attendants, communication with all parties is imperative as a supervisor. Individuals in this role should be able to clearly communicate needs, expectations, and operation standards with the attendants while being able to relay updates and action items that will improve operations to the managers. Establishing an individual communication plan at the beginning of the season (preference between text or email, etc) can be beneficial to all parties involved.

In addition to the all-staff meetings, the supervisors will jointly meet with management (either virtually or in person) to discuss the state of the rental concessions as well as any upcoming items of importance.

Supervisors are also responsible for initiating the disciplinary process for an attendant if necessary. If a supervisor believes this process needs to be started for any reason (behavior, repeated tardiness, etc.), notify the Manager and Assistant Manager and they will work to make sure the issues are eliminated. More about the discipline policy can be found in the Scheduling, Attendance, and Discipline section.

Customer Service

Customer service is key to a successful operation of Kayak Pittsburgh. Supervisors are the main point of contact between customers and upper management. Because of this, it is imperative supervisors become knowledgeable with all aspects of the operation. They should also present themselves as eager to assist with any customer inquiries (in-person, on the phone, etc.) While Kayak Pittsburgh customers are often with us for only an hour or so, their experience can be enhanced with quality customer service from both supervisors and attendants. Helpful employees with a positive attitude can turn someone kayaking for the first time into a repeat customer.

Media/PR

If contacted by an external source, no employee, other than the CEO, Director of Marketing, or a specified designee, may be a spokesperson for Venture Outdoors or Kayak Pittsburgh. **Refer all calls and walk-up media to the Paddlesports Director. In the case of an emergency, refer any press requests to the Venture Outdoors office.**

Opening and Closing

On operating days, supervisors will be responsible for the opening and closing of the rental concession. Kayak Pittsburgh Attendants will assist with these tasks, but the supervisor is the first to arrive at the concession to begin organizing the setup. This section provides a general description. Location-specific opening and closing instructions are in a later section.

The first thing the supervisor will do upon arriving is unlock everything. Keys will be located in a key box somewhere around the concession. Supervisors will receive codes to the key box and all necessary combination locks. These codes are *not* to be shared out to attendants or anyone else (unless they are KP Excursionists or Outdoor Educators). If any locks or keys appear to be nearing the end of their functionality, fill out a broken equipment form and let a manager know as soon as possible.

Supervisors will also prepare the concession technology for the day. This includes logging into FareHarbor on the laptops, setting up the iPads for Smartwaiver, and ensuring the phone is

plugged in and ready to receive calls. Supervisors will receive all necessary login information for the technology as well as the applications running on them.

After logging into Flybook, supervisors should take a look at the daily rentals. This number will most likely increase as the day goes on, but the number of reservations already in the system will be a good baseline for how many boats to bring down to start the day. Supervisors can assist attendants with the other opening duties after completing these tasks.

For closing the concession, supervisors must first make sure *all* participants are off the water and that all watercraft are ready to be cleaned and stored for the evening. They will then assist attendants in storing all materials (PFDs, boats, paddles, etc) and ensure everything is put away in the proper spot.

Supervisors are also responsible for shutting down and locking up all technology used for the day. Please make sure no technology is left out in the open at the end of the day. If a laptop or iPad is charging overnight, make sure it is stored in a secure spot and out of sight.

As the closing tasks are completed, the supervisors will dismiss the attendants for the day. Make sure to remind them to clock out on the ADP app before they leave. When all closing tasks are completed, the supervisor will begin to lock up the concession. Make sure all combination locks are locked and *spin the numbers away from the code*. Lock up the main building and then return the keys to the key box. Lock the key box and *spin the numbers away from the code*. Clock out and leave the concession.

Financials

Supervisors are responsible for handling the daily finances of the concessions. Kayak Pittsburgh currently operates on a card only basis. This means supervisors can expect to scan card information into the FareHarbor system for individual reservations using the handheld devices connected to the laptops. Any group reservation inquiries should be directed to a manager. If we choose to begin accepting cash again, we will brief staff on these protocols.

Employee Breaks

The Pennsylvania Child Labor Act states "No minor may be employed for more than five hours continuously without an interval of at least 30 minutes for a rest break. No period of less than 30 minutes shall be deemed to interrupt a continuous period of work." A minor, as defined in the Pennsylvania Child Labor Act, is an individual under 18 years of age. If you fall into this category, you must take a 30 minute break if your shift is longer than 5 hours. Supervisors will double check that everyone who needs to take a break is doing so. *Make sure you are clocking out for your break.*

Attendant Responsibilities

Communication

In order to successfully operate Kayak Pittsburgh concessions throughout the season, all parties should be in frequent communication with each other. This helps keep everyone on the same page and keeps problems from arising. Attendants can help with this by always having updated availability in the WhenIWork app (covered below) to ensure no scheduling mishaps arise. Additionally, attending the biweekly staff meetings is important as well. If you are available when these are scheduled, please attend. We will cover any important news and upcoming events. This is also a time to raise any questions, comments, and concerns. The managers might not always see things like the attendants do, so it is important to speak up if you think something needs to be fixed.

While working at the concession, attendants should communicate with the supervisor on duty as well as other attendants to ensure that the concession is running smoothly and that everyone is rotating between stations throughout the day.

Customer Service

Attendants will be interacting with customers wherever they are stationed throughout the day. It is important to appear helpful and knowledgeable. Working with customers (especially beginners) in a friendly and calm manner can help elevate customers' enjoyment and lead them to want to return again. If you are ever unsure about anything during an interaction with a customer, reach out to another attendant or supervisor for help.

Concession Upkeep

Attendants will assist with opening and closing duties each shift. Throughout the day, attendants should be making sure all aspects of the concession remain presentable. When customer traffic is slow, attendants should be making sure that the boats on land are clean and sponged out. They also work on returned PFDs (loosening straps) and paddles (spray clean) so they can be put back into use. At the end of the day, make sure everything is stored in its proper place. If any equipment appears broken, notify a supervisor and fill out a broken equipment form.

Technology

Attendants will also be responsible for operating the technology throughout their shift. This includes managing FareHarbor reservations, waivers on the iPad, and answering the phone. Tips for using this technology are included in a section below and will be covered in detail at the Technology Training.

Dockside Attendants

The attendant role at Kayak Pittsburgh locations is divided into two specific roles: dockside attendant and desk attendant. **Both positions are also allowed to work the other one, but due to the rate difference, please ensure your time card has the hours coded correctly.** Dockside attendants are responsible for management of the launch and the watercraft throughout the day. This will involve preparing the necessary watercraft and having them ready for customers, managing arriving and departing customers, ensuring the dock is safely operated, and providing any necessary on-water assistance to paddlers.

The dockside attendants will be required to be rescue trained prior to beginning the position. Supervisors can assist in any rescue/assistance process if available, but the dockside attendants will be responsible for noticing if any help is needed.

Dockside attendants should **not** be stationed at the dock for the entirety of the shift. It can be a strenuous job that definitely requires a break. When not working at the dock, these attendants will instead be stationed at the customer staging area providing safety talks and ensuring PFDs are properly fitted before customers depart for the water.

Boathouse Attendants

Attendants not working the dock will be stationed at the desk to assist arriving and departing customers with check in and check out as well as any other general inquiries. They will closely monitor the FareHarbor system and relay important information to other staff stations about the daily operations. They will be responsible for making any reservations for any walk ups that are not doing so on their phone.

Desk attendants should alternate stations throughout the day. When not at the desk, they should be at the customer staging area giving safety talks and ensuring PFDs are properly fitted before customers depart for the water.

General Employee Responsibilities

Timecards

All non-exempt employees (Attendants/ Supervisors/Excursionists) must record time worked by clocking in and clocking out at the beginning and end of each shift in the ADP App (navigating this app is covered in a section below). Misreporting or over-reporting time worked may be grounds for immediate termination of employment. Employees are unable to alter their punches if there has been a mistake; all changes or corrections must be reported with the Missed Punch Form. QR Codes for this are available at all concessions.

Employees will normally be paid on the fifteenth and last day of the month. If a payday occurs on a Saturday, Sunday, or Holiday, employees will be paid on the last working day prior to the regular payday.

Employees are strongly encouraged to have their paychecks deposited directly to the financial institution of their choice. This avoids delays in receipt of wages and saves the organization additional expenses related to payroll processing. Please reference the Venture Outdoors Employee Handbook for more information on this topic or contact the Kayak Pittsburgh Manager.

Dress Code

All employees will receive multiple Kayak Pittsburgh shirts upon hiring. Rehires are permitted to wear shirts from past seasons. The dress code is as follows:

- Clean Kayak Pittsburgh staff shirt. NO alterations are to be made to your shirt. No exceptions.
- Shorts/jeans/capris/cotton pants/etc. that you are ok with getting slightly dirty/wet. Must be work appropriate. NO holes, rips, etc. No exceptions.
- All employees must wear heel secured footwear. Flip flops are not allowed due to the potential of injury completing work related tasks.
- Hats (ballcaps, sun hats, etc) may be worn and are recommended on hot and sunny days. Must be appropriate.

Employees are also advised to bring sunscreen and a reusable water bottle if available. Water bottles can be refilled using the water cooler on site. Bottled water is also available on site, but this is for customers only, not for continual use by staff. Please only use/refill one plastic bottle throughout the day if you did not bring a reusable bottle.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Venture Outdoors values the ideals of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the workplace and strives to create an environment in which all employees feel welcome and respected. All employees must review and sign the Venture Outdoors Staff Equity Statement before starting work for the season.

Open Door Policy

Venture Outdoors and Kayak Pittsburgh are committed to being accessible not only to customers and the community but also to our valued team members. As such we encourage open, honest, and above all respectful communication among the staff. Please feel empowered to speak with any staff about disagreements, issues of disrespect or exclusivity.

If a solution cannot be reached, or there is a larger issue or concern, we encourage team members to speak with their immediate supervisor. Managers remain completely accessible to the team to address any issues or concerns not addressed or more immediate.

Scheduling, Attendance, and Discipline

Schedule Publishing

The Assistant Manager will regularly publish the schedule two weeks in advance for two weeks at a time. A few days prior to the publishing, an email will be sent to staff members reminding them to set their availability in the WhenIWork app and to make sure all requests for time off for the dates of that schedule are submitted before the schedule is published. It is important to complete these tasks before the schedule is published to minimize the appearance of scheduling conflicts.

When I Work App

Venture Outdoors uses the app WhenIWork for all part time/seasonal scheduling. After being hired and successfully added to the payroll system, you will be added to WhenIWork. You will then receive an email that walks you through setting up your profile in the app. This app allows you to see your upcoming schedule, set future availability, pick up and drop shifts, and request time off. These actions are discussed below.

Setting Availability

It is important that all employees set availability preferences in WhenIWork and update them as frequently as possible. Not only does this make scheduling easier, but it ensures that you will not be scheduled on a day you cannot work. Instructions on how to set availability will be discussed in the Technology Training. When setting availability, you are able to make preferences repeat throughout the week/month/season if needed. Attendants will be scheduled for an average of 20-30 hours per week while supervisors can expect to be scheduled for 25-35 hours per week. If you would like to work more or less than the average, set your preferences to reflect that as much as possible and let the Assistant Manager know. As long as you do not go over 40 hours in a work week (Venture Outdoors' work week is from Saturday to Friday), the Assistant Manager will work to honor your request.

When setting availability, it is important to keep the terminology in mind. Using the *I Prefer to Work* setting means you would like to work during those hours. It is not guaranteed that you will be scheduled for the entirety of those hours, but the Assistant Manager will know they can schedule you during this time. It is also possible you could be scheduled outside of those hours if no other availability preferences are created on that day. To ensure you are not scheduled when you cannot work, use the *I'm Unavailable to Work* setting and enter the time you cannot work. ***If***

you do not have any preferences listed on a certain day, the Assistant Manager will assume you are available to work and could potentially schedule you. Please remember to update your preferences as often as you can throughout the season.

Any one-off days you are unavailable (dentist appointment, other commitment, etc) should be submitted as a request for time off. Availability preferences are used to help set a regular schedule. For example, if you have a class on Wednesdays from 12-4, you would set an availability preference making you unavailable during those times. If you have a birthday party to attend on a Saturday or a weeklong family vacation, that needs to be submitted as a request for time off instead of an “unavailable” availability preference.

Dropping/Swapping Shifts and Open Shifts

If for any reason you know you are unable to work a shift you are scheduled for, you can drop that shift and another employee could potentially help you out. ***You are responsible for any shift you drop until it is claimed by someone else.***

To drop a shift, click on the shift in the WhenIWork app and tap “Drop Shift” at the bottom of the description. You will be prompted to select who you are dropping the shift to. If you have already found someone to take the shift, you can drop it to only them and only that employee can pick. If you offer the dropped shift to everyone, once the shift is posted, other employees are able to see it and are able to pick up the shift.

Shifts can also be swapped. If you decide to swap shifts with another employee, scroll to the bottom of the shift description and select “Swap Shift.” Select who you are swapping the shift with and that employee will complete a similar process to complete the swap.

Occasionally, Open Shifts will appear on the schedule. These shifts can be picked up by anyone that can see them on their schedule. These shifts are usually extra attendant shifts or apprentice shifts for any upcoming KP Excursionist trips. You are welcome to pick up as many open shifts you would like as long as you do not exceed 40 hours in a work week.

Requesting Off

Requests for time off need to be submitted for anything that is not covered by a regular availability preference. Doctors appointments, vacations, family commitments, etc. will need to have requests for time off submitted through the WhenIWork app. These requests are almost always granted if they are submitted well in advance of the date. Please make sure to submit requests for time off as soon as you know you will be unable to work.

Attendance and Tardiness

Attending work regularly is a basic expectation of employment. Excessive and unscheduled absences disrupt business operations and often cause undue hardship on coworkers who then have to assume additional tasks. If you know you are unable to attend a shift, alert your supervisor and the Assistant Manager as soon as possible and initiate a drop shift request on WhenIWork to see if anyone else is able to take your shift.

Employees are expected to be present at their assigned work location and ready to begin work at the start of their scheduled work shift. If they are not, they are considered tardy. Supervisors will monitor attendance and address each incident of tardiness with the employee. If necessary, they will notify the Kayak Pittsburgh Manager and Assistant Manager if further action needs to be taken.

Discipline

The following is the disciplinary action process used at Venture Outdoors/Kayak Pittsburgh. Venture Outdoors operates in an at will state and is not required to follow this process step by step. The organization has the right to discharge an employee at any time with or without warning. Reference the Venture Outdoors Handbook for more information.

- **Oral warning** - Initial disciplinary action should be in the form of an oral discussion and warning. This meeting should be documented using a Disciplinary Action Form (see the form document attachment) and will be kept in the employee's personnel file. Oral warnings will be issued for things such as a "no call, no show" to a scheduled shift, arriving late for a shift without notifying the Site Supervisor or Assistant Manager, or behavior incidents, etc.
- **Written warning** - A written reprimand may be issued to an employee who does not correct his/her misconduct(s) in response to an oral warning. The purpose of a written reprimand is to make certain that the employee is fully aware of their misconduct. The employee should sign the reprimand signifying it has been received. Should the employee decline to sign, it should be noted. The employee will receive a copy of the warning and the original will be kept in the employee's personnel file.
- **Final written warning with probation** - A final written reprimand incorporating a probationary period of 1 week may be issued to an employee who fails to respond positively to previous sanctions including oral and written warnings. The purpose of the final written warning is to make certain the employee understands the seriousness of the misconduct and that further misconduct will most likely result in dismissal. The employee should sign the reprimand signifying it has been received. Should the employee decline to sign, it should be so noted. The employee will receive a copy of the warning and the original will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

- **Discharge** – An employee will be immediately discharged from his/ her position if he/ she continues to not respond to the above warnings.

ADP - Our Payroll App

Getting Started on the App

After submitting your hiring packet, getting entered into the organization’s payroll is the next step in beginning training for work at Kayak Pittsburgh. Once you are in the system, the Manager or Assistant Manager will notify you and you can then create your account on ADP to clock in and out as well as track your hours.

Clocking In and Out

Clocking in and out is the main thing you will be using the ADP app for. As you arrive at the concession at the beginning of the shift, open the app and log in. The main screen will show a “Start Work” button. Click that to clock in. At the end of your shift, before you leave, open the app again and tap on the “End Work” button. This will end your shift for the day. You are only able to clock in and out *at* Kayak Pittsburgh concessions. If you forget to clock out at the end of the day, reference the next section. Procedures for clocking in and out will also be covered in Technology Training.

Forgetting to Clock In/Out

If you ever forget to clock in or out (or clock in/out too early or late), please fill out the Missed Punch Form since you cannot alter this on the app by yourself. QR codes for that link are visible at all locations. Prior to each payday, management will ensure these hours are put in your timecard

Approving Your Timecard

Prior to the pay period ending, all employees are required to approve their timecard in the app. To do this, access your timecard in the Myself > Timecard section of the app. You will then click “Approve timesheet.” A reminder to do this will be sent to you as the pay period comes to a close.

Getting Paid

Venture Outdoors and Kayak Pittsburgh employees are paid on a bi-monthly basis (paid on the 15th and last day of the month). If a payday occurs on a Saturday, Sunday, or Holiday, employees will be paid on the last working day prior to the regular payday.

Employees are strongly encouraged to have their paychecks deposited directly to the financial institution of their choice. This avoids delays in receipt of wages and saves the organization additional expenses related to payroll processing. Please reference the Venture Outdoors Employee Handbook for more information on this topic or contact the Kayak Pittsburgh Manager.

If you ever notice any issues with your paycheck, please contact the Kayak Pittsburgh Manager immediately.

FareHarbor (Online Reservation System) and Other Technology

Kayak Pittsburgh uses a reservation system called FareHarbor for both daily rental operations and group bookings. It is the responsibility of staff to keep track of the system throughout the day. The sections below explain the main functions of the system that staff will be working with as well as other technology used throughout the day. All of these will be covered in depth in the technology training.

Checking Reservations In and Out

All watercraft reservations must be checked in and out of the system. When a customer arrives to head out on the water, click on the reservation and select “check in.”

Make sure to check in all parts of the reservation AND double check that *everyone* going out on the water has a waiver filled out. Not all waivers link to a reservation - if the customer’s waiver is not appearing in the reservation, search SmartWaiver to make sure they have filled out a waiver in the past.

Select the reservation and click “check out” when they return. Make sure everyone returning is checked back in before leaving the concession.

Checking Availability

To get a view of daily availability, click on the “Bookings” tab on the top of the screen. This will show all resources and all times available. It will show two numbers in each time slot: how many watercraft are currently reserved, and how many are available. You can use the “Filter” feature to sort by time, watercraft, etc.

Making a Reservation

Kayak Pittsburgh strongly encourages reservations to be made in advance. Even if a customer “walks up,” their information still needs to be entered as a reservation in the system. If a customer arrives without a reservation, they can make one using their phone (a QR code that

directs to the reservation page on the Venture Outdoors website is available for scanning at each location). While staff should not always be making the reservation for customers, if the concession is not busy, it will be a lot quicker to make the reservation and take payment on the concession laptop.

To create a new reservation, first make sure the watercraft is available for the desired time by checking the “Bookings” calendar. Click on the correct time slot and select “New Booking.” You can then enter the required information on that page to complete the information. Payment should be taken *before* the customer’s reservation begins. **If you are creating the reservation for a customer, make sure they fill out the waiver before they get their materials.**

To change the date or time of a reservation, find the reservation in the Manifest and select “rebook” once you click on the reservation. This will allow you to select a different date and or time.

For all watercraft, no matter what time a reservation occurs, there is a 15 minute gap between each reservation. This acts as a buffer for customers returning late and to give staff time to prep the boat to be used again.

Sending Waivers or Confirmation Emails

If a staff member makes a reservation for a future date, they should send a confirmation email to the customer. To do this, click on the reservation details and select “send email/text.” You can then select “confirmation” and send the email. You are able to add a custom message as well.

If a customer would like to fill out a waiver on their phone instead of the kiosk, there is a QR code they can scan to complete the process. **If a customer fills out a waiver once during the season, they do not need to fill one out again if they return.**

Taking Payments and Making Refunds

Every reservation must be paid for before a customer goes out on the water. If a customer has made the reservation online beforehand, they will have paid for the reservation during that process. If the reservation is made by staff at the concession, or if a reservation is being altered, payment will need to be collected. When making the reservation, the field to enter card information will be on the right side of the screen. If you are taking additional payment for any reason, you can click on the reservation in the Manifest, and select “add payment.”

Full refunds are issued **ONLY** if a reservation is cancelled due to rain, or if a customer contacts KP to cancel the reservation **prior to 24 hours before** the reservation occurs. Additionally, if a reservation is altered (weekend to weekday rate, fewer watercraft being rented, shorter rental

time, etc), a refund can be issued to correct the payment. Customers are prompted to agree to the cancellation policy as they make their reservation.

To issue a refund, select the refund option in the reservation screen. You can then make either a full or partial refund. Always be sure to make a note in the note section about why a refund was given (weather, cancellation, etc) and note the date and the staff member completing the refund. If you are ever unsure about anything involving payment or refunds, make sure to ask your supervisor.

Customers can also cancel their own order if it is more than 24 hours before their reservation. In this case, staff will not have to do anything on their end; the customer will be refunded in the form of the gift card and the reservation will disappear from the manifest.

Smartwaiver System

Every Venture Outdoors participant must sign a waiver before their trip, group outing, or rental. Only those under 18 can have someone else sign the waiver for them (must be a parent/guardian). Waivers for Kayak Pittsburgh customers are signed digitally either through the link on the confirmation email or on the iPads at the concession. These waivers are collected into a system called Smartwaiver. Every completed waiver is searchable on the Smartwaiver if you log in on the laptop. If a waiver does not link to the reservation, search the customer's name in the system to make sure it has been completed. Customers that complete the waiver once in the season do not have to complete it again at any location. You can link the completed waiver to the reservation in Flybook, but this is not necessary.

If a customer is completing a waiver on-site, make sure they fill out the *entire* waiver with correct information and see the prompt to see a staff member pop up on the screen. This means the waiver is complete and they can continue with their rental. If a customer is prompted to wait for an email confirmation to complete their waiver but the waiver is already showing up in the system, this step is not necessary.

Paper waivers are available at each location for KP Excursionist trips or for customers who would rather complete the waiver on paper, but these should not be used unless absolutely necessary.

KP Phone

Staff members are required to tend to the phone during operating hours. The Kayak Pittsburgh phone number is the same for both locations. If you pick up the phone and the person on the other end needs to speak to the other location, you are able to transfer them using the extension of the other location. The most common phone calls concern operating hours, making and altering reservations, or general questions about the operation. Most of these can be answered by the automated greeting that the customer is prompted to listen to as soon as the call is placed. A phone cheat sheet has been developed that lists answers to common questions and is placed on

the front desk at both locations. If you are unsure of the answer to a question, ask your supervisor and let the person on the line know you are conferring with a supervisor to get the correct answer.

In the event of an on-water emergency, the PFDs have a safety card with a phone number on them. If this number is called it will ring on ALL KP phones and display “EMERGENCY” as the caller ID. Any staff member that sees this call come in should pick up the phone immediately and get all the details from the customer. They should stay on the line with the customer as a solution to the problem is found, whether this includes sending a safety boat out, or simply instructing the customer how to deal with the issue at hand. If someone uses this number to call with something that is not an emergency, please politely but firmly explain that this line needs to remain open and they should call the normal KP number with their inquiry. .

Daily Operations - North Park

This section discusses the general operations of the North Park concession. These details will be discussed further during the staff walkthrough.

Opening the Concession

Supervisors will arrive at the concession 45 minutes before opening. They will then unlock the boathouse (front, back, and side doors) using the keys in the key box by the back door of the boathouse. The codes for the key box and boat bay lock will be distributed at the beginning of the season and could potentially change throughout the summer - ONLY Supervisors and KP Excursionists are allowed to have these codes; they should not be distributed to the attendants under any circumstances. The supervisor should then remove the chains from the dock and if the dock is dirty, sweep it with the broom in the boat bay.

After getting everything opened up, the supervisor should set up the technology (iPads for waivers and computers for checking in customers) and check Flybook for the schedule of reservations. While the reservation numbers could increase throughout the day, checking the numbers early will help give an estimate for how many boats need to be brought down from the boat bay. The supervisor(s) will then assist the attendants with the rest of the set up for getting the concession ready to operate (PFDs and paddles, carrying boats, dressing the leader boat, etc).

Setting up the Watercraft

Solo kayaks, tandem kayaks, canoes, and SUPs will all need to be carried out of the boat bay to the water. This should be done before the concession opens. The number of boats brought down

should be based on reservations for the day, but the fact that reservation numbers almost always increase throughout the day should be considered as well.

Solo kayaks will be carried to the edge of the grass by the dock and stacked no more than three boats high. When they are needed for use, they will need to be carried to the dock.

Most tandem kayaks can be stored in the water. All North Park tandems have a clip on the front of the kayak that can be clipped to screw eyes located along the walkway of the dock (on the right side) or the string that runs along the side of the dock (left side). On very busy days, more tandems will be needed than available clips in the water. Some tandems can be placed on the grass with the solos and carried to the dock when needed.

Canoes are stored in the boat bay above the solo and tandem racks. Make sure multiple people are involved in bringing each canoe down as it is dangerous to do alone. Canoes are not launched on the dock, but along the sidewalk on the edge of the lake to the right of the dock. This area also has clips in the water the canoes can be clipped into.

SUPs are launched on the far side of the dock walkway. Use the velcro ankle strap on the paddleboards to attach them to the dock pylons in that area.

The pedal boats are stored (and locked) overnight on the right side of the dock walkway. Before opening, they will need to be moved away from the dock to make more room for tandems. They can be clipped into the sidewalk a few feet to the left of the dock.

Customer Flow

Ensuring that customers flow smoothly throughout the concession is key to a successful operation. Customers will begin their experience by checking in at the front desk and heading through the boathouse to the PFD area. They will then receive and put on their PFD. After the PFD fit is checked, they will make their way to the paddles where they will receive a paddle and a safety talk. They are now ready to head down the ramp to the dock. Customers should wait at the “stop” sign placed by the dock until their boats are prepped and ready to board. Once the boats are ready, customers can step onto the dock (any customer on the dock is **REQUIRED** to have their PFD on and zipped) and board their boat.

When the customers return, they will head off the dock and turn left to head up the hill. Paddles and PFDs will be returned to the racks by the boat bay. They will then check out with a staff member (using the iPad) and can then depart the concession.

Employee Stations

Throughout the day, you can expect to work at different stations of the operation based on what attendant role you are. They are described below

- Front desk (one or two staff) - Here you will be using the laptop to check in reservations and assist prospective customers on making a reservation, etc. You will also be responsible for answering the desk phone
- PFDs (one staff) - Distributing PFDs to everyone going out on the water. As you give out more PFDs, restock the rack with returned PFDs or grab more from the PFD room in the boathouse. Before sending customers over to paddle talks, make sure the PFD is being worn properly.
- Paddles (one staff) - Giving the appropriate paddles to the customers and administering the paddle/safety talk before telling customers they can head to the dock
- Dock (two or three staff) - Pushing out and pulling in all kayaks, launching other watercraft, and making sure customer flow is not presenting a safety issue; cleaning returning watercraft
- Floater (one staff) - If all other stations are staffed, the floater can move between stations based on where help is needed

If there is ever a lull in reservations going out, make sure watercraft are cleaned and prepare used jackets and paddles to be used again.

Programs

Throughout the season, you might encounter guided trips going out on the water during operating hours. These could be trips led by volunteer trip leaders, Outdoor Educators, or KP Excursionists. The managers and supervisors will be made aware of these trips before they happen and relay this information to you on the day of the trip. The boats will be reserved in the system so there should not be any supply issues.

As an attendant or supervisor, you are **not** responsible for the trips' boats or participants - these are the responsibility of the trip leaders. You are more than welcome to help them get set up *only if business is slow*, but bringing boats down, supplying PFDs and paddles, and cleaning up at the end is all up to those individuals leading the trip. If you encounter any trip leaders that are not doing a good job at this, notify the supervisor on duty or the Assistant Manager.

Closing

At the end of the day, make sure all watercraft are cleaned and sponged out (if applicable) before being carried up to the boat bay. Once all watercraft are properly stored in the bay, make sure the SUPs are locked up and then lock the entire boat bay. The pedal boat should be locked up and

the chains to close the dock should be put in place.

The PFDs should have all the straps loosened and then stored in the PFD room or on the rack in the boathouse lobby. Make sure all PFDs are stored on the correct racks with the same type and size jacket. All paddles should be returned to the proper locations. All cleaning materials should be stored properly in the boathouse. If used, return the tent and the umbrellas to the paddle room. The paddle buckets and chains for directing the customers should be collected and put away. If ANY equipment is broken or has an issue with it, make sure to flag it with the bright colored tape

The supervisor will collect all technology and lock it in the technology drawer in the supervisor's office. After locking the technology drawer, spin the numbers so the combination is not showing. If an iPad or laptop needs to be charged, make sure it is out of sight and in a secure area. Supervisors will also dismiss attendants when they feel their services are no longer needed for the day.

The supervisor will then retrieve the keys from the key box, lock up the boathouse (front, back, *and* side doors), and depart for the evening.

A closing checklist will be made available during the season.

Daily Operations - Sharpsburg

This section discusses the general operations of the Sharpsburg concession. This operation is not as intensive as North Park. It only has kayaks, and has a much lower volume than North Park. These details will be discussed further during the staff walkthrough.

Opening the Concession

Kayak Pittsburgh Sharpsburg operates out of four storage containers at the James Sharp Landing parking lot. Staff should park in the neighborhood across the street. Customers are allowed to park on the far side of the parking lot **ONLY**. Please ask any customers parking on the boat trailer side to move as the marina needs those spots.

Upon arrival, the supervisor will unlock the trailers. The first storage container has a combo lock while the remaining locks on the other trailers will be opened with keys found in the first trailer. The first trailer contains PFDs, paddles, and other materials required for concession operations. Staff will take the tent, bar mats (for the dock), PFD and paddle racks, and technology out of this trailer to set it up. The other three trailers house the boats. Tandems **MUST** be stored at the bottoms of the trailers with solos stacked on top of them.

Setting Up the Watercraft

Boats will be brought out of the trailers and taken down to the dock. Make sure to bring solos out first to make room to safely move the tandems. Boats can be placed on the dock ramp with solos going on one side and tandems on the other. Make sure the leader boat is easily accessible.

Customer Flow

Customers will check in at the desk under the tent. They will then walk behind the tent to receive a PFD, paddle, and safety talk. They will then be instructed to walk down to the dock. Upon return, customers will return to the station they received their material and staff will collect the equipment.

Employee Stations

Throughout the day, you can expect to work at different stations of the operation based on what attendant position you are. They are described below

- Front desk (one staff) - Here you will be using the laptop to check in reservations and assist prospective customers on making a reservation, etc. You will also be responsible for answering the desk phone
- PFDs (one staff) - Distributing PFDs to everyone going out on the water. As you give out more PFDs, restock the rack with returned PFDs or grab more from the trailer. Before sending customers over to paddle talks, make sure the PFD is being worn properly.
- Paddles (one staff - sometimes the job of PFD person as well) - Giving the appropriate paddles to the customers and administering the paddle/safety talk before telling customers they can head to the dock
- Dock (one or two staff) - Pushing out and pulling in all kayaks, launching other watercraft, and making sure customer flow is not presenting a safety issue; cleaning returning watercraft

Programs

Throughout the season, you might encounter guided trips going out on the water during operating hours. These could be trips led by volunteer trip leaders, Outdoor Educators, or KP Excursionists. The managers and supervisors will be made aware of these trips before they happen and relay this information to you on the day of the trip. The boats will be reserved in the system so there should not be any supply issues.

As an attendant or supervisor, you are **not** responsible for the trips' boats or participants - these are the responsibility of the trip leaders. You are more than welcome to help them get set up *only if business is slow*, but bringing boats down, supplying PFDs and paddles, and cleaning up at the end is all up to those individuals leading the trip. If you encounter any trip leaders that are not doing a good job at this, notify the supervisor on duty or the Assistant Manager.

Closing

At the end of the day, make sure all watercraft are cleaned and sponged out (if applicable) before being carried up to the trailers. Once all watercraft are properly stored in trailers, make sure to lock all the trailers.

The PFDs should have all the straps loosened and then stored in the trailer. Make sure all PFDs are stored on the correct racks with the same type and size jacket. All paddles should be returned to the rack. All cleaning materials should be stored properly in the rear of the trailer. If used, Return the tent and dock chairs to the trailer. If ANY equipment is broken or has an issue with it, make sure to flag it with the bright colored tape

All technology will be stored in the rear of the first trailer. Supervisors will dismiss attendants when they feel their services are no longer needed for the day.

The supervisor will then retrieve the keys from the trailer, lock up the final trailer, and depart for the evening.

A closing checklist will be made available during the season.

Daily Operations - Downtown

This section will be updated as more information about our Downtown operations become available!

PFD/Paddle Talks and Other Safety Protocols

Getting Customers the Right PFD

All Kayak Pittsburgh customers are **required** to have their PFD (personal floatation device) on *and* zipped up at all times on the water. When customers arrive at the PFD area, the employee stationed there will distribute PFDs. Make sure the participant receives a PFD that can be tightened and have a snug fit. The jackets are somewhat large and do not directly reflect a participant's shirt size. The majority of adults will receive a PFD sized Adult Small/X-Small or Medium/Large. (Larger individuals will receive the XL/XXL size while smaller adults can use the Youth Large/Adult Extra Small size.) Children will either receive the infant size, the youth size, or the Youth Large/Adult Extra Small. The weight recommendations for the PFDs are below.

Jacket Size (Brand)	Weight Recommendations
Infant/Small Child (Stohlquist)	30-50lbs
Youth (MTI/Mustang Survival)	50-90lbs
Youth L/Adult XS (Stohlquist)	75-125lbs
Adult XS/S (MTI)	80+lbs
Adult M/L (MTI)	80+lbs
Adult XL/XXL (MTI)	80+lbs
Adult Universal	90+lbs

Most average sized adults will use a X-Small/Small PFD. Taller individuals or those with a larger chest circumference will need larger sized jackets. If you are unsure what size is needed, do not ask the participant their weight. Instead, give them one size and if that does not work, try another one. As long as they are strapped in and snug, they can use that PFD.

When distributing PFDs, make sure to instruct customers to clip the buckle at the bottom and zip the main zipper. After that, there are three adjustable straps on *each* side that need to be tightened. Sometimes, this is easier with a buddy. After the side straps are tightened, there are two shoulder straps that the participant will pull down. *To make sure a PFD is on properly, ask the participant to stick their thumbs under their shoulder straps and pull up. If the jacket does not come above their ears it is on correctly.*

After customers have properly put on their PFD, they can continue the rental process. It is the responsibility of *all* employees to make sure PFDs are on properly, not just the person at the PFD station. Employees at each station should be double checking that PFDs are on correctly.

All adult PFDs come with an orange safety whistle in one of the pockets. These whistles should **ONLY** be blown in emergencies. Employees should advise customers to blow the whistle as loud as they can *three* times if they are in distress on the water.

PFDs are not *waterproof*! While the pockets on the vest are splash/water resistant, they are not waterproof. If customers are hesitant about taking something valuable on the water, advise them to leave it on land.

Lake Rules (North Park)

Kayak Pittsburgh customers need to adhere to *all* rules of the lake. Failure to do so can result in the termination of their rental. For the North Park location, the rules for the lake are as follows. Make sure to cover all of these rules (as well as any other tips you want to add) in the paddle talk.

- Always have your PFD on and zipped
- No drugs/alcohol
- Avoid spillway and buoys - At the end of the lake by the Babcock Blvd and Pearce Mill Road intersection, there is a spillway (how the lake drains). Going over this could result in serious injury or death. The spillway is marked off by buoys. Every paddle talk should cover the spillway. Customers are allowed to travel around the entirety of the rest of the lake, but they need to steer clear of both the spillway itself and the buoys. If they do so, they will not feel any effects from the spillway.
- Beware of submerged or floating debris - Especially after storms, debris such as tree trunks or branches will be floating in the lake. It is important to remind customers to not only avoid what they can see, but to avoid the area *around* any debris as you can't be sure of how big it is under the water
- Stay clear of people fishing - North Park Lake is a popular spot for fishing and it is quite common for people to fish from the sides. Kayakers need to make sure they are keeping a safe distance from anyone fishing so that they do not paddle through any fishing line.
- Keep to the middle - The sides of the lake are much shallower than the middle and usually have more overgrowth (lakeweed, lily pads, etc.) To avoid running aground or having to paddle through mucky areas, it is best for kayakers to keep closer to the middle
- Always stay seated in your boat - Standing or attempting to switch spots in the boat is incredibly dangerous. If customers absolutely must switch spots, make sure they return to the dock to do this. Additionally, customers are not allowed to dock the boat at any location except the Kayak Pittsburgh Dock.
- Do not bring anything back with you - This is generally directed towards children, but make sure customers do not bring back any flowers, plants, etc. The only exception to this rule is trash.
- Respect wildlife - Keep a safe distance from and do not harass any wildlife encountered on the lake.

River Rules (Downtown)

- Always wear your PFD
- No drugs/alcohol
- Paddle close to shore - Under no circumstances should customers be hanging out in the middle of the river. If they are not crossing the river, they need to keep to the side of the river. Keeping between the first pylon of all the bridges and the shore of the river will be

the easiest paddling experience. Customers should also be mindful of the shore of the river since it will be more shallow.

- Cross quickly - Customers are allowed to cross to the other side of the river. However, they need to be extremely careful while doing it. Remind them to do it as quickly as possible, cross in a straight line, and to double check there are no other boats anywhere nearby when they begin crossing. If boat traffic on a certain day is extensive, a supervisor can prohibit crossing and make paddlers only paddle on the side of the dock.
- Watch for wakes - If a large boat goes by and creates a wake, customers should attempt to hit the wake head on. If the boat is parallel to the wake, it will rock more and could possibly capsize.
- Be mindful of boats, bridges, and debris - Kayakers on the river can expect to encounter other watercraft during their rental. Barges, motorized boats, and jet skis all frequent the river. Kayaks **NEVER** have the right of way. Because of this, it is important to keep to the side and stay out of the way of any other moving watercraft. Additionally, customers need to be mindful of the bridges; they should steer clear of any pylons in the water. Any debris on the water should be avoided as well as the space around it because the size of the debris under the water is unknown.
- Do not bring anything back with you - This is generally directed towards children, but make sure customers do not bring back any flowers, plants, etc. The only exception to this rule is trash.
- Respect wildlife - Keep a safe distance from and do not harass any wildlife encountered on the lake.

River Rules (Sharpsburg)

- Always wear your PFD
- No drugs/alcohol
- Paddle close to shore - Under no circumstances should customers be hanging out in the middle of the river. Customers should also be mindful of the shore of the river since it will be more shallow. Barges travel through the middle of the river so customers need to be made aware of the dangers of paddling in the middle.
- NO CROSSING - Because of the barges and other motor traffic, no customers are allowed to cross the river. They must keep to the side of the concession.
- AVOID THE DAM - The Highland Park Dam is located about a mile down river. This is a federally restricted water area and customers must avoid this at all costs. Not only is it incredibly dangerous, but customers can be fined for being in this area. Upon reaching the end of Sixmile Island, customers should turn around and head back downriver.
- Avoid Sixmile Island - The island upriver from the launch is Sixmile Island. It is private property and kayakers should avoid it as it is considered trespassing to dock on the island.

- Avoid the Marina - Sharpsburg Islands Marina is directly downstream from the launch. **Customers paddling by must be aware of boats entering and exiting the marina as well as parked boats. When paddling by, customers should give a 50ft berth to the parked boats at the marina.**
- Watch for wakes - If a large boat goes by and creates a wake, customers should attempt to hit the wake head on. If the boat is parallel to the wake, it will rock more and could possibly capsize.
- Be mindful of boats, bridges, and debris - Kayakers on the river can expect to encounter other watercraft during their rental. Barges, motorized boats, and jet skis all frequent the river. Kayaks **NEVER** have the right of way. Because of this, it is important to keep to the side and stay out of the way of any other moving watercraft. Additionally, customers need to be mindful of the bridges; they should steer clear of any pylons in the water. Any debris on the water should be avoided as well as the space around it because the size of the debris under the water is unknown.
- Do not bring anything back with you - This is generally directed towards children, but make sure customers do not bring back any flowers, plants, etc. The only exception to this rule is trash.
- Respect wildlife - Keep a safe distance from and do not harass any wildlife encountered on the lake.

Paddle Talk

After receiving and properly putting on their PFD, customers will be directed to a station where they acquire a paddle and get a paddle/safety talk. There are three lengths of paddle. About 95% of paddlers will receive a paddle with the red band around the shaft. Taller paddlers can receive a paddle with a blue band and shorter paddlers can get one with a green band. Half kayak paddles are available for small children. Canoe paddles are all roughly the same size. For SUPs, most customers will get a green SUP paddle, but smaller black SUP paddles are available.

It is important to make sure *everyone* going out on the water receives the *entirety* of the paddle talk (paddle talks are allowed to be shortened for season pass holders, frequent repeat customers, staff ,etc). Some customers may think because they are a strong swimmer or have kayaked elsewhere in the past that they do not have to hear the safety talk, however this is incorrect as each kayaking location has rules and hazards that customers need to be aware of.

The paddle talk will cover both how to operate the specific watercraft and the rules and tips for the lake or river. Multiple people or groups can receive the paddle talk at one time. If a large group is going out on the water, it may be best to give a paddle talk to everyone in a spot that is away from the flow of the concession.

Begin the paddle talk by introducing yourself and asking the customer(s) if they have previously used the watercraft they are renting and if they have been to Kayak Pittsburgh before. If they have and feel comfortable with operating the watercraft, you do not have to explain the details of how to paddle/operate the rental. If they are not familiar with how to operate the watercraft or need a refresher, you will then begin explaining how to use the type of paddle (if applicable) and other tips for using the watercraft. Below is what should be covered for each specific paddle talk.

- Kayak
 - *Holding the paddle* - Arms should be about shoulder width apart and the AquaBound logo with the sun should *always* be facing the customer and be right side up (“sunny side up”). If a customer has one of the few paddles that is not AquaBound, the slight curve in the blade of the paddle should be curving towards behind them.
 - *Paddling* - The forward and backward strokes are going to be what the customer does about 95% of the time. To go forward, think “feet to seat.” Dip the paddle in by your feet in the boat and pull the paddle to your seat. To go backwards, think “seat to feet.” Put the paddle in by your seat and push the paddle away to your feet.
 - *Turning and stopping* - paddle on the opposite side of the direction you want to turn - if you want to turn to the right, *only* paddle on the left and vice versa. To stop, simply stop paddling or dip your paddle in the water on alternate sides to slow you down.
 - *Boat adjustments* - Make sure to mention that inside of the boat, there are foot pegs that can be adjusted to provide a little more stability and balance for the kayaker. Additionally, remind the kayakers about the safety whistle in their PFD as well as the protocol for inclement weather. Let them know the procedures for heading out from and returning to the dock.
- Canoe and Canoe Catamarans -
 - *Holding the paddle* - Paddling a canoe paddle is very similar to a kayak, however, there is only one paddle face. To hold a paddle, one hand will be placed on the top handle while the other hand is placed on the shaft.
 - *Paddling* - Paddlers will be alternating the side they stick the paddle in to go straight. Forward is still “feet to seat” and backwards is “seat to feet.” Turning and stopping are the same as well.
 - *Getting in the boat* - Some paddlers find canoes a little more wobbly than kayaks. Customers will board the canoe on the side of the walkway, not on the dock. An attendant will steady the boat while one person boards at a time - feel free to lend a hand if necessary. Paddlers must both face forward. If a child is sitting in the middle, make sure they are sitting on the floor and not the wooden support in the middle of the boat. Additionally, remind the canoers about the safety whistle in their PFD as well as the protocol for inclement weather.

- *Steering the canoe -*
 - Front paddler paddles straight (feet to seat)
 - The front paddler can assist a turn by paddling in a wide arc "sweeping" water toward the canoe behind the front paddler's seat. This will help the boat to swing away from the side on which the front paddler is paddling.
 - Rear paddler rotates paddle so upper hand thumb is up to the sky, places paddle in the water and angles it away from the rear of the boat. This will cause the paddle to function as a rudder and pull the front of the canoe toward the side which the rudder is placed, [SHOWN BELOW] or
 - Rear paddler paddles in a wide arc away from the boat "sweeping" water toward the rear of the canoe. This will cause the front of the boat to swing away from the side on which the rear paddler is paddling.
 - The rear paddle can also easily be used as a rudder on the opposite side of the boat, which will swing the boat toward the rudder side.



Paddlingmag.com

- Pedalboat (NP only) - Pedalboats do not require a paddle. To move forward, customers will pedal forward. To move backwards, they will pedal backwards. To turn, they will use the steering wheel in the middle of the boat. Make sure to caution customers that the boat does not have a wide turning radius, so turning might require a lot of space. Additionally, remind the boaters about the safety whistle in their PFD as well as the protocol for inclement weather. Let them know the procedures for getting in the boat and returning to the launch point.
- SUP
 - *Holding the paddle -* The SUP paddle is basically a cross between a kayak paddle and a canoe paddle. Only has one face, but it is somewhat curved like a kayak paddle. Unlike the kayak paddle, the customer will always want the AquaBound logo facing out from them. To hold the paddle correctly, they will place one hand on the top handle of the paddle and one hand in the middle of the shaft.

- *Paddling* - “Feet to seat” to go forward and “seat to feet” to go backwards. Remind them to alternate what side they paddle on so they do not end up going in a circle.
- *Turning and stopping* - To turn, paddle on the opposite side of the direction you want to turn. To stop, either stop paddling or dip the paddle in the water and that will slow you down.
- *Boarding the SUP* - When boarding the SUP, customers will head to the end of the dock and start out by sitting on the dock. They will then twist their body and put the outside leg on the far side of the board. Then, they will bring the rest of their body onto the board to start out *on their knees*. It is important they start out on their knees *and remain in that position for at least 15 to 20 feet away from the dock* so that they would not hit the dock or anything in the water if they were to fall when attempting to stand up. Additionally, remind the paddlers about the safety whistle in their PFD as well as the protocol for inclement weather. Let them know the procedures for getting in the boat and returning to the launch point.

After the customer understands how to operate the watercraft safely, you can go over the rules of the river or lake (from the section above). Be sure to add anything you think is necessary. Remember to double check the customer is properly wearing their PFD.

Leader Boat

A leader boat should be dressed and on standby for all operating hours at every location. (Leader boats are different from rental kayaks in that they are longer and narrower to move through the water faster. They are stored separate from rental kayaks.) Leader boats will be used by supervisors (or paddle trained attendants) if a patron ever needs assistance on the water. They can be placed so as to not be in the way of general operations as long as they are close to the launch. When dressing a leader boat, make sure a tow rope, first aid kit, and bilge pump are included. Throw bags are optional. Reference the diagram in the appendix to see how to properly dress a leader boat.

Incident Reports and First Aid

Venture Outdoors and Kayak Pittsburgh employees are required to fill out detailed incident reports anytime an incident happens in the office, on a trip, or at a rental concession. Incident examples include (but are not limited to) a customer getting injured and requiring first aid, a staff member getting hurt on the job, participants capsizing in the water, or anytime a leader boat needs to be used on the water to provide assistance. After the incident occurs, *every staff member involved* in the incident will fill out their own version of the form. QR Codes with links to the virtual form can be found at each location. Complete the form within 24 hours. If more information is needed, the Manager or Assistant Manager will reach out. If you are ever unsure

about whether or not something qualifies as an incident, ask your supervisor or fill out the form just in case.

All Supervisors and KP Excursionists are required to complete First Aid and CPR training (offered multiple times through the year). First aid kits are available at each location. It is the job of the Site Supervisors to notify the managers when kit supplies need replenished - either communicate this directly or fill out a broken equipment form to make it known replacement items are needed. If there is ever an instance where a staff member or customer needs first aid administered, follow the protocols taught in the course. **ONLY** staff who are certified in first aid and CPR can provide assistance. If the injury is serious, *call 911 first*. If the incident is on the water, use 911 to contact river rescue, not the office number.

Protocol for all on-water incidents/rescues/capsizes will be covered in paddle training required by supervisors and KP Excursionists.

Alcohol and Tobacco Policy

No alcohol is permitted while utilizing Kayak Pittsburgh boats. If an employee sees a participant consume alcohol or appear intoxicated, the participant will not be allowed to rent kayaks under any circumstances. Additionally tobacco products and vapes of any kind are not allowed to be used on Kayak Pittsburgh watercraft or in the confines of any Kayak Pittsburgh location. Employees noticing a customer using these products should ask them to stop. If they do not comply, they will be denied participation

Denial of Participation

In some rare situations, a Site Supervisor may have to deny participation to a customer. The site supervisor will have to decide whether the customer will pose a safety risk to him or herself or to others on the water. This determination will need to be made prior to sending the customer out on the water.

Some reasons for participation denial are as follows:

- Intoxication
- Disrespectful behavior to staff or other customers
- Age requirement not met
- Weight restrictions not met or exceeded
- Failure to comply with *any* rules, regulations, or protocols put in place by Kayak Pittsburgh or the governing organization of the body of water where the concession operates

It is the job of the supervisor on duty to make the final call on denial of participation. Supervisors considering a person for denial should talk to the person aside from their group and

try to establish as much background information as possible. For example, if they seem intoxicated, ask them if they were drinking alcohol earlier in the day and if so, how much. A kind yet rational approach is likely to be more successful compared to a more aggressive approach.

If your decision is not accepted by this individual, try having an attendant speak privately with the person. If the involved person still refuses to accept your decision, remember you cannot remove anyone from property open to the public. They must exit our operating area, but can still be on the Riverwalk, by the Boathouse area, etc. If a site supervisor has denied participation to someone, it is important that you advise the assistant manager or manager of the situation as soon as possible.

Damaged Equipment Policy

If you believe a participant should be charged for any damaged equipment, notify your supervisor or manager immediately and fill out a broken equipment form if necessary. More about the broken equipment form can be found below.

Pop-up Paddles

In addition to operating rental concessions, Venture Outdoors also hosts pop-up paddles throughout the summer. Pop-up paddles occur when some Kayak Pittsburgh staff travel to a different boat launch in Western Pennsylvania in an attempt to promote Venture Outdoors while providing access to outdoor recreation to the public in an area that may not always have this opportunity. Staff who work a pop-up can expect an operation similar to that of a concession, but there are some logistics that make it different from everyday rentals.

Getting to the Pop-up

On the day of the pop-up, the kayaks and other equipment will have to be transported to the location. A staff member who is trained to drive the vehicle *with the trailer* will leave from storage in the morning. Other staff are welcome to ride in the company vehicle with the driver or drive to the location on their own. Remember to log the miles of the trip on the sheet in the company vehicle. Information on the best route to take and trailer parking will be communicated to the staff prior to the event.

Different Launch Types

The pop-up location may have a boat launch that is different from the dock launches used at the concessions. If it is a concrete (motorized) boat ramp, this should not cause too many problems,

but staff will have to be vigilant if the boat ramp is being shared by boaters transporting their boats. If the launch is a natural shoreline of the river or lake, staff need to make sure any large rocks or debris are moved out of the way so they do not damage the boats as they slide over the area repeatedly. Lastly, if boats are being boarded in the water, staff need to be extra vigilant when helping participants in and out of boats. Dock information and how to best get customers in and out of boats will be shared before the pop-up.

Payment and Reservations

Pop-up paddles will operate on a hybrid system in which some reservations will be able to be made, but a walkup option will also be available.

Setup/closing and Technology

The setup of a pop-up will closely resemble a rental concession. There will be a check in desk where the technology is situated. Customers will then check in and head to the area where PFDs are distributed and then get their paddles. After that, they will head to the dock/ramp/etc. When setting up for the day, the different stations should be placed so there is a smooth flow of customers walking through the area.

It is likely that most pop-up locations will not have access to wireless internet or electricity. The internet connection will be accessed through a wireless hotspot. ONLY Kayak Pittsburgh technology should be connected to the hotspot as speeds will drop if a large number of devices connect to it. All technology should be fully charged before departing for the location. If anything needs to be charged during the pop-up, use the portable chargers.

When closing down the pop-up, make sure all materials are as dry as possible before loading them into the trailer. The kayaks and other equipment should be reloaded into the trailer as they had previously been stored. Any broken equipment should be flagged and a broken equipment form should be completed.

KP Excursionists (Kayak Trip Leaders)

In addition to operating rental concessions, Kayak Pittsburgh and Venture Outdoors also offer various types of public kayak programming and group outings. These trips are led by volunteer trip leaders or KP Excursionists. Any KP staff member has the opportunity to become a KP Excursionist and lead trips throughout the season in addition to working shifts at the rental concession.

Becoming a KP Excursionist

Anyone interested in this position will have to complete both Kayak Trip Leader Training and Paddle Training before leading any trips. These trainings are offered multiple times throughout the year since volunteers and Outdoor Educators are also required to complete them.

Additionally, if you have not attained it, a first aid and CPR certification is required as is the Act 114 FBI Fingerprinting clearance.

Important Excursionist Terms

- Leader - any Excursionist on any trip. We no longer classify “leaders” and “assistants” on trips. If you are on a trip in an Excursionist role, you are responsible for the facilitation of the trip and the safety of participants for the duration of the trip. Excursionists can delegate certain roles to each leader, but one leader should not have more responsibilities than others.
- Lead - The Excursionist that stays with the front of the group and guides the direction of the trip. This can be one of the roles delegated before the trip begins. A Lead does not have to be far out in front of all the participants, but they should place themselves where they feel they can comfortably navigate the group. This role can be switched during the trip.
- Sweep - The Excursionist that stays at the back of the group. They are responsible for making sure the group as a whole keeps pace with the leader and that the group does not become too spread out. Communication between the lead and sweep is imperative as it helps ensure the participants are remaining safe and not struggling to keep up with the group.
- Ratio - The number of trip leaders required to be on the water per the number of participants. **Trips occurring the day have a one leader per six boats ratio while trips occurring at night have a one leader per five boats ratio.**
- IWINMEE - The general introduction used on all Venture Outdoors outings. This is discussed at length further down.

Excursionist Responsibilities

- Trainings - All Kayak Pittsburgh Excursionists will have to complete the training mentioned above prior to beginning work. Paddle Trainings and the Kayak Trip Leader Course will be held before the season starts (mid-May) and throughout the summer for those hired during the season.
 - As a reminder, Excursionists must have CPR/First Aid training completed and all of the clearances mentioned above acquired prior to their start as well. Venture Outdoors schedules CPR/First Aid trainings throughout the summer if you do not already hold this certification.

- Prior to leading trips as an Excursionist, you will also have to participate on trips as an Apprentice to get a feel for the structure and operations of trips.
- When I Work - All Kayak Pittsburgh staff are responsible for frequently updating their availability in our scheduling app, WhenIWork. Open Shifts for trips will also be posted here.
- Leading the Required Number of Trips - As a Kayak Pittsburgh Excursionist, you are responsible for leading **at least 4 trips a month**. Exceptions to this are possible; please reach out to Kayak Pittsburgh Management if you are not able to achieve this.
- Communication with Staff and Volunteers - Kayak Pittsburgh Excursionists should be able to quickly and thoroughly communicate with other Excursionists, Kayak Pittsburgh Staff, Kayak Pittsburgh Management, and Venture Outdoors Volunteers. Schedules, weather, and water conditions can change quickly. It is important that these changes can be communicated to you as an Excursionist, and you and your Excursionist team can act accordingly. Additionally, the inverse is just as important: you should be able to communicate changes in weather etc. to Kayak Pittsburgh Staff and Management so they can help you make a decision if necessary.
- Vehicle Operation - Kayak Pittsburgh Excursionists will be tasked with operating the company vehicles (truck with trailer or box truck) to transport equipment to various locations. This requires completion of safe driver training and trailer training (if applicable). These trainings will be available at the beginning of the season and as needed throughout the summer. Excursionists are also required to complete the Vehicle Use Form before departing for trips in any company vehicle.
- Scouting a Trip Site - Excursionists may occasionally be tasked with scouting a launch for a future trip or to update information we already have on that site. The final section in this handbook details how to do this.

Leading a Trip - Before Arrival

- **Emails** - Kayak Pittsburgh Management will distribute both a Trip Leader Update and an email to participants before your outing. The Trip Leader Update will include trip and participant info and any other pertinent info about the trip. You will also receive the participant email, which explains what to expect on the trip (FAQs, what to wear, etc.).
- **Roster** - The roster will be included in the Trip Leader Update. Make sure to check out how many participants to expect, and **make a note of how many participants will need to sign a waiver on site**.
- **Weather and Water Conditions** - You should review the forecast and water data (temperature/flow rate) before the trip. If there are any concerns about these, Kayak Pittsburgh Management will communicate these to you.

- **Scouting Info** - If you are unfamiliar with the location of the trip you are leading, be sure to reference the Scout Packet for the location. This will have valuable info about proposed trip routes, equipment at the site, and more
- **Communication with other Leaders** - If necessary, reach out to the other leaders on the trip to develop a plan.

Leading a Trip - Arrival

- **Assess Location Conditions** - Upon arrival, make sure to double check the conditions are still safe for a trip. Check the water temperature (if able to do so) and the flow rate (if applicable). Be sure to make note of any potential hazards in the area (debris on water/obstructions to launch/etc).
- **Discuss Plan with Co-Leaders** - Develop a plan with your co-leaders. Who will do the introductions? Paddle talk? On the water, who will lead, sweep, or be in the middle?
- **Prepare Materials**
- **PFDs and Paddles** - Set up PFDs and paddles according to how they are distributed at the location of your trip. Make sure you have enough out for all participants.
- **Leader boats/rescue materials** - Dress the leader boats with the appropriate rescue materials. Make sure all the materials are easily accessible in case of an emergency.
- **Applicable extras** - Remember to set up any other applicable materials. If it is a night paddle, you'll need lights on all the boats. The leaders should have headlamps.
- **Dock/Launch** - Assess the dock or launch area for your trip. Make sure it is clear of any debris as this could be a hazard for participant entry and could lead to damage of the boat.
- **Check-In**
 - **Roster and Waivers** - When checking participants in, utilize the roster and make sure everyone has signed a waiver. If they have not yet done so, allow them to complete it on their phone or a KP iPad.
 - **IWINMEE** - Complete the IWINMEE. The IWINMEE is the acronym of the introduction the Venture Outdoors uses to introduce the program to participants. It covers a plethora of important information that participants should know about the trip. This can begin after everyone is checked in and ready to go.
 - **Introduce yourselves** - Greet the participants. You can say your name, that you are a Kayak Pittsburgh Excursionist, and any other relevant info about your experience.
 - **“We are Venture Outdoors...”** - Here, you can tell the participants more about VO. Make sure to explain how the support participants are providing today helps us create outdoor experiences for others in the Southwest PA region.

- **Introduce Participants** - Have the participants introduce themselves. You can have them share their preferred pronouns or complete some type of icebreaker as well.
- **News from the Trail** - This is the time to share information on bathroom access, water, any weather updates, and a general plan for the route of the trip (you can cover this more in depth in the Paddle Talk).
- **Medical Information** - Share information on First Aid/CPR certifications, where First Aid kits are located, and ask participants to find a trip leader if they have any medical concerns.
- **Equipment** - Explain the equipment you'll be using on this trip (PFD, Paddle, dock, etc). You'll cover the PFD and paddle in more depth during the Paddle Talk.
- **Etiquette** - You'll close out the IWINMEE by going over proper etiquette and best practices for being on the water. This includes things like emergency protocol (whistles, etc), how to best avoid wildlife, and other tips and tricks for remaining safe and smart as a group.
- **Material Distribution** - After the IWINMEE, you'll give the participants PFDs and paddles. You can then start the paddle talk.
- **Paddle Talk** - Paddle talks vary by location, but they should all go over the proper fit of a PFD, proper paddle orientation, navigating the boat forwards and backwards, how to turn and stop, and location specific information about how to stay safe on the water.
- **Locking up Materials** - Make sure any excess materials are properly stored and locked up. You can also let participants know that they can store anything they do not want getting wet inside the locked building, trailer, or container. Lock up everything and head to the launch.
- **Launching – One trip leader must communicate with the on call staff to let them know the trip is launching** – contact information will be included in any pre-trip emails and this can be done through phone call or text. Most Kayak Pittsburgh locations utilize some sort of ramp launch where participants will board their boat and you will slide them into the water. When this is occurring, make sure participants steer clear of the launching area unless they are being launched. Here are some other tips for launching.
 - A trip leader will **always** be the first boat to enter the water. Have that leader paddle to a safe spot to meet up with the other participants as they are launched and instruct everyone to head over there upon being launched.
 - Instruct participants entering their boat to adjust their foot pegs for more stability. Their legs should be slightly bent.
 - Unless you have a wide space for launches, generally two boats *at most* should be launched at a time.

- Make sure to keep to the trip leader ratio in place as you are launching; as more participants enter the water, so should trip leaders.
- Once all participants have been launched, the final leader can board their boat and head to the rest of the group
- If you have to use a dock launch (when the boat is in the water before the participant enters), make sure to support the boat as much as possible as the participant gets in.

Leading a Trip - On the Water

- **Group Control** - Hopefully, participant introductions gave you a good idea of the experience of your group. This is important to understand as it will dictate how your group functions on the water. For example, if it is a group of mainly beginners, it will be best to keep the group somewhat close together, and you should closely monitor the paddling skill of participants to see if you can offer any assistance. If this is a leisurely paddle with a more advanced group, you can decide if you'd like to give them the liberty to space themselves out a little bit more.
 - No matter the experience of the paddlers, you need to make sure to limit the spread of the group. Paddlers can be spread out, but as a leader, it is your job to make sure the group remains between the sweep and lead, *and* close enough that leaders can act properly in event of an emergency.
 - “Paddle clinic”
- **Bailout Points** - Make a mental note of bailout points on the route you are taking (these are documented in the Scout Packets). Should an emergency arise, these are spots where the group can safely exit the water.
- **Emergencies** -
- **Keeping Track of Time** - It is important to keep track of time on the water since you need to make sure the group returns to the dock before the scheduled end time. Generally, you can divide the trip into two halves (“heading out” and “heading back”) while giving slightly more time to the “heading back” portion as customers might be tired as they paddle back to the dock. It is also important to communicate to both other Excursionists as well as participants the timing structure of the trip.
- **Breaks** - Depending on the type of trip, breaks should be taken occasionally. When taking a break, be sure that *everyone* gets a break. A “break” should not be simply waiting for the slower paddlers to catch up to the rest of the group; leaders should give them time for a break as well once they regroup with the other participants.
- **Returning to Launch** - You should communicate the procedures for returning to the dock before beginning the process. Explain to the participants that one of the leaders will be the first person to return to the dock and will then direct the participants to follow. If using a ramp launch, remind the participants to build up some momentum when paddling towards the dock to make the process easier. If using a dock launch, provide assistance to

those exiting the watercraft. Only 1-2 paddlers should be disembarking at a time. At least one other leader needs to stay on the water until *all* participants are off the water.

Leading a Trip - Off the Water

- **Closing out the trip - Once everyone is off the water, a trip leader must let the on call staff know they have returned.** You can then debrief as a group and notify participants of other upcoming Venture Outdoors trips they might have interest in. Thank them for coming and then begin to collect their materials.
- **Cleaning up Equipment** - All equipment should be returned to where you found it. If PFDs or other equipment is wet, make sure to hang that out to dry (if using a mobile fleet, jackets can be hung to dry when returning the trailer). **If any equipment breaks or needs maintenance during the trip, please fill out an Equipment Maintenance Form.**
- **Cleaning up Boats** - All boats should be sponged out and as dry as possible before being returned to where they are stored. If light mounts were used, make sure to remove these before storing the boats.
- **Locking up and Departing** - Make sure all materials are properly stored, any lights are turned off, and the dock is closed off (North Park only). Then, lock any doors, boat storage, or trailers. You can then depart the location.

Leading a Trip - Post-Trip

- **Paperwork** - One leader from the trip will fill out the Custom Trip Report at the end of the trip – **this is also paid time!** Trip reports must be completed within three days of the trip and management will reach out to the leaders if a report is not completed. The link to this report will always be included in the Trip Leader Update email. **If an incident report needs to be completed, all leaders must complete one *within 24 hours of the incident.***
- **Feedback** - If you feel the need to share any additional feedback not included in the Trip Report, you can do so with Kayak Pittsburgh Management

Scouting a Trip Site

Occasionally, an Excursionist might be asked to scout a launch where a trip has not previously been led. There are certain things to look for when scouting a trip site and these can be found in the collection of scout packets given to excursionists.

Weather and Other Closures

Weather Policy

Kayak Pittsburgh customers are allowed to kayak in light rain. However, if there are incoming storms or lightning and/or thunder are detected, every watercraft needs to get off the water immediately and rentals about to go out should be held back on land. Customers on the water should head back to the dock; if this becomes impossible due to storm conditions, they should paddle to land and pull the boat to shore, exit the water, and take shelter. This information should be covered in every paddle talk.

Weather Closing Procedures

Thunder and/or lightning delay the operation by 30 minutes. Any time either are detected by a staff member, it becomes a new 30 minutes. If storms continue to linger, the managers will be in contact with the supervisors to develop a plan for operating the rest of the day.

If the concession is to remain open, the supervisor will make a decision on how many staff members are needed for the rest of the day. Chances are, even if the weather clears up, the concession will not be extremely busy. It might be the case that not all of the staff needs to work the rest of the day.

Staff should make sure to bring all PFDs inside to keep them from getting wet. If you are able to do so, flip the top boat on any stack of boats to prevent water from getting inside any of the kayaks.

If it is determined that the concession should close for inclement weather, the rest of the day's reservation will have to be notified by phone call and/or email and text and refunds will have to be issued. Staff should close up the concession as soon as it is safe to do so. The "closed for weather" sign should be displayed on the entrance to the concession.

Other Environmental Closures

Kayak Pittsburgh will also close concessions because of other environmental factors. The most common ones involve the state of the river(s). Kayak Pittsburgh closes the Downtown locations when the flow rate of the river gets too high. Paddling on a river that is flowing quickly can become unsafe, especially for beginners. The managers will monitor the flow rate throughout the week and determine how KP should operate, but supervisors should always double check before opening. Up to date flow information can be found online at the NOAA data page for the

Sharpsburg Dam (upriver from Downtown). If you ever have any questions, reach out to the KP Manager. The flow rate guidelines are below.

27,000 cfs and below - normal operation

27,000-30,000 cfs - upstream from launch point ONLY (high potential for not operating at all)

30,000 cfs and above - KP is closed

Additionally, operations could close because of water temperatures. The water temperature must be **above 60 degrees** to operate. Supervisors will take the temperature of the water every day before opening. It is possible that Kayak Pittsburgh would close even if the water temperature is above 60 because it is also a requirement that **water and air temperatures must combine to be more than 120 degrees**. If the sum of these temperatures is below 120, it is too cold to operate as the risk for hypothermia from capsizing increases greatly.

Kayak Pittsburgh will also occasionally close due to extreme heat. This will be a decision made by management.

Wind and excessive debris can also sometimes cause issues on the water. If customers are noting high winds or large amounts of debris on the river are making it challenging to paddle, supervisors should consult with management to determine if closing (even temporarily) is necessary

Special Event Closures

Kayak Pittsburgh will occasionally have to not operate or close early for events that prevent people from kayaking safely on the waters around the concession. Some instances of this include heavy boat traffic on the river (common on the 4th of July and big name concerts at Heinz Field) and boating festivals on the river. If the concession ever needs to close because of something like this, management will update the staff.

Refunding for Closures

If a customer is not able to get on the water for their reservation, that reservation can be refunded *or* rescheduled for a time later in the day or a future date. Keep in mind, reservations attempting to kayak later in the day can only be moved to times that are available in the schedule. If a customer has a reservation that has to be cancelled due to weather and has not yet arrived at the concession, make sure to contact them and update them on the situation.

If a customer is on the water for half an hour or less, their trip can also be refunded or rescheduled. Any reservation with multiple hours can have the unused hours refunded.

Emergency Protocols

All Kayak Pittsburgh employees should familiarize themselves with the following emergency protocols.

General Emergency Response

- Assess the situation - Identify the type of emergency, which personnel need to be notified, and what actions need to be taken to protect guests and team members.
- Communicate
 - Notify the appropriate staff. When in doubt, assume the situation is more serious. It is easier to scale down a response than to scale up.
 - If you need to call 911 you will be asked
 - The address of the emergency
 - Your name
 - A call back phone number
 - Provide the cell number from which the call is made
 - Explain the situation to the dispatcher
 - Answer all questions asked by the dispatcher
 - Pass along all information given by the dispatcher
 - Take all actions advised by the dispatcher. They are specifically trained to coach response over the phone
- Respond Appropriately
 - If you are properly equipped and trained to handle a situation, please act. Otherwise, assist responders as needed.
 - Additional personnel from Venture Outdoors will be required to support emergency situations that develop at paddle sport events due to the staffing structure
- Follow up
 - Remain on scene to give a witness statement for the investigators.

Capsizes

If a participant capsizes just after launch:

- Dock staff should assist the swimmer to the ramp or ladder and check participant for injury

- Collect participants name and date of birth for incident report
- Retrieve boat/paddle and dump water; check for damage
- Re-launch participant if the participant is uninjured and willing to relaunch
 - Check PFD for damage and proper fit before re-launch
- Flag any broken materials if necessary
- Complete incident report

Hypothermic Treatment – coming soon!

Microsgression – coming soon!

Intoxicated Customer

If you have to deny participation to a customer due to intoxication:

- Prevent from launching, cite safety
- Notify local authorities if danger to themselves or others
- If found *on* watercraft, rescue boat to escort craft immediately to nearest bailout point
- Tow back to launch if applicable
- Determine how on-water intoxication occurred
- Notify authorities if necessary

Active Shooter/Violence

If a person enters a Kayak Pittsburgh location and begins using a firearm or other type of weapon or begins to do so in the area of a Kayak Pittsburgh location, try to recognize the following:

- Number of assailants
- Location and movement of assailants
- Number and type of weapon being used

Follow any evacuation procedures specific to the location and try to assist injured guests if they are mobile. If the scene is not safe, you are not to assist non-injured mobile persons until the scene has been cleared.

If all exits are obstructed, staff and guests should hide behind solid objects to provide protection from the assailants. Look for areas with lockable doors and turn out all the lights. Advise staff and guests to silence cellphones and remain quiet.

As a last resort, if the assailant is in your immediate area and you are unable to run or hide, take down the assailant by any means necessary.

When police arrive, they will first move to neutralize the threat (temporarily ignoring the injured or stranded). Listen to and obey all instructions while keeping hands visible and not making sudden movements toward police officers.

Notify KP Management and standby to deploy a secondary emergency procedure as directed. Follow the post-incident procedure and complete an incident report.

Fire

Small fires or fires contained to a small outdoor area can be extinguished with a bucket of water.

In the event of a fire inside a building or a large fire:

- Cordon off the area immediately
- Notify the supervisor
- The supervisor should call 911 and stay on the line until told to disconnect
- Notify KP Management and CEO

If fire extinguishers are present (or a water source if the fire is not chemical or electrical) use the PASS technique (pull, aim, squeeze, sweep) directed at the base of the fire. NOTE: team safety comes first; if it is not possible to safely contain the fire evacuate the area of participants and team members and wait for additional responders. Fires double in size every 60 seconds. Fire extinguishers will become ineffective against a large fire in the first few minutes. Treat injuries as needed and remain on scene to assist as needed. Complete incident report.

Power Loss

In the event of a power loss, operations can continue as long as practical. Reservation check in can be accomplished on mobile battery powered devices using a hot spot for connectivity.

Supervisors will coordinate additional resources to provide power to registration systems and phones to support operations. A designated call taker at a location not affected by the outage will be assigned to monitor concession and emergency call lines. Complete an incident report

Missing Boat

If a boat is found to be missing, notify the supervisor on duty. It must be immediately determined if participants are also missing. Phone calls should be placed to the participants of the missing craft and emergency contacts as needed to ascertain the craft's location.

If a boat is more than 20 minutes overdue and not visually accounted for or communicated with:

- Rescue boaters should be dispatched in the area to visually search for the missing craft
- Searchers can also be dispatched on bikes or by car along shoreside roadways to visually search for the craft
- Supervisors should notify KP management for boats missing for 20+ minutes

- Local search and rescue will be requested for assistance for boats missing for more than 50 minutes
- Notify CEO
- Complete an incident report

Missing Person

If someone approaches your position and reports a missing person keep them at your position. Immediately contact a supervisor and obtain the following information about the missing party:

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Hair color
- Swimsuit/shirt description
- Light/dark complexion
- Last known location
- With other people or not
- Favorite areas or activities
- Area where family had possessions located (Children can often be found around areas with which they are familiar)

It is imperative that you keep the reporting party with you until otherwise notified. Help keep them calm by reassuring them that we are doing everything we can to locate the missing party.

It is important to never guarantee we will find a missing party. It may be out of our control to locate a party and we risk litigation for committing to a goal that may not be met. Instead explain to the party that "...we are doing everything we can to locate [the missing person] ...” This is true.

Other team members should observe their areas for participants matching the given description. If a person fitting that description is in your area approach and ask them their name to determine if they are the party being sought. If so keep that party with you and reunite the parties.

If you are helping with the search never enter a bathroom or private area with only one participant. This risks accusation of inappropriate activity that cannot be challenged. When in doubt bring a supervisor or staff member with you while searching. For any persons missing more than 20 minutes Notify KP management. Complete an incident report,

Evacuate the Water

In the event the water needs to be evacuated of all KP watercraft (weather, threat of violence, etc):

- dock staff should notify all boaters to return to the dock
- Participants need to check out with desk staff to account for those returned
- A boat count should be taken to determine the number of boats on the water
- Participants identified as on the water can be called if phones are with them

- Rescue boaters can paddle to boaters on the water
- Only if conditions permit
 - Participants can be escorted back to the concession, or
 - Participants can be picked up by land-based vehicles operated by staff
- Locations of boats will be noted for later retrieval
- Paddles and PFDs should be removed from boats at a minimum to prevent unauthorized use

Severe Injury, Unconscious, or Cardiac Arrest

For participants on the water immediately perform the necessary rescue and move to the nearest bailout point accessible by emergency services. Adjust rescue as needed for participants with an injury preventing standard rescue. Then do the following:

- Enlist other staff, participants, or bystanders with personal watercraft as needed
- Immediately call the supervisor for assistance
- Call 911
- Notify KP management
- For participants encountering a cardiac arrest begin CPR care as needed
 - CPR trained individuals should switch the role of doing compressions every 2 minutes, or after 3 cycles of 30 compressions
- For participants encountering a severe injury begin treatment as needed

Employees not involved in patient treatment should support the scene. Suspend trip/operations immediately. At rental sites boats will be recovered and participants checked out. No new boats will be launched. For trips participants will be taken to shore and corralled during response.

During an incident like this, it is important to control the crowd that may be gathering around the incident.

- Keep onlookers at least 20 feet back from the scene
- Remove distressed employees to a location out of site
- Keep family/friends of the patient treated separate from scene and supported
- Only trained team members and first responders will administer care
- Bystanders may not have the level of training required to be helpful to a situation
- Media arriving should be kept at a distance and contained to a single location
- Follow the Post incident procedure

Seizure

If a participant suffers a seizure on the deck (anywhere on land):

- Provide cushion for the head
- Clear other items away
- Determine from friends/family if seizures are typical for this person
- Seizures are generally short in duration, 30 seconds to 1 minute
- If seizures are common for this person, simply awaiting it's end may suffice
 - Call 911 if the seizure does not end after 1 minute
- Call 911 if there is no history of seizures
- DO NOT place anything in the mouth or restrain the customer
- Complete an incident report

If a participant suffers a seizure on water:

- For a customer seizing in the water with a PFD on, keep their head above water until the seizure ends
- For a customer seizing in a boat, provide stability to the boat and protect the participants' head until the seizure ends
- If seizures are common for this person, simply awaiting it's end may suffice
 - Call 911 if the seizure does not end after 1 minute
- Call 911 if there is no history of seizures
- DO NOT place anything in the mouth or restrain the customer
- Notify KP management
- Complete an incident report

Lightning

No place outside is safe from lightening, some are safer than others. Enclosed modern buildings and metal topped vehicles are much safer than trees or on water craft in open water

- Paddlers on the water close to a launch site should immediately return to the dock
- Paddlers more than 3 minutes paddle from the dock or unable to return due to high wind should do the following
 - Paddle to the nearest shore line with the shortest trees possible
 - All should exit the boats and crouch on their PFDs 10 yards apart from other paddlers and tall objects (as much as possible)
 - Call the Kayak Pittsburgh site if rental customers
 - On-water trip leaders should decide whether the group has the capability to return to the launch point quickly or if waiting out the storm is more practical
 - Trip leaders and site supervisors should coordinate pick up of paddlers waiting out the storm on shorelines with vehicles
 - Paddles and PFDs should be returned with paddlers to the launch site
 - Watercraft can be recovered following the storm
 - An accurate account of the location of all paddlers and watercraft is essential to ensure all paddlers are moved to safety and watercraft recovered
 - For more reference:
https://www.weather.gov/media/owlie/backcountry_lightning.pdf

Wildlife Encounter

Please always instruct participants to stay away from wildlife, and especially keep participants clear of aggressive wildlife. Notify your supervisor of aggressive wildlife. Additionally, for any wildlife trapped (in a dumpster or garbage can for example) please notify your supervisor

The most commonly encounters are:

- Ground hogs
 - Ground Hogs, or wood chucks, can become tamer as the summer season progresses. They may even approach people's possessions to obtain food. If they do not leave when approached instruct participants to keep their distance
- Rabbits and Squirrels

- These animals are generally more afraid of you than you are of them. Keep your distance and if they do not leave when approached, instruct participants to keep their distance.
- Geese
 - Geese can quickly become aggressive and territorial. Do not approach an agitated goose as it may try to bite or attack you.
 - If a goose flies at you to attack run perpendicular to its flight.
- Snakes
 - Snakes are known to lie in sunny warm areas to gather heat.
 - If you observe a snake instruct guests to stay away from it and notify your supervisor. Do not attempt to grab the snake or allow any guest to do so.
 - Western PA is home to some poisonous snakes, such as Copper Heads. Usually black rat snakes appear. While they are not poisonous and generally not aggressive they will bite if agitated.
- Beavers
 - If you startle a beaver, it will most likely slap its tail hard on the surface of the water and dive. Chances are that it will reemerge within one or two minutes.
 - Beavers can slow their heart rate, so they are able to remain underwater for at least 15 minutes!
 - Clicking or growling sounds are generally defensive or agitation noises
 - Safely move away from the beaver if these sounds are present

General Post Incident Procedure

Following incidents investigations will be conducted. These investigations are used to determine the following:

- Summary of incident events
- Cause of the incident
- Effectiveness of response
- Provide recommendations to mitigate similar risks in the future

Team members involved will be interviewed as part of post incident investigations.

- Internal investigations completed by management and/or company insurance or legal representatives
- External investigations may be conducted by law enforcement, state and local authorities, insurance representatives, legal representatives, etc.

An incident response evaluation meeting will be held to help refine staff readiness and response

- Includes key team members involved in the incident
- Preparation and response procedures reviewed
- Areas of improvement explored

A separate critical stress management debriefing meeting may be held with professional counselors to help mitigate post-traumatic stress. **Team members are encouraged to contact their supervisor/manager if counseling is needed regardless of level of involvement in the incident**

- UPMC Re:Solve Crisis Network is available 24 hours daily free of charge
- 1-888-796-8226

Media Requests for information - All requests for interviews or information from media outlets must be forwarded to the Director of Communications and CEO. No other team members are authorized to provide information

- This extends to social media requests

News reports may be incorrect, negative, or exaggerate information - Notify supervisor or manager if news report is observed regarding an incident

Legal Requests for information - Team members who are contacted by attorneys or law firms regarding an incident must forward such request to their supervisor or manager. Supervisors and managers will forward all legal requests for information to the CEO.

Re-opening - Any assistance required from team members will be communicated by supervisors and managers. Team members will be notified of reopening status

Caring for the Equipment

Because they get used so much during the season, it is imperative that all equipment at Kayak Pittsburgh remains in the best shape possible. This section covers how to ensure that boats and other materials remain clean and in good working order for not only this season, but future seasons as well.

Caring for Boats

The most important thing to remember when carrying and moving kayaks and other watercraft is **DO NOT DRAG BOATS**. While it might seem easy to pick up one end of the boat and pull it to where it needs to go, this is incredibly damaging to the structure of the boat. Dragging the boat puts pressure on and wears away the hull of the boat; not only does this shorten the lifespan of the kayak, but repeated dragging makes it unsafe while in use. Boats should be moved by being picked up completely off the ground or by *sliding* (keeping the weight evenly distributed to the *bottom* of the boat) them on grass or the carpeted surface of the dock ramp (NOT bare concrete). Solo kayaks and SUPs could potentially be carried by one person, but every other watercraft should be carried by two people for the safety of employees and the protection of the watercraft. Do not carry more than three solos or two tandems at one time.

Monitoring the state of the dock is also important for the condition of the boats. Make sure there are never any rocks, nails, or anything sharp or hard sticking out around the area where boats are being launched and staged. Launching boats over these repeatedly could create a gouge in the boat that damages the hull and is expensive and time consuming to fix. Any issues with the dock should immediately be brought to the attention of a supervisor.

Boats should be put away as dry as possible at the end of the day. They should be sponged out and all debris should be cleaned out of them. When sponging a boat, make sure to check the front and back hatches as water often seeps into those areas. Additionally, boats that are stored on the side will become dirtier on the sides up under the cockpit. When sponging, make sure to check on this area as well. Boats should not only be sponged out at the end of the day; staff should make sure the boats remain in good condition and appearance throughout the day.

Cleaning PFDs

PFDs are used frequently throughout the summer and will need to be cleaned with PFD cleaner every so often. This cleaner makes the PFDs smell better and keeps them fresh throughout the summer. Each concession will have a spray pump that can be used to treat the PFDs. When cleaning, make sure to hit all parts of the PFD with the spray. This should be done at the beginning or in the middle of the day as they will need time to dry before being put away.

If PFDs are ever returned wet and do not have enough time to dry before the concession closes, do not hang them with the rest of the PFDs. Assemble one of the drying racks inside the building and hand the wet PFDs (unzipped) on the rack overnight to dry.

Cleaning Paddles

After each use, paddles should be sprayed with the Mr. Clean solution in the spray bottles and then wiped down with a shop towel.

The drip rings on the paddles should be monitored, if a drip ring appears to be leaving a black mark as it rubs against the boat, remove the drip rings from the paddle (cut with scissors). This issue is not something for which the boat needs to be immediately taken out of service, but fill out a broken equipment form to let the Equipment Manager know about it.

Broken Equipment Forms

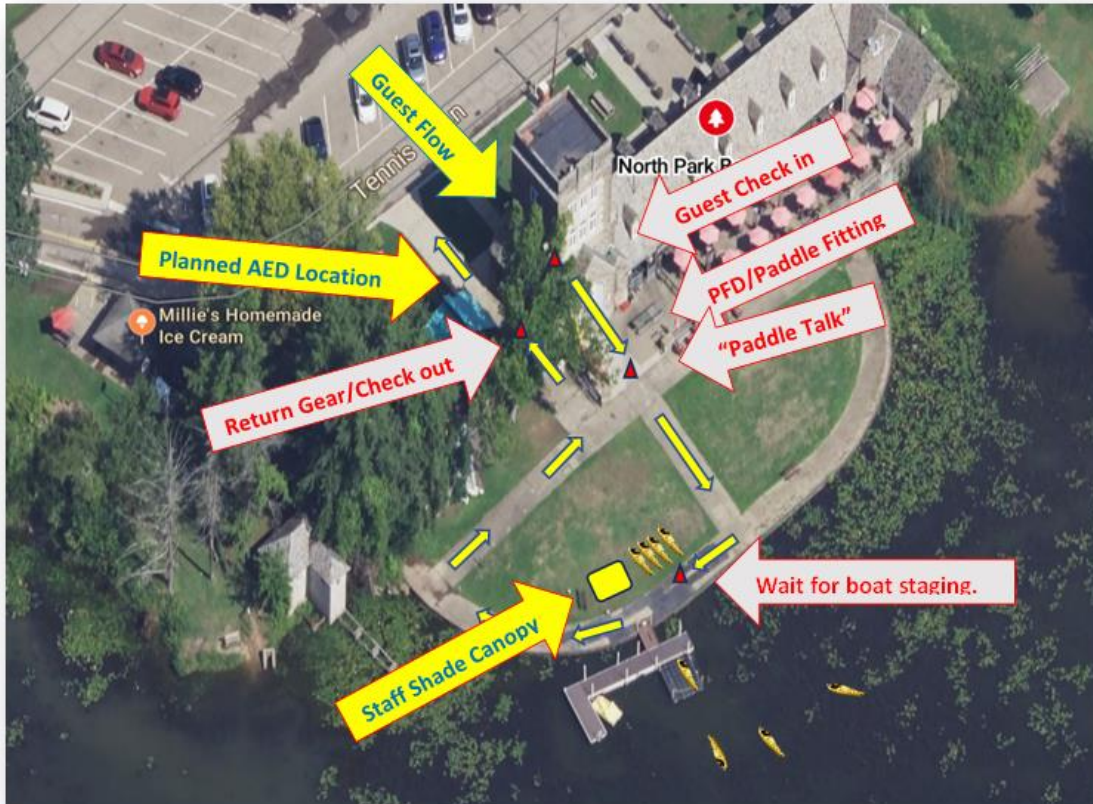
If any piece of equipment breaks or needs to be repaired in some way, that item should be flagged with the bright colored tape in the concession and taken out of service. Use a sharpie marker on the flag tape to describe the issue in one or two words. Make sure the flag tape is clearly displayed on the item so other staff do not accidentally put it back in service. After that, scan the QR code in the concession for the broken equipment form. This form is used to describe the issue to the Equipment Manager so they can better understand the issue and know what needs to be done to fix the item.

The form can be accessed at <https://ventureoutdoors.org/equipment-issues-report/>

An example of a properly flagged item can be found in the appendix.

Appendix

North Park Concession Flow Map



Venture Outdoors Staff Equity Statement

We commit to the equitable treatment of our colleagues, participants, and community members by valuing their rights, dignity, voice, and expression.

We welcome and respect the diversity of individuality such as race, sex, gender identity, ability, culture, and religion.

We recognize the human right for all individuals to be respected and accepted without bias.

We commit to an organizational responsibility to build individual and community respect, dignity, fairness, care, and equality.

We strive to understand the role our system plays in perpetuating exclusion, and to address the dynamics that support it.

We understand that accountability is mutual and reciprocal in order to continually learn and improve.

We believe that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion extends beyond the workplace and encourage all to continue personal development alongside the organization.

We require organizational staff and participants to encourage a culture of belonging and consider the entire experience and the ecosystem that supports it.

We will not tolerate explicit and implicit forms of racism, sexism, classism, xenophobia, ageism, and ableism.

We will not accept the use of racial or gender biases and require staff to implement inclusionary practices within their duties and program design.

Flagging a Broken Item

Video Links

[Playlist](#) - This is a link to the Kayak Pittsburgh training videos on YouTube. Here you will find a video about the mission of Venture Outdoors, a general orientation video about Kayak Pittsburgh, the 2021 Technology Training, and a concession orientation that, while geared towards volunteer trip leaders, will be helpful to new hires.