

Expedition Safety Concerns and Tips

Alcohol is the **#1 most dangerous** variable on many GC river trips. Folks should be as aware of this as they are about their PFD. Alcohol is the #1 leading cause of death and injury on river trips. Inebriation leads to poor coordination, poor body function(congestive heart failure, unbalanced electrolytes, low immunity, poor circulation, etc) and Judgement that can inversely affect the group in a big way. If there will be alcohol on your expedition, talk about what responsible drinking is **before** the trip.

Poor Health can impact a group inversely. The Grand Canyon is a harsh environment. Intense heat, freezing temperatures, swimming in cold water temperatures. Possibilities of fractures, cuts, open sores, foot rot, sprained ankles, sunburn, hyponatremia, dehydration, drowning, hypothermia, infection, septic, the list is endless. If an individual group member is not healthy going into the trip, that individual will no doubt be very unhealthy throughout the trip. A "Do It Yourself" trip is a working vacation. If any one possible member of the group is not a functioning "Do It Yourselfer", or HEALTHY, DO NOT invite them. They will not have fun, and the liability will ruin everyone's trip. Mental health should also be taken into consideration. Extreme personalities will amplify on an expedition.

Medical Experience is a must! Starting from First Aid, anatomy, advanced First Aid, WFR, EMT, Emergency Responder, RN, Doctor. A Good Trip Leader has some type of medical experience or training. Emergency Responders like firemen, paramedics are priceless members of an expedition.

Trip Leader. For any expedition, a group must be able to make intelligent decisions together. The Leader can facilitate the benefits of safety in numbers with a group knowledge collective. One example, a medical team. There may be an RN with more experience in medical issues. A trip leader may choose to appoint or lean on the RN for medical care. The Trip Leader should be abreast in group dynamics and conflict resolution. Also, the Trip Leader should have working knowledge of First Aid, boat repair, and boat extraction. In addition the Leader should know how to repair a boat and equipment vital to the safety of the group. The Trip Leader should be able to put the group above himself.

Expedition Members. Positive, communicative, group oriented, hardworking, willing to help. Many hands make light work. When a 16 person group all pitches in to load the boats it can seem like a well oiled machine and group work gets done fast and efficiently. When individuals are not helpful, and helpless a group can splinter into subsets that fracture the group dynamics and make leadership difficult. This can be particularly troublesome in an emergency. Every Members has strengths and weaknesses. A good group will work together to use each other strength and fill each other weaknesses. Be a Team Player!!

Groups of less than 8 people are at more of a disadvantage in many areas and should be particularly attentive to being more adept at the rigors and needs of an Expedition.

Bring Proper Clothing and Gear. Bring all needed safety gear and Leave No Trace camping.

IF YOUR GROUP FALLS SHORT OF ANY OF THESE CATEGORIES CONSIDER BEEFING THEM UP OR NOT GOING.