



## CLAP - promoting structured river running tactics

CLAP is a tactic used to promote a safe approach to running a river.

In order for CLAP to work each member of the team must understand how to apply CLAP whilst running the river.

- Communication.
- Line of Sight.
- Avoidance.
- Positioning

### Communication

Good communication is a key factor to anything we do in life. When on the river communication can be split into 2 key areas:

1. Pre-trip communication.
  - Clear communication between the group members before a river trip will ensure that the group have a clear understanding of the task ahead. An informal or formal pre trip discussion could mention the following points:
    - Group numbers & Head count
    - Medical conditions & medications
    - Trip length & grading with any river specific info (portages, timings, etc.)
    - Group ability & experience (Trip Leader/ most experienced paddlers)
    - Group equipment who has. First Aid kit, pin kit, phone, spare paddle, etc.
    - Back up plans in case of an emergency/ evacuation point
2. Communication between the group as you move down the river (signals) - agreeing on a set of signals that the whole group can use & understand will make life easier when on the river. The signals should include as a minimum.
  - Stop / Go
  - Eddy out
  - Go left/ Go right
  - First aid
  - Ok
  - Audio signal (whistle blasts)

### Line of Sight

Line of sight relates to 2 areas.

- It is good practice to try and keep line of sight with the boat in front and behind you. This way each member of the group can maintain visual contact with each other in order to enhance group safety & Control.
- Always try to leave an eddy between you and the end of your line of sight. This theory works really well if you are paddling a new river. You may choose the eddy to brief the group members as what the next move maybe. You may choose to exit the river from



the eddy to scout or portage a rapid. If you cannot see down a rapid you do not know scouting is advisable.

*“Never put your body into a place where your mind has not been to first”*

### **Avoidance**

- Avoidance simply relates to avoiding any issues or obstacles in order to increase the overall trip safety examples of Avoidance could be.
- Group / Human factors such as: Weak swimmers/ non-rollers, using the correct clothing & personal protective clothing for the water temperature Pre-trip communication / briefing
- Environmental factors such as: river hazards strainers, big stoppers, sieves, syphons, undercuts, day length, portages, wildlife / private land.

### **Positioning**

Positioning relates to your position within the group to ensure your maximum effectiveness to the group. Some simple questions you should be asking yourself as you paddle down the river are.

1. Am I in a clear position to see the boat in front and behind me?
2. Am I in a clear place to see, receive & give any signals to other group members?
3. Do I have a good line of sight down the river is there an eddy between me and the end of my line of sight?
4. Am I positioned in a place to avoid any features or hazards that could endanger my safety or the safety of the group?
5. Am I in a Position to effectively help in a rescue in case of a swimmer or flip?