

Blazing Paddles – Risk Disclosure Statement

Participant Acknowledgement of Risks – Guided Canoe Tours on the Whanganui River

At Blazing Paddles, we prioritise the safety of our clients and staff. While we operate under a robust safety management system audited under Qualworks and registered under WorkSafe New Zealand's Adventure Activities Regulations, it is important that all participants understand the inherent risks associated with outdoor river-based adventures.

Nature of the Activity

Blazing Paddles offers guided canoe journeys on the Whanganui River, which may include multi-day trips, remote locations, and Grade I–II rapids. Participants may be exposed to natural hazards, physical exertion, environmental conditions, and situations beyond human control.

Inherent Risks

While every effort is made to manage risks, the following hazards may be present during our activities:

- **River Hazards:** Swift currents, submerged objects, strainers (fallen trees), rocks, cold water, capsizing drowning risk, and low water levels.
- **Environmental Exposure:** Hypothermia, sunburn, dehydration, slips, trips and falls on wet terrain, changing weather conditions, and high UV exposure.
- **Remote Location Risks:** Delayed access to medical assistance, limited communication, isolation in the event of injury.
- **Equipment-Related Hazards:** Improper use of paddles, canoes, personal flotation devices (PFDs), and camping or cooking equipment.
Physical Strain: Paddling can be physically demanding and may result in muscle fatigue, strains, or impact injuries.
- **Wildlife & Natural Environment:** Insects, wasps, native flora (including stinging nettle), and unpredictable animal encounters.
- **Group Dynamics:** Variations in skill levels, behaviour of other participants, and human error.

Our Safety Commitment

- All guides are trained and certified in first aid, swift water rescue, and emergency procedures.
- All participants are provided with approved safety gear including PFDs and helmets (if required).

- We operate under a site-specific Safety Management Plan (SMP) reviewed annually and audited by Qualworks
- We maintain emergency communication equipment on all trips and follow strict incident reporting procedures.
- Trips are subject to weather and river condition assessments, and may be altered, postponed, or cancelled for safety.

Participant Responsibilities

By joining a Blazing Paddles trip, you acknowledge and agree to:

- Follow all safety instructions given by guides at all times.
- Disclose any medical conditions (including but not limited to asthma, allergies, heart conditions, or recent injuries) prior to the activity.
- Being of an appropriate fitness level.
- Wear all required safety equipment correctly and at all times when on the water.
- Inform the guide immediately of any concerns, discomfort, or injuries.
- Not participate under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Respect others in the group and contribute to a positive and cooperative experience.

Acknowledgement of Risk

By signing the participation form or continuing with the activity, you acknowledge that:

- You understand the nature and risks of the guided canoe trip.
- You accept that risks cannot be entirely eliminated, despite best safety practices.
- You participate voluntarily and at your own risk.
- You understand that Blazing Paddles, its staff and associated land managers (including DOC and iwi partners), will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure your safety but cannot be held liable for unforeseen incidents or participant negligence.

Emergency Contact and Insurance

- Participants are advised to hold personal travel or accident insurance.
- Emergency contact information must be supplied prior to departure.

For more information about our safety systems or if you have specific concerns, please contact us directly. We are committed to transparency, cultural respect, and the ongoing improvement of our risk management practices.

**Ngā mihi,
The Team at Blazing Paddles**