

**SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY TEAM RIVER RUNNER
STAFF/VOLUNTEER CONDUCT POLICY: JANUARY 2018**

We have access to recovering patients in a way that most people do not; this access is both an opportunity and a responsibility. We are viewed as peers and as leaders and as such must set a good example both on and off the river. We are also representing TRR as an organization; everything we do has the potential to reflect positively or negatively on TRR.

Participants will come and go. If someone came and dangled a foot in the pool and left with a smile, you have succeeded with them. We are just here to give the participants an opportunity to build emotional and physical strength, not to rate ourselves on how fast “our guy” learned to roll.

To participate in on-water activities each paddler must meet the American Canoe Association’s Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC) for adaptive paddle sports (full text of these EEC available at www.americancanoe.org/?page=EEC):

- Breathe independently without mechanical aid or support
- Be able to hold your breath for a reasonable amount of time under water
- Hold your head and neck up without external braces
- Manage your own personal care or bring someone with you to assist
- Get around on your own (this includes wheelchairs) or with someone’s assistance
- Be able to follow simple instructions and communicate by yourself or with someone’s assistance
- Independently exit a capsized watercraft without assistance (we will evaluate this during your first session)
- Independently turn from face-down to face-up in the water while wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) without assistance

By signing this agreement, you stipulate that you intend to adhere to the following items to the best of your ability:

- 1) TRR does not conduct, condone or participate in any illegal activity. Any TRR Staff/Volunteer in violation of this rule will be asked to stop working with TRR immediately.
- 2) Safety is key, both on and off the water. If you observe (or are observed) unsafe behavior, bring it to the attention of the trip leader, coordinator, or any TRR staff member. We will address it immediately. Continued safety violations will result in the individual being barred from participating with TRR and could result in expulsion from staff or volunteer position(s).
- 3) As a SVTRR Volunteer, you are signing up for more than just a pool session or a river trip. You need to have a certain level of commitment. We ask that you commit to attending/supporting **at least two river trips** during the warmer months and **at least two pool sessions** in the cooler months. You don’t need to be able to kayak to support this activity – we need shuttle drivers and meal cookers every bit as much as we need safety boaters and river guides.
- 4) Always be clear about the physical and emotional condition of the paddler you are working with. Ask if there is anything their physical therapist does or does not want them to do (covers physical constraints). Ask them if they have TBI or PTSD, because we want to avoid any

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triggering situations (covers mental/emotional constraints). As such all participants who are asked to fill out a medical information sheet need to provide enough information so that the staff is aware of any conditions that would limit their abilities while on the water. TRR maintains this information securely and discreetly.

- 5) It is a basic safety necessity to know what you're dealing with in terms of mental and physical health in your paddlers before you place them on the water. These questions must be asked. Paddlers with impulse control and aggression issues need to be monitored closely for everybody's well-being. Paddlers with physical constraints need to be kept from paddling situations that will injure them.
- 6) Veterans may be taking medication that does not mix well with alcohol. Our activities must support their recovery, not put it at risk. Please keep personal events or social activities within acceptable boundaries. If you see an issue, bring it to the attention of the trip leader, coordinator, or other staff member. We're all adults here.
- 7) As paddlers we are there to support the Disabled Veterans and disabled members of the community which are participating in activities associated with the chapter whether they're in a pool setting or outdoor setting, so it's important for us to be mindful of our own personal safety and limitations as well. As such all paddlers need to let staff know whether or not they suffer from any medical conditions that would limit their abilities while on the water as well. If so you will be asked to fill out a medical information sheet, so that staff can respond accordingly. Please initial to indicate if you, yourself have any Medical Conditions that might need accommodating. Yes: _____ No: _____
- 8) TRR doesn't pay for alcohol. Personally providing alcohol to anyone under the age of 21 is illegal. See rule 1.
- 9) Be aware of your language and comments. Off-color or suggestive jokes can be misinterpreted. Veterans often have a dark sense of humor, especially those who have returned recently from combat zones, or who have sustained permanent injuries and limb loss. Feel free to smile and laugh along with them, but don't try to join in or 'one-up' them in their jokes. We are not part of their club and we should not try to be.
- 10) Keep your politics to yourself. TRR is there to kayak, not to discuss the war or the motives behind it. Be supportive and sensitive to the fact that the Veterans have sustained injuries in service to our country, no matter what you think about the war itself.
- 11) Disabled Veterans and disabled members of the community know their bodies very well. They will tell you if they need help. Simply say: "Let me know what I can do for you," and leave it at that.
- 12) Do not ask anyone how they were injured, or what brought them to this program. They will tell you if they want to. If they do, and all you can say is, "Thank you for telling me that," then leave it at that.

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- 13) TRR encourages friendships between Staff/Volunteer and Veterans. We do not encourage dating between Staff/Volunteer and Veterans but we do not prohibit it. Please remember our participants are at a highly vulnerable point in their lives and our interactions with them will be influential. Forming close relationships puts both sides of that relationship at risk in unique ways. Be mindful and respectful of that potential.
- 14) Promote a safe and fun learning environment. Be aware that while “horseplay” between Staff/Volunteer and Veterans who already know each other is fun to those involved, but it can appear to be chaotic and upsetting to brand new Veterans who are attending our program for the first time.
- 15) TRR DOES NOT GIVE OUT FULL NAMES or any other information about TRR participants without written permission of the participant, for security, privacy and exploitation reasons.
- 16) Do not speak to the media on behalf of TRR without clearing it through your site secretary.
- 17) Do not ask for personal discounts from retailers because of your TRR affiliation.
- 18) You may deduct personal vehicle mileage to and from TRR events as a charitable deduction. “Beginning on Jan. 1, 2018, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be: 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.” (check www.irs.gov for any changes)

I have read the Team River Runner Staff/Volunteer Conduct Policy dated January 2018 and agree to follow those guidelines as I perform my volunteer activities at any Team River Runner event or whenever I represent Team River Runner.

Print Name

Signature

Date Signed

