

# Camp Kowakan

## Group Policies and Procedures

*In order to better provide for a safe/ positive experience,  
we ask all leaders to read this information.  
All Kowakan staff-led camps will follow these guidelines.  
All other user groups are responsible for their group's well-being.*

*By signing your contract with Camp Kowakan you agree to the  
following policies and procedures.*

*Updated April 2013*



Camp Minnesota  
Minnesota Annual Conference  
United Methodist Church

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# Part 1 - General Policies

Camp Kowakan (KWK) serves multiple groups in multiple ways. Please read this booklet with the following basic understanding:

- Rental Groups utilizing KWK packages & staff and Minnesota United Methodist Conference camps are required to follow these policies and guidelines. KWK staff will work with the leadership towards the fulfillment of that goal and share responsibility in that effort.
- Rental Groups NOT utilizing KWK staff are responsible for their own groups. These policies & procedures are recommendations. With activities of your group that directly affect the safety of KWK staff or related groups, please follow the policies and procedures contained here, though your leadership responsibilities with your group remain.

## I. Arrival & Transportation

**Supervision:** Rental Groups must provide adequate adult supervision and are responsible to provide first aid, emergency care, and emergency transportation as needed. Conference ratio is 1 adult (18 years or older) to every 6 youth. Family groups must have adequate parent supervision. Two-deep leadership is required at all times, for all programming, with adult leaders responsible for behavior and safety. Camp Kowakan reserves the right to ask persons to leave the property for behavior problems or violation of policies in consultation with the group leader.

**Late Arrival:** If you think you will arrive more than an hour off of your expected time, please call Camp Kowakan at (218) 365-2221 and leave a message.

### Arrival on Site:

- When you arrive proceed to the turn-around parking area. Vehicles shall be parked in the designated area just off Old County #18 in the corner. Driving to the upper camp area is not allowed.
- Please use only designated pick-up/drop-off and parking locations while on site (look for signs or ask a staff person for more details). *See the enclosed site map for specific locations (page 8).*
- If no staff person is there to meet you, park in the turn-around area (Woods Site) and proceed up the walking trail to the upper camp areas on foot.
- Your group will receive a brief orientation to camp safety procedures and regulations.

**Speed Limits:** Please recognize that Old County #18 runs directly through Kowakan and there may be campers walking around the east area. Campers are limited to walk on the county road only between the parking lot area and the turn-around down to the lake or dock area. **PLEASE—SLOW DOWN AND WATCH FOR PEDESTRIANS** after you turn onto Old County #18 and begin to drive on gravel! Follow all posted speed limit signs.

## General Transportation Requirements

- Campers and adult leaders should only be transported in vehicles designed to carry passengers. They are not permitted to ride in the back of trucks except in an extreme emergency and when directed by appropriate adult leadership (i.e. fire evacuation).
- Vehicles should carry only the number of passengers specified by the vehicle manufacturer.
- There should be a seatbelt for each passenger.
- Individuals in wheelchairs are to be seat-belted into wheelchairs that are locked into position and secured to the vehicle.

See additional transportation policies located in each KWK vehicle. KWK package (staff-led) groups are to follow all transportation policies. Other Rental /User groups are responsible for their own transportation, and are advised to consider these KWK safety policies.

## II. While You Are at Camp Kowakan

**Your Group Responsibilities** include abiding by all Kowakan usage policies provided or shared during your group orientation. Our first concern in these issues is for the welfare of the campers and you should take whatever action necessary to be most redemptive in each situation.

**Damage:** You are asked to help care for the grounds, facilities, and equipment while at Kowakan. This includes keeping things clean and usable. Please report any damage, problems, suggestions, needs, or complaints as quickly as possible to the Program Coordinator on site.

**Quiet Hours:** The camp is frequently in use by more than one group. Kowakan is about being in creation and listening to nature. Please respect the rights of others. QUIET TIME IS FROM 10:30 PM UNTIL 7:00 AM.

**Insurance:** User groups are asked to provide for their own insurance coverage. A copy of your church insurance policy number or your personal policy number are required as a part of your registration information. A written incident report is required should something occur.

**Water:** Drinking water can be brought in to the site. Other water for washing may be pumped or taken from the lake. Any water from the lake used for personal consumption needs to be filtered, chemically treated, or boiled before drinking or cooking.

## VIII. Emergency Phone Numbers

This list of phone numbers and contacts must be kept available with KWK staff and group leaders. All campers should know where this list is kept and be aware of procedures for handling emergencies.

Lake County Sheriff—Ely/Isabella area	1-800-450-8832 (218) 834-8385
Cook County Sheriff—Grand Marais/Tofte area	(218) 387-3030
St. Louis County Sheriff—Ely/Cook area	(218) 365-3344
Ely hospital	(218) 365-3271

### CAMPING NUMBERS

Kowakan Adventures—Kowakan	(218) 365- 2221
Minnesota Camping & Retreats Office (office days Mon–Fri, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.)	(612) 230-2267 or (855) 622-1973

### Other means to gain help when cell phones don't work

First take time to collect your group and talk around your options. You will have to decide about securing a portion of your group somewhere safe or taking the whole group with you. Don't make matters worse by endangering the rest of your group!

- Look for another group in the area for help. Boy Scout groups from Northern Tier have radio access to their headquarters and could request help to come out if required. **If you know what lake you are on and the # on your privy hole, they can find you immediately!**
- Signaling low flying airplanes by paddling in a tight circle on open water (counter-clockwise) indicates HELP is required. Also can wave a brightly colored cloth at them or flash the plane 3 times with a mirror.
- Check on your map to look for HELP spots that were indicated when you were at Kowakan and spots where other outfitters are located. Pick one closest to you and head for it.
- Look for the quickest and easiest way out to a landing. There may be help there.
- Head towards the closest cell phone tower—which would mean towards the closest civilization—such as Ely or Two Harbors.
- And always—Pray for God's help in times of trouble!

KWK staff will be equipped and trained with an emergency satellite signal device called SPOT (a satellite personal tracker). This will allow them to send a 911 emergency signal which will mobilize EMS services. A GPS signal is also sent indicating the location of the group. This same SPOT device is able to send both a trouble (non-emergency) signal and a "Group OK" signal. This results in an email sent to designated locations and/or a mobile signal to a designated camp phone. Currently these are not available for rental.

**Meals:** Meals should all be cooked in designated areas—Meadows and Hilltop pavilions, over a fire in a fire-ring, or in the charcoal grills provided. There are prep counters available at both pavilions. Please see related policies for food storage, preparation, and trash.

**Bathing/Dish Washing:** Please bathe and/or wash your dishes in designated areas. Dishwashing can take place at either the Meadows or Hilltop pavilions. Showers can take place at the shower area located between sites #7 & #8. The shower area is to be used by a single gender at one time and you are asked to wear swimwear. KWK staff will provide usage orientation. You are asked to use only this area for full body washing (all grey water must run directly away from the lake / 150 feet away from the water.) ALL soaps pollute the water including those labeled "biodegradable." **Absolutely NO washing or bathing in the lake!**

**Trash:** Trash must be secured nightly as it attracts animals. Kowakan campsite must be kept clean and free from garbage at all times. The reality of bears and other animals intruding and offering risk to campers is large. **Garbage must be taken either to the dumpster or to your vehicle and with you when you leave.** KWK staff will advise as to nightly procedures for handling garbage and/or personal items that might attract animals. **Nothing must be left in your tent that might attract an animal!**

### Food Storage & Preparation:

- Food also must be stored where animals cannot get it when not cooking. A lockable cabinet with Tupperware containers is available for your usage at Hilltop pavilion. Your vehicle is another storage option.
- User group leader is required to monitor food temperatures during food preparation and food serving.
- User group leader is required to minimize the time that potentially hazardous foods remain in the food temperature danger-zone, between 40° F and 140° F. (thermometers are available by request)
- User group leader is required to take appropriate safety precautions when holding, cooling, thawing, or serving food.
- Hot foods should be held and served at 140° F or higher
- User group leader should sanitize food contact surfaces after each use.
- User groups should make sure that wash and initial rinse temperatures are at least 100° F, and for a second rinse, you should use an approved chemical sanitizer.

**Conservation:** Please avoid damage to trees and trails. Please dispose of all litter in proper containers. Kowakan is a fragile environment. If you discover garbage, old metal, or glass, it is likely from the old logging Camp #20. Advise campers to be careful from being cut.

**Campfires:** You may have campfires or cooking fires if there is not a county fire ban on. You must use the existing fire circles. Make sure your fire is watched and does not escape the fire pit. Make sure there is a bucket of water near by and that the fire is out COLD when the last person goes to bed. There must be adult supervision at all fires and when cooking stoves are operated.

### **Intruders:**

- Occasionally people unfamiliar to the camp will wander onto camp property. Because Kowakan adjoins a national forest and is only occupied a few months of the year, people may assume this is public property. However, there is also the possibility that these people have come to the camp with the intent to have a party or to do harm to people or property.
- Campers should be instructed not to talk to unfamiliar persons and to report all incidents to their leader(s) immediately. Campers should be encouraged to share their feelings about their encounter with leaders and should be reassured by leaders.
- If you see or suspect an intruder in camp at night, immediately notify the camp manager or leader so they can keep a close eye on their campers. You can dial the sheriff on the camp phone or your cell phone if you have service. Lake County (Ely) 1-800-450-8832 or (218) 834-8385. Cook County (the county that Kowakan is located in) (218) 387-3030. Emergency Phone numbers will be posted by the camp phone located at the Meadows pavilion area (by the staff tents).
- Please make an incident report in writing to KWK staff of any intruder incident.

**Illegal and/or Prohibited:** Camp Kowakan does not allow use of any drugs (including alcohol), fireworks, firearms, weapons, or any kind of motorized off-road vehicles on site. You are asked to smoke away from any camp building or structure, and away from other campers. Personal or group sports equipment (bikes, skis, sleds, ball sports, etc.) should only be used in safe and standard ways with proper supervision when needed. Illegal substances are strictly banned from the site.

**Pets:** Normal domestic pets are allowed at Kowakan provided they do not interfere with campers or group programs. Dogs are to be on a leash when other campers are around. Be aware that there are wolves in the area, so all pets are at risk if left to run around or left alone on a leash. Kowakan will not be responsible for any injury or death to any pet.

**Bunks:** No persons under the age of 16 may sleep in a top bunk by KWK policy. There are NO guardrails found on any of our bunk cots. Please ensure the safety of your group while sleeping.

- If concerned about back or neck breaks—or other similar injuries—you will need to stabilize and move them out to help. If you decide that the risk of moving is too great to the injured camper, then you need to send a canoe for help. Talk things over with your group co-leader to help in such a decision, talk around how it should take place, and who should go. **Always seek to minimize the risk of a 2nd injury or loss to your group!**
- If evacuating, remember there are options in the woods for making stabilizing equipment. You have rope, a saw, and other materials to aid you. Utilize your greatest strength (your mind) and the resources around you (other campers). Consider your route options, and look at the Emergency Numbers sheet in your first aid kit to help in options and directions. Check your map.

## **IX. Accident & Injuries at Kowakan**

For accidents and injuries see below. For prevention see previous procedures.

If you are the primary staff member at the scene in camp:

1. Count to ten and evaluate the overall situation. Do not rush or panic.
2. Take charge. Be firm and clear with your instructions to campers and staff. Use a calm tone of voice.
3. The staff member with the highest level of appropriate certification is delegated the responsibility to aid the injured party. Give priority attention to caring for the needs of the victim. CHECK FOR VITAL SIGNS. The person rendering first aid must enter the information in the camp health log within 12 hours of the incident.
4. Decide if it is non-life threatening and you are going to transport to Ely or if you will call for help. Contact the Program Coordinator as soon as possible. Provide a clear description of the emergency and your location.
5. Once the Program Coordinator arrives at the scene, summarize the situation and answer questions. The Program Coordinator will take charge.
6. Delegate another staff member to ensure the safety of other campers by taking them away from the immediate scene and organize games, or other activities. Retain one person at the scene of the accident to carry communications.
7. Begin collecting the facts. What happened? How? When? Where? Witnesses? Where were the staff? Campers? What could the victim have done to prevent the injury?
8. Prepare accident reports within 24 hours.
9. In the case of a critical accident, serious injury, harm or fatality: Keep a responsible adult at the scene of the accident or emergency situation to see that nothing is disturbed until medical aid or the law-enforcement authorities arrive.
10. Remember to also record near incidents or accidents that take place so we can learn from them.

- Tall smoke plumes indicate a hot fire, if you see a tall smoke plume ahead of you, seek a safe refuge such as an open lake. Make a new plan for your route—consider leaving the area entirely
- If you feel threatened:
  - Get on a large lake
  - Stay upwind, but be aware that large fires can and do change directions unpredictably and in any direction.

If the fire is upon you, take your canoe into the water. Put on your PFD and turn your canoe over (trapping as much oxygen as possible). Go under your canoe and breathe the cool air under it until the fire passes.

**VI. LOST CAMPER**—All campers/leader should be aware at all times where persons in their groups are located or intending to head towards.

- Precautions should be made and emphasized towards keeping anyone from getting lost, such as no one goes alone on any adventure or exploration.
- All campers/leaders should be trained and advised as to what to do if/when you find yourself lost in the BWCAW. Share about not panicking and needing to stop to think about doing things in small steps. Consider re-tracing steps only to a point; consider finding water, shelter, and a spot where you could be found; climbing a tree; or making a signal for someone to notice (a fire or rock-pile “arrow shaped” pointing towards your location). Make plans for spending the night and remain calm. But, if there is hope that someone will look for you, stay in the general area where you are at, make yourself visible and at home. If have a whistle, use it in sequences of 3.
- If a camper becomes lost, note the time and gather your group to consider options. Consider time of day, weather conditions now (and predicted), general location, where help might be received, etc. Do not panic, and do not take avoidable risks towards losing or injuring another.
- At some point, you must go for help if a camper remains lost—by the start of the second day at the worst case scenario. Remember to consider the safety of the rest of your group as well.

**VII. INJURED OR SICK CAMPER**—Refer to your first aid guidebook around when you need to evacuate someone from the BWCAW. See your Emergency Numbers page (with the First Aid kit) for communication options or travel directions. Your map should also have indications of where the closest support location is. Again—don’t panic. You are needed to remain calm and care for your entire group.

- Look for evidence of shock with your injured camper—if seen, then you may have to evacuate immediately. If heavy loss of blood, danger of large infection, trouble breathing, and/or other physical concerns arise, then get the camper out right away.

### III. First Aid & Emergency Care

#### Policy:

KWK will provide health care personnel, first aid treatment, supplies, and emergency transportation only for individuals and groups for whom KWK has responsibility for supervision and major programming. This includes conference sponsored resident camps on site at Kowakan, tripping programs, and some family camp sessions.

For weekend retreat programs, family camp programs, and all rental groups, simply using camp facilities and limited services (food service, program specialists, etc.), **Kowakan is not responsible** for providing personnel, supplies, transportation, or health care services.

#### User Group Health Policies:

- Groups must provide their own adults currently certified in first aid and CPR, who are responsible for health needs of the group. This includes knowledge of age appropriate CPR, including the use of breathing devices.
- Groups are responsible for gathering and maintaining information on all members of the group that includes name, address, emergency contact names and numbers, and any allergies/health conditions/restrictions. For minors without a parent on site, group leaders should also have signed permission to seek emergency treatment. Group leaders are responsible to inform camp of any allergies or restrictions of their group that may affect camp services provided (e.g., food service, program activities).
- Groups are responsible for their own emergency transportation. Phone numbers and locations of local EMS providers, clinics, and hospitals are provided in confirmation information and also posted near all phones available to groups. Rental/User groups will be advised of the KWK designated emergency vehicle and key location during orientation.
- Groups are responsible for providing their own first aid supplies and equipment.
- Orientation for groups will include updated emergency procedures for the camp, including information on how to contact camp personnel in an emergency.
- Groups are asked to report any injuries, accidents, illnesses, and health related occurrences that take place at Kowakan or on a related trip, that might have an effect on the overall health policies and procedures now in place within KWK overall ministries.

## IV. Other Emergency Procedures

Please keep in mind that Kowakan is a wilderness environment and there is no structure considered a storm shelter. Generally speaking, the safest place for you on site during an emergency is in your vehicle in the parking area (i.e. a severe storm, wild animals, etc.). In very high winds, consider seeking low ground, away from tall trees, on the opposite side of a hill/ridge from the direction of the wind. Plan ahead. See the Wilderness Emergency Procedures on page 13. Emergency phone numbers are posted near the phone at the Meadows site. Red Rock Store may be a place to evacuate to. Staff will discuss safety options for your group during orientation at camp.

## V. Aquatics Safety

For the purposes of all KWK programs, ANY body of water will be treated in the same manner as waters within the BWCAW (includes Section 12 Lake at Kowakan) KWK staff/lifeguards are to inspect each potential swimming area prior to usage per “Canoeing & Swimming Policies” found on page 9.

- Rental Groups are advised to request a KWK lifeguard or provide their own certified lifeguard. KWK lifeguards are available at minimal extra cost for groups not using a program package.
- All non-KWK lifeguards must be familiar and orientated to the potential hazards of BWCAW waters. They are asked to demonstrate basic skills related to guarding at Kowakan for Section 12 Lake.
- No swimming is to take place at Kowakan or in the BWCAW without a qualified lifeguard available for supervision.
- Lookouts are also recommended when the numbers exceed safe numbers (per decision of lifeguard. They need to be orientated on their responsibilities including demonstrating skills related to basic rescue from land. See duties of lookouts Pg.11.

## VI. BWCA Trips

All KWK groups must follow our “Adventure Trip” policies when going into the BWCA. All User Groups are required to follow the U.S. Forest Service policies and are asked to follow KWK related policies as well. KWK reserves the right to refuse rental equipment and staff support to those groups not abiding by these policies.

BWCAW Trip Guidelines - All KWK led groups will follow the Trip Leader guidelines related to qualifications, preparations, and orientation for all Co-leaders in each permit group. A Trip Checklist needs to be completed and left with staff at Kowakan for each permit group going out.

## VII. Before You Leave:

Please leave the site better than you found it. Remember, the meaning of the name “Kowakan:” The place of the Lord, God Almighty. Please honor that meaning.

- When hanging your food pack, include your garbage and other items with a strong scent such as personal hygiene stuff (toothpaste) that smells sweet. Used feminine pads also need to be zip locked and placed in garbage and taken out. Squirrels and other animals have been known to invade poorly located food packs. Remember to hang packs a minimum of 10 ft. up and 6 ft. out (away from a tree), and 3-4 ft. down from a branch when possible. If placing on the ground in a barrel, spot your food cache at least 100 ft from camp in low ground—downwind.
- When encountering a bear or moose, stay together and make some noise. DON’T RUN. Most bears will leave with loud human voices—banging pots and pans, etc.—but if they refuse to leave, cautiously move to another site. Pepper spray can also be a deterrent, but remember that you must be fairly close to the bear and upwind (otherwise you spray yourself as well). A bull moose will leave you alone, if left alone, except during their rutting season (which is in late fall). Normal human noise or actions should move them away. Moose hoofs are as dangerous as their antlers. A female cow will, however, protect her young if threatened. Stay away and enjoy their majesty.
- Be aware of the insects in your camp and as you travel—they cause more harm to humans than other critters. When bugs are biting, wear long pants with long sleeves, and a hat (with a brim can be better). If you use insect repellent—be careful of the amount of DEET (the active ingredient), as it is strong stuff. Place the DEET on your hat brim in front of your face, on a neckerchief around your neck, and on your sleeves and pants—INSTEAD of your skin—it works almost the same. You might also put on water-proof sun block and rub it in, then put on some DEET—it shouldn’t get into your skin as well that way. Various shades of blue attract the famous black flies in the BWCAW, so consider your wardrobe options.
- If bitten or injured by an animal treat the bite as recommended with first aid, and consider rabies as a possibility. Move out from the BWCAW.

## V. Fire Hazards

Since the summer of 1999, when over 350,000 acres of timber was blown down (over 1/3 of the BWCAW), fire danger has increased.

- Follow BWCAW regulations to help in the prevention of forest fires, and advise forest service staff when have knowledge of fires or fire dangers. Know the fire restrictions and follow them.
- Because of the blow down, there are a ton of trees laying at crazy angles, and some very close to falling or springing up. Be careful not to walk or camp in areas where you may be hit by a tree
- Most fires travel east and north, so plan your route accordingly if in fire danger. Remember that burning embers can travel more than a mile to possibly start a new fire.
- Your greatest danger from fire is not burning, nor breathing smoke, but running out of oxygen! So if in a fire area—get out!

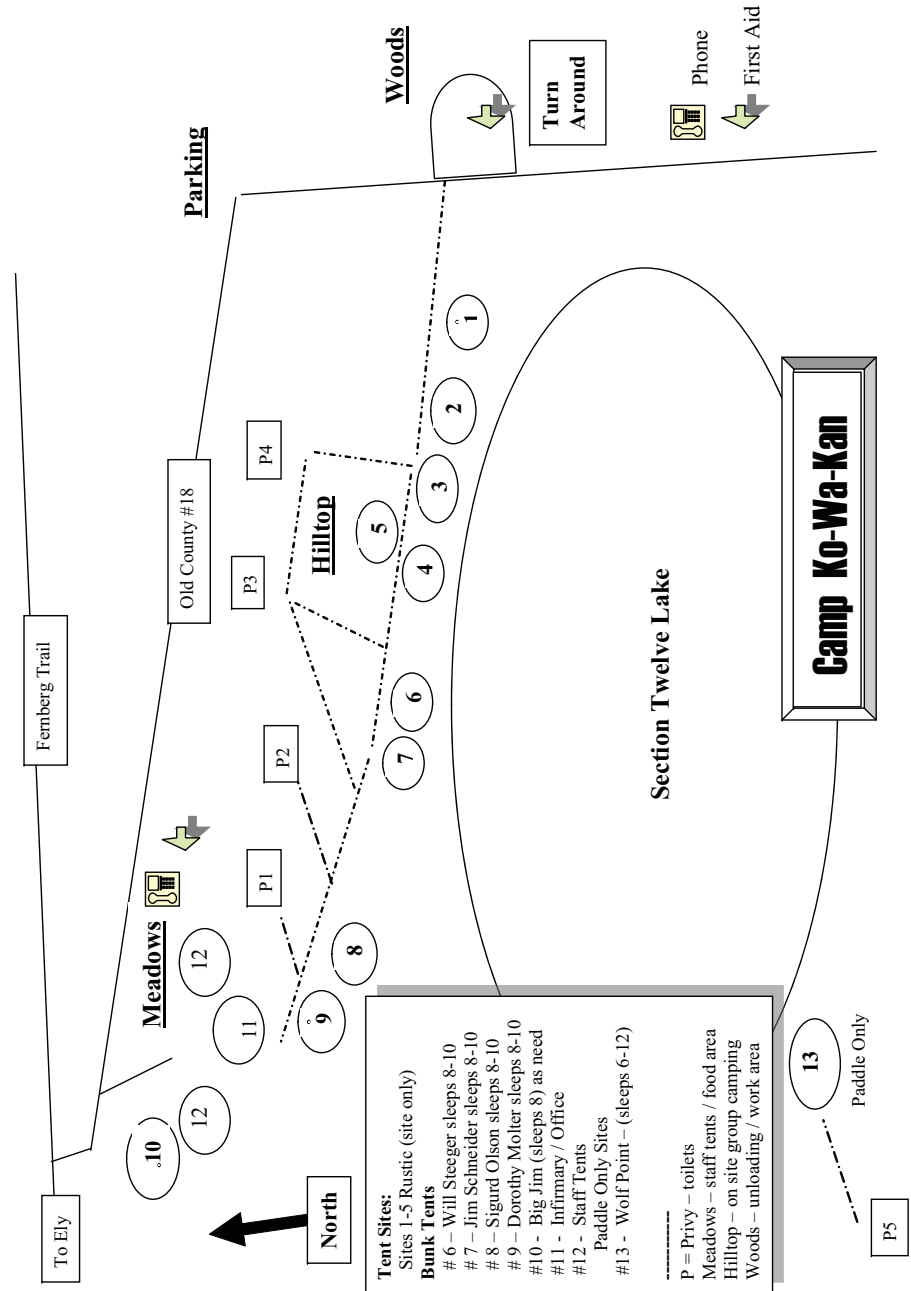


- If there is no help in sight, then gather your gear (inside a swamped canoe) and with your partner, paddle or swim with the canoe to the nearest shore (or with the current/wind if have option). You can paddle by sitting inside a swamped canoe with your partner. Avoid fast moving water and rocks.
- KWK policy dictates that we do not “run” rapids. We portage around them— that is why the portage is there. Your group staff/leader will decide if it is safe to paddle on some faster water or to seek another way around. Rapids are dangerous to both people and canoes.
- If a camper falls into fast moving water, consider paddling over to him/her and using the throw rope attached to one of your thwarts. That camper can than be pulled safely away from danger.
- Be aware of hypothermia after falling into the water. You may have to take steps to care for wet and cold campers—on shore and out of the wind with dry clothes and a sleeping bag (a fire only in emergencies). Make sure they are fully warmed and ready before traveling again.

## IV. Bears, Moose, or Other Critters

Remember that this is their home area—be respectful.

- When traveling, stay together (within sound and sight of each other).  
Normal human sounds will keep most animals away—and not surprise them
- When portaging, go with someone across the portage and keep someone close to your food packs (not leaving them alone for too long along the trail)
- Avoid getting between a mother and her young—they all love their children and would likely die to protect them (just like us). If you find yourself in that situation, back off, but DO NOT RUN. Animals are driven by instinct and the instinct to chase is strong in predators (bears and cats).
- Don't look a bear or moose in the eye—they consider that a challenge.  
Look slightly away (while keeping an eye on them), and back off under control
- Maintain a clean camp—putting your food away properly (either in a tree or away from camp on the ground in a barrel). Pick up the loose food items on the ground—it attracts them! Do NOT take food, snacks, or other items that have a strong (pleasant) human scent attached (gum & candy) into your tent. Use zip lock bags to cover the scent when possible.
- Do NOT eat, store, or cook food in your tent. That is what a tarp and raincoat is all about!



## Part 2 – Canoeing & Swimming

*Policies & Procedures related to activities on or around the water.*

**For the purposes of all KWK programs and activities, ANY body of water will be treated in the same manner as waters within the BWCAW.** This means that all KWK staff, camp leaders, and campers will follow the same guidelines and safety procedures at Kowakan, in the BWCAW, or other body of water where your particular adventure is taking place. ALL RENTAL/USER GROUPS ARE ADVISED to follow these same policies & procedures. They are also advised:

- To provide for adult leaders certified as lifeguards for their trips
- For PFDs to be worn at all times when canoeing
- For leaders who are experienced in canoeing skills

KWK staff have been trained in all aspects of this booklet with certifications in lifeguarding and wilderness first-aid. They are available to assist or co-lead your trip.

### I. POLICIES:

1. All “bodies of water” are to be considered unmarked and dangerous related to swimming and canoeing unless otherwise specified by a certified lifeguard. Prior to swimming in any such waters, a qualified staff will personally inspect or supervise the inspection of the area for safety and risk. Looking for:

- depth and clarity of the water
- presence of submerged objects (i.e. rocks, ishhooks, other hazards.)
- current or fast moving water
- water temperature when dangerously cold (hypothermia)
- safety of water’s edg slipperiness of rocks (after getting wet)
- size of water body or width or river
- weather—lightning frequency
- vantage point of the lifeguard/lookout

**THERE IS NO DIVING AT ANY TIME IN THESE WATERS**

2. KWK policy dictates that we do not “run” rapids—we portage them (that is why the portage is there). Your group staff/leader will decide if it is safe to paddle on some faster water or to seek another way around. Rapids are dangerous to both people and canoes.

3. PFDs or life-jackets (coast guard approved) are to be worn in a safe and secure manner when canoeing in these waters AT ALL TIMES. Because of the importance of our feet for portaging, we require foot protection for swimming.

4. All swimming activities will be supervised by a certified lifeguard (see below). User groups are expected to provide for their own lifeguarding staff or arrange bycontract for a Kowakan lifeguard prior to their arrival (June-August only).

- When swimming, a lifeguard is to be assigned to watch for trouble with any of the campers/leaders. The lifeguard will also determine if a supporting look-out

- Locate yourself properly in a lightning storm. Lightning will tend to hit a tree or other high point, rather than the person near it, if the object is 5 to 10 times or more the height of the person, and the horizontal distance from the person to the object is half the object’s height. If you are among trees of similar height, put yourself an equivalent distance between two trees. Avoid the tallest trees. Avoid being a bridge between an object and the ground. For example, do not lean against tent poles or trees. Avoid potential paths of conduction such as wet, lichen-covered rocks, cracks, and crevices (wet or dry), and areas subject to the “spark gap,” such as overhangs, wet ropes, and tree roots. If your skin begins to tingle, or your hair stands on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible, and minimize your contact with the ground.
- Have the group keep their raincoats handy at the tops of their packs—also keep a tarp packed on top for easy access. (Huddling under a tarp can be a warm memory—and much drier)
- In very severe weather—get off the lake—secure your canoes and seek low ground, safely away from most trees. Lie down flat and cover your head. Flying objects and falling trees are your biggest concerns, with lightning coming in next. Prepare for hypothermia in your group as well.

### II. Swimming Emergency

See KWK policies for safe swimming practices, and listen to your staff/leader. It is his/her responsibility to inspect and determine the dangers or risks of any potential swimming area.

- Unless permission is given from a qualified lifeguard, all persons either canoeing or swimming must have their PFD properly fitted and be wearing them.
- When a group wants to go swimming, there must be a lifeguard and/or lookout in place at a good location to watch for trouble. A canoe must be close by if needed. If no lifeguard, then must wear PFDs per above.
- A throw rope from the canoe should be close by as well, especially when near fast water.

### III. Canoe Tip Over

This is where deep-water rescue comes in handy

- If you capsize, don’t panic—stay with your canoe (life jackets on). It won’t sink. When you get help, work on the deep water canoe rescue process as trained—making the cross and pulling the overturned canoe over another canoe to dry out. Then re-load the passengers and re-capture any missing gear (paddles etc.)
- Be aware of getting hit on your head when capsizing—be careful to avoid head injuries.

16. Staff persons wishing to swim or use the canoes must check with the waterfront director or a person designated by him/her. NO ONE is to EVER swim alone. At Kowakan, there shall be NO SWIMMING away from the immediate vicinity of the north shoreline between the dock and the Meadows site. No swimming out to or near the islands on the lake (bird nesting areas).

17. User Groups: For adult groups and families, you may either hire KWK staff or implement your own WRITTEN procedures to care for water safety. At a minimum, your procedures would need to specify that:

- PFDs be worn by all persons at all times
- Safety regulations be followed
- A designated check-out system be utilized in order to assure that someone in camp is aware that adults, families or staff on time-off are utilizing watercraft and that all people in the group are accounted for.

## Part 3 – Emergency Procedures for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness

### I. Severe Weather

Keep track of weather (an eye on the sky) to anticipate changes as best possible. Kowakan staff will carry a NOA weather radio on trips. This is highly recommended for all Rental/ User groups as well)

- When traveling in dangerous weather, stay close to shore. If you must travel in lightning, stay within a 45 degree angle of the trees on the shoreline.
- Plan your route options to allow for not being caught on a large body of water in high winds
- Dress in layers and be prepared for sunny, cold, and wet weather—all coming quickly together
- Do NOT seek protection under tall trees—especially if they are fairly tall. Both wind and lightning can hit them hard. Seek protection out of the wind on the leeward side of an island, or into a woods a safe distance. Secure your canoes well up onto shore.
- Your life-vests (PFDs) are good insulation, floatation, and ground pads for kneeling on during a storm (to keep your body from being grounded for lightning)

is required. If no lifeguard is available, there must be an adult look-out assigned. Anyone entering the water must be wearing a PFD and remain in shallow (stand up depth) calm waters. There should be no swimming allowed without a lifeguard available.

- The lifeguard/lookout shall enforce additional safety rules as necessitated by the presence of hazards. (see #1)
- Swimming boundaries shall be set using: the depth of the water, visible hazards (i.e. rocks), rescue distance, weather, and swimming abilities as lifeguards or guides.
- Campers must receive an orientation prior to swimming their first time at this camp.
- Groups may enter the water without life-jackets if a lifeguard is present and on duty and given permission.

5. Emergency Rescue Equipment Available: The lifeguard and/or look-out are always to keep a canoe immediately available to use as an emergency rescue watercraft. This canoe will also have a 50 ft. throw rope in it to aid in rescues when in fast moving waters. This equipment shall be checked by a lifeguard and/or lookout prior to each swimming session. When at Kowakan, there is a rescue tube available for lifeguards. The nearest phone is located in the staff area/Meadows. Emergency contact information is located next to that phone. When in doubt dial 911. You can dial the sheriff on the camp phone or your cell phone if you have service. Lake County (Ely) 1-800-450-8832 or (218) 834-8385, Cook County (the county that Kowakan is located in) (218) 387-3030.

6. The following safety system will be used for swimming. (Note: User groups are asked to follow the same procedure). When campers approach the waterfront, they must first check in with the waterfront supervisor. They will be asked to find a buddy, and will be given a number as a team. With a whistle signal, they are to connect with their buddy and shout their number in numerical order. All swimmers are responsible for accounting for their buddy during such a count or check. Persons at the waterfront will be aware of the following whistle signals:

- 1 short blast to get attention of camper—do the number check and count (with buddies)
- 2 short blasts to get attention of a staff member/counselor
- 3 short blasts for an emergency situation
- 1 long blast to clear the water (also the all clear signal)

7. KWK does not provide a swimming test or swimming lessons of any kind. All swimmers with KWK will be assumed to have NO swimming experience prior to their arrival at camp. Therefore, PFDs are required whenever anyone swims until swimming strength and ability are shown (by lifeguard permission). KWK highly recommends that user groups follow this same procedure.

swimming strength and ability are shown (by lifeguard permission). Camp Kowakan highly recommends that user groups follow this same procedure.

8. Lifeguards and lookouts must be made aware of their responsibilities, and be attentive to these duties at all times. They need to be in an area where they can supervise, observe, and offer assistance at all times. \*\*Responsibilities may be modified according to age, activity, or attitude and maturity of the group.\*\*

#### 9. Duties of a Look-out

A. A look-out's job is to assist a lifeguard during times when number of campers in the water exceeds the 1:25 ratio. S/he may also supervise aquatic activities off-site provided the proper safety procedures are followed. Some of the duties a lookout is required to perform are:

- (1) Enforcing safety regulations
- (2) Applying First Aid when necessary
- (3) Performing backup for the lifeguard when needed.
- (4) (off site, when no lifeguard is present) observing any swimmers and enforcing all off-site safety regulations.

B. Any Kowakan staff or group adult leader can perform the duties of a look-out, provided they can demonstrate their ability to perform various forms of non-swimming rescue. Look-outs, before being given responsibilities, will be oriented about the following by the waterfront director:

- (1) All waterfront regulations
- (2) All emergency procedures involving emergencies in the water,
- (3) How to identify and deal with hazards in the water and on land,
- (4) How to identify a tired, distressed, and drowning swimmer,
- (5) Basic non-swimming rescue techniques, including
  - a. Reaching techniques, and
  - b. Use of equipment, including canoe with throw rope and rescue tube
- (6) How to identify weather signs,
- (7) Swimming risk management

10. If there are children under the age of 6, a parent or responsible adult must supervise the child within one arm's length. The maximum ratio for this is 2 children per 1 adult.

#### 11. Watercraft

- Canoes and other non-motorized watercraft will be thoroughly checked for safety and other maintenance needs prior to the start of the summer season. Any needed maintenance will be performed at that time.

- All canoes and other non-motorized watercraft will also be thoroughly inspected and repaired, if needed, after each subsequent use (prior to being stored).
- Campers must receive an orientation about the hazards they might encounter on their trip. These hazards may include capsizing, motorboat wakes, high winds, etc.
- Campers will also receive an orientation to the following prior to using a canoe:
  - Entering and exiting the canoe
  - Basic canoe strokes
  - Safe use of PFDs
  - Self-rescue techniques in case of swamping and/or capsizing
- All Camp Kowakan led events will have a staff person who has been trained in canoeing skills by our watercraft instructor. Our watercraft instructor will have documented experience and/or training from a nationally-recognized certifying body.
- User groups: Camp Kowakan offers staff who are qualified to teach basic flatwater tandem canoeing/paddling skills. Camp Kowakan recommends that if user groups will be canoeing that they should have a leader present who is knowledgeable in canoeing skills in order to provide the group with a positive, safe experience. If user groups wish to have this training it is available upon request through the Camp Kowakan staff at an additional cost.

## Special Policies Related to Kowakan

12. There must be a 1:25 lifeguard to camper ratio, and a 1:10 look-out to camper ratio. These ratios will vary with conditions (i.e. clarity of water and observation area). If something does not feel safe, increase the coverage, or take other appropriate action.

13. There must be a minimum of 2 staff or volunteers (including the lifeguard) at the Kowakan waterfront area at all times. At least one should be an adult.

14. First aid supplies will be stored in the pavilions at both the Meadows (staff area) and the Woods (turn-around) in a cabinet with a red cross on it. Groups should provide their own first aid kits and have them available at the waterfront. The basic first aid supplies at the above locations are available to all in an emergency.

#### 15. The Dock:

- No swimming on, around or under the dock(s)
- No running on dock(s).
- No pushing/roughhousing on dock(s).
- No diving off the dock(s).