

**MARINE CORPS COMMUNITY SERVICES  
OUTDOOR RECREATION  
WATERCRAFT ISSUE POLICY**

**PURPOSE:** To establish effective and enforceable guidelines for the safe issuance and use of MCCA Semper Fit Outdoor Recreation watercraft equipment.

**MISSION:** To implement and enforce safety precautions that enable patrons to enjoy water-based recreation in Japan while ensuring their safe return.

**SCOPE:** The intent of this policy is to establish regulatory provisions for the issuance of all MCCA Semper Fit Outdoor Recreation watercraft to solely authorized MCCA patrons or designated guests of the Command. The procedures are in compliance with MCO1700.27, III MEF/MCIPACO 5101.1 and the Coast Guard Safe Boating Policy, with necessary adaptations to local laws and conditions.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Watercraft safety is the joint responsibility of MCCA and those participating in this recreational activity.

MCCA is responsible for providing patrons with safe and operable watercraft, properly functioning support equipment, and any available information pertaining to area weather and water conditions that may impact the safety of the patron. While MCCA is not a weather service and does not possess expert knowledge of all bodies of water in Japan, reasonable efforts will be made to obtain pertinent information through air station resources and communicate it to patrons prior to issuing any equipment.

Patrons are responsible for adhering to all rules and regulations outlined in this policy and those detailed in III MEF/MCIPACO 5101.1. Patrons must gather necessary and current information regarding weather, water conditions, local laws, and customs relevant to the trip. Patrons are required to contact MCCA Semper Fit Outdoor Recreation of any changes to their float plan. Failure to follow these rules and regulations either by willful action or negligence, is the sole responsibility and liability of the individual involved.

For matters not covered by this policy, decisions of responsibility will be made by the appropriate higher authority.

MCCA RESERVES THE RIGHT NOT TO ISSUE WATERCRAFT TO ANY PATRON(S) WHENEVER ALL OF OUR SAFETY CONCERNS ARE NOT RESOLVED. SAID CONCERNS INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT RESTRICTED TO WEATHER CONDITIONS AND THE PATRON'S ABILITY TO SAFELY OPERATE THE WATERCRAFT. ONLY WATERCRAFT DESIGNED FOR THE OPEN SEA WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE INLAND SEA OR OCEAN SURROUNDING JAPAN.

**1. AUTHORIZED PATRONS:**

- A. The following people are eligible to be issued available MCCS recreational watercraft. Except as otherwise stated in this policy, the person who signs for the watercraft is the person responsible for returning it in the same condition as when it was issued. Any damage resulting from neglect will be the responsibility of the person to whom the watercraft was issued, unless otherwise approved by the Outdoor Recreation Manager:
- (1) Any adult, 18 years of age or older, with SOFA status and an authorized patron of MCCS Iwakuni, who is certified by statement they are at least a Level 4 American Red Cross swimmer (or equivalent), or a Class 3 Marine Corps Qualified swimmer.
  - (2) Designated responsible persons or contractors who are participating in an approved MCCS Iwakuni sponsored event, tour, or class.
  - (3) Anyone found using watercraft that is not specifically designed for open water in the Inland Sea or ocean surrounding Japan shall lose their boating license for the remainder of their tour and their Command will be notified.
- B. The following people are authorized to ride in watercraft issued to an eligible patron:
- (1) Any adult, 18 years of age or older, with SOFA status and an authorized patron of MCCS Iwakuni, who verifies by signature, meet the swim qualifications outlined in paragraph A(1) above.
  - (2) Any individual between 10-17 years of age who is a registered participant of a MCCS Iwakuni sponsored event, tour, or class. Participation requires prior approval from a parent or legal guardian and a signed Hold Harmless Agreement.
  - (3) Any dependent or authorized patron/guest under 18 years of age who can present prior written authorization from the parent or legal guardian to participate in this type of water recreation activity. The individual must remain in the sponsor's watercraft, be under the direct physical supervision of the sponsor, and wear the properly fitting Personal Floatation Device at all times.

**2. OUTDOOR RECREATION BOAT LICENSING PROCEDURES:**

A. General Provisions

- (1) All users must satisfactorily complete the required licensing procedures for the specific type of watercraft they intend to check out.
- (2) Upon successful completion of all licensing requirements, the customer will receive an Outdoor Recreation boat license, endorsed with the type(s) of watercraft they are authorized to check out.
- (3) The boat license must be presented to the Gear Issue attendant at the time of equipment checkout.
- (4) Boat licenses are valid for three (3) years from the date of issue. After expiration, individuals will be required to retake the licensing test(s) to renew their authorization.

B. SUP Board, Canoe, Bass Boat, and Sit-On Kayak

- (1) Read the MCCS Outdoor Recreation Watercraft Issue Policy.

- (2) Complete the American Canoe Association Smart Start for Safe Paddling online course.
- (3) Visit Outdoor Recreation, present the completion certificate and receive the boat license.

C. Sit-In Kayak

- (1) Read the MCCS Outdoor Recreation Watercraft Issue Policy.
- (2) Complete the American Canoe Association Smart Start for Safe Paddling online course.
- (3) Coordinate with Outdoor Recreation to schedule the practical training in the pool.
- (4) Complete practical training and receive the boat license.

**3. WATERCRAFT ISSUANCE PRIORITIES AND RULES:**

- A. MCCS Sponsored Activities.
- B. Unless otherwise approved by the Outdoor Recreation Manager, all watercrafts will be issued on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- C. Unless otherwise approved by the Outdoor Recreation Manager, watercraft and gear is due by 1800 of the due date. ANY GEAR RETURNED AFTER SAID TIME WILL BE ASSESSED A LATE FEE OF \$15.00 PER DAY.
- D. A current and valid Outdoor Recreation Boat License dated within the last three (3) years and endorsed for the type of watercraft. ONE VALID LICENCE IS REQUIREED FOR EACH WATERCRAFT ISSUED. Watercraft shall not be issued or used in inclement weather conditions or following heavy rainfall.
- E. Watercraft usage is limited to the following approved locations: Nishiki River, Tsuzu Beach, Yuu Beach, Katazoe Beach, Zushi Beach, Ihonoshō Beach, Hikari Beach, approved dams and lakes. Watercraft are required to stay within 100 meters of shore. Other locations may be permitted in advance with approval from the Outdoor Recreation Manager, contingent upon submission of a detailed float plan and adequate research of the area has been completed by the user. Only watercraft designed for open-sea use are authorized for operation in the Inland Sea or ocean surrounding Japan.
- F. Bail bucket or bilge pump will be issued to canoes or sit-in kayaks intended for use on lakes, ponds, or ocean.
- G. The buddy system is strongly recommended. Solo use of watercrafts will be discouraged for safety reasons.
- H. It is recommended all users carry a waterproof, buoyant cell phone case. Emergency contact information will be provided at the time of checkout and should be kept accessible during the float.
- I. **U.S. COAST GUARD APPROVED PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES BY ALL INDIVIDUALS WHILE ABOARD ANY MCCS WATERCRAFT.**
- J. **ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED BEFORE, DURING AND UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THE FLOAT TRIP ITINERARY.**

4. **TRIP PLANNING:**

- A. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Japan offers a variety of recreational watercraft opportunities for individuals of all ages and skill levels. While MCCS continually works to improve and provide updated information regarding these opportunities, specific weather, water, and geographical conditions can vary daily and seasonally. Patrons are strongly advised to thoroughly scout the intended trip area and obtain current information regarding weather conditions, water safety, local laws, and customs prior to departure.
- B. **FLOAT PLANS:** Each person issued a MCCS watercraft must complete a float plan for each watercraft prior to issuance. The float plan must include the following detailed information:
- (1) A detailed itinerary to include start and end dates and times, all destinations and projected stops. The plan must also include a list of all participants with the following details: full name, rank, age, home address, home and cell phone numbers, duty phone number, designated emergency contact and sponsor's unit. A separate float plan is required for each watercraft issued.
  - (2) A signed Hold Harmless Agreement for each individual, as outlined in section 1 of this policy.
  - (3) Signature verification acknowledging understanding of all watercraft rules and regulations.
- C. **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** Patrons will be informed of the emergency procedures that will be initiated if they fail to return the issued watercraft by the due date. All actions will be recorded in a logbook.
- (1) Gear Issue will contact designated emergency contact to verify whether the patron(s) has returned or deviated from the approved float plan.
  - (2) If the patrons(s) have not returned and cannot be located, the Chief of Semper Fit will be notified. The Chief will then notify the MCCS Director, the Provost Marshall's Office (PMO), and patron's Command. A copy of the float plan and all relevant information will be provided to PMO to assist in the search. At this point, the case falls under the jurisdiction of PMO, with support from the Outdoor Recreation Manager as needed.
  - (3) An After Action Report must be coordinated with PMO and submitted to the MCCS Director within three (3) working days of the resolution of the incident.