

Safety Concept – Boat Tours on the River Traun

This document is intended for teachers, supervisors and group leaders.

1. SAFETY EQUIPMENT – PROVIDED BY TRAUNXPERIENCE

TraunXperience provides all safety equipment. It must be worn or carried at all times during the tour:

- Life jacket (CE-certified, ISO 12402) – MANDATORY for all participants
- Helmet (CE EN 1385) – mandatory for gorge trips and whitewater sections
- Raft / kayak / SUP board – inspected and maintained before each season
- Paddle in appropriate size
- Dry bag for valuables and medication
- First aid kit (waterproof, in every boat)
- Throw bag / rescue rope (with guide)
- Mobile phone in waterproof case (with guide)

2. GUIDE QUALIFICATIONS

- Certified raft guide (Austrian Rafting Association)
- SUP Instructor (GSUPA – German Stand Up Paddle Association)
- First aid training (min. 16h, annual refresher)
- Lifeguard qualification
- Local knowledge of the entire route (entry/exit points, hazard areas)
- Public liability insurance in place

3. BEFORE THE TOUR – SAFETY BRIEFING

A mandatory safety briefing takes place before every tour (approx. 15–20 minutes). Participation in the briefing is a prerequisite for taking part. The following points are covered:

- Correct fitting of the life jacket (check fit, tighten straps)
- Paddle technique and commands ("Forward", "Stop", "Left/Right")
- What to do if capsized: lie on your back, feet first – swim back to the boat or to shore; wait for rescue only as a last resort
- "Man overboard" procedure: stay calm, the life jacket supports you
- Hazard points on the route (weirs, bridge pillars, currents)
- Distance to other boats and the riverbank
- Emergency signals and meeting points
- Sun and heat protection (headwear, drink water)

4. DURING THE TOUR – RULES OF CONDUCT

- Guide instructions must be followed AT ALL TIMES and IMMEDIATELY
- Life jacket must remain on for the entire tour
- No jumping from boats, bridges or rocks into the water
- No switching between boats while underway
- Maintain distance from weirs and bridge pillars

- In case of thunderstorm: immediately go ashore, follow guide instructions
- No alcohol before or during the tour
- Valuables and smartphones only in the dry bag (at your own risk)
- The group stays together – do not paddle ahead or fall behind

Proper equipment handling:

- Boats and paddles are rental equipment – handle with care, do not throw or drag
- When boarding and disembarking, stabilise the boat (paddle across, keep weight low)
- Do not modify life jacket or helmet, do not loosen straps
- Always secure dry bags and dry barrels inside the boat
- No standing in the raft boat while underway

If the boat runs aground (grounding):

- Stay calm – do NOT stand up abruptly or lean to one side
- Distribute passenger weight evenly, keep centre of gravity low
- Attempt 1: Paddle backwards – gently work the boat off the obstacle
- Attempt 2: One person steps out in a controlled manner (downstream side), holds the boat and frees it manually
- Do NOT all exit at once – risk of capsizing and current danger
- If severely grounded: guide takes over, wait for instructions
- If the boat is damaged: inform guide, boat swap may be arranged

5. NAVIGATION LAW – IMPORTANT RULES ON THE WATER

The Traun is a public waterway. The Lakes and Rivers Traffic Regulations (SFVO) apply, and on designated waterways the Waterway Traffic Regulations (WVO). Key rules:

Right of way

- Small craft (rafts, kayaks, SUPs) must give way to all larger vessels
- Motorboats and commercial shipping ALWAYS have priority
- Keep right on rivers – as in road traffic
- At blind spots: slow down, maintain communication

Age limits (Austrian law)

- On waterways (Danube, Traun etc.): under 16 only under supervision
- On other waters (lakes, streams): under 12 only under supervision
- For school groups, supervision by teacher + guide is ensured

Life jacket requirement

There is no general legal requirement to wear a life jacket for paddle craft in Austria. However, the absence of adequate safety equipment constitutes negligence under §7 of the Shipping Act. At TraunXperience, wearing a life jacket is therefore MANDATORY for all participants – no exceptions.

No-go at high water

When the highest navigable water level (HSW) is exceeded, a general prohibition applies for rowing craft. TraunXperience checks the current water level before every tour and cancels free of charge if conditions are dangerous.

6. NAVIGATION SIGNS – UNDERSTANDING SIGNS ON THE WATER

Various navigation signs are posted along the Traun and its tributaries. The most important ones for paddlers:

RED-WHITE-RED panel (A.1)

PASSAGE PROHIBITED! This sign means an absolute ban on passage. Go ashore immediately or turn back. May also appear as a red light or red flag.

Red panel / Red light

Entry prohibited into the marked area (e.g. lock area, restricted zone). **WARNING:** On the red-marked side of vessels, ropes, anchor chains or other obstacles may be hidden underwater!

Yellow diamond

Recommended passage. This area is cleared for passage and safe.

Blue panel with white arrow

Recommended direction of travel – pass on the indicated side.

St Andrew's cross

Caution, junction or confluence. Increased attention, reduce speed.

RULE OF THUMB

If you don't understand a sign: **DO NOT** continue! Ask the guide. When in doubt, always stop and check.

7. EMERGENCY PLAN

If capsized / person in the water:

- Stay calm! The life jacket supports you.
- Lie on your back, feet pointing downstream
- Do not swim against the current
- **PRIORITY 1:** Swim back to the capsized boat and hold on
- **PRIORITY 2:** Swim to the nearest riverbank or exit point
- **PRIORITY 3 (last resort):** Maintain back position, wait for guide rescue
- Guide throws rescue rope (throw bag) – hold on and let yourself be pulled in
- Other boats: maintain safe distance, do not jump in yourself

In case of injury:

- Stop the group, land at a safe spot
- First aid by guide (first aid kit in every boat)
- If needed, call emergency services: 144 (ambulance) or 112 (Euro emergency)
- Mobile reception is available along the entire route
- Several exit points are accessible for emergency vehicles

In case of thunderstorm:

- **IMMEDIATELY** leave the water! Water conducts lightning.
- On land: crouch down low, do not shelter under isolated trees
- Guide decides on tour cancellation or waiting time
- In case of weather warning, the tour is cancelled in advance (free rebooking)

Important emergency numbers:

- 144 – Ambulance
- 133 – Police
- 122 – Fire brigade (incl. water rescue)
- 112 – Euro emergency number
- +43 660 5290014 – Roland Fraunberger (TraunXperience)

8. CONDITIONS FOR TOUR CANCELLATION

TraunXperience reserves the right to cancel tours for safety reasons. Cancellation is communicated as early as possible (usually the evening before). Reasons for cancellation:

- Flooding (water level above HSW – highest navigable water level)
- Thunderstorm warning or severe weather
- Storm warning (wind force > 6 Beaufort)
- Water temperature below 8 °C (hypothermia risk)
- Insufficient participants (minimum number varies by tour)

FREE REBOOKING

If cancelled by TraunXperience, an alternative date is offered free of charge. Amounts already paid are refunded in full.

9. NATURE CONSERVATION IN THE NATURA 2000 AREA LOWER TRAUN

The Lower Traun is a European protected area (Natura 2000, AT3113000). It is one of the last near-natural river ecosystems in Austria and an important breeding and wintering area for waterbirds.

Protected bird species on the Lower Traun:

- Common merganser (*Mergus merganser*) – breeding bird, very sensitive to disturbance
- Black kite (*Milvus migrans*) – breeds in the riparian forests
- Marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) – breeds in the reed belt
- Common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) – breeds in steep banks
- Common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – breeds on gravel banks
- Various ducks, herons, cormorants

Rules of conduct in the protected area:

- Minimum distance 30–50 metres from reed belts and vegetated banks
- Gravel banks and sand bars: DO NOT walk on them (breeding sites of ground-nesting birds)
- Do not paddle into reed zones and reed beds
- Observe birds and other wildlife only from a distance
- Near bird congregations: be quiet, paddle slowly, do not feed
- Respect breeding season (March to July) – be especially considerate during this time
- Dogs (if permitted) must be kept on a lead
- Do not leave any litter or food waste in or near the water
- Enter and exit only at designated points
- Do not damage bank vegetation – no breaking of branches or plants

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Waterbirds are particularly sensitive to stand-up paddlers – the upright silhouette triggers strong flight responses. Studies show that birds can flee from distances of 300 metres. Every disturbance costs energy that is vital for survival, especially in winter and during the breeding season.

10. WASTE PREVENTION AND LEAVE NO TRACE

TraunXperience stands for sustainable tourism. We ask all participants to observe the following principles:

Before the tour:

- Dispose of unnecessary packaging at the meeting point
- Use reusable water bottles instead of single-use plastic bottles
- Bring packed lunch in reusable containers (no cling film, no plastic bags)
- NO glass on the water (injury risk!)

During and after the tour:

- EVERYTHING that comes along also goes back
- Store waste in the dry bag, do not throw it in the water
- Food waste NOT in the water – even organic waste disturbs the ecosystem
- If possible: collect other people's litter on the bank too (clean-up)
- Cigarette butts belong in a pocket ashtray, NOT in the water
- Choose reef-friendly/biodegradable sunscreen where possible

LEAVE NO TRACE

Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but memories. Our goal: the river should be just as clean after our tour as before – or cleaner.

11. DUTY OF SUPERVISION FOR SCHOOL GROUPS

- The teacher's general duty of supervision remains in effect throughout the entire tour
- The guide takes over technical leadership on the water (safety, navigation, technique)
- Recommended: at least 1 teacher in the front boat and 1 in the rear boat
- Maintain visual contact and ideally voice contact between all boats
- Participants under 18 require a signed declaration of consent from parents (see parent letter)
- Students who repeatedly fail to follow safety instructions may be excluded from the tour

12. MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

- SWIMMING ABILITY is a prerequisite (min. 15 min. unassisted swimming)
- Participants with cardiovascular conditions: medical certificate recommended
- Epilepsy: participation only with medical clearance and under supervision
- Asthma: carry inhaler in dry bag, inform guide
- Insect sting allergy: EpiPen in dry bag, inform guide
- Diabetes: blood glucose monitor + snacks within reach, inform guide
- Fear of water: please discuss BEFORE booking – we will find solutions

- Personal medication ALWAYS carried in waterproof case

13. CONTACT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Operator:	TraunXperience – Roland Fraunberger
Address:	Hafferlstrasse 3/3, 4650 Lambach, Upper Austria
Phone:	+43 660 5290014 (also reachable on tour day)
Email:	office@traunxperience.at
Web:	traunxperience.at
Emergency on tour day:	+43 660 5290014 (Roland Fraunberger)

SOURCES

- Waterway Traffic Regulations (WVO), BGBl. II Nr. 31/2019
- Lakes and Rivers Traffic Regulations (SFVO)
- §7 Shipping Act (SchFG)
- European Protected Area Lower Traun, AT3113000 (Management Plan, Province of Upper Austria)
- Austrian Rafting Association – Equipment guidelines
- SUP-Guide.at – Legal foundations for stand-up paddling in Austria
- BirdLife Austria – Bird protection during leisure activities
- LBV Bavaria – Stand Up Paddling and waterbirds (disturbance study)
- German Canoe Association – 10 Rules for paddlers (nature/environmental protection)

As of: February 2026