FINAL REGULATIONS - CHAPTER P-3 - RIVER OUTFITTERS

Note: Amendments to the Rules are added in red text and deletions are in red text with strikethrough.

 # 305 - Vessels and Equipment

1. A river outfitter shall provide all vessels and associated equipment required during all regulated trips. When equipment is lost, damaged, or used during a bona fide on-the-river emergency, then the river outfitter shall ensure that every vessel is reequipped as required prior to use of the vessel on any successive trip.

2. All vessels used during a regulated trip shall be marked with the vessel owner's name, current address, and telephone number in a legible, clearly visible and durable fashion.

3. The trip leader shall ensure that every regulated trip carries aboard at least one of the vessels a first-aid kit which shall be immediately available for emergency use. The first-aid kit shall contain, at a minimum, adhesive bandages, sterile pads, flexible gauze bandages, first-aid tape, antiseptic or soap and triangular bandages in quantities sufficient to meet the size and needs of the regulated trip. These supplies shall be maintained in a clean and dry condition in a durable container suitable for river use.

4. The trip leader shall ensure that every regulated trip carries aboard at least one of the vessels a throwbag containing a minimum of fifty feet of rope. The throwbag shall be in a serviceable condition and shall be stored so as to be readily accessible in an emergency.

5. River outfitters shall not provide, use, operate or permit the on water use or operation of fishing aids, air mattresses, beach or water toys, innertubes, ~~air mattresses,~~ or any ~~other~~ single-chambered, air-inflated devices during any regulated trip.

6. If an inflatable raft or dory is used during a regulated trip, then each such vessel shall:

    a. Display the river outfitter's company name or logo or abbreviation, which shall read from left to right in characters of good proportion, a minimum of four inches in height above waterline, of a color which contrasts with the color of the background, and be maintained so as to be clearly visible and legible from a distance of one hundred and fifty feet.

    b. Be equipped with a rope attached to the bow or stern, which shall be a minimum of ten feet long and suitable for tying up and securely holding the vessel to the shore of the waters being traveled. All loose ropes not in use shall be stored and secured so as not to present a danger of entanglement in case of an accident.

    c. Be equipped with at least one suitable container of sufficient size for bailing water out of the vessel, except that self-bailing vessels are exempt from this requirement.

    d. Be adequately equipped with durable and substantially undamaged oars or paddles and spares, taking into consideration the size of the vessel and river conditions.

        (1) For oar-controlled and powered vessels or combination oar and paddle-controlled and powered vessels, there shall be a minimum of two oars and one spare oar aboard each such vessel.

(2) For paddle-controlled and powered vessels, there shall be a minimum of one spare paddle per vessel. The spare paddle(s) may be carried in another vessel on the same trip so long as the spare(s) is/are readily accessible. A spare paddle is one in addition to one paddle per participating adult.

7. ~~If an inflatable raft, inflatable kayak, or other multi-chambered~~Any air inflated ~~device~~ vessel~~is~~ used during a regulated trip~~, then:~~ must be multi-chambered if it is designed to carry more than one person. Air inflated vessels must be of durable construction, designed for and capable of river use.

~~a. Every inflatable raft, inflatable kayak, or other inflated type vessel shall be multi-chambered, containing a minimum of two separate air chambers.~~

~~b. Every regulated trip including one or more inflatable rafts, inflatable kayaks, or other inflated vessel type shall have immediately available a minimum of one patch/repair kit and one air pump. Both the kit and the air pump must be adequate to meet the size and needs of the trip and they must be compatible with the vessel(s) in use. The kit shall be maintained in good and serviceable condition and stored in a durable container suitable for river use.~~

8. Every regulated trip including one or more air inflated vessel(s) shall have immediately available a minimum of one patch/repair kit and one air pump. Both the kit and the air pump must be adequate to meet the size and needs of the trip and they must be compatible with the vessel(s) in use. The kit shall be maintained in good and serviceable condition and stored in a durable container suitable for river use.

~~8.~~9. If ~~a canoe, whitewater or decked canoe, hard shell kayak, inflatable kayak, or sit-on-top kayak~~a vessel designed to carry a single person is used during a regulated trip, then a minimum of one spare paddle per every five such vessels shall be readily accessible aboard one of the vessels on the trip. In addition:

a. For canoes, whitewater canoes, and hard shell kayaks, every such vessel shall be equipped with flotation bags securely fixed in the vessel so as to provide enough flotation that when the fully equipped vessel is full of water, it will remain afloat.

b. Every river outfitter, guide, guide in training, guide instructor, trip leader, and commercial passenger aboard ~~a whitewater or decked canoe or hard shell kayak~~vessel designed to carry a single person shall wear a securely fastened crash helmet at all times while on the river.

~~.~~i. All inflatable kayaks, canoes, hard shell kayaks or similar vessels that are designed to carry two persons shall also wear a securely fastened crash helmet at all times while on the river.

~~9.~~10. If a motorboat, as defined in 33-13-102 (1), C.R.S., is used during a regulated trip, all State boating statutes and regulations pertaining to motorboat registration, use, operation and required equipment apply, except that the personal flotation device requirement shall be as stated in regulation # 304. In addition to the equipment otherwise required by law, each motorboat used during a regulated trip shall also:

a. Display the river outfitter's company name, logo, or abbreviation, as specified in # 305-6.a.;

b. Be equipped with one spare motor or adequate alternate means of propulsion and control;

c. Be equipped with a rope, a minimum of ten feet long, attached to the bow and stored when not in use as specified in # 305-6.b.;

d. Be equipped with a bailing device as specified in # 305-6.c., except that self-bailing vessels are exempt from this requirement; and

e. Be equipped with one suitable size ladder, capable of accommodating persons boarding from the water and stored so as to be readily accessible.

Basis and Purpose:

Updating the river outfitters regulations to implement HB 26-1197

CPW licenses and regulates river outfitters, meaning people who provide river-running services to the public for compensation (regulated trips). As part of that licensing process, no person may serve as a professional river outfitter without first obtaining a river outfitter license from CPW (ROL). River outfitters must meet the regulatory safety standards for river-running established by the Commission. HB 26-1197 revised the statutory definition of a vessel. In order to implement the bill these changes will update the regulations to allow the use of single-chambered vessels that are designed to carry one person. Considering technological advancements, the Division believes the use of single-chambered vessels on regulated trips that are designed to carry one person, like paddleboards and packrafts, are appropriate.

The statements of basis and purpose for these regulations can be obtained from the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife, Office of the Regulations Manager by emailing dnr_cpw_planning@state.co.us or by visiting the Division of Parks and Wildlife headquarters at 6060 Broadway, Denver, CO, 80216.

The primary statutory authority for these regulations can be found in § 24-4-103, C.R.S., and the state Parks Act, §§ 33-10-101 to 33-33-113, C.R.S., and specifically including, but not limited to: §§ 33-10-106 and 33-10-107, C.R.S.

EFFECTIVE DATE - THESE REGULATIONS SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2027, AND SHALL REMAIN IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT UNTIL REPEALED, AMENDED OR SUPERSEDED.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY THE PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF COLORADO THIS 4TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2026.