

## **FAQS**

***How many paddlers does it take to change a light bulb? Whoops, wrong question. How many paddlers does it take to fill a dragon boat?***

A: Each dragon boat needs 22 people which includes 20 paddlers, 1 drummer, and 1 steersperson. A steersperson will be supplied if your team does not have one – please let us know in advance if you need this service. *BTW, it also takes 22 paddlers to change a light bulb – 1 to hold the bulb in place, 20 to paddle the boat in circles, and 1 to keep the tempo.*

***Can I have an all-men or all-women team?***

A: You must have at least 8 women per crew. An all-women team is fine.

***Do we get a chance to practice?***

A: Most certainly! From Monday to Friday the week before Race Day, you and your team can partake in the free practice sessions on the Martindale Pond side of Henley Island. You can book your practice time by email (see [Teams](#) for more information). If you can't get all your team members to the same practice session, you can send them to the Island during other practice times and we will put them in with another team to help make up the numbers.

***Waivers ... who needs them?***

A: Every single member of your team entering into a boat must have a completed and signed waiver on file with the Festival Administration. These waivers are a legal document and without a completed waiver, no one is allowed in a boat – for practice or on race day.

***Where do I go when I first arrive?***

A: As you will see on the map you will receive, you will be directed to the red parking area. We have a local Scout troop helping with parking – they will ask you for a donation (usually \$2). From there you will need to go to the Registration Tent to drop off your signed waivers and register your team. Then it's over to the Wellspring Pledges Tent to drop off your team's pledges. Right, paperwork done, it's time to either find your team a spot in Tent City or meet up at the site you have already set up. Then relax and get ready for your first race!

***What if I need an extra paddler to fill in?***

A: The Festival does have spare paddlers as volunteers. Let the Staging Area Official know when you gather in the staging area whether you need a male or female paddler. If one is available, they will join your team in the Staging Area.

***So just what does a drummer drum?***

A: A drummer, usually a smaller member of the crew, sits at the front of the boat and provides the paddling tempo by beating on his or her drum. No great experience or talent is required, but practical jokers could take you right off course.

***I like telling people where to go. Can I be a steersperson?***

A: Steers are very important in dragon boat racing. If you've never done it before, expect to need at least 2 training sessions (at your practices) and some affinity for it in order to do it well. We will provide your crew with a steers if you do not have one, but be sure to let us know as soon as possible that you will need this service. If your team does have an experienced steers, please let us know if he/she would be willing to volunteer to help other crews (not during the same race as your team, obviously).

***Can my kids be part of my crew?***

A: Minimum age to be in a dragon boat is 16 years, with parental consent for those under 19.

***Can my dog be part of my crew?***

A: Well, now you're just being silly. Everyone knows that doing the dog paddle and dogs doing the paddling are 2 separate things!

### ***What is a Survivor Team?***

A: A Survivor Team is made up of women and men who have survived cancer, and most Survivor Teams and Challenge Races are specifically for the survivors of breast cancer. Dragon boating has been hailed as an extremely beneficial form of exercise for those who have battled this disease and Dragon Boat Festivals the world over celebrate and honour these strong and courageous individuals.

### ***What is a Challenge Race?***

A: Challenge Races are traditionally held for Survivor Teams, but can be set up for any special group with two or more teams entered. For example, there is often a Mayor's Challenge Race, where teams consisting of City employees or Councillors compete against other Cities' teams. Challenge Races are held between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> heats, may be shorter than a regular race, and the winner may receive a special Challenge Race Cup or some other type of medal or award to commemorate the Race (plus bragging rights for the year).

### ***How does my team issue a Challenge?***

A: First talk with our organizers (see [Contact Us](#)) to be sure we can accommodate your race. Let us know the category involved and what will make this race special (e.g.: a Hydro company is issuing a challenge to a Gas company to have a "power race"). We'll work with you to make your race fun and exciting!

### ***Food & Drink: what, when, how much?***

A: Breakfast: we hope to offer a light breakfast again this year (available 7:00 – 11:30). All proceeds go to Start Me Up Niagara - Out of the Cold program. Lunch: BBQ by Start Me Up Niagara starts around 11:30 until 5:00. Standard fare includes hamburgers, hot dogs, veggie dogs or burgers at very reasonable prices. Of course, pop and juice are also available.

Water: whenever possible, the Region very kindly sends out a water truck to our Festival. Please bring a reusable water bottle, and then fill up as often as you like for free at the truck (in Vendor Village). Beer and wine are available in the Beer Tent from 11:30 on. Note: NO OUTSIDE ALCOHOL may be brought on to the Island and all alcohol purchased must be kept within the Beer Tent.

### ***Can we bring our own food and drink?***

A: You can provide your own food. You CANNOT provide your own alcoholic beverages. See the above question for what the Festival offers in the way of food & beverages. We would also greatly appreciate it if you did not bring disposable water bottles. Please bring a refillable water container.

### ***How much does it cost to enter a team?***

A: The St. Catharines Dragon Boat Festival charges \$750 per team registration. This works out to approx. \$34 per crewmate. Discounts are available for early-bird registrations, Breast Cancer Survivor teams, and multi-team registrations.

### ***Is my registration fee tax deductible?***

A: No, because you are paying an entrance fee and thus receiving a service. However, the money raised through registrations to the Festival, once expenses are paid, do go to the St. Catharines Museum in support of educational programs and projects. Pledges made to Wellspring Niagara are eligible for a tax receipt, as would be a donation to any of our charitable partners (the St. Catharines Museum, Wellspring Niagara, Start Me Up Niagara).

### ***I want to enter my team, but am short some members. What can I do?***

A: Go ahead and register. If you're still short by race day, let us know and we'll arrange for some volunteer paddlers to help you out. There are always extra paddlers around just looking for an excuse to hop in a boat!

### ***I've got more than 22 people who want to be on my team – how do I choose who goes in and who stays on shore?***

A: Each team will have 3 races. You can let everyone have a turn at paddling while the others cheer you on, switching up for each race. Better yet, register 2 teams and we'll schedule their races far enough apart so they can share crewmates.

***I've never done this before – how can I learn to paddle?***

A: We hold practices for newbies. See the section on [Rules/Practice Information](#) or [Team Registration](#) for all the details.

***What time does the Festival start? And end?***

A: The first race generally starts around 9:00 am. Races are normally 10-12 minutes apart and, depending on the number of teams and any weather delays, and usually end between 4:00 and 5:00 pm.

***How many races will we be in? Do only the winners get an extra race?***

A: Each crew will have 3 races during the day, regardless of your standings. The time your team sets in the first race dictates your position in the second race. It is the same for the second race. The third race is the final and your place in the finishing line up is decided by that time.

***What type of clothing should we wear?***

A: Keep in mind that you will be near water most of the time and you may get wet. You can almost guarantee that your feet will get wet! Dress as you would for any sporting event this time of year, but make sure that you aren't wearing expensive leather footwear. Also keep in mind that eyeglasses, sunglasses, or any other loose items may end up dropping into the water and that you will not be able to rescue them if this happens.

***What happens if it rains?***

A: You get wet! Seriously, you're going to be wet anyway after your race, so a little rain won't stop us. The races (and practices) will be stopped for lightning, high winds, or 'severe weather,' but this is usually just a time-out and we continue once the threat has passed. Our organizers are totally tuned in to Doppler radar, plus have a nifty little 10-mile radius lightning-detector.

***A bunch of us from work want to put together a team – how do we get our company to pay the registration fee?***

A: Well, usually the best time to ask is before or during your company's annual budget review and planning. Talk to your co-workers first and see how much interest there is. If you can do a full crew of just co-workers, you can promote it as teambuilding. If you need (or just want) to include family members, then it becomes a morale-booster, employee appreciation, and/or giving back to the community. Make sure you come up with a team name that promotes your company and suggest getting t-shirts with that team name on the back. Finally, go to our [Downloads](#) section and grab some of the posters – don't forget the Sponsor Package (Festival Sponsors will get to put in a free team along with lots of recognition).

***I/my company would like to become a Volunteer/Steers/Spare Paddler/Vendor/ Sponsor. Where can I find more information?***

A: See our [Volunteer Info](#) section for more info on being a Festival volunteer, steersperson, spare paddler, or Committee volunteer. See our [Vendor Info](#) page to find out how to become a Festival Vendor. See the [Sponsors Info](#) page to learn how to become a Festival Sponsor.

***Are spectators welcome? Is there a charge to come and watch?***

A: Spectators are always welcome. There is no charge to come on the Island; however, the Scouts assist with parking and will be asking for your donation (usually \$2 requested). Once on the Island, you are welcome to wander around, shop at the vendor booths, get some food and drink, and cheer on your favourite teams as they paddle past.

***My question still hasn't been answered!***

A: Send us an email and we'll get the answer to you. And frequent questions will be added to the FAQ, so check back another time.

