

Tulsa's Great Raft Race

Rules & Regulations

Safety is our #1 priority! The rules and regulations set forth are for the protection of our participants and spectators.

GENERAL NOTES:

The age cutoff for participants is 18, or 12 if accompanied by a parent. A 3:1 child to parent ratio is required.

Shuttling will not be available to and from take in and take out. We encourage attendees to ferry vehicles to get between sites.

WATER DISCLAIMER

Tulsa's Great Raft race is dependent upon mother nature's full support and cooperation, ensuring we have the water needed for a fun and safe race. In the event she doesn't play nice, or we are facing low rainfall drought like conditions, the event may be canceled. A refund will be issued and as much notice as possible given to participants.

CAN WE SWIM IN THE WATER?

While the mighty Arkansas River is rated for primary contact, we would recommend staying on your raft or floating device during the race. Water levels vary along the waterway and we don't want participants hitting rocks and debris in shallow areas. Plus, it's not fun if you ingest any river water. Better safe than sorry (trust us!). In all seriousness, it's never safe to ingest river or lake water.

PERSONAL FLOATING DEVICES (PFDS)

We like to play around a lot, but we do not mess around our P.F.D.s. Your Personal Floatation Devices (life vests) are your first ticket onto the water. Every single racer on your team who plans to be on the water needs to have one. This is not negotiable, and our water safety team will be standing guard to ensure this happens. We value safety above all else – including fun!

RAFT RULES

- Your raft team is required to be able to hand carry your raft.
- Acceptable boat types are canoes, kayaks, inflatable rafts, paddleboards, and homebuilt rafts.
- **RAFTS ABOVE 12ft x 16ft WILL NOT BE ALLOWED.** Small-Mid size rafts will have a maximum size of 8 ft x 10 ft. Mid-large size rafts will be above 8ft x 10ft and no bigger than 12ft x 16ft. Please be clear about what category you're in because we need this for staging and launch info.
- No motors are allowed on boats of any type.
- **All rafts are required to have a safety whistle.** Only blow in case of extreme emergency to notify water safety boats.

HOMEMADE RAFT RULES

- **All homemade rafts are also required to have a safety whistle.**
 - An anchor with rope rated to their vessel's weight. If you miss the West Festival boat ramp take-out, you must immediately throw anchor to prevent floating farther downstream toward Zink Dam.
 - Extra rope to be able to tie off if needed during race or at take-out waiting for the boat ramp to clear.
 - An easily accessible tow point if the Fire Department boat needs to tow you to shore.
 - One safety whistle per boat. Only blow in case of extreme emergency to notify water safety boats.
 - A sufficient number of oars or paddles to navigate your raft. Two extra paddles are recommended.
- Homebuilt rafts will be registered in 2 different categories. It is very important to register in the proper category
- All homemade rafts are required to drop their rafts Sunday starting at 11a.m. in River City Park. We will do raft drop-off and check-in in waves Sunday from 11a.m. - 5p.m. You will be notified of your drop off time via email before the race. The Coast Guard Auxiliary will be checking rafts for safety. Security will be on-site overnight to watch over rafts.
- The estimated average depth will be 4.5 feet. It is possible in a few small areas of the course the depth could be as shallow as 2 feet. Please build your raft accordingly and keep in mind in these few areas it may be required to push/pull your raft.

ALCOHOL RULES

- Low point beer will be allowed on the river. We are in accordance with Oklahoma Boating Laws. If you drink while rafting, it is mandatory to designate a non-drinking boat operator, just as you would designate a non-drinking driver.
- There is a zero-tolerance policy on overconsumption of alcohol. Local law enforcement has authority to issue tickets on the water and will do so if any person or raft is creating a safety issue or causing problems. We want everyone to have a great, safe experience. Thank you for your compliance!
- Sand Springs River City Park does not allow alcohol consumption in the park. You will not be allowed to drink in the park prior to your launch time. Sand Springs Police will be present and strictly enforcing this local ordinance.

SAFETY REGULATIONS

- All participants are required to have a life jacket. The Great Raft Race is in accordance with Oklahoma Boating Laws and life jackets must be Coast Guard-approved. [See the Department of Safety's website for further information.](#)
- Multiple local authorities will be deploying safety power boats. There will also be swift water rescue kayakers floating with certain waves and stationed around bridge pillars. The primary river channel is RIVER RIGHT (Right side of river floating down stream) for most of the route. The first 2 miles below Sand Springs can be shallow; directly downstream HWY 97 bridge is especially shallow. Stay to the right of the large sandbar. The average depth for the entire route at our water release is approximately 4.5 feet, but can be as shallow as 2 feet in some areas.

- Stopping on sand bars to hang out for extended periods of time is not permitted. Only a certain amount of a water release is secured, and you run the risk of being on the river when the water level begins to recede. You could possibly be stuck dragging your raft over sand bars down river.
- Entering Tulsa as the river begins to bend south, you will go under 244 bridge and multiple others. There are lots of misaligned pillars in this area and, it is potentially a trouble spot. Please make sure all raft occupants are secure and paying attention in this section. Safety kayakers will be stationed here directing you to the appropriate approach. At this point you have to stay on the RIGHT side of the river going forward. The take out is shortly after the bridges, and if you are on the MIDDLE TO LEFT side of the river you could potentially miss the take out boat ramp.
- If you experience an emergency event, blow your safety whistle and safety personnel will respond. Or use your cell phone to call the appropriate authorities.

SEVERE WEATHER

Oklahoma events mean Oklahoma weather and we want our racers prepared for unexpected inclement weather. Our event is RAIN or SHINE, with a few exceptions...

In the event of severe weather before the start of our event, including lightening and storms, please check your e-mails and our social media pages for timely updates. We will make every effort to update participants as early as possible to changes in schedule.

Should we experience sudden storms during the race day, any lightening strike within ten miles of the event will pause boat launches and our safety teams on the water will work to notify teams to find the closest bank and get off the water. The race will resume, and boats will begin launching, after 30 minutes of no lightening strikes in the area.

Safety first!