



# **Outdoor Recreation Georgia Tech (ORGT)**

## **River Crossing<sup>1</sup> Policy**

### **General Procedures**

1. Select an appropriate route during planning.
2. Monitor river conditions and weather reports prior to and during trips to areas where river crossing is planned for or may occur.
3. Prepare and supervise participants at all times.
4. Examine the option not to cross a river based on the ability of the weakest participant and river characteristics such as rate of flow, depth, riverbed and shoreline characteristics, downstream hazards, and air and water temperature.
5. Face upstream and if using a rope, cross on its downstream side.
6. Wear appropriate footwear such as tennis shoes or boots, secured sandals or water shoes.
7. When carrying a pack, undo the waistband and sternum strap, and loosen the shoulder straps so the pack can be easily removed if necessary.
8. Shuffle feet across the bottom and do not cross or lift feet.
9. Consider having a person without a pack on each side of the crossing to lend assistance.
10. Consider stationing a Staff person or strong swimmer downstream as a backup.
11. Cross alone only in water less than knee high.
12. Consider the chances and consequences of a fall when crossing on a log or rock-hopping prior to.

### **River Crossing Selection**

1. Pick a wide, shallow stretch of water that is free from obstructions that could snag a rope.
2. The banks should not be steep.
3. The stretch of water below the fording point should be long, shallow, and free of hazards.

### **River Crossing without a Rope**

1. Double-Crossing: Two people face each other and hold shoulders. The larger person faces downstream to create an eddy for the smaller person. Small side-steps are taken alternately, beginning with the upstream person, each supporting the other while moving.
2. Triangle Crossing: Three people form a triangle, with the strongest person as point, facing upstream. The point calls step right, step left as the triangle moves across the river.
3. In-Line Crossing: At least three people form a line with the strongest person in the front facing upstream and using a long stick or paddle to

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<sup>1</sup> Some of this information was adapted from Georgia College Outdoor Education Programs policy

support themselves. Waders carefully follow holding the shoulders of the person in front.

**River Crossing with a Rope**

1. Use the rope as a hand line and do not clip into it.
2. Anchor one end at least five (5) feet on shore.
3. Three people cross using the triangle crossing technique holding on to the rope to anchor it to the far side at least five (5) feet on shore.
4. The remainder of the group crosses using the rope for support, facing up stream.
5. The last three people untie the anchor and cross using the triangle crossing technique.