

CROA

COLORADO RIVER OUTFITTERS ASSOCIATION



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COLORADO RIVER OUTFITTERS TAKE BOLD INITIATIVE

BUENA VISTA, Colo. — The Colorado River Outfitters Association announced Thursday that, beginning in 2000, members will be required to have drug-testing programs for all drivers and river guides.

Bolstering a tradition of safety and responsibility, CROA's executive committee decided to require its members each adopt some kind of drug-testing program. The move follows a year of studying the issue and talking to members about the pros and cons of such programs, including cost and liability issues.

Drug testing isn't new to most river outfitters. Drivers with Commercial Drivers Licenses already must submit to random drug testing. Any outfitter who operates within national parks and monuments already is required by federal law to have a drug-testing program.

CROA's executive committee decided to let each member outfitter design his or her own drug-testing program, though they suggested the programs include pre-employment and random drug testing. The executive committee also decided that drug testing wasn't necessary for administrative and office staff, though many outfitters are certain to implement their drug-testing policies company-wide. By designing their own programs, members can implement drug testing in ways that best fit their operations and limitations.

CROA represents 58 licensed river outfitters in Colorado.

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COLORADO RIVERS EVEN SAFER THAN BEFORE

BUENA VISTA, Colo. — The Colorado River Outfitters Association announced Thursday that, beginning in 2000, members will be required to have drug-testing programs for all drivers and river guides.

“As an industry, CROA members are committed to taking the necessary precautions to ensure we are providing the highest level of service and experience for our guests,” said [name], CROA Chairman and owner of [company], a rafting company in [city].

After a year of studying the issue and surveying its members, the CROA executive committee passed a resolution that all its members adopt at least a basic drug-testing program. The resolution suggested that the programs include pre-employment and random drug testing.

Many outfitters already fall under federal guidelines requiring their drivers to submit to random drug tests. All outfitters that operate within national parks, including areas such as Colorado National Monument and Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument, also are required to have drug-testing programs.

Although all outdoor adventures involve risk, CROA representative [name] said CROA members consider safety a priority and strive to ensure guests have the safest, highest quality experience possible. Drug testing will not only support this goal but will put river rafting at the vanguard of Colorado tourism industries in terms of safety and social sensitivity, said [name].

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CROA members comprise 58 licensed river outfitters in Colorado. In 1998, the rafting industry contributed \$115 million to the state's economy

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BACKGROUND

The Colorado River Outfitters Association represents 58 licensed river outfitters in Colorado, identifying and supporting river conservation issues in the state. CROA also promotes safe whitewater practices for commercial and private river rafters. The State of Colorado licenses all members, who are expected to adhere to a code of ethics that includes commitment to safety, water and natural resources conservation and professional conduct.

CROA represents its members to the legislature and regulatory agencies and serves as a united voice about river, water and conservation issues. CROA also compiles statistics about the industry's operations and economic impact.

Since 1993, the river rafting industry in Colorado has jumped from 381,755 user days (a user day is one person on a half- or full-day trip) to 520,940 user days in 1998, an increase of 36 percent. In the same time, the total economic impact has jumped 53 percent, from \$75 million in 1993 to \$115 million in 1998. Estimates for 1999 predict another 8.4 percent increase in the number of user days.

"River rafting represent a large portion of Colorado's summer tourism business, both in terms of rafters and dollar impact," said [name], CROA Chairman. Only Colorado's ski industry attracts more tourism dollars and visitors.

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