FLY FISHING FUNDAMENTALS

» Obey all state and local fishing laws and rules.
» Practice “catch and release”. Be sure your hands are wet before handling fish.
» Understand the “Golden Rule”, treat other anglers as you want to be treated.
» Don’t step on or disturb a Redd (spawning bed)

This guide is intended to prepare you in the following areas when fly fishing:

1. Off the River
2. Float Anglers
3. Fly Fishing from a Flats Boat
4. On the River
5. Tipping your Fishing Guide (Gratuity)

1. OFF THE RIVER

» Stay on visible paths and trails; shortcuts kill vegetation and lead to erosion and silting. Erosion and silting can endanger fish and destroy aquatic life.
» Don’t litter. Take a plastic bag with you and collect your trash or trash left by others. Dedicate a vest or shirt pocket to hold the monofilament line you cut off your reel.
» Don’t trespass. Ask permission before walking on private property or don’t fish there. Most likely you are not the first person to ask a land owner if you can access water on their property. They may have an established rod-fee. Be polite and respect their policies. Close all gates behind you.

2. FLOAT ANGLERS

» Wait patiently for your turn to launch.
» Wait near the launch site but not in a roadway or lane that blocks the entry/
exit of the ramp. Undo the trailer, boat straps and covers. Load gear. Make sure to have your boat rigged and loaded before you back down the ramp. After getting your boat in the water move it away from the ramp. If you need to tie up or anchor move your boat, make sure to be upstream of the ramp. If anchored, make sure you are out of the way of other boats that are launching. Once your boat is in the water and safely tied up or anchored, pull your vehicle and trailer out of the water, move your vehicle to the parking lot and secure the tie-down straps.

» As you float down the river, give wading anglers a wide berth and limit your use of oars or motor. Don’t cast into the same area as the wading angler. If the wading angler is standing in the middle of the river, maneuver your boat behind the angler.

» If a boat is occupying a known hot spot but no one is fishing, don’t assume you can slide into that area. Ask if they are staying in the spot or moving on.

» If your fishing partner in the boat hooks a fish, reel your line in and help them land/net the fish. If you are in a drift boat with a Guide, the Guide will help your partner land the fish, be cautious not to interfere when they are trying to land the fish.

» If you see trash floating in the water, pick it up. Be aware of the trash in your boat and make sure it doesn’t blow out when moving to another fishing hole. Dispose of trash properly.

» After the float and you have arrived at the take-out, tie up or anchor your boat downstream of the ramp. Make sure your boat is out of the way of other watercrafts approaching or using the ramp. Move your boat to the take-out ramp only after your vehicle is pulled up and in place.

» Help clean the boat when you are done fishing.

3. FLY FISHING FROM A FLATS BOAT

» Be quiet! Saltwater fish are easily spooked (noise from cooler lids, camera cases, etc. that bang against the hull of the boat travel great distances.)

» Don’t hog the bow. Split time on the bow fairly with your fishing partners.

» Establish rules with your fishing partners, such as setting a certain number of casts or time limit until the next partner can switch to the bow to cast.

» Listen, be respectful, and follow the rules to the Guide and their boat.

» Do not wear studs or traction devices on your wading boots while you are in the boat.
4. ON THE RIVER

» Listen, be respectful, and follow the rules of the guide and his/her boat.

» A section of water belongs to the first angler fishing. It is inconsiderate to crowd them. You should maintain a distance of at least two long casts from another angler. Before entering the water near another angler, confirm the direction they are fishing (upstream or downstream) and ask their permission before entering the water near them.

» A slow-moving or stationary angler has every right to remain where they are. If you are moving, leave the water and walk around them and be sure not to disturb their fishing or the water they might be working. The angler may be resting a pool or planning their next move so remember that area is considered their water and you should not jump in without permission.

» An angler working in an upstream direction has the right-of-way over someone fishing downstream. Keep in mind, an angler wading upstream against the current forces you to move slowly, cover less water and approach fish from behind and an angler working in a downstream direction moves faster, covers more ground quickly, and has the potential to disturb a larger area of water. For example, a careless wader could send silt or debris washing downstream and alarm fish that another angler is working and spoil his fishing. The wader should get out of the river and go around the angler fishing that area, if the density of the stream side vegetation or local laws make it impossible to go around, ask the angler which bank he would like you to wade and stay as close to the bank as possible. Reel your rod in and don’t cast to a rising fish in the angler’s vicinity.

» An angler has the right-of-way, upstream or downstream, when they have a fish on their line.

» Fish quietly. Sound carries over water and tests have shown that trout as far as 200 feet downstream are disrupted by the noise and spooked into hiding.

» Don’t cast to a fish that is holding on a spawning bed. Spawning takes a lot of energy if they strike at the fly which stresses and weakens the fish at a time when they need additional energy. And they typically aren’t hungry during this time and may be striking at the fly out of anger.

» Be aware of the water temperature where you are fishing. Avoid fishing if the water temperature is above 70 degrees.

» Recognize that skilled anglers or heavy fishing pressure can limit and greatly reduce the available fish populations in any stream. Keep in mind, a legal limit
is not a quota. Let your fishing motto be: “Limit your kill, don’t kill your limit.”
FFI supports the “catch and release” philosophy which allows fish to mature,
reproduce, and challenge other anglers in the future.

» Anglers fish from a variety of vessels including: kayaks, canoes, or tubes. It
is the responsibility of the angler in the vessel to recognize that the wading
angler has established a position before they floated into view. The angler in
the vessel should try to pass behind the wading angler. If space doesn’t permit,
the angler in the vessel should float by quietly and with minimum disturbance.

» Anglers who are saltwater fishing from the surf need to be aware of the people
who may be behind you such as kids, joggers, walkers, etc. because they are
not usually aware of your back cast or that you are fishing, so proceed with
caution.

5. TIPPING YOUR FISHING GUIDE (GRATUITY)

» Tipping etiquette in the sport of fly fishing follows the same general rules
that applies to all service industry workers in that given country. For example,
in the United States a tip of 20 percent or more means you were extremely
happy with the experience; if tipping less than 10 percent means you were
dissatisfied.

» When tipping at destination fishing lodges or on a package trip be sure to ask
your booking agent, or lodge manager for their advice/recommendations. Plan
on bringing around 7-12 percent of the total package amount (not including
taxes, travel and other non-destination service charges) in cash or personal
check in your carry-on luggage. Note: traveler’s checks are one of the least
favorite forms of gratuity, since banks often charge significant fees to deposit
them. Often the lodge manager will recommend a “collective” gratuity for your
entire stay, whereby the lodge manager will distribute the funds to staff.

» If you want to tip a Guide directly that works at a lodge operation, a typical tip
is $40-$50 per.

» If you are planning a float trip with a Guide, be sure to determine if the posted
“Guide Fee” is based on a per person or per boat basis.
Fly Fishers International has been an organized voice for fly fishers since 1964. We represent all aspects of fly fishing—from the art of fly tying and casting instruction, to the protection of and access to fisheries around the world.

A 501c3 non-profit organization, FFI is driven by three fundamental pillars: Conservation, Education, and Community. Together, these pillars provide the foundation for our vision of the future of fly fishing—a future in which anglers have access to prime waters and fish can thrive in healthy, protected habitats; in which learning never stops and artistry is not forgotten; and that recognizes the true value of camaraderie. If we want this legacy to be experienced by future generations, we have to work to make that happen.

Join Fly Fishers International today to help ensure that fly fishing can continue to instill the kind of passion it does today in so many of us.