**HAZARDS**

Officers can provide regulatory information, valuable reports on current water conditions, and other useful information. It is your responsibility to know the regulations which apply to where you boat.

- **Stay away from strainers!** Paddling hazards include rocks, strainers, low-head dams, heavy current, lightning and other bad weather. Strainers can be anything that blocks passage but lets the water filter through.
- **Stay away from low-head dams!** Low-head dams are tough to see from upstream and very difficult to escape. Both strainers and low-head dams are regarded as “drowning machines.” These hazards are dangerous—avoid them, portage around them, and ALWAYS SCOUT AHEAD!

**Keep It Stable!**

- **DANGER** Leaning shoulders outside the edge of the boat can lead to a capsize. Keep your weight low and balanced over the centerline of the boat.

**Cold Water**

- **H.E.L.P.** Heat Escape Lessening Posture
- **H.U.D.D.L.E.** Heat Uptake Decreasing Lessening Posture

Can be a KILLER! Loss of body heat, the possibility of hypothermia, and at the very least, the end of your float trip can be a result of falling into cold water. Whether alone or in a group, it’s important to conserve your body heat. Using the H.E.L.P. or H.U.D.D.L.E. positions along with wearing a life jacket improve your chances of survival in cold water.

**Dress for Safety**

- **Helmet**
- **Sunglasses**
- **Pocket Knife**
- **LIFE JACKET**
- **Rescue Throw Bag**
- **Water Bottle**
- **Sweater and Wet Suit**
- **Proper Shoes**

Be prepared for your type of paddling by being dressed and outfitted properly.

- **Touring**
- **Whitewater**
- **Dry Bag**
- **SUNSCREEN**
- **Proper Shoes**

**Remember to...**

- Wear your life jacket.
- File a float plan.
- Never go paddling alone.
- Scout ahead for water hazards.

**The Law and You**

Officers can provide regulatory information, valuable reports on current water conditions, and other useful information. It is your responsibility to know the regulations which apply to where you boat.

**American Canoe Association**

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This brochure is produced under a grant from the Aquatic Resources (Wallop/Breaux) Trust Fund administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

**Know and Enjoy More!**

www.AmericanCanoe.org
Prepare to Paddle Safely

**PFD TYPES**

**TYPE 1:**
Intended for offshore use. Be safe and keep your life jacket snug.

**TYPE 2:**
Near-shore buoyancy vests. They are recommended for paddlers.

**TYPE 3:**
Flotation Aid. They are recommended for paddlers.

**TYPE 4:**
Throwable devices. These are not required on canoes or kayaks and are not to be used as substitutes for life jackets.

**TYPE 5:**
These are special use life jackets. They may be appropriate and recommended for certain uses by paddlers.

Read the life jacket’s label. The right fit provides the right flotation. Remember, it doesn’t work if you don’t wear it!

Know Before You Go!

Know the waters you plan to float.

Changes in weather can affect your trip.

What waters do you expect to paddle and are you prepared?

Wear it!

**STAY ALERT**

Be ready to move out of danger.

**STAY VISIBLE**

Because others may not see you.

**SHARE THE WATER:**

Give others the room they need to enjoy the waters.

**Be Considerate of Others:**

Give others the room they need to enjoy the waters.

**KEEP THE SCENE CLEAN:**

Pick-up litter.

**Never Boat Under the Influence:**

While paddling can be easy, it’s no excuse to paddle under the influence. Paddling a kayak or canoe requires a responsible, safe, and aware operator. Don’t blur that operation with alcohol and drugs.

A group of paddlers is safer, but this should not become a drinking party!

Best Paddling Practices

Know the waters you plan to float.

Changes in weather can affect your trip.

What waters do you expect to paddle and are you prepared?

Pay Attention!

Pay Attention!

Keep the scene clean and pick-up litter.

Keep your feet on the surface and swim to shore.

If you fall out in current, keep your feet on the surface and swim to shore.

Although you may intend to be IN your canoe or kayak...

Expect the unexpected and know what to do if you find yourself IN the water. Stay calm and stay with the boat.

In most cases, getting wet or swamping your boat is no reason to end your trip.

Just dump the water out, re-enter and you’re on your way.

In most cases, getting wet or swamping your boat is no reason to end your trip.

Just dump the water out, re-enter and you’re on your way.

Plan to Get Wet!

Boarding and Re-entry

Boarding

Keep at least three points of contact and stay low for balance.

Capsizing while ON the water can put you IN the water, so...

Re-entry

Your buddies can help you empty and...

Although you may intend to be IN your canoe or kayak...

Practice Re-entry

If shore is too far away...

...your buddies can help you empty and...

...re-enter your boat.

...although you may intend to be IN your canoe or kayak...

...expect the unexpected and know what to do if you find yourself IN the water. Stay calm and stay with the boat.

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