

HAZARDS

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 strainers!



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 capsizing. Keep your weight low and balanced over the centerline of the boat.



Cold Water

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.



H.E.L.P.
Heat Escape Lessening Posture



HUDDLE

Whether alone or in a group, it's important to conserve your body heat. Using the **H.E.L.P.** or **HUDDLE** positions along with wearing a life jacket improve your chances of survival in cold water.



BE PREPARED!



DRY CLOTHES

Dress for Safety

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



TOURING

WHITewater

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.*

Remember to...

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

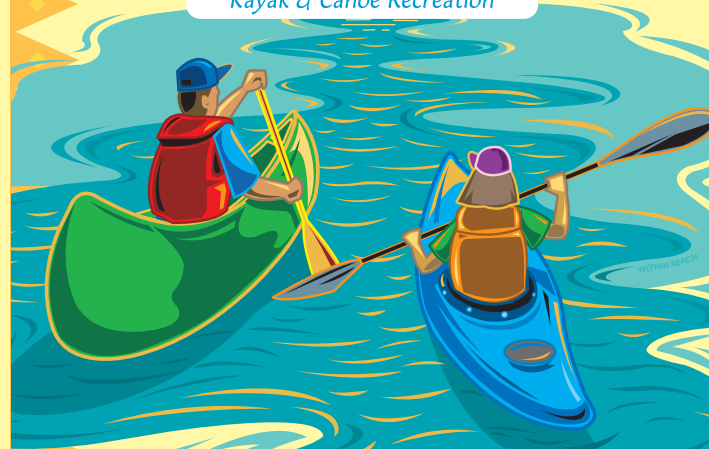
This brochure is produced under a grant from the Aquatic Resources (Wallop/Breaux) Trust Fund administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.



American Canoe Association
7432 Alban Station Blvd. Suite B232 • Springfield, VA 22150-2321



A Smart Start for Safe Paddling



Know and Enjoy More!

www.AmericanCanoe.org

Prepare to Paddle Safely

PFD TYPES

TYPE 1: Intended for offshore use. Because of their bulk, they are not recommended for paddlers.



TYPE 2: Near-shore buoyancy vests. They are not 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.

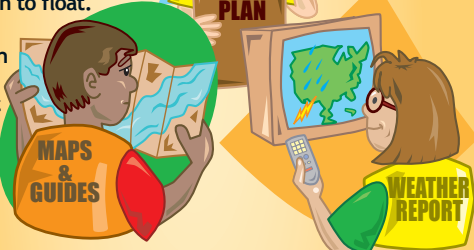


Read the life jacket's label. The right fit provides the right flotation. Remember, it doesn't work if you don't wear it!

Know Before You Go!

Know the waters you plan to float.

Changes in weather can affect your trip.



Let others know about your float trip by leaving a float plan.

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

Best Paddling Practices

Pay Attention!

STAY ALERT and be ready to move out of danger.

STAY VISIBLE because others may not see you.

HORN

WHISTLE

FLASHLIGHT

It's important to be aware of your surroundings, especially if you encounter powerboats.

SHARE THE WATER:

Be Considerate of Others

Give others the room they need to enjoy the waters.

Keep the scene clean and 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!

Boarding and Re-entry

Boarding

Be a steadying influence on your partner!

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

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

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...

Plan to Get Wet!

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

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

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.