

Universal Signals

1. **Stop.** Hold the paddle over your head horizontally. Normally, everyone should signal everyone else in the group and all should stop. Wait, for "all clear" signal before proceeding.



2. **Help/Emergency.** If there is an emergency or problem, wave the paddle vertically in a circular motion and/or give three or more long blasts on a whistle. The Navigation Rules defines five blows on a horn as indicating danger.



3. **All Clear.** Everything is okay. Hold the paddle vertical and stationary.



4. A single whistle blast often indicates "attention"

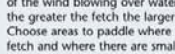


5. When lack of visibility, one blast at least every two minutes.



Self-Rescue

This is what you can do to rescue yourself. Self-rescue may involve simply climbing back on top of a sit-on-top kayak or a paddle float rescue or it may involve using a paddle float to get back into a kayak with a cockpit.



Coastal Kayaking

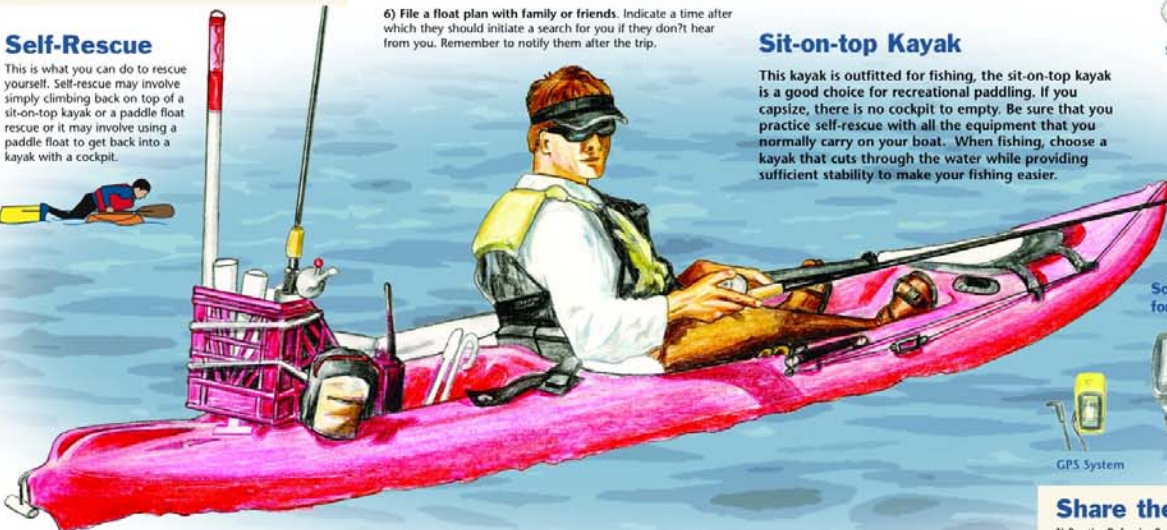
Individual Responsibilities

- 1) **Be a competent swimmer.** Being a competent swimmer includes the ability to handle yourself in waves and moving water.
- 2) **Wear a lifejacket.** It is much easier to put on before rather than after entering the water.
- 3) **Obtain the knowledge.** Skills and ability necessary for coastal kayaking. For most people, coastal waters are a new and unfamiliar environment.
- 4) **Boating alone is discouraged.** Paddling alone increases your risk. It leaves little to no margin for error. If you can't self-rescue, there is no one else there to assist in your rescue.
- 5) **Know how to self-rescue.** Know how to get back into your boat and practice it beforehand. A paddle float is recommended.
- 6) **File a float plan with family or friends.** Indicate a time after which they should initiate a search for you if they don't hear from you. Remember to notify them after the trip.

- 7) **What you take with you on a trip is all that you have to survive and rescue yourself.** This includes water, food, navigation aids, safety, rescue equipment, and extra clothes. If you don't bring it, you won't have it if and when you need it.
- 8) **Gradually work yourself into the activity.** Pick a setting that matches your ability, skills and general conditioning. When they improve, choose more difficult settings or longer more remote trips.
- 9) **Know your emotional and physical limitations.** Constantly assess your own behavior. If you find yourself becoming tired, talking less with others, getting cold, or not eating enough, take corrective action. The wind, waves, cold water and sun create additional stress on the body and may lead to fatigue much sooner than in an urban environment.

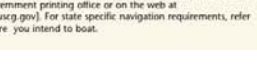
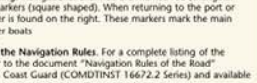
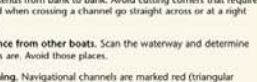
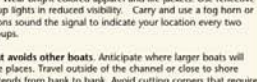
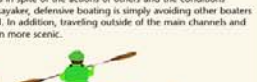
Sit-on-top Kayak

This kayak is outfitted for fishing, the sit-on-top kayak is a good choice for recreational paddling. If you capsize, there is no cockpit to empty. Be sure that you practice self-rescue with all the equipment that you normally carry on your boat. When fishing, choose a kayak that cuts through the water while providing sufficient stability to make your fishing easier.



Rescue Equipment

Part of your first line of defense is the knowledge, skills, ability and equipment that you bring with you on the trip. For example, self-rescue without a paddle float is often cumbersome or impractical depending on the type of kayak used. A lifejacket, towline, aerial flares, smoke canisters, paddle float, paddle leash, VHF radio, foghorn, strobe light, flare-up white light, signaling mirror, whistle and/or phone can aid in your and others' rescue. Check with your state agency regarding state equipment requirements for a boat of your length and type.



Share the Waterways

- 1) **Practice Defensive Boating.** For the kayaker, defensive boating is preventing collisions and mishaps in spite of the actions of others and the conditions around you. For the kayaker, defensive boating is simply avoiding other boaters and where they travel. In addition, traveling outside of the main channels and closer to shore is often more scenic.
- 2) **See and be seen.** Wear bright colored apparel and life jackets. Use reflective tape and white flare-up lights in reduced visibility. Carry and use a fog horn or whistle. In fog situations sound the signal to indicate your location every two minutes. Travel in groups.
- 3) **Select a route that avoids other boats.** Anticipate where larger boats will travel and avoid those places. Travel outside of the channel or close to shore when the channel extends from bank to bank. Avoid cutting corners that require crossing channels and when crossing a channel go straight across or at a right angle to the channel.
- 4) **Keep a safe distance from other boats.** Scan the waterway and determine where the other boats are. Avoid those places.
- 5) **Red, Right Returning.** Navigational channels are marked red (triangular shaped) and green markers (square shaped). When returning to the port or harbor, the red marker is found on the right. These markers mark the main channel used by larger boats.
- 6) **Know and follow the Navigation Rules.** For a complete listing of the navigation rules, refer to the document "Navigation Rules of the Road" published by the U.S. Coast Guard (COMDTINST 16672.2 Series) and available through the U.S. Government printing office or on the web at [http://www.navcen.uscg.gov]. For state specific navigation requirements, refer to the state laws where you intend to boat.

Boat and Equipment

A typical touring kayak is shown, and the equipment listed is for an overnight or extended trip. Choose a kayak to meet your needs and add or subtract equipment as needed.

Keep the Deck Clean

Stowing equipment and keeping a clean deck reduces the effects of crosswinds, and makes for an easier reentry.

On person sling for reentry into kayak
snacks
knife
personal flare

Deck Bag (Optional)
drink bottle
binoculars
VHF radio
sunscreen
hat
woolen hat
waterproof notebook
more snack bars
mobile phone in waterproof case

Front Hatch
food bag
footwear for off-water
clothing bag

Fore Deck
compass
GPS receiver in waterproof case
laminated chart

Cockpit
sponge
water bottle

Day-hatch (or Deck Bag)
flares
survival bag
water bottle
head lamp
first aid pack
towline
binoculars
VHF radio
sunscreen
hat
waterproof notebook
snacks

Rear Deck
deck mounted towline
pump
split paddles
paddle float

Rear Hatch
water (1 gallon per day)
cooking kit
regul kit
tent
sleeping bag
sleeping pad
stove

Safety Education

In an effort to promote a safe and enjoyable boating experience, the ACA offers extensive safety, educational and instructional programs to its members and to the general public. In addition, the ACA is committed to protecting the resource for paddlers and through its programs, it seeks to provide water trails and other scenic places for people to paddle their kayaks and canoes. This waterfront is part of the ACA's effort to promote safe boating.
www.americancanoe.org

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Fetch
Fetch refers to the unobstructed distance of the wind blowing over water. Generally, the greater the fetch the larger the waves. Choose areas to paddle where there is less fetch and where there are smaller waves. Routes A and C are generally preferred.

Scale of Difficulty for Coastal Waters

Class 1: Easy. The water ranges from mirror-like to small wavelets with no breaking crests. No current is present. It is relatively easy, requiring beginner level skills. Wind Scale is less than Force 3, "calm" or "light breeze" ranging from 0-6 knots (0-7 mph). The coastline, islands and other features are relatively sheltered, reducing the effects of fetch. The paddler is close to shore and no significant surf zone is present. Rescues are relatively easy and may include shore based rescues.

Class 2: Challenging. The water is somewhat challenging, but easy enough for paddlers with some experience. Seas are relatively small ranging from 2'-4' in height. Whitecaps will be present if wind speed increases to Force 4. Beaufort Wind Scale is Force 3-4 with a "gentle" to "moderate breeze" ranging from 7-16 knots (8-12 mph). Current is absent or minor, two knots or less. The coastline, islands and other features still reduce the effects of fetch. The paddler is still relatively close to shore and passing through the surf zone (if surf is present) is easy and fairly straightforward. Visual and audible communications are clear and keeping the group together is fairly easy. Rescues are relatively easy to perform.

Class 3: Difficult. The wind and seas begin to get pushy and good boat handling skills are required. Seas are moderately large and steep. There may be currents present, ranging from 2-4 knots, near or exceeding the speed of the average

paddler. Beaufort Wind Scale is Force 5-6 "fresh" or "strong wind" between 17-27 knots (20-31 mph). Problems associated with fetch are becoming more of a concern. The coastline is farther away, islands are separated by open expanses, and there is more open water present. Passing through the surf zone is more difficult and may be impeded by larger waves, or an irregular or rocky coastline that requires some skill and experience to negotiate. Self-rescue and rescue of others in the group becomes more difficult.

Class 4: Very Difficult. Very rough seas are present, requiring advanced paddling skills. Seas are large, chaotic, and steep, with spray and foam flying in streaks off the wave crests. Beaufort Wind Scale may reach Force 7 or "moderate gale" force wind between 28-33 knots (32-38 mph). If currents are present, they may reach speeds up to 6 knots (7 mph). The large expanse of water often makes it difficult to reach shore quickly and/or passing through the surf zone poses sufficient risks to the paddler that staying in the open water is often a better alternative. Communications within the group is difficult. Paddlers must be self-reliant and may end up on their own. Rescues are difficult and could endanger other paddlers in the group.

Class 5: Extreme. Even expert paddlers are challenged by these conditions. Seas are very steep and wave crests are beginning to tumble. Dense spray reduces visibility. Beaufort Wind Scale is Force 8 to 9 "gale" winds

between 34-47 knots (39-54 mph). If present, currents may exceed five knots. The large expanse of water makes it difficult to reach shore in a timely fashion and/or passing through the surf zone poses sufficient risks to the paddler that staying in the open water is often a better alternative. Passing through the surf zone is more difficult and may be impeded by larger waves, or an irregular or rocky coastline that requires advanced skills and experience to negotiate. Communications within the group is difficult at best and paddlers are essentially on their own. Self-rescue or the rescue of others in the group is possible but very difficult and could endanger other paddlers in the group.

Class 6: Life Threatening Class 6 conditions are life-threatening and present a serious danger and survival situation to any paddler, no matter how experienced or skilled they may be. Seas are huge and chaotic with numerous breaking waves. The sea is white with spray and foam. Beaufort Wind Scale is a Force 10+ consisting of "whole gale" to "hurricane" winds of over 48 knots (55 mph). Returning to shore through the surf zone is often impractical, extremely difficult and life threatening. Communication is very difficult to impossible. Paddlers are essentially on their own. Self-rescue or the rescue of others in the group is probably impossible. These are conditions that even experts do not want to deal with.

Surf Zone

The surf zone is an area where the bottom affects the formation of waves. A boat turned sideways in the surf can easily injure a paddler as the waves tumble and thrash the boat. Know where and how to beach your kayak.

Safety Line

Assists you in self-rescue and rescue of others where you can grab the line and flip the kayak over.

Rudder

It is used to avoid weathercocking where the boat turns broadside in the wind (versus leecocking which is turning into the wind). Normally, it is not designed for steering.

