All Paddlers Need To Be Prepared For:

- Low Light Conditions
- Ways to Contact Help
- Minor Medical Emergencies
- Outings which extend past the esitmated return time
- Weather Pattern Changes
- Other Traffic

Boat Safe - Boat Smart - Wear It!

American Canoe Association

The **American Canoe Association** (ACA) is a member-based nonprofit organization (501(c)3) that promotes fun and responsible canoeing, kayaking, and rafting. Founded in 1880, the ACA actively advocates recreational access and stewardship of America's water trails. For more information and to become a member, visit **www.americancanoe.org**.

American Canoe Association
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www.americancanoe.org

Making the world a better place to paddle. Since 1880.

YOUR BOATING DOLLARS AT WORK

Produced under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Paddler's Safety Checklist

Part of ACA's *Paddle Safe, Paddle Smart* Series

www.americancanoe.org

Be A Leader!

Pre-Trip Planning

Know the waters to be paddled. River guide booklets and topography maps are valuable references in trip planning. Plan alternate routes.

Set-up locations for put-ins and take-outs along with possible lunch break stops. Consider time and distance. Arrange for the shuttle.

Equipment - What you take with you on a trip is all that you have to survive and rescue yourself. This includes water, food, maps and charts, rescue equipment and extra clothes.

File a Float Plan with someone who will notify others if you don't return on time.

Paddle within your, and your group's, limits.

On Water Behavior and Etiquette

Be a competent swimmer with the ability to handle oneself underwater, moving water, surf or current.

Have a properly fitted lifejacket (Personal Flotation Device - PFD), and WEAR IT!

Keep the craft under control. Do not enter a rapid unless reasonably sure you can navigate it or swim the entire rapid in case you capsize.

Keep a lookout for hazards and avoid them. Watch for fog, especially on coastal waters.

Know your emotional and physical limitations.

Group members need to constantly assess the behavior of others in their group.

Respect the rights of anglers and land owners when paddling.

Know the Conditions

For Flatwater

Remember to watch for water and weather changes - beware of fog

Keep an eye out for other boat traffic

Pay attention to all safety warnings

Be sure you are visible

For Whitewater and Rivers

Stay on the inside of bends - Beware of strainers!Strainers are Fallen trees; bridge pilings, undercut rocks or anything else that allows the current to flow through it while holding you. Strainers are deadly.

Walk around low-head dams

Watch for hydraulics - Looking downstream, if a hole is "smiling" it is probably friendly. If it's "frowning", it is probably unfriendly.

If in doubt, get out and scout!

For Coastal Areas

Stay close to shore

As you travel away from shelter, make sure you have the necessary skills to travel back.

Watch conditions for winds and fog

Understand wave height, wind speed (Beaufort Scale), fetch and how it will impact your travel

Stay aware of all boat traffic and traffic patterns

Learn re-entry techniques BEFORE you need them, know how to re-enter your boat and how to assist others back into their craft

Stay apprised of tidal currents and their affects on you and your boat

Watch for landing in surf or passing through the surf zone to shore

Paddler's Checklist

Be A Swimmer

File A Float Plan

Wear Your Lifejacket

Assess Your Boat's Flotation Needs

Carry A Spare Paddle

Always Dress For The Unexpected Flip

Wear a Hat or Helmet

Carry A Compass and Chart or Map

Carry a Whistle or Sound Signaling Device

Carry Throw Bags And Other Rescue Gear

Carry a "River" Knife

Have A Bilge Pump And/Or Bailer

Self-Rescue Devices (Paddle Float / Sling / Tow Rope)

SunScreen

Drinking Water & Snacks

Light / Signal (for low light conditions)

Wear Proper Footwear

UV Eye Protection

Drybag with extra clothing

Wear Appropriate Clothing

First Aid Kit with Matches

Small Repari kit with Duct Tape

VHS Radio and GPS Locator