Hazards
Stay away from strainers!
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!

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

Cold Water
- 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.

Keep It Stable!
- Leaning shouldered outside the edge of the boat can lead to a capsize. Keep your weight low and balanced over the centerline of the boat.

Whitewater
- Whitewater is very different from low-head dam paddling. Your safety and equipment will be different.

Touring
- Touring can be just as hazardous as whitewater paddling. Be prepared and stay aware.

Know and Enjoy More!
www.AmericanCanoe.org

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American Canoe Association
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**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.

**Wear It!**
- Be safe and keep your life jacket snug.

**Know Before You Go!**
- Know the waters you plan to float.
- Changes in weather can affect your trip.

**Maps & Guides**
- What waters do you expect to paddle and are you prepared?

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

**Best Paddling Practices**

**Best Paddling Practices**
- **Pay Attention!**
  - Stay alert and be ready to move out of danger.
  - Stay visible because others may not see you.

**Best Paddling Practices**
- **Share the Water:**
  - Give others the room they need to enjoy the waters.

**Best Paddling Practices**
- **Never Boat Under the Influence:**
  - While paddling can be easy, it’s no excuse to paddle under the influence.
  - A group of paddlers is safer, but this should not become a drinking party.

**Best Paddling Practices**
- **Be Considerate of Others:**
  - Let others know about your float trip by leaving a float plan.

**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...

**Boarding**
- Practice Re-entry
  - If shore is too far away...
  - Your buddies can help you empty and...

**Boarding**
- **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.

**Boarding**
- 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.

**Boarding**
- Be a steadying influence on your partner!

**Boarding**
- www.AmericanCanoe.org