

AOSC - ADAPTIVE WATER SPORTS
CANOEING & KAYAK SAFETY



ADAPTIVE WATER SPORTS ©

Canoeing & Kayak Safety

**You Can Make A
Difference!**

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Canoes and kayaks are increasingly popular types of watercraft that provide disabled individuals with access to streams, rivers, lakes, bays, and oceans where water sports can be enjoyed.

The key to safety when canoeing or kayaking is to have proper training that addresses use of watercraft, safety and rescue.

THIS INCLUDES:

- **Wearing approved life jackets** – also know as PFD's {personal floatation devices} **Most small craft boating related fatalities could have been prevented if PFD's had been worn when on or around the water.
- **Knowledge of weather conditions taking appropriate precautions** – storms, lightning, high winds and sudden temperature changes can cause disasters. **BE WEATHER WISE.** Sudden wind shifts, lightning flashes and choppy water all can mean a storm is brewing and heading your way.
- **Knowledge of waters where you will be canoeing/kayaking**
– To have a safe trip or outing, advanced planning is imperative. Get information on the waters you plan to travel and explore such as: dam controlled water levels of lakes and rivers, currents, recent rain, impact of spring thawing, low head dams and other hazards.
- **Avoid drinking alcohol when boating** –approximately 1/3 of boating related drowning involves alcohol.
- **Carry emergency supplies, safety equipment, training** – maps/charts, compass, helmet—(white H2O), GPS, water proof first aid kit, dry bags, visual distress--signaling device, whistle, cell phone, two-way radios, extra paddle, bilge pump, paddle float. **Take a course in First Aid and Emergency Care, CPR, and AED (Automated External Defibrillation) training.
- **Know and abide by the “Rules of the Road”** – collisions with other boats or objects are often due to ignorance of the boating rules of the road.
- **Wear appropriate outdoor clothing for the environmental conditions** – choose your clothing based on potential changes in weather {wet versus dry conditions}, temperature extremes{hot or cold conditions}, personal activity levels – select clothing layers that wick moisture, dry quickly, provide UV protection, insect protection, preserve body heat even when wet, and serve as barrier to wind, rain or snow.

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- **Know the capacity of your watercraft** – overloading your canoe or kayak increases the possibility of falling overboard, capsizing or swamping. When boarding and un-boarding or changing seats, stay low and near the centerline of the boat. A canoe/kayak can capsize if weight is not properly distributed.
- **Know and meet the legal requirements for where you are canoeing or kayaking** – check with state and local boating authorities.
- **Remain with your canoe/kayak** – if you unintentionally fall out of the craft, fall overboard, capsize or swamp the boat – **DON'T PANIC, THEY FLOAT!**
- **Submit Float Plans** – this is especially important if traveling in a wilderness area. Tell someone where you are going, who is with you, and how long you expect to be away.
- **Have an Emergency Action Plan** – Expect the un-expected! In case an emergency does happen, know what you are going to do and how you plan to obtain emergency assistance.
- **Swimmer versus Non-swimmer** – **THE ABILITY TO SWIM IS IMPORTANT!** – If you are a non-swimmer, take lessons.