



Paddler's Safety Checklist

- 1) Always wear a Personal Floatation Device (PFD) that is secured (zipped up) and properly fitted. Wear a Fox40 Whistle (not on the PFD zipper) and know the three whistle signals.
- 2) When paddling in moving water, wear a helmet in all closed boats (kayaks). Wear a helmet in all open boats (canoes) in Class II and above. Always wear full coverage shoes when on or near the water.
- 3) Never paddle alone, stay with your group. Do not let the group pressure you beyond your capabilities and limitations. Kneel in your canoe while in rapids for stability
- 4) Know water class definitions and the degree of difficulty to paddle. Level changes can alter the difficulty to paddle. Do not paddle during high water levels where there is not a clear bank landing area. Stay clear of obstructions like branches (Strainers).
- 5) Stay hydrated and drink water (not Alcohol)!
- 6) Secure and waterproof all gear including glasses.
- 7) Dress for anticipated temperatures and sun (dry or wet). Remember that spring and fall water temperatures can be much colder than the air temperature and can result in hypothermia.
- 8) Ensure that your craft will float if capsized. Install floatation bags in all non-inflatable craft if possible. Also install bow and stern lines and end grab loops.
- 9) Make sure your boat is outfitted safely and you can exit without entanglement. Never tie a line to yourself, paddle, child or pet.
- 10) Know your craft's carrying capacity. Carrying more than two adult paddlers in an open canoe is not recommended.
- 11) Let others know about your plans on the water. Leave a float plan with someone who can track your day.
- 12) If you capsize, hold on to your boat. Get to the upstream end so that you cannot be caught between the boat and a rock or other obstacle. Release your craft if it will improve your chances for rescue.
- 13) If swimming in fast moving water, lie on your back with your feet held high and pointed downstream. Do not stand in water above your knees.
- 14) Contact NCSP/LDC if you have other safety questions.
- 15) Stay SAFE, enjoy the environment and have FUN!

