



## GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS IN CLUB PADDLES

Nanaimo Paddlers is a club of peers, all with varying paddling abilities. These guidelines are intended to optimize safety on the water. *On all Club paddles, each participant is expected to be aware of their own abilities and limitations and be responsible for their own safety.*

Participants need to know what gear to wear and bring, paddling etiquette, safety procedures and emergency protocols.

**Proficiency Level:** Paddlers must have a minimum of Nanaimo Paddlers Proficiency Level 1 before joining us on a paddle. Take the Nanaimo Paddlers Skills Self-Assessment questionnaire at [nanaimopaddlers.org](http://nanaimopaddlers.org), where you will find it under the Resources tab. The information is then immediately available to yourself, and to hosts who plan paddles, to determine whether you have the necessary skills for that paddle.

If you do not yet have Proficiency Level 1 skills, please see the Kayak Instruction Regional Resource List under the Resources tab of our website. In addition, the Training tab will show you the current training opportunities available through the club.

Each paddle will have a description of the expected conditions: things like distance, duration, current, wind and open water crossings. You can use your self-assessment to determine if your skills are a good match for the paddle in the same way a host will. If you have any questions about the paddle, please contact the host. Note that you may receive a query from the host once you have signed up, if they have not paddled with you before and wish to discuss the paddle conditions.

**Communication is key.** If, at any time, before or during the paddle, you are not comfortable with the conditions, or if you see someone else in difficulty, please make sure the Host is aware of this so the group as a whole can come together and assist where necessary.

**Event Organizers/Hosts:** These are club members who volunteer to coordinate and host a trip/paddle for other club members. They are not required to be expert paddlers, or guides. Their primary responsibility is to plan and organize a trip or paddle.

### Group Paddling Guidelines:

- OTW means On The Water
- All start times posted are OTW
- Be sure you arrive at the launch area in plenty of time to unload and pack your kayak and assist others if necessary
- Follow Host instructions during beach talk and on the water
- Stay in a formation designated by the host when requested for crossings etc.
- Buddy up with another paddler or paddlers if possible
- Count the number of paddlers regularly to make sure everyone is accounted for
- If for any reason, a group splits up, it is important that a minimum of three paddlers stay together

**Immersion Gear:** The water around Vancouver Island is cold all year round. Cold water shock or hypothermia can happen on the hottest days with deadly consequences. These two factors are the most common causes of kayaking fatalities.

**The 1 – 10 – 1 Rule:** If you capsize and end up in the water you have:

- **one minute to bring your breathing under control** so you can function.
- **ten minutes before you lose your ability to use your fingers and hands**, so you need to get back into your boat or on to land quickly.
- **one hour before you lose consciousness due to hypothermia.**

Read the Meetup postings before registering to see if the host mandates immersion gear for an event. Most paddles from September to June will require immersion gear, as well as many in the summer months especially where crossings or extreme conditions may be encountered.

### **Considerations for all Participants Registering for and Participating in an outing:**

- To join a trip or paddle, register on Nanaimo Paddlers Meetup. Only RSVP if you plan on attending.
- If the trip is full and there is a waitlist, put your name on the waitlist. Space often becomes available.
- Check details of the event carefully to make sure your abilities match the type of paddle described. It is up to each participant to self-assess their own skills and abilities prior to registering for a paddle. Paddlers will update their skills self-assessment each year, at a minimum, upon renewing their membership.
- Make sure your Self Assessment is accurate and up-to-date, as Hosts check the most recent information to determine if registrants are currently capable of participating safely. As you add skills, update your self assessment. If you are recovering from illness or injury, and your skills have lapsed, update your self-assessment. There is no limitation on the number of updates you can do.
- Everyone participating in a Club trip or paddle **must be able to do a wet exit and assisted re-entry, plus an assisted rescue of another paddler.** These are skills that must be practiced regularly, a minimum of once per year (in the ocean, in water deeper than you are tall).
- Watch Meetup for information updates on weather and possible cancellation in case of bad weather.
- Whether you are registered for a trip or paddle, or on the waitlist, **if for any reason you cannot go, please change your RSVP to 'NO' to allow another club member to take your spot.** Please be considerate of other members and cancel in plenty of time, ideally a day or two before the event.

### **Required Equipment / Supplies for a Day Trip/Paddle:**

- Seaworthy ocean going kayak with watertight bulkheads or floatation, and deck lines appropriate for use during rescues.
- Spray skirt
- Paddle
- Spare paddle
- Dry bag containing an extra set of dry clothes
- \*PFD, to be worn at all times (not the inflatable type).

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- \*Sound signaling device (whistle, air horn, etc.)
- \*Bilge Pump or bailing device
- \*15m buoyant throw line (or tow belt)
- \*Navigation lights (or flash light, strobe light, etc.) if on the water between sunset and sunrise.

\* As mandated by Transport Canada for small craft under 6m (19'8")

### **Recommended Equipment / Supplies for a Day Trip/Paddle:**

- Water, hot drink and food
- Paddle float (preferably the inflatable type)
- VHF marine radio
- Sunscreen
- First Aid kit
- Distress signals (flares, strobes)
- Reflective Material on boat and paddle
- Knife and multi tool
- Repair Kit
- Emergency Contact Information (preferably inside your PFD)
- Chart
- Compass

### **Information to know before you go:**

Tides and Currents:

<http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca/eng/data#s1>

Weather:

<https://sailflow.com/>

<https://windy.com>

<https://weather.gc.ca/marine/>

<https://spotwx.com>

### **Signals:**

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Paddle held horizontally: | Stop        |
| Paddle held straight up:  | Come to me. |

|                   |           |            |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Whistle/Air Horn: | 1 blast:  | Stop       |
|                   | 3 blasts: | Come to Me |

**Skill Development Opportunities:** Nanaimo Paddlers offers a variety of opportunities throughout the year where members can improve their skills and learn more about paddling, navigation, camping and safety. These skills can also be learned and improved through several local outfitters. All members are encouraged to continually upgrade their skills for their own safety and to assist others when necessary.

**Every club member is responsible for their own safety on and off the water.**