

NANAIMO PADDLERS

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS IN CLUB PADDLES 2016



The Nanaimo Paddlers is a club of peers, all with varying paddling abilities. *On all Club paddles, each participant is expected to be aware of their own abilities and limitations and be responsible for their own safety.* Overall people need to know what gear to wear and bring, paddling etiquette, safety procedures, emergency protocols, etc. These guidelines are details to be considered when joining the Nanaimo Paddlers for a trip to ensure your own safety as well as the groups'.

Please print out as a handy guide and checklist for all your Nanaimo Paddlers' trips.

The key to safe paddling is to know your abilities and develop the skills to ensure that you remain within your comfort and safety zone. The key to safe and enjoyable paddling within a group is to communicate your needs for safety and enjoyment and accommodate the needs of the others you are paddling with.

Coordinators/Hosts: People who agree to coordinate a paddling trip for the Nanaimo Paddlers are simply agreeing to arrange and organize a paddling event. They are not expected to be expert paddlers or the leaders.

Participants in Nanaimo Paddler's outings should consider the following:

Considerations for all Participants Prior to Meeting for the Outing:

- ❑ If you wish to join a paddle, you can sign up on our meetup site www.meetup.com/nanaimopaddlers. Do *not* RSVP if you are *not* attending.
- ❑ Know the tidal high and low, current speed and time of slack in the area of the proposed paddle. www.waterlevels.gc.ca
- ❑ Check the weather forecast to determine wind direction and speed, forecast and outlook. www.weather.gc.ca.
- ❑ Determine the meeting place and time from the meetup site. Details for the paddle will be posted i.e. what area and distance will be covered and how long it should take, speeds, currents, etc.
- ❑ Every paddler must have signed a liability form *every year*. If you have not done so, go online to www.nanaimopaddlers.org under "Join" and sign online. If you are bringing a guest, you must notify the trip coordinator and have the guest go online and sign a liability form which will be sent to our treasurer Susie Youle (cheerstree@shaw.ca) 3 days before the paddle.
- ❑ Advise the co-coordinator if you do not have the necessary skills to handle your boat in the expected conditions and execute a wet exit and re-entry should you need to do that maneuver.
- ❑ Be prepared to confirm to the co-coordinator that you will have with you the Transport Canada required safety gear: a PFD with whistle, a paddle, a throw bag, a pump, and a light (if you will be paddling at dusk or at night).
- ❑ See suggested gear & supply list following.

Checklist for Day Paddle

Must have:

Seaworthy kayak with dry gear storage with a full set of deck lines on your boat, loose enough for the rescuers hands to get under them.

Spray skirt

Paddle and spare one

Pump

PFD with whistle attached

Throw rope

Paddle float

Extra clothes in a dry bag (fleece, rain wear, socks, sweater, extra pants, hat, gloves, wind jacket), space blanket

Paddling boots or sandals or old runners that can get wet and have sturdy enough soles to carry boats over rocks and oyster shells (no flip flops)

Light

Float plan – number of participants and kayaks, route, expected time of return – leave with person on shore

VHF radio (or check that someone in the group does have one)

In level 3 waters – helmet

Dry suit or wet suit for cold water paddling**

**Cold water exposure is the number 1 cause of kayak fatalities. Cold water shock is a real risk in our cold waters. Wearing immersion gear which includes a dry suit, wet suit, or combination farmer john/dry top is a good way to avoid cold water shock, and prolong a capsized paddler ability to perform the demanding physical requirements of a rescue. A capsized paddler with or without immersion gear can succumb to the cold very quickly and make self rescue impossible.

Good to have:

Chart

Compass – orienteering compass for chart, magnetic compass for on-water

Tide & current table information

GPS

Camera

Cell phone in waterproof bag

Distress signals (flares, light, etc.)

Small dry bag with snacks, phone, warm hat, medications, etc. anything you need access to

Full water bottle

Sunhat, sunglasses with strap, sunscreen, lip balm

Lunch and emergency food

Hot drink in thermos (depending on weather)

Sponge

Paddling jacket, paddling gloves

Basic first aid kit:

- Aspirin
- Band-aids

- Ace bandage
- Sterile compress
- Adhesive tape
- Zinc oxide ointment
- Insect sting and snakebite kit
- First aid book

Repair kit – rudder cables and screws, leatherman, duct tape, epoxy, etc.

Rescue strap

Change for phone calls/money for water taxi

Fire-starting implements

Small stove, fuel and pot, ability to heat water, cup/bowl

Knife with screwdrivers

Binoculars

Safety procedures/emergency plan plus phone numbers of water taxi, ambulance, hospital/clinic, etc.

Basic emergency shelter or hypothermia treatment:

- Small tarp
- Light sleeping bag
- Chemical heat packs
- Pot and stove
- Waterproof matches
- Rope

On the Beach Prior to Launch, Participants Will Want to:

- ❑ Bring out the chart for the area.
- ❑ Discuss relevant tides and currents, the weather forecast, and hours of daylight.
- ❑ Discuss the plan for the outing: the route, estimated distance, any open crossings, currents, speed needed to reach destination (i.e. to get through passages with currents), any surf landings, proposed stop(s), a contingency plan, and estimated time of return.
- ❑ Confirm to the other members of the group that you have the required safety gear and be prepared to advise others of any additional safety gear you have with you beyond what is required by regulation.
- ❑ Inquire of other members of group as to their experience and rescue abilities i.e. who feels comfortable doing assisted rescues?
- ❑ Inquire as to who will be acting as the group lead(s) and who will be acting as sweep(s).
- ❑ Buddy up with another member.

Group Paddling, Safety & Awareness

Groups paddling together should be aware that there are a number of common practices that result in the group outing being more enjoyable and safer. They include:

- ❑ Be aware that in a group it will be the slowest paddlers, often the ones in the rear, who will necessarily set the pace. Other paddlers must remain within calling distance of the other members of the group.
- ❑ When the lead(s) and sweep(s) have been identified, please stay within the lead and sweep area. (Also check on the sweep from time to time). It is a good idea

- for the lead and sweep to have VHF radios so they can communicate on the water to maintain group control in case of accident, sickness or simply straggling kayakers. The sweep should be paddling beside or close to the last paddler.
- In groups larger than a 6:1 ratio, it can be useful for smaller groups of 2 or 3 persons to agree to keep an eye on each other (the buddy system). If you feel that you are in a situation which is beyond your skill level, let your fellow paddlers know immediately so they can provide assistance.
 - If you must leave the group, it is required due to safety to you inform the others of your plans. At least one other member must join you if you are returning to the put-in location.
 - In larger groups, which include people of different skill levels, it can often be useful to break the group in smaller groups and set appropriate plans for each. Each group is then self sufficient and should have a designated lead and sweep, and a VHF to radio to others if a need arises. Ensure each group has adequate supplies, skills, a rendezvous point, emergency plan and a communication protocol.
 - If night paddling, remember to bring appropriate lights (headlamps, flashlights under deck bungies, glow sticks on PFDs) so group can see and be seen. The groups might adopt a system of identification by numbers (each paddler can call out their number) which can compensate for the difficulty of counting the group in the dark.

Signals: Establish signals before getting on the water

- If the group does become spread out so that oral communication is not practical, the following signals are commonly used:
 - o Vertical paddle (held straight up): Come together
 - o Horizontal paddle: STOP
 - o Whistle, one loud blast: STOP and look
 - o Whistle, series of 3 loud toots: Come to me, or come together

Rescues:

- If an assisted rescue becomes necessary, paddlers should remember that:
 - o The person being rescued MUST follow the directions of the person(s) assisting in the rescue.
 - o Those not actively involved in the rescue MUST raft up and if necessary try to find a sheltered area and await the completion of the rescue.

THEN, GO OUT AND HAVE FUN, AND A GOOD AND SAFE TRIP!