NANAIMO PADDLERS

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. Pets are not permitted on club paddles.

New paddlers should have basic introductory skills before joining us on a paddle. See our website www.nanaimopaddlers.org for a list of training agencies.

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
- Pets and children are not allowed for on-water club activities as per club policy

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 cold water without immersion gear you have:

- **one minute to bring your breathing under contro**l so you can function.
- **ten minutes before you lose your ability to use your fingers and hands**, so you need to get back in to 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 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 should update their skills self-assessment on Meetup each year upon renewing their membership.
- Make sure your Meetup profile is accurate as Hosts check this information to find out if registrants are capable of participating safely.
- Watch Meetup for information 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.
- Everyone participating in a Club trip or paddle **should be able to do a wet exit and assisted re-entry, plus an assisted rescue of another paddler.** It is recommended that these skills be practiced regularly and at a minimum of once per year (preferably in salt water).
- **If a paddler arrives at the launch site without the required skills (above) or equipment (below), the host has the discretionary authority to request that they not participate in this or other club paddles until those deficiencies are rectified.**

Required Equipment / Supplies for a Day Trip/Paddle:

- Seaworthy ocean going kayak with watertight bulkheads or floatation and proper deck lines (non-stretch perimeter lines that one can get one's hands under).
- Spray skirt
- *Paddle
- Spare paddle
- *PFD, to be worn at all times. (Inflatable PFD's are not recommended)
- *Sound signaling device (pea-less whistle, air horn, etc.)
- *Bilge Pump
- *15m throw line (or tow line)
- *If on the water between sunset and sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility, carry one of the following waterproof devices: navigation lights, strobe light, flashlight or 3 pyrotechnical flares.

- *Magnetic compass if navigating out of sight of navigation markers
- *A proper fitting helmet if in class 3 (or above) waters near shore (surf, tidal currents, rock gardening, etc.)
- Dry bag containing an extra set of dry clothes
- *At least one water-proof first aid kit in the group

  * *As mandated by Canadian Coast Guard for small craft under 6m (19'8")*

Recommended Equipment / Supplies for a Day Trip/Paddle:

- Water, hot drink and food
- Paddle float
- 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
- Chart
- Compass

Information to know before you go:

Tides and Currents:

http://tbone.biol.sc.edu/tide/
http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca/eng/data#s1

Weather:

https://sailflow.com/
https://www.windy.com
https://weather.gc.ca/marine/

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 give them the ability to provide assistance to others if necessary.