



Paddlesports Committee

Annual Report

2024-2025 Committee Charges, Membership, and Next Cycle Recommendations

August 15, 2025

Chair: Billy Doss, Indiana

Vice Chair: Wendy Flynn, Connecticut

NASBLA Paddlesports Committee Charter

Paddlesports Vision Statement

NASBLA's Paddlesports Committee provides a venue for a diverse group of stakeholders to engage with NASBLA members in productive dialogue to find actionable opportunities to partner and promote paddlesports while growing a culture of safety across the United States so that over time the incidence of accident and injuries declines even while participation increases. The Committee strives to develop recommendations and work products to the NASBLA membership based on the best data available and professional judgment of its diverse members.

Program recommendations will:

- *Advance the strategic plans of the National Recreational Boating Safety Program and NASBLA;*
- *Incorporate best practices and current research;*
- *Seek to mitigate risk factors, to grow a culture of paddling safety;*
- *Assure that the paddlesports community has the tools, information and messaging to reduce incidents, injuries and fatalities; and*
- *Connect the public, member organizations, and stakeholders with the products of the committee and others.*

Paddlesports Committee members are assembled into project teams, taking the lead on specific, assigned charges and monitoring activities.

2024-25 Paddlesports Committee Meeting

The Paddlesports Committee convened three times as a full committee (2 virtual and 1 in-person). Charge teams met over 50 additional times during this cycle.

The Committee held its in-person meeting on March 13, 2025, in Lexington, KY in conjunction with the RBS Meeting and Education Seminar. The Paddlesports Committee roster is provided at the end of this report.

2024-2025 Committee Leadership:

Name	Position	State/ Agency	Email	Phone
Billy Doss	Chair	IN	bdoss@dnr.in.gov	765.635.5916
Wendy Flynn	Vice Chair/ Charge 1 Lead	CT	gwendolynn.flynn@ct.gov	860.447.4339
Matt Majors	Executive Board Liaison	TN	matt.majors@tn.gov	423.693.6852
Tom Dardis	USCG Liaison	USCG	thomas.j.dardis@uscg.mil	703.986.9205
Kim Jackson	Charge 2 Lead	AZ	kjackson@azgfd.gov	602.402.9732
Phil Hagar	Charge 3 Lead	MD	philipl.hager1@maryland.gov	301.832.4569
Virgil Chambers	Charge 4 Lead	Associate	vhchambers@aol.com	614.582.4112
Pam Dillon	Staff	NASBLA	pam@nasbla.org	860.908.7368

See Appendix A for the full committee roster.

This report provides a summary of committee deliverables and work products for the 2024-2025 Committee year.

PADDLE 2024-1 Collaborate with PTC

Collaborate with Paddlesports Trade Coalition (PTC) to develop a credential for training paddlesports retailers, outfitters, and livery staff (new).

Needs Statement: Paddlecraft activities continue to grow in popularity across the country. The Paddlesports Trade Coalition is a 501(c)6 national non-profit trade organization whose members include paddlesports brands, outfitters, retailers, and associates. In 2023, the PTC membership endorsed a project to create a knowledge base/training credential which retail shops and outfitters could voluntarily use to train new staff – many of which were not deeply versed in paddlesports or safe paddling. This charge was submitted in response to this stated desire in hopes that the Paddlesports Committee can provide a targeted approach, including resources, for training of paddlesports personnel.

PADDLE 2024-1 Collaborate with PTC: Lead - Wendy Flynn (CT); Charge Members: Kim Jackson (AZ), Kosette Seibert (AK), Lili Colby (Mustang Survival), Adam Spangler (PA), Tom Dardis (USCG Liaison), Alyssa Smith (WA), Billy Doss (IN)

Measure of Effectiveness: After acceptance and implementation by PTC, the number of retail shops, outfitters or liveries which utilize a resource library or other targeted approach, to help orient and introduce staff to safe paddling concepts. If a credential is desired, the number of individuals completing the provided training.

Deliverable(s): The Charge will identify critical and desired needs to fill information gaps within the paddlesports industry for staff training in paddlesports safety training so 1) the system can be improved, and 2) staff can be provided access to resources which have been reviewed and are recommended by the NASBLA Paddlesports Committee.

The Charge team met several numerous times to address this charge. For the purposes of this report, human powered vessels were identified as canoes, kayaks, SUPs, rowboats, and inflatables.

Initial work focused on development of a survey to retailers. The survey, launched in January 2025, was announced to members of the Paddlesports Trade Coalition. Seventy-three (73) responses were received. The survey revealed insight on the levels of current training and credentials within the industry. It was evident that most of the specialty vendors who responded to the survey take staff training very seriously. Training included a significant number of staff with training credentials from the American Canoe Association (ACA) including on-water skill training and swiftwater rescue. However, there were several respondents who identified the need for safe paddling best practices which were vetted and recommended by professional boating safety educators (specifically the states). While they did not fully support the need for a stand-alone credential, several indicated that a resource library of information

available on-line would serve as a useful tool to orient new staff.

See Appendix B: Survey Results – Survey of Paddlesports Retailer and Outfitter Training – Current Practices and Needs (73 Responses)

Summary of Paddlesports Retailer and Outfitter Training Survey

Primary Paddlesports Interests (Q1)

- **Top categories:**
 - Outfitter Only (31.94%, 23 responses)
 - Retailer and Outfitter (29.17%, 21 responses)
 - Retailer Only (20.83%, 15 responses)
- **Other Stakeholders:** Livery Operator, Industry Consultant, Instructor.

Safety Protocols for Renting Vessels (Q2 & Q3)

- **94.59% of outfitters have safety protocols** for vessel rentals.
- **Common protocols:**
 - Mandatory PFDs (life jackets)
 - Pre-trip safety briefings
 - Waivers of liability
 - Equipment checks
 - Restrictions based on weather and water conditions.

Employee Safety Skills (Q4)

- **Key skills needed:**
 - CPR/First Aid
 - Water rescue techniques
 - PFD fitting
 - Communication and situational awareness
 - Knowledge of weather, tides, and hazards.

Safety Training for Employees (Q5 & Q6)

- **74.55% provide safety training.**
- **Training resources used:**
 - American Canoe Association (ACA)
 - American Red Cross
 - Local Coast Guard chapters
 - Wilderness First Aid programs.

Confidence in Employee Education (Q7)

- **65.38% are very confident** in employees educating customers about safe paddling practices.
- **26.92% are somewhat confident.**

Challenges in Providing Safety Training (Q8)

- **Top challenges:**
 - Time (72.55%)
 - Cost (49.02%)
 - Availability of certified trainers (29.41%)
 - Seasonal employment and staff availability.

Additional Input (Q9)

- **Concerns raised:**
 - Difficulty in creating a national safety standard due to varying local conditions.
 - Importance of hands-on training and tailored curricula.
 - Manufacturers should invest more in training retail staff.

Interest in National Best Practices (Q10)

- **49.02% are willing to assist** with national efforts to create industry best practices.
- **Concerns:** Regulatory burdens and the need for localized training.

Contact Information (Q11)

- **42 respondents shared contact details** for follow-up and summarized reports. *(Note: These names have been removed from the Appendix A report.)*

Key Takeaways:

1. **Safety protocols and training are widely implemented**, but challenges like time, cost, and seasonal employment persist.
2. **Outfitters prioritize PFDs, safety briefings, and weather monitoring** to ensure customer safety.
3. **Employee training relies heavily on ACA and other established organizations**, with a focus on CPR, rescue skills, and situational awareness.
4. **There is interest in national best practices**, but concerns about regulatory burdens and local adaptability remain.

This report highlights the current practices, challenges, and needs in paddlesports, safety training and development.

Conclusion:

Based on this input, the Charge team adjusted their focus. Adopting the process identified and implemented by **Charge 2 – Microlearning**, an initial list of reviewed resource information is being developed and will be shared for feedback and input at PTC Colab '25 (Charlotte, NC – October 16-19, 2025).

Next cycle recommendation: This charge should continue to address the following:

Recommendation 1: Continue Charge entitled “Collaborate with PTC” to incorporate additional feedback from the Paddlesports Trade Coalition and other paddlesports industry partners.

PADDLE 2023-2 Microlearning and Outreach Needs Assessment

Develop microlearning training and resources to help facilitate opportunities for officers, educators and administrators to engage with the paddling community. Based on the 2023-4 survey, confirm where gaps exist and identify what efforts should be made to recommend a list of acceptable and available safety videos for use by boating educators.
(NASBLA 2.6) (RBS Initiative 1)

Needs Statement: Officers, educators and administrators need new and innovative strategies to help facilitate opportunities to engage the paddling community. Microlearning components can quickly give these professionals the information and tools they need to engage this growing boating community effectively. A needs assessment will identify gaps where additional resources may be needed.

Charge 2024-2: Micro-learning and Outreach Needs Assessment. Lead - Phil Hager (MD)
Charge Members: Adam Spangler (PA), Craig Watson (OH), Seth Snow (TN), Beth Spilman (ACA), Jim Greenhalgh (USPS/ABC), Jeff Moag (WSF).

Measure of Effectiveness: As identified in the previous committee cycle, there is no inventory of currently available materials; efforts to create materials are often unnecessarily duplicated. This Charge will identify the digital and print materials states have that can be shared among the boating education community and identify any gaps in boating education materials. This list of gaps could inspire states and our associate members when creating new content that is desired and beneficial to the boating education community. As a starting point, the charge team developed criteria for review of publicly available video materials. Based on this criterion, the charge team implemented the process to identify video resources for the *Presenter’s Guide to Paddlesports Safety - Kayak (Charge 4)*.

Deliverable(s): A 2024 survey confirmed that there were not a lot of materials available to the states providing basic information on paddling safety, PFD wear and safe paddling practices. The charge team focused on a review of publicly available materials to create a list of vetted videos that could be used by State educators as part of their paddle sports education classes/programs. The subject matter of topics initially focused on basic paddlesports skills as presented in Ohio's *Introduction to Kayaking* program, NASBLA's draft *Presenters Guide to Paddlesports Safety – Kayak* and ABYC's American National Standard entitled EDU-3 On-Water Recreational Boating Skills-Human Propelled.

The charge team first determined reviewer guidelines. To make the final list of recommended videos, each must comply/agree with the following:

- ANSI/NASBLA Basic Boating Knowledge and Human Propelled American National Standards.
- The NASBLA Seal of Safe Boating Standards
- USCG's Media Production Procedure
 - For practical purposes, the charge team determined videos should be less than 4 minutes in length to supplement classroom or on-water training and not be an instructional class on their own.

Individual charge team members located and reviewed videos on specific skills or needs and recommended videos for review by the whole charge team. After review by the whole team using the above guidelines, a number of videos were approved for our final list.

See Appendix C: Paddlesports Resources

This vetted list of resources is primarily for use by state educators. This list includes the skill taught, a video link and some comments about the video. The instructor is expected to review the videos to determine which are appropriate for use prior to or during their class.

These video resources are vetted by members of the NASBLA Paddlesports Committee including individuals with a broad background in paddlesports. This list-to-date is not intended to be a final list but a starting point. Additional videos can be added to include a wider variety of paddlecraft and to meet new teaching needs.

Next cycle recommendation: This charge should continue to address the following:

Recommendation 2-1: Expand the list of recommended safety videos for kayak, canoe, SUP, and other disciplines (pack raft, raft, etc.).

Recommendation 2-2: Create a location on the NASBLA website and/or Paddlesports Dashboard to link to the list of recommended videos. Create protocols to maintain and update the list.

PADDLE 2023-3 Outreach to Paddlecraft Liveries & Retailers Best Practices/ [National Paddlesports Committee Honors](#) (NPCH)

Create a program for paddlesports manufacturers, retailers, and liveries that will recognize their efforts to create and promote a safe paddling culture. Similar to the Seal of Safe Boating, the Committee will identify and develop specific award criteria for paddlesports manufacturers, retailers, and liveries. These criteria will consider the methods and efforts already used to create a culture of paddling safety. It will also determine an appropriate amount of time for which the honor is valid and an effective method to distribute the honor. (NASBLA 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6) (RBS Initiative 1: CoA 1, CoA 2, CoA 3, Initiative 3)

Needs Statement: Paddlecraft rental liveries are one of the prime outlets to engage entry level, non-motorized boaters in safety awareness and risk mitigation for increased safe participation. Developing best practices for state boating safety professionals to use offers an opportunity to engage retailers and livery operators and further boating safety messages for this hard-to-reach population.

Charge 2024-3: Outreach to Paddlecraft Liveries & Retailers Best Practices/ [National Paddlesports Committee Honors](#) (NPCH): Lead - Kim Jackson (AZ); Charge Members: Kosette Seibert (AK), Lili Colby (Mustang Survival), Wendy Flynn (CT), Adam Spangler (PA), , Alyssa Smith (WA).

Measure of Effectiveness: Implement the program for paddlesports manufacturers, retailers, and liveries to recognize efforts that help to create and promote a safe paddling culture. Initiate the program in 2025 with initial awards based on the approved metrics. Position the program to grow the number of National Paddlesports Committee Honors (NPCH) awarded in the future.

Deliverables: The National Paddlesports Committee Honors (NPCH) was developed and launched to recognize paddlesports manufacturers, retailers, and liveries which promote a safe paddling culture. This is measured by analyzing safe practices promoted on social media including the number of life jackets (and additional safety items) shown being worn (or used) through photos and specific safety messages (National Safe Boating Week, no alcohol use, cold water best practices, etc.). Paddlecraft rental liveries and outfitters are prime outlets to engage entry-level, non-motorized boaters in safety awareness and risk mitigation for increased safety awareness. Almost all manufacturers, retailers, and liveries have a social media presence and data shows many consumers receive messages from these sites. The NPCH will recognize efforts to create and promote a safe paddling environment. The committee finalized the language for the program and requested Executive Board approval to proceed in January 2025. The Executive Board approved the application, rubrics, and other details for the NPCH and the program was launched on the NASBLA website in February 2025.



The process includes the following (documents posted on the [Charge Team Basecamp site](#)):

- NPCH Application
- NPCH Reviewer Guide
- NPCH Social Media Scoring Rubric
- NPCH Website scoring rubric
- Paddlesports Award – Social Media Scoring blank

See NPCH Application posted on the NASBLA website:

[National Paddlesports Committee Honors](#)

While applications may be submitted year-round, seventeen (16) applications were received during the initial review period. To date, twelve (12) recommendations received Executive Board approval for NPCH recognition. These are:

- Appomattox River Company
- Chicago Adventure Therapy
- Georgia Rivers Alliance (GARivers)
- GetOutdoors LLC
- Longshore Sailing School
- Mission Bay Aquatic Center
- Montgomery Whitewater
- Mustang Survival
- National Safe Boating Council
- Robert Nissenbaum Kayaking
- SUP New Jersey
- YakAttack, LLC

NPCH recognition includes award of a 2025 NPCH certificate of recognition and authorization for use of the NPCH logo on the awardee's website for a one-year period. Announcement of NPCH recipients will be made at the NASBLA Annual Conference, with certificates presented at suitable venues including PTC Colab '25, Charlotte, NC, October 16-19, 2025.

Next cycle recommendation: This charge should continue to address the following:

Recommendation 3-1: Update the 2026 NPCH criteria to address findings from the 2025 process.

Recommendation 3-2: Create a Standing Charge in the Paddlesports Committee to continue the NPCH process.

PADDLE 2023-4 Paddling Course & Instructor Charge Proposal

Develop a curriculum and tools for an introductory paddling program that meets ANSI standards for state boating educators. Develop/recommend a process to voluntarily train state educators wishing to receive a NASBLA paddlesports training credential to provide entry-level paddlesports training based on American National Standards for human-propelled boating.

Needs Statement – With the growth of paddlesports activities and the increase in related incidents and fatalities, many state boating agencies are developing and engaging the often difficult to reach paddling demographic through short-duration events. Many state boating educators face challenges when organizing entry-level paddling events or participating in brief public outreach activities. A needs assessment was conducted in the 2023-24 committee cycle to help understand the issue.

Charge 2024-4: Paddling Course and Instructor Charge Proposal: Lead - Virgil Chambers (Associate); Charge Members- Adam Spangler (PA), Alyssa Smith (WA), Craig Watson (OH), Kim Jackson (AZ), Andrea White (GRN/ ACA RAC), Jim Greenhalgh (USPS/ABC), Scott Szczepaniak (USCG 7th District), Roland McDevitt (USCG Aux)

Measure of Effectiveness: The effectiveness of this charge will be based on the number of states that would implement (in whole or in part) the resulting products into their education program.

Deliverable(s): The 2023-24 survey to BLAs and Education Coordinators determined numerous state agencies would like guidance on how to provide introductory paddlesports programs within their agencies with 87% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement: *It is important for the NASBLA Paddlesports Committee to develop or recommend an introductory Paddlesports program for state educators/ staff/ volunteers.*

Other survey findings indicated that 55% don't have a program and another 15% are using someone else's program. Respondents indicated interest in programs of 1-4 hours or half-day maximum (84% of respondents support this with 66% recommending 3-4 hours- 1/2 day). There was no (0.0%) support for a longer format.

Respondents indicated interest in an Instructor's Manual (88%) and/or Student Manual (74%)

to conduct a program, with an on-water component (91% agree with 45% strongly agreeing) to supplement a classroom, onshore, or online program. Some type of instructor certification is desired for this optional – not mandatory- program (59% agree; 27% were neutral or not sure).

With Executive Board approval, the charge team developed a simplified instructor program following the American National Standard for an entry level paddler which includes an on-water component for kayak. The program was reviewed during the 2025 NASBLA Education Seminar with additional input received.

With updated content based on feedback received during the Education Seminar, the *Presenter's Guide to Paddlesports Safety - Kayak* received Executive Board approval for field tested with educators from two states – Virginia (scheduled August 25, 2025) and Pennsylvania (scheduled August 27, 2025) with results reviewed at the NASBLA 2025 Annual Conference. Once completed, it is expected that the *Guide* will be posted for free download by the states and other interested parties.

See Appendix D: NASBLA Presenter's Guide to Paddlesport Safety

Summary

The **NASBLA Presenter's Guide to Paddlesport Safety** is designed to help state boating educators introduce novice paddlers to kayaking and other paddlesports. It emphasizes safety, skill development, and enjoyment while adhering to American National Standards for human-propelled boating. The guide provides a comprehensive framework for teaching paddlesport safety and skills. It emphasizes preparation, proper equipment, and risk management to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants.

Key components include:

Purpose and Goals

- Reduce paddlesports-related fatalities and injuries by promoting safe practices.
- Target novice paddlers with little or no prior experience.
- Provide scalable and adaptable program guidance for classroom, shore, or on-water settings.

Key Safety Messages

1. Always wear a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
2. Dress for immersion in cold water and wear appropriate footwear.
3. Check weather conditions and avoid paddling in unsafe environments.
4. Avoid alcohol or drug use while paddling.
5. Paddle with others and follow safety protocols.

Program Content

- **Basic Skills:** Boat entry/exit, capsize recovery, self-rescue, assisted rescue, and paddling techniques (forward, reverse, sweep, and draw strokes).

- **Safety Gear:** Life jackets, signaling devices, first aid kits, thermal protection, and emergency communication tools.
- **Legal Requirements:** Compliance with state-specific laws, including registration, safety equipment, and navigation rules.
- **Risk Management:** Waivers, emergency action plans, and appropriate student-to-instructor ratios (1:5-6).

Teaching Methods

- **Whole-Part-Whole Method:** Demonstrate the entire skill, break it into parts, and then practice the whole skill.
- **Teaching Ladder Approach:** Progress from instructor demonstration to student practice with feedback.

On-Water Skills

- Launching, maneuvering, and returning safely to shore.
- Maintaining situational awareness and avoiding hazards.
- Practicing self-rescue and assisted rescue techniques.

Program Structure

1. **Introduction:** Welcome, objectives, and safety briefing.
2. **Land-Based Training:** Overview of equipment, safety protocols, and paddling basics.
3. **On-Water Training:** Hands-on practice of strokes, rescues, and maneuvers.
4. **Conclusion:** Recap, Q&A, and participant evaluations.

Additional Resources

- Appendices include links to American National Standards, verified courses, risk management guidelines, and recommended videos for supplemental learning.

Target Audience

- Novice paddlers and state boating educators.
- Programs are designed for flat water with minimal current and wind.

Paddlesports Committee Training Recommendations (Not yet finalized):

The Presenter's Guide is good as-is if presenting information on shore. If providing on-water training, the educator needs additional on-water-specific training.

Options being discussed for presenter training for on-water use of the Presenter's Guide:

- Leave up to state agencies to train and determine state-recognized instructors.
Examples of current practices include:
 - Ohio uses this approach for Verified Paddlesports Instructor Certification.
 - Pennsylvania certifies paddlesports instructors as one module within their Boating Safety Water Awareness Program.
 - Arizona uses this approach for Verified Paddlesports Instructor Certification.

- Connecticut developed a paddling-safety protocol to address risk management for on-water paddling programs but does not have an on-water program.
- Washington offers paddlesports training to staff but does not certify outside instructors. They have a 3-class "warm up/proof" system. They observe and assist on the first class, help with lessons on second course, and by third (if progressing well) are cleared to teach components under observation. At 4 - 5 classes, they are set "free", though still with monitoring for first season.
- For self-certifying programs, it is important to consider:
 - State policies and procedures for risk management
 - State policies and procedures for working with minors or any activity which could potentially "lay hands on" the participant. (See <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/training-and-education/safesport-courses-for-all/>)
- Additional training options/equivalencies for individuals using the Presenter's Guide include:
 - Presenter Candidate earns a Level 1 ACA Instructor certification for kayak
 - Presenter Candidate completes an ACA Level 1 Skills course for kayak with a certified ACA instructor
 - Presenter Candidate earns a Level 1 Skills Assessment for kayak with a certified ACA instructor
 - Presenter Candidate earns the ACA Community Paddlesports Leader certification for kayak and one additional craft (canoe or SUP)
 - These courses explore and develop solutions to "big picture" paddling challenges including venue selection, group management, participant competency, and rescues across a variety of paddlecraft. These non-discipline-specific courses train leaders that engage with the broader paddling community to provide safe, fun, paddling experiences at the entry level.
 - ACA Paddlesports Safety Facilitator (Kayak) – *Note: Need to discuss this as it covers less than the Level 1 curriculum.*

Additional discussion:

- Should NASBLA offer a level of training for states based on the Presenter's Guide?
- Could this be rolled-out under the NASBLA BOAT program as a Train-the-Trainer course?
- Should Presenter Guide Training be presented by partners such as the NSBC, PTC, ACA, or others in lieu of NASBLA providing the training?
- We understand BEAP was developed to address training for education? How should BEAP be involved in the roll-out of this program?
- Reach out to the Education Committee/others who want to implement a program to advance the next steps in this discussion. Determine what else is needed to adopt this/use the *Presenter's Guide for Paddlesports Safety - Kayak* in various states?
 - The committee has been contacted by educators from several states and organizations hoping to use the completed *Guide* for training.

- Define Equivalencies for using the Presenter’s Guide (e.g., Ohio, AZ, ACA programs, etc.).
 - Florida - People can volunteer to run trips in state parks but volunteers must first train under an ACA instructor.

Next cycle recommendation: This charge should continue to address the following:

Recommendation 4-1: Update the Guide based on lessons learned from the August 2025 VA and PA beta tests.

Recommendation 4-2: Support state efforts to implement the *Guide*.

Recommendation 4-3: Consider options to roll-out an on-water Train-the-Trainer option based on implementation of the *Presenter’s Guide*. Roll-out options to include consideration of partnerships with other organizations (e.g. NSBC, PTC, ACA, USPS/ABC, CG Auxiliary and/or others).



PADDLESPORTS COMMITTEE
2024 - 2025
APPROVED COMMITTEE ROSTER

Committee Leaders & Staff	Agency / Organization	State
Billy Doss - CHAIR	Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division	IN
Gwendolynn Flynn - VICE CHAIR	Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	CT
Matt Majors - EXECUTIVE BOARD LIAISON	Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency	TN
Tom Dardis - USCG LIAISON	Grants Management Branch (CG-BSX-22)	
Pamela Dillon - NASBLA Staff	National Association of State Boating Law Administrators	

State Members	Agency	State
Adam Spangler	Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission	PA
Alyssa Smith	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Boating Program	WA

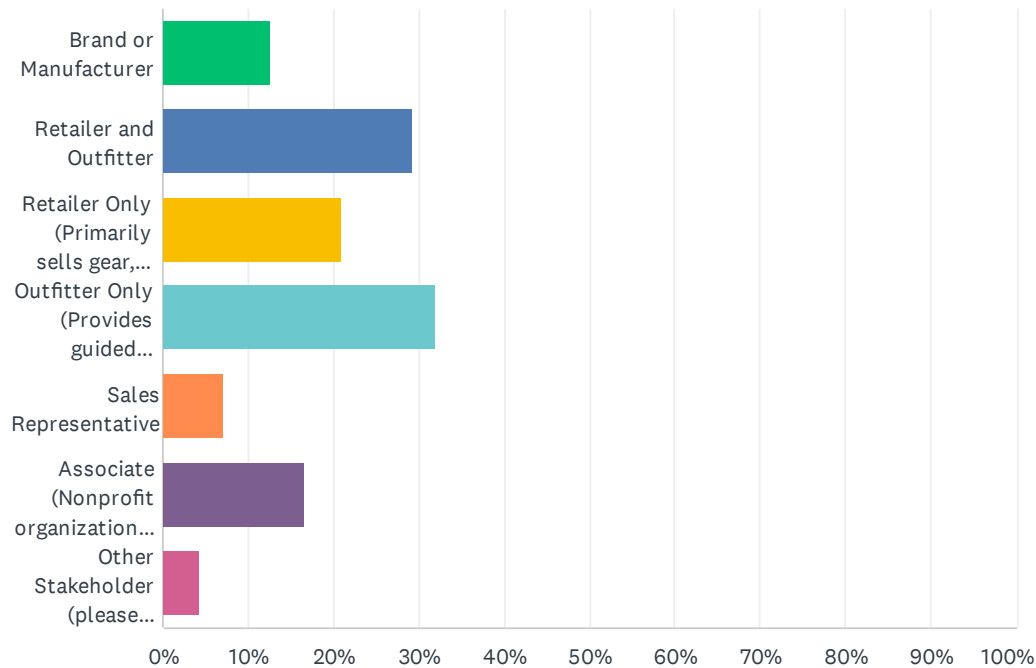
Craig Watson	Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks & Watercraft	OH
Jacob Vitak	North Carolina State Parks	NC
Kim Jackson	Arizona Game and Fish Department	AZ
Kosette Seibert	Alaska Office of Boating Safety	AK
Philip Hager	Maryland Natural Resources Police	MD
Sara Kennedy	California State Parks, Division of Boating and Waterways	CA
Seth Snow	Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency	TN

Associate Members	Agency / Organization
Andrea Leigh White	Georgia River Network/American Canoe Association Regional Activity Council
Beth Spilman	American Canoe Association
James B. Greenhalgh	United States Power Squadrons, America's Boating Club
Jeffrey Moag	Water Sports Foundation

Jim Virgin	Washington State Parks, Boating Program Advisory Council	WA
Lili Colby	Mustang Survival	NH
Roland McDevitt	United States Coast Guard Auxiliary	NC
Scott Szczepaniak	U.S. Coast Guard Seventh District	SC
Virgil Chambers	Chambers & Associates	PA

Q1 Please indicate your primary paddlesports interest (check all that apply).

Answered: 72 Skipped: 1

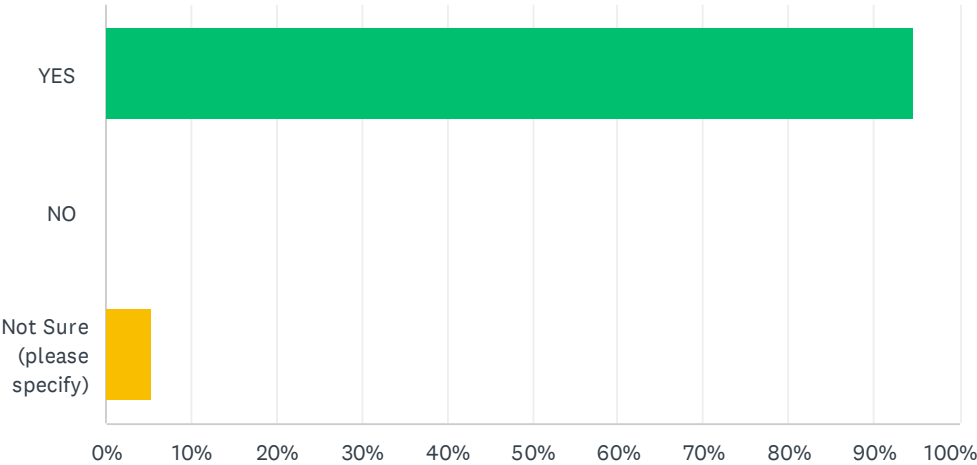


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Brand or Manufacturer		12.50%	9
Retailer and Outfitter		29.17%	21
Retailer Only (Primarily sells gear, apparel and equipment to customers)		20.83%	15
Outfitter Only (Provides guided experiences, rentals, or adventure services)		31.94%	23
Sales Representative		6.94%	5
Associate (Nonprofit organization, government, etc.)		16.67%	12
Other Stakeholder (please specify)		4.17%	3
Total Respondents: 72			

#	OTHER STAKEHOLDER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Livery Operator	3/7/2025 1:30 PM
2	Industry consultant	3/7/2025 10:20 AM
3	Instructor (paddle AND Safe Boating)	3/1/2025 11:28 AM

Q2 You indicated you are an outfitter. Do you have any safety protocols for people renting vessels?

Answered: 37 Skipped: 36



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
YES		94.59%	35
NO		0.00%	0
Not Sure (please specify)		5.41%	2
TOTAL			37

#	NOT SURE (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	We don't rent vessels	3/5/2025 9:49 AM
2	We are in Alaska and don't do rentals, too many inexperienced requests.	3/1/2025 6:59 PM

Q3 As an Outfitter, please list the safety protocols for people renting vessels that you use.

Answered: 29 Skipped: 44

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	We do a pre trip briefing as required by TN state law	3/26/2025 10:35 AM
2	PFD's must be worn correctly at all times. No alcohol, glass or recreational drugs are allowed. Renters must sign a waiver of liability and confirm that they know how to swim. Renters are given instructions before entering the water as to the boundaries where they are allowed to paddle. Liability waivers must include emergency contacts. Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied on the water with someone 18 or older. Gear is checked to make sure it is in working order.	3/21/2025 10:15 AM
3	-Mandatory wearing of life jackets - Debrief on tides, winds, and current before launch -Debrief on safest and best route to avoid federal channels -Basics of paddling and safe entering/exiting vessel - Cell phone packs with lanyard for purchase at check-in	3/18/2025 11:35 AM
4	Full safety speech and equipment demonstration (if applicable). Lifejackets provided and required. Guides accompany if guests seem unsure or in need of assistance.	3/13/2025 10:46 AM
5	Equipment, Safety Video, Repeat video info in an in-person safety talk	3/12/2025 12:10 PM
6	We go over the safety tules and regulations before a trip	3/9/2025 9:51 AM
7	Greet & identify if guests have paddled the river before or if it is a first time. Explain their paddling trail and how long they plan to be out for. Ensure hat, water, sunscreen. Sign waiver At the dock before entering the kayak guests are instructed to put on a pfd, fitting snug. Employees help guests into their kayak, ensuring they are in a comfortable seat position. Also, gives guests a chance to ask any additional questions before enjoying their rental.	3/7/2025 8:54 PM
8	For my business, I am only doing guided experience, trips, skills workshops, etc. We never rent equipment that users will take and use on their own without a guide present. Clients renting equipment are familiarized with use and care. Clients renting equipment must sign of release of liability/hold harmless agreement.	3/6/2025 5:59 PM
9	1. We don't do unattended rentals. We have staff out on the water and have a restricted area people can paddle in. 2. We give a safety overview. 3. We have leashes and PFDs. 4. We don't go out when the wind is more than 15 mph, etc.	3/6/2025 3:31 PM
10	Standard use of PFD + Whistle for each participant. Brief overview of paddle technique(s) and kayak/SUP features Check for Hat, Sunscreen, Sunglasses, Flashlight, and appropriate clothing for weather/conditions Discuss weather, route plan, what time to be off water	3/6/2025 2:35 PM
11	All required FWC safety and our own SOP . We also require our staff to attend annual safety classes through ACA or USCG	3/6/2025 2:06 PM
12	Must have relavent training and experience	3/6/2025 1:07 PM
13	Required to wear a PFD Required to get an orientation (environment & skill)	3/5/2025 6:20 PM
14	We provide adaptive programming and occasional independent use of our kayaks, canoes, and SUPs. All program participants must follow our Program Attendance Guidelines and meet our Essential Eligibility criteria.	3/5/2025 12:17 PM
15	Rental customers are required to wear PFDs throughout the duration of their trip. Cursory instruction on safely entering/exiting their watercraft, basic strokes, and what to do if they should find themselves in the water is provided immediately prior to getting on the water.	3/5/2025 11:47 AM
16	Weather protocols Water Level parameters (cfs/ecoli) Pre trip safety talks (river hazards/river map) Contact Number to office for questions or emergency while on the water Constant River sweeps by staff (always one staffers on the water making contact with guests)	3/5/2025 10:45 AM

Survey of Paddlesports Retailer and Outfitter Training - Current Practices and Needs

17	Previous experience, proper gear and minimum age.	3/5/2025 10:16 AM
18	Skill level	3/5/2025 9:47 AM
19	They are required to wear PFDs in order to use our rentals, or participate in our tours even with their own canoe/kayak. They are notified of this with a rental policies document emailed to them before the event, and verbally before getting on the water. They are instructed in writing and verbally how to safely use their boats and what to do/what not to do.	3/5/2025 9:46 AM
20	We have our customers go through a 15 minute orientation regarding the day's conditions (wind, tide, marine traffic, etc), proper route planning for the day, and a primer on proper paddling technique. PFDs must be worn at all times.	3/4/2025 12:05 PM
21	everyone required to wear a life jacket rentals that will be transported must be properly secured renter cannot exceed the weight capacity of the boat	3/4/2025 12:04 PM
22	Brief lessons, safety gear explanation, waivers signed, waterway description to guests, weather forecast for guests. emergency contact number given	3/4/2025 10:05 AM
23	Safety video; riverside safety briefing; required to wear PFDs at all times, and helmets when in Class III+ whitewater.	3/3/2025 3:13 PM
24	Sign a waiver acknowledging possible risks. Required to wear a PFD Safety briefing at put-ins Lighting on boats for night-time guided trips It would have been easier to answer your question if you had defined what you mean as "protocols"	3/1/2025 1:36 PM
25	-Safety Video included in waiver process -Water conditions webpage that is linked in customer email and booking page. This shows weather, live camera, water level gauge, and detailed descriptions of what to expect at certain water levels -Pre-trip safety briefing/explanation of conditions -All customers required to have PFD on and buckled when entering vessel. The PFD LAW is stated in safety briefing. -PFD signage at check-in, PFD shack, and launch site.	3/1/2025 11:42 AM
26	All Participants renting are introduced to the sport by ACA PSF certified and trained Staff that follow all ACA Protocol.	3/1/2025 10:42 AM
27	Must use PFD. Zero alcohol and drug use before and during outing. Safety brief before the outing begins. With every purchase of new watercraft we include an ACA produced paddle safety brochure. WE monitor the weather and future predicted weather before allowing anyone on to the water.	3/1/2025 8:42 AM
28	All rentals include pfd, throw bag, bailer, floatation	2/28/2025 6:08 PM
29	Renter must be healthy enough to paddle and able to get in and out of a kayak or canoe Must be dressed appropriately for the water and temperature Must wear the PFD (we supply) properly at all times on the water Must be able to use the emergency whistle we provide Must have drinking water on board with them.	2/28/2025 5:20 PM

Q4 What are the most important safety skills your employees need for their roles?

Answered: 49 Skipped: 24

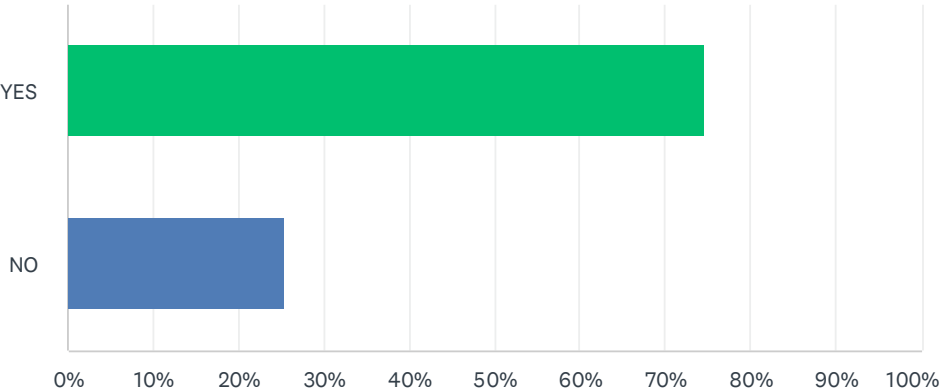
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	If they go into the river above their knees to assist a customer they need to wear a lifejacket	3/26/2025 10:36 AM
2	We are The Illinois Paddling Council with no employees, just volunteers. We promote paddling safety opportunities across the state of Illinois.	3/21/2025 3:14 PM
3	Employees understand how to fit a renter correctly with PFDs. Employees understand the section of the river renters are allowed to paddle on.	3/21/2025 10:15 AM
4	Fitting customers in PFDs and on water kayak rescues.	3/18/2025 1:23 PM
5	-proper fitment of life jackets for all ages and sizes -proper entry and exit technique from vessels - thorough understanding of wind/weather/tides/currents -thorough understanding of routes outside of federal channel	3/18/2025 11:37 AM
6	group management	3/18/2025 11:19 AM
7	Good judgement / situational awareness. CPR/First Aid training.	3/13/2025 10:47 AM
8	Prevention, First Aid	3/12/2025 12:11 PM
9	N/A	3/9/2025 9:52 AM
10	All of the steps listed are important but PFDs are a non-negotiable.	3/7/2025 8:55 PM
11	Paddling skills, rescue skills, CPR, river or body of water knowledge	3/7/2025 10:21 AM
12	Wilderness First Responder medical training. ACA trip leader or instructor certification appropriate to the conditions expected for the trip.	3/6/2025 6:01 PM
13	Water rescue, knowing the signs of heat exhaustion, CPR, First Aid, common sense	3/6/2025 3:32 PM
14	Attention to details like weather, and clear communication skills to convey safety concepts and set clear expectations for guests	3/6/2025 2:37 PM
15	Proper fitting life vests, paddle safety instruction, awareness on the water instruction, contact info for emergency, self rescue and rescue assistance for paddlecraft	3/6/2025 2:08 PM
16	Ability to communicate safety	3/6/2025 1:08 PM
17	Understanding their environment and predicting changes in conditions. Communicating safety and skill information. Paddling efficiently themselves.	3/5/2025 6:28 PM
18	N/A	3/5/2025 1:48 PM
19	I am a Sales Representative for a kayak trailer manufacturer. Safety standards from the DOT and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration impact our design. The safety skills I require in my role are driving related.	3/5/2025 12:49 PM
20	Setting someone up properly and comfortably, including recognizing (and making adjustments if needed) proper boat trim, quick rescues - most commonly T and Scoops	3/5/2025 12:18 PM
21	An understanding of how to keep themselves safe is the most critical. That includes monitoring personal hydration/nutrition, temperature/sun exposure, and other environmental factors. After that, the ability to quickly and clearly communicate safety information to customers is vital. Also, a variety of methods for executing assisted rescues, as well as self rescue, should they find themselves in need. Finally, first aid/CPR training, should a situation require such.	3/5/2025 12:07 PM
22	communication skills for educating renters proper PFD fitting with customers environmental	3/5/2025 10:46 AM

Survey of Paddlesports Retailer and Outfitter Training - Current Practices and Needs

	situational awareness	
23	"Safety Speech" given to clients before trip to set them up for success. Rescue and incident response as needed.	3/5/2025 10:18 AM
24	To properly pick up,carry,move about, store and otherwise handle the weight of kayaks properly.	3/5/2025 10:15 AM
25	SWR, cpr, first aid	3/5/2025 9:49 AM
26	Basic first aid & CPR Water rescue Stress management	3/5/2025 9:49 AM
27	I have no employees as an owner/operator but I keep up with skills practices on my own and keep an eye out for ACA trainings near me	3/5/2025 9:48 AM
28	Having correct safety equipment	3/5/2025 9:36 AM
29	Knowledge of regulations, venues, hazards, appropriate safety gear and local training opportunities	3/5/2025 9:28 AM
30	basic course	3/5/2025 8:04 AM
31	Awareness of the safety requirements for each type of paddlesport. Familiarity with whitewater rescue techniques.	3/4/2025 5:29 PM
32	Proper safety gear, and rescue techniques.	3/4/2025 2:34 PM
33	Ability to understand the impact of weather, tide and marine conditions on a customer's paddling experience, the ability to convey that information in a compelling and credible manner to people from a variety of backgrounds. First Aid and CPR certification are also required. Guides are all trained in rescue skills and in group management and leadership.	3/4/2025 12:08 PM
34	be convincing when they Talk about wearing Life jackets	3/4/2025 12:05 PM
35	Level headedness, kayak certifications, practicing skills and rescues. Understanding the risk management plan of the business	3/4/2025 10:06 AM
36	Drivers: able to keep customers' attention during safety speech, get customers in and out of boats safely Guides: Ability to read water, read customers, guide skills, rescue skills	3/3/2025 3:15 PM
37	Self Rescue, Client rescue at sea, Survival Skills	3/1/2025 7:00 PM
38	Safe use of our equipment, particularly in an adaptive kayak environment	3/1/2025 2:51 PM
39	Swimming ability Paddling skills Rescue skills Awareness of changing weather conditions	3/1/2025 1:38 PM
40	-First aid/CPR -Awareness of hazards: equipment handling, natural environment, vehicles. - Risk assessment. -Emergency preparedness/response	3/1/2025 11:45 AM
41	Ultimately, resque skills in every craft. (SUP, Kayak and Canoe).	3/1/2025 10:43 AM
42	Knowledge of basic first aid, cpr, emergency contacts	3/1/2025 8:43 AM
43	Retail safety	2/28/2025 11:57 PM
44	For on water staff appropriate certifications from national organizations. In store staff need to understand the safety implications of wearing and using gear properly.	2/28/2025 8:02 PM
45	Basic water rescue skills off a dock and on water, CPR and first aid	2/28/2025 6:46 PM
46	Staff training regarding safety equipment that must go out on rentals. Instructors require national certification, Swiftwater rescue and first aid	2/28/2025 6:09 PM
47	All of our staff are sea kayak or ww coaches and they double as retail staff during down times	2/28/2025 5:35 PM
48	First Aid and CPR (Wilderness First Aid Preferred) The ability to rescue a boater in the case of a capsize or related incident. The ability to tow a tired paddler while dealing with a tour Basic lifeguard skills The ability to recognize when someone should not be in a kayak or canoe.	2/28/2025 5:27 PM
49	Reading a river and navigating potential obastacles Rescues	2/28/2025 5:19 PM

Q5 Do you currently provide any paddlesports safety training for your employees?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 18



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
YES	74.55%	41
NO	25.45%	14
TOTAL		55

Q6 You indicated you provide safety training. What are the partnerships or resources you currently use to train staff?

Answered: 40 Skipped: 33

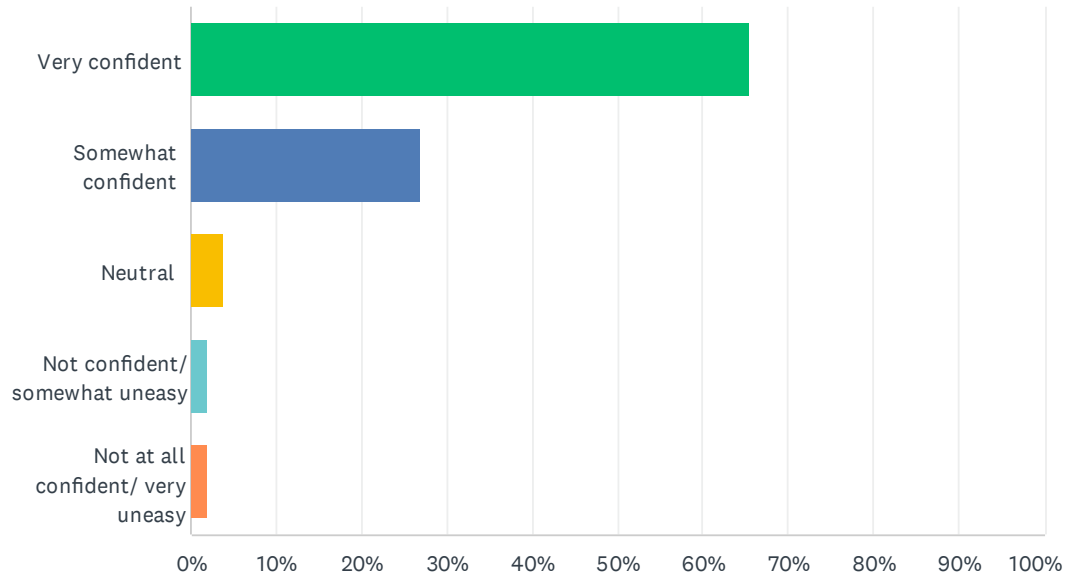
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	For our assistant guides for classes or guided trips we use the ACA paddlesports safety facilitator training and also have assistant guides complete the ACA level 1 and/or level 2 kayak/canoe classes. We do not require these for rental staff but they are allowed to complete the training if they would like to.	3/26/2025 10:39 AM
2	ACA and our product reps	3/18/2025 1:24 PM
3	Wind/weather and tide apps ACA certified instructor provided modules WaterProof chart 26E	3/18/2025 11:39 AM
4	American Canoe Association, British Canoeing, American Red Cross, Solo Wilderness First Aid	3/18/2025 11:20 AM
5	American Red Cross training.	3/13/2025 10:47 AM
6	SOLO	3/12/2025 12:11 PM
7	Resources like experience, paddling enthusiasts, ACA instructor courses, local coast guards chapters.	3/7/2025 8:58 PM
8	I am an ACA L4 instructor. I can train and assess staff up to level four skills, and I can train and assess staff up to level three trip leader certification. I partner with other ACA instructor-trainers (ITs) for higher levels of certification.	3/6/2025 6:02 PM
9	WPA	3/6/2025 3:32 PM
10	We partner with the USCG Auxiliary to coordinate indoor training, as well as on-the-water training for staff. Information is then passed to front line employees	3/6/2025 2:38 PM
11	American Canoe Association certificatio	3/6/2025 1:08 PM
12	Powerboating training, Waterfront Lifeguarding, ACA Instructor Certifications	3/5/2025 6:29 PM
13	We provide internal training as well as American Canoe Association Instructor and/or Trip Leader	3/5/2025 12:18 PM
14	Training is conducted in-house, relying on senior staff members' years of direct experience, as well as drawing on resources from organizations like the ACA.	3/5/2025 12:12 PM
15	Rescue 3 SRT/SRTpro Yearly on site scenario/evac training Full review of the emergency action plan for each staffer	3/5/2025 10:47 AM
16	Training done in house with a combination of printed material and hands on learning.	3/5/2025 10:19 AM
17	We do this internally, with our trained staff.	3/5/2025 10:15 AM
18	First responder Water rescue Through fire services	3/5/2025 9:51 AM
19	I used the NOLI institute last year	3/5/2025 9:49 AM
20	I have no staff, but I use the ACA	3/5/2025 9:48 AM
21	ACA	3/5/2025 9:36 AM
22	ACA certified instructors and instructor trainers	3/5/2025 9:28 AM
23	Internal training from certified staff	3/4/2025 5:30 PM
24	American canoe association	3/4/2025 2:37 PM
25	Our instructors are all ACA certified	3/4/2025 12:08 PM

Survey of Paddlesports Retailer and Outfitter Training - Current Practices and Needs

26	Paddle Canada Certifications and Remote Wilderness First Aid Training	3/4/2025 10:07 AM
27	America outdoors safety videos AAA or Rescue 3 for rescue training classes Red Cross or AHA for medical training classes	3/3/2025 3:16 PM
28	ACA and personal skill/experience of the owner	3/1/2025 7:01 PM
29	I personally	3/1/2025 2:51 PM
30	First aid and CPR training Viewing of safety videos Mentoring	3/1/2025 1:39 PM
31	-ACA guidelines -Local Fish and Wildlife Officers	3/1/2025 11:46 AM
32	ACA Certifications in all Craft at PSF, Level I and Level II	3/1/2025 10:45 AM
33	Online water safety, local CPR certification, ACA certified paddle instructor training	3/1/2025 8:44 AM
34	Local instructor programs and individual one on one training	2/28/2025 11:58 PM
35	We do the ckc river safety program and an internal training program for retail staff.	2/28/2025 8:02 PM
36	We used to use the BCU, we are switching over to ACA. We have all new employees do a Basic skills kayak class and then take red cross CPR/first aid	2/28/2025 6:48 PM
37	Canoe kayak canada and paddle canada	2/28/2025 6:09 PM
38	ORCKA, Paddle Canada, Safe Sport, Coach.ca, CANSAIL	2/28/2025 5:36 PM
39	ACA Instructor Trainers, PSUPA Instructor Trainers, ACC Swiftwater Rescue Classes, local Lifeguard trainings, Wilderness First Aid Classes with Sierra	2/28/2025 5:27 PM
40	We have ACA certified instructors and staff go thru an Intro Class and a Safety and Rescue Class. They paddle on trips as a customer before working on a trip.	2/28/2025 5:20 PM

Q7 How confident are you in your employees being able to educate customers about safe paddling practices?

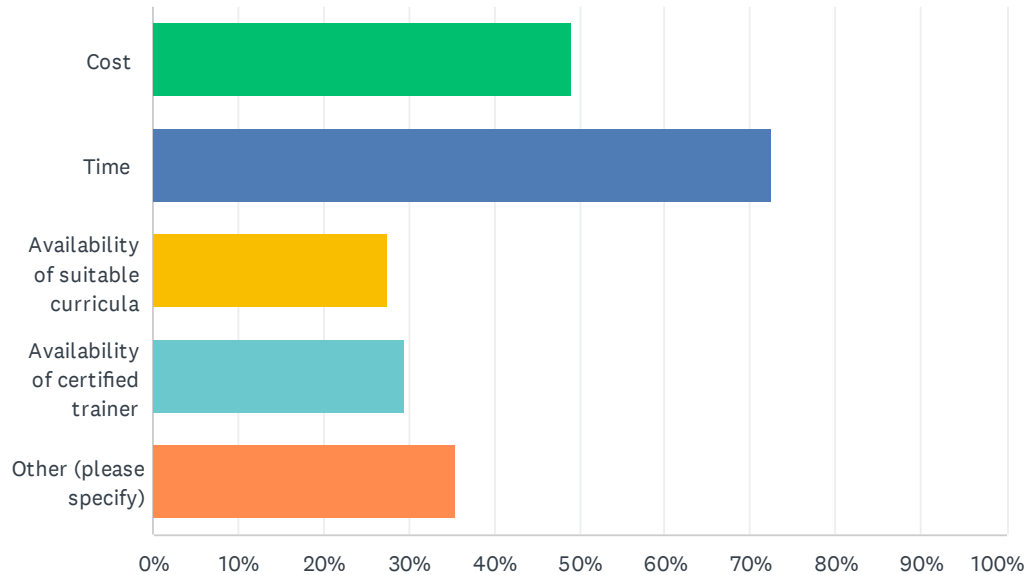
Answered: 52 Skipped: 21



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very confident	65.38%	34
Somewhat confident	26.92%	14
Neutral	3.85%	2
Not confident/ somewhat uneasy	1.92%	1
Not at all confident/ very uneasy	1.92%	1
TOTAL		52

Q8 What CHALLENGES do you face in providing safety training for employees? Check all that apply.

Answered: 51 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Cost	49.02%	25
Time	72.55%	37
Availability of suitable curricula	27.45%	14
Availability of certified trainer	29.41%	15
Other (please specify)	35.29%	18
Total Respondents: 51		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	We have only volunteers. Most are very busy	3/21/2025 3:15 PM
2	None. We take the time, spend the money, have ACA certified instructors on staff, and a best practices curricula.	3/18/2025 11:41 AM
3	None.	3/7/2025 9:03 PM
4	Seasonal employment.	3/7/2025 10:22 AM
5	One of our main challenges is finding the time to train all of our staff prior to the busy time of the season. Most of the workforce that travels here to join our company doesn't arrive until business volume is very high.	3/6/2025 2:40 PM
6	Staff ability to be available at the same time to run a training	3/5/2025 6:29 PM
7	Interest from employees.	3/5/2025 1:48 PM
8	I feel like I am missing the mark on either how the first question categorized my role in the industry, or the answers you are looking for. We weld, paint, cut and grind metal. The safety	3/5/2025 12:52 PM

Survey of Paddlesports Retailer and Outfitter Training - Current Practices and Needs

training is all manufacturing based.

9	None, we have ample time and resources dedicated to training staff. We have the curricula and trainer resources available in company	3/5/2025 10:48 AM
10	Certified Training provides many opportunities to meet the needs of our clients and staff but fall short on paperwork. "Checking" the boxes on certified training does not provide better training just proof of a specific sometimes unfocused curriculum at a greater cost and hassle. We believe every river or body of water has unique challenges better trained and documented at a local level. Having required training by certified instructors leaves outfitters wide open to losing lawsuits if there is a gap in training or paperwork.	3/5/2025 10:42 AM
11	No challenges.	3/5/2025 10:17 AM
12	We run a 3-day intensive guide school at the beginning of the season for new guides to cover all the necessary bases to get new hires up to speed and able to be an introductory second guide. They spend numerous tours shadowing and assisting veteran guides before they can lead their own tours. This takes an enormous amount of instructor and student time and resources.	3/4/2025 6:54 PM
13	We are quite seasonal, and some staff are only on-board for a few months while we are quite busy. It is hard to monitor everyone effectively	3/4/2025 5:31 PM
14	We seem to not have a problem finding trainers for paddling and WRFA training.	3/4/2025 10:08 AM
15	For us, it's not so much employees as the constituents who use our adaptive products. The issue is lack of awareness About safety issues they should be conveying to their own volunteers and staff	3/1/2025 2:52 PM
16	Desire of employee to learn as well as duration of experiences	2/28/2025 11:59 PM
17	The real question is what challenges will we face if we do not provide safety training...	2/28/2025 6:49 PM
18	Often, courses concentrate too much on hard skills and not enough on communication and coaching techniques.	2/28/2025 5:37 PM

Q9 Thank you for your valuable input. Please share any additional input for us regarding staff development, training, and safety resources.

Answered: 16 Skipped: 57

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	We do not advocate a national safety training standard for all outfitters or customers. Every river has challenges unique to that river and unique to that outfitters. It would be difficult to crest a national standard that did not create an undo burden on outfitters.	3/26/2025 10:44 AM
2	The IPC Promotes paddling safety and would like to continue to be involved in this effort.	3/21/2025 3:16 PM
3	We take it seriously. Our business viability, reputation, and liability insurance are all tethered to the proper training of the staff, guides, and instructors.	3/18/2025 11:43 AM
4	The lack of willingness on the part of Metro Parks and the state of Tennessee to let outfitters be part of the solution	3/6/2025 3:33 PM
5	It's wonderful to be able to partner with the USCG Auxiliary as a resource to help create safer experiences on the water for guests and staff.	3/6/2025 2:42 PM
6	I enjoy teaching the on-water safety training. I hope to utilize my ACA Instructor Certification later this year, possibly in conjunction with one of my dealers.	3/5/2025 12:56 PM
7	In terms of training customers on paddle sports safety, there really isn't time during the sales process to provide a proper course. The best we can do is provide them with a pamphlet. We do stress the importance of wearing a life jacket at all times. Most of our customers would have no interest in taking a "course". Offering short reels on various aspects of water safety might be the most effective. We could promote these during the sales process, and through our social media outlets.	3/5/2025 10:21 AM
8	I think this effort should tap into the ACA Regional Activity Council to locate local training opportunities in each region. ACA State Directors and Regional Chairs are a new and untapped resource for connecting all of the dots across the paddlesports community.	3/5/2025 9:30 AM
9	Staff training, retention and development is a huge priority for our business. Our people are our most valuable asset.	3/4/2025 6:56 PM
10	The best training would be hands-on experience, but that is hard to accommodate.	3/4/2025 5:32 PM
11	A little difficult to fill out this survey since we range from unguided canoe/kayak/tubing trips to Class IV whitewater. We utilize different programs and different training sources, depending on the level of risk.	3/3/2025 3:19 PM
12	Not sure that a "certified" trainer is necessary. For example, I have been teaching river skills for over 40 years. I have to admit that I resent having someone with less experience than I blessing my skill level. A course outline with training videos would be what's helpful to me and my staff.	3/1/2025 1:44 PM
13	We require all Retail staff to gain training in paddlesport product as well as Saftey, They are all required to get at least PSF certification before introducing customers in test paddle of boat of interest. Training dates are scheduled with Manufacturer Rep's to come and train the clinic staff on the product. Manufatures are not investing in rep forces, to provide this quality training that was common a few years back.	3/1/2025 11:02 AM
14	Thank you for bringing this topic and discussion to the broad paddlesport industry.	3/1/2025 8:45 AM
15	Safety training is very different than customer relations and product knowledge. We also spend a significant amount of time with new employees on how to sell products and the technical knowledge required. We hire about 50 High School and college kids a summer, one of our most important elements of training these young people is the human skills that most of them come to us with severely lacking.	2/28/2025 6:54 PM

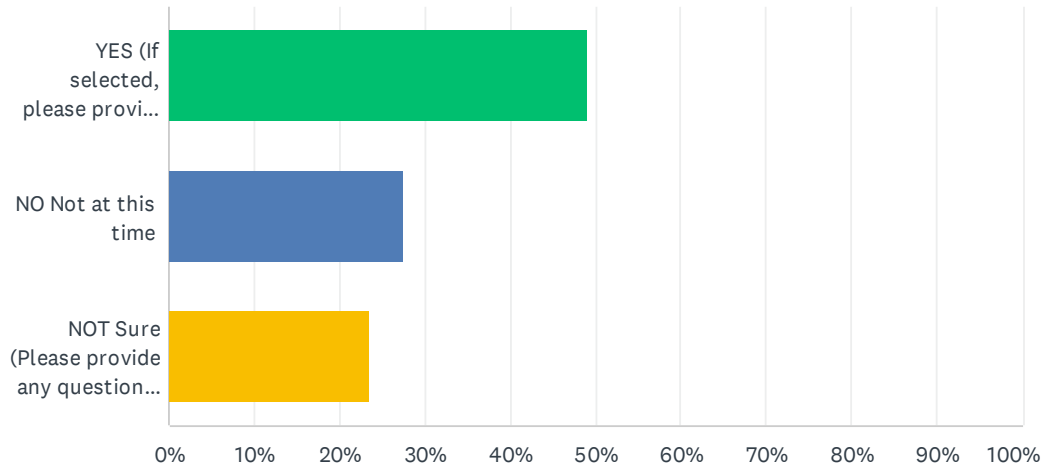
16

We make Safe Sport training mandatory for all coaches in our organization as well as the UCCMS as our baseline conduct. Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport <https://sportintegritycommissioner.ca/uccms>

2/28/2025 5:40 PM

Q10 Are you willing to assist with national efforts to create industry best practices for paddlesports?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
YES (If selected, please provide your contact information at the end of this survey)	49.02%	25
NO Not at this time	27.45%	14
NOT Sure (Please provide any question or comment.)	23.53%	12
TOTAL		51

#	NOT SURE (PLEASE PROVIDE ANY QUESTION OR COMMENT.)	DATE
1	We do not advocate for a national standard for training or testing. The needs of an outfitter on the Nantahala River versus the Duck River is very different based upon the River conditions and typical issues faced on that river. Any national standard or test would simply be another regulatory burden for small businesses to overcome.	3/26/2025 10:44 AM
2	There are good existing training programs developed by organizations that specialize in paddle sport. We don't need a state mandated training. We don't need safety taught from the perspective of an organization that exists primarily for larger powered vessels. Another layer of poorly informed bureaucracy making entry into the sport more difficult is not welcome. Mandated training for paddles sports instructors will result in fewer instructors and retailers that sell paddle sports gear without instructing the customer, so customers will start paddling without training.	3/18/2025 11:31 AM
3	Kristen with Estero River Outfitters, Esteroriver@gmail.com	3/7/2025 9:04 PM
4	I have helped paddlesports groups with regulatory issue and but do not train or teach paddling. Some of these questions are NA for me.	3/7/2025 10:23 AM
5	Mike Aronoff 703 501257 mikearonoff1@gmail.com	3/6/2025 1:09 PM
6	Illinois does not regulate paddlesports at this time.	3/5/2025 1:49 PM
7	Jeff Little 443-244-2592 Jeff@SnakeRiverLocker.com JeffreyKnowlesLittle@gmail.com	3/5/2025 12:56 PM
8	Dave Grigsby, Owner Kayak Connection Santa Cruz, CA - Moss Landing, CA dave@kayakconnection.com 831-454-6999	3/4/2025 6:56 PM

Survey of Paddlesports Retailer and Outfitter Training - Current Practices and Needs

9	I am on the board of American Outdoors. We would be an excellent partner at looking at this. degedi@ky-rafting.com	3/3/2025 3:19 PM
10	If there's any element of adaptive training curriculum I am interested in participating	3/1/2025 2:52 PM
11	Manufacturers have a responsibility to work harder to develop safety training with specialty retail staff. Especially at the big box store level, where many beginner boaters are introduced to the sport without safety coaching from knowledgeable staff.	3/1/2025 11:02 AM
12	Once there is a program in place we would participate where we could.	3/1/2025 8:45 AM

Paddlesports Resources

The following video resources are recommended by the NASBLA Paddlesports Committee as of August 2025 to supplement classroom or on-water training.

The Paddlesports Microlearning charge team evaluated each listed resource and determined each supported or met these established criteria:

- ANSI/NASBLA Basic Boating Knowledge and Human Propelled American National Standards.
- The NASBLA Seal of Safe Boating Standards
- USCG's Media Production Procedure
 - o For practical purposes, the charge team determined videos should be less than 4 minutes in length to supplement training and not be an instructional class on their own.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list. Additional resources may be vetted and added to this resource list in the future.

Paddle Sports Skill	Video Link	Notes
SAFETY GEAR KNOW BEFORE YOU GO	Safer Paddling Series, Episode 3 Essential Paddling Gear	instruct class to check state requirements for additional equipment, bring cell phone in dry bag, research body of water for hazards ask local paddlers, wear water shoes inspect vessel
	Essential Gear that all paddlers need.	3 minutes of the basics. Instructor will need to teach about other essential equipment
	Golden Rules of Kayaking for beginners	
	Safer Paddling Series, Episode 3 Essential Paddling Gear	Instruct class to check state requirements for additional equipment, bring cell phone in dry bag, research body of water for hazards ask local paddlers, wear water shoes, inspect vessel.
	Essential Gear that all paddlers need.	Three minutes of the basics. Instructor will need to teach about other essential equipment.
	Top 5 Kayak Fishing Safety Rules	Good basic kayak safety messages especially for those interested in fishing.
PROPER PFD WEAR	Gearing Up for Stand Up Paddling	Gearing Up for Stand Up Paddling
	Paddling with Kids Does Your Child's PFD Fit Properly?	Use if information on Child wear is appropriate. This is a good supplemental material for the Presenter's Guide, but may not address the primary audience for the guide.
	Paddling With Kids Do They Need to Wear a PFD?	Covers why to wear a life jacket even if they can swim. Focuses on Children. Paddle TV.
	Life Jackets // Paddling Shorts Ep. 1	Quick overview of wearing and fitting a lifejacket.
	lifejackets and inflatable lifejackets	Powerboating and life jacket use. NOTE: This needs updated with age and weight restrictions per the new regulations: Lifejacket Approval Harmonization https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-28264

ENTERING EXITING LAUNCHING	Entering/Exiting/Launching Canoe, Kayak and SUP - Boat Ed	Entering/Exiting/Launching Kayak - Boat Ed
	How to Get Into and Out of a Kayak Smoothly and Safely - ACA	Entering/Exiting/Launching Kayak - ACA
	How to Get Into and Out of a Canoe Smoothly and Safely - Paddle TV	Entering/Exiting/Launching Canoe - Paddle TV
	What if I Flip? Paddling Shorts Ep. 7	Water safety foundation how to reboard a Kayak
	Boarding and Exiting	Entering/Exiting/Launching Kayak - Boat Ed
	Kayak Smoothly and Safely	Entering/Exiting/Launching Kayak - ACA
	Launching Your Paddle Board Safely from a Dock	Entering/Exiting SUP from Dock - West Coast SUP Adventures
	Launching Your Paddle Board Safely from the Beach	Boarding SUP in Water - West Coast Adventures
PADDLE STROKES	Proper Kayak Forward Stroke for All Kayakers	Forward Stroke - ACA - Ken Whiting video Paddle TV - Aquabound paddle endorsement
	Kayak Reverse Stroke - How to Paddle Series	Reverse stroke Jackson Kayak - ACA Instructor- Mike Aronoff - Paddling.com - CAPCO
	Kayak Tutorial Reverse Stroke	Tom Nickels - ACA
	Kayak Sweep Strokes - How to Paddle Series (both forward and reverse sweeps)	Jackson Kayak - ACA Instructor- Mike Aronoff - Paddling.com - CAPCO
	Tutorial Reverse Stroke	Jackson Kayak - ACA Instructor- Mike Aronoff - Paddling.com - CAPCO
	Expert Advice: Basic Strokes	In sea kayak so may not be the best to use with Recreational kayak class/ covers forward, sweep, reverse, draw and sculling draw
MAINTAINING A PROPER LOOKOUT	https://courses.boatus.org/course/id/SCAN	FREE BoatUS online course on Proper Lookout - Powerboat focused
KNOW WHEN APPROPRIATE TO KAYAK	Weather and Tides - YouTube	British video - excellent content but British references
	How Much Wind Is Too Much For Kayaking? - Water Sports Haven - YouTube	presented as a PowerPoint type presentation - Focused on the beginner/ AI voice/ may have distracting background - presents higher winds option

RULES OF THE ROAD	What To Know About Paddling with Boat Traffic in Multi-Use Waterways - YouTube	Paddle TV - All craft shown
	Kayaking in High Traffic Areas - Rules of the Road - YouTube	Paddle TV - shorter version of previous with Kayak shown
	Canoeing in High Traffic Areas Rules of the Road - YouTube	Paddle TV - Canoe focused
RULES OF THE ROAD	What To Know About Paddling with Boat Traffic in Multi-Use Waterways - YouTube	Paddle TV - All craft shown
	Kayaking in High Traffic Areas - Rules of the Road - YouTube	Paddle TV - shorter version of previous with Kayak shown
	Canoeing in High Traffic Areas Rules of the Road - YouTube	Paddle TV - Canoe focused
RESCUE	Rescue - Heel Hook Rescue	Jackson Kayak Mike Aronoff, Paddling.com CAPCO
	How to Re-Enter a Sit Inside Kayak for Beginners	ACA video assisted rescue boat over boat
	How to Re-Enter a Sit-On-Top Kayak	ACA self rescue and assisted rescue
	The Paddle Float Rescue	SeaKayaking TV - Float may not be beginners tool but something you may want to look at in the future
	Super Easy Kayak Cam Strap Assisted Rescue	Uses a 15 foot cam strap. Rescue straps can work well but be cautious about wrapping material around body parts,
	Stirrup	Strap rescues must be practiced to see if they work for your particular kayak.

NASBLA Presenter's Guide to Paddlesport Safety

Foreword *To the Boating Educator:*

Why do we care about paddlesports safety? To save lives!

As you know, the mission of the Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) program is to reduce fatalities (and injuries) by influencing boaters' behaviors.

In recent years, there have been approximately 600 recreational boating fatalities each year. Nationally, one out of three fatalities have been associated with paddlecraft such as kayaks, canoes, Stand Up Paddleboards (SUPs) and similar human-powered vessels. Paddlecraft deaths account for a significant percentage of the national boating statistics. Many of these paddler deaths happen to inexperienced paddlers, on calm waters, who drown when they capsize. Tragedies that could be avoided if they just wore life jackets.

If we influence paddlers to...

- o Wear life jackets
- o Dress for immersion in cold water
- o Check the weather and cancel or change the trip to a more suitable location
- o Not use alcohol or drugs while paddling
- o Take classes on land and on water to learn how to paddle safely
- o Paddle with others
- o Have a safe and enjoyable experience on the water...

...we will inevitably save lives! This guide is designed to help you influence paddlers behaviors and save lives. Safe behaviors lead to fun experiences. Thank you for all that you do!

For Presenter Training only - (13 minutes):

[Kayaking Mistakes That Can Kill You!](#)

Date: August 2025 - Accepted by Committee

By: **NASBLA Paddlesports Committee 2024-25** - Billy Doss (IN) - Chair, Wendy Flynn (CT) - Vice Chair
Paddling Course and Instructor Charge Proposal - *Lead:* Virgil Chambers (Associate).
Members: Adam Spangler (PA), Alyssa Smith (WA), Craig Watson (OH), Kim Jackson (AZ), Andrea White (GRN/ACA RAC), Jim Greenhalgh (USPS/ABC), Scott Szczepaniak (USCG 7th District), Roland McDevitt (USCG Aux). NASBLA Staff: Pam Dillon
Special thanks to others who assisted in the encouragement, development, or review of the Guide: Chris Calhoun, John Malatak, Robert B. Kauffman, Charlie Walbridge, Mark Chanski, Robin Pope, Kelsey Bracewell. In addition, we thank and acknowledge the many state education coordinators and Boating Law Administrators who guided this project through their input and survey responses.

Goal: This Presenter's Guide is designed for state boating educators to introduce new paddlers to the activity of kayaking. Based on the applicable American National Standards for human-propelled boating*, this guide provides program guidance targeted to novice members of the general public interested in paddlesports as a form of outdoor recreation.**

** Appendix A has links to applicable American National Standards.*

*** Appendix B lists state paddlesports programs meeting the American National Standards.*

Intended audience: For use by the state boating educators teaching novice paddlers. A novice is a person who is new to the activity and typically has little or no knowledge or skills related to that activity.

Overview: A 2024 survey of state boating educators indicated interest in providing introductory paddlesports programming based on American National Standards. The information should be scalable for programs ranging from 1 to 4-hours or more and adaptable to classroom, shore, and on-water close-to-shore settings. Program content is directed to novice paddlers with little or no prior knowledge or experience in paddlesport safety. This Guide's focus is basic safety and fundamental paddling skills for boat control and self-rescue. This Guide is **not** a course of training. Instead, it may be used as a blueprint for states interested in developing a paddlesports course specifically meeting this on-water skill standard: *ABYC EDU-2: On-Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human-Propelled*.

This Guide emphasizes the importance of proper techniques and precautions to ensure a safe and enjoyable paddling experience. Key topics include: understanding the features of your boat; personal protective equipment (PPE) selection and use with focus on life jacket wear; legal requirements and safety gear; skill development such as entering and exiting the boat, capsize recovery (self-rescue and assisted rescue), and basic paddling techniques for boat control.

Venue: Educators can use this information in a variety of ways. Components of this program may be presented in a classroom or shore (designated by "LAND" in the document) or on-the-water (designated by "WATER"). When presenting this program on-the-water, this program applies to human-propelled craft under the following conditions:

- o Flat Water (current less than 1 knot)
- o Protected from the wind and waves; wind speed light or none
- o Daytime with no restricted visibility or threatening weather
- o When the kayak is underway, individual skills are to be accomplished in accordance with any aids to navigation, navigational rules, and any regulations applicable to the location in which the skill is being executed.

Important Presenter Notes

Note: States should develop policies and procedures for conducting training programs on the water. This may include required training needed by the presenter, safety service availability, student-to-instructor ratios, safety protocols and other requirements. *Additional information must be added if developing a course based on ANSI/NASBLA 101-2022 Basic Boating Knowledge - Plus Human-Propelled.*

Note: Life jacket and Personal Flotation Device (PFD) are used interchangeably throughout this program. Whenever either term is used, we are referring to a U.S. Coast Guard approved wearable device in serviceable condition and appropriate for the intended wearer, activity, and environment.

Note: In addition to water and boating safety protocols, it is important to follow local, state, and national regulations and best practices for working with students, especially minors. Understand and implement guidelines for how and when it is/is not appropriate to "lay hands" on students. For instance, you may want to consider following the procedures outlined in a nationally recognized program such as Safe Sport. Safe Sport is a national standard adopted by the U.S. Olympic Committee for working with hands-on sports. See the appendix for reference information for development of state training and policies for consideration prior to introducing any water-based or skill training program.

Additional needs:

In addition to water and boating safety protocols, it is important to follow local, state, and national regulations and best practices for working with students, especially minors. Understand and implement guidelines for how and when it is/is not appropriate to “lay hands” on students. For instance, you may want to consider following the procedures outlined in a nationally recognized program such as Safe Sport. Safe Sport is a national standard adopted by the U.S. Olympic Committee for working with hands-on sports.

Note: Appendix C has reference information for development of state training and policies for consideration prior to introducing any water-based or skill training program.

Student Performance Objectives:

As a result of this program, the students will be able to:

1. **Identify Boat and Paddle Features and Terminology:** Participants will be able to identify, understand the key features and terminology of their paddlecraft, including the hull, cockpit, deck, and bulkheads; the type of water for which the boat is best suited; and how to inspect the craft and safe equipment including paddle selection and proper grip of the paddle. *ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard Elements # 1.1; 1.4. NASBLA Knowledge Standard Core plus Human-Propelled.*
2. **Choose Proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Thermal Protection Usage:** Participants will learn the importance of PPE such as properly fitted life jackets and thermal protection gear, and how to effectively use and maintain them. *ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard Elements #1.2; 1.3; 7.4; 7.6. NASBLA Knowledge Standard Core plus Human-Propelled.*
3. **List the Legal and Safety Gear Requirements:** Participants will gain knowledge of the essential legal and safety gear required for paddling, including wearing an appropriate life jacket, having signaling devices (whistle), first aid kits, and how to meet all state legal requirements for on-water safety and compliance. *ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard Elements # 1.4; 7.6. NASBLA Knowledge Standard Core plus Human-Propelled.*
4. **Evaluate the Conditions when it is Appropriate to Go Paddling:** Participants will be able to consider weather, water conditions, identification of hazards and risks, time of day or night, boat traffic and personal well-being to determine if it is safe to paddle. This includes recognition of skill levels of self and others on the trip; inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol; and the importance of matching skills and equipment to the conditions; etc. *ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard Elements # 1.1. NASBLA Knowledge Standard Core plus Human-Propelled.*
5. **Demonstrate Successful Boat Entry and Exit Techniques:** Participants will practice and demonstrate safe techniques for entering and exiting their paddlecraft to ensure stability and prevent accidents. *ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard Elements # 2.1; 5.2; 7.2.*

6. **Prepare for Departure and Safe Launch:** Each participant will ensure that they are ready to paddle, after assessing that conditions are favorable for the length and time of the trip, including weather, trip preparation, boat outfitting, group rescue/assistance plan (including Float Plan), and equipment (including life jacket wear, and appropriate personal and group gear) is thoroughly checked and properly secured. The boat should be balanced (properly trimmed) and ready for departure. Participants will understand and be able to use whistles and hand signals for effective communication on the water. *ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard Elements # 1.1; 1.2; 1.5; 2.2.*

7. **Launch Boat Safely on to the Water:** Participants will be able to float the boat on to the water from the departure point, checking area for other boats, people, and hazards. This would involve a 360-degree scan of the area while avoiding capsize and collision with other boats and objects and ensuring boat is balanced and stable. *ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard Elements # 2.2; 7.1; 7.2; 7.7.*

8. **Move the Boat in Different Directions:** Participants will be able to: paddle in a straight line forward and backward; turn the craft in either direction while moving and while stationary; stop the boat; and move the boat sideways using appropriate strokes. Movements will be in controlled directions (i.e., figure 8 course) and distances while maintaining a proper 360-degree lookout, with comfort and control in the operation of the craft, and while assessing and avoiding hazards and collision with other boats or objects in compliance with navigation rules and navigation aids. *ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard Elements # 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 7.1; 7.2; 7.6; 7.7.*

9. **Return Safely to Shore or Dock:** Participants will be able to arrive safely at their given take-out location, maintaining a proper lookout and clear path of arrival; properly exit the craft; and bring the craft to a secure place for storage or transportation. *ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard Elements # 2.2; 5.1; 5.2; 6.1.*

10. **Demonstrate Rescue Techniques:** Participants will understand self-rescue for their selected craft, including wet exit; capsize recovery; re-entry (if appropriate) or getting oneself safely back to shore. Participants will understand appropriate techniques to assist in the rescue of a person in the water and, considering personal safety and the standard practice of rescue priorities, assist in the recovery of the capsized craft. *ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard Elements # 8.1; 8.2. 7.3; 7.4.*

Program Preparation: The following materials and supplies are recommended for a presentation as outlined in the Presenter's Guide. Depending on the length and venue of the program (classroom, shore, or water-based), not all items may be needed. Additional items may be added based on the venue. Common items such as a data projector for classroom presentation, are not included.

1. Paddlecraft and Equipment:

- o Paddlecraft (kayak) suitable for demonstration(s)
- o Paddle(s) for the paddlecraft

NOTE: There are several specific conditions, time and distance requirements to fully address elements of the ABYC EDU-2 On Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human Propelled Standard. If submitting a course for approval, the stated specifics must be included.

2. Minimum Legal Requirements:

- o U.S. Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) for all participants
- o Sound producing device (whistle or air horn)
- o Registered/permitted boat with appropriate decals (if required by state law or local jurisdiction)
- o White flashlight for night paddling or if paddling in low visibility (if applicable)

- o Any state-specific legal requirements (such as boat registration documents, state-specific safety equipment, alcohol and drug use laws, area restriction regulations, etc.).

Note: The terms "PFD" and Life Jackets are used interchangeably throughout this Guide.

3. Safety and Emergency Gear/ Preparation for Emergency Response:

- o Dry bags for storing gear and keeping it dry
- o Waterproof cell phone bag or box
- o First aid kit with supplies for minor injuries
- o Signaling devices (e.g., whistles, flares, mirror)
- o Rescue gear suitable for the type of venue (e.g. throw bags, paddle floats, throwable devices, river knife - if ropes are present, etc.)
- o Emergency contact information sheet for all participants
- o Local emergency response contact information
- o Float plan - should be left with a responsible person(s)
- o Area-specific information needed to inform first responders

4. Protective Gear:

- o Appropriate clothing that can get wet
- o Wetsuits or drysuits (for thermal protection if in cold water environments and to discuss with students)
- o Footwear – required (closed toe with back to stay on feet)
- o Sunscreen with high SPF rating (above 50 is recommended)
- o Wide-brimmed hats for sun protection
- o Sunglasses with UV protection/ glasses strap

5. Comfort and Hydration:

- o Bottles of water or hydration packs for fluids
- o Non-perishable snacks and food items
- o Extra layers of clothing for changing weather conditions
- o Towel and dry clothing for after paddling

6. Teaching Aids:

- o Visual aids (posters, charts, maps, etc.) showing water area, boat features and safety tips
- o Printed handouts or booklets on paddling safety and techniques (supplied by state, ACA, recreation departments, etc.)
- o Buoys or markers for on-water figure 8 course. Other on-water teaching aids.
- o Magnetic whiteboard with markers, magnetic boats, etc. (as appropriate)
- o Notepads and pens for participant notes (as appropriate)

7. Miscellaneous Supplies:

- o Clipboard for managing participant information, attendance, and skills checksheets
- o Instructor's guide or lesson plan

- o Trash bags for collecting any waste

8. Emergency Response Radio or Cell Phone in Secured Dry Bag or Box:

- o Emergency response plan or procedure (share with all Presenters and participants)
- o Means of communication for response in the event of an emergency

Managing Risk:

Waivers, Life Jacket Use, and Emergency Communication:

To ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, a comprehensive risk management protocol will be implemented for the paddling safety program. Each participant must sign in upon arrival and may be required to sign a waiver and release form to participate in the program. Additionally, emergency contact and medical information forms must be completed.

Without exception, all participants will be required to wear a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) while on the water. The instructor will review the use of whistles and hand signals for effective communication. Specific protocols for handling a capsized will be demonstrated (and practiced, if appropriate) to ensure that participants are prepared for such situations. This thorough approach to risk management aims to minimize potential hazards and ensure a safe and enjoyable learning experience for all participants.

The paddling safety program will be designed for a manageable group size. The program should employ an effective student/instructor ratio ensuring an adequate number of instructors are available to attend to the safety of all students involved; ensuring an adequate number of instructors to provide effective instruction with individualized attention (e.g., direction, coaching, feedback, etc.); and considering available resources (e.g., time, boats, equipment, etc.).

Supervision:

The leader and/or co-leaders need to be in the activity area, systematically monitor the activity, and be able to transition to anyone in need of assistance. Anticipate unwanted events and position yourself so that you can assist quickly.

Program Size and Instructor-to-Student ratio:

The recommended ratio is one instructor for every 5 to 6 participants depending on the type of craft. There should be a minimum of two instructors when conducting on-water instruction. The ratio depends upon a variety of factors established by your agency policy. Ratios should take into consideration the desire for safety in addition to personalized attention and effective instruction.

Site Selection:

The chosen location should offer easy access for unloading and staging equipment, along with adequate space for on-land instruction. The on-water component of the program will be conducted in a controlled and protected area, away from other boat traffic, with clearly identified boundaries. It will take place on flat water to provide a stable and safe environment for learning. The area will be selected to offer maximum protection from wind, ensuring optimal conditions for instruction. Buoys or float lines may be used to define specific paddle stations and skill drills, creating a structured and safe learning environment.

Notification:

Notifications to the authority having jurisdiction will be completed with necessary permits for site use acquired in advance for the program. Ensure all local, state, and federal rules and requirements are met.

Note: See Appendix C for additional information on managing risk.

Presenter's Guide to Paddlesports Safety

Sample Outline: **SAMPLE Program Outline (Can be used for all disciplines: Kayak, Canoe, SUP)**

NOTE: Recommended video links are listed throughout. A full list of videos is found in Appendix D.

LAND	1. Introduction and Welcome - o Welcome participants - o Brief introduction of instructors - o Explanation of program objectives/ student expectations - o Sign-in and completion of waivers and other necessary forms - o Review of the day's schedule
LAND	2. Program Overview - o Overview of what will be covered in the program - o Emphasis on safety and enjoyment - o Overview of minimum legal requirements (i.e., PFD, sound-producing device, registered/permitted boat, white flashlight for low visibility, etc.) - o State-specific legal requirements - o Drugs and alcohol use strictly prohibited - o Importance of carrying safety gear (first aid kit, signaling devices, etc.)
LAND	3. Wear a Life Jacket and Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - o Importance of properly fitted PFDs – ALL MUST WEAR WHILE ON WATER - o Brief overview of thermal protection gear and footwear (secured to feet) - o Proper use and maintenance of PPE - o SUP leash information for stand-up paddle board activities
LAND	4. Choose the Right Boat for the Water You Intend to Float - o Key features and terminology of paddlecraft - o Key hull types, flotation, pre-departure checklist - o Safe techniques for lifting and carrying the paddlecraft - o Proper posture and teamwork
LAND	5. Paddles: How to Use a Paddle, Paddle Signals - o Paddle selection - Types of Paddles/ Feathered vs. Unfeathered - o Proper grip and hand placement on the paddle (Control hand for feathered paddles) - o Demonstration of basic strokes and body mechanics - o Paddle signals for communication on the water
WATER/VIDEO	6. Launching, Entering and Exiting Your Boat - o Demonstration of safe boarding and exit techniques - o Posture and balance/ Three points of contact - o Practice sessions for participants
LAND/ WATER/VIDEO	7. Moving Your Boat Across the Water - Strokes - o Forward stroke - o Reverse/ stopping the boat in control - o Turning strokes (sweep stroke, forward and reverse) - o Moving sideways (<i>draw stroke - may be optional</i>)
WATER/VIDEO	8. Capsize, Self-Rescue, and Assisted Rescue o Introduce techniques for self-rescue, assisted rescue and re-entering the paddlecraft after a capsize

- o Preparing for the unexpected capsize
- o Demonstration/practice of floating techniques while wearing a PFD (if practical)
- o Explanation of what to do in the event of a capsize
- o Exiting the craft/ wet exits (if applicable)
- o Demonstration and practice of various capsizing and recovery techniques (based on conditions and types of craft being used)

9. On-Water Drills and Maneuvers/ Return to Take Out Location

- WATER
- o (Optional on-water) Drills to Demonstrate Entry-Level Competency
 - o Return safely to the take out location and disembark from the craft.

10. Conclusion - Program Completion and Evaluation

- LAND
- o Secure all equipment
 - o Recap of key points covered in the program
 - o Opportunity for participants to ask questions
 - o Final reminders and safety tips
 - o Sign-out and collection of any needed forms/data
 - o Participants complete a brief evaluation form to provide feedback on the program/ Determine if the program met the participant's expectations.

NOTE: There may be additional topics that must be covered for a program fully addressing the American National Standards. See the Appendix for the American National Standards for both knowledge and on-water skills.

Presenter's Guide to Paddlesport Safety - Kayak

Conducting an On Water KAYAK Program

Suggested videos are for the Presenter's background information. Select the videos based on your intended audiences.

The following is an example of an Instructor narrative with on-water components and teaching tips for a Kayak program.

Basic Intent – Provide entry-level paddlers an introduction to safety and enjoyment of paddling activities. We focus on the fact that most of these individuals have little to no knowledge of paddling or on-water safety. It is imperative that the presenter centers on basic safety and fundamental skills while taking into consideration the proper techniques and precautions to safely enjoy the activity.

This activity is done in a pool or on flat water with no current or wind. There should be at least two presenters/trainers with each group of interested paddlers. Size of the group is based on state-specific policies and good-judgement of the presenters/trainers – this will vary with age, experience, environmental and other circumstances considered by those responsible. This may differ from state to state: Consider some of the safety policies, risk management components (including environment), operational risks, life-safety considerations, float tests, and safety protocols (equipment, student to instructor ratios, training, emergency response plans, waivers, pre-class information).

Teaching Tip: Use the Whole-Part-Whole Method

This method includes these basic steps:

- 1) Arrange the class for maximum instructional effectiveness and safety.
- 2) Identify the skill and explain its purpose.
- 3) Demonstrate the whole skill.
- 4) Describe and demonstrate the parts of the skill.
- 5) Demonstrate the whole skill again.
- 6) Give students the opportunity to practice.
- 7) Assess and correct student performance by providing feedback.

Teaching Tip: The Teaching Ladder Approach - I do; We do; You do!

Here is another approach to teaching a skill.

- 1) The Instructor explains and demonstrates the skill.
- 2) The student explains while the Instructor demonstrates based on the student's instructions.
- 3) Student demonstrates while the Instructor explains.
- 4) Student demonstrates and explains the skill while the Instructor assesses their performance.

1. Introduction and Welcome

- o Welcome participants
- o Brief introduction of program presenters/instructors
- o Explanation of program objectives/ student expectations
- o Sign-in and completion of waivers and other necessary forms
- o Review of the day's schedule

2. Program overview - Introduce legal requirements and safety equipment

This shore-based/on-water program is based on three basic paddlesport principles:

- o **Wear a Life Jacket!** A life jacket should be comfortable and fit properly. It should be snug and of the correct size for the wearer. The life jacket must be appropriate for the activity it is being used.
- o **Choose the right boat for the water you intend to float.** Most paddlecraft are designed for use on specific kinds of water - flatwater, moving, whitewater, ocean. Some craft are designed to go very fast and may be unstable for the entry-level user, while other very stable craft are often slower and heavier so may not be suitable for everyone. It is important to know the kind of paddling you wish to pursue.
- o **Develop essential paddling skills.** Essential skills includes knowing what you should do if you capsize or find yourself suddenly and unexpectedly in the water. In addition, one should know how to hold and use a paddle to most efficiently move the boat forward, backwards, and stop, and be able to turn the craft and head in another direction.

The emphasis of this program is on both safety and enjoyment:

- o Provide an overview of state and minimum legal requirements (i.e., PFD, sound-producing device, registered/permitted boat, white flashlight for low visibility, etc.)
- o Cover any additional state-specific legal requirements.
- o Emphasize that drug and alcohol use is strictly prohibited.
- o Share the importance of carrying additional safety gear, such as a first aid kit, whistle/signaling/communication devices, bailer/handpump or sponge, etc.
- o The Navigation Rules do NOT give paddlecraft special privileges.
- o Stay aware of other vessels such as powerboats including commercial vessels. Understand Navigation Rules and expect interactions on multi-use waterways.
- o Understand and comply with buoys, sound signals, or any navigational markings or aids.
- o Maintain a proper lookout at all times, assessing potential hazardous situations and taking early and decisive action.
- o Situational awareness at all times is key for safety.

[Paddling with Kids | Does Your Child's PFD Fit Properly?](#)
[Life Jackets // Paddling Shorts](#)
[Ep. 1](#)

[Life Jackets and Inflatable Life Jackets](#)

[Essential Paddling Gear](#)

[Top 5 Kayak Fishing Safety Rules](#)
[Essential Gear that All Paddlers Need](#)

3. Wear a Life Jacket and Appropriate Personal Protective Gear

It is required that each person wear a life jacket at all times near or on the water for this presentation. A properly fitted life jacket is important. As part of this program, each person should correctly select and put on a life jacket based on the following checklist. Wearing a life jacket isn't just a good idea, in many states, it may be required, especially for younger paddlers. A properly fitted life jacket can save your life, even if you are a good swimmer on calm water. It is highly recommended you try out your personal life jacket at a pool or protected waters. This way you will understand how the device works, and how it can keep you afloat if you capsize into the water.

LAND - Skill
Checklist

Select and Properly Wear a Life Jacket

- ☐ Select a USCG-approved wearable life jacket for the size and intended use by the paddler. Read the label to ensure suitability.
- ☐ Inspect the life jacket to ensure it is in serviceable condition (no tears, all zips and buckles are in working order, etc.)
- ☐ Put on the life jacket ensuring all zippers, buckles or ties are fully secured.
- ☐ With a partner, tug up at the shoulders to demonstrate a snug fit. If the jacket moves above the ears, tighten the device or select a smaller size.
- ☐ Ensure the life jacket remains worn at all times near or on the water.

WATER -
DEMO or
SKILL

OPTIONAL: Floating with a life jacket in the water. *The following is best experienced by each student prior to teaching boat-based on-water skills. This exercise can be done if the water temperature is appropriate for the skill. Having the individual practice the in-water use of a life jacket can be a rewarding and lifesaving experience. It is also recommended that instructors provide a live in-water demonstration (A video may be a practical option.)*

Wearing a properly fitted life jacket and other appropriate protective gear (water shoes, cold-water protection, etc.), walk into the water at a pool, beach, or other flatwater (non-moving) protected water site. Continue to walk until they can raise their legs and relaxingly float in the water. Encourage the participant to move through the water retaining a safe distance from shore, and swimming in whatever manner they are most comfortable. This experience provides confidence in what the life jacket can do for the wearer to keep them afloat with their head above water.

Environmental Stressors and Thermal and Foot Protection

Describe environmental stressors that impact recreational boating including:

- o sun, wind, glare;
- o dehydration;
- o fatigue;
- o heat factors including the effects of hyperthermia and how to prepare for, prevent, and respond to heat-related events;
- o cold factors (exposure) including the effect of hypothermia and how to prepare for, prevent, and respond to cold related events; and
- o effects of cold water immersion and how to prepare for, prevent, and respond to a cold water immersion event, including the physiological effects of cold water immersion.
- o Understand the effects that medications can have on the above mentioned factors.

[Paddling With Kids | Do They Need to Wear a PFD?](#)
[Paddling with Kids | Does Your Child's PFD Fit Properly?](#)

[Life Jackets and Inflatable Life Jackets](#)

- o Provide a brief overview of thermal protection gear such as a paddling jacket, fleece or synthetic wear to provide warmth and protect you from the sun.
- o Footwear is required and must be secured to your feet. Closed-toe shoes are preferred.
- o Review proper use and maintenance of PPE includes ensuring it is cleaned and dried between each use.

4. Choose the Right Boat and Safety Gear for the Water you Intend to Float

Key features and terminology of paddlecraft, including:

- o Hull Types, Flotation, and Pre-departure Checklist

LAND OR
WATER

There are many different types of paddlecraft. This training demonstration will focus on kayaks. The hull shape will determine the type of water the boat is designed to be used on. Recreational kayaks are primarily used on flat-water. They have little to no rocker. The rocker is the shape of the hull along the underwater keel line. The straighter the keel line, from bow to stern (front to back) the greater the tracking when traveling in a straight line. This is usually more desirable when paddling on a lake or body of water with little to no current. As the keel line lifts at each end the boat becomes more maneuverable. A characteristic better suited for moving water such as flowing rivers, creeks and streams. Learning to paddle a kayak with a significant rocker on flatwater like a pond or calm lake can be very discouraging for the novice paddler as it may be difficult to paddle in a straight line and control the kayak. A kayak with a rocker turns more easily and can be more maneuverable in faster moving water.

LAND

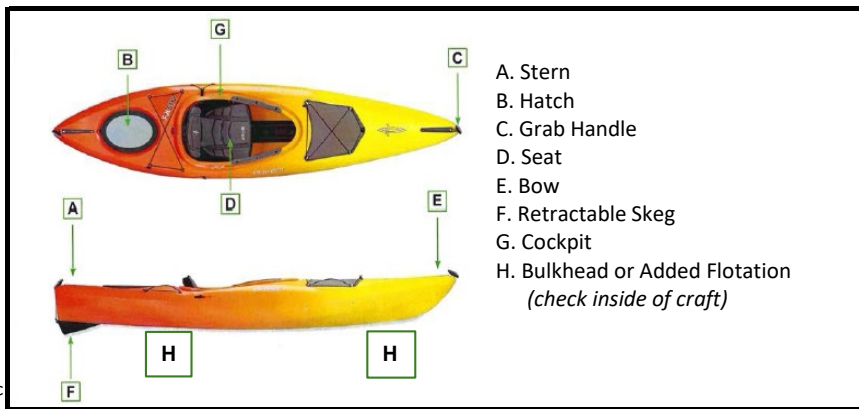
Teaching Tip: Look at the hull characteristics of various boats. Ask the students how they predict the boat will track on the water and the type of water it is most suitable.

Another characteristic that adds to the safety of the boat is built in flotation. This is usually at the bow and stern of the kayak and keeps the boat afloat if or when filled with water. Look for built-in and/or added flotation. Built-in flotation is normally sealed off bulkheads in the bow and stern or added floatation material. Flotation is a feature one should look for in a kayak especially for beginning paddlers.

[Golden Rules of Kayaking for beginners](#)
[Top 5 Kayak Fishing Safety Rules](#)

Paddlecraft Terminology

- o Key features and terminology of paddlecraft

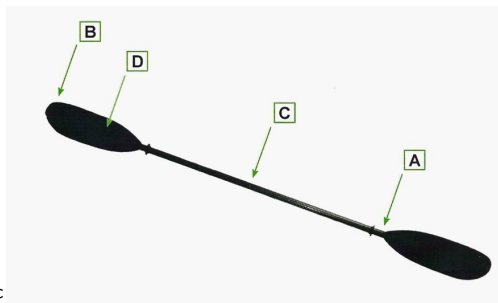


Ohio DNR Graphic

5. Paddles: Selection, How to Hold a Paddle and Paddle Signals

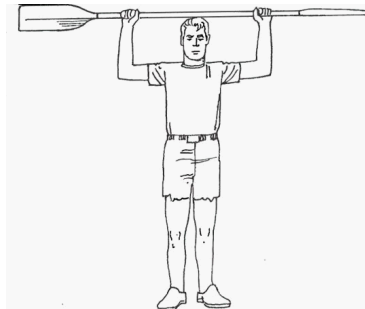
- o Paddle selection - Types of Paddles; Feathered vs. Unfeathered blades
- o Proper grip and hand placement on the paddle (If feathered, identify and discuss either right- or left-hand control.)

The paddle used in kayaking is a double-bladed paddle (a blade at each end). Paddle selection can get complicated, but for the beginner, a standard unfeathered flat blade (no curve, spoon or special shape) paddle is recommended. They are easier to learn with and can be used for either left- or right-hand control, a technique that - with practice and skill - you will develop as you become a better paddler.



Ohio DNR Graphic

Hand placement on the paddle's shaft is a matter of choice with many experienced paddlers. Beginners should basically place their hands so that the elbows are at a 90-degree angle when the paddle is held over the head. Knuckles should be on the top side of the paddle shaft.



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Hand, Paddle, and Whistle Signals

- o Demonstrate and practice basic hand and paddle signals
- o Explain whistle signals and their uses and other program communication signals for the on-water session.



AW Safety Code -
used by permission

LAND - Skill
Checklist

Complete a Pre-Departure Checklist for Group

- ☐ Using a venue-specific pre-departure checklist, conduct a safety briefing with all passengers/ all in the group.
- ☐ Obtain a local weather report. Check the weather and water conditions and the forecast to determine if conditions are appropriate for the length/time of your outing. Determine if the outing is a go or no-go based on updated information.
- ☐ Review local laws and regulations ensuring compliance.
- ☐ Evaluate any known hazards to navigation or other environmental factors which you may encounter. Determine if the outing is a go or no-go.
- ☐ Inspect the boat for water tightness and hull integrity. Determine if the boat capacity is within the stated limits.
- ☐ Check the boat's flotation and air bags (if applicable).
- ☐ Check lines and grab handles.
- ☐ Check paddle to ensure it is appropriate for the outing.
- ☐ Check and properly secure all other equipment prior to launch (no loose lines which could cause entanglement; appropriate load, craft balanced).
- ☐ Ensure each participant is dressed appropriately for the weather and water temperature (thermal protection, closed toed shoes, hat, eyeglass strap, etc.)
- ☐ Ensure each participant is wearing a properly secured life jacket.
- ☐ Ensure each participant is aware of the rescue protocols (paddle in groups of 3-4; how to appropriately assist people in the water; how to signal for assistance, who has first aid and rescue gear, etc.). Ensure each participant is aware of the emergency action plan.
- ☐ Ensure you have told others on shore where you plan to float, who you are with, when to expect your return, and what to do in case you are not back on time.

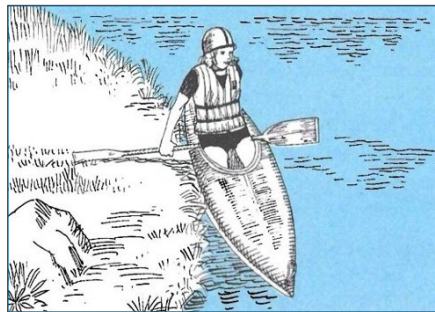
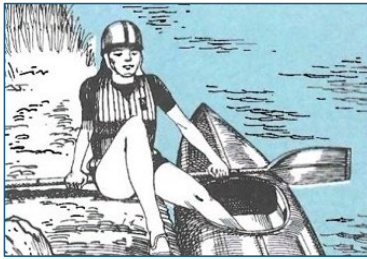
Teaching Tip: For additional training, encourage students to take a course from the American Canoe Association (ACA), your State Boating Agency or a local paddling club.

6. Launching, Entering and Exiting Your Boat

Boarding a kayak requires skill. Once practiced, you should be able to get in and out of the kayak with little effort. Many people prefer sit-on-top kayaks because they do not feel restricted and should they capsize, which is common, exiting the craft and self-rescue is much simpler.

Boarding the Kayak

Be sure to maintain control of the boat as you board. Many capsize occur due to losing control of the boat during the boarding process. Focus on steadying the boat maintaining three points of contact at all times. Once aboard, maintain good posture and balance, being careful not to lean too far over the sides of the boat.



© American Red
Cross

SHORE - Skill
Checklist

Boarding the Kayak - Beach or Shoreline

(Notes: Departure from a higher dock may involve additional skills not listed. When a safe shoreline or beach is available, students may have a higher level of control and comfort at those areas versus boarding from a higher dock. Before launching students onto the water, have a second instructor/rescue boat on the water to assist those moving away from shore.)

- ☐ Place kayak close and parallel to shore. Kayak should float freely in the water.
- ☐ Lay the paddle across the boat behind the seat, with more paddle length toward shore.
- ☐ Grasp the paddle with both hands behind you.
- ☐ Lean the kayak towards shore until the paddle blade braces against the ground.
- ☐ Transfer your weight slowly onto the paddle and slide into the kayak seat maintaining three points of contact.
- ☐ Bring the paddle in front of your body and grip the paddle with both hands, knuckles on top of the shaft and hands shoulder-width apart. Sit straight up with a slight forward lean with your back against the seat. Your knees should be slightly bent with your feet in the foot braces to give you added stability.
- ☐ Once balanced, check for clear departure using a 360-degree scan prior to leaving shore.

[Entering/Exiting/Launching
Canoe, Kayak and SUP - Boat Ed](#)

[How to Get Into and Out of a
Kayak Smoothly and Safely - ACA](#)

Teaching Tip: Once students are on the water, have them "raft up" by gathering next to each other and holding onto the boats parallel to them. Be sure the students are all facing the same direction in order to hear the instructor and view the demonstrations.

7. Moving Your Boat Across the Water

Paddling the kayak to where you want it to go takes some skill. You should know how to hold the paddle and move the boat forward, backward, how to turn and how to stop in control. These are basic skills you must know to safely and enjoyably paddle a kayak.

Paddle Techniques

- o Forward stroke
- o Stop the boat
- o Backward stroke
- o Turning strokes (sweep strokes - forward and reverse)
- o *Moving sideways (draw stroke) may be optional for a beginner

Strokes

The power to move through the water most effectively comes from use of the body and placement of the paddle in the water to move the kayak toward the direction you want to go. In other words, think about planting the paddle and (with your feet secured in the foot braces and your lower back against the seat) move the kayak (not the paddle) across the water. Once you are moving, it is relatively easy to continue to paddle through the water. Starting and stopping usually takes the most effort. The skill of moving the boat with your body rather than just your arms allow for a more effective stroke that is less tiring and more enjoyable.

Here are a few tips to get you started. These strokes are performed from a seated position in the kayak with proper hand placement on the paddle. You should maintain a proper lookout, assessing potential issues with other boats, people and hazards while maintaining control of yourself and your boat.

Teaching Tip: After demonstrating all the strokes, consider the stroke to teach first based on the types of boat the students are using and what will lead them to the best early success. For instance, teaching turning strokes to participants in boats with more rocker, which are designed to easily turn, may be less frustrating than having them paddle straight. In any boat, be aware that teaching the forward stroke first may propel the students away from the instructor before they understand how to turn the kayak in order to get back!

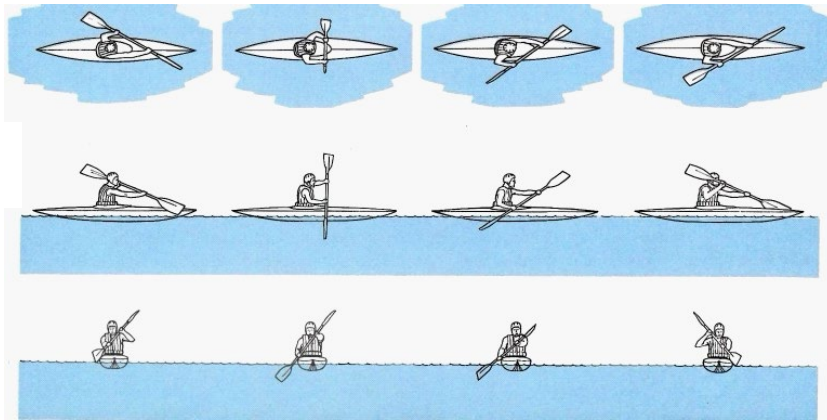
[Expert Advice: Basic Strokes](#)

Note: This video covers all strokes. Additional videos focus on single strokes below. Some terminology may vary based on regional and instructor differences, however, safety remains as the highest priority.

Forward Stroke

The **Forward Stroke** moves the kayak forward in a straight line. The blade enters the water close to vertical and perpendicular to the kayak itself. You may start on the left or right side; this is a choice of the paddler. Reach forward and place the blade of the paddle into the water. Pull with the bottom arm while pushing forward with the top arm. Your torso should turn naturally allowing use of the body and not the arms for power (mastering this technique comes with practice). The top arm becomes fully extended in front of the body and the lower arm on the shaft is bent alongside the body as the stroke is completed. The kayak is pulled forward as the blade moves along the side of the kayak providing forward motion. Once the paddle is behind the paddler, recovery is performed by bringing the blade out of the water while entering the opposite blade on the other side of the boat. Repeat the stroke on the opposite side. Note the bow of the kayak will tend to turn away from the paddling side as the kayak moves forward. Alternating the stroke on each side will tend to keep the boat moving forward in a straight line. There may be a slight zigzag as the kayak moves through the water. With practice and the proper hull design of the kayak the paddler will effectively go in a straight line.

[Proper Kayak Forward Stroke for All Kayakers](#)



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Forward Stroke

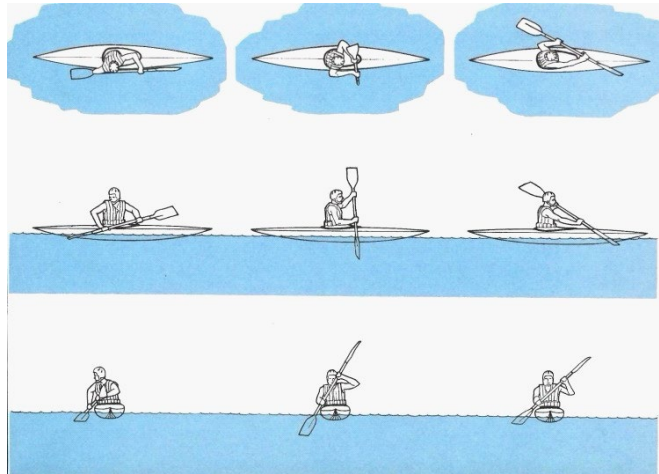
- ☐ Lead with the chest.
- ☐ Extend working blade forward, arm straight.
- ☐ Plant the entire blade in the water.
- ☐ Push forward on the foot brace on the paddle side while pulling back with the arm on the paddle side until the hand reaches the hip. The other hand on the side not in the water pushes forward resulting in a torso twist.
- ☐ Remove the working blade from the water by lifting the wrist and elbow.
- ☐ Reach forward with the opposite blade to perform the next stroke.

Reverse Stroke

The **Reverse Stroke** is used to stop the forward motion and/or move the kayak in reverse. The blade of the paddle enters the water behind the paddler and alongside the boat perpendicular to the kayak. Rotate the body so the lower arm is bent. The upper arm is extended forward so that the hand is slightly over the water away from the kayak. The paddle is pushed with the back side of the blade doing the power phase of the stroke. Remember rotating the body is what gives you the greater power of the stroke. The stroke is completed when the lower arm straightens out forward of your position and the top arm is bent close to the head. The distance the paddle travels in the water is a decision of the paddler. The next reverse stroke is repeated on the opposite side. The number of strokes is determined by if the paddler is merely stopping the kayak from forward motion or backing the kayak away from a position. Like with the forward stroke, the paddler must alternate from side to side to keep the kayak backing in a straight line. Multiple strokes on the same side will create a turning effect and may move the kayak in circles.

[Kayak Reverse Stroke - How to Paddle Series](#)

[Kayak Tutorial Reverse Stroke](#)



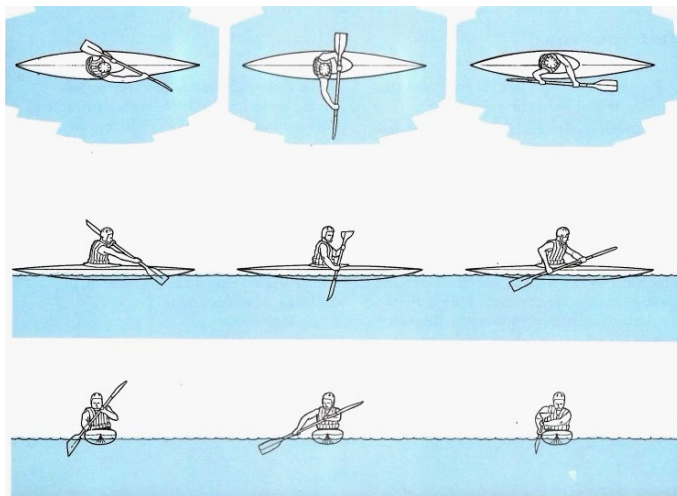
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Reverse Stroke / Stopping

- ☐ Turn (twist) the torso then extend the working blade backward on the side you are facing so it is next to the kayak.
- ☐ Plant the back face of the blade into the water while maintaining your “normal” (knuckles up) grip.
- ☐ Push forward on the back face of the blade until the hand extends beyond the hip. The other hand (on the side not in the water) pulls back resulting in unwinding the torso twist.
- ☐ Remove the working blade from the water by lifting the wrist and elbow to shoulder level.
- ☐ Turn the torso to the other side and reach backward with the opposite blade to perform the next stroke.

Forward Sweep

Turning the kayak for beginners is most easily done using sweep strokes. The **forward sweep** stroke turns the boat away from the side of the paddle in the water as the boat moves forward. To execute the stroke the blade enters the water next to the boat as far forward as comfortable for the paddler. The paddler bends forward toward the bow. Try to keep the paddle at a slight angle close to parallel with the water's surface. This is very different than the forward or back stroke where the paddle shaft was closer to perpendicular to the water's surface. Next sweep the paddle in the water from the bow to the stern maintaining a slight lean throughout the stroke. You are arcing the paddle around the kayak from bow to stern. The bow will swing away from the paddling side. The stroke is complete once you have the paddle near the stern. Remove the paddle from the water and repeat the stroke if needed *on the same side* to continuously turn the kayak. Usually, three or four good sweep strokes will turn the kayak 360 degrees depending on the hull design.



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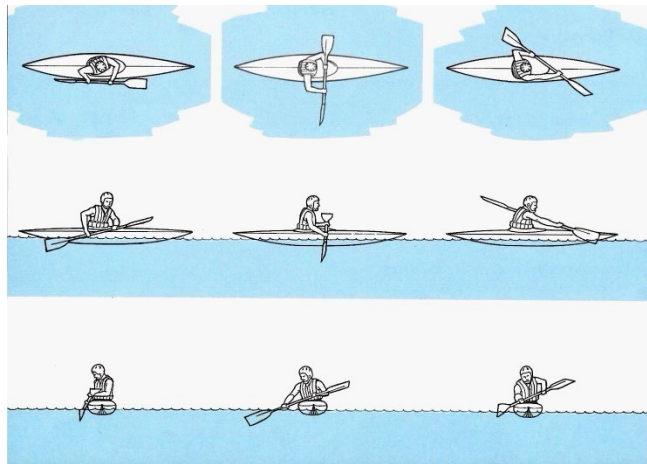
[Kayak Sweep Strokes - How to Paddle Series \(both forward and reverse sweeps\)](#)

Forward Sweep

- ☐ Reach working arm and shoulder forward. Torso rotated 45 degrees, keep paddle shaft horizontal.
- ☐ Submerge the working blade in the water alongside the bow of the boat.
- ☐ Rotate the torso back while extending the blade through the water in a sweeping motion, creating a semi-circle. The blade travels away from the body and ends towards the back of the boat.
- ☐ Remove the working blade from the water by lifting the wrist and elbow to shoulder level.
- ☐ Perform another forward sweep by repeating this process.

Reverse Sweep

Reverse sweep is used to quickly turn the bow *towards* the paddling side. This will also move the kayak slightly backwards. It is done like the forward sweep with the paddle blade first entering from the stern of the boat. The blade is pushed out from the stern and forward to the bow in a large arc. Power is applied with the lower arm pushing out from the stern as the body rotates and the top arm pulls the shaft in front of the body. The stroke ends near the bow with the body leaning forward. The blade is lifted from the water. Repeat this stroke on the same side as needed to turn the kayak.



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[Kayak Sweep Strokes - How to Paddle Series \(both forward and reverse sweeps\)](#)

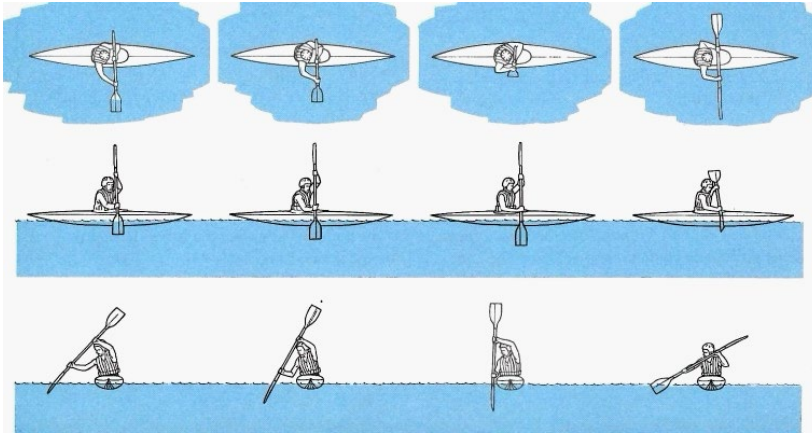
Reverse Sweep

- ☐ Reach working arm and shoulder towards the back of the boat. Torso rotated 45 degrees, keep paddle shaft horizontal.
- ☐ Submerge the working blade in the water alongside the stern (back) of the boat.
- ☐ Rotate the torso forward while extending the blade through the water in a sweeping motion, creating a semi-circle. The blade travels away from the body and ends towards the front of the boat.
- ☐ Remove the working blade from the water by lifting the wrist and elbow to shoulder level.
- ☐ Perform another back sweep by repeating this process.

Teaching Tip: Have the students complete a full 360-degree turn by linking one forward sweep and one reverse sweep together!

Draw Stroke

The **draw stroke** is useful when coming alongside a dock or rafting together with others. This is an optional stroke needed to meet the requirement of the ABYC EDU-2 On-Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human-propelled American National Standard to "move the boat sideways."



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Draw Stroke

- ☐ Rotate body until shoulders align with the keel (the long axis) of the boat.
- ☐ With paddle vertical, submerge the blade in the water approximately 18-24 inches away from the hip. The power face (front) of the blade will face the paddler.
- ☐ Move the kayak sideways by pulling the hip towards the paddle/ pulling the paddle towards the boat. The top arm is straight while the lower arm is slightly bent.
- ☐ Complete an out of water recovery by swinging the blade out of the water for another stroke
- OR –
- ☐ Complete an in-water recovery by rotating the blade 90-degrees and slicing it back through the water to the starting position.
- ☐ Perform additional draw strokes by returning to the steps above.

Other Strokes

There are other strokes that can be learned for efficient boat control. Maneuvering a kayak requires practice and a firm understanding of all the basic strokes. It is advised that training is needed beyond this short demonstration. A recognized paddling course is highly recommended to become proficient and to fully enjoy kayaking.

6. Capsizing, Self-Rescue, Assisted Rescue

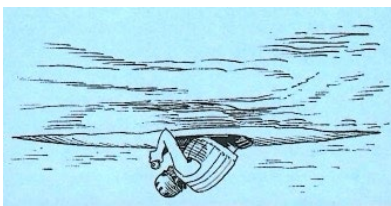
- o Explain what to do in the event of a capsize
- o Rescue Priorities: People first! Then boat and gear
- o Demonstrate and practice capsize and recovery techniques
- o Demonstrate and practice techniques for self-rescue, assisted rescue and re-entering the paddlecraft after a capsize
- o Practice sessions for participants (if practical)

Prepare for the Unexpected Capsize

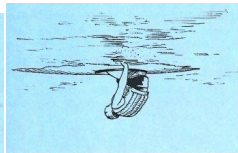
Avoid capsizing the craft by maintaining proper body position and paddle techniques. Capsizing is a common occurrence when entering a boat, especially with beginners. That unexpected tip into the water can be a shocking event. A properly fitted life jacket can keep your head above water until you re-gain your ability to swim to the boat or safety of the shore.

The following capsize and recovery information is provided to prepare the Presenter to offer assistance and to present options for self-rescue and assisted-rescue. It is not intended for ALL of these techniques to be presented. Rather, these provide options to the Presenter based on craft being used and suitable location (guarded beach or pool; qualified assistants; etc.).

VIDEO OR
WATER DEMO



Wet exit from a kayak (shown from under water). Release spray skirt from the cockpit, then somersault out. Maintain contact with the kayak at all times.



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Self Rescue

- The swimmer exits the boats calmly, secures their paddle in the uprighted boat, the holds onto the grab loop, swimming the swamped kayak towards calm water at a close shore or another point for assistance.
- OPTIONAL: The swimmer secures their paddle in the uprighted boat, then completes an unassisted deep-water reboarding method appropriate for the boat type being used.

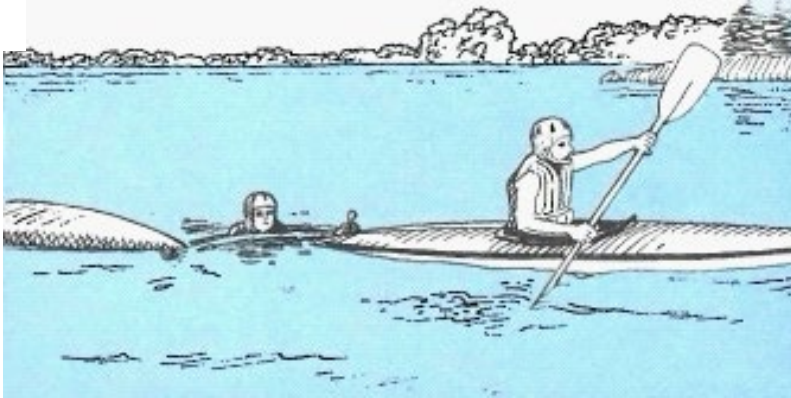
Drill to Demonstrate Entry-Level Competency - Rescue

- Smoothly exit the craft after a capsize to avoid injury and entrapment.
- Swimmer grasps and maintains control of the craft and paddle within a few seconds of exit.
- Swimmer re-enters craft and returns to activity using an effect self-rescue technique (e.g. swim self and boat to shore or unassisted deep-water reentry.)

Note: A demonstration of a capsize or fall out of the boat is important. The paddler must know what to do if they are presented with the common and unexpected fall into the water. The skill to properly self-rescue will help to ensure they will not be discouraged by this action and want to continue to learn and enjoy the sport. Considering personal safety and using a suitable assisted rescue technique and standard practice for rescue priorities is a must. This can be discussed, shown via video or graphic, or demonstrated by the presenter. If conditions are appropriate, this skills should be practiced by the students themselves.

[What if I Flip? Paddling Shorts Ep. Z](#)

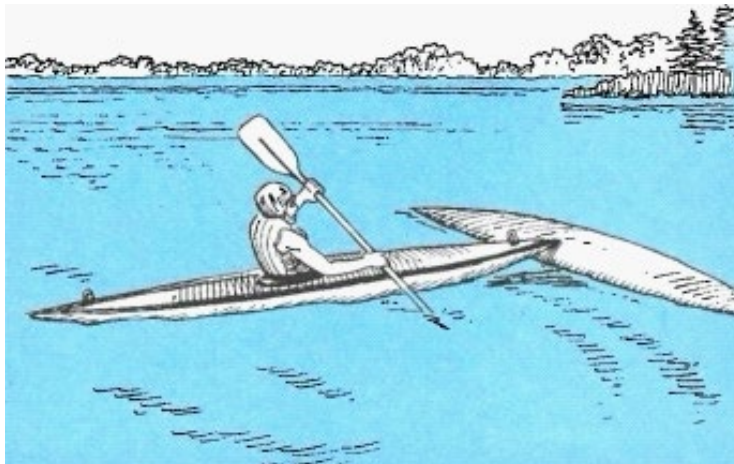
Assisted Rescues



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Assisted Rescue - Towing a Swimmer with or without boat

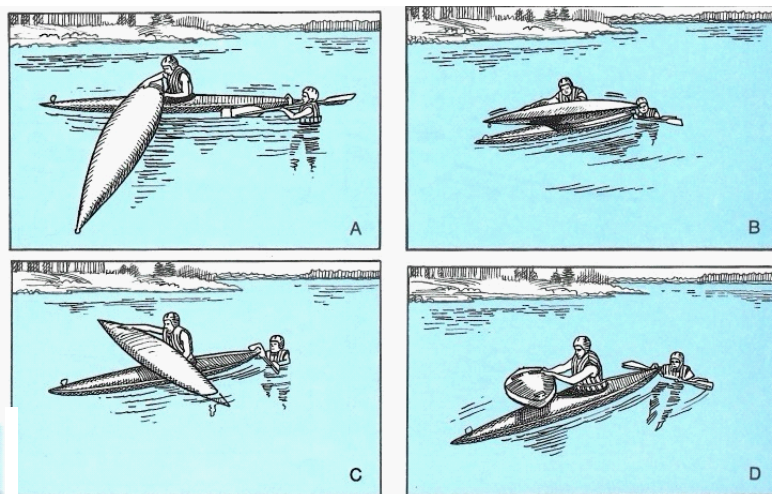
- ☐ The swimmer (without the boat) holds onto the grab loop at the back of the rescue craft being careful to float in their life jacket without pulling down on the rescue boat. The swimmer may also wrap their legs around the boat or around the stern to decrease drag.
- ☐ The rescue boat paddles toward shore or to another point for assistance.
- ☐ If the swimmer does not wrap their legs, they assist the rescuer by using a swimming kick to help propel while maintaining contact with the rescue boat.
- ☐ The swimmer may assist in the rescue of their boat by holding onto the bow or stern grab loop while being towed by the rescuer. Use a swimming kick to help propel while maintaining contact with the rescue boat.



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Assisted Rescue - Bumping or Bulldozing

- ☐ Rescue people first prior to retrieving gear.
- ☐ The rescue craft bumps the swamped kayak around midpoint towards calm water at a close shore or another point for assistance. This works best when the overturned kayak has an air pocket and the assisting kayak bumps the upside down kayak at a 45 degree angle to the cockpit.



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Assisted Rescue - Boat over Boat Rescue (T-Rescue)

- ☐ Swimmer holds onto end of rescue boat. Rescuer line up capsized kayak, forming a “T” with the rescue kayak as the top of the “T.”
- ☐ Swimmer pushes down on the end of the capsized kayak and pushes it toward the rescue boat. The rescuer lifts the other end out of water while pulling it upside down across the deck of the rescue boat to mid-point to drain the water.
- ☐ The swimmer moves to one end of the rescue boat, holds on, and remains floating in their life jacket to ensure they are secure and are out of the way of the boat re-entry.
- ☐ The rescuer rolls the kayak upright and slides it back into the water, careful to maintain contact and control, placing the boat alongside and parallel to the rescue boat.
- ☐ Both kayakers are now positioned for a side-by-side rescue.

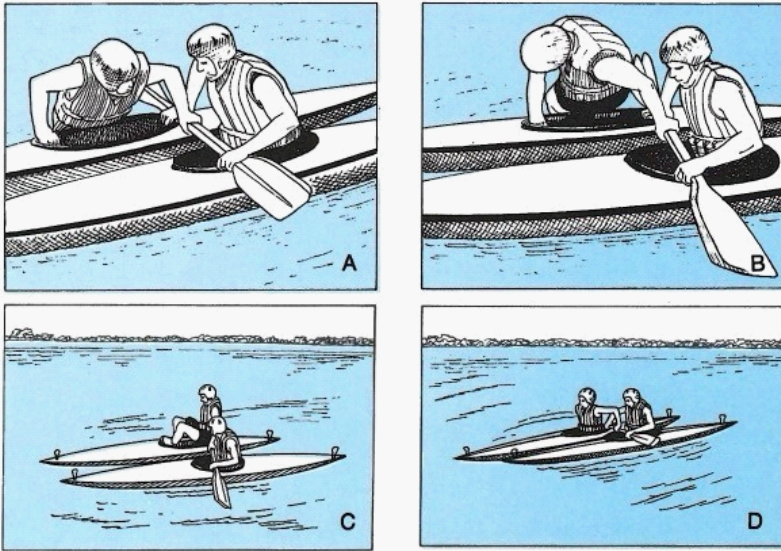
Note: The swimmer should maintain contact with their boat as it is pulled toward the rescue craft.

A paddler should always try to hold onto their boat during a capsize as rescuing a paddler separated from their boat becomes more complicated for all involved.

Assisted Rescue - Assisted Heel Hook

- ☐ Rescuer stabilizes the kayakers side by side, with the kayakers facing opposite directions.
- ☐ Swimmer floats next to the empty kayak with their feet pointing towards the bow (front).
- ☐ Rescuer pulls up on the closest side in order to lower the opposite side to the water's edge.
- ☐ Swimmer reaches with outside foot up and over the side and secures it under the cockpit.
- ☐ Rescuer maintains stability of both kayakers.
- ☐ Swimmer reaches the outside hand and grasps the opposite side of the cockpit.
- ☐ Rescuer uses leverage to push down on the closest side, while the swimmer straightens their leg which is secured under the cockpit and rolls into the kayak turning their back towards the rescuer.
- ☐ The rescuer maintains stability until the person rescued is fully seated with their paddle secured.

[Rescue - Heel Hook Rescue](#)



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Assisted Rescue - Double Bounce/ Deep Water Re-entry

- ☐ Position the kayaks side by side.
- ☐ Rescuer maintains stability of both kayaks.
- ☐ Swimmer moves to the side of their kayak and grabs the near side.
- ☐ While holding onto the side, the swimmer will bounce twice in the water. On the second bounce, the swimmer uses a combination of a scissor kick and pull-up to re-enter the kayak. The rescuer may allow the boat to lean towards the swimmer (a scoop technique) to ease entry, if needed.
- ☐ The rescuer maintains stability until the person rescued is fully seated with their paddle secured.

Note: This technique may not work in some recreation kayaks (kayaks without adequate flotation).

[How to Re-Enter a Sit Inside Kayak for Beginners](#)

[How to Re-Enter a Sit-On-Top Kayak](#)

Assisted Rescue - Rescue Sling (Stirrup) and Paddle Float

- ☐ Position the kayaks side by side (Inflate Paddle Float to provide outrigger).
- ☐ Rescuer loops a section of line or webbing across (and over) the kayaks. The line or webbing must be long enough to hang into the water.
- ☐ Secure the webbing/line to a paddle beneath/under and between both kayaks.
- ☐ The swimmer uses the loop as a stirrup, adjusting the length of the loop if necessary.
- ☐ Using a double bounce technique, the swimmer hoists themselves into the kayak.
- ☐ The rescuer maintains stability until the person rescued is fully seated with their paddle secured.

[The Paddle Float Rescue](#)

[Stirrup](#)

[Super Easy Kayak Cam Strap Assisted Rescue](#)

9. On-Water Maneuvers and Drills

OPTIONAL: The following on-water drills are defined in the ABYC EDU-2 On-Water Recreational Boating Skills - Human-propelled American National Standard. Successful demonstration of these skills indicates the student has reached the entry-level* for the activity.

Drill to Demonstrate Entry-Level Competency

- ☐ In each of the following, check for clear approach using a 360-degree scan.
- ☐ Propel the kayak forward while using a forward stroke.
- ☐ Propel the kayak forward in a straight line 15-20 boat lengths using proper strokes to maintain a constant heading.
- ☐ Move the kayak backwards 3-4 boat lengths maintaining directional control.
- ☐ Stop the kayak with a series of short reverse strokes.
- ☐ Turn the kayak at 90 degrees to the right and left maintaining forward motion.
- ☐ Propel the kayak forward in a figure 8 course around markers 3-4 boat lengths apart.
- ☐ Turn the kayak from a stationary position 180-degrees to the right or left within 1-2 boat lengths.
- ☐ Move the kayak sideways 10 feet to each side.
- ☐ Secure the craft and equipment to shore.

Note: "Entry-level" is defined as the proficiency reached by a person who has successfully completed an appropriate amount of beginner instruction, or has achieved a sufficient level of experience, to be ready to pursue (or "enter" safely into) recreational boating. This includes whatever complimentary knowledge is required to be able to safely operate the craft.

10. Program Completion and Evaluation

- o Secure the craft and equipment using appropriate techniques and anticipating winds, currents and tides.
- o Recap of key points covered in the program
- o Opportunity for participants to ask questions
- o Final reminders and safety tips
- o Sign-out and collection of any needed forms/data
- o Participants complete a brief evaluation form to provide feedback on the program/ Determine if the program met the participant's expectations.

Appendices

Appendix A: American National Standards and Technical Support Documents

[ANSI/NASBLA 100-2022 Basic Boating Knowledge -- Core - American National Standard, effective June 1, 2022.](#)

[ANSI/NASBLA 101-2022 Basic Boating Knowledge - Plus Human-Propelled - American National Standard, effective June 1, 2022.](#)

[ESP TR 101-2022: Technical Report – Basic Boating Knowledge – Core Plus Human-Propelled](#)

- This Technical Report provides information to help design and implement successful recreational human-propelled boating education and training programs based on ANSI/NASBLA 100-2022: Basic Boating Knowledge – Core and ANSI/NASBLA 101-2022: Basic Boating Knowledge – Plus Human-Propelled (ANS). Produced by the National Education Standards Panel, effective June 1, 2022.

Information about the development of National On-Water Standards:

<https://www.usnows.org/>

Download the ABYC EDU-2 American National Standard:

<https://www.usnows.org/review-standards>

Appendix B: For a list of **verified courses** visit:

<https://www.nasbla.org/education/verified>

For information regarding these verified state courses, contact:

Ohio DNR - Division of Parks and Watercraft - Craig Watson at craig.watson@dnr.ohio.gov

Arizona Game and Fish Dept. - Kim Jackson at kjackson@azgfd.gov

Additional Resources:

<https://americancanoe.org/smart-start/>

ACA Smart Start for Safe Paddling — a collection of educational resources designed to help beginner paddlers build safe habits from their very first time on the water.

Note: You need not be an ACA member, instructor, nor have taken any ACA courses to use these resources.

<https://www.boaterexam.com/paddling/>

Paddlecourse.com (Free Paddle Sports Safety Course from Kalkomey)

[US Coast Guard Auxiliary - AuxPad Paddlesport Program](#)

[USPS | America's Boating Club - Paddle Smart Course](#)

Life Jacket Association Resources:

[Life Jacket Technician course link: https://www.boat-ed.com/lifejacket/](https://www.boat-ed.com/lifejacket/)

Life Jacket Association - Life Jacket information videos:

<https://community.nasbla.org/ljagrant/professionals/videos>

National Safe Boating Council Resources

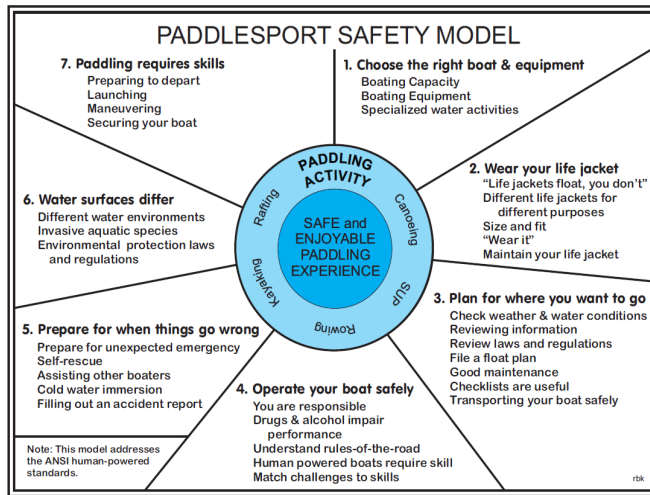
<https://www.safeboatingcouncil.org/resources/>

Appendix C: Risk Management

U.S. Center for SafeSport

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/courses/>

The following **Paddlesport Safety Model** addresses the ANSI Human-powered standards. Developed by Robert B. Kauffman, Ph.D.



For additional operational and programmatic safety guidelines, contact:
Washington State Parks - Alyssa Smith at alyssa.smith@parks.wa.gov

Appendix D: Video Links - Kayak, Canoe, and SUP resources

The following video resources were reviewed and are recommended by the NASBLA Paddlesports Committee as of August 2025.

The Paddlesports Microlearning charge team evaluated each listed resource and determined each supported or met these established criteria:

- ANSI/NASBLA Basic Boating Knowledge and Human Propelled American National Standards
- The NASBLA Seal of Safe Boating Standards
- USCG's Media Production Procedure

For practical purposes, the charge team determined videos should be less than 4 minutes in length to supplement classroom or on-water training and not be an instructional class on

Note: This is not an exhaustive list. Additional resources may be vetted and added to this resource list in the future.

PADDLESORTS SKILL	Video Links	Notes
SAFETY GEAR KNOW BEFORE YOU GO	Safer Paddling Series, Episode 3 Essential Paddling Gear	Instruct class to check state requirements for additional equipment, bring cell phone in dry bag, research body of water for hazards ask local paddlers, wear water shoes inspect vessel
	Essential Gear that all pladdlers need.	3 minutes of the basics. Instructor will need to teach about other essential equipment
	Golden Rules of Kayaking for beginners	
	Safer Paddling Series, Episode 3 Essential Paddling Gear	Instruct class to check state requirements for additional equipment, bring cell phone in dry bag, research body of water for hazards ask local paddlers, wear water shoes, inspect vessel.
	Essential Gear that all pladdlers need.	Three minutes of the basics. Instructor will need to teach about other essential equipment.

	Top 5 Kayak Fishing Safety Rules	Good basic kayak safety messages especially for those interested in fishing.
	Gearing Up for Stand Up Paddling	Gearing Up for Stand Up Paddling
PROPER PFD WEAR	Paddling with Kids Does Your Child's PFD Fit Properly?	Use if information on Child wear is appropriate. This is a good supplemental material for the Presenter's Guide, but may not address the primary audience for the guide.
	Paddling With Kids Do They Need to Wear a PFD?	Covers why to wear a life jacket even if they can swim. Focuses on Children. Paddle TV.
	Life Jackets // Paddling Shorts Ep. 1	Quick overview of wearing and fitting a lifejacket.
	lifejackets and inflatable lifejackets	Powerboating and life jacket use. NOTE: This needs updated with age and weight restrictions per the new regulations: Lifejacket Approval Harmonization https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-28264
ENTERING EXITING LAUNCHING	Entering/Exiting/Launching Canoe, Kayak and SUP - Boat Ed	Entering/Exiting/Launching Kayak - Boat Ed
	How to Get Into and Out of a Kayak Smoothly and Safely - ACA	Entering/Exiting/Launching Kayak - ACA
	How to Get Into and Out of a Canoe Smoothly and Safely - Paddle TV	Entering/Exiting/Launching Canoe - Paddle TV
	What if I Flip? Paddling Shorts Ep. 7	Water safety foundation how to reboard a Kayak
	Boarding and Exiting	Entering/Exiting/Launching Kayak - Boat Ed
	Kayak Smoothly and Safely	Entering/Exiting/Launching Kayak - ACA
	Launching Your Paddle Board Safely from a Dock	Entering/Exiting SUP from Dock - West Coast SUP Adventures
	Launching Your Paddle Board Safely from the Beach	Boarding SUP in Water - West Coast Adventures
	Proper Kayak Forward Stroke for All Kayakers	Forward Stroke - ACA - Ken Whiting video Paddle TV - Aquabound paddle endorsement
	Kayak Reverse Stroke - How to Paddle Series	Reverse stroke Jackson Kayak - ACA Instructor- Mike Aronoff - Paddling.com - CAPCO
	Kayak Tutorial Reverse Stroke	Tom Nickels - ACA
	Kayak Sweep Strokes - How to Paddle Series (both forward and reverse sweeps)	Jackson Kayak - ACA Instructor- Mike Aronoff - Paddling.com - CAPCO
	Tutorial Reverse Stroke	Jackson Kayak - ACA Instructor- Mike Aronoff - Paddling.com - CAPCO
	Expert Advice: Basic Strokes	In sea kayak so may not be the best to use with Recreational kayak class/ covers forward, sweep, reverse, draw and sculling draw
MAINTAINING A PROPER LOOKOUT	https://courses.boatus.org/course/id/SCAN	FREE BoatUS online course on Proper Lookout - Powerboat focused, includes quiz

KNOW WHEN APPROPRIATE TO KAYAK	Weather and Tides - YouTube	British video - excellent content but British references
	How Much Wind Is Too Much For Kayaking? - Water Sports Haven - YouTube	presented as a PowerPoint type presentation - Focused on the beginner/ AI voice/ may have distracting background - presents higher winds option
RULES OF THE ROAD	What To Know About Paddling with Boat Traffic in Multi-Use Waterways - YouTube	Paddle TV - All craft shown
	Kayaking in High Traffic Areas - Rules of the Road - YouTube	Paddle TV - shorter version of previous with Kayak shown
	Canoeing in High Traffic Areas Rules of the Road - YouTube	Paddle TV - Canoe focused
RULES OF THE ROAD	What To Know About Paddling with Boat Traffic in Multi-Use Waterways - YouTube	Paddle TV - All craft shown
	Kayaking in High Traffic Areas - Rules of the Road - YouTube	Paddle TV - shorter version of previous with Kayak shown
	Canoeing in High Traffic Areas Rules of the Road - YouTube	Paddle TV - Canoe focused
RESCUE	Rescue - Heel Hook Rescue	Jackson Kayak Mike Aronoff, Paddling.com CAPCO
	How to Re-Enter a Sit Inside Kayak for Beginners	ACA video assisted rescue boat over boat
	How to Re-Enter a Sit-On-Top Kayak	ACA self rescue and assisted rescue
	The Paddle Float Rescue	SeaKayaking TV - Float may not be beginners tool but something you may want to look at in the future
	Super Easy Kayak Cam Strap Assisted Rescue	Uses a 15-foot cam strap. Rescue straps can work well but be cautious about wrapping material around body parts.
	Stirrup	Strap rescues must be practiced to see if they work for your particular kayak.