

Paddler's Safety Checklist

- ✓ **Assess the risk** – check the weather. Be realistic about what can go wrong and be prepared.
- ✓ **File a float plan** – write down where you intend to put in, take out, when you expect to return, and who to call if you don't. Give it to someone who WILL call for assistance if you don't return on time.
- ✓ **Wear a life jacket and keep it snug** – for it to work effectively, it must fit.
- ✓ **Attach a whistle or small boat horn to the life jacket.**
- ✓ **Assess your boat's floatation needs** – for floatation bags to work effectively they must fit snugly into the craft and be securely tied into place.
- ✓ **Carry a spare paddle.**
- ✓ **Always dress for an unexpected capsize** – wear a wet suit or dry suit on cold water. Test your gear in the water (walk in/out with spotter). Carry spare dry clothes.
- ✓ **Wear a hat or helmet** – helmets are necessary where upsets are likely (white water or surfing in canoes/kayaks). A hat protects from the sun.
- ✓ **Chart or Map of the River and Compass** – know where you are and how to get out in an emergency.
- ✓ **Throw bags and other rescue gear.**
- ✓ **Knife** – when there are ropes and rigging, throw bags and throw ropes, a knife can be beneficial.
- ✓ **Bilge pump and/or bailer** – important for those in open water, always carry some device that can get water OUT of the boat.
- ✓ **Self-rescue devices such as paddle float, slings, and tow ropes** practice assisted and self-rescues.
- ✓ **Sunscreen/Drinking Water.**
- ✓ **VHF/FM marine band radio.**
- ✓ **Light, Strobe, Mirror, Flares.**
- ✓ **Proper footwear.**
- ✓ **UV Eye Protection. Choose a good pair of sunglasses and a strap.**
- ✓ **Dry Bag** – pack with dry clothing in case of capsize. Also protects cell phones and cameras.
- ✓ **First Aid Kit with waterproof matches.**
- ✓ **Duct Tape/small repair kit.**
- ✓ **Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) and GPS Locator if venturing away from shore in a coastal area.**