



Safety Rules & Procedures

Each individual paddling in any Club event is responsible for their own wellbeing and safety. Each individual should ensure that their craft, paddling equipment and safety gear is in good working order and that their craft has sufficient buoyancy to stay afloat and support them after a capsize.

Individual Safety Requirements ...

1. Must wear an approved **Personal Floatation Device** on the water at all times.
2. Must have a **whistle** securely attached to their personal floatation device.
3. Must have a **5 metre long by 5mm diameter tow rope**, which floats, attached to the **rear** of their craft. The rope should not interfere with steering whilst towing and the free end of the rope, must be easily accessible to the paddler. Tying the rope to the front of the craft should be a last resort option.
4. Must have a secure **front** tow rope attachment point - a carry handle would suffice.
5. If paddling a kayak, must have an accessible **bailer or bilge pump** attached to their kayak.
6. If paddling at night, must have a **white light** that is easily visible to approaching vessels.

Before the Start of any Paddle ...

1. An experienced **Club Member** (usually a Club Committee Member), at the paddle, should assess the conditions for the programmed route, and decide if the paddle needs to be aborted for all "Groups" or specific "Groups". The route may also be altered for safety reasons.
2. **Each "Group"** must have a minimum of **3 Club Members** paddling.
3. **Each "Group"** paddling should then select a "Leader" and "Tail End Charlie".
4. Five minutes before the "On the Water" time for the paddle, each "Group Leader" will give a "Pre Paddle Briefing" to explain the **selected route**, the **return stopping point** (including suggested **time for coffee** if applicable) and any other pertinent details about the paddle.
5. **Each paddler** should then select a paddling "Group" that meets their paddling requirements, and that also fits their fitness, speed & paddling capability. If you are the slowest in a "Group", you should consider paddling with a slower "Group" the following week.
6. **Each paddler** should respect the "Group Leader" and must not divert from the selected route.
7. **Each paddler** must assess whether the conditions on the day, the paddle course and the total distance to be paddled are within their capabilities.

During each Paddle ...

1. Leaders will use **2 whistles to GO** and Leaders and Paddlers will use **1 whistle to STOP** and **3 whistles** in the event of an **EMERGENCY** or capsize.
2. **Keep together as a group. The tighter the group the safer you are.**
 - a) Stay between the "Leader" & "Tail End Charlie".
 - b) Stay within "Hearing" distance of whistles, which will be vastly reduced in windy conditions.
 - c) Stay within "Visual" contact in adverse weather conditions.
 - d) Stay on the same course as the "Leader".
3. Any paddler can use their whistle to stop the group (1 whistle blast). For example, in order to **catch up**, or for a **water break**, or if requiring a **shore stop**, or if there is a need to **leave the group**.
4. If a whistle is used to stop the "Group", then leading paddlers of the group should stop immediately, whilst the rear of the group should continue to paddle until they are level with the leading paddlers.
5. Avoid **navigation channels** where possible, but if necessary cross quickly in a tight group, after the "Leader" has given the signal to cross (2 whistle blasts).

Should any Paddler Capsize they are to ...

1. Immediately hang on to their craft, to conserve energy and if possible blow their whistle 3 times.
2. If unable to re-enter their craft they should ...
 - a) Abandon their craft for another member of the "Group" to look after.
 - b) Use the **"wrap your arms & legs around the bow of the rescuing craft"** technique.
 - c) The **entire** "Group" should then head for the nearest safe landing, with the goal of reducing the anxiety and saving the energy of the person being rescued. Rotate rescue crafts as necessary.