

## HAZARDS

Paddling hazards include rocks, strainers, low-head dams, heavy current, lightning and other bad weather. Strainers can be anything that blocks passage but lets the water filter through.

*Stay away from strainers!*

Low-head dams are tough to see from upstream and very difficult to escape.

*Stay away from low-head dams!*

Both strainers and low-head dams are regarded as "drowning machines." These hazards are dangerous—avoid them, portage around them, and **ALWAYS SCOUT AHEAD!**

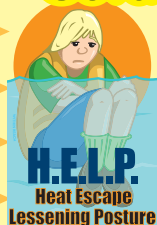
## Keep It Stable!

**DANGER**

Leaning shoulders outside the edge of the boat can lead to a capsize. Keep your weight low and balanced over the centerline of the boat.

## Cold Water

can be a **KILLER!** Loss of body heat, the possibility of hypothermia, and at the very least, the end of your float trip can be a result of falling into cold water.



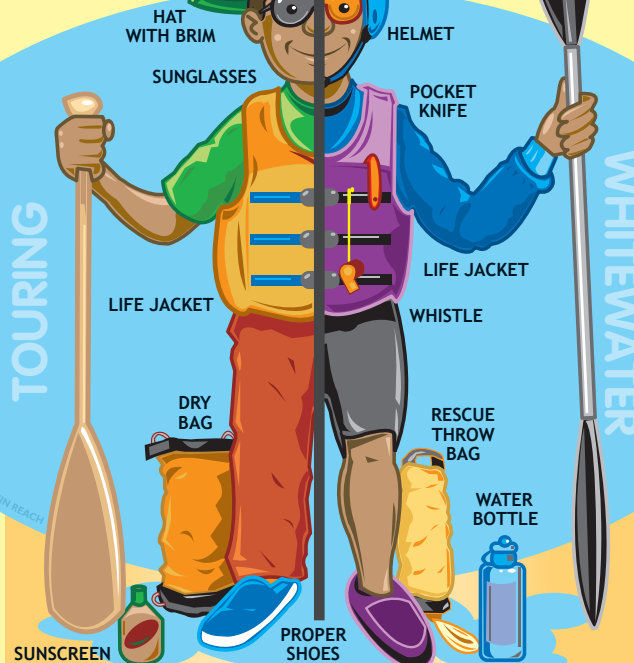
**HUDDLE**

Whether alone or in a group, it's important to conserve your body heat. Using the **H.E.L.P.** or **HUDDLE** positions along with wearing a life jacket improve your chances of survival in cold water.



## Dress for Safety

Be prepared for your type of paddling by being dressed and outfitted properly.



## The Law and You



Officers can provide regulatory information, valuable reports on current water conditions, and other useful information. *It is your responsibility to know the regulations which apply to where you boat.*

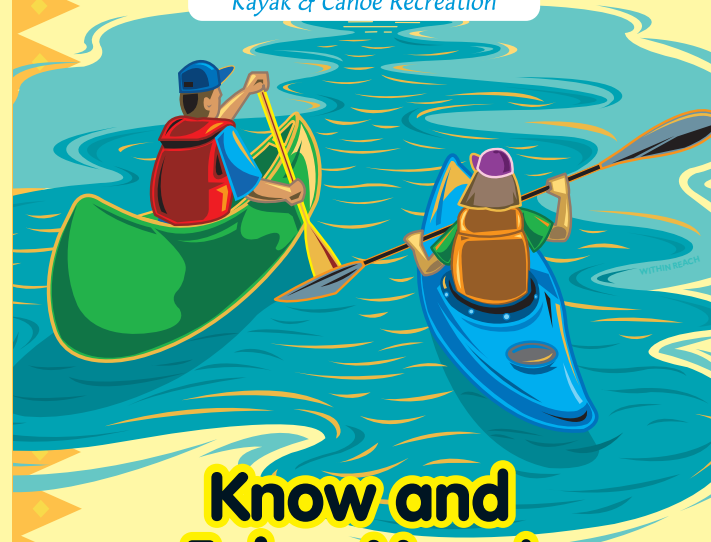
## Remember to...

- Wear your life jacket.
- File a float plan.
- Never go paddling alone.
- Scout ahead for water hazards.

This brochure is produced under a grant from the Aquatic Resources (Wallop/Breaux) Trust Fund administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.



# A Smart Start for Safe Paddling



## Know and Enjoy More!

[www.AmericanCanoe.org](http://www.AmericanCanoe.org)



American Canoe Association  
7432 Alban Station Blvd. Suite B232 • Springfield, VA 22150-2321

# Prepare to Paddle Safely

## PFD TYPES

**TYPE 1:**  
Intended for offshore use. Because of their bulk, they are not recommended for paddlers.



**TYPE 2:**  
Near-shore buoyancy vests. They are not recommended for paddlers.



**TYPE 3:**  
Flotation Aid. They are recommended for paddlers.



**TYPE 4:**  
Throwable devices. These are not required on canoes or kayaks and are not to be used as substitutes for life jackets.



**TYPE 5:**  
These are special use life jackets. They may be appropriate and recommended for certain uses by paddlers.



Read the life jacket's label. The right fit provides the right flotation. Remember, it doesn't work if you don't wear it!

## Know Before You Go!

Know the waters you plan to float.

Changes in weather can affect your trip.



Let others know about your float trip by leaving a float plan.



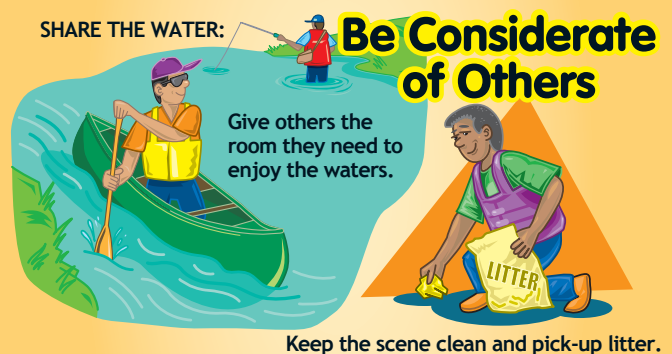
What waters do you expect to paddle and are you prepared?

# Best Paddling Practices

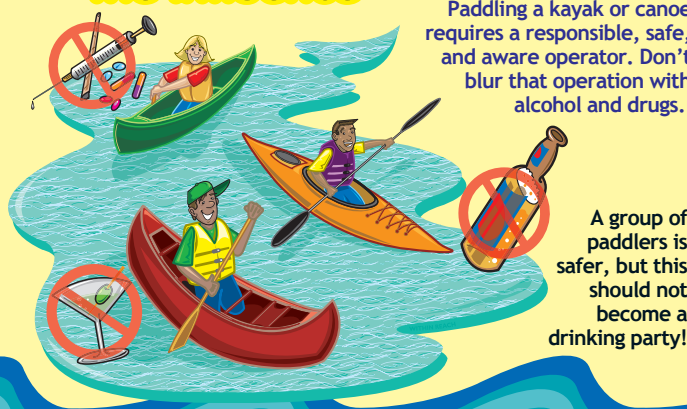
## Pay Attention!



## SHARE THE WATER:

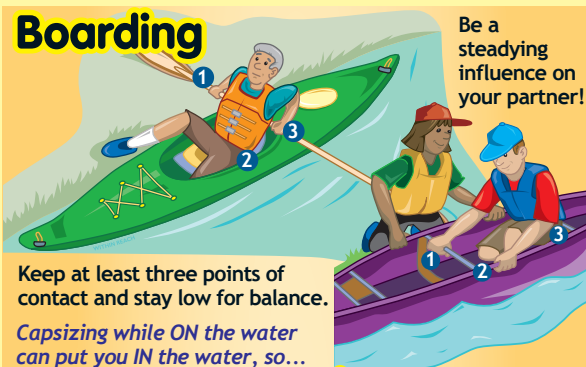


## Never Boat Under the Influence



# Boarding and Re-entry

## Boarding



## Practice Re-entry



## Plan to Get Wet!

