



BOAT SAFETY TIPS

Before you go canoeing or kayaking, there are some important things you should know to keep yourself safe. Boating is a lot of fun, but if you don't know the dangers, you could get into trouble on the water. Here are some tips for keeping dry and steering clear of danger:

BOAT SAFETY TIPS:

TO GET INTO YOUR BOAT:

- **HAVE SOMEONE HOLD THE BOAT STEADY** - you don't want to tip the boat before you even get out on the water!
- **CROUCH LOW** - keep your knees bent and
- **GRAB THE SIDES OF THE BOAT FOR BALANCE** as you walk to your seat
- **ALWAYS WALK ALONG THE CENTER** - keeping your feet on the centerline will help keep the boat from rocking.

STAY LOW - do not stand up or walk in your boat when you are away from shore.

ALWAYS WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET - you never know when you might fall out or tip over unexpectedly.

AVOID SUDDEN OR JERKY MOVEMENTS - rocking from side to side could cause the boat to tip over.

BE AWARE OF THE CURRENTS IN THE WATER - you don't want to end up floating farther downstream than you planned. If the current starts to pull you along faster or you see lots of rocks in the water ahead of you paddle away from them or paddle towards the shore.

ALWAYS SIT ON THE SEATS OR IN THE CENTER OF THE BOAT - sitting on the side of a boat will cause it to tip over.

STAY AWAY FROM LOW HANGING TREES AND BRANCHES NEAR THE SHORE.

DO NOT CANOE OR KAYAK IN BAD WEATHER.



AVOID LETTING BIG WAVES HIT THE SIDE OF YOUR BOAT - always try to keep your boat at a right angle to the waves otherwise the wave might push your boat over.

IF YOUR CANOE OR KAYAK TIPS OVER:

- **DON'T PANIC**
- **STAY WITH YOUR CANOE**
- **PADDLE OR PUSH YOUR BOAT TO SHORE** - with the help of the other person in your boat, you can get out in shallow water and flip the boat to dump out the water and climb in. Your boat will float even if its full of water until you can get to shore to empty it.
- **ALWAYS BRING ALONG EXTRA CLOTHING IN A WATERPROOF CONTAINER**- you want to be prepared in case your boat tips or the weather changes.

BE SURE TO BRING THE PROPER EQUIPMENT:

- **SUN PROTECTION** - hats, sunscreen, long sleeves and pants
- **FIRST AID KIT**
- **PLENTY OF BOTTLED WATER (DO NOT LITTER)**
- **LIFE VESTS**
- **MAP** - be sure you know where you are so you do not get lost!

TIE ALL YOUR EQUIPMENT TO THE BOAT - put your equipment into a waterproof bag to keep it dry and tie it to one of the center beams in the canoe or front of kayak so that you don't lose everything if your boat tips over.

DO NOT BRING FOOD OR PETS INTO THE JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK – there are wild animals in the park. This is their natural habitat. Do not try to feed the animals or tempt them to come closer with food of any kind. It is dangerous for small pets to be in the close proximity of wild animals.

DO NOT LITTER - carry out everything you bring in. The animals don't like a messy home.

Once you learn these important tips, you'll be set to go! So grab your paddle and life jacket, and, always remember to canoe and kayak safely. Have fun on the water!



LIFE JACKET SAFETY

Boaters enjoy the feel of sun and spray. So it's tempting to boat without wearing a life jacket especially on nice days. Not wearing a lifejacket is like not wearing a seatbelt in a car. When you need it, it's often too late. So be prepared.

Modern life jackets are available in a wide variety of shapes, colors, and sizes. Many are thin and flexible. Some are built right into fishing vests or hunter coats. Others are inflatable as compact as a scarf or fanny pack until they hit water, when they automatically fill with air.

There's no excuse not to wear a life jacket on the water!

THINGS TO KNOW:

- Certain life jackets are designed to keep your head above water and help you remain in a position which permits proper breathing.
- To meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements, a boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard Approved life jacket for each person aboard. Boats 16 feet and over must have at least one Type IV throwable device as well.
- Adult-sized life jackets will not work for children. Special life jackets are available. To work correctly, a life jacket must be worn, fit snugly, and not allow the child's chin or ears to slip through.
- Life jackets should be tested for wear and buoyancy at least once each year. Waterlogged, faded, or leaky jackets should be discarded.
- Life jackets must be properly stowed.
- A life jacket especially a snug-fitting flotation coat or deck-suit style can help you survive in cold water.

HOW DO LIFE JACKETS SAVE LIVES?

- When capsized in rough water.
- When sinking in unexpectedly heavy sea conditions.
- When thrown from the boat as a result of a collision.
- When injured by rocks or submerged objects.
- When unconscious from carbon monoxide fumes.
- When tossed into freezing water.
- When thrown off balance while fishing.
- When unable to swim because of heavy or waterlogged clothing.



LIFEJACKETS MUST BE

- Coast Guard approved,
- in good and serviceable condition, and
- the appropriate size for the intended user.

ACCESSIBILITY

- Wearable lifejackets must be readily accessible.
- You must be able to put them on in a reasonable amount of time in an emergency (vessel sinking, on fire, etc.).
- They should not be stowed in plastic bags, in locked or closed compartments or have other gear stowed on top of them.
- The best lifejacket is the one you will wear.
- Though not required, a lifejacket should be worn at all times when the vessel is underway. A wearable lifejacket can save your life, but only if you wear it.
- Throwable devices must be immediately available for use.

INFLATABLE LIFEJACKETS

- Inflatable lifejackets may be more comfortable to wear.
- The best lifejacket is the one you will wear.
- Inflatable lifejackets require the user to pay careful attention to the condition of the device.
- Inflatable lifejackets must have a full cylinder and all status indicators on the inflator must be green, or the device is NOT serviceable, and does NOT satisfy the requirement to carry lifejackets.
- Coast Guard Approved Inflatable lifejacket's are authorized for use on recreational boats by person at least 16 years of age.

CHILD LIFEJACKET REQUIREMENTS

Some states require that children wear lifejackets

- applies to children of specific ages
- applies to certain sizes of boats
- applies to specific boating operations

Child lifejacket approvals are based on the child's weight. Check the "User Weight" on the label, or the approval statement that will read something "less than 30", "30 to 50", "less than 50", or "50 to 90".



AVOID ACCIDENTS

- Many canoe and kayak related accidents (especially fatalities) involve alcohol, so stay sober and stay alive.
- Avoid standing up in a canoe or kayak. Water is unstable and can throw off your balance. The force of water can push you over the edge easily and you can get trapped under a canoe or kayak.
- Paddlers don't often notice they're thirsty when having fun canoeing or kayaking. Take plenty of potable water with you when having fun on the water and drink often.
- Plan ahead for possible immersion. The body loses heat 30 times faster when immersed in water. Take along extra clothes and pack your belongings in waterproof bags.
- If your boat capsizes, don't panic. Your canoe can be flipped back over. Overturned canoes float.
 - First, assure that all passengers are safe before attempting to retrieve equipment.
 - Stay with your canoe unless you judge that doing so will be dangerous.
 - If possible, hold on to your paddle because you'll need it later.
 - If you can stay with the canoe guide it to shore or quiet water.
 - If you cannot get to shore, stay at the front end of the canoe so that if the canoe becomes pinned, you don't.
 - Use your paddle or another canoe to flip the canoe upright again.
 - Float with your life jacket on your back, with your feet downstream.
 - If the water is cold, get ashore quickly.
- If someone else's canoe capsizes offer your assistance. If it comes down to a rescue, remember, it's people first then equipment.
- Above all, keep calm and encourage the "dunkees" to do likewise.