

RESOURCES

Use the contact information below to ensure you have a safe and fun trip.

Boating Safety and/or Navigation Courses

Boat US Foundation | www.boatus.com/foundation

800-336-BOAT

MASKGI | www.maskgi.org

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary | www.uscgaux.org

U.S. Power Squadrons | www.usps.org

Regional Paddling Clubs

Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network | www.smskn.org

North Shore Paddlers Network | www.nspn.org

MDI Paddlers | mdipaddlers.wordpress.com

Pemaquid Paddlers | pemaquidpaddlers.blogspot.com

Maine Outdoor Adventure Club | www.moac.org

Agencies and Organizations

Maine Forest Service (fire permits) | 800-750-9777 for places west of the Penobscot River, 207-827-1800 for places east of the Penobscot River

Maine Island Trail Association | www.mita.org

Maine Sea Grant | www.seagrant.umaine.edu

Marine Mammals of Maine | www.mmome.org | 800-532-9551

NOAA (nautical charts) | www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov

Red Tide Hotline | 800-232-4733

U.S. Coast Guard, Operation Paddle Smart | www.uscgboating.org

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

U.S. Coast Guard (north to south):

Eastport 207-853-0684

Jonesport 207-497-2200

Southwest Harbor 207-244-5121

Rockland 207-596-6666

Boothbay Harbor 207-633-2661

South Portland 207-767-0363

Portsmouth Harbor 603-436-4414

Maine Marine Patrol:

Portsmouth to Brunswick 800-482-0730

Rockland to Rockport 800-452-4664

Penobscot Bay to Canada 800-432-7381

Maine State Police (in-state only) 800-452-4664



Photo credit: Dan Carr

GEAR LIST

While no list is guaranteed to keep you safe, responsible kayakers will have the following items with them on every outing. If you don't know how to use any of the following equipment, get instruction before you set out.

- ✓ **Kayak** appropriate for conditions with bulkheads or flotation bags
- ✓ **Personal Flotation Device (PFD)** with attached whistle, emergency strobe light and signal mirror.
- ✓ **Clothing** appropriate for conditions with extra layers
- ✓ **Wetsuit or drysuit** (because of Maine's cold water temps, a shortie wetsuit is recommended even in summer months)
- ✓ **Spray skirt**
- ✓ **Paddle and spare paddle**
- ✓ **Paddle float**
- ✓ **Bilge pump or bailer**
- ✓ **Fog horn**
- ✓ **VHF marine radio, weather radio, cell phone**
- ✓ **Flashlight/headlamp**
- ✓ **Flares**
- ✓ **First aid kit**
- ✓ **Kayak repair kit**
- ✓ **Multipurpose repair tool**
- ✓ **Nautical charts, compass (deck and handheld) and GPS**
- ✓ **Tide chart**
- ✓ **Hat, sunscreen and sunglasses with safety strap**
- ✓ **Rain gear and dry bags**
- ✓ **Food and water**
- ✓ **ID your boat** with a phone number or e-mail address
IF FOUND - CONTACT stickers are available from the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Brought to you by



Maine Island Trail Association

MASKGI

Maine Association of
Sea Kayak Guides and Instructors



Maine Sea Grant

Kittery Trading Post | Lincoln Canoe & Kayak
L.L. Bean | Maine Department of Marine Resources
Maine Sport | Maine State Kayaking
Seaspray Kayaking | United States Coast Guard

Store to Shore

Sea Kayaking Safety and Stewardship in Maine



Photo credit: Daniel E. Smith / ScenicNewEngland.net



CHECKLIST FOR KAYAK SAFETY

Sea kayaking can be fun and rewarding but it carries with it inherent dangers. The suggestions contained in this brochure can help you safely manage the risk while minimizing your impact on the natural environment.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME

Know the expectations and limitations of everyone in your group. Acquire nautical charts, study the long range marine forecast and note conditions such as water temperature, wind, tide range and currents.

- ✓ Plan a route appropriate for the experience level of everyone in your group.
- ✓ Identify danger areas and emergency evacuation options.
- ✓ Determine which access points and destinations are available for use and suitable for your group size.
- ✓ Know your group's allergies, medical needs, abilities and expectations.
- ✓ Agree on your group's method for making decisions.
- ✓ Assemble emergency phone numbers and VHF radio channels (Coast Guard monitors Channel 16)
- ✓ Become familiar with safety protocols and practice rescue techniques. (Guides, instructors and clubs can provide this training - see back for more information)
- ✓ Complete a float plan (download from www.maskgi.org/triplanning.html). File a plan for every trip.

BEFORE YOU LAUNCH

Gather all group members near the launch site and review these items together (please avoid tying up the ramp).

- ✓ **Basic paddling:** does everyone know strokes, braces and rescue techniques?
- ✓ **Trip planning:** does everyone know the intended route, break locations, anticipated distances, emergency bailouts?
- ✓ **Leadership and decision-making:** who is in charge in case of danger? Who will make decisions about course changes?
- ✓ **Safety procedures:** Does the group agree to stay together? How will you communicate with each other on the water? What will you do if someone capsizes, gets lost or separated?
- ✓ **Outfitting:** Is everyone equipped with standard safety gear? (see gear list). Are all group members dressed appropriately and wearing a PFD? Is all gear packed and are kayaks ready to be launched properly?
- ✓ **Conditions:** Is everyone aware of the forecasted conditions, including wind, fog, precipitation, and tides?

ON THE WATER

Keep these things in mind while underway to reduce the risk of incidents.



Photo credit: Daniel E. Smith / ScenicNewEngland.net

- ✓ **Visibility:** Kayaks can seem invisible to larger boats. Assume that other boats can not see you. Keep your group tight, avoid busy channels and congested areas. Use brightly colored boats and clothing and consider reflective stickers.
- ✓ **Communication:** Use visual communications, a VHF marine radio, a fog horn and/or a whistle to communicate with other vessels.
- ✓ **Navigation:** Carry multiple navigational aids including nautical charts, compass, and GPS to navigate and avoid danger areas.
- ✓ **Ability:** Do not paddle beyond the ability or comfort of anyone in your group. Change your intended course if necessary.
- ✓ **Conditions:** Keep a watchful eye on conditions at all times. Observe changes in weather patterns and cloud formations for hints of an incoming storm. Keep track of wind-driven waves, rebounding and/or refracting waves, tidal currents, and the effects of sea bottom on the surface.
- ✓ **Physical condition:** Make sure the group remains well fueled and hydrated. Plan rest breaks as needed and protect yourself from the sun, the cold and the water. Remain attentive to any medical issues that might arise such as dehydration, sea sickness, hypothermia, blisters, sunburn, and heat exhaustion.



Photo credit: Daniel E. Smith / ScenicNewEngland.net

AT YOUR DESTINATION

Once on shore, practice low-impact recreation by following these Leave No Trace guidelines.

Plan Ahead and Prepare

- ✓ Learn and abide by the usage policies and guidelines for the places you visit. Land only where you have permission.
- ✓ Keep group size small (fewer than 6 is ideal) and visits short. Limit your stay to 2 nights max.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- ✓ Land and launch on sandy beaches or sloping rock ledges. Avoid scrambling over dirt banks.
- ✓ Concentrate activity on hard surfaces such as rock, sand, resilient grass and established campsites/trails. Avoid wet areas and refrain from trampling vegetation such as fragile mosses and lichen.
- ✓ Do not cut, clear or remove live or dead vegetation.

Dispose of Waste Properly

- ✓ Carry out all trash - your own and any that you find.
- ✓ If no privy is available, carry out all solid human waste and toilet paper for proper disposal on the mainland.

Leave What You Find

- ✓ Leave flowers, plants and other natural objects where you found them. Do not disturb archaeological sites.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

- ✓ Except in emergencies, campfires are not recommended. Use cookstoves for meals and headlamps for light.
- ✓ If you plan to kindle a fire, you must obtain a permit from the Maine Forest Service (see reverse for contact info).
- ✓ When authorized fire rings are unavailable, build small fire below the high tide line in a fire pan or on sand or gravel to avoid scarring.
- ✓ Use only driftwood collected nearby, burn all wood to a fine ash and douse with seawater. Scatter any remains so there is no evidence of a fire.

Respect Wildlife

- ✓ View wildlife from a distance, give a wide berth to nesting birds, rafting eiders and hauled out seals.
- ✓ Store food securely - never feed wildlife.
- ✓ Leave pets at home.

Be Considerate of Others

- ✓ Keep your visual impact low by keeping gear consolidated.
- ✓ Preserve the peace and quiet of the setting and be respectful of those who live and work in the area.
- ✓ Break camp early. Sweep the site to ensure you've left nothing behind.
- ✓ Restore the site to its natural state before you leave.

