

Cataraqui Canoe Club

Personal Safety



General

1. Never attempt a trip that will overtax your ability. Improve your skill by meeting progressively stiffer challenges but do so gradually and — if possible — under the guidance of an expert.
2. Every paddler should know how to swim. If you can't swim, wear your PFD
3. Watch for and be aware of changing weather conditions; use these to make wise choices. A sudden change in wind direction or change in temperature will probably bring a storm.
4. Carry sufficient water.

Boat, Equipment and Technique

5. The law requires every boat to have a properly fitting PFD (personal flotation device) for each person. We strongly urge you to wear one. Also required by law is a 15-metre floating throw rope, a signalling device such as a whistle (such as a Fox40) and a bailer. A light is required for travel after dusk.
6. All kayakers should carry a well-fitting spray skirt and ensure that their kayaks have proper flotation. Highly recommended equipment for canoes include a spare paddle and front and rear painters (ropes). All paddlers should wear helmets in white-water.
7. On rivers, be on the lookout for unexpected rapids. Unless you have the skill and knowledge to run rapids, it is always best to portage around them.
8. Be especially careful when paddling in cold weather. Hypothermia is a constant danger if you fall into the water. Learn how to avoid – and how to treat – hypothermia.

Protocols

9. Three blasts on your whistle means an emergency. Make the trip leader aware of your presence and be ready to help. (One blast means "Pay attention"; two blasts means "Round up").
10. Follow the trip leader's directions. If you feel these compromise your personal safety, make your reasons known to the trip leader.
11. Stay with the group: there is safety in numbers. The only exception is if the trip leader gives one or more persons permission to separate from the group.
12. The trip leader (or another person designated by the trip leader) should carry maps and a compass. A GPS unit is also helpful.
13. The trip leader (or other designated person designated by them) should have a first aid kit approved by St. John Ambulance or similar organization. St. John Ambulance is a good source of quality first aid kits. The Club first-aid kit is kept at the Boathouse and available for trips.
14. When signing up for a trip, you are indicating your willingness to follow the guidance of the trip leader.

Cataraqui Canoe Club

Personal Safety

Clothing / Gear

15. Wear proper outdoor clothing, such as wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts and solid footwear. Bring extra clothing and always carry rain wear.
16. Wear sun block and protective clothing to prevent sunburn, and wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from glare and sun.
17. Avoid wearing cotton clothing and wear your PFD. This will help prevent hypothermia from wind and rain. Wet cotton can increase the likelihood of hypothermia even in warm weather, so consider wearing synthetics (the best choice is quick-dry clothing) or wool.

Insects / Disease

18. Black flies, mosquitoes, deerflies, horseflies, ticks and other insects are annoying and may carry disease. Wear protective clothing or use an insect repellent.
19. Be aware of the symptoms of Lyme Disease, which is caused by the bite of an infected deer tick. Avoid contact with ticks by wearing protective clothing or insect repellent. Inspect your body for ticks; if found, remove the tick carefully and save the specimen for analysis. Monitor your body for symptoms. (For more information about Lyme Disease, refer to the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care website.)