

PADDLE CRAFT

Kayaks | Sit-on-Tops | Waka Ama | Canoes

Safety Guide



Kia Mataara

Know the ways of the water
before you let go of the land

**Safer
Boating**



Follow Safer Boating
on Facebook

THE BOATING SAFETY CODE



**WEAR YOUR
LIFEJACKET**



**TAKE TWO WATERPROOF
WAYS TO CALL FOR HELP**



**CHECK THE MARINE
WEATHER FORECAST**



AVOID ALCOHOL



**BE A RESPONSIBLE
SKIPPER**

PADDLE SAFELY OUT THERE

Hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders go paddling along our coasts and on our lakes and rivers every year.

Nothing compares to the adrenalin rush of being on the water. But things can go wrong. Very wrong! And they do. On average, 20 recreational boaties die each year on New Zealand's waters. Around 10 percent, or an average of two people, are paddlers.

So whether you're a hardcore sea kayaker or you've just started out on a SUP, be prepared. Know your stuff, check your craft, take the right gear, and understand

what to do in an emergency. Don't let one of the statistics be you.

Follow these 4 guides:

1. Prepare your paddle craft

2. Check your gear

3. Know the 'rules'

4. Make a plan



saferboating.org.nz

Safe boating tips.



Metservice
Marine app

Marine forecasts
and tide information.



MarineMate app

Local bylaws,
boat ramps and
boating info.



Coastguard app

Click [here](#) for the
Coastguard app user guide



KNOW AND PRACTICE WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU CAPSIZE

Many boating deaths happen when a small craft (under 6m) is swamped or capsizes.

- Get appropriate training.
 - Know how to get back into or onto your boat.
 - Always wear your lifejacket. Many people don't survive the first few minutes without one, especially in cold water.
 - Call for help on your VHF radio (Channel 16) or cell phone and/or trigger your PLB distress beacon.
-



KNOW YOUR STUFF

Make sure you get appropriate training and practice your new skills on a regular basis. Paddlers and the general public underestimate the technical skills and knowledge required to safely paddle on New Zealand's waters.

Sometimes it's hard to get back when the wind gets up, and the water gets choppy. Tides and currents also make it difficult to stay on-course and prevent capsizing. Make sure you know the environment and how to use your equipment.

- It's safer to paddle with mates. Join a waka ama, kayak, canoe or SUP club.
- Go to boatingeducation.org.nz for Day Skipper, a Maritime VHF Radio Operator Certificate, and other courses nationwide and online.
- Into waka ama? Search 'Waka Ama Safety Rules' at www.maritimenz.govt.nz; or go to www.wakaama.co.nz

- For SUP safety and other tips (such as making sure you wear the right safety leash for flat water, fast-flowing or surf): www.nzsup.org
- Follow Safer boating on Facebook



Detailed information about sea kayaking

safety and techniques can be found at: www.kask.co.nz/info



TOP 3 SURVIVAL TIPS

1. CHOOSE A PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE (PFD)/LIFE JACKET SUITABLE FOR THE JOB

Generally, we would recommend PFD **NOT** a life jacket for kayaking – if capsized a life jacket may make it harder to get out and a PFD plus a kayak are good enough for flotation once out.

Buoyancy aid/
personal flotation device



Buoyancy
Vests



Check it inflates, mate!

Got an inflatable?
Check CO₂ cylinders regularly
and change them when they
reach their use by date.

Search 'Hutchwilco inflatable
lifejacket servicing' at
[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

See 'Lifejackets: choosing the right
one to wear' at 'Boatsafetyinnz' on
[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

2. TAKE TWO WATERPROOF WAYS TO CALL FOR HELP

Want to be rescued? It's your call. Stash your lifejacket pocket with your VHF radio, PLB, or cell phone.

- Marine waterproof handheld VHF.
- Personal locator beacon (PLB)
Recommended for trips of 2km or more from shore. Register it at beacons.org.nz, make sure the battery is within its expiry date, and carry it in your pocket.
- Cell phone in sealed waterproof lanyard bag (Older cells can be used in a bag, but not all smart phones).
- Flares Choose red hand-held flares for high visibility. Use LED flares for night paddling

Take two forms of waterproof communication devices

to call for help if need be.



Marine VHF radio

A waterproof marine VHF radio is the most reliable way of calling for help. You can call Mayday on a distress channel – Channel 16. Or call your local Coastguard.

Check the maritime radio frequency wheel and Coastguard radio frequencies so you know what channels to use.



3. CHECK THE MARINE WEATHER

The marine weather forecast is your friend.

Take note of **wind speed** over water and the size of waves or swell. If on inland waterways and lakes, check the land or mountain weather forecast.

- Download the free MetService Marine App

Visit Metservice.co.nz



MetService

ALL THE
MARINE FORECASTS
AND TIDES

– PLUS HEAPS MORE
IN ONE HANDY APP

SEARCH:
'METSERVICE MARINE'
IN YOUR APP STORE



KNOW THE RULES

It is important that you know the rules of paddle craft.
You need to know:

- Give way rules
- Navigational lights
- Buoys and beacons
- Channel paddling
- You can find all you need to know at www.kask.co.nz

BUOYS AND BEACONS

These are the 'road signs' on the water. The meaning of each navigational buoy or beacon is found in its shape, symbol on the top (top mark), and its colours.

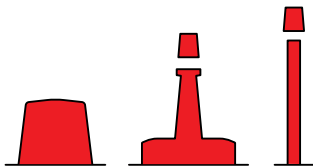
Channel markers

These show well-established channels and indicate port (left) and starboard (right) sides of the channels. One of the following may be used:

Lateral marks

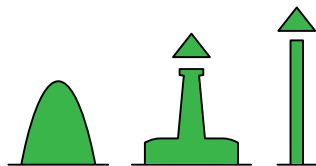
Port mark

A red can shape on a buoy or post. At night a red flashing light may be shown.



Starboard mark

A green conical shape on a buoy or post. At night a green flashing light may be shown.



Entering the harbour, channel or marina: The red mark should be kept on the boat's port (left) side, and the green mark on the boat's starboard (right) side. The red navigation light on your boat should be on the same side as the red channel marker.

When leaving the harbour, channel or marina: The red mark should be kept on the boat's starboard (right) side, and the green mark on the boat's port (left) side. Your boat's navigation lights should be opposite colours to the channel markers.

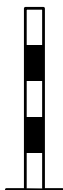
Water-ski access lanes

Black and orange bands.



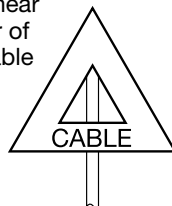
Reserved areas

Black and white bands.



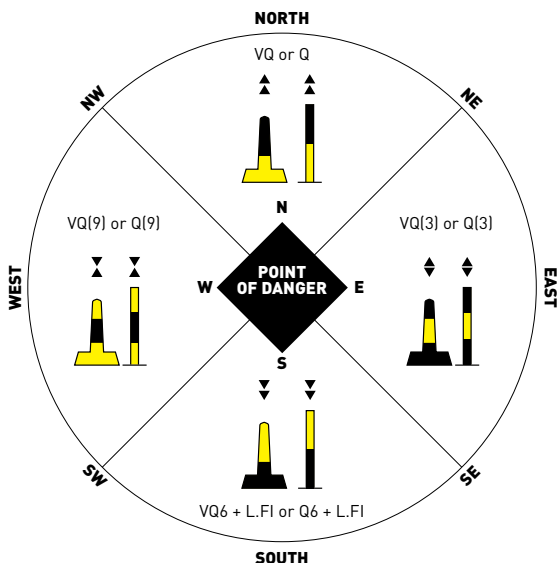
Underwater cable marks

When in pairs, these marks indicate the direction of a cable. Be careful not to anchor near these cables. The skipper of a boat that damages a cable will be held responsible.



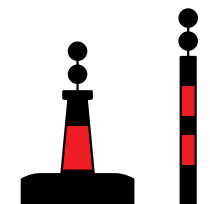
Cardinal marks

Each indicates where there is deep water close to a danger (relative to the compass) – deep water is to the north of a north cardinal mark, and to the east of an east cardinal mark.



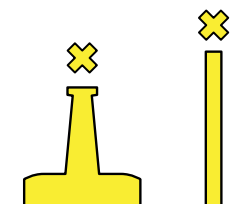
Isolated danger mark

Indicates an isolated danger, such as a submerged rock, and tells you not to pass too closely. If lit at night, it shows a group of two white flashes. The top mark has two black spheres.



Special marks

Indicate a special area and that you should use caution. If lit at night, they show a flashing yellow light. The top mark is a single yellow cross. Check your chart to identify what is special in that area.



BE SAFE BE SEEN

1. You're responsible for your own safety, your craft and any passenger, so learn how to paddle safely. Remember, in some areas you can be fined for not wearing a lifejacket.
2. Keep a good lookout at all times and never assume you can be seen. Wear bright clothing and make sure your boat is highly visible with safety flags etc.
3. Wear a white head torch between sunset and sunrise so others can see you. Or even better, display an all-round white light.

WHAT'S THE PLAN, STAN?

Make sure someone on shore knows what you're up to. Tell a mate or family member where you're leaving from, where you're going, how many people you're with and when you think you'll be back.

Tell them what to do if you don't return – call the Police on **111** or ***500** for the Coastguard NZ – and let them know if you're running late. Or use the Log A Trip tool in the Coastguard app. See the link below.



Coastguard

Click [here](#) for the Coastguard app user guide

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

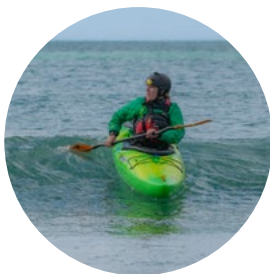
It's easy to get carried away on the water so stick to your limits. And, remember, the further you go the greater the risk, so the more prep you need to do.



Beginners

limit yourself to flat sheltered waters with light winds

Less than 11 knots or 19km/hour



Paddlers with some skills

limit yourself to moderate conditions with winds

Less than 17 knots or 29km/hour and waves less than 0.5 metres



Experienced paddlers

limit yourself to fresh conditions

Less than 25 knots

ALL PADDLERS

- If possible, stay close to the shore line.
- If with mates, paddle in tight formation.
- When possible paddle outside the channel – avoid the centre of the channel or river.
- Keep to the right.
- Take care when entering or crossing channels or shipping lanes.
- Keep clear of larger vessels (pass behind them, not in front).
- Aim to paddle against the wind, current or tide so you won't wear yourself out on your return.

**IF IN
DOUBT,
DON'T
GO OUT!**

NEW TO PADDLING?



See: Safety in Kayaks & Canoes at
[Boatsafetyinnz on youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/Boatsafetyinnz)



CHECK YOUR CRAFT AND PREP YOUR GEAR

Paddle craft

Check your craft for leaks, damage or dodgy cables/fasteners and anything else that could invite trouble.

Lifejackets

Check your lifejacket, especially an inflatable, is undamaged and fits. Know how to adjust the fit.

Communication equipment

Take two – a hand held VHF radio, a personal locator beacon (PLB) or a cell phone in a waterproof lanyard bag. Carry them on you or stash them in your lifejacket pocket.

Paddle

Tether your paddle so you don't lose it if you capsize. Know how to get back on and right your paddle craft.

Wetsuit

Dress for the water temp, not air temp. Cold water shocks and hypothermia can kill.

Waterproof torch

Show a bright light from (and during) sunset to sunrise. Check your battery.

Local knowledge

Talk to locals about the specific tides, currents and hazards. Check MarineMate for your local bylaws (search 'Marine Mate' in your app store).

Plenty of food, drink and sunscreen

Don't get caught short.



COLD WATER KILLS

Wearing the right gear – a wetsuit with your lifejacket – could save your life.

Cold water immersion can kill in as little as 30–40 minutes – especially in New Zealand's alpine lakes. It may look sunny, but the lakes are often fed with melted snow from mountains. At sea you also survive longer on an upturned hull than in the water.

If your vessel has sunk or drifted away, huddle to conserve heat and energy.



**HOLD YOUR ARMS TIGHT
AGAINST YOUR CHEST.
PRESS YOUR THIGHS TOGETHER.
RAISE YOUR KNEES.**



MAYDAY! WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

1. Make sure your lifejacket is fastened
2. Set off your PLB
3. Call a Mayday on your hand-held VHF radio – on Channel 16
4. Call the police on 111 (Always carry your cellphone in a waterproof bag)

Stay with your craft – it's much easier to spot in the water than you are. Never attempt to swim to shore unless you're close and wearing a lifejacket. If you can, keep warm by climbing onto your craft.

Master the Mayday: Search 'Radio a MAYDAY' at maritimenz.govt.nz or get a Maritime VHF Radio Operator Certificate online through boatingeducation.org.nz



REPORT ALL ACCIDENTS

Reporting accidents allows lessons to be shared with the boating community.

You can report accidents online, within 48 hours, at maritimenz.govt.nz/report-online

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