

Transport for NSW

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# Paddle Safe



The waterways of New South Wales provide many beautiful locations for canoes, kayaks and other paddlecraft. Some areas are more challenging than others, but wherever you go paddling, it's essential to prepare well for a safe and enjoyable outing.

Always ensure that you are well prepared and understand the rules and conditions of the waterways. Ensure you are aware of your craft's limits and your own abilities.

## Wear a lifejacket

People in canoes and kayaks must wear a lifejacket:

| Enclosed waters   | Alpine waters      | Open waters and crossing coastal bars |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| At night (between sunset and sunrise), or when alone on your canoe or kayak (including when you have children aged under 12 on your canoe or kayak) | At all times       | At all times                          |
| Level 50S or above  | Level 50S or above | Level 50S or above                    |

## Be bright, be seen

It is important that you are well prepared before you. Canoes and kayaks must carry a waterproof torch if you go out between sunset and sunrise to use and help prevent a collision.

It is also recommended that you:

- Wear highly visible clothing. Skippers in larger vessels may not always see you
- Attach a high-visibility flag to your vessel
- Display an all round white light visible in every direction or wear a head torch
- Paddle with someone else or in a group so that you are easily visible

## Be prepared

It is important that you are well prepared before you go kayaking or canoeing to avoid collision or getting into trouble on the water.

Before going out:

- Ensure that you know the rules for paddlecraft including lifejacket wear and safety equipment requirements
- Check the weather and tides including the flow and current in rivers and open waters before going out and make sure you are comfortable with the conditions. If the conditions appear unfavourable, consider postponing your trip or choose a more sheltered location
- Check your canoe or kayaks condition and know the limits of the craft and your ability
- Consider downloading the Paddlesafe app or take a printed or electronic map to learn about the waterway and any potential hazards you may encounter

## Be aware

It is important to be aware of the waterway and your surroundings when paddling to avoid collision or sudden dangers.

- Keep a proper lookout and all times including behind you to avoid a collision
- Watch out for larger vessels and their wash. Don't attempt to cross in front of another vessel, always wait and paddle behind
- Take extra care when paddling in surf zones or open waters
- Watch out for fast flowing water, currents and hazards in rivers
- Avoid paddling in the centre of a river, channel or large waterway. Keep safe and stay right



Consider getting involved in a paddling club to explore recreation, training and racing opportunities. For more information, visit [nsw.paddle.org.au](http://nsw.paddle.org.au) for club and training locations, contacts and a waterways guide for paddlers.

## Wear a lifejacket

At all times day and night



## Be prepared

Know the rules

Check the weather

Let someone know where you're going

Check your canoe or kayak and safety equipment



## Be aware

Keep a proper lookout, including behind you

Look out for larger vessels

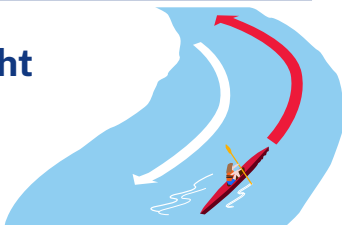
Watch out for vessel wash



## Keep safe, stay right

Avoid paddling in the centre of a channel or river

Cross behind larger vessels, not in front



## Be bright, be seen

Wear highly visible clothing

Paddle in a group where possible

Display an all-round white light and take extra care at night



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For more information:  
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