

Kayaking, Canoeing and Stand Up Paddle Boarding....they are considered Boating

Boating Tips

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Kayaking, canoeing along with stand up paddle boarding are boating activities growing in popularity on our sounds and rivers. These introduce people to boating, getting them on the water where adventure, healthy activities, relaxation and fun await.

For this article I will refer to kayak, canoe and stand up paddleboard collectively as “paddleboating”. And as with powered counterparts, paddleboats share rules.

With similar nautical rules of the road, I highly recommend a one-day safe boating course. Many common rules apply including a float plan of when and where you are going and expected return. When you plan and prepare for the worst you experience the positive!

The local attraction of paddle boating is the “friendly” water of the Tar/Pamlico and Neuse Rivers. Each shares beauty, diversity plus ample opportunities from urban to rural. In a paddleboat you’re one with the water and surroundings, quietly using human power to go slowly to places others can’t. You’ll experience nature up close - fish, flowers, reptiles, plants, even eagles and more that larger boats might pass by without noticing.

In selecting a paddleboat, prices vary from a few hundred to over a thousand dollars. Quality factors determining price includes materials – carbon fiber or plastic, flotation – none to ample, stowage – none to reasonable. Next are creature comforts such as a high backrest or an adjustable foot strap. Last are personal factors, the person’s weight and height in determining the proper paddleboat length. Size also determines the correct paddle length and shape to assure efficiency with less stress of motion. A good dealer will match the buyer/renter to the correct paddleboat and equipment.

In a paddleboat, for safety, you need to be seen. Select light, bright colored paddleboats plus use orange or yellow blades. Wear bright clothing. Next, dress appropriately for the weather plus water temperature should you fall in the water. Because wet cotton weighs people down and dries slowly, leave jeans and cotton at home. Wear wool or synthetics for conditions. Always check the weather before venturing out no matter the vessel. Layer since mornings begin cool with temperatures climbing by mid-afternoon.

Like swimming and scuba diving, experience paddle boating with a friend or friends. In a dry bag take a radio/cell phone, drinking water, a few energy snacks or fruit and small first aid kit. Add a flashlight for seeing along with being seen in the dark along with a map or chart of the area. A marine throw cushion adds to comfort as well as safety.

Universal rule, fall out, stay with the paddleboat. Kayaks specifically, if it flips you will fall out. Next step, right the paddle boat then get the water out by any means possible preferably a manual bilge pump. When fall water temperatures hover around 70°, quickly getting back into the paddleboat is critical before hypothermia takes over.

Practice. On a hot day, in shallow water, tip the paddleboat to experience fall out. Getting back into one or the other, each is different. No matter the paddleboat, have a paddle float, an air bag on a paddle for an amazingly stable platform. Experience and practice guarantees your safety in an emergency.

Equally important, don't over fill your paddleboat. Take only the essentials that you may need storing them wisely. Know your physical limits especially if you are new to paddle boating. Build up to longer voyages.

Locally, Inner Banks Outfitters is an excellent paddle boating resource. Rent a paddleboat to learn if paddle boating is for you. IBXO also offers vessel specific classes while the local power squadron and coast guard auxiliary regularly offer basic, safe boating courses. If you are serious about paddle boating, Boater Exam-Paddle Sports Safety Course—kayaks, and canoes and stand up paddle boards <http://www.boaterexam.com/paddling/>

Additional paddle boat, canoe and paddle board safety resources are:

Safe Kayaking Tips, Everything You Need to Know - <https://www.saltstrong.com/articles/ultimate-kayak-safety-tip>

American Canoe Association Top 10 Safety Tips - http://www.americancanoe.org/?page=Top_10

and Safe Paddling Tips, Sea Kayaking Ireland - <http://www.seapaddling.com/resources/safe-paddling-tips.html>.

The Pamlico Sail & Power Squadron schedules boating education courses and seminars throughout the year, which includes a "Paddle Smart" Seminar. To learn more about this course and others, the local squadron or what education and safety training is available, email our Education Officer at psps@gmail.com or contact Linda at 252-964-3009.