



HAVE I CHECKED THE WEATHER AND TIDES TODAY AND PLANNED MY TRIP ACCORDINGLY?

- Check the weather and the tides before you set out. Try NOC anyTide App or UKHO Easytide. Be aware of wind strength, especially offshore winds (where the wind is blowing out to sea).
- Use beach zones to surf in, marked with black and white flags.
- Seek local knowledge from experienced kayakers in the area.



DO I HAVE APPROPRIATE TRAINING AND/OR EXPERIENCE FOR THIS TRIP?

- Get some training: contact your local canoe or kayaking club and look for coaching sessions run by British Canoeing or Canoeing Ireland coaches.
- Learn and practise techniques to get back onboard your kayak, should you capsize.



DOES SOMEBODY KNOW WHERE I'M GOING AND WHEN I'LL BE BACK?

- Tell someone on land where you are going and what time you'll be back.
- Paddle in a group, where possible.
- The RYA or ISA SafeTrx apps can be used to log, track and send alerts about your trip. Visit www.safetrxapp.com.



ARE MY CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT SUITABLE FOR TODAY'S CONDITIONS?

- Wear the right clothing for the season and conditions, such as a suitable wetsuit/drysuit and layered clothing.
- When sea kayaking in open water take
 - means of calling for help
 - tow line
 - knife attached to your buoyancy aid
 - split paddle on deck
 - pump
 - waterproof torch
 - sunhat/sunglasses/sunscreen
 - hat/gloves
 - basic first aid kit
 - repair kit
 - helmet (for the surf or rock gardens).

If you're fishing:

- Make sure your paddle is attached with a leash.
- Beware of overloading your kayak with gear – it'll be harder to self-right than you think.
- Navigational aids, rod holder and other equipment should be stowed before surfing or landing in surf.
- Only use anchors in areas with little or no current.

KNOW WHAT TO DO

VISIT

RNLI.org/kayaking

britishcanoeing.org.uk/go-canoeing

IN AN EMERGENCY!

If you can't reach to call for help, help can't reach you.

If you need help, here's what to do.

USING A RADIO:

1. Press Channel 16 button.
2. Activate DSC alert if fitted.
3. Press and hold transmit button and say:
 - Mayday, mayday, mayday.**
 - This is ... [your name 3 times].**
 - Call sign ... MMSI ...**
 - Mayday, [your name].**
 - Call sign ... MMSI ...**
4. **My position is ...** [describe position and give GPS location if possible].
5. **We are ...** [describe the nature of distress, the assistance required, number of people and craft followed by any further information].
6. Say **over** and wait for a response.
7. If no response – repeat procedure.

USING A MOBILE PHONE:

Call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard.

While you are waiting for help, stay with your kayak – you make a larger target for search and rescue teams.

If you can get your body even partially out of the water, it'll significantly increase your survival time.



320 kayakers and canoeists rescued by RNLI volunteer crews in 2016.

18 paddlers lost their lives in the UK between 2011 and 2015.*

*Water Safety Forum's Water Incident Database (WAID) 2011-2015

RNLI.org/kayaking

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity registered in England and Wales (209603) and Scotland (SC037736). Registered charity number 20003326 in the Republic of Ireland

Photos: RNLI/Nigel Millard

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Lifeboats



SEA KAYAKING SAFETY PACK

RNLI.org/kayaking



HM Coastguard



PREVENTING DROWNING TOGETHER

BE SURE

BEFORE YOU PADDLE AWAY, BE SURE TO CHECK:



ALWAYS CARRY A MEANS OF CALLING FOR HELP AND KEEP IT WITHIN REACH.



WEAR YOUR BUOYANCY AID.



CHECK THE WEATHER AND TIDES.



TELL SOMEONE ELSE WHERE YOU'RE GOING AND WHEN YOU'LL BE BACK.



GET SOME TRAINING AND/OR EXPERIENCE.



WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING FOR THE CONDITIONS AND YOUR TRIP.



CAN I REACH MY COMMUNICATION DEVICE IF I CAPSIZE?

Always carry a means of calling for help and keep it within reach. If you can't reach it in an emergency it's no help.

WATERPROOF HANDHELD DSC VHF

- Keep it on your person.
- If possible, buy a DSC-equipped radio. This transmits a recognised emergency signal, and also your location.
- Requires an operator's licence, a ship's radio licence (free online in the UK) and a Maritime Mobile Service Identity number, which comes with the ship's radio licence.



PERSONAL LOCATOR BEACON (PLB)

- Keep it on your person.
- A recognised emergency signal, it's manually activated only and must be registered with the coastguard.
- Not all PLBs inherently float and the unit needs to be held out of water to transmit.
- It can also be used on land in areas where no phone signal is available and it transmits for 24+ hours.



MOBILE PHONE

- Keep your mobile in a waterproof pouch, on your person.
- Smartphones can provide a location, but emergency calls should be made by voice – call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard.
- The RYA or ISA SafeTrx apps can be used to log, track and send alerts about your trip. Visit www.safetrxapp.com.



AM I WEARING A BUOYANCY AID?

- Wearing a well-fitted, well-maintained and suitable buoyancy aid could save your life.
- When choosing a buoyancy aid, check the size and fit by adjusting the jacket, then lift from the shoulders. It should not be possible to move the jacket. If it slides up, try a smaller size or tighter fit.
- Check product labelling for weight and size guidance.
- Choose one that's cut away around the shoulders and the arms, for comfort when paddling. It should have a belt or drawstring to pull it tight around the waist.
- Choose a brightly coloured one that can be easily spotted. Make sure it has enough pockets to store your calling for help device and any other equipment. Attach a whistle on a lanyard, and at night attach a small strobe light.
- Check your buoyancy aid regularly for visible signs of deterioration.

For more tips, go to RNLI.org/ChooseltWearIt



BE SEEN

REFLECTIVE TAPE

Whenever you're on the water, your visibility is important. But during a rescue, it can be a lifesaver. Increase your visibility by sticking this SOLAS-approved reflective tape to your boat and paddle and displaying appropriate lights if out at dusk or night time.

HOW TO APPLY IT

Make sure your boat's surface is completely clean and dry. If the surface is cold to the touch, warm it slightly with a hairdryer or heat gun. Peel the backing paper off the SOLAS reflective tape strip, position the tape and smooth it down slowly to prevent air bubbles.



BE IDENTIFIED

WEAR AN ID STICKER

This ID sticker will save time – and potentially your life – in a rescue situation. Having your basic information allows others to raise the alarm and track you down if they find your boat unattended.

If you lose your gear whilst you're out paddling please tell the coastguard. That way we'll know that you're safe and won't launch a search for you.

HOW TO USE AND APPLY IT

Fill in your details using a thin, waterproof, permanent marker. We recommend placing the sticker within the hatch of your vessel, where it's dry but fairly visible. Make sure the boat's surface is completely clean and dry. If the surface is cold to the touch, warm it slightly with a hairdryer or heat gun. Peel the backing paper off the ID sticker, position it and smooth down slowly to prevent air bubbles.

REMEMBER TO WRITE WITH A PERMANENT MARKER