

Be Aware!

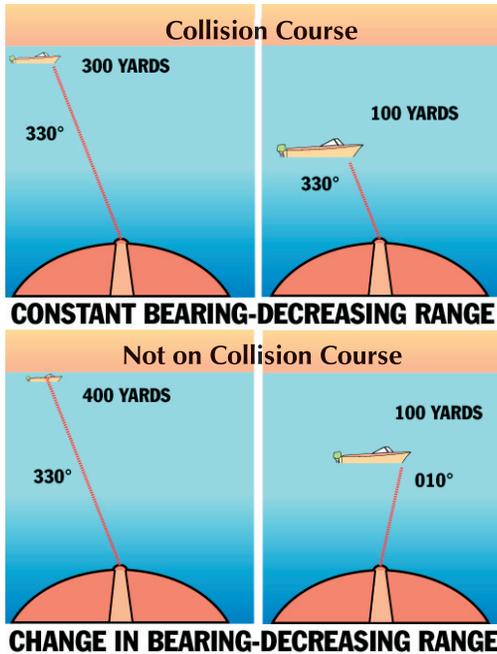
First and foremost, please be aware of your surroundings. You may be the only craft on the water or may be sharing the channel with a large container ship. Whatever the circumstance, your awareness of other traffic may make the sole difference in the safety of everyone on the water.

Paddlers do not travel as fast as motorized craft. If you see a powerboat, do not assume that you can pass ahead of it if traveling across its path. The safest way for paddle craft to cross the path of a powerboat is astern. Remember to cross other boats as a group instead of straggling across the river and blocking other traffic.

Don't let your safety depend on others finding YOU on the water.

Always assume that power boaters don't see you. Canoes and kayaks do not show up on radar and many power boaters miss seeing you on the horizon. They tend to keep watch to the right forward side of their boat and may miss those approaching on the left when low to the horizon. Help them by being obvious. Wear bright noticeable colors and even consider buying a boat in a fun neon color. Use reflective tape on the paddle or boat and always have a white light ready for use.

Keep a sound-signaling device handy and at the ready so that you can attract attention if you feel that a boater in a larger vessel may not notice your position. Remember, in shared waterways, the more boaters watching out for others, the safer everyone will be.



Big Boats, Bright Lights

Some busy waterways have “lanes of travel” similar to the Interstate highway system. Know the area you plan to paddle. If you are near commercial waterways, the navigation charts change often and you need a current set. Channels 13 and 16 are the most common radio frequencies to monitor. Any vessels less than 20 meters should not impede the passage of a larger ship whether under power or not. The big guys can't move out of the channel to avoid you. The depth of the channel may limit deep draft vessels. You, however, are very mobile and agile. Make use of your ability to move out of the way. If you are not crossing the channel stay close to shore. Large stationary objects offer a margin of protection.

A good thing to remember is that a ship which is two football lengths long traveling at 11 knots takes more than 1.4 miles to stop. It is far simpler to get out of the way. A barge may have more than a 1/4 mile blind spot!

At night, a white light must be shown toward oncoming traffic. Bright colors go a long way in not only keeping track of your fellow paddlers but make it far easier to see you if you become separated from your craft.

If motorized craft are operating close to you, you are much less likely to capsize if you turn your bow into the wave and don't take the wake motion broadside.

Rights of Passage

Learn the channels in your area and what the buoy markers mean. While onboard and facing downstream or leaving a harbor, green lights indicate starboard (right) and red lights indicate port (left). When returning or heading upstream, red lights or buoys should be on your starboard side. Remember, “Red Right Returning.” The markers are for the larger craft so if you stay between the light or buoy and the shore, you are out of the way of many of the larger, faster craft and less likely to encounter wake and turbulence from commercial vessels.

Since the events of 9/11, recreational boating in the United States has changed. Now many harbors and waterways have security zones surrounding different resources.

In ports and harbors, there are now restrictions on crafts within 100 yards of all U.S. Navy vessels. On local lakes and rivers, there may be restricted areas around bridge abutments, large dams and some shore based facilities such as powerplants. Some jurisdictions also have law enforcement

personnel stationed near drinking water reservoirs to protect against biological incidents. As an American citizen, please

cooperate with those individuals and understand that we all need to work together in public and private to keep our nation safe. Safeguard all the things we value, including our boating resources!

Remember

If you have a question, check with your state boating office BEFORE you go. It is easier to ask questions before the crisis than to try correcting the mistake when you're in the water.

- Wear your PFD
- Carry AND drink water
- Watch out for the other guy
- File a float plan
- Watch the weather
- Plan ahead
- Stay with your group
- Have a great adventure and come home safely.

Friendly Fun

Canoeing and Kayaking are great fun. Just ask any paddler you find on the water. Paddling offers so much to so many; quiet lazy paddling, intense adrenaline or the path to more adventure and fun.

Paddling is a great way to access nature, experience reflective moments and enjoy family and friends away from the distractions of life. All boaters, whether recreational or commercial, powered or human powered, have common interests. All boaters love water, need safety and security, and everyone desires unimpeded access to their waterways.

Conflicts often arise between various boating groups because of craft size, education and training of the operators, maneuverability, geographic constraints and the sheer numbers of recreational users of the waterways. Paddlers do need to be aware of a few of the "Rules of the Road" when sharing resources with other marine traffic. Remember to be courteous to other boaters and law enforcement officers. They're there to help you to be safe and have fun!



For more information please check

www.usps.org
www.cgau.org
www.acanet.org
www.safeboatingcouncil.org
www.uscgboating.org
Your state boating authority.



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Rules of the Road

What paddlers
need to know.

