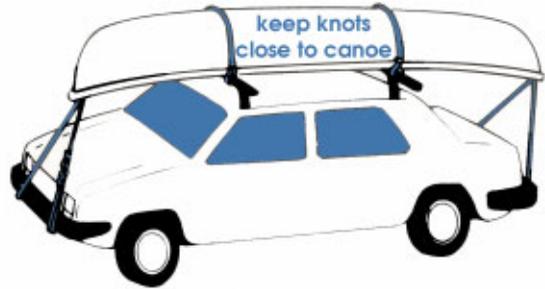


Transporting Your Canoe

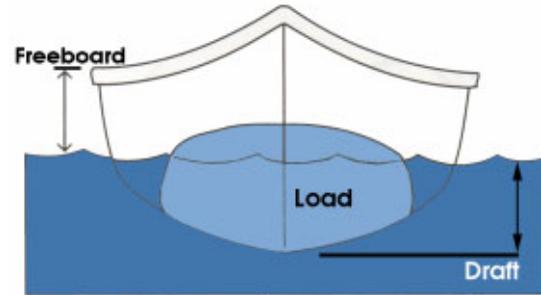
When transporting your canoe on top of a vehicle, do not rely on roof racks alone. A canoe offers strong resistance to wind even when your vehicle is traveling at slow speeds. Roof racks can be pulled off the vehicle by a canoe caught in the wind. Secure the canoe well, especially with strong bow and stern ropes to the bumpers or framework of the vehicle.



Use 3-point tie-downs

Watching Your Weight

Do not overload your canoe. There should always be at least 6 inches (15 cm.) of freeboard when fully loaded (including paddlers). Secure your gear in waterproof containers to protect contents and increase buoyancy. Keep weight low in the boat.



Illustrations by Nola Johnston

Canoe Clubs (2005)

Beaver Canoe Club - Burnaby	604-943-2341
Blackwater Paddlers - Quesnel	250-992-6352
Burnaby Canoe Club - Burnaby	604-522-7226
Caribou Chilcotin - Quesnel	250-392-6344
Columbia - Castlegar	250-365-6111
Cowichan Canoe Club - Duncan	250-743-6997
Dogwood Canoe Club - Vancouver	604-936-0262
Island Paddlers - Salt Spring	250-537-5700
River Spirit Pad. Club - Kamloops	250-374-5589
Kelowna Canoe Club - Kelowna	250-762-2112
Komoux Valley Paddlers - Comox	250-339-2176
New Caledonia - Vanderhoof	250-567-5194
NW Brigade Canoe Club-Prince George	250-964-7400
Victoria Canoe&Kayak Club - Victoria	250-655-7113

Paddlers' Ethics

- Help canoeists maintain a good image and rapport with other outdoor users.
- ! Use only marked access points and public land for getting to the water and taking rest stops.
 - ! Keep lunch spots and campsites clean. Do not put refuse of any type into the water; pack out all garbage you generate or find.
 - ! Respect the rights and needs of other users and landowners.
 - ! Give people fishing a wide berth; disturbing the fish in the area as little as possible will be appreciated by your fellow river user. Paddle quietly down the far shore if possible; don't play in their rapids! There are other rapids for you.
 - ! Do not approach, feed, or harass wildlife.
 - ! Take only photos, not souvenirs.
 - ! Minimize your impact on the environment; educate yourself on how to do so.
 - ! Help conservationists to protect and improve our natural water environment.

Check out the RCABC website for the latest news and events, or to find out more information on canoe lessons:

www.bccanoe.com



Produced by:
Recreational Canoeing Association of British Columbia
www.bccanoe.com
sec@bccanoe.com
 2005

- The purposes of the RCABC are:**
1. to coordinate, promote, and encourage all types of recreational paddling;
 2. to develop safe canoeing practices and activities for canoes;
 3. to involve the society in appropriate conservation and environmental issues around the province.

The printing of this pamphlet sponsored by:



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A Guide to
Canoeing Safety
 in British Columbia

Introduction

This safety guide recommends the basic knowledge you should have before venturing out in a canoe. This brochure is for people who will be paddling sheltered waters. Those unfamiliar with wilderness waterways are advised to gain experience locally.

Guidelines for Lake, Ocean & River Paddling

GENERAL

- ! Never canoe alone: the recommended minimum is 3 canoes.
- ! Watch out for your fellow paddlers, keep an eye on the boat behind you.
- ! All on board should wear a Canadian Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Device (lifejacket) at all times.
- ! A PFD is designed to provide flotation and to keep a conscious paddler's head out of the water in calm conditions. When purchasing a PFD, select one that fits you comfortably so that you will **WEAR IT**.
- ! Learn paddling skills and know your own abilities and limitations; the safest paddler is the skillful one.
- ! Never paddle further from shore than you are prepared to swim.
- ! Be certain your canoe and equipment are in good condition; carry a bailer, bow and stern painters (ropes), an extra paddle and a rescue throw line.
- ! Ensure that your canoe will float even when fully swamped. Install extra flotation if required.
- ! Don't be without an efficient sound signaling device, a repair kit, first aid kit, survival kit, and extra dry clothing.
- ! Be prepared for all kinds of weather and the possibility of falling in; bring extra clothing. Rain gear, wool or fleece (NOT cotton) sun protection, runners, and wool toque are suitable.
- ! Appoint a trip leader for each outing who has knowledge:
 - of the river or body of water and expected weather conditions
 - of the ability of any participants and their equipment

- ! Always leave your campsites clean; take your garbage with you; make sure your campfire is extinguished before you move on.

OCEANS AND LAKES

When canoeing on open waters, keep large groups together and close to shore. Familiarize yourself with the canoe-over-canoe rescues. Be aware of:

- ! backwash off cliffs along shorelines
- ! fast-changing weather conditions
- ! offshore winds and currents

When on the ocean know when and where tidal currents and riptides occur. Know the weather forecast before venturing out. If you capsize far from shore and can't empty the canoe, stay with it.



RIVERS

Heavy spring runoffs in British Columbia, usually persisting into July, cause rivers to be swift and frequently lethal. Cold water (below 15°C/60°F) will render you helpless in minutes. Additionally, dangerous obstructions such as deadheads, overhanging branches, sweepers (fallen trees), log jams, rapids, falls and gravel bars should be watched for and scouted on land. Paddling rivers requires skills and equipment additional to those used on lakes. **Acquire these BEFORE venturing onto moving water.**

To promote a safe journey:

- ! Split into small groups and distribute expertise at the front and back of the group.
- ! Keep well spaced out and **never pass the lead boat**.
- ! Follow the route of the lead boat; know and use river signals; communicate directions to the canoe behind you.
- ! Avoid outside bends on rivers where undercut riverbanks and roots are common.
- ! If you capsize, hold onto the paddle and the **upstream end** of the canoe; float on your back, toes pointed downstream; learn self-rescue procedures.
- ! Follow the instructions of your rescuer.
- ! Join a club for further instruction or contact RCABC for an instructor near you:
www.bccanoe.com

Small Craft Safety

Large craft may not always see you; pass well to the right of or behind all other boats, especially in narrow channels where power craft may not have a choice of route.

Indicate distress by waving a piece of light coloured cloth or a flashlight in a vertical circular direction. Other distress signals and their interpretation may be found in Transport Canada's "Safe Boating Guide":
www.boatingsafety.gc.ca

TRANSPORT CANADA REGULATIONS

Below are the regulations that all canoeists must follow when paddling in Canadian waterways:

1. One Canadian-approved pfd or lifejacket of appropriate size for each person on board.
2. One buoyant heaving line of not less than 15 metres in length.
3. One manual propelling device OR an anchor with not less than 15 metres of cable, rope or chain in any combination.
4. One bailer or one manual water pump fitted with or accompanied by sufficient hose to enable a person using the pump to pump water from the bilge of the vessel over the side of the vessel.
5. A sound signalling device or a sound signalling appliance.
6. Navigation lights that meet the applicable standards set out in the Collision Regulations if the pleasure craft is operated after sunset and before sunrise or in periods of reduced visibility.

International River Grading System

The grades for classifying the difficulty of rivers and rapids for open canoes are described below.

Grade One: Suitable for novices. Easy. Waves small and regular; passages clear; occasional sand banks and artificial difficulties like bridges.

Grade Two: Suitable for intermediate paddlers. Quite easy. Rapids of medium difficulty; passages clear and wide. Occasional boulders in stream. Open Canadian canoes may ship water in places.

Grade Three: For expert paddlers in open canoes. Medium difficulty. Waves numerous, high, irregular. Rocks and narrow (clear) passages. Considerable experience in maneuvering required. Advance scouting usually needed. Will ship water, and unless equipped with spray covers, will require frequent emptying.

Grade Four: Not suitable for open Canadian canoes. Difficult. Long rapids, powerful irregular waves; dangerous rocks, boiling eddies; passages difficult to navigate.