

THE VILLAGES CANOE AND KAYAK CLUB

www.thevillagespaddlingclub.com

Recommended Safety Equipment and Personal Items

The following list represents the minimum items that you should bring with you on our club trips as well as other steps you should take to ensure for your safety and comfort. This list may be updated as needed, so check this page before every trip. Please send any recommendations for additions to a club officer. Don't allow hindsight to make you wish you followed our recommendations.

1. REQUIRED BY U. S. COAST GUARD AND STATE OF FLORIDA:

Personal Flotation Devices, more commonly called PFDs, are lifesavers should you capsize. The U.S. Coast Guard has classified PFDs into five categories (Type I through V and with their floatation/life saving value associated in descending order – Type I being the highest rated). While each type is listed below, paddlers commonly use Type I, II or III. By Federal and Florida state laws all outfitters are required to supply each renter with one. Almost 80 percent of the people killed in boating accidents do not wear a PFD despite knowing that they are probably the most important piece of safety equipment. Boaters tend to treat PFD too casually, often using them as seat cushions or toss them at the bottom of other equipment into their boats. Nothing can be scarier than to capsize and watch your PFD float past you and out of reach. They can only save your life if worn properly and is in good condition.

As of 1995, boats under 16 feet in length are required to have at least one Type I, II or III for each person on board. Types IV and V no longer meet the requirements of this law. Rental outfitters are required to issue an acceptable PFD to each person using their boats. Private Boat Owners are responsible for having their own acceptable safety equipment.

Type I: This is the most buoyant of all PFDs and is effective in all waters including high seas and is designed to automatically turn an unconscious person to a face-up posting.

Type II: Intended for calm waters and quick rescue, it provides less buoyancy and is less likely to turn a capsized person into a face-up position.

Type III: Also meant for calm, inland waters where a quick rescue is likely and requires the wearer to place him or herself into a face-up position. Type III has the same minimum buoyancy as the Type II and is the favored type for recreational paddlers due to its more comfortable design.

Type IV: These are usually throwable devices such seat cushions or floating rings.

Type V: This includes deck suits, work or sailing vests as well as hybrid inflatable PFDs that need to be inflated before it provides any buoyancy.

Sound Signaling Device: Vessels under 39 feet must carry a whistle, horn or other similar attention-getting device. The whistle should be audible for one-half mile.

Buy a marine type whistle and wear it. Three strong blasts is our club's recognized emergency sound, repeat as often as necessary

2. RECOMMENDED ITEMS;

Hand pump/Bailers/Sponge: These are essential items to empty water from a swamped boat or to just remove water that has accumulated by where you are sitting or by your gear. Hand pumps are essential gear for Sit-Inside kayaks and are very helpful for canoes. Pumps used in conjunction with a homemade bailer can empty a swamped boat pretty quickly. Bailer can be made from an empty Clorox

type jug by cutting out the bottom to create a jug like device (be sure to leave the handle as part of the bailer). Large soft sponges are wonderful for drying out the bottom of boats.

Rope: Good nylon or cotton rope can come in handy. Have two lengths – one about 12 feet long and the other about half that length. The longer one can be used to assist other paddlers or tie you boat to a tree for a rest stop and the shorter to secure person items in your boat.

Cell phone: Not a bad idea but should be secured in a dry bag. Ensure you have emergency numbers with you. Please note that you may not get a signal in remote areas.

Drinking Water: Dehydration can be deadly and its symptoms will take you by surprise. You should bring at least two quarts of water (per person) on our trips. Water hydrates better than soda or juices. No beer or other alcohol on our trips.

Sun Protection: Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen are pretty much normal essentials especially during the summer months. Also, some find that $\frac{3}{4}$ length boating gloves offer great protection against the sun and blisters while giving you a better grip on your paddle. If you wear glasses, consider buying a set of floating Chums (Eyeglass straps), which can save your glasses from sinking should you capsize.

Rain Wear: Sometimes a light rain shower on a hot summer day can be refreshing and sometimes it isn't. Disposable rain ponchos take up little room and can be welcomed if the weather turns wet.

Clothing: Consider wearing lightweight long sleeved shirts with collar, which will offer good protection during the summer months. Nylon pants/shorts and shirts dry much faster than cotton. Some types can be easily converted into shorts. Have a dry change of clothing in your car (with a towel) should you get wet.

Footwear: The new type of wet sneaker or kayak boot are very popular and provide great traction on wet surfaces as well as be less prone to come off your feet in mucky riverbeds. Laced sneakers are also good. Other types such as sandals can slip and slide away from your feet and do not always provide needed traction.

Dry Bags: Good ones (quality and size) are great for keeping items such as cameras, binoculars, GPS, cell phones, etc dry, however, it's important that you fold them properly and test them, at home, for leaks.

Energy Snacks: Good old Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwiches can't be beat to provide a quick boots of energy while others like energy bars or GORP (Good Old Raisins and Peanuts). Please remember to leave no trace of your day on the water by ensuring no trash is left behind.

Seat Cushions and Backs: Great for lower back comfort on longer trips but not all canoes will accept seatbacks.

Individually: Know your paddling abilities and physical limitations. Ensure you always are within sight and sound of at least one other boat. Be sure your trip leader knows you are on the water and that someone knows your trip plans. If you capsize, do not panic, use your whistle – help will be on its way.

Paddle safely and wisely