

*Paddle Smart
Paddle Safe
Have Fun!*

Smart Start Safe Paddling for



3

*Chapter 3:
Smart Plan*



How To Use This Resource

Information presented in these slides support both the on-shore Smart Start for Safe Paddling program and the on-water Smart Start On-The-Water program.

- Those presenting the on-water program must hold, at minimum, an active ACA Level 1 Instructor Certification or Community Paddlesports Leader Certification.

These slides are designed to support instruction, not replace it. These slides are designed to accompany, not replace, teaching aids such as boats, paddles, and paddling equipment. Presenters should pair this content with real equipment, demonstrations, and discussion (not just lecture).

Select examples that match the craft, venue, and experience level of your participants.

When used on the water, instruction should include hands-on practice with the boats, paddles, and safety equipment participants will actually use.

**If this presentation is used to teach a course compliant with NASBLA's human-propelled boating standards, all slides must be used. If not, presenters should select slides that best meet their students' needs.*



Overview



The Smart Start for Safe Paddling program is a suite of resources that provides essential information to help novice paddlers stay safe and have fun while on the water. The comprehensive program book addresses each NASBLA core and human-propelled standard, and provides in-text citations for easy cross reference.

- Resource Book
- Student Workbook
- Facilitator's Guide
- Free Online Safety Course
- Presentation Slides (This Document)
- On-Water Course Outline
- Infographics
- And more!





Focus Areas



Smart Start for Safe Paddling gives paddlers a foundation for safe, enjoyable time on the water. This program presentation is organized into four focus areas. The following slides address Chapter 3: Smart Plan.

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Smart Gear

Smart Skills

Smart Plan

Smart Decisions

3 *Smart Plan*



In this chapter, we will focus on the planning and preparation that sets the stage for a fun and successful paddling trip.

Safe paddling is comprised of more than the on-water experience. Do your research and planning, and be sure to know your way around:

1. The importance of float plans
2. Paddling rules and regulations surrounding life jacket carriage and wear requirements
3. Leave No Trace principles including helping to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species
4. Reporting accidents and rendering aid to others

These details are often overlooked - and they are critical to sustaining a healthy water sports community that includes aware, thoughtful, and responsible paddlers.

First Section: Float Plans

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Float Plans



A thorough float plan helps paddlers make sure someone on shore knows where they are going, who is with them, what gear they have, and when they expect to return. If the group is delayed, separated, injured, or unable to communicate, that information can help trusted contacts and rescuers respond faster and search in the right place.

To build a comprehensive float plan, ask yourself these questions:

- What do I need to know about my paddling destination?
- Who is coming and what gear are they bringing?
- What's the plan once we arrive? Does everyone know the plan?
- What are my legal and ethical obligations as a paddler?

Be sure to give a copy of your float plan to a trusted friend or family member who will NOT be on the water with you, and tell them what to do if you do not return on time.

FLOAT PLAN

Vessels

Orange SUP, Red Kayak, Blue Canoe

Paddlers

Calvin, Monique, Sam, Julian, and myself

Contacts

Emergency contact: Sister: 555.123.4567

Local first responders: 555.765.4321

Safety & Survival

Date of trip: 04/19/24

Location: Evergreen Lake

Departing/Returning: 10am-2pm

Length of trip: 4 hours

Route / Access points: Put in at Evergreen Lake

Boat Ramp, take out at Evergreen Beachfront.

Shuttle on Evergreen Rd.

Weather: Sunny, chance of wind + rain

Tides & Temp: No tides, air 68°, water 50°

Permits: Evergreen Lake Boating Permit

3 Float Plans



What do I need to know about my paddling destination?

Gather information from online research, weather and water status applications, guidebooks, maps, charts, conversations with other paddlers, and information from local outfitters or guide services.

Choose an area that fits your interest and paddling abilities.

Be sure to pay close attention to water conditions in that venue to ensure you and your group have the knowledge, skills, and gear appropriate for your chosen trip destination.



RESEARCH



CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLACE



CHECK CONDITIONS



MATCH SKILLS & GEAR



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Float Plans



1 WHO & WHAT



- ✓ Full names of all paddlers
- ✓ Each person's equipment
- ✓ Vessels in the group
- ✓ Emergency contacts

- Paddlers: Calvin, Monique, Sam, Julian, and me
- Vessels: Orange SUP, Red Kayak, Blue Canoe
- Emergency contact: Sister 555.123.4567
- Local first responders: 555.765.4321

2 TRIP DETAILS

- Date of trip: 04/19/24
- Location: Evergreen Lake
- Departing / Returning: 10am - 2pm
- Length of trip: 4 hours
- Route / Access points: Put in at Evergreen Lake Boat Ramp, take out at Evergreen Beachfront. Shuttle on Evergreen Rd.
- Permits: Evergreen Lake Boating Permit

3 CHECK CONDITIONS



Weather: Sunny, chance of wind + rain

Tides & Temp: No tides, air 68, water 50

- Water flow / current
- Extra access points
- Local regulations
- Outfitters / guide services

4 SHARE THE PLAN



- Give a copy to a trusted person on shore
- Tell them when to expect your return
- Tell them what to do if you do not return on time

3 Float Plans



What's the plan once we arrive?

Does everyone know the plan?

Review the float plan with each member of the paddling group, invite questions and discussion so that everyone knows the details and is comfortable with the activities and timeline of the trip.



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Float Plans



Identify roles, review the route, and agree on what to do.

1 ARRIVAL & SHUTTLE



- ☒ Driving route and shuttle plan
- ☒ Make, model, and license plate of each vehicle
- ☒ Where each car is parked

2 PEOPLE & ROLES



- Who has medical training
- Who has rescue training
- Medical issues or concerns
- Assign group roles
- LEADER
- SWEEP
- FIRST AID
- COMMUNICATIONS

3 ROUTE HAZARDS



- Known hazards on the route
- Example: low-head dam at mile 2.5
- Safe access points and alternate exits

4 IF OVERDUE



- WHEN TO EXPECT RETURN
- WHO TO CALL IF OVERDUE
- ACTIONS TO TAKE IF THE GROUP IS LATE
- When to expect return
- Who to call if overdue
- Actions to take if the group is late

3 Float Plans



Give a copy of your float plan to a trusted friend or family member who is not on the trip with you.

Once you have completed your outing, remember to contact that person when you get off the water.



3 Float Plans - Ethical Obligations



What are my legal and ethical obligations as a paddler?

Paddlers, just like all other types of recreational boaters, are subject to federal, state, and local laws. Applicable rules and regulations are legal obligations paddlers must understand and to which they must adhere.

There are also some ethical obligations such as the “Leave No Trace” principles that guide paddlers to minimize their impacts on waterway environments.



3 Float Plans - Leave No Trace



Clean water and waterway environments are invaluable resources for all kinds of recreational activities, and are particularly relevant for paddlers.

The Seven Leave No Trace© (LNT)

Principles:

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impact
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate Of Others

Learn more at: Int.org.



3 Float Plans - Invasive Species



Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are plants and animals that live in one location and are introduced to another, where they do not belong. They can exist in or near water and can have a variety of negative effects on the local ecosystems where they are introduced. To prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, paddlers should, after every trip:

- Clean obvious contamination from their boat
- Drain all water from their boat
- Dry their boat before going to another waterway

Paddlers should take care to remove any obvious contamination from their boats after paddling and should be sure to dry their boats completely before visiting another waterway. Some states legally require paddlers to adhere to a “Clean, Drain, Dry” program, which is a set of guidelines to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species from boats, trailers, and equipment.

*Invasive zebra mussels
(Dreissena polymorpha)*



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Float Plans - Summary



1 FOLLOW THE LAW



Federal, state, and local laws apply



Paddlecraft may be classified as human-propelled craft



Know the rules before you launch

2 MEET YOUR OBLIGATIONS



Carry required safety equipment



Follow posted signs, permits, and access rules



Use the waterway responsibly

3 PROTECT THE PLACE



Practice Leave No Trace principles



Respect wildlife and other visitors



Leave the area better than you found it

Second Section:
Equipment Carriage & Life
Jacket Wear Requirements

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Life Jackets: Carriage & Wear Requirements



Federal law states that human-propelled craft must have a readily accessible life jacket for every adult on board. Persons 13 and under are required to wear a properly fitted life jacket.

The ACA firmly believes that all individuals on the water should wear a properly fitted life jacket at all times. Putting a life jacket on in the water is very difficult – particularly if you truly need the life jacket due to an injury or cold conditions.

Some states have stricter rules regarding life jacket wear. Be sure to know the rules that apply where you are paddling.

3 Life Jackets: Quick Fit Review



Before getting on the water, check that your life jacket:

- Is the right size for you
- Is fully fastened
- Fits snugly without riding up
- Is in good condition with no broken buckles, torn straps, or damaged fabric



Zip It!



Buckle It!



Fit It!

Perform a simple fit check: fasten it, tighten it, and have a partner lift gently at the shoulders. It should stay secure on your body.

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Sound Producing Devices, Navigation Lights & Visual Distress Signals

1 SOUND SIGNAL



Every paddler should carry a sound-producing device on board.

2 LOW VISIBILITY



These devices help signal in fog, rain, or darkness and communicate over distance or noisy backgrounds.

3 BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT



Human-propelled vessels operating at night or in low visibility must carry a bright white light that can be shown in time to prevent a collision.

Third Section:
Rendering Aid & Accident
Reporting

3 *Rendering Aid & Reporting Accidents*



Paddlers have an obligation to help others in dire need on the water if they can help without unduly endangering themselves or others in their group.

All boaters are required to report significant boating accidents. In general, accidents are reported to the state's boating law administrator. **Federal boating regulations require accident reporting in the following situations:**

- A person dies or is lost as a result of the accident.
- A person is injured and requires medical care beyond first aid
 - For example: they go to an emergency room, urgent care, or other medical facility
- If a boat is lost or destroyed
- If more than \$2,000 worth of damage is caused by the accident

In some cases, state regulations are different from those described here. Paddlers should contact their local agency that handles boating laws.



Fourth Section:

Chapter Summary

3 Chapter Summary



Safe paddling is made up of more than the time spent on the water. This chapter reinforced the importance of researching your trip, planning ahead, understanding your legal and ethical responsibilities, and knowing what to do when something goes wrong. By preparing before launch, following applicable rules, protecting the places we paddle, and looking out for others, paddlers help create safer trips and stronger paddling communities.

Key takeaways:

- Float Plans
- Paddling Rules and Regulations
- Leave No Trace and Stewardship
- Reporting Accidents and Rendering Aid



1 FLOAT PLANS



2 PADDLING RULES AND REGULATIONS



3 LEAVE NO TRACE AND STEWARDSHIP



4 REPORTING ACCIDENTS AND RENDERING AID





Up Next: Chapter 4



This concludes the Smart Start for Safe Paddling Chapter 3: Smart Plan.

Be sure to check out Chapter 4: Smart Decisions for even more great information!

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Smart Gear

Smart Skills

Smart Plan

Smart Decisions



Connect With ACA



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The American Canoe Association's (ACA) vision is to engage millions of paddlers with safe and healthy opportunities for challenge, learning, service, and enjoyment. ACA's Smart Start for Safe Paddling is a holistic program which features comprehensive books, student activity workbooks, free online coursework, instructor's guide with presentation slides, and a wide collection of complementary resources.

Find all this and more:

<https://americancanoe.org/smart-start>