

## Remember

If you are going to areas (for example, inland water ways) where there is no cell phone or VHF radio coverage, take a 406 personal locator beacon or an emergency position indicating radio beacon.

Dress for the conditions – stay warm, stay hydrated and stay fuelled. You'll enjoy your paddling experience all the more.

## ENVIRONMENT

Please respect the environment wherever you are. Keep all rubbish with you and dispose of it at a shore-based facility.

Take nothing but photos and leave nothing but footprints.

**If in doubt, don't go out!**



## USEFUL LINKS

Coastguard NZ - Kayaking Safety Module  
[www.cbcs.org.nz/expert](http://www.cbcs.org.nz/expert)

Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers  
[www.kask.org.nz](http://www.kask.org.nz)

Kiwi Association of Sea Kayakers – Free Safety Guide  
[www.kask.org.nz/publications](http://www.kask.org.nz/publications)

Maritime New Zealand  
[www.maritimenz.govt.nz](http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz)



## MARITIME GUIDELINES

### Kayaking



# Kayak safety

- > Before heading out on the water
- > On the water
- > Useful links

## Contact us:

For further information contact  
Northland Harbourmaster's office for the Northland Regional Council  
**0800 002 004** or [www.nrc.govt.nz](http://www.nrc.govt.nz)

**Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/NorthlandRegionalCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/NorthlandRegionalCouncil)

**Twitter:**  
[www.twitter.com/NRCExpress](http://www.twitter.com/NRCExpress)

Putting Northland first



The following is an outline of essential basic safety advice. For your own safety seek advice from instructors and experienced kayakers, and complete a safety course before buying your boat or heading out on the water.



## BEFORE HEADING OUT ON THE WATER

### WEATHER AND WATER CONDITIONS

Check the local area marine weather forecast and note the wind speed and direction, sea conditions and any forecast weather changes.

### EQUIPMENT

Before you go be sure to check all your gear and equipment is sound and safe.

- There are no cracks or splits in kayaks and paddles.
- Your personal flotation device is in good condition with all clips working and preferably with a pea-less whistle attached.
- Your kayak has some form of internal buoyancy.

### SIGNALS AND COMMUNICATION

Take some form of communication with you to use when you need assistance. This could be:

- VHF radio or mobile phone (in waterproof pouch)
- Torch
- Signal mirror
- Flares
- Personal locator beacon (PLB) or emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB).

Remember your VHF radio. A quick message on Channel 16 to surrounding vessels stating that you are on the water can alert them to your presence.

### VISIBILITY

During daylight increase your visibility on the water.

- Choose bright colours that contrast with the environment – for your kayak, personal flotation device, clothing and hat.
- Display an orange or yellow 'chopper' guard flag on the stern (back) of your kayak if you're kayaking where there are lots of other boats.
- Stick reflective day glow tape to your paddle blades as this improves visibility – people can see them as you paddle.

At night you are required by law to have an all round white light or a bright torch which must be shown in plenty of time to prevent a collision (wearing a head torch will allow your arms to be free to paddle).

If using an all round white light (or a red, green, or white sector light) this must be mounted above head height so it can be seen from all directions.

### PLANS

Leave your trip intentions with a reliable source. Include relevant information:

- Number in party
- Where you're launching from and when you expect to be back
- Overdue action time – who to contact if you're away longer than you planned (either the Police or the Coastguard) and what time that should happen.

## ON THE WATER

### PADDLE IN A POD

Like dolphins, a pod refers to a group of kayakers that stay together. Paddling in a pod means there's always someone available to help quickly if you capsize or there's another emergency. Remember:

- Make someone a party leader;
- Always paddle at the pace of the slowest member; and
- If weather or sea conditions worsen beyond the skills of anyone in your pod, find shelter or the shore by the safest route.

### LOOK OUT

- Always keep scanning the area for approaching vessels (high speed vessels will close on you more quickly than expected).
- Never assume the approaching vessel has seen you.
- Take early evasive action if a vessel is on a collision course with you.
- If travelling in a pod keep together when crossing shipping lanes, take the shortest route and pick a time to cross between the vessels that are using the lanes.

### SAFETY

- If you capsize, stay with your kayak, keep your paddle – your kayak is more visible than just a lone swimmer.
- Your kayak provides you with more buoyancy than just your personal flotation device.
- Signal with a vertical paddle (hold it straight up in the air) to passing vessels if you need help.
- Use the Heat Escape Lessening Position (H.E.L.P) to retain body heat while waiting for assistance (refer to first aid material to find H.E.L.P techniques).
- Use any communication available to attract attention and ask for help.