

KCK Safety Meeting - Personal Paddling Safety Gear and Equipment

I. Personal clothing – Dressed for the water. If you can't go into the water with what you have on and be functional until you are safely out of the water and back in control of your situation, you are not dressed appropriately!

A. Layers for the body

1. Under layer - polypropylene or other similar synthetics or wool/blends
2. Middle layers – ploypro, fleece, other synthetics or wool/blends
3. Outer layers general – more synthetics appropriate to weather conditions nylon, ploypro, wool/blends, Gore-Tex, Supplex, etc. Coated, wind block weave or breathable/permeable
 - a. Block the sun
 - b. Block the wind
 - c. Block the rain
 - d. Block the snow, hail or sleet

B. Extremities

1. Head – ploypro, fleece, Gore-Tex, neoprene. Wool/blends
 - a. Warmth, sun protection, chin straps or ties
 - b. Have at least one back up.
2. Hands – ploypro, fleece, rubber gloves, neoprene, wool/blends
You must be able to do whatever is necessary manually.
 - a. Warmth, dexterity
 - b. Have at least one back up set.
3. Feet – socks - ploypro, wool/blend, neoprene
 - a. Warmth
 - b. Have at least one back up pair.
4. Feet – shoes, boots, sandals
 - a. Footwear must stay on during any normal or emergency activity.
 - b. Footwear must not have anything that will snag or interfere with safe movement.
 - c. Footwear should be appropriate to your craft and water conditions.
 - d. Warmth
 - e. Must stay on or have a back up pair.

(If there is little chance of going into the water, alter dress toward air conditions you will encounter. Cotton clothing is NOT recommended for water sports in Alaska!)

C. Eyes – You should have eye protection for direct and reflected sunlight.

- a. You should have eye protection for driving rain, sleet or hail and on some rivers for blowing sand.

D. Immersion wear – Water and/or weather conditions may dictate wearing clothing for being wet from spray, splash or going into the water.

1. Dry suits – coated nylon, Gore-Tex or other breathable fabric
 - a. Fabric dry suits do not provide warmth. They must have appropriate under layers for warmth. Neoprene dry suits are not common but do provide some warmth.
 - b. They come in one or two piece.
 - c. Nylon or breathable fabric must have good water tight/proof cuffs and neck, have no tears or nicks to be safe.
2. Wet suits – neoprene
 - a. They should be thick enough for the water temperatures.
 - b. They should cover at the minimum, your torso, crotch, arm pits, neck. Full suits or full pants and full jacket are best.
3. Close fitting neoprene chest waders with tight belt with fleece/ploypro top and paddle jacket. You can put drain holes in the feet for extra safety.
4. Fleece/ploypro under garments with close fitting rain gear.
5. Always have warm snug head gear!!!!
6. Helmets for white water III and above.

7. Gloves and boots or water shoes. Avoid footwear with straps and laces that can get caught up/snagged.

II. Other personal gear to wear

A. Flotation and on flotation

1. PFD (Personal Flotation Device) appropriate to your body, craft and water conditions
 - a. It should float you high enough in your water conditions for you to be able to breath without much of treading or arm motions.
 - b. It should fit snugly and not ride up in the water. Crotch straps are a good idea for boats without spray skirts.
2. Whistle – Water proof, fastened where you can reach it easily but where it will not get caught on anything. Do not fasten it to you PFD zipper!
3. Visual signal device, knife, possibly small first aid, candy

III. On your boat and easy to get to

A. First Aid kit

Band aids, Neosporin, thermometer, CPR shield, vinyl/latex gloves, antiseptic wipes, moleskin, gauze pads, aspirin, antacids, hard candy, heat pack, magnifying glass, Q-tips, etc.

B. Rescue equipment depending on which boat you are using....

1. Throw bag, flip lines, pulleys, carabiners and prussiks, 200 foot static rescue rope.
2. Tow belt and line, pigtail, drogue/sea anchor, paddle float, bilge pump, bailer, flotation bags

C. Signal kit

1. Visual signals – flares, mirror, smoke, orange panels/flags or big bags, strobe, head lamp.
2. Sound signals – Whistle, air horn, radio(VHF, Airplane, HF, CB), cell phone, EPIRB, satellite phone

D. Hypothermia kit

Change of warm clothes, hats/caps, socks for feet and hands, weather shelter, fire starter, thermos

E. Repair kit

Duct tape, shoe-goo, wire, patches, glue, lighter, rope, misc bolts, nuts, washers, screws, multi-purpose tools(flat and phillips screwdriver, adjustable wrench, pliers, awl, file, pliers), flashlight, sewing kit, big garbage bag....

F. Navigation kit

Maps/charts, compass, binoculars, distance scale, tide tables, GPS?.....

G. Bivy kit

Sleeping bag/quilt, ground insulation, weather shelter

H. Bailout/survival kit

Some combination of signals, fire starter, weather protection, knife, first aid, map and compass, rain gear, space blanket, rope, dry bag, water container, food....

What you take will vary depending on you boat of choice. Most of these many people already have from doing other Alaskan outdoor activities. Many of these can be purchased inexpensively at thrift stores, discount stores, garage sales, or found around your home somewhere.

Alaskan boating activities are great social and group activities. We watch out for each other and at the same time, each of us is responsible for our own safety, having the correct equipment and skills and making good decisions.

Have happy, fun and safe times on the water this summer.

Provided by courtesy of Randy Knauff