

SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



Guiding Principles

We are fortunate to be living and paddling in a locale which affords us the opportunity to train and compete on the ocean year-round.

However, we must always be aware that, even in the best of weather, the marine environment can be unforgiving, and conditions and situations can turn adverse in an astonishingly short period of time.

Therefore, we must always be diligent in following some simple cautionary procedures when paddling and never allow ourselves to become complacent regarding personal and collective safety. In this way, we can reduce the chances of undesirable outcomes on the water and be better focused on training and competing in a sport that we love.

Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)

This policy applies to all paddlers using Latitude 48 club facility and equipment including participation in Latitude 48 practices, races, and other events in any paddling craft.

Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's) must be in good condition, must be of the proper size for the paddler, and once on, cinched securely. PFDs must have a label indicating it has been approved by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, and/or Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Transport Canada - Lifejacket and Personal Flotation Device (PFD):

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/en/services/marine/getting-started-safe-boating/choosing-lifejackets-personal-flotation-devices.html>

PFD's must be WORN when the following apply:

- paddling between November 1 to March 31
- paddling before sunrise or after sunset
- the paddler is under the age of 19
- the paddler is using an inflatable PFD.

Inherently buoyant PFDs, when not worn, MUST always be in/on the canoe and readily accessible.

Paddlers who cannot swim or are not comfortable in open ocean water conditions are required to wear an inherently buoyant PFD or Lifejacket at all times while on or near the water.

Safety Checks & Safety Equipment

Transport Canada requires all vessels to have lights visible at 360 degrees. Latitude 48 provides lights for the OC6 canoes. OC1 lighting is the personal responsibility of the paddler.

OC6 PADDLERS ARE REQUIRED TO DO AN EQUIPMENT CHECK ON THE OC6.
THESE ITEMS MUST ON BOARD:

1. One Canadian-approved personal flotation device (PFD) or lifejacket of appropriate size for each person on board.
2. One buoyant heaving line at least 15m in length.
3. One watertight flashlight.
4. Minimum of 2 bailers.
5. One sound-signalling device (pealess whistle or a compressed-gas or electric horn).
6. Navigation lights in good working order if canoe is operated after sunset, before sunrise.
7. An extra paddle is highly recommended.
8. Also, highly recommended that you carry a cell phone or waterproof VHF radio. Cell phones will require a waterproof case usable while still in its case. VHF radios are available in the club house.

ALL OC1/OC2/V1/Surfski MUST CARRY:

1. PFD (refer to section on Personal Flotation Devices)
2. A boat leash securely attached to the boat and paddler. (paddlers responsibility to purchase)
3. One sound-signalling device. (pealess whistle, airhorn)
4. Navigation lights in good working order if canoe is operated after sunset, before sunrise.
5. A spare paddle is highly recommended.
6. Carrying a cell phone or waterproof VHF radio is highly recommended. Cell phones require a waterproof case usable while still in its case.

Small Vessel Regulations **SUBPART 2** Human-Powered Pleasure Craft
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2010-91/FullText.html>

PADDLERS ARE REQUIRED TO DO A SAFETY CHECKS WHICH MUST INCLUDE:

1. All safety equipment is on board.
2. Understand in-coming weather conditions that include wind speed & direction, temperature, precipitation, tidal currents, and direction before leaving the dock.
3. Ensure that the canoe is seaworthy by checking the i'ako rigging is secure, water-tight compartments are empty and plugged, and the ama has no water inside.
4. Ensure that all paddlers know their specific responsibilities in the event of a huli.

5. When venturing outside the outer harbour, canoes should stay within hailing distance of one another.
6. We recommend that for night paddling, paddlers do so with a buddy or a group.

Navigation

It is the responsibility of all members to understand our waterways and its navigational landmarks, ex. Colville Island, Laurel Point, Middle Harbour, etc.

The flow pattern is established by Transport Canada through the Harbour Master and maintained by the Harbour Patrol. These flow patterns must be adhered to at all times.

Public Port of Victoria Traffic Scheme:

<https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/pacific/marine-1521.html>

The Gorge

The Gorge Waterway is heavily used as a recreational and commercial body of water.

1. Keep to your right in both directions of travel.
2. Travel close to shore leaving the middle of the waterway open for faster vessels.
3. When returning from the sea, keep the red buoys on your right side. This is the “Red Right Return Rule”.
4. Southbound has the right of way.
5. At the Selkirk Trestle, there is a red shallow bell marker, it is a blind corner for craft heading out to sea. Proceed with caution as they are southbound and have right of way.
6. The area between Halkett Island and the red shallow bell marker VXX, is strewn with rocky outcrop during low tides. Unless you are familiar with this area, stay closer to the Island or use Red Right Return Rule.
7. Commercial barges always have right of way. Do not cross their bow if they are transiting, as they cannot stop or maneuver quickly.
8. Sterns and OC1 members that are new or inexperienced will not traverse through the Tillicum Falls at Tillicum Bridge.

The Port of Victoria

The Port of Victoria is considered in four parts:

1. the **OUTER HARBOUR** extending from the breakwater to Shoal Point,
2. the **MIDDLE HARBOUR** extending from Shoal Point to Laurel Point,
3. the **INNER HARBOUR** extending from Laurel Point to the Johnson Street Bridge, and
4. the **UPPER HARBOUR** extending north of the Johnson Street Bridge.

The Victoria Harbour is a Marine Airport under the authority of Transport Canada. The runway patterns are set, and non-motorized traffic flows clear.

- Non-motorized craft are to enter/exit the harbour area using the north shore, staying between the shoreline and the white channel buoy markers until in the West Bay location.
- Waters behind Colville Island can be shallow with rocky outcrops. Stay in the centre of the channel, or transit between the Island and the last white marker. Stay to the right when travelling southbound, and do not transit up the centre of the Outer Harbour.
- The Harbour Patrol prefers we do NOT use the south shore especially during the summer months. When with a motorised coach boat, you will exit/return via the south shore, keeping the yellow channel buoys to your left in both directions. Motorised traffic uses this area, so be cautious and leave a large space buffer if there are motorised craft around you.
- Speed limits in the Inner Harbour are 5 knots while the Outer Harbour is 7 knots.
- Should you need assistance while in the Middle Harbour wave your paddle over your head. This is the International Signal that you require assistance. The Control Tower will see you. Do not wave your paddle in this manner if you do not require assistance.
- **White strobe lights**
 - are located at **ShoalPoint, LaurelPoint, Berens Island** and on **PellyIsland** and are activated by the Flight Service Station to alert mariners of the imminent takeoff or landing of a seaplane.
 - When these strobe lights are activated, use extreme caution and do not transit.
 - If this light is flashing, hold your boat and wait for the strobe stop flashing, then continue on your course.
 - If light starts flashing when the canoe is already transiting do not stop or backup, keep moving through the crossing.

When & Where

- Professional and Amateur Training: Due to the volume of activity, rowers, canoers, scullers and kayakers shall not conduct any professional or amateur training after 7 a.m. in the **INNER HARBOUR**, or the **MIDDLE HARBOUR**.
- After dusk, no canoes are permitted outside the outer harbour.
- The minimum number of paddlers required for an OC6 canoe is 5 paddlers. In rough conditions outside the Harbour, crews are required to have all 6 paddlers.
- We recommend small boat paddlers paddle with others especially in the dark.

Wind, Rough Water and Severe Conditions:

- Winds that are equal to or greater than 25 knots posted at the Inner Harbour site, will be greater outside the harbour and are deemed an unacceptable risk.
- Should you find yourself/crew in rough or unsafe conditions, remain calm, and paddle to the closest safe landing or sheltered water and wait out conditions.

- In the event of thunder and/or lightning, paddle near shore and land the canoe in a safe location. Get off the water.
- In the case of any emergency, pull it up on the shore or dock and take shelter. Contact the necessary people for assistance. They can, if necessary, notify others accordingly.
- If you get into trouble on the water requiring assistance and in a life-threatening situation, hail using your VHF radio Channel 16 or call *16 on your cell phone. This is a MAYDAY call.
- Channel 11 - Vessel Traffic Management (Strait of Georgia)

Resources:

- **Canadian Coast Guard – Radio Distress Call**
<https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/tp-tp10038-91-emerg-radio-distress-cal-137.htm>
- **Environment Canada Weather** <http://www.weather.gc.ca>
- **Beaufort Wind Force Scale** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaufort_scale
- **Lightning Safety on Water**
<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/lightning/safety/water.html>
- **Wind Conditions** <http://www.bigwavedave.ca/>
- **Tide & Current Charts** <http://www.dairiki.org/tides/daily.php/vic>
- **Wind, waves, cloud, interesting stuff ...** <https://www.windy.com/?48.417,-123.365,5>

CANOEES ARE NOT TO BE LAUNCHED:

1. If there are periods of lightning or thunder. Stay off and out of the water, and in a safe location for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder. About one third of lightning-related casualties occur after the storm because people return to outdoor activities too soon.
2. If there are foggy conditions limiting visibility to less than 500m. (*If you find yourself/crew in fog, stay close to shore and blow your whistle every 30 seconds to alert other water-users to your presence.*)
3. When there is a storm warning or high wind warning and conditions are imminent.
4. When sustained winds near the docks are greater than 20 knots.
5. A boat has been tagged for repair or maintenance
6. If air temperature is below 2 degrees.
7. There is ice on the waterway and/or the docks.

Huli Policy & Small Boat Orientation (See complete Huli Recovery Procedure on separate policy)

- All paddlers must participate in an OC6 capsized Huli Drill on an annual basis, as scheduled by the club/coaches.
- All small boat paddlers MUST demonstrate their ability to self-recover on an annual basis in order to have access to club OC1/OC2.

- A paddler wanting access to club OC1 will attend a small boat orientation session to learn and demonstrate proper rigging, usage and self-recovery, prior to receiving permission for the use of small boats.
- Paddlers will have their boat use privileges suspended unless they can adequately demonstrate their ability to re-enter the canoe successfully.

Access to All Boats

- All policies and procedures will always be upheld when using any Latitude48 boats and equipment.
- Requests for canoes by the Competitive Program For Racing events will take priority over other programs and/or requests.
- Small boats must be reserved using the online booking system and terms of use as stated in the booking system.

Maintenance & Damage

If there is a maintenance issue with or damage to the canoe the Stern or small boat paddler will report the problem directly to the Safety Officer and /or Commodore.