

APPENDIX B

PADDLESPORTS – STANDARD 7.5

The course will inform paddlers and rowers about safe boating practices and accidents risks unique to this group of recreational boaters including, but not limited to, the following:

- 1) Wear properly fitted life jacket and avoid alcohol use. Be prepared to enter the water, know how to swim and self rescue swim in river/current.
- 2) Standing up or moving about in a canoe or kayak greatly increases the chance of capsize.
- 3) Maintain three points of contact while moving around. (As you move a foot to step forward, you should be holding onto the boat with BOTH hands, then with both feet down, move one hand at a time, etc.)
- 4) Load the boat properly (Keep the weight centered both from side to side and bow to stern. The lower and the closer the load in the boat is to the boat's centerline, generally the more stable the boat will be, assuming there is adequate freeboard. Stay with the limits of the boat's capacity rating on the capacity plate if one is present).
- 5) Keep your shoulders inside the gunwales of the boat. When retrieving something from the water, reach with your paddle or guide the boat close to the object so you can grab the item from the water without leaning your shoulders over the gunwale.
- 6) Never paddle alone. There is safety in numbers.
- 7) Avoid extreme conditions: including weather, distance from shore, water conditions, current including flood water or fast current beyond skill level.
- 8) Take hands-on training. Paddling instruction will teach you balance, use of stabilizing strokes, safe exit and entry on the water, and rescue and recovery skills.

Rationale - Paddlers don't consider themselves boaters and thus pay little attention to learning and observing traditional boating safety rules, so messages should be crafted specifically for them. A Significant portion of fatal capsizes result from occupant movement. There is a need for messages that increase awareness about the risk associated with standing in or moving about a canoe and how to minimize the risk. Since paddlesport fatalities occur across the range of canoeing and kayaking activities, education efforts should continue to be directed to all segments of the paddlesport community. A study of paddlesport accident statistics from 1995 – 2000 identify priority problem areas:

- 1) 75% of all fatalities examined were associated with canoeing (versus kayaking)
- 2) 83% of all canoeing related fatality victims were not wearing a PFD at the time of the accident.
- 3) Occupant movement and weight shift within a canoe played a major role in roughly 50% of all canoeing accidents.
- 4) Approximately 50% of cane and kayak related fatalities were fishing at the time of the accident.
- 5) At least 25% of victims in fatal canoeing accidents are believed to have consumed alcohol immediately prior to the accident.

(Source: *Critical Judgment: Understanding and Preventing Canoe and Kayak Fatalities*: American Canoe Association 2003)