

Here are some useful hints and tips to make your Florida paddling experience more enjoyable and safer.

- Wear your (PFD-personal floatation device)
- Dress appropriately
- Bring plenty of drinking water
- Bring trash bags for litter. Help keep our waterways beautiful.
- Be aware of water hazards and know the waterway.
- Be aware of weather conditions.
- Do not jump or dive off docks, bridges, trees, or rope swings
- Always wear shoes or water socks
- Respect fisherman and other outdoor enthusiasts.
- Respect private property
- Use a strap for eyeglasses and sunglasses
- Carry gear and personal items in watertight containers or bags
- Tie car keys to canoe or kayak or leave with outfitter
- Do not feed or molest wildlife, keep your distance from wildlife so they are not disturbed.
- File a float plan or make sure someone knows where you are going.
- Abuse or use of intoxicants is dangerous and may lead to arrest or worse!
- Don't cut or damage living trees and scrubs
- Put out campfires, don't leave burning wood or trash in firepits
- Bury, burn, or carry out toilet paper
- Be knowledgeable about and anticipate harsh conditions or self-reliance. Be prepared for an emergency if needed.
- Share the boat ramp or access
- Follow the "Rules of the Road". Contrary to popular belief, human-powered vessels do not always have the right-of-way. The vessel with the least maneuverability must be given "lee" or right-of-way. I.E., a supertanker has the right away or a boat underway in the In-tercoastal Waterway. The tanker can't make sharp turns and like the motorboat, has to stay in the assigned channel to run. And that's a two-way street. Motorized watercraft need to afford the slower, less stable human-powered vessels lee when necessary and all need to exhibit common courtesy to each other. Share the waterways and play nice!

Basic Required Safety Equipment

Note: Please double check all safety requirements with the below links and local boating and wildlife officials.

Personal Floatation Device (PFD)

One approved Type I, II, III or V for each person on board Must be USCG-approved. Must be in serviceable condition. Kids, 90 lbs. and under should have a lifejacket that *fits* them. Kids under 6 must have their lifejacket on while the vessel is underway in Florida.

Sound Producing Device

Bell, horn, or whistle. Every vessel less than 12 meters (39.4 ft.) in length must carry an efficient sound-producing device that is audible for 1/2 mile. One whistle per vessel is required. Most paddlers attached them to their PFD.

Visual Distress Signal

Required on the high sea and coastal waters only. Must carry visual distress signals (3) for nighttime use if travelling at night. NOTE: Coastal waters means the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico and all bays, sounds, harbors, rivers, inlets, etc. where any entrance is over 2 miles wide to the first point where the distance between shorelines narrows to 2 miles.

Vessel Lighting

Paddlecraft must carry white light at night and at times of decreased visibility .The light can be a flashlight and be ready at hand to shine in sufficient time to avoid a collision . The U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Rules specify lighting requirements for every description of watercraft. It is recommended that paddlers carry flashlights at all times in case of times of unexpected nighttime paddling.

Other suggested equipment: an anchor and a sufficient amount of anchor line; a de-watering device, such as a bilge pump in the event of flooding; an extra paddle, raingear, and a waterproof map.



For more detailed information on required safety equipment please go to:

www.myfwc.com/boating/safety-education/boat-safety-equipment/vessels-under-16-feet/

www.uscgboating.org/

www.boat-ed.com/florida/handbook/page/1/Introduction

Don't Forget!

- If you put a motor, any kind of motor including an electric trolling motor, on your paddlecraft you must register your paddlecraft.
- You must have a PFD for each person on board. There must be a PFD for each person and it must fit them. See inside of flyer for more PFD info regarding kids.
- PFDs must be Coast Guard approved lifejacket and readily accessible. Do not use PFDs straps as ropes or tie to vessel
- Paddleboards are vessels except under certain circumstances (see FWC Paddleboard Safety flyer at www.myfwc.com) and must follow the same rules and regulations as canoes and kayaks.



Websites of interest:

Florida Professional Paddlesports Association. Find a professional outfitter or retailer, tips, and more.

www.paddleflausa.com

Tips for Paddling

www.americancanoe.org

www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/paddling/Segments/Tips_Safety.htm

Boat Ramp Etiquette

www.paddleflausa.com/upload/hintsandtips/boat_ramp_etiquette.pdf

Pooches and Paddling

www.paddleflausa.com/upload/hintsandtips/dogs_and_paddles_can_mix_nicely.pdf

Downloadable Float Plan

www.myfwc.com/media/100268/Boating_FLOAT_PLAN.pdf

General weather and waterway info

www.floridagofishing.com/info-hazards-to-avoid.html

www.noaa.gov

Boating safety information & boat ramp location info

www.myfwc.com/boating/safety-education/

www.myfwc.com/boating/boat-ramps-access

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Paddlesports!



WHY PADDLE?

Paddle for Exercise

Paddle to be Close to Nature

Paddle for Adventure

Paddle for Relaxation

Paddle to Learn

Paddle as part of Another Activity (fishing, camping, wildlife viewing)

Paddle to be with Friends & Family

Paddle to Race & Compete

Paddle Because it's Fun!

