
Nymboida River Canoes

Safety Code

This safety code has been prepared for clients of Nymboida River Canoes'. It is essential that clients of Nymboida River Canoes' read and follow the recommendations outlined below.

Individual Paddler Requirements

- Be able to swim 50 metres confidently, wearing shorts/shirt and sandshoes.
- Wear an approved PFD (buoyancy vest or life jacket) and adequate footwear when canoeing or in the water.
- Wear an approved safety helmet when approaching and paddling rapids.
- Be honest with yourself about your ability in consideration of age, general health and fitness.
- Know the type of water selected and familiarise yourself with the likely hazards to be encountered (eg. Fast moving water, over-hanging branches, rapids, log-jams).
- Be suitably dressed for the conditions which may be encountered and protect yourself against the elements. Secure spectacles/sun glasses, footwear and allow for protection from sun, wind and rain.
- Be aware of cold water and weather extremes. Check the weather forecast for the locality for the duration of your activity.
- Be prepared for an emergency: acquire skill in capsize situations, rescue work and in First Aid.
- Ensure you know group plans for the trip and details of the river to be paddled (eg. put-in, take-out, trip length, river grade, known hazards).
- Always paddle in a group of 3 or more.
- Leave details of your trip with a responsible person, in the event of an emergency.

Before commencement of each trip (or part thereof)

- Check the craft for fixed buoyancy.
- Check for any damage or sharp edges along the join line and around the cockpit area.
- Ensure seats and handloops are in a serviceable condition.
- Check condition of personal safety equipment (eg. PFD, helmet, etc).

On Rivers

- Understand group plans, canoe formations, the general nature of the river ahead.
- Know the emergency signals (hand/paddle and whistle).
- The lead boat checks all doubtful parts of the river, sets the course (and safety as required) and should never be passed.
- The rear boat is equipped and trained for rescue (tail-end Charlie).

- Each craft has a responsibility to the craft behind. Visual contact should not be lost. Signals should be passed on and obstacles pointed out. Try to prevent repetition of errors through the group.
- The party needs to be compact. Large formations should sub-divide into independent groups with an overall plan.
- If in doubt of a particular stretch of river or rapid, get out of your boat and scout ahead.
- On rapids, there should only ever be one canoe on a rapid at any one time.
- Have a sound knowledge of the effects of wind (and tides) on rivers.
- On navigable rivers, cross boating channels quickly. Do not obstruct or paddle in dedicated boating channels for a prolonged period of time.
- All rivers and creeks require knowledge and skills – be sure you have the necessary ability.

On Lakes

- Travel within a returnable distance from shore under the worst conditions possible.
- Have a sound knowledge of the effects of wind and tides on tidal lakes and rivers.
- Be familiar with formation positions to prevent craft being dangerously dispersed.
- Team rescue drill should be perfected by all canoeists, so that capsized craft can be righted and emptied to allow the crew to re-embark.
- Do not paddle large lakes if you are inexperienced.

In the event of a Capsize

- Keep calm and alert.
- In moving water, stay on the upstream side of your craft and move to the bank as soon as you can safely do so.
- If swept into a rapid, swim down on your back, feet first to fend off rocks (ie. Whitewater float position).
- Keep your head clear of the water for good visibility.
- Be aware of your responsibility to assist your partner(s) or others in your group.
- Follow your rescuer's instructions.
- Abandon your craft if your safety is at risk.
- If rescue is not close at hand and the water is dangerously cold or worse rapids follow, then swim in the appropriate direction to the nearest point of personal safety.
- Be certain of your own safety, never attempt a rescue that will put you in unnecessary danger.

In the event of an emergency

- Stay calm, assess the situation before attending to the incident. (DO NOT endanger yourself or others)
- Attend to the situation, with first aid as required. Provide reassurance.

- Call for assistance from any people nearby
- Contact Nymboida River Canoes on (02) 6649 4063 / mb 0407 571 402 if situation involves lost or damaged equipment or a breached canoe and assistance is required.
- Contact Emergency Services on '000' in the event of a life threatening emergency. Be sure of your exact position before calling.
- Act on advice given to you.
- Be aware of keeping your group together and safe until the incident is resolved or emergency services have arrived and taken control of the situation.
- Take notes of the situation including timings during the incident if possible (or at least soon after).
- If you need to evacuate the area do so in an orderly fashion to avoid additional incidents. If you need to leave gear/equipment, make safe noting exact location for later retrieval. Do not overload your vessel.
- Report incident to Nymboida River Canoes after the situation is resolved and complete relevant incident reports.

On-water communications

Voices are often drowned out by the sound of wind or the noise of water. Recommended whistle and hand signals are:

Whistle commands:

- 1 whistle blast – Attention: look/proceed with caution in direction of whistle
- 2 whistle blasts – Attention: stop/route blocked wait for all clear
- 3 whistle blasts – Warning/Emergency: danger/assistance required immediately

River Signals

