

Safe Canoeing/Kayaking Checklist

BEFORE YOU GO

- Always check the river levels BEFORE your trip. Daily river levels are available on www.bom.gov.au or <http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/realtime-data/hydro-rivers>
- Obtain GPS coordinates for major hazards and camping areas. Set up your GPS for the GDA datum and enter the coordinates of the features in advance
- Participants should be proficient on water they are intending to paddle. Beginners and children should be competent on still water
- Ensure you have enough food, water and supplies for the trip
- Mobile phone reception is not always available on some rivers, make sure you carry another form of communication in case of an emergency
- Do not enter or camp on private property without first gaining consent from the owner
- Always let someone know of your trip plans and ensure your support vehicle knows how to get to your intended rendezvous point
- To fish in NSW waters, you must pay a fee and carry the receipt showing payment. For more information visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au.

SAFETY GEAR

- All canoes/kayaks should have fixed buoyancy with securing loops at each end
- A high visibility Buoyancy Vest (or PFD)/Life Jacket with a whistle attached should be worn at all times on the water. Helmets should be worn while paddling rapids.
- Spare paddle and repair kit
- A rope or throw line should be carried for rescue purposes
- Waterproof containers for food and warm/dry clothing
- Map, compass and GPS
- A first-aid kit and basic knowledge of CPR
- Adequate drinking water and food for the trip being undertaken
- Appropriate footwear for water and rocks
- Hat, mosquito repellent and sunscreen.

ON THE RIVER

- Make sure you have all your gear when you set off as the river's flow may be too strong to paddle back upstream
- Be alert for hazards such as trees in the river, overhanging branches and snags
- Approach compulsory portages with caution, allowing some distance between each canoe/kayak as not to crowd the take-out point.
- If a rapid can not be scouted from the water or if in doubt about a rapid or obstacle ahead pull into the bank and check on foot.
- Avoid travelling alone and stay in contact with other canoes/kayaks in your group
- If you capsize, hold on to your canoe/kayak until you can beach safely. If the water is freezing leave your craft and head for the bank immediately
- To avoid overheating, paddle early in the morning or late evening with a break in the hottest part of the day

AT THE CAMPSITE

- Practice low impact camping – take out what you take in
- Light fires in fireplaces provided and extinguish completely before leaving. Observe any fire bans that are in place
- If there are no toilets bury your waste at least 50m from the river
- Always boil or treat river water first unless you know it is safe. Otherwise carry adequate supplies of drinking water with you
- Do not use soaps or detergents in the river
- Do not interfere with vegetation, gates, fences or stock
- Respect other canoeists/kayakers and campers.

IN CASE 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 Emergency Services on '000' (or try 112 if your mobile carrier does not service the area) 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.