


From: **U.S. Coast Guard** <uscoastguard@service.govdelivery.com>

Date: Fri, Apr 15, 2022, 9:59 AM

Subject: MSIB 04-22 - Paddle Craft Safety

To: Sector Long Island Sound Waterway Users



	Sector Long Island Sound U.S. Coast Guard	120 Woodward Ave New Haven, CT 06512 24 hr Command Center: (203) 468-4444 Do1-SMB-LISCCenter@uscg.mil
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Good Day Sector Long Island Sound Waterway Users,

As warmer weather slowly moves in and the summer months rapidly approach, Sector Long Island Sound has produced [Marine Safety Bulletin \(MSIB\) 04-22](#) to inform mariners and paddle craft users of some Paddle Craft Safety best practices.

Paddle sports continue to be the fastest growing pass time of recreational boating and with that the importance of paddling smart and safe all while having fun is the main goal!

The Boating Safety Seven



1. Wear your life jacket
2. Take a boating safety class
3. Carry all required safety gear
4. Use your engine cut-off device
5. File a float plan
6. Be aware of weather and water conditions
7. Boat sober, and be considerate of others

We hope these best practices and the safety seven are helpful tools for paddle craft users over the next few months. And as always we hope you are staying safe on the waters of Long Island Sound!

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Sector Long Island Sound
U.S. Coast Guard
(203) 468-4444
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April 11, 2022

MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN (MSIB) 04-22:

PADDLE CRAFT SAFETY

Paddle sports continue to be the fastest growing segment of recreational boating, and the Coast Guard urges paddlers to paddle smart and be safe while having fun. **In previous years, the majority of paddle craft fatalities in the northeast involved people who were not wearing a life jacket.**

The Coast Guard strongly recommends that all paddlers follow these best practices:

- **Take a boating safety course!** Approved courses can be found at <https://www.nasbla.org/education/taking-a-boat-course>
- **Always wear a Coast Guard approved life jacket!** Once you are in the water, it is almost impossible to put it on.
 - Children are required by CT and NY state law to wear a securely fastened Coast Guard approved life jacket **at any time** during the year.
 - In NY, paddlers are required by state law to wear a life jacket between November 1 and May 1. Properly fitting life jackets are required to be onboard at all times.
 - In CT, paddlers are required by state law to wear a life jacket between October 1 and May 31. Properly fitting life jackets are required to be onboard at all times.
- **Check the weather!** Look up the marine forecast, including wave heights, provided by the National Weather Service for the area you intend to paddle (<https://www.weather.gov/marine/>).
- **Carry a waterproof, hand-held VHF radio.** This is the best way to broadcast a distress situation to any nearby boaters and the Coast Guard.
- **Carry a sound producing device** such as a whistle.
- **Don't paddle alone!** Paddling with others reduces risk to an individual in the event of an emergency and increases the chances of being seen by powerboat or sailboat operators.
- **Don't drink alcohol** and operate a boat or paddle craft.

Some additional safety tips for all paddlers:

- **Dress for the water temperature.** At the start of the boating season, air temperatures get much warmer while water temperatures remain deceptively cold. Always check the weather forecast before paddling and dress for the water temperature, rather than the air temperature. Sometimes, especially when water temperatures are under 60°F, wet or dry suits are most appropriate for paddling.

- **MARK YOUR PADDLE CRAFT** with “if found - contact” stickers to avoid false alarms and unnecessary search efforts should the paddle craft break loose and drift off. These stickers can be found at retailers, Coast Guard units, and State Boating Safety Offices. At a minimum, use a waterproof marker or any permanent means to mark your name and contact information directly on your vessel’s hull.



- **Leave a float plan** with someone staying ashore, letting people know your plans on the water and when you expect to return ashore. A float plan provides emergency responders with valuable information they would need in order to search for a distressed or overdue boater. Information on a float plan and how to obtain a blank float plan can be found at <https://floatplancentral.cgaux.org/> or use the CG app at <https://www.uscg.mil/mobile/>
- **Understand your physical limitations and endurance.** Paddling can be strenuous exercise. Know techniques for self-rescue, as well as how to rescue fellow paddlers.
- **Understand the limitations of your paddle craft.** There are different types of paddle craft design. Some kayaks are designed for touring and are capable of carrying significant amounts of gear for longer trips. These types of kayaks may cost several thousand dollars. Others, such as inexpensive, entry-level kayaks, are generally designed for protected waters, near-shore waters or water such as that found on lakes and slow moving rivers when paddling trips will be of a shorter duration.

For more information, check out these websites:

National Safe Boating Council, <http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org/>

U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety: <http://www.uscgboating.org/>

Vessel Safety Check: <http://www.vesselsafetycheck.org/>

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary web page, <http://www.cgaux.org/>

NOAA Rip Current Awareness: <http://ripcurrents.noaa.gov>

We wish you a fun and safe paddling season!

E. J. VAN CAMP
 Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
 Captain of the Port, Sector Long Island Sound