



UCSB Campus Point Paddling (Kayak & SUP) Safety Guidelines

Updated 5/14/19 RT



Purpose: To educate paddle craft (Kayak & SUP) users on various risks and hazards related to paddling in our coastal waters around UCSB Campus Point in order to help reduce risks and increase safety.

Background: Each year many users enjoy our beautiful Santa Barbara ocean environment via different paddle craft. Unfortunately, there are numerous *COLD WATER and CHALLENGING WEATHER (esp. Wind)* related accidents that result in severe injuries and fatalities. These incidents are directly attributed to not understanding the hazards, poor preparation, a lack of training/ experience and a loss of situational awareness. Paddling is a wet sport. You will get splashed/ soaked. ALL paddlers **MUST** be able to swim. We want to help you manage the risks!

Water Safety Facts: You must constantly be aware of your resources, surroundings and changing conditions!

- Personal Floatation Devices (PFD'S/ Lifejackets) must be worn at all times while on the water to be effective.
- Most drowning victims are within 10 feet from safety.
- Cold water immersion can cause drowning in less than 1 minute.
- Wind, waves and water currents can overpower and overwhelm even trained professional athletes.

Safety Equipment **MUST be taken with you and used properly:**

- Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs/ Lifejackets) must be worn at all times while on the water to be effective.
- A properly charged cell phone must be taken in each kayak and on each SUP. We will provide a dry bag upon request, but are NOT responsible for loss or any damage to personal property.
- Paddle leashes must remain properly attached to kayak and paddle at all times.
- SUP ankle leashes must be properly used.
- Helmets must be worn while launching and landing kayaks through the surf zone.
- Whistles and flashing strobes should remain attached to your PFD/ Life Jacket and used as signaling devices in an emergency.

Recommended Additional Equipment/ Supplies:

- Wetsuit.
- Sun Protection: Hat, Sunglasses, Long Sleeve Shirt, Sunscreen, Lip Screen, etc.
- Stay Hydrated and Fueled: Drink water and eat a good meal before your trip. Carry extra water and snacks.

Always Wear a PFD/ Life Jacket!

Cold Water Immersion and Survival: Use the "1-10-1 Rule" if immersed in significantly cold water; Try to NOT PANIC

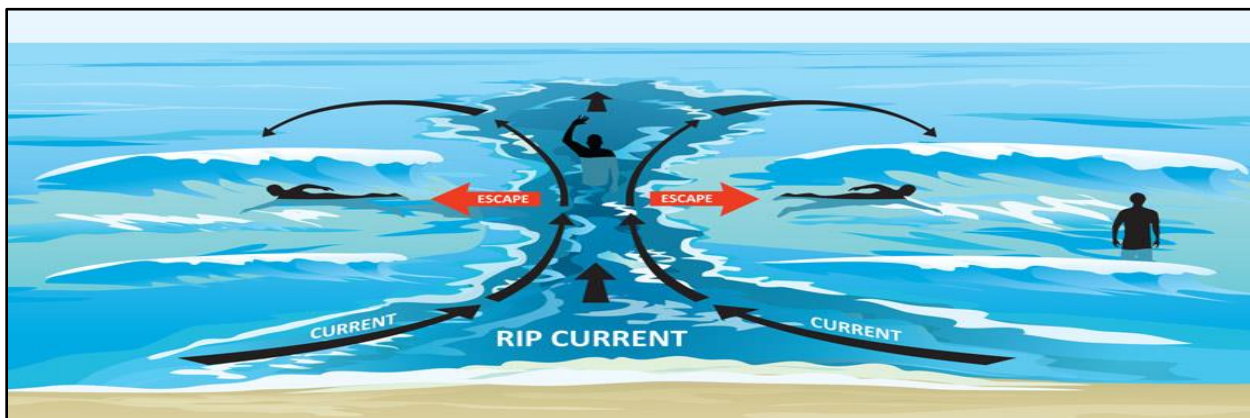
- 1 Minute to get your breathing under control
- 10 Minutes of meaningful movement for a survival strategy
- 1 Hour of survival before Severe Hypothermia takes effect
 - Hypothermia is reduced when ON your kayak or paddleboard rather than IN the water.
 - Maintain contact with your equipment at all times. Search and Rescue report that they eventually always find the boat or board.
 - Swimmers floating in the open ocean are extremely difficult to find relative to the large and bright colors of kayaks and paddle boards. DO NOT leave your kayak or paddle board.

Wind is the #1 cause for local rescues

- Most paddlers are unable to make progress when the wind reaches approx. 10 to 15 knots (~11 to 17 MPH)
 - Winds at this speed produce consistent whitecaps. If consistent whitecaps are seen and/or are developing, return to shore.
- Wind tends to increase in the afternoons and tends to be stronger as you travel further offshore.
 - DO NOT paddle further off shore than the kelp beds off Isla Vista or beyond Goleta Pier.
- If you lose contact with your kayak or paddleboard, wind will often blow it away from you faster than you can swim to catch it.
 - DO NOT lose contact with your equipment.
- Paddle INTO the wind at the beginning of your session while you are “fresh” and use it to help you return towards the end of your paddle. DO NOT paddle downwind first.
- If the wind becomes too strong, consider paddling to the nearest shore and walking your equipment back to the rental center.

Surf Zone

- The surf zone contains various hazards including the waves themselves, rocks, people, and more.
- Launch and land in an area with the fewest hazards.
- When possible, we will have a launch and landing zone YELLOW flag(s) up to make it easier to navigate a safer and clearer path through the surf zone. If you don't see a yellow flag, use good judgement to avoid hazards.
- DO NOT paddle into the heavily populated surfing area when launching or landing. Always wait for surfers and swimmers to vacate your projected path before entering the surf zone.
- All kayakers are required to wear a helmet in the surf zone when launching and landing anywhere along the beach. Getting caught between a capsized boat and/or thrown into rocks by the pounding surf is a very real danger and threat to your safety. A helmet can prevent serious head injury.
- Aim your boat or board at a direct perpendicular angle (forward or backward) to the wave face whenever possible to avoid capsizing and falling off boat or board.
- Two essential bits of surf etiquette:
 - Stay out of the way of board surfers. They believe, and it's probably true for most of us, that those heavy kayaks pose a real danger to them when a boater is coming in on a wave, because the boat is big and less maneuverable than their boards. Most surfers are friendly, if you give them space.
 - The rider already on the wave has the right of way. If someone's further out than you are and catches the wave, stay out of that person's way.
- Shuffle your feet when walking in the surf zone. Sting rays like our sandy beaches.
- If you find yourself caught in a rip current and heading out to sea, swim parallel to the beach to escape:



Where to paddle

UCSB Adventure Programs kayak and SUP rental equipment may ONLY be used in nearby areas:

- Check with rental staff and see posted Google maps images for available paddling areas near campus point.
- Zone 1- near shore just off campus point beach to Goleta Beach.
 - Stay to the North / inside of an imaginary line drawn between Campus Point and the end of Goleta Pier.
 - DO NOT paddle beyond Goleta Pier
 - DO NOT paddle under, tie up to, or jump off of Goleta Pier. High risk of getting hooked by a fish line and/or smashed into the pilings. All three are illegal and you risk receiving a citation from Park Ranger.
 - You must stay at least 100ft from Goleta Pier at all times. Also a potential citation.
 - Afternoon winds typically make it very difficult to get back to Campus Point when paddling in the middle of Goleta Bay. We highly recommend paddling close to shore and staying upwind. The UCSB bluffs can act as a windbreak if you are close enough. Watch out you don't get too close and caught in a surf zone.
- Zone 2- Near shore from Campus Point to Coal Oil Point and no further offshore than the kelp beds.
 - This zone is in the State Marine Conservation Area and is loaded with marine life.
 - This zone often gets closed in the afternoons due to its exposure to the typical wind patterns.
 - DO NOT paddle past Coal Oil Point/ Sands.
 - DO NOT paddle further offshore than the kelp beds. The majority of the marine life is found in the kelp.
 - As this is a protected area, nothing may be taken or collected. No fishing.
- Any area outside Zone 1 or Zone 2 is considered restricted for your safety.
- Kayaks and SUPs may not be rented and taken elsewhere.

Always leave your Float Plan with rental center staff!

Field Plans and Float Plans:

- Important for all outdoor adventures! Let someone know; it can inform rescue personnel where to search if you do not return!
- Please be as accurate as possible re: Estimated return time, intended routes and destinations, emergency contact persons with phone numbers, any special information or health considerations, your on-board cell phone numbers.
- If you are overdue, we will attempt to contact you after 1 hour based on the phone numbers you left with us on your float plan. If we are unable to get contact or a message from you we will plan to call 911 and initiate a full Search and Rescue at 1.5 hours overdue. Please keep your cell phone on and audible (not in silent mode) and check it when you get a call/ text/ message.
- In order to prevent high-risk helicopters, putting rescue personnel at risk, and significant money and resources into play, please:
 - Try to be accurate on your float plan and stick to your plan.
 - If you need to update your plan and rent the equipment for additional time, please do so at the rental center.
 - If you are not able to update in person, you can try calling the Adventure Programs main number and the staff will try to update the float plan for you. Please put our number in our cell phone right now:

▪ 805-893-3737

Check the weather forecast and current conditions

The weather, wind, swell, surf, water temp should be checked before you decide to go out paddling and will help formulate your float plan:

- 17ft.com and weather.gov give both current conditions and forecasts of our local area.
 - The “East Santa Barbara Channel” buoy is the closest to Campus Point
 - Current conditions at “West Santa Barbara Channel” buoy will give you a good idea of what is heading towards East Santa Barbara Channel.
 - Any forecast of “Small Craft Advisories” or worse will indicate closed conditions for paddling.

No Drugs/ Alcohol/ Impairing Medicine

No Drugs/ Alcohol/ Impairing Medicine:

- University regulations and program policies do not allow alcohol or impairing drugs while using UCSB owned equipment. Thank you for your cooperation.

When you fall off/ out

Maintain contact with your equipment:

- Wind will often blow your kayak or paddleboard away faster than you can swim. Since your boat or board is your ticket home, don't lose it.

Always stay aware of you, your boat, and surrounding hazards:

- If you get caught between your boat and another boat or a rock or a wave, you risk serious injury.
- Quickly move to the “ocean side” of the kayak or board when in the surf zone. This way the surf will push the gear away from you rather than into you.

Keep hold of your paddle:

- It is much more difficult to paddle a SUP by hand than with your paddle.
- All AP Kayak rentals are fitted with a paddle leash so holding onto your paddle will help you maintain contact with your kayak.

Your PFD will keep you floating, so you can concentrate on getting back in your kayak using the BBF (bellybutton-backside-feet) recovery:

- The name is derived from the main parts of the technique. 1) Reach over and right your kayak if flipped. 2) lay flat at the surface of the water, kick, and pull up to get your bellybutton over your seat. 3) After balanced, flip over and put your backside in your seat. 4) When balanced, bring your feet in one at a time (not pictured).



Non-Emergency and Emergency “Call In”

In the event that we decide to ask all equipment renters to return to shore please respond ASAP:

- From time to time, we ask everyone to come off the water in the interest of safety and risk management for various reasons
 - Local shark sighting
 - Changing weather conditions
 - Rental center is about to close
 - Etc, Etc,
- Our primary method of communicating a “call in” will be raising the pink flag either on the beach or on the rental container:



- Please scan our rental area periodically for the call in flag.
- If you see the flag, please make your way back to the shore as quickly and safely as possible for further details.
- We may also attempt to contact you on your cell phone and/or bull horn/siren/air horn blast.
- Air horns are only effective for a limited range and become less effective as the wind speed increases, therefore, please keep your cell phone on and audible (not in silent mode), check it when you get a call/ text/ message, and scan for the pink flag.

On Water Emergencies

Although very rare, sometimes on water emergencies occur and you need to be prepared:

- Most importantly, please follow all recommendations and requirements in this information document, use good judgement, and stay well within your abilities.
- Plan an "escape" route - an alternative place to get off the water should environmental conditions suddenly change.
- Self-rescue is often possible when you are prepared.
- You should be wary of goals which may be clouding your judgment. Getting to work on time or preventing your friends from calling the Coast Guard/ 911 because you may be embarrassed is not worth the risk to life.
- Universal Distress Signals may be able to contact nearby help and Include:
 - Waiving paddle/ arms back and forth rapidly overhead (not very effective in foggy conditions or when very far from help)
 - 3 whistle blasts repeated over and over (not very effective in strong winds)
 - Flashing strobe light (works best at night and isn't very visible during the day)
- If the above attempts at contacting someone nearby for help are not effective, **CALL 911**.
 - Be prepared to report your location as accurately as possible (GPS coordinates from a cell phone work well) and the nature of your distress.
 - Stay with your boat or board. Search and Rescue professionals typically always find the boat/board eventually. You will typically be warmer on your boat/board (even if it is upside-down) rather than in the water.
 - Try to stay calm and make yourself visible using the Universal Distress Signals while Search and Rescue professionals are looking for your location.

Paddle with a buddy (Group rentals)

Be honest with yourself and the rental staff regarding your abilities:

- Most people tend to overestimate their abilities and underestimate conditions.
- Be conservative when judging your abilities and conditions. If you “go too far” you can cross a line of no return.

Paddling alone is far more dangerous than paddling with a partner:

- Consider using a tandem kayak or SUP with a friend.
- Three is safer yet; providing more options in an emergency.
- With four paddlers one could stay with a disabled paddler (ideally on shore) and two could go for help. Even though the group was forced to split up each member still has a partner.

Groups should use the buddy system, linking novices to experts:

- This helps keep the group together and makes the responsibilities of group members more clear.
- If larger groups are divided into subgroups it is important to distribute the experienced paddlers so a weak group is not formed.
- Never leave a novice or group of novices by themselves. Some paddlers have paddled for years but only in calm conditions. If there is a chance of rough conditions these paddlers should be considered to be nearly novices.
- Groups larger than three should pick a leader to be responsible for keeping the group together, picking a safe route, and assessing the physical and psychological state of the group members.
- Ultimately YOU are responsible for your own safety so don't blindly follow another paddler's lead. Feel free to politely “question authority” and voice your strong objections to any plan you think would be risky for you or some other member of the group. Novices can easily be led into trouble by those who have forgotten how vulnerable they were as beginners. Conditions can get so bad that the experts will have trouble taking care of themselves. Don't count on them being able to rescue you. If the plan appears to be dangerous if you were on your own insist on a safer course of action.

Keep the group together:

- In a group paddlers should follow the lead paddler and not branch out at some angle without first notifying the leaders of their intentions. DO NOT go off on your own even if you have your buddy with you.
- The lead kayak must be certain it is not leaving anyone behind. A meeting place should be agreed on in advance in case the group is accidentally separated.

Group communication:

- Ideally, the group should remain within verbal communication distance of each other.
- At times, wind and waves can make verbal communication difficult. There are a few signals/sounds you should review to make sure everyone is able to communicate
 - “Look here” or “your attention please” = one whistle blast.
 - “Stop” = paddle held horizontally overhead or arms outstretched.
 - “Go” = paddle held vertically overhead or one arm reaching up.
 - “Go this way or that way” = paddle/arm overhead and angled to the intended direction.
 - “Come here” = paddle/arm *slowly* waving back and forth overhead.
 - “Come help / Emergency” = paddle/arm *quickly* waving back and forth overhead **OR** 3 repeated whistle blasts.
 - “Are You Okay?” Tap the top of your head with your hand and then point to the paddler you're addressing. Paddlers should tap head to respond “yes, I'm okay.” Lack of response should be interpreted as “not okay.”