

## KAYAK SAFETY TIPS

**#1** - Wearing a lifejacket is required by law for kids under age 12 and for everyone October through May. Make sure it fits snugly so it does not float up and cover your face or slip off.

**#2** - State law requires you to have a sound-making device (whistle), also a white light when paddling after sunset.

**#3** - Never mix paddling with alcohol or drugs.

**#4** - Don't paddle alone. Stay close enough to your companions so you can provide assistance to each other.

**#5** - Cold water is *very* dangerous. Always dress for an unexpected swim. Water temperatures less than 60 degrees Fahrenheit or water and air temperatures less than 120 degrees combined require specialized clothing (wetsuit, etc.)

**#6** - Know your boat's limitations. Recreational kayaks should not be used in strong winds, waves, or currents. Make sure your boat has enough flotation when swamped.

**#7** - Stay close to shore and out of boating traffic. In harbors, these are identified with red and green markers (remember: *red right*

*return*" means red markers are on the right as you return to shore.)

**#8** - Be visible and let boaters know what you're doing. Wear bright colors, stay together in a group, and cross busy boating channels as quickly as possible.

**#9** - As you travel away from shelter, know your physical limitations, watch for changes in weather, and make sure you have sufficient skills, energy and daylight to return safely.

**#10** - Let someone know where you're paddling, whom you are with and when you expect to return.

**#11** - Program the U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue number into your cell phone: **203-468-4401**.

## EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

- Paddle
- Lifejacket
- Whistle
- Paddle float
- Light for paddling after dark
- Drinking water
- Bilge pump
- Cell phone
- Proper foot ware
- UV eye protection
- Appropriate clothing
- Extra clothing in a dry bag

## BASIC KAYAK SKILLS

- Know how to control your boat in all conditions.
- Learn how a reverse stroke can get you out of trouble quickly.
- Capsizing is a normal part of kayaking. Practice a "wet exit" to get out of your boat when it is upside-down.
- Learn how to get yourself back into your boat and how to assist others after capsizing.
- Learn how to use a paddle to brace yourself and avoid capsizing in rough water.
- Avoid shoulder injuries by learning proper paddling techniques. (For example, keep both hands where you can see them at all times.)

## Connecticut Coastal Kayaking

Contact us for kayak classes, tours, private lessons, and special event 860-391-3837 or check out the calendar and info at [www.ctcoastalkayaking.com](http://www.ctcoastalkayaking.com)