

Wynnum Redlands Canoe Club Inc

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PADDLE SAFELY ALL THE TIME

Your committee wishes you a very safe and happy paddling lifetime and expends considerable time and effort to ensure the Club provides a good environment for this to happen but please take the time to carefully read and **reread** this document.

The purpose of this document is to introduce a limited number of topics of relevance to paddling. It is not an exhaustive discussion. Its purpose is to raise awareness when paddling.

Most Wynnum Redlands Canoe Club activities are classified as a “Peer Activity” defined in the Australian Canoeing Safety Guidelines as -

“A paddling activity where no formal instructional or guiding structure exists. It is the responsibility of each member of the group to ensure the suitability of their equipment and themselves for the activity.”

What does this mean?

It means that if you are on the water or preparing to get on the water and you get into difficulty IT IS NO ONE ELSE’S RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSIST OR SAVE YOU.

And this means

If you DO NOT have the skills or experience to deal with the conditions you observe or expect to experience during the activity DO NOT LEAVE SHORE or else do not venture further; return to safer conditions. Do not be influenced by peer pressure.

The responsibility is yours solely. If you are uncertain BE CAUTIOUS & STAY SAFE.

PADDLING SKILLS

This document does NOT discuss the topics of paddling strokes, skills, rescues, etc. that are vital to survive the different water conditions described. Paddlers should talk to and paddle with experienced club members, take part in specifically planned sessions, book a coaching session from one of the club instructors or enroll in one or more of the excellent courses conducted regularly by Queensland Canoeing Telephone 07 3899 1667.

Wherever and whenever you paddle, SAFETY should be a ‘constant awareness’ issue.

For more information refer to our club website – <http://www.wynnumredlands.canoe.org.au/> or websites such as Queensland Canoeing - <http://www.qld.canoe.org.au/> or Australian Canoeing - [http://www.canoe.org.au.](http://www.canoe.org.au/)

YOU ARE REFERRED TO THE DISCLAIMER ON PAGE FIVE (5) OF THIS DOCUMENT.

CONDITIONS THAT INFLUENCE YOUR SAFETY

WIND

Be aware that wind can exert greater influence than tide on anything above the water line. If you or your boat is disabled with even a moderate wind blowing in the opposite direction to the tide, it is likely you will be moved in the direction of the wind NOT THE TIDE. In open exposed waters a 10-knot wind can cause waves of 0.5 of a metre; 15 knots – 1 metre; and 20 knots – 2 metre waves, etc. Wind can easily cause capsizes and swampings.

“Onshore wind” means the wind is blowing from the ocean on to the land;

“Offshore wind” is the opposite.

TIDE

- As a general rule the tide takes 6 hours to rise or fall, plus approximately ½ hour at the top and bottom of the tide when it doesn't run.
- The high & low tide mark can vary by several centimetres from day to day.
- Do not be complacent about how high or low the water will be based on yesterday's level.
- The tide times advertised for Brisbane are taken to mean the time it will be high or low at the “Brisbane Bar” i.e. the mouth of the Brisbane River. All other areas of the coast & tidal rivers upstream will have a variance on this time.
- Tidal flow is greatest/strongest, therefore hardest to paddle against, in the middle 2 hours i.e. hours 3 & 4 of the flow in or out.
- If your paddling venue is tidal, consider which way it is currently running; when it will change and what impact that will have on your plans?
- **Q. In the event of difficulty, will the tide take you into greater danger or greater safety?**
- What is the tidal fall. E.g. in upper Tingalpa Creek the difference in height between high and low can be in excess of 1½ metres. This makes it extremely difficult to land or launch at low tide in many areas.
- An eddy is a current, as of water or air, **moving contrary to the direction of the main current**, especially in a circular motion.
- In moving water, an eddy will form behind any obstacle in the path of the flowing water (important to know in Tingalpa Creek!). If unsure of the direction of the tide, create an eddy with your paddle (first ensuring that your boat is stopped).
- Why are eddies important – because if they are large and powerful, they can cause you to capsize and, alternately they can provide a safe haven for a respite in dangerous waters.
- Upstream/downstream – **Upstream** refers to the headwaters of the river/creek you are on; i.e. where it starts. Non-tidal waterways only flow **downstream**, and either join into another waterway or eventually reach the Coast. Tidal waters obviously flow in both directions with the incoming or outgoing tide but upstream still refers to the origin of the waterway and downstream still means towards the Coast.
- **Which way is the ocean – standing on the bank of Tingalpa Creek facing the water, the ocean/Moreton Bay is to the right.**
- If you are on a **tidal** creek but uncertain which way is downstream, select a fixed marker or level and observe whether the water level is rising or falling. If it is falling, then the ocean/downstream is in the direction that the water is running – i.e. out to sea.

Information on tide times can be obtained from the local daily newspapers, radio & TV News & Weather Reports or booklets such as “The Official Tide Tables & Boating Safety Guide” published by the Queensland Government and available from boating outlets and many newsagents. Websites - <http://www.seabreeze.com.au/> or <http://www.weatherzone.com.au/qld/brisbane/brisbane>

WEATHER REPORTS.

Weather information is available from locals (especially fishermen), broadcast News & weather Reports; local newspapers and many sites e.g. Bureau of Meteorology – <http://www.bom.gov.au> - Brownie's Coastwatch – <http://www.coastwatch.com.au/> - Coastal Watch - <http://www.coastalwatch.com/> - <http://www.weatherzone.com.au/qld/brisbane/brisbane>

RIVER TRAFFIC & MARITIME RULES:

The general rule is 'If it's bigger/faster/more expensive than your canoe or kayak, keep out of its way.'
On rivers in general and in shipping channels the rule is to keep to the right (i.e. opposite of Australian road rules). In maritime language the **left** side of your boat is '**Port**' and the **right** side of your boat is "**Starboard**". The most common signs in Tingalpa Creek are called 'lateral marks' and are usually positioned to define well-established channels, and indicate **port** and **starboard** sides of the navigation route **into a port**. A **port** mark is coloured **red**. A **starboard** mark is coloured **green**. These signs can be on posts or anchored. For more information on maritime rules and regulations visit Maritime Safety Queensland <http://www.msg.qld.gov.au>.

PADDLING AT NIGHT:

Paddle at night only in an extremely safe environment or with an experienced nighttime paddler. Always consider your visibility to other water users. The **minimum** basic requirement for non-powered craft is simply "a signaling device (torch) which can be displayed when required". If you intend to night paddle regularly consult experienced NIGHTTIME paddlers.

SPECIFIC *Additional* HAZARDS:

- ✚ Our local environment is **SALT WATER** – hence, be cautious of venomous & dangerous creatures; specifically,
 - STONE FISH have been sighted in Tingalpa creek on at least 3 occasions in the past year;
 - BULL SHARKS are common in the Bay and creeks that flow into it.
(No incident with a Bull Shark and paddler has been reported to the club).
 - STINGRAYS often lay in the shallow water at the mouth of the creek..
 - DOLPHINS are occasionally seen in the creek; surfacing nearby can cause water turbulence;
- ✚ **Broken bottles, fish hooks, sharps, oyster shells** and the like are common; wear appropriate footwear always.
- ✚ Inconsiderate motorised fishing boats, jet skis, and water skiers, etc can cause considerable wash and increase chances of capsizing; (Turning your boat into the wash, will decrease your chances of capsizing; getting caught side-on will increase your likelihood of tipping).
- ✚ Unseen objects under the water;
- ✚ Branches, logs and undergrowth (dead or alive) hanging over the bank &/or in the water can be particularly dangerous if you get pushed into them;
- ✚ Tide, wind, sandbars are discussed elsewhere.

General overall paddling guidelines:

- always check the weather forecast and consider it's implications for your trip;
- always have **drinking water**
- always **wear a hat and sunglasses** in daytime.
- always apply **30+ sunscreen and reapply 2 hourly**. Preferably use a waterproof product.
- **wear a PFD**. Ensure the PFD is the right size for you and done up FULLY & CORRECTLY. An improperly worn PFD is a hazard.
- **Wear enclosed footwear to protect against broken glass, sharps, oysters, stonefish, etc.**
- **paddle with partners**, especially in new or more challenging conditions. 3 boats is good; 4 is better and more is excellent. With a minimum of 4 in the event of an accident, 1 boat can stay with victim and 2 boats can go for assistance. This increases everybody's safety chances.
- In the event of an accident or capsizing by someone else; **do not become a victim** yourself by undertaking rescue activities beyond your own capabilities.
- wear sun-smart clothing and consider **clothing** needs for weather changes.
- consider **the water temperature**. A large inland lake, even in summer, can have a water temperature considerably lower than the sea temperature.
- consider carrying minimal **safety gear** e.g. first aid kit, throw ropes, slings & tow ropes.
- always **consider the tide and the wind. Which is the more powerful**. If you capsize or become unable to paddle your boat, **will the wind/tide assist your safety or increase your hazard.**
- always pre-consider the best **route to safety**.

General overall paddling guidelines: (cont)

- never paddle alone in **new or challenging conditions**
- if exploring an unknown river, always paddle upstream, then return to your put-in point. Downstream could have unseen hazards e.g. rapids or waterfalls.
- never paddle beyond your ability and experience unless you have on-the-water-guidance from paddlers who are experienced in the new environment.
- consider your visibility; **wear colours that contrast with your surroundings** especially at times of difficult visibility e.g., early morning or late afternoon.
- **inform** someone reliable of your intentions and approximate return time; **(at the clubhouse complete the book in the box outside the tilt-a-door).**
- **never be complacent** that where you paddled safely on a previous occasion is still safe to paddle.
- **cotton clothing** is **not** recommended for paddling. It holds water, is slow to dry and can rapidly cause hypothermia.

Specific WRCC paddling guidelines:

- ❖ **read the attached pages on Boat Types & Water Descriptions very carefully.**
- ❖ wear a PFD if paddling on Moreton Bay or similar.
- ❖ always wear a safety helmet on white water
- ❖ always wear a PFD on white water
- ❖ early morning on Moreton Bay is generally the calmest time to paddle.
- ❖ at low tide from Tingalpa Creek to the beacons in Moreton Bay is considered low level risk in good calm weather.
- ❖ high tide in Moreton Bay can be very treacherous; if you are in the bay paddle as close to the land as possible;
- ❖ do not paddle in a 10 knot or higher wind if you can avoid it.
- ❖ **secure** your boat, paddle and any gear **WELL ABOVE** the highest high tide mark.
- ❖ be aware, particularly on a summer afternoon, that thunderstorms develop **VERY QUICKLY.**
- ❖ At the Clubhouse enter details of your intended paddle e.g. direction and expected time of return in the book provided.
- ❖ **Report and record any injuries and/or incidents.**

- ❖ **REMEMBER -**
- ❖ **Most Club activities would be classified as a “Peer Activity” defined in the Australian Canoeing Safety Guidelines as “A paddling activity where no formal instructional or guiding structure exists. And it is the responsibility of each member of the group to ensure the suitability of their equipment and themselves for the activity.”**

- ❖ **If you use any of the Club’s boats and equipment it is ENTIRELY your responsibility –**
 - (1) to ascertain the general condition of the boat (eg rudder working properly, observable hull damage, does it have sufficient buoyancy; will the flotation come loose & float away in a capsize? etc.); and to NOT use the craft if you identify any defects.
 - (2) to maintain the boat while in your possession in a proper condition for your activity and
 - (3) to determine that this boat is suited to your needs, skills and environment.**
 - (4) This also applies to any other club equipment you use, e.g. pfd or paddle.**
 - (5) If the boat is in your possession, it is assumed**
 - (a) that you followed the stipulations in (1) above;**
 - (b) you are therefore responsible for any damage or loss sustained to the boat or other club equipment when it is returned to the club.**

Waiver and Disclaimer for Extreme Sport

Water based activities including canoe/kayaking involve a real risk of serious injury or even death from various causes including but not limited to: drowning, overexertion, dehydration, hypothermia, heat exhaustion and collisions and tipping over accidents. This publication does not constitute individual advice and should not be relied upon to the exclusion of other inquiries by you.

Recommendations:

1. Seek detailed information from Australian Canoeing, Queensland Canoeing, and experienced paddlers and instructor(s).
2. Ensure when obtaining advice **that the person or entity is aware at the time of your enquiry of your level of paddling skill, the extent of your (local) knowledge or experience, the water you want to paddle and the boat type you are contemplating using, so that the information you receive is relevant.**
3. **Be always mindful** that in any paddling situation, even if you are accompanied by extremely experienced paddlers, you are still responsible for your own safety.
4. Above all, never attempt paddling beyond your capabilities and always consider the "worst case scenario".
5. Satisfy yourself of the risks & likely outcomes of the activity.
6. You should seek medical advice to ensure you are fit to participate and this should be updated regularly with the specific demands of the activity in mind.
7. If a person is under 18 years of age ("minor"), their parent or guardian's consent is required and they are wholly liable for the activities of the minor.
8. Information provided in this document may periodically be out of date. It is not the club's responsibility to update such references.

Waiver and Disclaimer:

Your use of any of Wynnum Redlands Canoe Club's ("WRCC") equipment or participation in any Club activity is acknowledgment of your understanding and acceptance of these terms and **FURTHERMORE**, to the extent permitted by law, **YOU WAIVE** all legal rights of action against WRCC, Queensland Canoeing, Australian Canoeing, it's members, office bearers, directors, employees or agents from any loss or damage from participation in such activities conducted or organised, included but not limited to any negligent or tortious act or omission, breach of duty, breach of contract or breach of statutory duty.

This waiver will bind you and your executors.

KNOW YOUR WATER

WATER DESCRIPTIONS IN COMMON USAGE:

- Moving Water** 'Moving water' is basically any water that is moving in a definite direction, especially if it is moving faster than you are/can paddle. It is generally used to refer to rivers (Grade 1 upwards) rather than tidal flow but is still relevant in areas where there is a 'tidal race' or a significant tidal flow.
- Flat Water** Long, flat stretches of water, can be tidal or not, e.g. Tingalpa Creek, Wivenhoe Dam; with gravel races & faster moving water to Grade 1 level e.g. Upper Brisbane River in different sections.
Hazards: Wind, rain, storms, submerged rocks or trees; floating debris eg trees, animal carcasses; weirs & strainers; wash from other water users, recreational fishing boats, water skiers; differing land and water levels due to tidal flows; assistance or resistance from direction of tidal flow &/or wind; dangerous riverbed &/or banks eg oyster beds; being stranded in low/no water due to tidal run-out.
Critical knowledge: (1) The larger the body of water the more susceptible it is to wind. (2) Wind can rise from a gentle breeze to severe in 10-15 minute. (3) refer to Tide & Wind segments above.
- Estuary** Where creeks, rivers open to protected coastal areas e.g. Moreton Bay.
Hazards: refer to flat water segment plus increased influence from wind, weather, tide, commercial fishing boats and large vessels, marine animals;
Critical knowledge: in a passage e.g. Bribie passage or between mainland and Fraser Island – which direction is the tidal flow, both in and out
- Sea/Ocean** Open ocean or coastal areas unprotected by islands
Hazards: : Large uneven swell, distance from land, influence of tidal flow, sun and heat exhaustion; cold; waves washing over craft; **nil protection** from wind, storms, sun;. **Where a major river meets the open ocean, a sand-bar tends to build up and causes very turbulent water, uneven waves, rips, etc; such a bar is never static. A 'Bar' is one of the most hazardous areas of a coastline and is EXTREMELY DANGEROUS to all craft.**
Critical knowledge: refer to flat water & estuary plus obtain weather reports & forecasts; position of reefs, sandbars, infamous tidal rips; access to fresh water; accurate maps, extra safety equipment eg EPIRB, accurate local knowledge and research into journey.
- Whitewater:** (1) Where water is obviously turbulent, boisterous, foaming, violent; e.g. beach surf;
(2) in rivers where water is obviously turbulent, boisterous, foaming, violent due to constriction of the flow, e.g. a weir, obstruction by rocks and other debris or where there is a noticeable drop in the river line e.g. waterfall, weir, Penrith whitewater Stadium. Inland 'moving water' is graded from 1 to 6; Grade 1 - numerous places on the Brisbane River e.g. Lowood log-jam, Lowood Bend, Twin Bridges at Fernvale; Grade 2 – Tabulum (Easter Camp)(1½), Mary River (The Steps). Gradings change according to the amount of water passing through eg Tabulum can vary from a Grade 1 to Grade 3 at our camp site. Grade 4 to 5 – highly dangerous & only paddleable by the very experienced. Grade 6 – not paddleable.
Hazards: Fast flowing and strong current, overhanging and submerged tree branches, strainers, boulders, water washing into craft; steep, inaccessible river banks, limited land access to river. Isolated areas, water courses changing after heavy rain; flood.
Critical knowledge: Experience; extra safety equipment e.g. helmets, PFD, skirts, communication equipment to suit area; accurate maps and local knowledge; checking for hazards from river bank for assessment before paddling (reccie)
- Weirs and waterfalls can be fatal and are not to be paddled.**
- All/any water** **Can be dangerous given the right combination of circumstances or hazards** e.g. The Twin Bridges bend at Fernvale, (a popular picnic/camping spot with families with small children), is particularly hazardous because of its combination of hazards, not the speed or depth of its water.

White Water Grading – for more information on White Water, go to our Website, Member Info & Updates

KNOW YOUR BOAT

BOAT TYPES:

Flat Water Boats: TK1 & TK2's; e.g. Scorpions, Cobras, Millsoms, Texas Rose, Wanderers, Nymphs; can be ruddered or unruddered, fibreglass, wood or plastic. General shape is broad, not great depth, 3-4 m in length (TK1) & have flatish bottoms, both from side to side as well as end to end. If your boat is flat on the ground & you press down carefully on one end, the other end will NOT rise significantly off the ground (versus white water boat)

MOST OF THE BOATS IN THE WRCC FLEET ARE FLAT WATER BOATS.

Advantages: light to lift & move; easy to keep on course; designed for paddling in a relatively straight line for lengthy distances e.g. BV 100 without too much steering effort;

Disadvantages: slow to turn; can be capsized by boat wash, large swells, poor balance; poor storage capacity; easy to damage, (except plastics).

Flat water boats are THE MOST *UNSTABLE* OF THE KAYAKS.

Estuary Boats: Usually fibreglass and ruddered e.g. Rosco Tidemarks. Not generally considered to be a marathon boat as much heavier than Flat Water Kayaks, so slower to paddle. Suited to more challenging, mid-range coastal water, large open flat expanses where wind might rise e.g. Wivenhoe Dam & Moreton Bay; can have storage bulkheads built in.

Advantages: very stable in flat water and good on Moreton Bay in mild to moderate weather. Good all-round recreation boat for varied MODERATE water conditions.

Disadvantages: heavier to lift, slower to paddle, slow to turn; unresponsive in rolling swells.

Sea / Ocean Kayaks: Usually ruddered; can be fibreglass, plastic or wood. Much longer than most other kayaks, have retractable rudders & deck rigging. Usually have storage bulkheads for expedition paddling. Very stable in open ocean conditions. Club has several.

Advantages: Very stable in most water and weather conditions except white water.

Disadvantages: Heavy to carry and paddle; slow to turn; more tiring on flat water than the lighter TK1's.

Moving Water Boats: Up to a Grade 1 level of moving water e.g. Brisbane River, ruddered boats are sometimes used providing the paddler has experience and understands the influence that the water will have on the rudder.

**Rudderless boats are ALWAYS used in more swiftly running water (Grade 2 upwards).
If inexperienced or uncertain use a rudderless boat on Grade 1 water.**

White Water Kayaks: Never ruddered; usually plastic but can be fibreglass; shorter and deeper than most kayaks e.g. blue & grey Dancer in club fleet. Extremely stable on the water; have smaller cockpits and can be difficult to get into and out of. If the boat is flat on the ground & you press down carefully on one end, the other end will **rise noticeably** off the ground and also probably start to swivel.

Advantages: difficult to capsize; extremely easy to turn; very sturdy and able to sustain severe impacts without damage.

Disadvantages: difficult to paddle in a straight line; difficult to exit in a capsize; tiring to paddle on an expedition with large bodies of flat water.

BUOYANCY: Kayaks and canoes should have **sufficient buoyancy / flotation** built in to remain afloat and level in the water when full of water and support the weight of the crew. Check the flotation is **in place in your boat every time you paddle.**

Grade Description & Pre-requisites Weather / Sea limits

You are now aware that there is an inherent danger in any sport and canoeing is no different. **You are responsible for assessing your own ability.** Your safety is your responsibility. Children are the responsibility of the parent or an adult nominated by a parent.

You are encouraged to take part in training activities conducted by Queensland Canoeing and WRCC and to practice these skills on a regular basis. Social paddling depends on technique not strength and because it is a low impact sport with high aerobic benefits, it can be participated in for many years. Safety is an important issue with WRCC and members are encouraged to adhere to safe practices at all times. It is usual for members to look after each other when on a paddle, however no other paddler is responsible for your safety.

This Table is intended as a rough guide for members to self assess their suitability for Club paddles.

The weather and sea/lake/river conditions expected during any trip may result in the cancellation of a trip or a higher skill requirement to participate safely.

Grade	Description and pre-requisite	Weather/sea limits
Grade 0	Open to all members. No previous skills or experience required. Closed or protected water.	5 knot winds OR 0.0 metre seas
Grade 1	For beginners with some paddling experience. Up to 15km per day on estuaries and lakes or other protected waters.	10 knot winds OR 0.5 metre seas.
Grade 2	For novices with some skills including assisted rescue, bracing, towing and entry and exit through small surf. Up to 15km per day, primarily on estuaries or lakes, occasionally along accessible coastline for training purposes.	15 knot winds OR 1 metre seas.
Grade 3	For proficient paddlers holding Sea Proficiency Certificate. Capable of sustained speeds of 4-6 kph. Up to 25 km per day along open coastlines. Please read the ACI Sea Proficiency Certificate requirements carefully.	20 knot winds OR 2 metre seas.
Grade 4	For advanced paddlers. Ability to self rescue in all situations. Very reliable rolling, surfing and rescue skills in severe conditions. Up to 40 km per day at speeds above 6 kph with long open crossing or unlandable stretches.	Paddlers know their limits.
Grade 5	For expeditionary paddlers. Long voyages in potentially severe conditions. Probable invitation only.	Paddlers know their limits.