

## Gear List

A life jacket should be worn at all times. It is extremely difficult to put a life jacket on in the water. When you need it, you need it on.

If you do not know how to use any of the following equipment, get instruction—before you set out.

- Kayak appropriate for conditions, with flotation bags or bulkheads
- Clothing appropriate for conditions, with extra layers
- Because of Maine's cold water temperatures, a shortie wetsuit is recommended even in the warmest months
- Life jacket/personal flotation device (PFD) with whistle, emergency strobe light and signal mirror attached
- Spray skirt
- Paddle
- Spare paddle
- Paddle float
- Bilge pump or bailer
- Food and water
- Sun hat
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses and safety strap
- Rain gear and hat
- Dry bags
- Flares
- Foghorn
- VHF marine radio
- Weather radio
- Flashlight/headlamp
- First aid kit
- Kayak repair kit
- Multipurpose repair tool
- Local charts
- Deck compass
- Card compass and parallel rules
- Tide chart
- Opt: Vacuum bottle (hot drink)

## Paddle Smart from the Start! Wear your Life Jacket!

The Coast Guard encourages citizens to participate in the national effort to protect our shores. Those who use our coasts can be valuable contributors to the protection of our nation. You know best what is or is not ordinary activity on our shores. By reporting suspicious maritime activity, you will play a vital role in ensuring the safety and prosperity of our country. Please report any unusual or suspicious activity to your local Coast Guard unit or to toll free 1-866-455-8238.

## Resources

### Boating safety and/or navigation courses

- U.S. Power Squadrons [www.usps.org](http://www.usps.org)
- U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary [www.uscgaux.org](http://www.uscgaux.org)
- BoatUS Foundation, 800-336-BOAT [www.boatus.com/foundation](http://www.boatus.com/foundation)
- Check MASKGI website for outfitters who offer boating safety instruction [www.maineaseakayakguides.com](http://www.maineaseakayakguides.com)

### Other agencies and organizations

- Marine research, education, and extension: Maine Sea Grant, [www.seagrant.umaine.edu](http://www.seagrant.umaine.edu)
- Fire permits: Maine Forest Service, 800-750-9777 or 207-287-2275
- Marine Mammal Strandings: Marine Animal Lifeline Hotline, 207-773-7377
- Red Tide Hotline: 800-232-4733
- Oil or chemical spill reporting: 800-452-0311
- Charts: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, [www.noaa.gov/charts.html](http://www.noaa.gov/charts.html)
- U.S. Coast Guard Information Line: 800-368-5647, [www.uscboating.org](http://www.uscboating.org)
- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife: 207-287-5220, [www.mefishwildlife.com](http://www.mefishwildlife.com)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: 800-344-WILD, [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

### Emergency numbers

U.S. Coast Guard (North to South):  
Station Eastport: 207-853-2845  
Station Jonesport: 207-497-5700  
Group Southwest Harbor: 207-244-5121  
Station Rockland: 207-596-6666  
Station Boothbay Hbr: 207-633-2643  
Group Portland: 207-799-1680  
Station South Portland: 207-767-0363  
Sta Portsmouth Hbr, NH: 603-436-4414  
Maine State Police: 1-800-452-4664 (In-state only)

### Guide books to Maine

- Guide to Sea Kayaking in Maine, by Shelley Johnson and Vaughan Smith
- Hot Showers! Maine Coast Lodgings for Kayakers and Sailors, by Lee Bumsted
- Kayaking the Maine Coast: A Paddler's Guide to Day Trips from Kittery to Cobscook, by Dorcas Miller
- The Sea Kayaker's Guide to Mount Desert Island, by Jennifer Paigan
- Maine Island Trail Association Stewardship Handbook and Guidebook, by Maine Island Trail Association

### Paddling clubs in Maine

- MDI Paddlers: [greenberg@acadia.net](mailto:greenberg@acadia.net), 207-288-8225
- Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network: [www.smkn.org](http://www.smkn.org), PO Box 4794, Portland, ME 04112

## Who Brings You This Information?

The following organizations, and the additional sponsors listed on the cover, bring you this brochure:

### Maine Island Trail Association (MITA)

The Maine Island Trail is a 325-mile waterway designed for small boats, extending from Casco Bay to Machias. It includes approximately 90 public and private islands where one can visit or camp in a wilderness setting. The Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) was formed in 1987 to develop and maintain this waterway. MITA's goal is to inspire all visitors to Maine's islands to become good stewards.

With a network of volunteers and members, MITA manages the stewardship and conservation of these wild places. Each island on the trail is a fascinating example of nature's grandeur. Some are as large as 300 acres, others are just large enough for a single tree. While the public islands are open to all, privately-owned islands included in the trail system are only open to members.

Maine Island Trail Association's goal is to establish a model of thoughtful use and volunteer stewardship for the Maine islands that will assure their conservation in a natural state while providing an exceptional recreational asset that is maintained and cared for by the people who use it.

For island access, conservation, stewardship and membership information, contact 207-761-8225 or [outreach@mita.org](mailto:outreach@mita.org). [www.mita.org](http://www.mita.org)

### Maine Association of Sea Kayak Guides and Instructors (MASKGI)

Taking the time to learn new sea kayaking skills will enhance your experience tremendously. Professional Maine Guides and instructors can help you gain the skills you need to be safe and tread lightly.

The Maine Association of Sea Kayak Guides and Instructors (MASKGI) is a non-profit organization of sea kayak outfitters, guides and instructors who embrace the highest professional business practices and conduct. The purpose of MASKGI is:

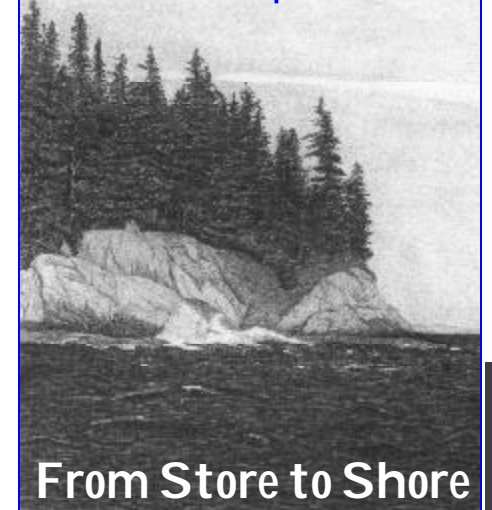
- \* To preserve Maine's natural resources by practicing and teaching Leave No Trace Techniques;
- \* To promote education in sea kayaking safety and paddling skills as well as professionalism of the sea kayaking industry;
- \* To protect the safety of the paddling public and our employees by providing safe, high quality services, equipment and facilities.

To view MASKGI's professional code of ethics, safety standards, and Leave No Trace policy and to access a current list of guides and instructors, log on to [www.maineaseakayakguides.com](http://www.maineaseakayakguides.com)

### Maine Sea Grant

Maine Sea Grant's mission is to play a leadership role in marine science research and education and to promote their use for the development, management, and stewardship of marine and coastal resources. For more information, go to [www.seagrant.umaine.edu](http://www.seagrant.umaine.edu)

## A Sea Kayaker's Guide to Safety and Stewardship in Maine



## From Store to Shore

Maine's coast is a sea kayaker's paradise, but with enjoyment comes responsibility. Even when traveling with skilled paddlers, you alone are ultimately responsible for your safety and your impact on the places you launch and land.

This brochure provides tips, checklists, and information about sea kayak instructors, courses, and resources that can help you increase your skills, stay safe, and practice low-impact paddling.



### Partners in boating safety and stewardship:

- Cadillac Mountain Sports
- Epic Sports
- Kittery Trading Post
- L.L.Bean
- Maine Association of Sea Kayak Guides and Instructors
- Maine Department of Marine Resources -- Marine Patrol
- Maine Island Trail Association
- Maine Mountain Works
- Maine Sea Grant
- Maine Sport
- Seaspray Kayaking
- United States Coast Guard



## Checklist for Sea Kayak Safety

Kayaking is an enjoyable sport with inherent dangers. Use this list to plan a trip and manage risk. Remember that no list can keep you safe: You must be familiar with and practice safety and rescue techniques. Guides, instructors, and clubs can provide this training. (See back panels for contact information).

### Before you leave the house

- Plan a route appropriate for the experience level of your group; use navigational charts; identify possible danger zones and emergency evacuation options.
- Find out what land, if any, is open to the public. (See Kayaking the Maine Coast, which lists these public areas as well as wildlife islands closed to visitors, or contact the Maine Island Trail Association or the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands)
- In cold-water climates, dress for water temperature rather than air temperature; consider wearing a wet suit or dry suit.
- Know your group's medical needs, abilities, and expectations.
- Agree on your group's method for making decisions.
- Write down emergency phone numbers and VHF radio channels.
- Coast Guard emergency info: VHF radio (CG monitors Channel 16); Cell phone (\*CG works in some areas).
- Listen to the local marine forecast and note paddling conditions such as water temperature, wind, tide range and currents.
- Review Leave No Trace policies. (See LNT on reverse.)
- Complete a float plan. (See plan on reverse.)

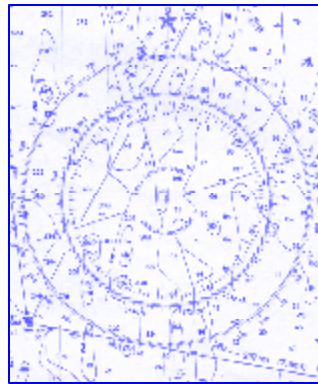
### Before You Launch

All group members should gather near the launch site and review these questions together (avoid tying up the ramp!):

- Basic paddling: Does every participant know strokes, braces, and rescue techniques?
- Course planning: Does everybody know the intended route, break locations, emergency bailouts, campsites, distances to be covered, contingency plans, and safe landing options?
- Leadership and decision-making: Is someone in charge in case of danger? Who will make decisions about course changes?
- Safety: Does everyone know about staying together, how to communicate with others on the water, what to do if someone capsizes?
- Procedures: Do trip members know how to avoid getting lost or separated from the group, and what to do if someone else gets lost or separated?
- Outfitting: Is each kayak equipped with standard safety gear? (See Gear List, on back of brochure.)
- Tides: Is everyone familiar with the local tides and how they will affect conditions?
- Launching: Is all gear packed and are kayaks ready to be launched promptly?

### On the Water

- Visibility: Assume that other boaters cannot see you. Stay out of well traveled areas, keep your group tight. Use brightly colored boats and life jackets, and wave your paddle in the air to increase visibility.
- Communication: Use visual communications, a VHF marine radio, a fog horn, and/or a whistle to communicate with other vessels.
- Navigation: Use a chart, compass, and other navigation tools to predict danger areas and keep track of your course. (See Resources on reverse).
- Group ability: Paddle only to the ability of your slowest member. If necessary, change your course.
- Weather: Because weather can change quickly, watch for incoming storms, changes in weather patterns, and cloud formations.
- Ocean conditions: Keep track of wind-driven waves, rebounding and/or refracting waves, tidal currents, and the effects of sea bottom on the surface.
- Hydration: To avoid dehydration, drink enough fluids; plan on at least three quarts for a full-day trip.
- The elements: Protect yourself from the sun, the cold, and the water.
- Medical needs: Remain attentive to any medical issues that might arise on the water (sea sickness, hypothermia, blisters, sunburn, heat exhaustion, and so on).
- Shoreline: Most land on the coast is private. Land only on public property or where you have permission.
- Leave No Trace: Always.



## Leave No Trace on Maine's Islands

The ideal guests in the wilderness leave no trace of their passage.

### Plan ahead and prepare

- \* Know the island regulations and guidelines for the area you plan to visit (including capacity limits) and land only where you have permission.
- \* Consider shoreside campgrounds or bed & breakfasts as overnight options.
- \* Keep your group size as small as possible; six or fewer is ideal.

### Travel and camp on durable surfaces

- \* Travel on sand, stone, resilient grass, and established trails.
- \* Locate kitchens on the beach, on granite, or in the intertidal zone.
- \* Camp only in established campsites. If the campsites are already in use, squeeze into an existing site or bivouac on smooth granite, sand, or gravel.
- \* Limit your stay to two nights. Naturalize the site when you leave.
- \* Do not cut or clear vegetation, dead or alive, for any purpose.

### Dispose of waste properly

- \* Carry out all solid human waste and toilet paper to the mainland for proper disposal. (See [www.mita.org](http://www.mita.org) for carry-off techniques and pumpout stations.)
- \* Carry out all trash—your own and any that you find.

### Leave what you find

- \* Preserve archaeological sites.
- \* Avoid campsite alterations.
- \* Leave flowers, plants and other natural objects where you found them.

### Minimize campfire impacts—kindle no fires

- \* Fires on islands are dangerous; MITA requests no open fires.
- \* Use cookstoves below the high tide line.
- \* The Maine Forest Service allows fires in designated fire rings; contact the service for a permit. (See Resources on reverse.)
- \* If you must build a fire, use a fire pan below the high tide line to prevent fire scars. Burn only driftwood and keep fires small and safe.

### Respect wildlife

- \* Enjoy wildlife from a distance; give wide berth to nesting seabirds, eagles, ospreys, rafting eiders, and seals.
- \* Please leave pets at home.

### Be considerate of others

- \* Help protect the experience of all visitors by developing an ethic of sharing. Preserve the peace and quiet on the island.
- \* Be considerate of others who live and work in the area.

For more information about low-impact practices, contact the Maine Island Trail Association.

## Sea Kayaking Float Plan

Copy and complete this float plan and give a copy to a trustworthy individual. Place a second copy on the dashboard of the vehicle you leave at the launch site. File a plan for every trip, no matter the length.

What happens if you don't return from a day trip or overnight within a reasonable period? Nothing, unless you let someone know the details of your trip and tell that person how to secure help.

Name, age, paddling experience (beginner, intermediate, advanced), type and color of kayak, color of life jacket, and pertinent medical information for each person in your group:

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Emergency contacts:

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Launch time and location:

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Take out time and location with latest expected return date:

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Intended route:

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Safety equipment you have with you (include tent color and style):

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Plan of action if not back by latest expected return date:

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\_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle type: \_\_\_\_\_  
 License Plate: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Print a full-size copy from: [www.MaineSeaKayakingGuides.com](http://www.MaineSeaKayakingGuides.com)

