

HOW TO PADDLE IN A GROUP



LEADERSHIP

1. The sea leader makes final decisions even though participants could have input into the decision-making process.
2. The leader should adopt a team-based approach in completing recoveries as no-one can be certain when situations occur.
3. The Tail-end Charlie could play an active role in assisting the leader.

LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

A trip leader should consider the following to reassure paddlers of their safety.

1. Identify the paddling level of the activity. Paddlers should make a self-assessment of their own ability, but leaders have the final decision on who can participate.
2. Ensure that all participants have completed the participant list form.
3. Change the paddling activity as needed based on conditions and paddler safety.
4. Create a float plan.
5. Obtain a current weather forecast.
6. Conduct a briefing with the club Briefing Notes.
7. If necessary, log the trip with local emergency services and log off at the end.

DYNAMICS

Group Spread

Participants should stay with the paddling group. If a participant paddles a long way from the group, the trip leader will remind that paddler to return. After three reminders, if a paddler does not comply, the paddler is considered to have abandoned the activity. The club and members are then not responsible for that paddler's actions or safety.

Lead Paddler

Paddlers follow the lead paddler who have been chosen by the trip leader.

Tail End Charlie

Paddlers stay in front of the Tail-end Charlie, who ensures safety and coordinates with the sea leader to prevent anyone from being left behind.

Surf landing or launching

Participants should maintain a safe distance from one another when launching. Paddlers then form a group beyond the surf line and wait for the signal to start. A beachmaster is nominated by the trip leader before any landing, and waiting paddlers are coordinated beyond the surf line.

Recoveries / rescues

Helping paddlers back into their sea kayaks is common. Nearby paddlers should assist if they can. For multiple swimmers, the trip leader or tail-end Charlie will direct actions.

Accident or Incident

The trip leader is responsible for determining the appropriate course of action following an accident or incident, which may involve contacting emergency services. Documentation should detail the circumstances and any injuries sustained for the benefit of emergency services. Completing Paddle Australia's incident report form can serve as evidence in support of an insurance claim.