

Before you go out

- Check the weather - direction and strength of wind are key
- Check the local tidal information
- Is your equipment fit for purpose; check for damage, leaks, chips, torn cables, broken paddles or leg leashes
- Does your lifejacket fit well and serve its purpose?
- Do you have all the necessary safety gear?
- How will you raise the alarm?



- Do you know your limitations?
- Know the rules of the waterway and seek local knowledge for hazards and conditions
- Plan your trip - let someone know where you are going and the time of departure and return
- Complete a training course
- Join a paddle club and learn from others plus paddling in groups is a great way to stay safe

Safety equipment carriage requirements - all waterways

CANOE/KAYAK

- Lifejacket
- Bailer or bilge pump if required

STAND UP PADDLE BOARD (SUP)

- More than 400m from the shore: Wear a lifejacket (recommend to wear all the time)

ALL PADDLE CRAFT MORE THAN 2NM FROM COAST

- Waterproof buoyant torch
- Two handheld orange flares
- Two handheld red distress signals
- Compass
- Registered EPIRB

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED AT ALL TIMES Personal Locator Beacon (PLB)



Recommended equipment

- Kayak paddle leash - keeps your paddle nearby and acts as a sea anchor
- Leg Leash – keeps you tethered to your craft



- Bring your phone in a waterproof pouch, or wear a smart watch
- Kayak paddle float – inflate and place over one end of the paddle
- Place your name and number on your craft
- Attach reflective tape to your craft and paddles to increase visibility
- Wear suitable clothing: highly visible, light, warm, and dries quickly. Cotton doesn't dry, and it remains cold and heavy. Layers of lightweight knits provide extra warmth. A wetsuit is a good option too
- 15-metre tow rope – to assist with a rescue
- Consider water, food and sun protection for longer trips

And remember: Stay vigilant and keep clear of other vessels

Know the weather

- **Wind** – understand the wind direction, and avoid paddling in strong and offshore winds or when a weather warning is issued
- **Waves** - they can push you off course and further away from the shoreline, making it difficult to return
- **Stream flows/water levels** – check for streamflow as it may be challenging to return against an upstream flow. Inland water levels vary, look out for snags
- **Tides** - when trip planning consider tidal flow as the outgoing tide may make it challenging to return to shore
- **Surf** - avoid the water if there is a hazardous surf warning
- **Cold water** – Victorian waters can get as low as 12°C. Cold Shock is a risk and hypothermia sets in quickly. You need to prepare for each phase of Cold Shock
- **Location** – choose a suitable location for your activity and understand the wind directions and water conditions that impact that area

Additional information

USEFUL APPS

- **Boating Vic**
- **Emergency Plus**
- **BOM Weather**



USEFUL WEBSITES

- **Maritime Safety Victoria**
transportsafety.vic.gov.au/maritime-safety
- **Paddle Vic**
vic.paddle.org.au
- **Surfing Vic**
surfingvic.com
- **SUP VIC**
supvic.com

In an emergency, don't delay - call 000 immediately or activate a distress beacon.

Paddle Safe

Safety tips for all paddlers

MARITIME SAFETY VICTORIA



A branch of Transport Safety Victoria

