

Safety Reminders

Great Lakes Kayak would like to take this opportunity to encourage all of you to be safe on the water. HUMANS CANNOT BREATHE WATER!

1. NEVER PADDLE ALONE.
2. TAKE LESSONS & ATTEND SYMPOSIUMS. YOU WILL NEVER LEARN EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT KAYAKING. ALWAYS CONSIDER YOURSELF A BEGINNER NO MATTER HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE YOU HAVE. MODESTY PROMOTES GOOD JUDGMENT!
3. PRACTICE RESCUE TECHNIQUES! If you cannot get back in your kayak or your fellow paddler back in his/her kayak in a timely matter, then you should reconsider whether kayaking is the right sport for you! If you are unable to perform self or assisted rescue recovery techniques but you still wish to paddle, make sure your kayak is extremely stable, you paddle only on flat, relatively warm water, and you are in the company of at least 2 other paddlers.
4. NEVER REMOVE YOUR PFD WHEN YOU ARE NEAR WATER.
5. TEST YOUR TOLERANCE FOR SUBMERSION IN COOL WATER. YOU CAN DO THIS BY SIMPLY WADING INTO THE WATER BEFORE PADDLING. WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT TEMPERATURE TOLERANCES. If your tolerance is low, consider investing in a dry suit. Have your dry suit tested yearly for leaks and gasket weakness and always wear synthetic (NO COTTON) insulating layers under your dry suit.
6. Weather and conditions on Lake Michigan can change dramatically in a short amount of time. Be alert and aware of current conditions and what might be coming your way.
7. Is your kayak equipped with bow and stern bulkheads? If it is not, you should not be paddling your kayak on Lake Michigan. If your kayak does not have bow and stern bulkheads, you must equip it with float bags. If you are not sure what a bulkhead or a float bag is PLEASE TAKE A LESSON! Bulkheads are water-tight compartments that usually are accessed through external hatches on the deck at the bow and stern. Float bags are inflatable plastic bags that are tapered to fit into the bow and stern of kayaks. They act to displace water and add buoyancy to the kayaks.

Know your weaknesses and strengths, imagine the worst case scenario and ask yourself if you can manage safely under those circumstances. If you have any hesitation, error on the side of caution and do not go paddling!

