



**Muskoka • Algonquin Park • Haliburton**

## **Canoe Safety**

Canoes are one of the easiest boats know to man. This lightweight and highly manoeuvrable water craft has two pointed ends and is pushed through the water by using paddles. Although people have been canoeing for centuries there's still come precautions you should take into consideration before heading out;

### **Where your Life Jacket!**

I say this over and over again, it is important to wear your Life Jacket. By law you are required to have one flotation device for each person but they really do little good if you do not have them on. Each year here in Muskoka we hear the tragic news of someone who had died just because they didn't have their Life Jacket on. They cost as little as \$30 to \$50 and they can save your life.

### **Where Appropriate Clothing**

With nearly 90% of all boating accidents contributed to the lack of proper clothing this is one area that you can easily make sure you do it right. From sun hats, and sun screen on bright sunny days to rain jackets and proper laying on not so good days to even full dry suites when the water is cold in the spring or even early summer. Remember in most areas early in the summer all that high water is caused by melting snow and ice leaving the water very cold.

### **Understand your abilities**

Every paddler is different and what one paddler is able to accomplish can be different than others. Paddle with in your ability and only push your envelope when others are around to lend a hand if you get into trouble.

### **Know the weather**

Always check the weather condition before heading out onto the water. It doesn't matter if your just going out for the afternoon on one of the Muskoka lakes or if you heading out on a 2 week canoe trip, checking the weather before hand and being able to read the weather patterns while your out on the water is critical to safe travel. Often winds are the most dangerous weather to look out for.

### **Know your route**

Believe it or not I have came across countless canoeists that are helplessly lost in Algonquin Park just because they neglected to pack a map or saved themselves the \$5 for an Algonquin Park map by printing one on their ink jet printer that has now gotten wet and unreadable. Know where your going and where you've came from. Look back often so you know landmarks on your return trip and always let others know when to expect you back.

Here is a summary of what you are required to have by law in any canoe or kayak less than 6m (19'8") in length.

## **Canadian Boating Safety Gear**

- One (1) Canadian-approved personal flotation device or life jacket of appropriate size for each person on board
- One (1) buoyant heaving line no less than 15 m (49'3") in length
- One (1) manual propelling device (paddle or hand powered crank-drive propeller OR an anchor with no less than 15 m (49'3") of cable, rope or chain in any combination
- One (1) bailer OR One (1) manual water pump fitted with or accompanied by sufficient hose to enable a person using the pump to discharge water from the bilge of the vessel over the side of the vessel
- A sound signalling device (bead-less whistle) or a sound-signalling appliance
- Navigation lights that meet the applicable standards set out in the Collision Regulations if the pleasure craft is operated after sunset and before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility

## **Extra suggested gear**

- Painter lines (attached ropes) on each end of your canoe (do not leave loose as you could get entangled in these if you find your self in the water next to your capsized canoe.)
- An extra throw-line (for emergencies)
- Attach a whistle to your Life Jacket so you can locate it easily
- A first aid kit in a water tight case that will float
- Ductape can be your best friend as temporary repair material for canoe or paddles
- Change of cloths in a dry bag in case you get wet