

Topic:

## Managing Risk

QC-0510

Resource:

[Risk Rating System](#)

**Basics:** Each day brings risk whether we are on the water, or driving to work. Managing risk in our car means having safety and repair equipment, having basic training, knowing the rules of the road and other skills that only come with experience: developing "local knowledge", how to respond to weather conditions, making emergency repairs. Kayaking is no different.

**Question:** *What paddling equipment is like an automobile safety belt?*

**Answer:** A PFD, like the car's safety belt is the most likely piece of equipment to go unused and at the same time the one most able to save the paddler's life. More than 75% of deaths in person-powered craft occur to paddlers that fail to wear their PFD. Don't view your PFD as restricting, think of it as offering comfort from risk. RULE #1: ALWAYS WEAR YOUR PFD

**Question:** *How else can I reduce my risk when paddling?*

**Answer:** The next biggest factor in reducing risk is paddling with a buddy. Rule #2 is: NEVER PADDLE ALONE. But the more sophisticated paddler understands that the more extreme the conditions, the more backup you need. Furthermore, all persons in the paddling party need to TRAIN FOR THE CONDITIONS they will meet. Practicing boat handling skills and self and assisted rescues under real conditions is critical to being able to rely on these skills when they are needed.

**Advanced Concepts:** You may want to get more information on the following:

- Trip Planning: tide tables, weather, wind, wave information.
- Navigation: route planning, plotting, locating position on the water.
- Unassisted Rescues: Paddle-Float, Stirrup, Re-entry & Role.
- Assisted Rescues: Bow/Paddle Presentation, T or X Rescue, etc.
- On-water Aid: boat repair, First Aid, CPR, Wilderness First Aid.

*For more information contact*

*Sea Kayaking Skills and Adventures*

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