



Press Release

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KAYAKS AND CANOES KEEP COAST GUARD BUSY OVER THE WEEKEND

From Oregon to New Orleans to Philadelphia the U.S. Coast Guard stayed busy this past weekend rescuing kayakers and a canoeist. In Oregon the Coast Guard rescued a 30-year old male after his kayak overturned. The man was reportedly suffering from hypothermia when Coast Guard rescuers reached him; In New Orleans the Coast Guard rescued a man in the Bonnet Carre Spillway after the canoe he was aboard became stranded by the strong current; and in Philadelphia the Coast Guard, a tug boat crew and a boom boat crew rescued two kayakers after they capsized and were overtaken by water in the Delaware River. Both kayakers demonstrated early signs of hypothermia.

Stories like this are all too familiar and as the temperatures across the country warm more and more Americans will take to the water for recreation. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary reminds paddle craft operators that a safe trip begins with assessing conditions and planning your trip, including the return. Data is available from a wide array of sources: buoys, NOAA forecasts, locals, previous trip reports, bar condition reports, and charts are starting points as the prudent mariner does not rely on a single source of information. And don't forget to wear your lifejacket. Paddle craft operators are also encouraged to get a free Vessel Safety Check (yes paddle craft are considered vessels too and are required by federal law to maintain specific safety equipment onboard) To arrange for free Vessel Safety go to www.vesselsafetycheck.org and click on "I Want a VSC" to find a Vessel Examiner near you.

As the number of people turning to manual powered craft or paddle craft increases, so does the risk for novice or unprepared operators getting themselves into trouble. A recent study by the Outdoor Industry Foundation has shown a dramatic increase in the number of Americans participating in kayaking, a 23% increase in 2005 alone. Unfortunately, there has also been a rise in the number of paddle craft accidents.

Three knots is the average speed for a kayaker. In the wrong place, where a river narrows or underwater features force waters to speed up or create towering waves, experience and preparedness, not muscle power, are what matter. The prepared kayaker will have a boat

appropriate for the task, be wearing protective clothing and a lifejacket, be carrying safety and communication equipment, have the skills to re-enter and roll, and use good judgment tempered with an appraisal of objective and subjective factors. The experienced paddler should also be in the company of one or more people equally versed in reading the water and self-rescue.

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed civilian component of the United States Coast Guard. Created by an Act of Congress in 1939, the Auxiliary directly supports the Coast Guard in all missions, except military and direct law enforcement actions. The Coast Guard Auxiliary is an integral part of the United States Coast Guard. For more information visit www.cgaux.org if you are ready to be join visit <http://join.cgaux.org/>.

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