



Tips for Paddlesports Staff

As your season draws near and thoughts turn towards youthful smiles, warm days, and leading paddling trips; here are a few tips to help you prepare for another season on the water!

*Teach youth properly and safely from the start, as it will provide the basis for a lifetime of paddling enjoyment. Don't fudge, youth are the future of paddlesports!

*FUN! Behind safety, this is the key element to a successful paddling season. Incorporate games, hands on activities, and skill building.

*Discuss lake and river etiquette. As the leader, you must set the appropriate example.

*Hone those rescue skills.

- When was the last time you used your throw bag?
- When was the last time you practiced a boat over boat rescue?

*If you have a group in a river environment, consider an appropriate swimming activity. Wear PFD's and incorporate a throw rope drill. The participants will enjoy it and you'll get some practice as well!

*Encourage diversity. A participant can exhibit various levels of enjoyment, whether on class II whitewater, or an early morning sighting of a heron on the lake.

*Safety!

- How often do you do a head count of your group while on a lake or river?
- Constantly play the 'What if?' game, especially with your other staff on the way to the put-in.
- What if we let everyone jump from this rock and a participant hits their head?
- What do we do if a storm blows up in the middle of a lake crossing?
- What's your current level of first aid training?
- Did we explain what a strainer is prior to paddling downstream?
- What do we do if a kayak flips over in a rapid?

*Enhance your instructor resume by continuing your professional development.

- Take an ACA safety and rescue course.

- Read, and re-read, literature related to instruction techniques and rescue.
- Practice!

Author Bio:

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Paddle Safe, Paddle Often!

Chris

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