

Dedicated to the Memory of Commissioner Enoch S. "Inky" Moore Jr.

PFLAY

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Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

by Andrew Desko

BACK TO THE BASICS: WATER SAFETY FOR PADDLERS

Paddling in Cold Water

Who likes a cold shower? No? Cold water is shocking, and it can be dangerous. Exposure to water less than 70° F can cause shock or a medical condition known as hypothermia, which is when your body temperature drops. How do you avoid becoming a paddling popsicle? Here are some tips.

- Leave the jeans at home. Cotton clothes absorb cold water like a sponge.
- Wear wool and synthetic materials (nylon, polyester, fleece). These materials keep you warm even when they are wet.
- Dress in plenty of layers. You can take an extra shirt off if you overheat.
- Wear a rain suit over the other layers to keep out water.
- Cover your head, hands and feet. They do not work well when frozen.
- Pack extra clothes in a waterproof bag. Use garbage bags or freezer bags.
- A life jacket helps you float and stay warm, so wear it.



In this issue, we will talk about staying safe while canoeing and kayaking. For more information, visit www.fishandboat.com.

Taking the Big Plunge

In the seconds before falling out of a boat, take a breath and cover your mouth, so you don't take a gulp of cold water. Get your head above water and control your breathing. If you cannot climb out of the water right away, don't panic. Get in the H.E.L.P. position. That is the Heat Escape Lessening Posture (H.E.L.P.). It will keep you warm until friends rescue you. Grab some pals, put on your life jackets and practice these skills in a pool.*



1. Give yourself a hug.
2. Hide your hands in your armpits.
3. Lift your knees up to your chest and cross your shins.
4. Float as long as possible.

A group can survive freezing water together in the huddle position.



1. Gather in a tight circle.
2. Squeeze even closer.
3. Have a group hug.

* Note: Wash your life jackets with fresh water after playing in the pool to remove chemicals.

Hazards on the Water

STRAINERS:

Watch someone pour a pot of spaghetti through a kitchen strainer. It separates the spaghetti from the water. Trees, pipes, rocks and garbage in a river do the same thing. Water flows through them. You and your boat do not. Paddle away from strainers.



LOW-HEAD DAMS:

Low-head dams are difficult to see from upstream and hard to escape. The strong current below a dam will pull you under until it flushes you out hours or days later. Low-head dams are dangerous when approached from upstream or downstream.



WAVES:

Wind, rocks and big boats cause waves that can swamp a canoe or kayak. Stay low in your boat when paddling through big waves. If you are in a canoe, get on your knees. Do not stop paddling in the wave, because paddles provide extra stability.



Reading a River

In a book, words tell a story. On a river, the rocks, waves and slack water tell a story of how to get through whitewater rapids safely. There are tools to help you read a river.

Paddlers label rapids into different levels, called classes. For example, a Class 2 (II) rapid is more dangerous than a Class 1 (I). Water trail maps display where rapids are in a river and their class. These maps also point out larger hazards, like dams. Rapids change to different classes during floods or high water. A Class 1 (I) rapid can become a Class 4 (IV) in a flood. Before floating down rapids, park your boat and walk the shoreline to investigate hazards that are downstream.

Discovering the Class of Rapids



| CLASS 1 (I) | CLASS 2 (II) | CLASS 3 (III) | CLASS 4 (IV) |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Fast moving flat water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small waves. <p>Hazards are easily paddled around.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paddlers who fall out can rescue themselves most of the time. <p>Class I rapids can still drown people.</p> | <p>Wide channels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waves can reach 3 ft. in height.• Some rocks that can be avoided.• Paddlers should have plenty of practice and know how to self-rescue. | <p>Numerous waves that will fill a canoe with water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strainers and small waterfalls.• Powerful currents• Kayakers should know how to roll over.• Scout from shore before paddling these rapids.• Swimmers may need to be rescued by others. | <p>Long sets of tall waves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Few rest areas.• Very powerful currents.• Narrow channel passages.• Dangerous rocks and strainers.• Kayakers must know how to roll over quickly.• All paddlers in the group must know rescue skills. |

Following the Sequence, the Rescue Sequence

If someone falls in the water, follow this plan to pull him or her out safely.

1. **SELF-RESCUE:**

Talk to them. They may be panicking from falling in. Tell them to stand up or swim to safety. Calm them down.

2. **REACH:**

Use a paddle or fishing rod to 'fish' them out. Don't lean over too far. They will pull you in.



3. **THROW:**

Toss an extra life jacket, ring buoy or rope to the victim. You can even throw an empty plastic cooler, because they float. Do not aim for their head.



4. **ROW:**

Use the canoe or kayak to rescue the victim. Be careful that they don't pull you out or rock the boat.

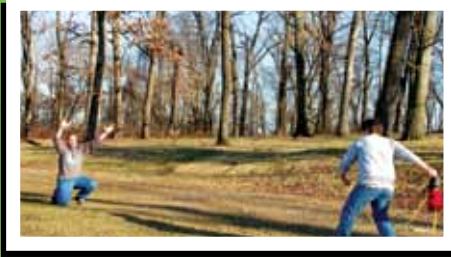
5. **GO:**

Go get help. Don't jump in after someone. Only trained rescuers with proper gear have the skills to leap in the water and rescue a victim.

Throw a Bag

A throw bag is one cool tool. It is filled with rope that you can toss to a drowning victim to pull them back to shore safely. You can practice hurling a throw bag by using it to rescue friends from your yard. Follow the steps below to use it.

1.



Open the bag and grip it in your throwing hand. Hold the end of the rope in your other hand. Do not tie the rope to yourself.

2.



Try tossing the throw bag overhand, underhand and sidearm.

3. Yell, "Rope," to the person acting as the victim, so they are ready to catch the rope.

4.



Toss the bag over the victim's head. Don't hit them with it. Yell, "Grab the rope!"

5.



Pull them in.



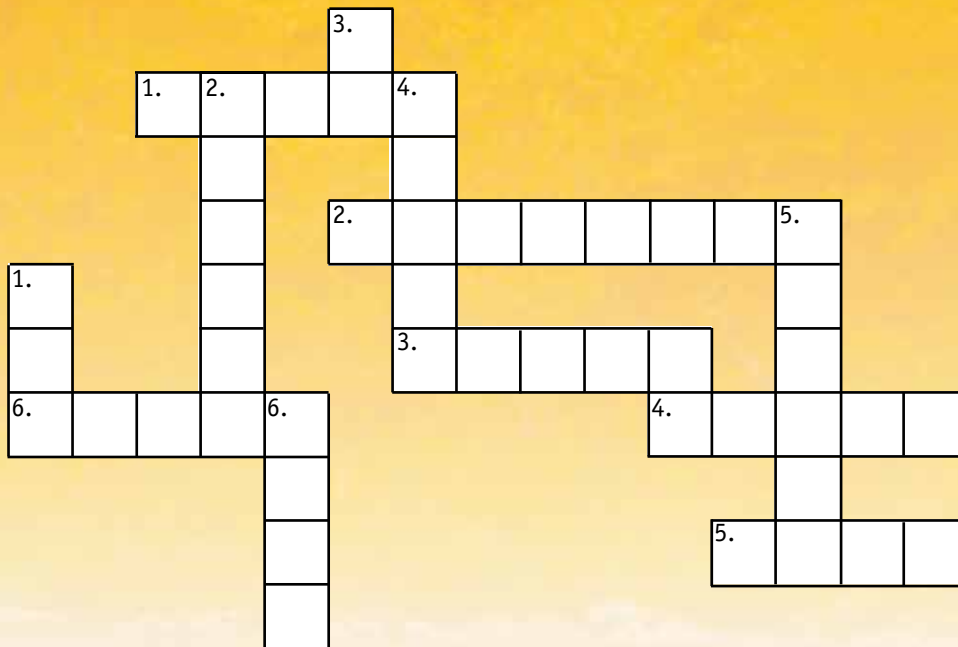
If you miss, coil the rope like a cowboy and toss the coil back to the victim.



After you are finished practicing, repack the bag by sliding the rope back into the bag inch by inch. Shoving wads of rope into the bag tangles the rope in a knot, so you can't use it in a real emergency.

The Rescue Game

Can you find all of the water rescue words in the puzzle below?



Across:

1. If a victim is too far to reach, you may have to _____ a rope to them.
2. A tree falls in the water and becomes a hazard called a _____.
3. _____ with a paddle or oar to pull someone to safety.
4. Pebbles might scratch a boat, but _____ can break it!
5. The _____ position traps body heat when you fall into freezing water.
6. They are fun to surf on at the beach, but large _____ can swamp a boat.

Down:

1. You can _____ to a drowning victim in a boat.
2. A group in the water can _____ together for warmth.
3. Only trained rescuers should _____ in water after a victim.
4. Wear a life jacket when you play on the _____.
5. Follow the _____ sequence when assisting a drowning victim.
6. Before assisting someone who falls in, see if he or she can _____ rescue.



For more information:

- www.fishandboat.com
- www.acanet.org
- www.rbff.org
- www.safeboatingcouncil.org
- www.boatingsidekicks.com

Crossword Puzzle Answer Key:
 (Across) 1. throw; 2. strainer;
 3. reach; 4. rocks; 5. help;
 6. waves (Down) 1. row;
 2. huddle; 3. go; 4. water;
 5. rescue; 6. self.

PLAY

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