

Busting Out Ottawa Dragon Boat Club

Committee: Health and Safety

Title: Health & Safety Reminders for Safe Paddling

Last Updated: March 11, 2026

General

1. Please review the Health and Safety policy, Heat and Humidity policy and the Air Quality policy found on the Busting Out Ottawa website and TeamSnap.
2. Safety assessment: Each paddler must complete a water safety assessment before the start of the new paddling season. You will be assessed on your ability to tread water while wearing a life jacket.

In the Boat

1. Personal safety and comfort: While not mandatory, consider bringing a water bottle, seat cushion, paddling gloves and using sunscreen. If you wear eyeglasses, consider using a lanyard/strap to prevent losing them in the water.
2. The PFD should be worn as indicated; zipped and snug fitting. If unsure of the fit, check with the Health and Safety team.
3. Review your PFD safety card periodically to ensure that it is legible and the information is complete. Consider placing it inside a Ziplock bag. Sunscreen and rubbing alcohol can wipe off the permanent marker. We are not sure about the Rideau River water though! 😊
4. A First Aid Kit (blue dry bag), bailers and tow rope are located on each boat.
5. Loading/unloading: As per the Rideau Canoe Club recommendation, there should be a maximum of 4 people on the dock for the 20-seater and 2 people for the 10-seater small boat. Unless assisting others, please leave the dock promptly but safely.
6. Silence in the boat during practice: Paddlers should avoid unnecessary conversations so that all teammates can hear the coach's instructions. Conversations with seat mates should only take place on designated breaks.
7. At the start of each practice, the Coach/Steer will lead a count of all paddlers in the boat in the unlikely event of a tip over.
8. Paddling through a wake/wave: As best as possible, always keep paddling as a wake/wave approaches and through it until the Coach/Steer directs otherwise. This will help keep the boat level.

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9. If you need to stop paddling, pull your paddle into the boat and lean forward so that you are not in the way of the paddlers around you. Take breaks as needed.

In the Rig (Winter Session)

1. Indoor paddles are used for rig practice. Consider wearing light clothing (ie. shorts and t-shirt are suitable), and bringing a seat cushion along with a water bottle. PFDs are not worn during rig practice.
2. Silence in the rig during practice: Paddlers should avoid unnecessary conversations so that all teammates can hear the coach's instructions. Conversations with seat mates should only take place on designated breaks.
3. It is the team's responsibility to remove the rig from the pool at the end of practice. Everyone at practice is expected to assist in the process:
 - Designate a lead person BEFORE anyone starts moving the rig. The lead person will oversee the process, ensure everyone is ready (4 people on each side of the pool) and call 'Ready, Ready' (or similar) to help the team work in unison to lift, lower, slow down, etc.
 - Make sure there are at least 4 paddlers on each end of the rig.
 - When ready, lift the rig but leave it submerged in the water. Use the water's buoyancy to help with lifting. It is awkward as you will be bent over. Make sure that both sides of the rig move in unison so it does not wedge along the side of the pool.
 - Bring it to the end of the pool and tilt it up on the edge of the deck.
 - Move it back 1 foot and remove the legs. Please put the pins back in the rig once the legs are removed.
 - Lift rig over to the wall and towards the door. Please watch your toes! Push the rig at the bottom up against the wall and secure with the hooks and pulley.
 - Place the legs and poolside frames inside the rig against the wall once the rig is secured.