

# Essential paddling tips for the canoeist



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### DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

The Swedish word for 'canoe' is a general term used for kayaks, canadian canoes (open canoes) and stand-up paddle boards?

# Canoeing

The waterways of Sweden's are absolutely ideal for canoeing, which in combination with the right of public access to our archipelagos, rivers and thousands of lakes provide great opportunities for enriching outdoor experiences.

This booklet contains basic knowledge about canoeing for the convenience of those who want to experience the joy and beauty of the outdoors together from a canoe. There is much to discover, and with the advice from this booklet, it can be both safer and more enjoyable. Whatever canoeing needs and desires you might have, Sweden's canoe clubs and centres will offer expertise and good opportunities to hire equipment.

## Many types of canoe

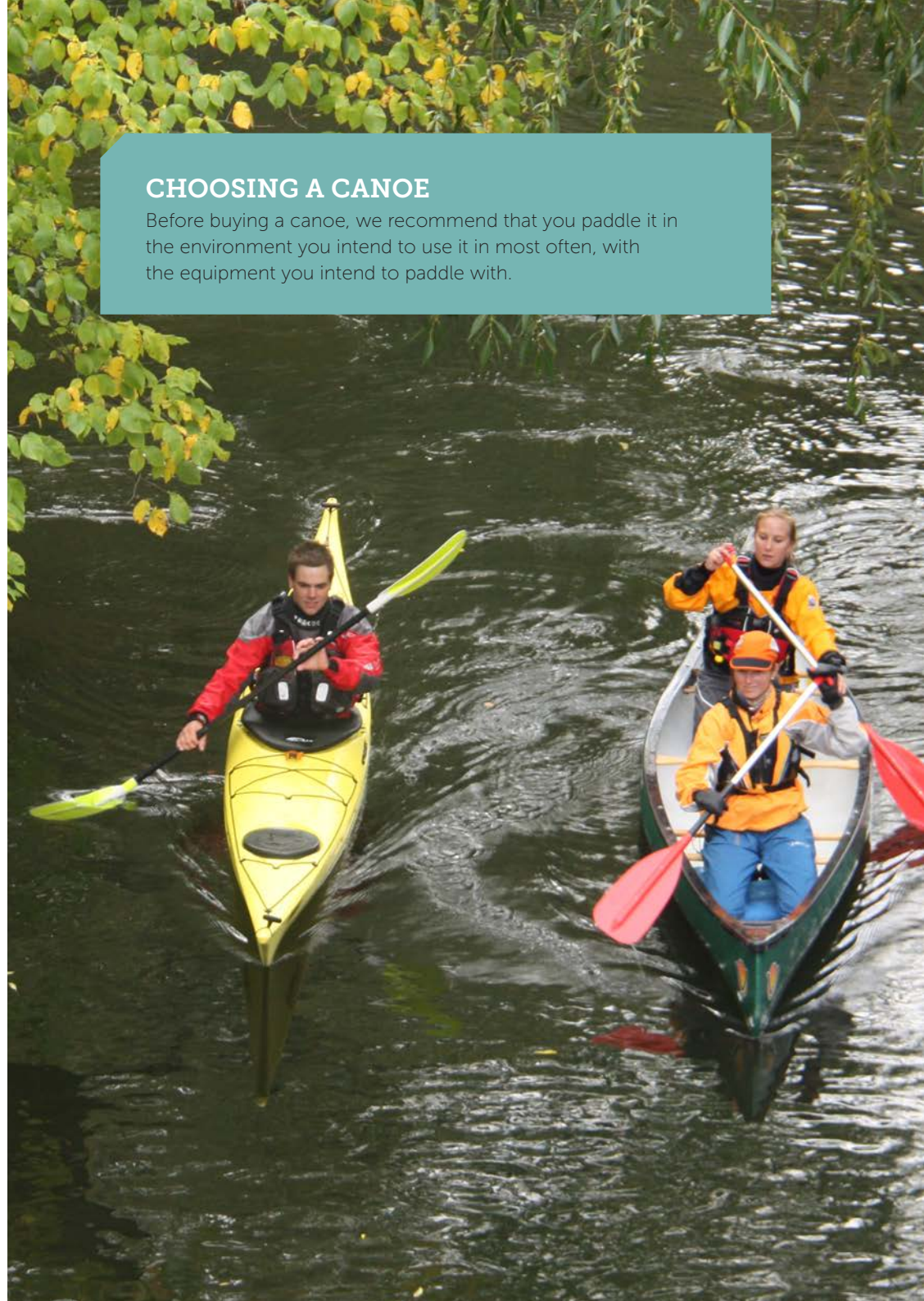
A canoe is generally a light craft that is pointed or rounded at the ends and paddled with a single or double bladed paddle. There are many different models on the market, adapted to different conditions and uses. Which one is best depends for example on how big or small you are, your balance, where you want to

paddle, if you are carrying any equipment, and how fast or far you want to paddle. It is best to try different models to find a canoe that suits you and your plans. Canoe centres and canoe clubs can often help you test different models.

However, generally, a long and straight keel makes the canoe easy to paddle in a straight line. A canoe that has a rounded keel from the bow to the stern, makes it easy to turn. A flat bottomed canoe is stable in calm water, whereas a rounded bottom can feel 'tippy' in calm water, however, it is often more stable in waves or turbulent water. Longer canoes also have a greater potential for speed.

## CHOOSING A CANOE

Before buying a canoe, we recommend that you paddle it in the environment you intend to use it in most often, with the equipment you intend to paddle with.



# What is a canoe?

'Canoe' is the collective name for various types of small water craft. Here are some descriptions of a kayak, Canadian canoe and stand-up paddle board (SUP board).



**The Canadian canoe** (open canoe) originates from indigenous peoples of the Americas. An important feature is its large cargo capacity. At first, it may seem safer than a kayak, but it takes great skill to handle a Canadian in rough seas, moving water or strong winds. Canadian canoes are therefore often best paddled in rivers and small streams. Canadian canoes are paddled with a single bladed paddle.



Canadian

**The kayak** was developed by the Inuit to make it possible to hunt and fish on cold and often windy water. There is a variety of designs based on different uses, such as sea kayaks, white water kayaks, touring kayaks, surf skis and sit-on-tops.



SUP board

**Stand-up paddle boarding** (SUP board) has developed from surfing and is a relatively new discipline in Sweden. The paddle makes it easier to catch good surfing waves, and it also makes it easier for surf instructors to supervise their students. The SUP board is paddled with a single bladed paddle.



Exercise Kayak



Sea kayaking



Surf ski



Sit-on-top

! Part of your balance in a canoe comes from the paddle; when you have learned to handle the paddle correctly you are in a great position to stabilize yourself on the water.



Length of Canadian paddle



Suitable distance between the hands on the kayak paddle shaft



Basic safety equipment

# Equipment

## Buoyancy aids

It is important to always wear a buoyancy aid, regardless of the weather, wind and water depth. You should be able to paddle comfortably whilst wearing the buoyancy aid, but it should fit firmly so that it does not slide on the body or when you fall into the water. It is often good to swim whilst wearing the buoyancy aid to see how it works in practice. We advise against inflatable life jackets, as they are not really functional in a canoeing context because they need to be inflated. Those that have an automatic inflation device also require recharging every time it has been activated.

## The paddle

To be able to enjoy paddling, it is important to use the correct paddle. A rough measure for Canadian canoes is that the paddle should come up to the paddler's chin. For kayak paddles and for

SUP boards, reaching up, you should be able to put your fingers over the upper paddle blade/handle. If in doubt, a shorter paddle is usually better than a longer one.

As well as the length of the paddle, you should also consider the shape of the paddle blade, as a large blade gives greater stress on the body than a smaller blade.

When you sit in a canoe, the paddle should always be within reach as part of your stability comes from it. You should learn to handle the paddle correctly so you can use it to compensate for the movements of the canoe. Consequently, it is important to start with a really stable canoe so that you can learn the techniques before paddling canoes which are less stable. Also, make sure you start on calm water and with stable weather conditions.

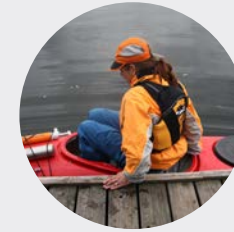
## Equipment and packaging

When the weather is fine, it can be tempting to paddle in just a t-shirt, shorts and of course a buoyancy aid. Make it a habit to always carry a mobile phone in a waterproof case. Hats and sunscreen will help you cope with the sunrays, which are magnified out on the water. The weather can change very quickly and it's easy to get a sunburn or become chilled if you cannot get changed quickly. An easy way to cope with sudden weather changes is to carry appropriate spare clothes in a waterproof "canoe" bag. Even a small first aid kit should be carried as standard. If you do not have a waterproof canoe bag, you can make your own by putting things in a plastic bag; be sure to have a couple of inches over the top that can be pushed together and then folded 2–3 times and tied up with string to provide a waterproof bag. Put the plastic bag in a bag or backpack so that the plastic bag is not likely to tear. Drinking water should also be included in your packing and should be easily accessible.

On a longer trip, it is good to find out the extent of mobile coverage; also, take a set of waterproofs, spare 'emergency food' and a repair kit (eg knife, matches, rope and "duct tape"). Even spare glasses and headlamp can be good to have.

- Buoyancy aid
- Clothing for the weather conditions
- Spare clothes in the event of capsize or weather changes
- Waterproof bag
- Water
- Hats, sunscreen and possibly glasses lanyard
- Mobile phone in waterproof case
- First aid kit
- Repair kit (knife, waterproof matches, rope, duct tape)

Getting in and out placing one hand in front of you.



Getting in and out placing one hand behind you

## How to pack a canoe

Spare clothes and sleeping bag should be packed in waterproof canoe bags. Heavy equipment is placed near the centre, and you should try to balance the weight equally between the front and rear of the canoe. If the wind is from a constant direction, it may be advantageous to move equipment forward or backward depending on the wind direction to facilitate steering. A front-heavy canoe will turn into the wind; a tail-heavy canoe will turn away from the wind.

You can attach equipment securely to your Canadian canoe because it will function as extra buoyancy, while remaining in the canoe in the event of a capsize. One option is to pack the equipment so that it floats at a capsize and can be easily collected (as it is attached) after the rescue.

In a kayak, it is best to avoid attaching equipment to the outside, because it can catch the wind and thus affect the balance and stability.

It is quite possible that a little water may get into the kayak's watertight bulkheads (pack spaces), which may make life difficult if necessary equipment, such as your sleeping bag, gets wet. You should attach a bailer or pump, which must be easily accessible to facilitate the emptying of the kayak. It is best to load the canoe when it is in the water so that you can avoid carrying heavy loads.

## Launching

It's a good idea to have help to carry and launch the canoe. A long kayak is difficult to balance and carry yourself and it can also be quite fragile, especially if it has a rudder.

## How to get in and out of your canoe

Among the first things to learn is how to get in and out of the canoe safely. The easiest way is to ask the canoe centre or seller for advice. The technique differs depending on whether it is a kayak with a small or a large cockpit opening, a Canadian or a SUP board. Of course the

technique will also differ depending on the place where you are getting into or out of the canoe. Is it a pier, beach, or quay? The wind is another important factor to keep in mind. Take care of your paddle, as it is built to work in water and can be easily damaged if it is used as a support on the bottom.

When you get in a canoe it is important to always keep your centre of gravity directly over the centre line of the canoe. One hand is placed centrally on the front or rear of the kayak cockpit edge. The second hand on land. You can also help each other to keep the canoe still to increase stability when getting in and out. Another method to get in and out of a kayak is to sit over the cockpit with your feet in the water on either side of the kayak.

A low dock or pontoon is easy to use. If you get in or out of the canoe on a rocky beach, be sure to place your feet securely because the wet stones and rocks can often be very slippery. If the canoe has a rudder

you have to be extra careful when paddling into and away from a beach; ensure that you raise the rudder, to avoid damage to it.

## Seating position

In a Canadian canoe you can sit on the seats. Do not sit on the thwart in the middle of the canoe, as this is intended to strengthen the canoe's sides and can break. For extra balance and more power, try kneeling on a pad with your knees either side of the canoe and your bottom resting on the edge of the seat, with your feet under the seat. This lowers the centre of gravity and provides much better stability. For solo paddling in a tandem canoe it is best to sit closer to the centre.

In a kayak, you sit upright with your back free from the frame and footrests so that your legs are slightly bent. Then you can use leg power to rotate the body. To get better control and balance it is possible to brace your knees on the kayak's side / under the cockpit for efficient forward paddling.



Catch



Power-phase



Exit



Beginning recovery phase



End of recovery phase

# Basic – canoe strokes

## Forward paddling

Paddling a canoe mainly consists of paddling forward. Therefore, it is really valuable to start with an efficient energy saving and "body friendly" style. When you plan to paddle a long distance, it is a good idea to vary your techniques so that you can efficiently use muscle groups which are likely to become tired.

Here are some great tips for forward paddling: Let the trunk and back muscles perform the work through rotation of the upper body and also the hips. If you have space in the cockpit to use your legs, rotation can be further increased by bending and stretching the legs alternately during each paddle stroke (pressuring and extending the leg on the side where

the paddle stroke is taken). This way, you will paddle efficiently while avoiding numbness in your legs and bottom. Try to paddle with straight wrists and take a firm grip with your lower hand whilst keeping a loose grip by pushing your upper hand (the pressure you exert will keep the paddle in place). This avoids stiffness and poor circulation in the arms and hands.

Rotate your upper body without leaning forward to put the paddle blade into the water. You will drive the canoe forward by unwinding your upper body. The blade should be fully submerged, and at a constant depth in the water throughout the stroke.



Note that the arms are relatively straight throughout the paddle stroke. The paddle blade is most effective when it is perpendicular to the water's surface with the top edge of the blade just under the water surface.

When the hand is just in front of the hip, you take the paddle out of the water by lifting parallel with the water up to shoulder height. The body will now be turned the other way and you'll be in position to put in the other paddle blade in the water (or re-rotated for the new paddle stroke for SUP board and Canadian canoe).

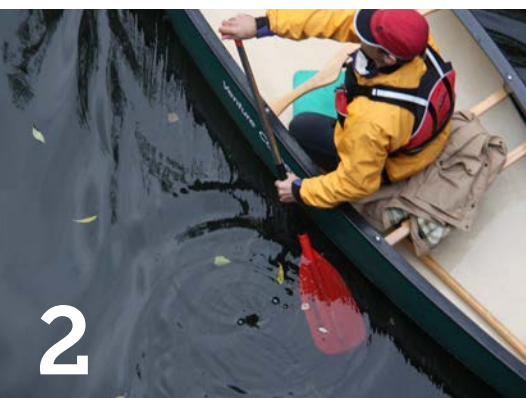
Note that the arms are relatively straight throughout the paddle stroke. The paddle blade is most effective when it is perpendicular to the water surface. You can also lower the elbows – adopting a 'low style'. It is not as effective, but you will reach further out with the paddle. Also, it becomes more stable and the load on the shoulders decreases slightly. By

practicing the different forward paddling styles until they become automatic, you will get control of the canoe and feel safe even when the waves grow large.

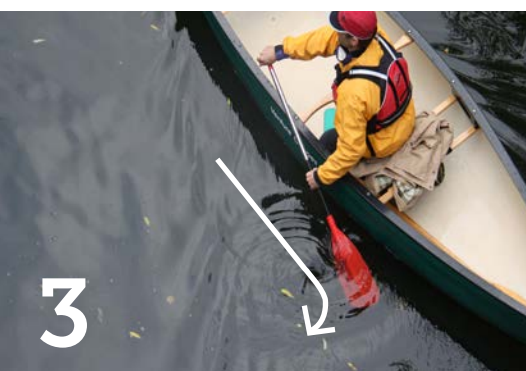
You can also contact a canoe club or an approved canoe centre and take a course to get more technical tips. Good paddling technique makes for a better experience.



Note that the body is rotated towards the paddle side during the whole stroke.



Canadian canoes will always turn away from the stern paddler's paddle side, making it necessary to compensate for the turning with each stroke. It is quite energy consuming to do this by continually changing sides with the paddle, which is usually the natural thing to do before you learn the "J-stroke". The J-stroke is used by the rear paddler. With the paddle, draw a J with the arc backwards/outwards from the canoe. When the paddle blade reaches the hips, push the thumb forward and drive the tension side of the paddle out. You can also use the paddle as a rudder and let it linger longer in the water to straighten the course.



1. Paddle blade is dipped into the water.
2. The thumb of the upper hand is pushed towards the water.
3. Upper hand is angled downward, blade rotated ninety degrees so that the face of the blade is parallel with the side of the canoe. The blade is then driven out of the canoe, the thumb pointing downwards and the body rotated.



If the kayak is equipped with a rudder, it is possible to control it with your feet while simultaneously using the sweep stroke.

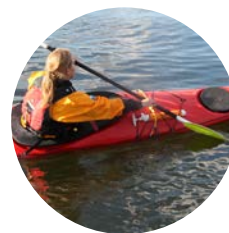
### Turning the canoe

Place the paddle blade in the water near the bow. Draw the paddle in a circular motion away from the canoe and keep your arm on the paddle side straight during the entire stroke. The other arm held close to the body and with the paddle kept low. Take advantage of body rotation and press with the pullingside knee and foot. Turn both ways and make sure that you feel a proper force being transmitted to the canoe. A combination of the forward and reverse sweeps effectively turns the Canadian canoe. If you want to turn a Canadian canoe quickly, then the forward paddler can use a forward sweep stroke and the rear paddler can use a reverse sweep stroke on opposite sides. This should turn the canoe in stationary position. You can also turn a canoe that has speed by braking with the paddle, the canoe will turn to the paddle side.

In a sea kayak, you can also turn by edging the kayak. You do this by lifting your inner knee during the turn, thus tilting the kayak outward. The upper body remains upright over the kayak centre line.

If you want to turn a Canadian canoe quickly, then the forward paddler can use a forward sweep stroke and the rear paddler can use a reverse sweep stroke on opposite sides. This should turn the canoe in stationary position. You can also turn a canoe that has speed by braking with the paddle, the canoe will turn to the paddle side.

In a kayak, you can also turn by edging the kayak. This means that the kayak is tilted outward by lifting the inner knee during the turn. The upper body remains upright over the kayak centre line.



Catch



Power-phase



Exit



Edged kayak



## Keep your balance

Try the stability of the canoe by tipping it from side to side as soon as you have got into the canoe and still have a fixed point on land. Relaxing your body increases your balance. Whilst you are paddling, the paddle in the water becomes a fixed point that stabilizes the canoe. The paddle blade also provides support for the canoe.

Keep your elbow straight over the paddle shaft and correct the canoe by "rotating" it into position under your lower body using knees and hips – the so-called "hipflick". Use the speed of the leading edge of the paddle ensuring a small angle (about 3–4 cm above the water) to gain support from the water. Support from the water using the paddle can be gained regardless if the canoe is stationary or moving.

## Paddle backwards

Use the reverse of the paddle blade, and pull the paddle from the rear of the canoe to the front. Look over your shoulder to see where you paddle while you use the rotation of the upper body to push the canoe backwards.

In a kayak with a rudder, it is important to fold the rudder up when reversing, to avoid damage in shallow water.

## Paddling sideways

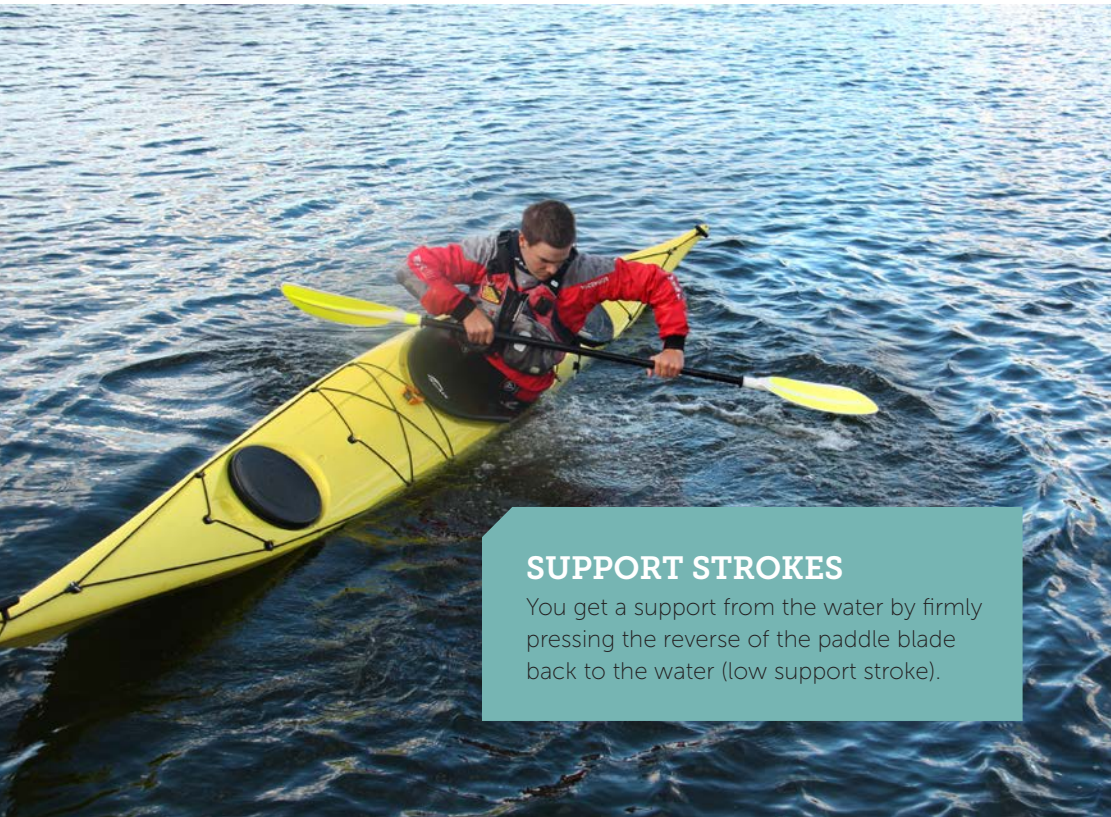
You move sideways by taking hold of the water on the side of the canoe and pulling the canoe towards it. You pull the canoe towards the blade and then lift the blade out of the water and repeat the maneuver. Alternatively, you can turn the blade 90 degrees and slice it out again through the water to the start point. It is also possible to swing the paddle forward and backward with the pressure towards the canoe. The edge of the paddle that is in the direction of motion shall point from the canoe as if drawing a figure 8 in the water, or like spreading butter on toast!



Dip the paddle into the water behind you, then pull the paddle forward



Rotate your upper body. Pull the canoe sideways towards the paddle



## SUPPORT STROKES

You get a support from the water by firmly pressing the reverse of the paddle blade back to the water (low support stroke).

# Capsize and get back in the canoe

Capsizing the canoe doesn't have to result in an accident, but it can if you don't know what you are doing. Buoyancy aids should always be worn. Trying to put on a Buoyancy aid whilst in the water is not easy and it is easy to lose motor skills in your hands, even if the water is not that cold.

The longer you stay in the water, the more impaired you will become both physically and mentally. Trying to reach the shore in cold water, anything more than a short distance after a capsize is usually not a good idea, because movement of water across the body accelerates the body's cooling. To be safe, you should practice to quickly and easily get back into the canoe, practice even in cold water.

## Getting back in the canoe

There are different methods to get up, this booklet gives you a common and simple method. Rescue techniques should be trained in calm conditions with warm water. Please contact an association or a canoe centre in your area for advice and support during rescue training. Common to all rescues is that you must always cling on to the canoe (your own or the rescuer's) and your paddle.



## Kayak

Call for help, hold the paddle and keep contact with the kayak (1). Turn up the kayak so that it comes on even keel while awaiting help. If there is water in the kayak, let the helper empty it. Anyone who is in the water can help stabilize the canoe at the bow (2, 3). When the canoe is empty, and parallel to the rescuers, you can swim up on the back of your canoe using a strong kicking motion with your legs. (4) It is important to maintain a low

centre of gravity and then rotate into the cockpit at the right place (5, 6). Take a seat and pump out the last water (7), grab the paddle properly, then slide slowly away from your friend's kayak and continue kayaking. There are a number of different methods for this, try it in a secure environment and see what works.



**SUP BOARD**  
For SUP board you have to climb up on the board again, near the centre and with as little effort as possible to regain a good paddling position. Use the board leash of the lower leg; without a leash the board can easily blow away from you if you fall off.



**Canadian**

Upon capsizing call for help and hold the paddle and the canoe (1). The rescuers will sit on their knees to pick up the capsized Canadian, empty it (2, 3) and then slide it into the water when it is empty and on even keel (4, 5). Meanwhile those who have capsized will support the fore/aft of the rescuers' canoe and then climb one at a time into the emptied Canadian canoe. One way to

climb back in is to lie on your back in the water between the Canadians and lift up one leg at a time, one into the rescuing canoe and one into your own (5, 6). When you are back in the canoe, you can move back to your normal seating position (7). Keep in mind that stability is much greater when sitting on your knees in the canoe than when sitting on the seats.

# Safety



## Important to know about cooling

The water in the sea and lakes is almost always dangerously cold.

The immediate cold shock that occurs when one suddenly ends up in cold water leads to rapid breathing (hyperventilation). With a little luck you will only get immersion shock, however in the worst case, it could result in drowning.

The best protection against hyperventilation is good clothing. The most effective solution is a dry suit, but other garments that are reasonably waterproof and fastened around the ankles and wrists can also provide some protection against immersion shock. Warm garments worn on the feet, head and hands also make a

big difference when you are in cold water. Beautiful spring days can be sunny and warm in the air but still extremely cold in the water. A canoeist who paddles with light clothing and ends up in the water can run into a particularly dangerous situation. The immediate immersion shock can lead to heart problems. Even healthy young people may suffer. But the most exposed to this risk are people with previous heart problems, and men over 40 years.

If you end up in the cold water, with time, the cooling effect can lead to hypothermia. Even when the body temperature drops only a few degrees, it becomes very difficult to control movements. Fine motor skills deteriorate quickly, clear thought is difficult and the

risk of drowning increases. Water colder than 25°C involves a substantial risk, and at temperatures below 15°C, the risk of severe chilling is likely. How long a person is capable of staying in cold water varies greatly from person to person.

## Clothing protects

and the more layers of clothes you wear, the better the chances to cope with the cold. You should not swim in vain, but try to float as calmly as possible. Save heat by keeping your legs together, elbows to the side and your arms crossed over your chest.

## Use caution

A person suffering from hypothermia should be handled very carefully to avoid the risk of heart problems. Clothes should

be cut off. The person suffering from hypothermia should be wrapped in dry blankets and should be re-heated very gently. Normal room temperature may work but definitely not a hot shower or sauna, as heating should come from within.

Rules of thumb: Note that gentle heating applies to people who are so chilled that they have stopped shivering due to cold and fatigue. A casualty who is still shivering, however, may be heated more actively, via movement, taking a hot shower, drinking something hot, etc. If the chilled person is able to hold the cup and drink without help, you can offer him or her a drink.



When you paddle at night, it is important to have a lamp readily available on board to identify yourself to other boats.

## Collision risks

A canoeist is very small and often difficult to spot from other boats. You can improve your safety by paddling near beaches or between islets where no other boats can go, thus keeping away from faster and bigger vessels. These areas are more protected – and you will be surrounded by wonderful scenery. When at sea, keep to the right. Paddle on the right hand side in fairways and narrow straits. Any sea lanes or active straits should be crossed perpendicularly and in a narrow place to provide the safest crossing. If you are paddling in a group, cross any strait as a tight-knit group because it will be easier for other vessels to choose their path around you. You can also improve your safety by wearing clothes that are highly visible, and also by using reflective tape on both your canoe and paddle. In mist it is also a good idea to have access to a gas powered air horn to signal to other boats, and in the dark, it is important to have a lamp readily available to signal to other boats that you are on the water.

## Alcohol

It goes without saying that canoeists do not drink and paddle, as even small amounts of alcohol have an impact on your balance! Alcohol can also have adverse effects during physical exertion and cooling. It can also give rise to confusion and a rapid decline in body temperature.

## Navigation, communication

If you are paddling in unknown waters,

you will need a map or chart and a compass. Your mobile phone should be carried in a waterproof case, allowing you to communicate in case of delays or other difficulties. Several kayakers have been rescued in Sweden after having fallen into the water, where they have still been able to make phone calls. Today's mobile phones also contain satellite navigation and maps. Unfortunately, mobile coverage is limited in many parts of Sweden. In coastal areas, a portable and waterproof VHF radio can be a useful piece of equipment, as well as various forms of distress beacons. Personal Locator Beacons (PLB) that transmit to satellites and inform the air and sea rescue centre on a precise GPS position are also available nowadays. We recommend that you investigate the market based on the conditions and environment in which you plan to paddle.

**Emergency Numbers on both  
landline and mobile phones:  
112**

**Distress frequency on VHF:  
Channel 16**

**Distress call: MAYDAY**

A 112 call from a mobile phone will connect to the mobile operator with the best coverage in spite of your own operator's network coverage. There is also the opportunity to locate your actual position from a mobile phone, if it has a built-in navigator.

## Weather

In principle, you can have the pleasure of canoeing in any weather, as long as you can understand and plan for the effects of the wind. If you find yourself in a canoe in the wrong place, wind and waves can very quickly become awkward and even dangerous. On the Maritime Safety Council's weather card, you will find broadcast times on the radio channel P1 and coastal weather forecasts broadcast on VHF net. You can also listen to P1 weather broadcasts anytime at [sr.se/väder](http://sr.se/väder). The weather card can be ordered at [transportstyrelsen.se](http://transportstyrelsen.se)

The Swedish Maritime Administration's weather reports Wind and Water (abbreviated to ViVa), gives you access to the 'real-time' weather. The Swedish Maritime Administration has more than 90 weather stations around the Swedish coast. These stations can provide information on wind speed, wind direction, water current, visibility and water. Read more on [sjofartsverket.se](http://sjofartsverket.se). If you get into the habit of comparing reality with ViVa, you can learn how to interpret and use the weather reports better.

Avoid paddling during electrical storms, as there is a small risk of being struck by lightning. Also, in thunderstorms, both sudden shifts of the wind and strong winds are frequent

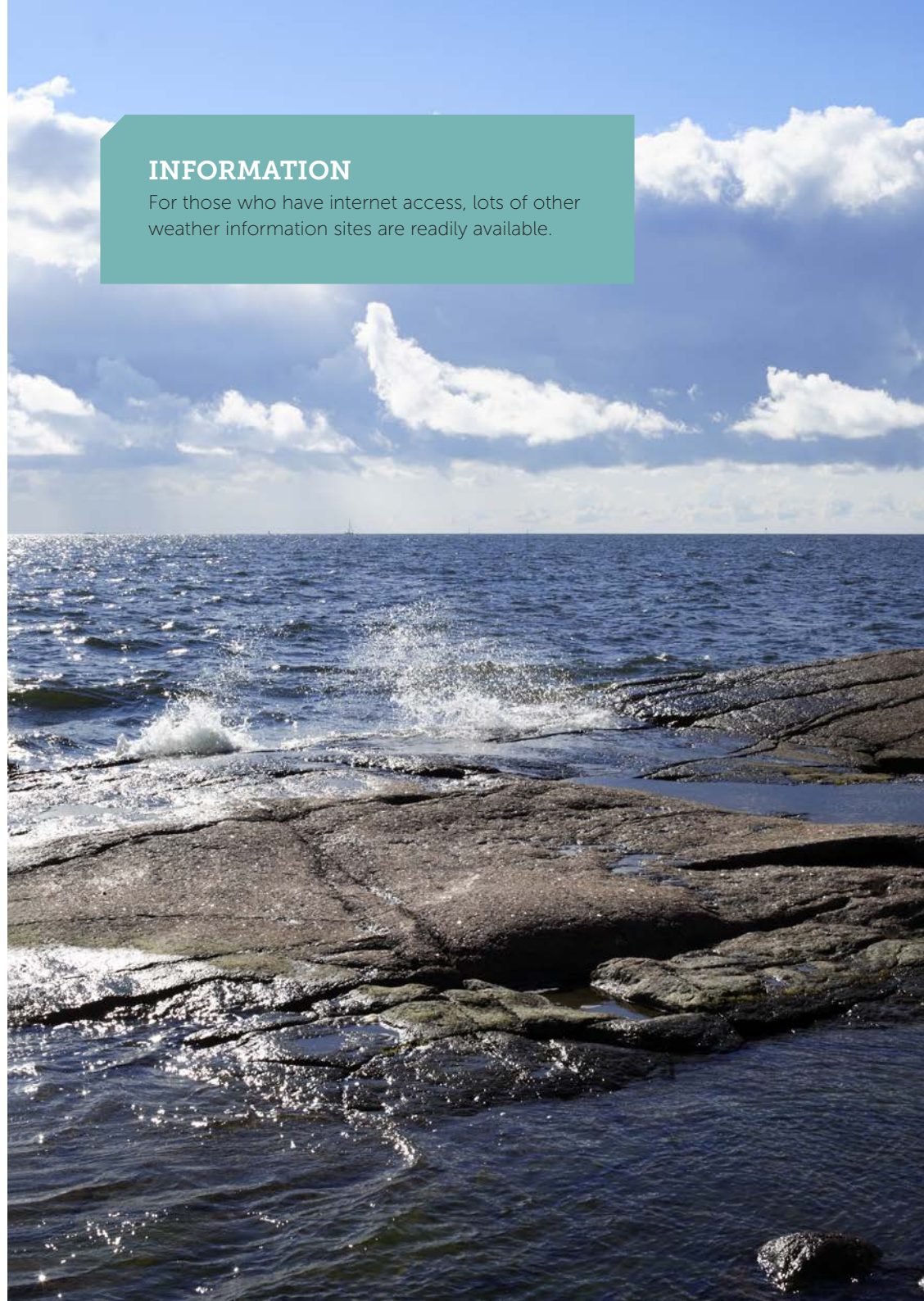
## Plan your route

Make sure that you always travel with a safety margin based upon your ability, and plan your route so that you can get out of the wind. Also, consider alternate routes in case the wind should change. Choose your camp for the night so that you can leave the site regardless of weather changes. Avoid paddling across open water with the wind on your back, because the waves can quickly become unpleasant and high, making it difficult to reverse your course. If you manage to turn, it can still be hard to cope and paddle back into a strong headwind; you will also become quickly chilled when you are sweaty and have to paddle against a cooling breeze.

Avoid any open water crossing with a Canadian canoe. Stay close to shore so that it is possible to swim ashore. Also be sure to schedule breaks to drink and take something to eat along the way, it will keep your spirits up and your judgement clear.

## INFORMATION

For those who have internet access, lots of other weather information sites are readily available.





# The right of public access – freedom with responsibility

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

More information can be found on the Environmental Protection Agency's website [naturvardsverket.se/allemansratten](http://naturvardsverket.se/allemansratten) or by phone at 010-698 10 00.

Thanks to the Swedish Right of Public Access, you are welcome to canoe virtually everywhere in Swedish waters. You can also go ashore, swim and sleep one night if you act respectfully. It is a freedom which requires responsibility, respect and good judgment. The canoe is a very quiet craft, and can easily get too close to nesting birds. Therefore, you should move away if the birds appear nervous – you have come too close. Do not camp or rest near the birds' nesting sites. Some places are protected as bird sanctuaries, and it is forbidden to go ashore. Elsewhere, you may find limited access areas, such as nature reserves or protected shoreline areas. Camping for one night is allowed if you do not risk harming the natural environment or disturbing nearby residents. If houses are nearby, you should ask for permission

before tents are set up. Try to relieve yourselves at campsite toilets etc. Canoe centres will be able to tell you where toilets can be found, or you can use local route descriptions and maps. Otherwise, dig a pit with a small trowel and cover tightly. Bring all your waste when you leave your camp site.

### Fire ban

Fire restrictions often exist during the summer when all open fires and flames are forbidden. Otherwise, you are allowed to make fires with extreme caution. This means that the fire should be built upon stones (not directly on the ground) and that you should extinguish it thoroughly with water. Never light a fire directly on flat rocks, as it leaves ugly scars that do not go away. The best alternative is to bring a small camping stove.

### Travelling overland

It is forbidden to travel through gardens and sensitive areas, such as arable land, where you may cause damage. Always be sure to close any gates behind you! On some private roads you may be prohibited from driving a motor vehicle; this will be evident from signs at the side of the road.

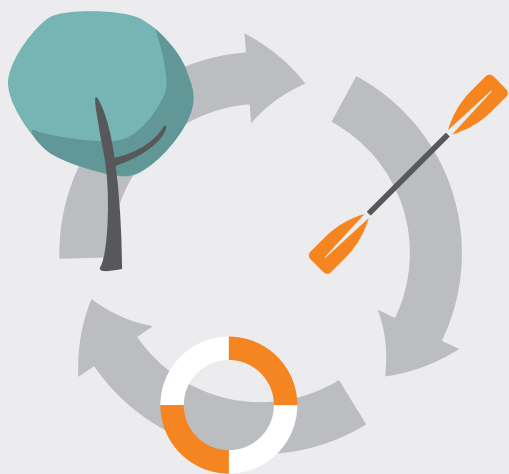
### Fishing

Sport fishing using a lure is allowed along the coasts and in the five largest lakes. In other waters, a fishing license or other authorization will be required.

### Finally

- Paddle within your own ability.
- Paddle in groups and learn to rescue each other.
- Always wear a buoyancy aid.
- Never drink alcohol whilst paddling.

- Find out the local weather report.
- Do not think "it does not happen to me" but "what do I do if it happens?"
- Kayaking in rapids and on large open water requires special skills.
- Cold water is a high risk environment, minimize by staying really close to the shore.
- Keep your phone in a waterproof case.
- Respect the right of public access motto – not to disrupt or destroy when you are out in the wild!



**Environment, safety and good paddling technique**

With these three elements taken into consideration, your paddling will be enjoyable, educational, and sustainable. Good luck with your paddling.

# Paddle pass



With European cooperation, the European Paddle Pass (EPP) has been developed. The Swedish version of the EPP is called Paddelpasset. The aim is to offer a common, clear and methodical system for the development of knowledge that can be used at all levels and throughout all canoeing disciplines. The requirements for the various levels are virtually the same in all countries.

Paddelpasset starts with a white introductory session, which is followed by the yellow level 1 with common requirements for all canoe models. This is followed by green, blue (which is divided for different canoe types), red and black, where canoeing knowledge is very high and

canoeists are very competent. The EPP canoeist can develop in a thoughtful way to get better both in terms of technical ability, safety and environmental awareness. Associations, canoe rentals, the Swedish outdoor association Friluftsrörelsen, the Scouts Movements and

some outdoor training programmes provide training and examination in the Swedish version Paddelpasset. Paddelpasset is described on [kanot.com](http://kanot.com) and you can email to [paddelpasset@kanot.com](mailto:paddelpasset@kanot.com)

## There are paddle passports for all

The contents of this brochure reflect the requirements for Paddelpasset Level 1 Yellow. On this level, the canoeist is to be able to handle a canoe to paddle a tour which will be both enjoyable and safe.

- Carrying the canoe with good lifting techniques (using the legs) and happy to help each other to carry.
- Launching the canoe safely in the water and being able to get in with regard to safety, the environment and without damaging the canoe.
- Paddle in a straight line for at least 50 meters. The goal is for canoeists to use large muscle groups and rotate their body for each paddle stroke, with a good grip, but at the same time relaxed in control of the paddle.
- Stop the canoe from both forward and backward directions.
- Paddle backwards to a point 25 meters away.
- Turning the canoe from a stationary position, using different forward and backward strokes.
- Turning the canoe whilst moving.
- Step out of the canoe in a safe manner with respect to safety, the environment and the canoe. Then carry the canoe (with help), wipe it

out and put it away safely. In addition to this, the canoeist should try to paddle the canoe sideways and try to trim the canoe and regain balance with the help of the paddle.

In terms of safety, there are requirements for a suitable buoyancy aid and appropriate clothing and safety in the water. The canoeist should perform a capsize, remain calm, collect all their equipment and swim to shore (10 meters) and empty the canoe from the water with the help of a companion. It is desirable to also test the paddler to get back on board and into the canoe using another paddler by companion rescue.

Regarding the environment, canoeists should know about the Right of Public Access and follow it. In essence, always respect nature and show consideration for the environment (do not disturb, do not spoil).

There is also a code of conduct concerning safety, environment and behavior. The canoeist should ensure that the canoe and equipment are suitable for the prevailing conditions and be aware of its capabilities and remain well within their limits. The canoeist should have an appreciation of the risks where he or she plans to paddle and should be accompanied by being at least another canoe, so that they can help each other. This is an important safety measure on the water.



## SWEDISH CANOE FEDERATION

The Swedish Canoe Federation has about 120 affiliated associations and more than 100 approved canoe centres around the country that can help with local knowledge and the opportunity to test different canoes.

Find them on **kanot.com** or **kanotguiden.com**.

There are also more tips on how to find great canoeing and how to learn more in order to develop your paddling skills.

You can also reach us via email:

**paddelpasset@kanot.com**

or on telephone: **+46 (0)155-20 90 80**

"Essential paddling tips for the canoeist" is a collaboration between the Swedish Transport Agency and the Swedish Canoe Federation.

Order more copies of the brochure under "Publications" on **transportstyrelsen.se**

You can also reach Swedish Transport Agency on telephone: **+46 (0)771-503 503**



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