Paddler’s Checklist

Preparation for a paddling trip should include planning for worst-case scenarios. What safety items you choose to bring will vary from trip to trip. Below are some items to consider, but this list is by no means complete.

**Basic Trips**
- Appropriate clothing – always dress for the weather and know what to expect. Temperature changes can occur rapidly. Layers of clothing insulate in cool weather better than a single garment. Cotton is not a good insulator, especially when wet.
- Lots of drinking water
- Life vests (personal floatation devices, PFD’s)
- Proper footwear – closed toe sandals or shoes are best
- Maps and river guides
- Sunscreen
- UV eye protection – choose a good pair of sunglasses and a strap to keep them on
- Wide-brimmed hat - for sun protection
- First aid kit with matches
- Dry bag – to keep extra clothing, electronics, sleeping bag and other items dry during your trip
- Rope and/or bungee cords - to keep items such as tackle boxes and coolers attached to the canoe or kayak

**Overnight trips**
- Cooking and dining utensils – plates, forks, knives, cook stove and fuel, etc.
- Extra matches
- Fire starter
- Food – amount depending on length of the trip and amount of people.
- Necessary toiletries – toilet paper, shampoo, soap, toothpaste and toothbrush, etc.
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad
- Tent

**More advanced trips**
*(Longer trips/trips with rapids and hazards)*
- Helmet – a helmet is important in whitewater where upsets are likely or when spray skirts or thigh restraints are in use
- A whistle or sound signaling device
- Bilge pump, sponge and/orailer – important for those in open water, always carry some device that can get water OUT of the boat
- Compass and/or GPS and a good map of the river – know where you are and how to get out in an emergency
- Duct tape/small repair kit
- Waterproof tarp
- Light/signal
- River knife – when there are ropes and rigging to get tangled in, a knife may be needed
- Self-Rescue devices – paddle float, slings, tow ropes, throw bags and throw ropes
- Spare paddle
- VHS radio – for emergencies and monitoring the weather
- Water bucket or folding jug
- Water purification tablets or filter
- Two “painter lines” - 30’ long, 1/4” thick nylon ropes to attach to the bow and stern of your boat.