Smart Start for Safe Paddling

ACA PADDLESPORTS



Smart Gear



Always wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket while on the water. Pay attention to the size, weight capacity, and design of your boat and paddle. Carry essential safety gear such as a first aid kit, whistle, and cutting tool - and know how to use them! Don't forget to bring plenty of food, water, and dry clothes in a watertight bag or box.

Smart Plan



Make a plan before you paddle! Check the weather forecast especially for wind, storms, or temperature changes. Understand water conditions including tides, currents, and river levels. Identify potential hazards, including boat traffic, submerged obstacles, and cold water risks. Choose an appropriate paddling route and discuss back up plans.

Smart Decisions



Paddle in a group, never alone! Stay within your skill and comfort level and avoid unfamiliar waters without proper preparation. Learn waterway navigation rules including how to interact with other waterway users. Always file a float plan and give it to a trusted friend or family member.

Smart Skills

To build confidence on the water, learn and practice fundamental paddling strokes such as the forward stroke, sweep stroke, and draw stroke. Consistently practice proper boat entry, exit, and self-rescue techniques; also become confident in providing assisted rescues to other paddlers who need help. Find a certified instructor and take an on-water course!



The Smart Start for Safe Paddling program is brought to you by the American Canoe Association (ACA).
Visit: americancanoe.org/smart-start

Smart Start for Safe Paddling

The American Canoe Association's (ACA) vision is to engage millions of paddlers with safe and healthy opportunities for challenge, learning, service, and enjoyment. As part of fulfilling that vision, the ACA developed the Smart Start for Safe Paddling program to present core paddling principles that will keep you, your friends, and your family safe on the water and creating lasting memories for years to come.

Smart Start is holistic suite of resources which features comprehensive books, student activity workbooks, free online coursework, instructor's guide with presentation slides, and a wide collection of complementary resources.



- Smart Start for Safe Paddling Book
- Smart Start for Safe Paddling Student Activity Workbook
- Presentation Slides
- Free Online Smart Start Safety Course
- Instructor Course Delivery Guide
- On-Water Course Outline



These resources are intended to meet ACA's educational guidelines and the evidence-based educational standards recommended by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary's B Directorate, as well as align with standards created by the National On-Water Standards program and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA).

In-text citations provide for easy cross-reference of published standards and the corresponding content within the Smart Start for Safe Paddling program.

Learn More!

Scan the QR code to discover all that the Smart Start for Safe Paddling program has to offer.

americancanoe.org/smart-start

aca@americancanoe.org

540-907-4460