

17 RECOVERY

Don't underestimate the fatigue factor, especially if you don't go sea kayaking regularly. If your muscles cease to respond, drink some water, eat some energy-rich food, and, if possible, try to reach the shore to rest.

In case of extreme fatigue, you and your kayak can be towed by another kayak using the heaving line that you are required to carry with you at all times. The most experienced paddler of the group will tow you by attaching one end of the cord to his body and the other end to the bow of your kayak. This method is physically very demanding on the paddler and is intended solely for the purposes of transporting an exhausted person to a safe place as fast as possible.

The rafting technique consists of all kayakers of a group drawing their kayaks close together, each holding on to the next kayak. The entity as a whole is relatively stable and allows for each to rest without having to worry too much about losing balance.

When the sea starts to become rough, you will start to sense difficulties in maintaining your balance. At this point, you should

apply the leaning technique: place one side of the paddle on the surface of the water and push it towards the bottom to stabilize yourself. Withdraw the paddle diagonally out of the water and continue moving forward, which also helps you to maintain your balance.

Should you still find yourself in trouble, don't panic. It is almost easier to get out of a tipped-over kayak than it is to get out of one that is right side up. However, to get out of a kayak while right side up: Grab the ring in front of your spray apron and pull it towards you. Place one hand on each side of the cockpit and, leaning forwards, thrust yourself out of the kayak. When you return to the surface, keep in touch with your kayak and wait for help from your companions.

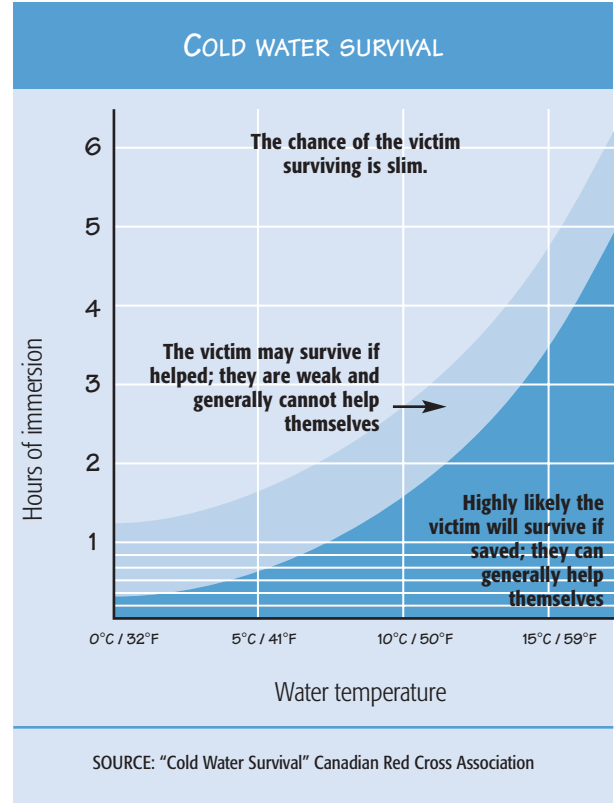
A paddle float will allow you to restabilize your kayak by yourself. Inflate it and place it at the end of the paddle that reaches into the water. Place the other end onto the kayak: the paddle is now perpendicular to the kayak, at the height of the cockpit. Using the paddle as a support, hoist yourself onto the kayak and into the

cockpit. Pump the water out of the kayak into the sea and replace the spray apron.

Naturally, these self-help procedures are easier said than done. We strongly urge kayakers to practice these techniques in controlled settings before starting out. And once again, for your safety, nothing can replace training and experience!



PIERRE TRUDEL



18 HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is your **worst enemy**, especially in **extremely cold coastal waters**. It occurs when your body loses more heat than it can produce. If not treated quickly, **hypothermia can be fatal**. **Even in July**, a dunking in the waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence can lead to a total loss of manual dexterity within 5 minutes and death within 15 to 20.

Immersion in cold water isn't the only cause of hypothermia. Although less obvious, the combination of factors such as fatigue, dehydration, hunger, wind, rain, and air temperature can also be dangerous.

Acute hypothermia: Uncontrollable shivering, loss of manual dexterity, generalized numbness

Chronic hypothermia: Shivering stops, difficulty speaking, confusion, loss of balance, sleepiness then unconsciousness

You should take hypothermia very seriously. Take steps to protect yourself by wearing appropriate clothing and doing all you can to help your body fight the cold (rest, drink water, eat properly).

TREATING HYPOTHERMIA

As soon as uncontrollable shivering and trembling (acute hypothermia) begins, take immediate action:

1. **Protect** the victim from the elements (get victim out of water, shelter from wind or rain).
2. Strip off wet clothing and replace with dry clothing. Cover head and neck (wool cap, sweater).
3. A warm sweet drink (**no alcohol or caffeine**) will help the victim warm up from the inside out. A flask of warm water under the arms will have a similar effect.
4. With mild hypothermia, exercise will help warm the victim. If the hypothermia is severe, place the person in a sleeping bag.
5. When body temperature returns to normal, give the victim something rich in carbohydrates and sugar to eat (dehydrated fruit, cereal bar, honey).
6. Rest as long as necessary before setting off again.

After the first four steps of treatment, **victims with chronic hypothermia must be evacuated** to a hospital as quickly as possible.

19 COMMUNICATION

CALLING FOR HELP

Radio: Frequency 156.8 MHz-channel 16. Signal: Mayday (3 times) indicating your name and position, the nature of the problem, and the type of assistance required

Cell phone: *16. (See chapter 5 for restrictions).

Distress flares can be **Type A (parachute flare), Type B (red star shells), and Type C (hand flare)**. They burn from several seconds to a minute and can be seen for several miles, both day and night. It is strongly recommended that you bring along at least three flares. Even if you plan on staying close to the shore, **the wind and currents can quickly push you out** to sea where sound-signalling devices are useless. They are compulsory (at least 6) for kayaks over 6 meters (See Chapter 1, Kayaks, Equipment, and Clothing). Check the manufacture date and make sure they meet approved distress signal standards. Flares are approved for four years after the date of manufacture or as per manufacturer's expiration date.

A piece of orange canvas with either a black square or circle. The canvas is very compact and provides a continuous distress signal. Several sizes are available. Any set-up featuring a square flag with a ball above or below serves the same purpose.

Morse code sound or light signalling device. A one second signal equals a dot and a 4 to 6 second signal equals a dash.

Distress signals

Continuous sounding (dash) with a foghorn, a bell or a whistle at intervals of about one minute.

Flashlight : •••---••• (S O S)

The following signals help draw the attention of approaching rescuers. **Smoke flares (Type D) and fluorescein dye** (see Chapter 5) are examples of such signalling devices. You can also slowly wave your outstretched arms by simultaneously and repeatedly raising and lowering them.

CANADIAN RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Transport Canada, Marine Safety

www.boatingsafety.gc.ca

Boating Safety Infoline: (800) 267-6687

Video

Sea kayaking safety awareness... make every trip a return trip

Sea kayaking is one of the fastest growing water sports in Canada and has become a popular mainstream activity for outdoor enthusiasts who are drawn to the lure of the sea. This safety & awareness video, produced by the Canadian Coast Guard, will raise your awareness of the skills and level of knowledge required to safely navigate Canadian coastal waters. Sea kayaking is a safe and incredible experience for all those who fully understand the potential hazards; have been properly trained in all aspects of the sport, and have truthfully assessed their own skill level to mitigate any risk.

Available from: Sound Venture Productions
126 York Street
Suite 219
Ottawa, Canada
K1N 5T5

Canadian Hydrographic Service

Marine charts and Canadian tide tables: www.charts.gc.ca

Information: (877) 775-0790

Environment Canada

Weather Office: weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca

VHF Broadcasting on Weatheradio Canada in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax

Parks Canada

www.parksCanada.gc.ca/

General Information: (800) 463-6769

Canadian Wildlife Service

www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)

www.cpaws.org/

Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association

info@paddlingcanada.com

www.paddlingcanada.com
