



Marine Notice No. 37 of 2022

*Notice to all Masters, Owners and Users of Pleasure and Recreational Craft
and commercial training providers.*

Important safety advice for those involved in Canoeing and Kayaking

In response to Marine Casualty Investigation Board recommendations, the Department of Transport wishes to draw attention to Chapter 7 of the Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft in relation to Canoeing and Kayaking.

As highlighted previously in [Marine Notice No. 30 of 2020](#) and [Marine Notice No. 31 of 2019](#), canoeists, kayakers and kayaking and canoeing organisations are again encouraged to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code of Practice and to comply with its safety advice and recommendations.

Chapter 7 (Canoeing/Kayaking) of the Code of Practice gives advice on actions to take prior to taking to the water, including details on appropriate training and information on personal safety equipment. Information is also provided in relation to additional precautions to be observed when sea kayaking, river kayaking and canoeing.

Particular attention is drawn to the following advice:

1. Training

Before taking to the water in a canoe or kayak, it is recommended that all persons undertake a recognised training course in the correct use of the craft involved, including relevant rescue and recovery drills. Information regarding training courses and registered training providers is available on the Canoeing Ireland website at www.canoe.ie.

2. Before entering the water

Sections 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 of the Code of Practice list important safety actions and checks to be undertaken prior to entering the water. These include being able to swim, never operating alone, the inspection of craft and equipment, the wearing of a suitable personal flotation device/lifejacket, having a dependable means of communication, ensuring someone is aware of your intended departure, location and return details and ensuring that you are wearing suitable clothing and footwear for the area of operation and time of year.

3. Sea and river kayakers should observe additional precautions including:

- Check the weather forecast and sea area forecast. Only operate within your limits and ability. Canoeing/Kayaking in a wind force 4 or above should only be considered for the very experienced.
- Be aware of the tidal conditions or water levels for the areas that you are operating in.
- Be aware of the effects of interaction between wind and tide on sea states.
- Be aware of the dangers of hypothermia when wet or exposed to the elements.
- Have a passage plan and alternative emergency plans, e.g. safe landing area down wind.
- Assess and study potential courses for hidden dangers, snags, hazards, currents, etc., prior to putting craft into the water.

4. Dependable means of communication

Mobile phones should not be relied on as the primary method of contacting the emergency services. Marine VHF radio equipment is the recommended method of communication and craft users should be familiar with its use. Where mobile phone use is proposed, the phone should at all times be fully charged and the signal strength and charge indicator should be regularly checked while the vessel is underway. For further advice and information, please see [Marine Notice No. 40 of 2019](#) (Limitations of Mobile Phone Use for Emergency Communication at Sea).

As outlined in [Marine Notice No.32 of 2022](#), the Code of Practice is a free document. Hard copies can be obtained on request, in both English and Irish, from the Maritime Safety Policy Division of the Department at email MarineLeisureSafety@transport.gov.ie. The Code and individual Chapters of the Code are available to view or download from www.transport.gov.ie. A list of updates to the 2017 Edition of the Code is also available to view or download from www.gov.ie.

A link to Chapter 7 of the Code of Practice is [here](#).

All recreational craft users are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Code of Practice and to heed the safety advice and recommendations.

Please spread the word regarding the Code of Practice and its availability.

Note: Marine Notices are issued purely for maritime safety and navigation reasons and should not be construed as conferring rights or granting permissions.

Irish Maritime Administration,
Department of Transport
Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02 TR60, Ireland.

15/06/2022

For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact:

The Marine Survey Office, email: MSO@transport.gov.ie

For general enquiries, please contact the Maritime Safety Policy Division, email:

MaritimeSafetyPolicyDivision@transport.gov.ie

Written enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to:

Dept. of Transport, Maritime Safety Policy Division, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02 TR60, Ireland.

email: MarineNotices@transport.gov.ie or visit us at: www.gov.ie/transport