



## United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

District 11 Northern Region

Serving Northern California, Nevada, Utah



# Paddle Craft Vessel Safety Check Review D11NR Vessel examiner's-

***We save lives!***

Prepared by:  
Mike Lauro DSO-VE 11NR

# Paddle Craft



The *fastest* growing area of  
Recreational Boating!

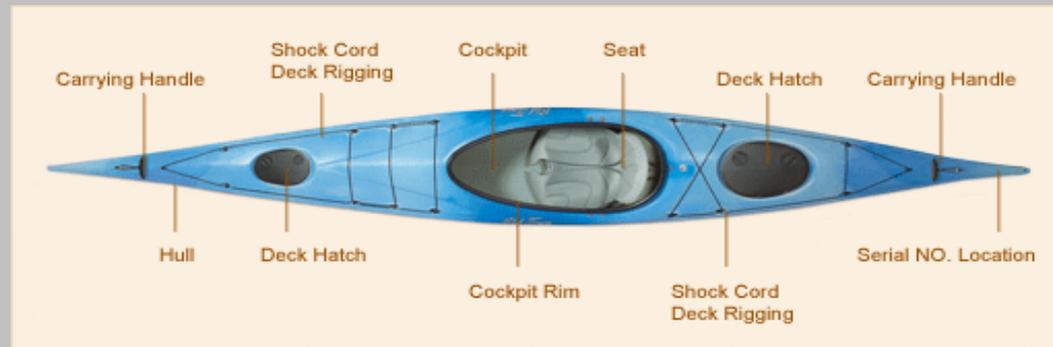
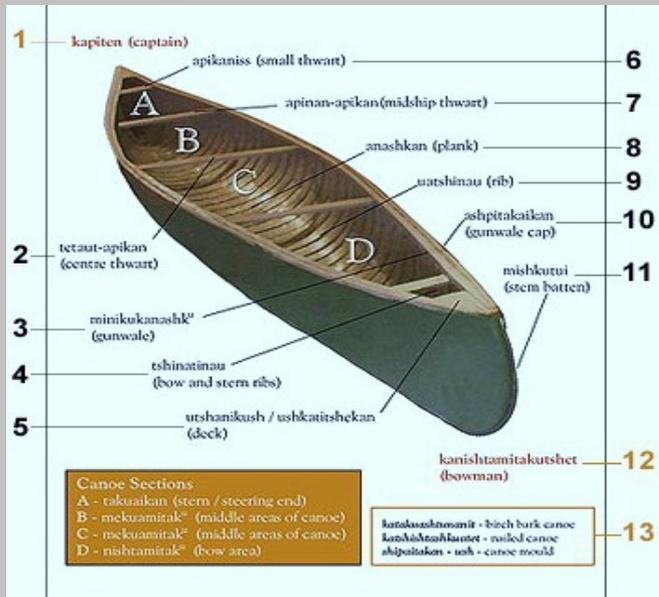


# What's a Paddle Craft?

Canoe, kayak, rowboat,  
pedal boat, but NOT a  
paddleboard or a vessel  
powered by an engine!



# Types of Paddle Craft



# CANOE



# KAYAK



# ROWBOAT



# PEDAL BOAT



# Paddle Craft 7012A VSC Form

	<b>PADDLE CRAFT</b> <b>VESSEL SAFETY CHECK (VSC)</b> <small>To be completed by a U.S. Coast Guard approved Vessel Examiner.</small>	Date of VSC: _____
		Decal Awarded: _____
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Sections 1, 2 and 3 must be completed

I. Owner / Operator Information	II. Paddle Craft Information
Name: _____	Registration No. _____ HIN: _____
Attended Safe Boating Class: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Make & Model: _____
Attended Related Skills Class: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Kayak <input type="checkbox"/> Canoe <input type="checkbox"/> Row Boat <input type="checkbox"/> Paddleboard <input type="checkbox"/>
Location of VSC- County: _____ State: _____	Scull <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Replaced decal was: Check a selection below	Color: Deck _____ Hull _____
Last Year <input type="checkbox"/> Outdated <input type="checkbox"/> First Time <input type="checkbox"/>	Length (in feet): <12 <input type="checkbox"/> 12-16 <input type="checkbox"/> >16 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Water craft used in: Protected <input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Swift <input type="checkbox"/>

III. Safety Check Requirements	Y	N	N/A	V. Other Recommendations:	Y	N	N/A
Sound signal (whistle, horn, etc)				Dressed for immersion / helmet			
Life jacket(s)				Personal ID on operator			
Overall Vessel Condition: as applies				Float plan with someone on shore			
a. Hull & deck sound				Adequate food and water / Sun Protection			
b. Hatch covers (good condition/secure)				Assess the risk / good awareness			
c. Deck lines & Bungee Cords				High visibility clothing, gear, etc.			
d. Hardware secure (in working order)				Appropriate emergency kit (might include first-aid kit, knife, repair kit, etc.)			
e. Bulkheads/Airbags/Flotation				Appropriate self-rescue system / skills			
f. Paddle / Oars (serviceable)				Contact information affixed to craft			
Navigation Lights, White lights				Accident Reporting – Owner Responsible			
Visual Distress Signals (VDS)				Anchor lights (if applicable)			
State and/or Local Requirements							
IV. Open Water Recommendations:				Vessel Examiner Comments:			
Pump or bailer							
Spray skirt							
Spare paddle / oars							
Compass / GPS / navigation chart							
Tow / boat recovery system							
Marine radio (VHF) / cell phone / PLB							

I certify that I have checked this craft and find it meets the above requirements at the time of this Vessel Safety Check. I am a qualified Vessel Examiner of the: CGAUX \_\_\_\_\_ USFS \_\_\_\_\_ State of \_\_\_\_\_

VE(print name): \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Comment:** *This is not an official boarding for law enforcement purposes. It is recommended that you correct any deficiencies noted. This checklist is furnished for your information. There is no assumption of liability of any kind for advice given or opinions expressed in connection to this examination. By accepting the Vessel Safety Check (VSC) decal you are pledging to maintain your craft and equipment to the standard of safety exhibited during this examination. Please remove the decal if the craft is sold or no longer meets these requirements.*

I am consenting to this Vessel safety check of my Paddle Craft with full knowledge that it is provided to me as a public service on a volunteer basis without cost and I understand and agree that any receipt of a Vessel Safety check shall not constitute or be construed as a warranty or guarantee as to either the qualification, knowledge, or skills of the operator; the seaworthiness of the vessel; or the serviceability or adequacy of any equipment on board.

Owner - Operator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ANSC 7012A (11/10) Previous editions are obsolete.

Original - EXAMINER

Sections 1, 2, and 3, must be completed for award of the VSC decal. Form includes space for Vessel Examiner Comments.



# Paddle Craft 7012A VSC Form

## Boater copy

I. Owner / Operator Information	Details
Assess the risk	Be realistic about what can go wrong and be prepared.
In depth understanding of many factors impacting the voyage being undertaken.	Water temp, weather, waves, current, visibility, navigation skills, craft design limitations, physical conditioning, skill level, other craft on the water, local geography. Know and abide by the rules of the road.
<b>III. Safety Check Requirements</b>	
Sound signal (whistle, horn, etc)	Ideally attached to your life jacket.
Life jacket (adjusted to wearer & USCG approved)	9 out of 10 boaters that drown are not wearing a life jacket. Make sure you have a life jacket that is sized and fitted for you.
Overall vessel conditions: *as applies	Leaky hulls, lines or fittings in disrepair, leaky bulkheads – are all reasons for VSC failure.
*Hull & deck sound	Even a small leak could impact the stability of the vessel
*Hatch covers in good condition and secure	Submerge in controlled conditions and check hatch for water.
*Deck lines and bungee cords in good condition and secure	If you capsize, hold on to your paddle and craft as they can potentially blow or surf away faster than you can swim after it.
*Hardware secure and in working order	A malfunctioning rudder, skeg, etc. can be a significant liability.
*Bulkheads / air bags / emergency flotation in good working order	Many craft without flotation become unusable or sink completely when flooded. Flotation makes self or assisted rescues much easier. Unsecured flotation can be lost.
*Paddle / oars serviceable	No visible cracks or fractures along the blade and shaft
Navigation Lights (sunset to sunrise)	If operating between sunset and sunrise, or in restricted visibility, 1 white light (flashlight acceptable).
Visual Distress Signals (VDS) (sunset to sunrise) Applicable only to vessels operating on waters defined as coastal.	If operating between sunset and sunrise a VDS suitable for night use must be carried. Either 1 electric light (with S.O.S.) or 3 combination day/night flares. Expired signals do not meet the requirement and are unreliable if used.
<b>IV. Open Water Recommendations</b>	
Pump or bailer	Recommended to remove excess water from inside vessel.
Spray skirt – Waterproof barrier worn to create a seal with the cockpit coaming	Make sure the grab loop is on the outside and that the operator knows how to exit the boat while wearing the spray skirt.
Spare paddle / oars	Make sure you have one available if needed.
Compass / GPS / navigation charts	Know how to use them & test in the conditions you expect to need them.
Tow / boat recovery system	Have a plan if you need help getting home? Practice these skills.
Marine radio (VHF) / cell phone / PLB	Know how to use & test them in the conditions you expect to need them.
<b>V. Other Recommendations</b>	
Always dress for an unexpected capsize, a helmet is necessary where upsets are likely	Cold water kills: cold shock - 1 minute, swimming failure -10 minutes, hypothermia - 1 hour. Resulting in unconsciousness/ death Always wear your lifejacket.
Personal ID on operator	Driver's license, credit card and medical ID is excellent.
Float plan with someone on shore	Route, duration, craft description, bail out options, etc.
Appropriate food and water	Be prepared, you are completely dependent on the operator for mobility.
Never Boat Under the Influence	Keep yourself well fueled.
Appropriate emergency kit (might include first-aid kit, knife, fire starter, boat repair, etc.)	When putting your kit together, bear in mind the type of activities you'll be doing and the conditions you'll expect to encounter.
Sun protection (sunglasses / hat)	Don't forget your eyes and skin.
High visibility clothing, gear, etc.	Retroreflective, brightly colored, luminescent, etc.
Appropriate self rescue system / skills	Have a plan if you find yourself out of your boat. Practice self and assisted rescue techniques.
Contact information affixed to craft	Your name and phone number is sufficient.
Anchor Lights – if applicable (sunset to sunrise)	Not required unless anchoring in or near a narrow channel, fairway, anchorage, or where other vessels normally navigate, or in restricted visibility – 1 all around white light, or an electric torch or flashlight.



# MANDATORY

## Safety Check Requirements

- Lifejacket
- Vessel in overall serviceable condition-items up to examiner discretion.
- Sound Signal-whistle or a horn-should be attached to the lifejacket.



# SOUND PRODUCING DEVICES

All vessels must have a means of signaling sound for at least a ½ mile. SUB can meet this requirement with a marine distress whistle-attached to the lifejacket.



# LIFE-JACKET

- Each person must have an approved type I, II, III, or V PFD. Type IV is not required.
- The PFD with a whistle and safety mirror should be worn whenever under way.
- A PFD designed specifically for canoeing or kayaking is best.



# Overall Vessel Condition

- Hull & Deck Sound
- Hatch covers in good condition and secure
- Deck lines and bungee cords in good condition
- Hardware secure and in working order
- Bulkheads/air bags/emergency floatation in good order
- Paddle/oars serviceable
- Contact information affixed to craft



# Additional Requirements: NAVIGATION LIGHTS

- Navigation Lights are required on all vessels operating at night and during periods of reduced visibility.

A flashlight in good working order with spare batteries may



# VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS



- SUB must comply with Federal and State VDS requirements. If operated in coastal waters unless with an organized group, they must have three **ORANGE** for day use, or **RED** flares for day/night use on board. If operated at night on inland waters, they should have at least a flashlight. In addition, a signaling mirror or an old CD should be attached to the operator pfd.



# REGISTRATION

- This document is not required by California, Nevada, or Utah unless the vessel has a means of propulsion. There is a HIN (hull identification number) to record. However, the operator should be able to verify ownership.



# NUMBERING

- California, Nevada, and Utah do not require registration numbers on non-motorized boats.
- Other states may have different requirements.



# NAVIGATION RULES

- Boats 39.4 feet and over must have on board a current copy of the Navigation Rules. NOT required for SUBS, but they should aware of the “size matters” rule!



# STATE AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

- The Paddle Craft must comply with all state and local requirements. Currently there are no additional state requirements. However, local regulations may apply.



# OVERALL VESSEL CONDITION

The boat must be well maintained  
and suitable for its area of use.



# ADDITIONAL ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR ALL Paddle Craft



# FILE A FLOAT PLAN

which should include:

- Information about the operator, the vessel, and transport vehicle.
- The route of travel, date and time of arrival and departure.
- Posting a float plan with friends is a great life insurance policy.

**FLOAT PLAN**

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete this plan before you go boating and leave it with a reliable person who can be contacted upon notifying the Coast Guard, or other rescue organization, should you not return or otherwise be delayed. If you have a change of plans after leaving, be sure to notify the person holding your float plan. For additional details of this plan, go to: [www.FloatPlanRecord.org](http://www.FloatPlanRecord.org)

Do NOT file this plan with the U.S. Coast Guard

**VESSEL**

IDENTIFICATION: Name & Home Port \_\_\_\_\_  
Coast Guard Registration No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Year & Make \_\_\_\_\_  
Length \_\_\_\_\_ in. Type \_\_\_\_\_ Craft \_\_\_\_\_  
Hull Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Registration Number \_\_\_\_\_

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: Radio Call Sign \_\_\_\_\_  
DSC MMSI No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Radio 1 Type \_\_\_\_\_ On-Flag MMSI No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Radio 2 Type \_\_\_\_\_ On-Flag MMSI No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax No. \_\_\_\_\_

**POPULATION**

Passenger Type \_\_\_\_\_ No. of \_\_\_\_\_ Fuel Capacity \_\_\_\_\_ gal.  
Crew Type \_\_\_\_\_ No. of \_\_\_\_\_ Fuel Capacity \_\_\_\_\_ gal.

**SAFETY & SURVIVAL**

VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS: Day Only Type \_\_\_\_\_ Night Only Type \_\_\_\_\_ Day & Night Type \_\_\_\_\_  
AUXILIARY DISTRESS SIGNALS: Horn/Whistle \_\_\_\_\_ Bell \_\_\_\_\_  
COVER-UP: Life Jacket/Life raft \_\_\_\_\_ PFD(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Life Vest/IBCF \_\_\_\_\_ Drysuit/IBCF \_\_\_\_\_  
Drysuit/IBCF \_\_\_\_\_ Drysuit/IBCF \_\_\_\_\_  
PFD(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
IBCF \_\_\_\_\_  
Raft/Inflatable Boat \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONS ON BOARD**

OPERATOR: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Cellphone No. (area code) \_\_\_\_\_  
Trailer will be used on \_\_\_\_\_

PERSONS ON BOARD: Name & Address \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_  
Hull Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Hull Registration No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Hull Registration No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Hull Registration No. \_\_\_\_\_



# USE A SPRAY SKIRT



- Learn how to properly attach the spray skirt and how to remove it in an emergency



# HAT OR HELMET

- Wear a Hat for sun protection.
  - Wear a helmet for rapids, surfing, and rough seas.
- Use Sunscreen.



# FIRST AID KIT

- Suggest taking a basic first aid and CPR training.
- Pack a waterproof First Aid kit.



# WATER, SNACKS, AND CLOTHING

- Dress properly for existing and expected weather conditions.
- Bring drinking water, snacks and clothing.
- Cold water requires the use of wet or dry suits in addition to wearing a lifejacket.



# WATER, SNACKS, AND CLOTHING-continued



# DRY-BAGS

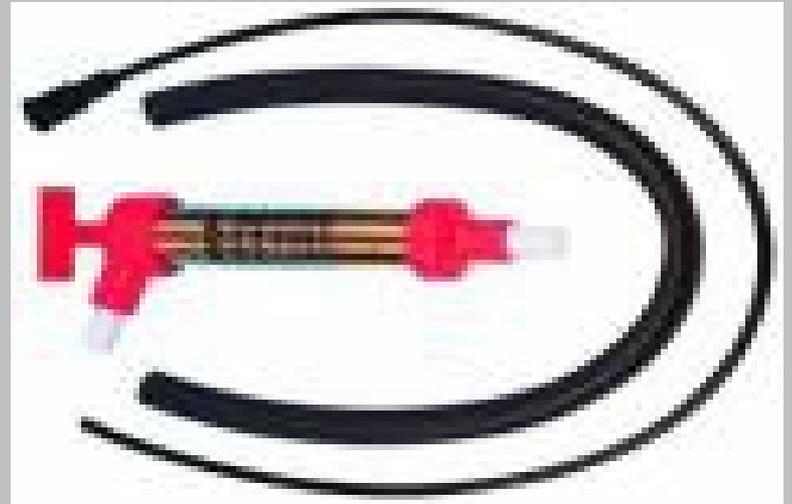


- All loose items should be stored in waterproof bags tethered to the boat.



# BILGE PUMP

- On sit-in units always carry a small PVC type bilge pump for dewatering your vessel.
- Note: most sit-on kayaks have self draining holes.
- Use a floatation collar.



# RESCUE GEAR

- Bring throw bags, tow lines and other rescue gear.
- Discuss **AVOIDING** drugs and **alcohol!**



# SPARE PADDLE/OAR



- Pack a spare paddle or oar and secure it to the boat.
- Use a paddle leash attached to a forward fitting or bungee cord



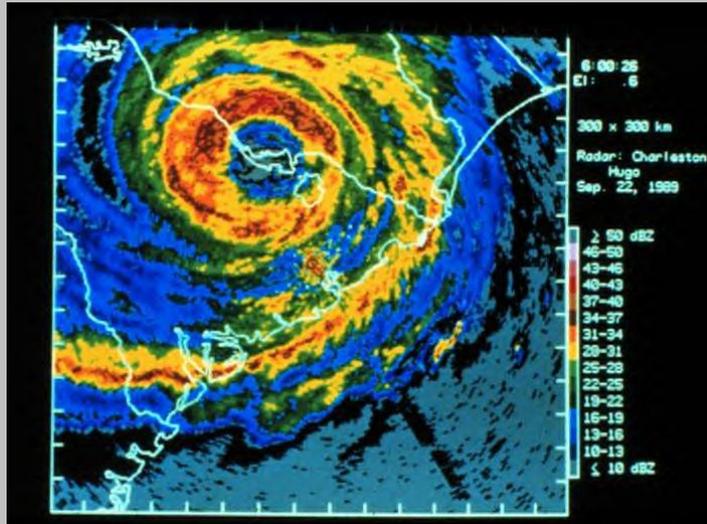
# VHF RADIO, GPS, COMPASS



- Carry a VHF Radio, GPS, and Cell Phone.

- Carry a hand held compass as a back up.





# CHECK THE WEATHER

- Monitor weather conditions.
- Bring a weather radio or use a VHF radio with a weather channel.
- Check sky and sea conditions.
- Remind the paddler about exclusion zones around dams, docks and ships.



# CHARTS- suggest:



- Carrying a chart.
- Local knowledge of your route is key.
- Learn basic coastal navigation.



# PRACTICE, PRACTICE PRACTICE....

- Practice wet exits from a kayak or canoe in safe, calm, shallow water.



# OTHER ITEMS



# CLEAN UP

- Pack a trash bag.
- Take all refuse away with you.
- Leave every stop cleaner than when you found it.



# BUDDY SYSTEM

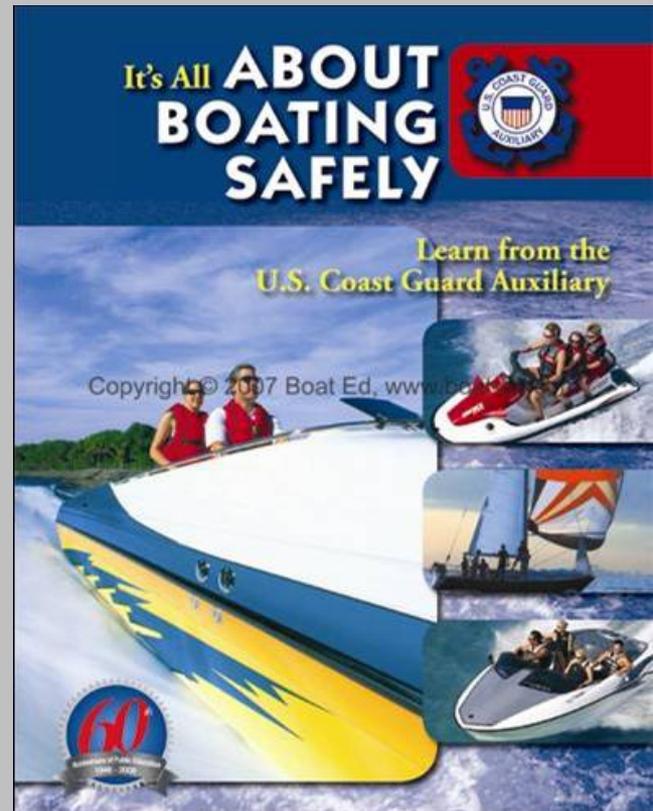
- **NEVER** PADDLE ALONE!  
ALWAYS Bring a friend.
- It is always safer to paddle in a group.



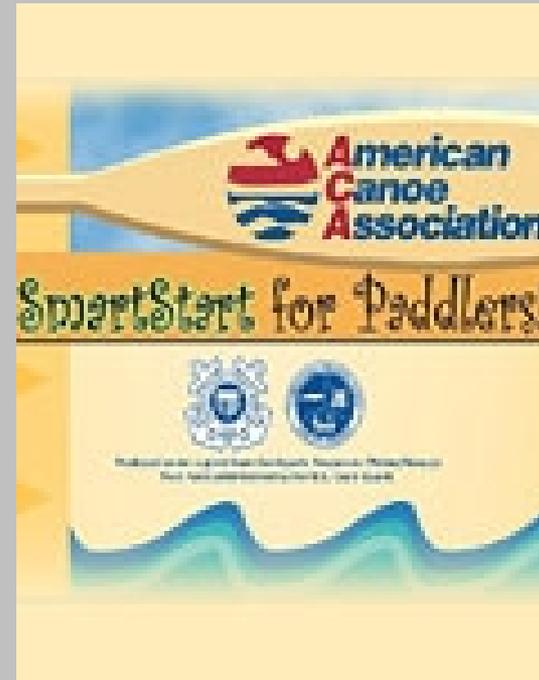
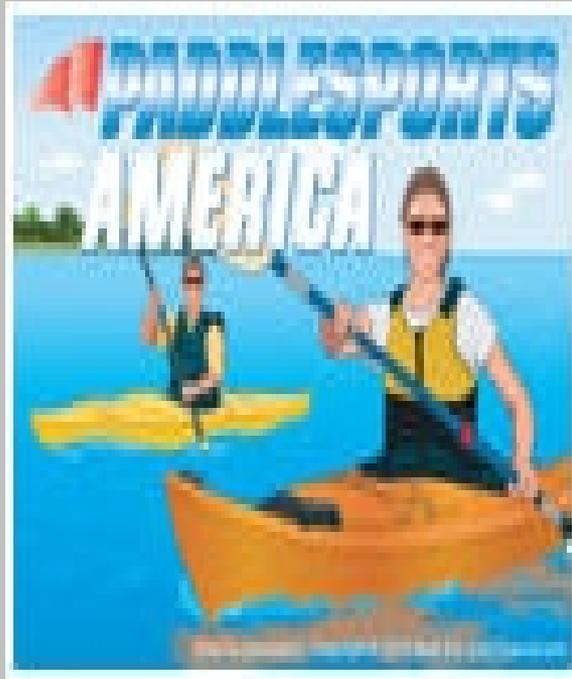
# BOATING SAFETY COURSE

All boaters should be encouraged to take a Boating Safety Course such as the “About Boating Safely” Course.

For more D11NR class info, promote:  
<http://public.d11nuscgaux.info/pe-course.html> on ALL handout material.



# Recommend- PADDLESPORTS AMERICA or SMART START FOR PADDLERS-



# “IF FOUND” Decal

Vessel Identification Sticker for Canoe, Kayak or Rowboat

**IF FOUND - CONTACT**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Use waterproof marker



If possible, the Vessel Examiner should provide the paddler with this decal during VSC, and strongly suggest it's use.

Please see your DSO-VE for availability.



# Paddle Craft VSC Review

## D11NR Vessel Examination Department

***WE SAVE LIVES!***

For more information, please see: “[How to Perform a VSC on a Paddle Craft](#)” available on the District Vessel Examiner website:

<http://rbsafety.d11nuscgaux.info/ve/ve.html>.



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