

Hackensack RIVERKEEPER® Assumption of Risk Form for Canoes and Kayaks

**10 TIPS FOR SAFE TRIPS**

1. The Hackensack River and Meadowlands are potentially unpredictable and hazardous. The occasionally strong water and wind currents are strongest in the center of the river and reduced toward either bank.
2. Creeks and channels throughout the wetlands might be disorienting and some may become unnavigable as the water level falls. In many places, wooden markers with red tips separate the channel from the mud flats. **Do not paddle under the NJ Turnpike's Western Spur without an experienced guide.**
3. Cold water and air may cause hypothermia or frostbite. Hot weather and sun reflecting from the water and canoe can increase sunburn potential or other heat-related illness. Dress for the weather and act accordingly.
4. Wildlife is easily disturbed by human activity. Observe, but keep your distance.
5. In the event of a sudden thunder or lightning storm, immediately paddle to land (not wetland) and walk away from your boat. If practical, return to your launch site. Otherwise, try to find shelter and wait for the storm to subside.
6. **Canoes and kayaks can be capsized (overturned) by the following: swift water, running aground, underwater obstructions, floating debris, wind-induced swells, boat wakes & contact with other boats.**
7. To help prevent or alleviate danger:
  - Wear your **Personal Flotation Device** AT ALL TIMES.
  - Load gear evenly and secure it to your boat. Anything you bring with you may get lost or wet so it is recommended that you leave valuables in your car or at the Paddling Center.
  - Maintain **3-Point Contact** with the canoe when entering and exiting and never stand up.
  - Keep your body centered with your weight low (kneeling when appropriate).
  - **BRING a cellphone programmed with the Paddling Center number (201-920-474)** in a waterproof container or bag. We have some dry bags available.
8. Your whistle is for emergencies: fatigue, illness, disorientation, stranding, and hazardous conditions. It is also advantageous to wave a paddle back and forth above your head while whistling.
9. Other inherent hazards associated with water and watercraft activities may not be stated. Please ask questions at any time; before, during or after launch. Use sound judgment in, on and around the water.
10. **Before or during launch, if you feel that conditions are unfavorable, please return to shore.**

*I have read and I understand the above material and I have been briefed\* on paddling techniques, boat handling, and emergency procedures so that I understand the potential hazards associated with canoeing and kayaking. All of my questions and concerns have been answered to my satisfaction and I am voluntarily participating in this paddling activity. I do hereby release and will hold harmless Hackensack Riverkeeper and all of its officers, employees and volunteers, from any and all liability, actions, causes of action, debts, claims and demands of every kind and nature whatsoever. I also understand that all equipment is the property of Hackensack Riverkeeper Inc. and that I can be held responsible for any loss or damage.*

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

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\*The briefing will take place at the Paddling Center before your trip.

ALL PADDLERS MUST REVIEW AND SIGN THIS FORM – SEE REVERSE FOR ADD'L SPACES.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
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