

Pod Leader Safety Talk Outline

Introduction of Pod Leaders and Assistants - Names and background information

Safety role of Leaders & Assistants

Provide safety guidance on the water.

Keep the pod together.

Safety role of Participants

Follow directions.

Pay attention to your leaders and the river.

Stay with your pod – or inform your leader or assistant of any changes.

Safety Talk

The Willamette River is classified as “flat water”, but there are a number of areas along the river with fast moving current. Although your pod leader and assistant are there to offer guidance on the water - you are responsible for your own safety. The general rule is to “**Recognize and Avoid All Hazards.**”

Things to look out for and safety tips include:

- 1) **Strainers** - any object that is stationary in the water that has the current pushing against it. This can be a log sticking up out of the current, a root wad from a fallen tree, an artificial obstruction such as metal pole, or rocks. If a canoe or kayak gets pushed up against such an object the current will frequently force the canoe or kayak to turn, or buckle – thereby trapping the paddler. Pinning may occur in fast current with little or no whitewater to warn of the danger. If pinned against a strainer above water, remember to lean *towards* the object.
- 2) **Power Boats and Ferries** – Always be cautious of boats and ferries. Be sure to paddle well away from these crafts. Do not assume that they see you! Be aware of how motor boats can quickly change direction. Also be aware of their wakes.
- 3) **Capsizing** - If your boat capsizes the general response should be to survey the river ahead for danger, hold on to your boat if possible, keep your feet up off of the river bottom (to avoid foot entrapment on the river bottom), and swim towards slow water, an unobstructed riverbank, or fellow boat. Equally important, if you see a boat capsize, blow your whistle to ensure that they are seen and assisted by other paddlers. If a boat in your pod capsizes either await instructions to assist them or pull over and wait for the pod to regroup.
- 4) **Personal Flotation Devices** - PFDs must be worn at all times while in a boat. *No exceptions.*
- 5) **Whistles** – all paddlers must wear a whistle. One whistle blast: ATTENTION
Three whistle blasts: Universal signal for - GET HERE NOW!
- 6) Your own paddling tips - i.e. river reading, heading toward the “V”, single file down swift sections, don't stop paddling.....etc