

# Kayak Loan Program - General Safety Guide

Please review this guide each time you use a kayak. This guide provides some basic safety precautions that all paddlers need to take. However, following this guide does not automatically mean kayaking is a safe activity. You must still thoroughly review and understand both the *Kayak Loan Program Policy* and *Kayak Release of Claims, Indemnity, and Hold Harmless Agreement* before you paddle. Kayaking in a river is inherently dangerous and this information is offered as guidance. The ultimate decision on when and where to paddle is the responsibility of the paddler and should be informed by current river and weather conditions in addition to level of experience. **KAYAK AT YOUR OWN RISK.** Please be careful!

- 1. Review the river flow conditions before you decide to paddle:** Please visit: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/01170500/#parameterCode=00060&period=P7D>. The closest location to where you will be paddling is Turner's Falls. The number in orange is the flow rate in cubic feet per second (CFS). Our recommendations are:
  - a. Less than 5,000 CFS: accessible to all paddlers.
  - b. 5,001 to 9,999 CFS: prior paddling experience and high level of physical fitness recommended.
  - c. 10,000+ CFS: Do not paddle.
- 2. Review the weather conditions before you decide to paddle:** We recommend using weather.com and entering Sunderland's Zip Code 01375.
  - a. Find the weather predictions for the next three hours from when you want to paddle.
  - b. Check the radar to see if any showers or thunderstorms are nearby. Anything between Sunderland and the NY border is usually less than an hour away.
  - c. Check the wind speed. We do not recommend paddling if the wind is greater than 10 mph.
- 3. Review the Recommended Paddling Zones Map:** This map shows you the recommended routes for paddling from the Sunderland Boat Launch based on your experience level.
  - a. **Green:** Recommended paddling zone for all levels.
  - b. **Yellow:** Advanced paddling zone. Prior paddling experience needed in these areas.
  - c. **Red:** Do not paddle in these areas! Not safe for paddlers of any experience level.
- 4. The Kayak must be used in the CT River near the Sunderland Boat Launch.** Do not take the kayak to any other location.
- 5. Do not kayak below the Sunderland Boat Launch.** Once you enter the channels for the bridge abutments the flow increases significantly and can be difficult to return. Running into the bridge abutments can be dangerous as you could fall out of your kayak and get pinned between the kayak and the abutment and drowned.
- 6. Wear a Personal Flotation Device/Life Jacket at all times while on the river.** The life jackets provided are universal-sized and will fit most patrons weighing more than 95 lbs. Those who weigh less, especially children, must provide their own life jacket. All patrons are allowed to use their own life jacket.
- 7. Never paddle alone.**
- 8. Let others know when and where you will be paddling.** Let someone trusted know when you expect to return and to contact the police if you do not return at the expected time.
- 9. Call 9-1-1 in the event of an emergency.** We highly recommend bringing a cell phone with you on the river, but, remember, keeping your phone dry is your responsibility. The colored bags provided are water resistant, but not waterproof.