



# The Halton Outdoor Club



## Recreational(Rec)Kayak Program

Welcome to the Halton Outdoor Club Recreational ( Rec) Kayak Program.  
This is a guide to help you with learn more about the program.

### HOC Paddling Community

**Mission:** To create a positive, safe, respectful, inclusive paddling community for beginner/novice and intermediate paddlers.

**Vision:** To grow the Halton Outdoor Paddling Community by provided a respectful and encouraging environment where we develop our paddling skills, respect the environment and nurture each other resulting in a positive paddling experience.

**Values:** Safety, Respect, Inclusive

Halton Outdoor Club Paddling Community strives for safety always. We use Paddle Canada ([www.paddlecanada.com](http://www.paddlecanada.com)) and Paddle safe- Paddle –smart ([www.paddlesmart.org](http://www.paddlesmart.org)) regularity for knowledge and expertise on paddle safe guidelines. In addition, the MOT (Ministry of Transportation) Marine Law and OPP determines what is required by law on all paddles/vessels on the water. The law applies to all vessels including kayaks, canoe, SUP (Stand Up Paddleboards).

Paddling is safe: almost all accidents are a result of poor judgement or lack of knowledge.

### **Things to consider:**

- Recreational kayak: 12 feet long or less, with one or no water tight compartments. **Inflatable kayak designation are not acceptable**, Fold up or Sit on top acceptable. Air bags for floatation is strongly recommended.
- Proper clothing for air and water temperature. Never wear cotton on the water. Wet suit and dry suit based on water temperature recommended.
- Proper fitting PFD worn at all times.
- Proper safety devices required by law: whistle, bailer/pump, paddle, and buoyant heaving line at all times.
- Paddling Safety: Most overlooked factor: a vessel suited to what you do or want to do.
  - A kayak suitable for Grand River, may not be suitable for Lake Ontario

## **How we grade our trips for expected conditions and skills required**

We endeavor to have everyone remain safe on our paddling excursions and to have participants make informed decisions regarding the suitability of such trips. Therefore, we have adopted a trip rating system based on the typical conditions that one may face on any trip and the skills needed to meet such conditions. It is the discretion of the volunteer trip leader to increase a trip grade depending on changing conditions on the day of the paddle.

HOC-Paddling-Trip-Rating-Tool- located on the HOC website, paddling page.

Grade A - Beginner

Grade B - Comfortable Beginner

Grade C - Intermediate

Grade D - Comfortable Intermediate

## **What skills do I required to join in on a recreational kayak paddle?**

- Forward stroke, backward stroke , turn around stroke
- Ability to wet exit  
Having performed at least 1 in-water (wet) exit from personal rec kayak
- Ability to self-rescue (able to swim to shoreline)  
For recreational kayaks, this means, upon wet exit event, ability to flip kayak top side up in-water and comfortably swim/float to shore while pulling kayak to shore
- Ability to assist in rescue.  
Don't worry we have pool lesson, lake lessons available throughout the season

## **What to wear :**

- Dress for water temperature not air temperature. Cold water immersion ( wet suit/dry suit)
- Water shoes (Keens, solid bottom) , no flip flops
- Cotton Kills , wear neoprene ,dry fit, Gortex type material
- Bring a change of clothes
- Towel

## **What to bring :**

- In addition to paddling gear
- Water, water ,water or energy drink
- 2 Snacks in lifejacket to manage energy and sugar level
- Lunch: protein base lunch is optimal
- Small camping chair or something to sit on at breaks/lunch
- Sun care protection , hat, sunglasses, paddling gloves
- Bug spray, First aid kit, Swiss army knife
- Remote car key water proof containers

- Phone water proof container
- Dry bag to hold keys and phone
  
- **Group Management 101** : We paddle as a group always.
  - All levels “fast – slow paddlers” . Fast paddlers are at back, Slow paddlers set the pace
  - Buddy system – way to meet other paddlers – find a partner
  - Stay in a group formation – along shoreline
  - Lead and sweep roles – we will assign a lead and a sweep to all paddles
  - Paddle signals – watch the trip leader for signals to stop, wait, listen
  - Whistle signals – stop, SOS
  - Wind conditions: Not able to hear
  - Thunderstorm plan
  - Sing a song ...talk to a buddy
  
- **Personal Management 101** : During a paddle your energy level may drop
  - Eat something with sugar, snack
  - Water, water, water for managing dehydration
  - Medication - Aspirin
  - Hypo ( too cold) or hyper ( too hot) watch for signs
  - Pre-existing – something that you want to share with the leader so they are aware and can manage appropriately
  
- **What to expect from a Trip Leader and Trip Information Sheet found on the events calendar**
  - Local Location Selection:
    - Lake or river ( small interior lakes or rivers)
    - Drive time under 3 hrs from Halton Area
    - Guide or no guide to lead trip
    - Rentals or no rentals – must be able to make own arrangements to rent and transport
  
  - Route planning
    - Launch site
    - Distance of paddle: 12km 20 km
    - Map route
    - Breaks and lunch spots
  
  - Timing
    - Arrival time
    - Launch time
    - Off water time
    - Total time on water
  
  - Number of Trip Leader per paddler ratio ( Paddle Canada)
    - 1:6