

## *How to Deal with Emergencies*

- *Don't panic* if you capsize. Stay on the upstream side of the craft.
- *Don't leave the boat* unless it increases your safety. Swim with the current (at a 45° angle) to the nearest safe landing.
- *Avoid* being pinned against obstacles or swept under the boat.
- *Save yourself first:* Then worry about the boat.
- *Float downstream on your back, feet-first:* To see and avoid obstacles.
- *Never stand up in a moving current.*



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# PADDLING OREGON SAFELY



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## Fast Fact

Most accidents occur when boaters overestimate their boating abilities or underestimate the danger of a waterway.

## How Do We Prevent Accidents?

Know *before* you go. Prepare a float plan and give it to a friend. Know the river and your equipment.

## Equipment

- **New equipment:** Test it in calm water first.
- **Life jacket:** Each person in a canoe, kayak and boat must wear a life jacket.
- **Learn first-aid and C.P.R.:** Know how to help someone in need.
- **Clothing:** Dress appropriately.
  - Choose wool or synthetic pile (cotton traps moisture and cools the body when wet)
  - Wear a wind and water-resistant outer layer
  - Insulate head, hands and feet
  - Wear protective footwear (neoprene booties or tennis shoes with wool socks)
- **A sound signaling device:** Attach a whistle to your life jacket.
- **Fitted helmet:** Great for inexperienced paddlers or those running more difficult rivers.

## The Flow

- **River Flow information:** Available at the river forecast center (503) 261-9246 or online by searching Oregon River Flow.
- **The route:** be familiar with the route and bring the appropriate equipment.
- **Consult an experienced trip leader, local expert or guide book.**

# WHILE YOU'RE UNDERWAY — A SAMPLE RIVER

## How to Run the River

Always travel with an experienced trip leader who is familiar with the waterway. **Never boat alone.** A three boat standard is used for a white-water run. Keep both preceding and following boats in sight, never get ahead of the lead craft, and never lag behind the sweep/drag (last) craft. Safely navigating a waterway requires more than the ability to handle your craft. It also requires the ability to *read* a river, to know when to *scout*, and when to *portage*. Watch out for these hazards to avoid.

### Key

Scout .....  
Portage - - - -

## C. Get Out and Scout

When approaching obstructions like rocks or sharp bends in the river plan your approach in advance. Paddle to shore, get out and scout. Examine obstructions. Portage if necessary.

## D. Portage

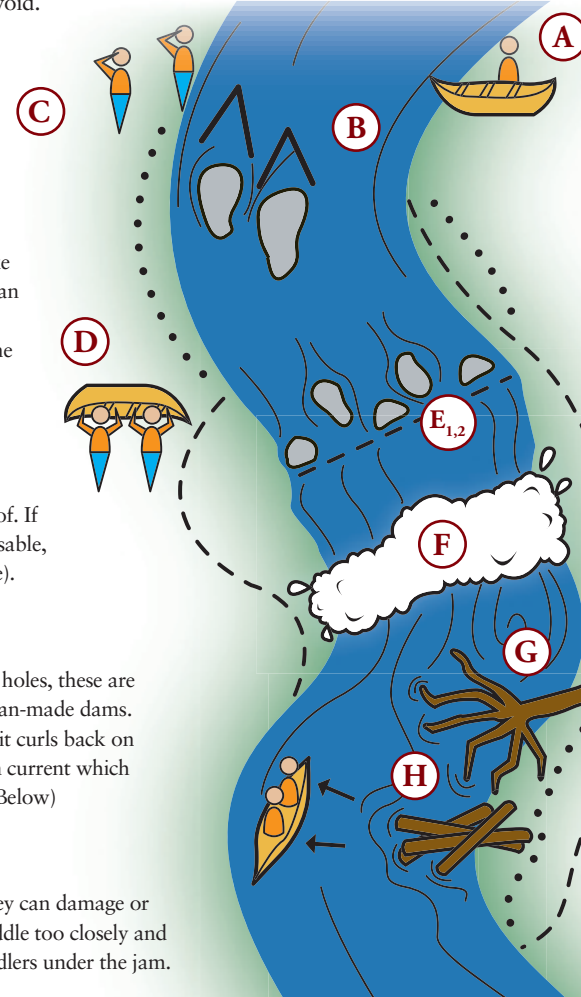
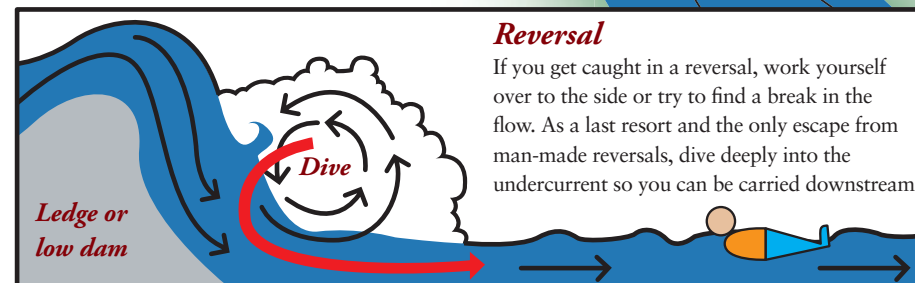
Carry your craft over and around obstacles or rapids you are unsure of. If portage is difficult and water is passable, "line" your craft (tow it from shore).

## F. Reversals/Hydraulics

Also known as holes and "keeper" holes, these are especially hard to escape around man-made dams. When water falls over an obstacle, it curls back on itself. This forms a strong upstream current which may hold a boat or swimmer. (See Below)

## H. Log Jams

Stay away from them. They can damage or upset your boat if you paddle too closely and can sweep paddles or paddlers under the jam.



## A. Put-In and Take Out

Just before getting underway examine the put-in point. Observe how the take-out point looks from the river before landing.

## B. Need to Read

Paddlers need to know how to read a river to maneuver their craft through the safest course. Example: Upstream V's indicate objects or obstacles in the water "danger." Downstream V's indicate a path through the objects.

## E 1. Watch Horizon Lines

A river's horizon line, where the river's flow drops from sight, can tell you what's ahead. If you see large rocks and white caps, you may be approaching a rapid. If the horizon line disappears, look out! You may be headed for a drop. Get out and scout.

## E 2. Waterfalls, Drops and Dams

Avoid waterfalls, drops and all dams; they may form reversals. Scout and/or portage if necessary.

## G. Strainers

Strainers are formed by trees, branches, logs or debris lying across or just under the water's surface. Avoid them as they allow water to flow through, but can catch and entrap paddles and paddlers underwater or entangle lines on boats.

**Note:** The representation diagram depicts some common hazards you may encounter on a river. Remember, the best put-in and take-out points for scouting and portage depend on individual river characteristics.