



ONEC Paddling Guide: Policies, Procedures and Resources

ONEC Paddling provides members with kayak and SUP (stand-up paddleboard) equipment to paddle from the NCC River House and helps people connect with others to paddle with. Paddling activities are unsupervised unless they are part of a sanctioned course or clinic being run by a Paddle Canada certified instructor (also open to the public).

General Paddling Participant Obligations

All participants in paddling at ONEC acknowledge and agree to abide by the following policies, rules and guidelines (and any amendments that may be issued to members in future), which have been formulated based on Paddle Canada Risk Management guidelines for Paddling Association members. Failure to do so may result in membership privileges being revoked without refund.

Before taking equipment out on the water, all “paddling participants” at ONEC, which is a Paddling Association member of Paddle Canada, are required to:

- Sign the *ONEC and Paddle Canada waivers* (including confirmation that the participant can swim 100m unassisted)
- Complete the New Member Orientation (including a practical on water component where new members practice tipping in and getting back out of the water, to safety)
- Abide by the ONEC paddling rules, including respecting relevant paddling zones as outlined below

New Member Orientation

It is extremely important that paddlers have appropriate adequate skills and are prepared to paddle safely in changeable river conditions (with currents and boat traffic present to varying degrees), including being able to rescue themselves in the event of a capsize either by swimming to shore or by getting back into their kayak or onto their SUP and paddling back to safety.

The initial mandatory orientation is in place to help members enjoy ONEC paddling safely by:

- Providing a general paddling safety briefing according to Paddle Canada guidelines, to help individuals assess and manage their personal risk appropriately in choosing where and when to paddle
- Outlining safe operating procedures at ONEC's shared waterfront location
- Reviewing skills deemed necessary to paddle safely on the Ottawa River

In order to be prepared and paddle safely, all new members must complete a practical session where they tip out of their kayak and/or off their SUP and return safely to shore:

- In order to go paddling on outings further than 50 meters from shore, paddlers must be able to get back into their kayak (and/or onto their SUP) and paddle back to the shore to get to safety.
- If paddlers swim back to shore to get to safety, they must stay within 50 meters of the shore on paddle outings

People who complete a Paddle Canada courses or clinic at the Basic Kayak standard (including the wet exit and assisted re-entry techniques) are exempt from this practical session requirement.

Paddlers who do not possess skills deemed necessary to paddle safely at a distance from the shore (including being able to get back into their kayak or onto their SUP from in the water) **must restrict their paddling to within 50 meters of the Ontario shoreline and must paddle with a buddy.**

Kayaking skills deemed necessary to paddle away from the shoreline include wet exit and assisted re-entry techniques, as well as paddling skills as per *Paddle Canada Basic Kayak standards*. <https://www.paddlecanada.com/levels/sea-kayak/basic-kayak-skills/>

The ONEC paddling program aims to provide opportunities to develop these skills through courses, clinics and club outings. Kayakers may paddle more than 50 meters from shore when participating in outings with others with skills at Paddle Canada Kayak Level 1 (<https://www.paddlecanada.com/levels/sea-kayak/akasharkbow/>) and beyond (who have the ability to perform unassisted rescues to reenter their kayaks).

SUP skills deemed necessary to paddle more than 50 meters from the shore include launching and paddling in windy and/or turbulent conditions, and efficient paddling strokes as per *Paddle Canada Basic SUP standards*. <https://www.paddlecanada.com/levels/stand-up-paddleboard-program/basic-sup-skills/>

Register for a mandatory New Member Orientation session via the Paddling Calendar on the ONEC website. Registration for Paddle Canada courses and clinics is also available on the Paddling website pages and calendar. Email paddling@onec.ca with any questions.

Booking Policy and Tools

All paddlers must reserve their paddling times using the online Paddle Reservation System. Once members have completed the New Member Orientation, they will be provided with a login and password.

Bookings via the online boat reservation system will be available daily between 06:00 – 20:30, with earliest departure after sunrise and return to the dock before sunset. Members can book for up to 2.5 hours for midweek paddling. On weekends Touring Kayak bookings can be made up for up to 4 hours (with recreational Kayak bookings staying at up to 2.5 hours).

There will be times when some equipment may be reserved for orientations, programming or kids camps (which run in July and August).

Safe Paddling Protocol

When going out on the water, paddlers at ONEC are required to:

- Have participated in an initial New Member Orientation session and respect appropriate paddling zones
- Record details of your planned outing in the Paddling Logbook located with the safety gear in the River House. This includes name, equipment being checked out, planned route, departure time, and, upon your return, your return time.
- **Wear your PFD and a whistle, AT ALL TIMES**
- Comply with relevant Transport Canada regulations, including carrying a watertight flashlight if on the water before sunrise, after sunset, or “in periods of restricted visibility”
- Be aware of boat traffic in the area (including the **Ottawa River rowing traffic patterns**) and adhere to navigation rules including right of way
- Carry on board a safety kit (complete with required buoyant throwing line bailer, spare whistle and flashlight) when paddling a kayak.
- Verify the SUP has a properly attached and working ankle strap, and always secure it to your ankle (or just below below the knee) before boarding your board. It is a life line.

In addition it is strongly recommended that paddling participants at ONEC adhere to the following guidelines:

- Paddle only during daylight hours – do not leave the dock before sunrise and be back at the docks by sunset
- Check weather forecast and radar for adverse weather to at least one hour beyond planned return time
- Paddle with a partner
- Wear appropriate clothing for the weather and to be highly visible (brightly coloured PFD, shirt and hat)
- Wear sunscreen or wear a long sleeve shirt for sun protection
- Stay hydrated - always bring plenty of water

Cold Water Policy

When the water temperature is between 11 and 16 degrees C, a yellow flag (under “Rowing Season Status”)will be shown on the website and the cold water policy will be in force:

- No Stand-up paddle boarding will be permitted
- Kayakers must wear suitable protective clothing
- Kayakers must paddle with a buddy

When the temperature is 10 degrees C or below , a red flag will be shown on the website:

- No Stand-up paddle boarding will be permitted
- Kayakers must wear a dry suit or immersion suit
- Kayakers must paddle with a buddy and stay within 30m of the shore

No paddling of any type will be permitted if the water temperature is below 5 degrees C.

Guest Policy

Currently only members are permitted to use ONEC paddling equipment outside of programmed events such as Paddle Canada courses and clinics or specific club events set up to accommodate non-members.

Youth Policy

Children under 16 must be accompanied on the water by a parent or legal guardian.

Storage (“Rackage”)

At this time ONEC is not able to offer storage for member’s kayaks and paddleboards. It is hoped that we will be able to do so in the future – space permitting.

Club Communications, Volunteering and Resources

Information about the Club and its activities can be found on: www.onec.ca

You can also ask questions or make suggestions by sending us an email at paddling@onec.ca. You can contact the Club Manager and Pavilion staff at info@onec.ca and 613-746-8540.

If you are interested in being added to the list of potential paddling volunteers to learn of opportunities to support the ONEC paddling program, please email paddling@onec.ca.

Helpful links for info:

The paddling page on onec.ca and the following links contain additional information.

ONEC Paddling Orientation Overview

(https://www.onec.ca/_files/ugd/912eaf_e04f4b8dc59240759b681463ed529aac.pdf)

Ottawa River Rowing Traffic Patterns (<https://www.rowonec.com/safety-resources>)

Paddle Canada, the recreational paddling association of Canada

(<https://www.paddlecanada.com/>)

***Policies Reviewed and Approved by
The ONEC Board of Directors
June 4, 2021***

***Updated for return to boathouse by
The ONEC Paddling Committee
December 2023***