

New American Canoe Association Resources for Sea Scouts

The American Canoe Association (ACA) partners with Sea Scouts to promote paddle sports education and safe paddling. ACA has strong trip leader and instructor certification programs that can help Sea Scouts develop boating and leadership skills. Two resources in particular stand out. First, ACA's State Director program provides a single point of contact in each state, who can help Sea Scouts find qualified instructors and gain access to local paddling clubs. Local paddling clubs can, in turn, help mentor Sea Scouts. Many clubs sponsor trips that could provide opportunities for Sea Scouts to learn information about paddling destinations while enjoying trips with club members. A list of ACA State Directors can be found at <https://americancanoe.org/community/about-us/regional-activity-council/>.

The second resource is an evidence-based paddling risk reduction course, Paddle Safe. Paddle Safe resources include an instructor guide, a handbook, and a PowerPoint presentation. Access to these is currently available in a Google Drive folder found at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1D6yfgE7A6XucQnpLDguNiEhVA8LVev3m?usp=sharing>. The drive also contains a manuscript describing trends in recreational boating fatalities and a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the manuscript. The data in the manuscript provide the basis for Paddle Safe. The drive also contains a PowerPoint presentation on cold water hazards. More information is found in the READ ME FIRST file in the drive.

Paddle Safe teaches methods to be safer while paddling in the belief that safer paddling is more fun. It appears to be the first intentionally evidence-based boating safety course available in the US. Although it is focused on paddling, much of the content is relevant to all types of boating. The ACA and I believe the information contained in Paddle Safe will help save lives and we want to make sure cost is not a barrier to access. Therefore, the course and supporting documentation are made available to all boating safety programs at no charge, so long as proper author and ACA attribution are provided. All ACA instructors, facilitators, on-water leaders, and coaches are authorized to teach the program. Instructors from other programs, including Sea Scout Skippers and Scouting merit badge counselors, are encouraged to take advantage of these resources. Anyone with questions about Paddle Safe can contact me at robinpope3@hotmail.com.

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