



WAKA AMA WATER SAFETY BASICS



wakaama
Outrigger / Va'a / New Zealand



**Water
Safety**
NEW ZEALAND



HE MIHI

He aha te mea nui o te ao?

He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata.

What is the most important thing in the world?

It is people, it is people, it is people.

Waka Ama New Zealand, in association with Water Safety New Zealand, places a strong emphasis on our waka ama whānau being safe in and around the water. Water safety is a fundamental element within waka ama.

Waka Ama NZ aims to promote and implement waka ama water safety practices for all waka ama participants and supporters.



The purpose of this booklet is to educate our waka ama whānau in six key areas of water safety in relation to waka ama. These key areas are:

- Personal Floatation Devices (PFD)
- The environment
- Marine Weather Conditions
- Communication
- Equipment Required
- and Maritime Laws

This booklet aims to provide new and existing members with basic water safety information so they feel safe and able when heading out on the water.

For more in-depth information keep an eye out for this icon, and head to the back cover of this booklet to our ngā rauemi (resources)

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Personal Floatation Device (PFD)

Maritime Rule Part 91: Navigation states - that a correct fitting PFD appropriate to the vessel activity must be available to everyone on board, or worn when told to by the kaihāutu (skipper).

Regional navigation safety bylaws specific to local areas may vary from Maritime Rule part 91.

Regional bylaws include specific details about when to wear as well as the maritime activity being undertaken. Head to our ngā rauemi section for information about Maritime Rule Part 91 and regional bylaws.

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Types of PFD

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- 1) Type 401 - Inflatable
- 2) Type 402 - Inshore conditions
- 3) Type 403 - Specialist lifejackets and PFDs
- 4) Type 405 - Buoyancy Garment
- 5) Type 406 - Specialist PFD

PFD CHECKLIST

Wearing a PFD is essential for novice and junior paddlers, for paddlers who are not strong swimmers and should be worn at night.

- ✓ Checked regularly and maintained to make sure it is in working order (i.e. check stitching, straps, all intact, free from corrosion)
- ✓ Correct buoyancy rating and size for the paddler
- ✓ Fitted properly to use - this included adjusting waist and/or chest straps to avoid slipping over shoulders
- ✓ Accessible
- ✓ Be worn at heightened times of risk - i.e during rough conditions, with novice paddlers, or at night.

PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICE

THE ENVIRONMENT

A few tips before paddling in these types of marine environments

THE SEA

- Be aware that sea breezes might pick up during the day
- A waka can travel relatively quickly when working with a following tide, current or rip however heading back into these can be challenging
- Local knowledge can be really important!!
- Check tide forecasts
- Keep a good lookout for other users.

RIVERS

- Rivers are changeable and unpredictable and can contain hidden dangers.
- Near dams water levels and flows can change significantly
- Stay well clear of a river in flood.
- The pressure of moving water is constant and can be powerful even if the river looks slow moving and calm.
- Check weather forecasts and consider how rainfall may affect the flow.

LAKES

- Lakes can be very unpredictable, always check weather forecasts before heading out on the water
- Lake waters can be very cold so ensure you are prepared for this
- Adhere to all signage and warnings
- Lakes are included in regional bylaws - be sure to check these bylaws before heading out.

HARBOUR

- Harbour entrances (and river mouths) can have strong flows to paddle against
- The rate of flow against strong wind can make these entrances treacherous
- Keep a good look out for other users
- Collision prevention - check out the rules of the water
- Be cautious and alert of shipping and ferry channels.

For detailed
info on all
these
environments -
head to the
back cover!

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MARINE WEATHER CONDITIONS

Remember to **ALWAYS** check local weather and marine conditions. If in doubt - don't go out!
Marine forecasts describe the average conditions expected over the next 24 hours over open water.

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WIND



The wind has one of the greatest impacts on a waka ama paddler. The strength of the wind along with the water conditions can add a lot of pressure to a paddler.

A few tips for checking wind conditions:

- Maritime forecasts are provided in knots per hour: 5knots = 9.26kph
- Wind gusts can get up to 50% higher than wind speed
- Wind accelerates significantly greater around headlands, between islands, and spilling from valleys.

WARNINGS



These are issued for gales, storms or squalls anywhere on the New Zealand coast. A strong wind advisory is issued in recreational areas if the wind is expected to be over 25 knots (about 40km/hr).

VISIBILITY



Waka ama paddlers should always make an effort to be seen. Visibility can be affected by a number of things - the time of day, fog, rain, etc.

WIND & TIDE



When the wind blows against a tide it can create very choppy seas. Always check the wind and tidal conditions before you head out.

FORECAST



There are a number of ways you can check the weather forecasts. You can get up to the minute updates from any of the following sources:

- Maritime Radio VHF channels
- MetService Marine app
- MetService website
- your local newspapers
- your local radio stations.

SEA & SWELL

The sea is forecasted as the waves determined by local wind. A swell comes from either a distant disturbance, such as a cyclone or depression, or develops from wind waves that have been blowing from the same direction for a length of time. Swells increase in height and get steeper when they reach shallow water.

For more information head to <https://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/recreational/safety/weather>

COMMUNICATION

Cellphone & VHF

Cellphone and VHF Radio are the two primary means used to contact another person if an emergency should arise.

A cellphone in a waterproof pouch - ensure the phone stays dry, reception is reliable and you have enough battery power for the duration of your trip. Unlike a VHF where many people can listen in - cell phones are person to person only.

A VHF Radio - A VHF radio is your rescue network at sea. Your call can be heard by many people at the same time and the distress channel - channel 16 - is monitored 24/7.

We recommend that paddlers complete a VHF course, head to ngā rauemi for more information.

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Emergency Signalling Devices

Whistle - Can be attached to your PFD and can only be useful if someone can hear it

Flares - These rely on another person to see it. These should be checked and serviced regularly, ensure they are dry and not expired.

Torch - Can be valuable for paddlers at night to attract attention

Using your paddle - or arms to signal to another vessel that you are in distress

EPIRB or PLB - Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon or Personal Locator Beacon emit distress signals via a satellite. These should only be used in an emergency. Be sure you are familiar with how they operate and check the batteries regularly.



EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

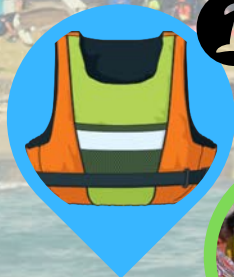
Under New Zealand Maritime Law, all required equipment is the minimum safety equipment needed by all waka when paddling on all types of waters. The recommended safety equipment assists in ensuring all paddlers are safe while on the water.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

1. A suitable PFD for each kaihoe
2. A bailer
3. Fixed white light
4. Communication equipment (at least 1 form)
5. Bungs - as required
6. Sprayskirts - as required

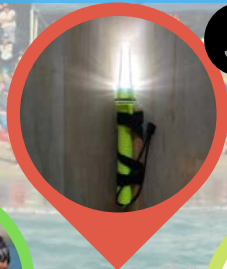
RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

1. Signalling equipment (flare)
2. Spare hoe
3. Tow rope
4. Leg leash (as required)
5. A second form of communication



PFD (Personal Flotation Device)

1



FIXED WHITE LIGHT

3



BUNGS

5



BAILER

2



COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

4



SPRAYSKIRTS

6

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Check out ngā rauemi on the back of this booklet for more information regarding this equipment



MARITIME LAW

Know your responsibilities as a kaihāutu (skipper) of a waka and where to find information on your local and regional bylaws

Regional Bylaws

Regional bylaws ensure the safety of all water users and reduce conflicts between the different water-based activities in an area - it emphasises the importance of local knowledge.

Bylaws apply whether you are on a lake, river or the sea and apply to all water activities including waka ama. You should check your regional bylaws before you head out.

Head to:
www.maritimenz.govt.nz/recreational/safety/regional-safety.asp#about_bylaws to access information about any given region.

Kaihāutu (Skipper) responsibilities

- The kaihāutu must be designated before every voyage. If a kaihāutu is not designated, then the person steering the waka is considered to be the kaihāutu.
- The kaihāutu is responsible for assessing any risks to the waka and the crew and must:
 - know the crew's paddling and swimming capabilities, including any medical conditions,
 - inform someone about the crew's paddling plan
 - understand weather forecasts and local conditions
- The kaihāutu carries the responsibility for his or her decisions and is legally responsible if there is an incident.

Kaihāutu Checklist

- Communicate with someone on land about your planned trip and when you will be back
- Check that all kaihoe have the right gear including:
 - A spray skirt, if required by the conditions
 - Each kaihoe must have a life jacket or PFD that fits
 - Appropriate clothing for the conditions
 - All required safety gear is on-board

KUPUTAKA

GLOSSARY

WAKA AMA	Outrigger Canoe
AMA	Outrigger
HOE	Paddle
KAIHOE	Paddler
KAIHĀUTU	Skipper - In the absence of a nominated kaihāutu, the steerer is usually regarded as the kaihāutu
PFD	Personal Floatation Device
EPIRB or PLB	Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon or Personal Locator Beacon
VHF Radio	Very high-frequency radio



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NGĀ RAUEMI

RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Key resources for this booklet:

www.wakaama.co.nz

www.maritimenz.govt.nz (under recreational)

www.watersafety.org.nz

PERSONAL FLOATION DEVICE

www.maritimenz.govt.nz/recreational/safety/lifejackets/lifejacket-types.asp

Maritime Laws Part 91: <https://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/rules/part-91/>

THE ENVIRONMENT

River conditions:

<https://watersafety.org.nz/how%20to%20stay%20safe%20around%20rivers>

Rules on the water:

<https://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/recreational/rules/default.asp>

MARINE WEATHER CONDITIONS

For more information about marine weather conditions in NZ: www.maritimenz.govt.nz/recreational/safety/weather

Checking weather forecasts:

www.metservice.com

www.maritimenz.govt.nz/public/mobile-apps/default.asp

www.coastguard.org.nz/nowcasting_service_rego.php

COMMUNICATION

For more information about Coastguard Education VHF Courses:

<https://www.boatingeducation.org.nz/courses>

More information regarding VHF:

www.maritimenz.govt.nz/recreational/safety/communications/vhf/default.asp

More information on EPRIB's and PLB's: www.beacons.org.nz

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

<https://www.wakaama.co.nz/pages/view/3>

www.maritimenz.govt.nz/recreational/waka.asp

Video about Navigation lights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-mgZHN7FKA>



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