



# SAFETY ALERT

5<sup>th</sup> May 2008

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| <b>Incident Description</b> | <p>An OC1 paddler was separated from their canoe and lost at sea for an hour and a half during an afternoon training session. The paddler swam to shore and then made their own way back to their home beach. The incident sparked an air / sea search and could have ended very badly had the waters been colder or the paddler less fit or capable in the ocean.</p>  |
| <b>Negative Actions</b>     | <p>The paddler was not wearing a leg rope nor were they carrying a life jacket.</p>   |
| <b>Positive Actions</b>     | <p>The coach was carrying a mobile phone and called for assistance as soon as it was noted the paddler was no longer with their canoe or with the group.</p> <p>The paddler had been paddling using a buddy system – the paddlers were paired and watching one another.</p> <p>The paddler had been briefed prior to setting out on their paddle and was aware of the currents and tide in the area.</p>  |
| <b>Learnings</b>            | <p>When paddling offshore:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Wear a leg rope – in this instance the canoe 'got away' from the paddler, a leg rope would have prevented the incident.</li><li>2. Have a life jacket attached to the paddler.</li><li>3. Use a buddy system when out paddling.</li><li>4. Take a mobile phone in a water-proof pouch.</li><li>5. Plan ahead and make sure a person onshore is aware of who is paddling, where you are traveling to and the expected time back.</li></ol> |
| <b>Comment</b>              | <p>In this instance had the paddler had flares the search vessels would have been able to easily spot the paddler.</p> <p>While this incident involved an OC1, the learning's also apply to OC2 and OC6 paddlers</p>  |