



CKC Personal and Safety Kit Advice

If you are a member of the Club most canoe shops in the area will offer you a discount of between 10 and 20% (depending on how much you purchase). The best local retailer is Whitewater the Canoe Centre at Shepperton and they know the Club well. Decathlon at Canada Water also has a few useful bits and bobs such as clothing and basic water shoes.

This note has been put together for people just starting out in their paddling and those people who are looking to lead or are willing to help out on trips.

Personal Kit

If you are just getting into kayaking the Club does not expect you to rush out and buy your own kit straightaway. In fact it would discourage you from doing so – particularly the more expensive items. The most expensive is also not necessarily the best and the Club has all the essentials available for you to use while you find your feet. You may well get gear envy and think ‘I want that’ and if money is no object then great but don’t feel you have to take the plunge. Many of the more experienced paddlers in the Club have only recently bought the more expensive items available (drysuits for example) and they’ve been paddling for many years!

There are, however, a few essential paddling specific personal items that the Club would encourage you to buy or strongly consider getting as follows:

Time from joining the Club	Item	Advice
0 – 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x Torches for Thames Sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available online for around £10 each the best performing torches we’ve found by far are the Fantasea Nano Spotter Led Light Diving Torch. Read the PLA Guidelines on Lighting too.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base Clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good quality insulating clothing you don’t mind getting wet and is relatively quick drying, e.g. thermal / fleece material. Avoid materials like cotton. Anything synthetic is generally fine.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wet Shoes / Boots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try before you buy! Can you fit in your boat with this footwear? You are looking for a compromise of sole-thickness for flexibility matched with durability and protection. Your other main consideration is how well do they stay on your feet. Slip-on shoes could come off if you take a swim or portage through mud. Zip-up or Velcro secured boots will not.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assorted Dry Bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basically you can’t have enough dry bags of assorted sizes and colours from 3 - 5l up to around 15-25l (particularly if you plan to go on overnight trips). Don’t bother getting anything bigger than 25l! Aquapacs (or equivalent makes) are also great for valuables like phones, keys, etc – but they can be pricey.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic First Aid Kit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small personal first aid kit that has a few things specific to you – including any medication, etc.
1 year +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touring Cag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst the Club does of course have cags available it would encourage people to get their own if possible – particularly for use on trips. Try before you buy and seek advice from other members on what’s good!
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helmet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is good practice to always carry a helmet in your boat particularly on trips – if you don’t need to use it then great! The Club’s helmets are entry level and possibly not the most comfortable (or stylish!). Again try before you buy and ask others for advice – this is one item that you probably shouldn’t cut corners on.
2 years +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BA, safety kit, spraydeck, paddle, dry trousers, etc! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once you have a couple of years under your belt you can start your gear collection off properly – the priority will probably be a BA, assorted safety kit (see below) and possibly a spraydeck and paddle in a style and length that’s right for you. However, a reasonable set of dry trousers may also be in your sights by then too (if you haven’t opted to get a pair sooner!).



Other things to consider:

- Much of the time spent getting changed into and out of kit will be in public locations. Therefore, another item to consider is a changing robe. Robie's are the original gear option and several members use them - <http://www.robierobes.com>. However, if you Google 'changing robe' several other options will pop up.
- A flask is also probably essential for most people – if you don't like tea or coffee, then hot squash it is!
- When the water or air is cold you might find your hands feel sore. People have different solutions – some people like neoprene gloves, some prefer pogies, and some carry hot gel hand warmers in their BA's - find out what works for you.
- Other things often forgotten on trips are sun cream, energy bars and water. You might also consider purchasing a water bladder. Well-known brands are Camel Back or Platypus – but the Source Widepac Hydration Bladder is considered to be a good option being taste free and much easier to clean than other brands ([http://www.source-hydration.co.uk/acatalog/Source Hydration Widepac.html](http://www.source-hydration.co.uk/acatalog/Source_Hydration_Widepac.html)). **Top Tip:** Once you've rinsed your water bladder out after use, pop it in your freezer until you need it again. This will save you having to clean it yet again before its next use particularly if it's been awhile!

If you fancy getting yourself some CKC branded kit (e.g. t-shirts, hoodies, beanies, baseball caps, etc) then these can be purchased directly from Godfrey Sports: <http://www.chelseakayakclub.co.uk/shop/>.

Safety Kit Advice

The Club does have a complete set of safety items to use on trips including a waterproof mobile and a couple of VHF radios – but there is certainly not enough to go around.

If you are an aspiring leader then you should really be thinking about having all the appropriate items you need for leading. Alternatively if you don't want to lead but are happy to help out if required it would still be great if you had some of your own safety gear too.

It probably goes without saying that any equipment that needs to be carried depends on who you are paddling with (e.g. do others carry safety kit too), where you are paddling and the anticipated conditions. Consequently there is no such thing as a 'minimum kit list' as it will vary from trip to trip but a more complete safety kit might comprise:

- Appropriate Navigation Equipment (e.g. map, GPS, navigation planning aids, etc)
- Bilge Pump
- Climbers tape webbing (3 – 5m length)
- Compass
- Emergency Shelter
- First Aid Kit
- Karabiners
- Knife
- Paddle Float
- Paddle Leash
- Personal Location Beacon (PLB) (e.g. SPOT Personal Tracker – carried on your person not in the boat!)
- Quick Release Waist Towline (15 m)
- Repair Kit (boat, hatches, skeg, etc) including small tool kit
- Spare Clothing
- Spare Paddles (Splits)
- Suitable means of summoning help in an emergency (e.g. mobile, VHF Radio)
- Waterproof Torch
- Whistle

Plus of course several larger, possibly colour coded (e.g. yellow or orange), dry bags to put all the above in!

This list may appear quite daunting but you do not necessarily need to accumulate it all in one go – plus several of the items are relatively inexpensive. The other option of course is to borrow certain things from other members on occasion to tide you over – and check out what you like and don't like.

At the very least the Club would encourage you to buy your own quick release waist towline – you can't have enough towlines in a group!

The Club does not currently own its own flares. Aside from the obvious, flares are expensive, have expiry dates and are problematic to dispose of legally. Out of personal choice several members of the Club do carry their own small day/night flares and smoke flares – but this is not necessarily a Club requirement or expectation.