

## Rafting 101



### GETTING READY:

The front passengers should sit on the seats (thwarts). All passengers should keep their feet in to avoid injury. Everything must be tied in. Keep heavy gear off the floor. Store a spare paddle under the thwarts along a side tube. Do not tie rafts together (This is a safety hazard when approaching bridge pillars). Remember: rear paddlers have the greatest steering control.

### BASIC STROKES:

Reach the paddle well forward and pull toward you continuing behind. Make sure the blade remains vertical throughout the stroke. To back paddle, reverse this (start with paddle behind you and pull it in front of you).

### LEFT TURN:

The left side back paddles while the right side paddles forward. If done correctly, one stroke should turn you 90 degrees. Two to three strokes should make a 180-degree turn.



### RIVER CLOTHING

Not far from the glaciers, the cold Bow River can drive the breath from a person upon impact. It disorients, and quickly numbs the limbs. Without rescue and proper first aid treatment, unconsciousness and even death may result. Lessen your risks by ensuring you have the proper clothing/gear for both cold and hot weather rafting and paddling.

#### Cold Weather Clothing & Gear

- **Helmet** - Wear a good plastic or fiberglass helmet - Wear a good plastic or fiberglass helmet. Make sure that it protects your temples. A helmet is recommended for all river kayakers and open canoeists on any river Class III or above.
- **Drybag** - For storing valuables including car keys for the shuttle car and money for an emergency phone call. Make sure this is securely stored.
- **Knife** - (optional) A knife may be carried to free the paddler in case of entrapment.
- **Booties** - Wet suit booties with rubber soles are an ideal choice for cold weather. Also, wet suit socks worn inside rubber-soled sneakers or plastic sandals provide good protection.
- **Pogies** - Usually fastened directly to the paddle, pogies or mittens protect the hands and wrists from chilling wind.

#### Warm Weather Clothing

- **Hat/Helmet** - A hat protects from the sun. Wear a helmet in Class III and above rivers.
- **Sunglasses** - Choose a good pair of UVA/UVB glasses, with straps if necessary.
- **Shirt** - Wearing a shirt reduces the likelihood of sunburn.
- **Swimsuit pants** - Light weight pants over the swimsuit are a good idea even in summer. The sun reflecting off the water and the bottom of the boat can quickly bake the legs.
- **Drybag** - For storing valuables including car keys for the shuttle car and money for an emergency phone call. Make sure this is securely stored.

### SAFE Boating Tips: Things to Know before you go

- Wear a lifejacket or personal floatation device (PFD) at all times!
- Law requires a bailer, rescue throw line, two paddles and a noise-making mechanism such as a whistle. We also recommend a spare paddle.
- Bring extra clothes in a waterproof bag.
- Wear a wetsuit when immersion is more likely.
- Bring drinking water, food, and sun/wind/rain protection.
- Stay close to shore when lake paddling. The wind can pick up without warning.
- Stay alert at all times! Watch for rocks, trees that are over or under the river (sweepers, strainers), shallow sections, bridge abutments and river braiding.
- Use sturdy ropes to secure boats while transporting on vehicles.
- Tell someone where you are going, and when you expect to return.
- Take a course or a safety lesson.
- Register for the Outdoor Centre's Swift Water Rescue 1 day courses

# BOW RIVER FLOATS

PUT-IN	TAKE-OUT	DISTANCE/TIME	FEATURES
Ghost Dam	Cochrane	27 km, 5-6 hours	Class II rapid sections, some sweepers & strainers.
Gas Plant	Cochrane	10 km, 2-3 hours	Class I rapid sections, some sweepers & strainers.
Cochrane	Bearspaw Dam	25 km, 5-6 hours	Slow moving water, must cross Bearspaw Reservoir (6 km) <b>long portage at end on North side.</b>
Bearspaw Dam	Calgary Zoo (St Patrick's/ St. George's Isl.)	23 km, 4-5 hours	One section of class I rapids, fast water by bridge abutments. <b>All Bridges are very hazardous give all abutments a wide berth</b> (8 or 9 bridges). <b>Wier down stream of Zoo, Extreme Drowning hazard.</b>
Bowness Park	Shouldice Park	6 km, 1-2 hours	Treed islands which branch river, sandstone cliffs (3 bridges)
Bowness Park	Prince's Island	15 km, 2-4 hours	Treed islands, difficult parking at Prince's Island (8 bridges) caution at 10th street area.
Bowness Park	Calgary Zoo	19 km, 3-4.5 hours	Treed islands, fast water by bridge abutments (10 bridges) <b>Wier down stream of Zoo. Extreme Drowning hazard.</b>
Fish Creek Park (22x, under bridge)	McKinnon Flats	32 km, 4-8 hours	Class I rapid just before take out (rapid on river right of island), sandstone cliffs, treed islands (trees in river creating some hazardous sweepers)
Fish Creek Park (22x, under bridge)	Carsland Dam	55 km, 8-12 hours (best as an overnight)	Class I rapid at McKinnon Flats, pelicans, blue herons, sandstone cliffs, treed islands, trees in river are creating some hazardous sweepers. <b>(Do not go close to the dam, major spillway) Extreme Drowning hazard.</b>

**\*\*Note:** Float times based on average river speed of 6-8 km/hour (does not include headwinds and shuttle times).

## Taking a raft outside the Calgary area?

- Do you know where the river hazards are?
- Do others know where you are going?
- Have you checked the river flow volumes for where you are going?
- Do you have correct gear for the conditions?
- What is your emergency contingency plan?

Check these advisory websites:

[www.environment.alberta.ca](http://www.environment.alberta.ca)  
[www.transalta.com](http://www.transalta.com)  
[scitech.pyr.ec.gc.ca](http://scitech.pyr.ec.gc.ca)

### Need to brush up on your skills?

The Calgary Outdoor Centre at the University of Calgary is your one stop shop, year round, for all things canoe, including basic instruction, water safety courses, advice and access to all the gear to complete your outing. Our extensive gear rental shop offers all that you need at prices that ensure you can afford to get to the put-in location!

### FREE PRESENTATIONS

run September-May annually and offer the opportunity to come ask questions and learn more about pushing your skills to the limits from our expert program advisors in all outdoor activities including canoeing! Check our website regularly for updates!

e. [outdoor@ucalgary.ca](mailto:outdoor@ucalgary.ca)  
 p. (403) 220-5038

[www.calgaryoutdoorcentre.ca](http://www.calgaryoutdoorcentre.ca)