

## 5 Star Sea Kayak Night Paddling - Top Tips & Handy Hints

Prepare yourself and your group before you get on the water - tides, crucial compass bearings, have had enough to eat (energy) and are people comfortable in their kayaks.

Ensure everyone is adequately dressed for chillier night time temperatures and paddling at night requires more navigation than day time so hence more stopping and starting. which results in.....

Adopt a method for checking on group members with group periodically - number off, alphabet (cars, names, animals, place names) or leader counting nightsticks

If appropriate due to group and prevailing conditions adopt a set group pattern either diamond shaped or all paddling line abreast to ensure group control.

Ensure everyone has a light stick or torch / strobe attached to them (tied or strapped on) so if they end up in the water, they can be easily seen.

Mark on the different coloured sectors of sectorised lights onto your chart or map.

Mark on the location and flashing sequence of all lights and buoys.

Have a 'soft' light source for map / chart reading rather than using your headtorch and destroying your night vision.

Consider a putting in place signal which means everyone should gather around i.e. rescue or navigation leg being sorted out. One whistle blast or very bright torch switched on.

Be next vigilant for other water users and be prepared to signal your existence to them by torch, strobe or VHF radio.

Apply liberally retroreflective tape to your sea kayak - not small bits but half foot strips. Tests by the RNLI proved that a half foot section can be picked up in a searchlight beam from half nautical mile away.

People make silly mistakes at night, as they normal primary sense (sight) is greatly restricted. So expect the unexpected and prime people to make more use of listening for waves, boats, etc.

Try and pick a clear night with a new or full moon when introducing people to night paddling but what will tides then be like? Dilemma's....

As Tony Blair said 'preparation, preparation, preparation' so get it sorted and be ready for what ever Neptune decides to throw at you. ☺