

# Maui Canoe Club - STEERING SAFETY CHECKLISTS

[rev. 6 November 2007]

## Board of Directors' - Approved Training Standard.

**In this document, words importing the singular include the plural and vice versa; and words importing a male person include a female person.**

## CANOE USE POLICY

1. The Club Board of Directors determines the official paddling schedule. This approved paddling schedule is published on the Club website from time to time.
2. Members may use the canoes at times other than during published scheduled times.
3. Every paddling activity requires a Board-approved steerer aboard each canoe .
4. Without exception, every person aboard each canoe must be a Maui Canoe Club member that has signed a comprehensive waiver of liability and has paid the prescribed membership dues for the current calendar year.
5. It is the responsibility of each Board-approved steerer to enforce compliance with Club Rules.

## PRE-LAUNCH INSPECTION (canoe is high on the beach - back from the water)

- 1 Watertight compartment forward, is empty and watertight
2. Watertight compartment aft, is empty and watertight
3. The hull is sound, no visible cracks or fractures to the fibreglass
4. Wae (structure to which the ama is secured) is sound, no cracks evident
- 5.. Wae rigging lines are tight and secure - no frays evident
6. Seats (all 6) are serviceable and secure
- 7 Iako are sound - no cracks or de-lamination
8. Ama is sound - no visible cracks and it contains no water  
Lift the ama - if it is unusually heavy, it contains water.....  
Look at the bottom of the ama - that's where the cracks emerge
9. Ama lines (2 sets) are tight and secure - no frays evident.
10. 2 bailers in good condition are properly secured (lines are 'tucked', no knots)
11. Ensure that there is at least one spare paddle aboard

## CREW BRIEFING (canoe is in launching position - at the water's edge)

1. **Ensure that every paddler has signed a current Maui Canoe Club waiver of liability.**
2. Ensure that every person is a capable swimmer - ask, to remove all doubt.
3. Ask whether any paddler has any physical limitations or health issues to be considered  
Advise paddlers with known limitations to cease paddling, if they experience any discomfort - pain, breathing problem, etc.
4. Reminder - if a huli occurs - **crawl towards the ama - watch the ama and iako -**

**hang on to the boat** and listen for the steerer's orders.

5. Reminder - if a huli occurs in the surf or in the shore break, get away from the canoe
6. Demonstrate proper boarding - proper water depth, sit on gunwales; rotate into seat
7. Reminder - stay ama conscious - keep weight towards ama at all times
8. Reminder - entry and exit from the canoe is always on the ama side
9. Tell the crew what the trip plan is intended to include (considering conditions)
10. Assign crew to the remaining 5 seats - have each stand beside the assigned seat
11. Ensure that the stroker is trained to steer the bow - ask to be certain
12. Remind seat 5 to watch the ama and to shout "AMA" if it lifts
13. Remind the stroker to advise (shout warning), if a swimmer is spotted in the water ahead
14. Reminder - never stop paddling unless instructed to do so. Avoid the tendency to stop paddling when something out of the ordinary occurs - like, coming close to another canoe - like, when the canoe takes a big gulp of water
15. Instruct crew to start paddling on the left immediately - as soon as seated  
"BUTT FIRST! PADDLE ON THE LEFT!"
16. If, during the launch, a paddler fails to negotiate into a seat - the canoe is to leave him behind and paddle until outside the break. **Do not help the paddler!** The paddler is to swim ashore; the canoe will return to the beach (using the return to beach procedure) and try again to board all paddlers.

**RULES OF THE ROAD** (intended primarily, to avoid a collision at sea)

1. A swimmer or less maneuverable vessel has the right of way - **YOU GIVE WAY**
  2. A vessel being overtaken, has the right of way - **YOU GIVE WAY**
  3. A vessel on your right, has the right of way - **YOU GIVE WAY**
  4. A vessel not under command, has the right of way - **YOU GIVE WAY**  
(aground, without ability to manoeuvre, tied to a mooring buoy)
  5. During darkness - ensure the ability to show an all-round white light.
  6. On entering a harbor, leave the red buoys to the right (green buoys to the left)
- NB. A collision during the launching or the beaching of a canoe is inexcusable

**THE LAUNCH**

1. Plan your trip in advance considering - weather, swell, wind-driven chop, and daylight  
**If you feel uncomfortable, in regard to any of the above - DON'T GO OUT.**
2. Launch one canoe at a time - remember the rules of the road above
3. Observe the wave pattern - wait for a small set
4. Lift the ama - move the canoe towards the ocean - 'get it wet'.
5. Start the launch, as the wave approaches the shore - "ready crew? - IMUA"
6. Order all to paddle on the left - smartly, until 200 yards off the beach
7. Steerer sits on the left gunwales until crew is seated and paddling on the left

8. If you took on water during the launch, head into the sea, order seat 5 to bail
9. Proceed with the paddling plan

#### CANOE TAKES ON WATER - from wave action while at sea

1. Order seat 5, and if need be, seat 3 to bail too
2. Caution, the vessel is unstable - remind the crew to lean towards the ama
3. Turn and hold (light paddle) the canoe headed into the sea, until most water is removed
4. Seat 3 resumes paddling; seat 5 finishes bailing

#### CANOE SWAMPS (fills with water) - at the beach

1. Drag/push the canoe as high up the beach as possible (it's very heavy)
2. Instruct 2 crew members to lift the ama until the iako are vertical
3. As an outgoing wave recedes, lower the ama to right the canoe
4. Push/drag the canoe fully onto the beach
5. Bail until the canoe is free of water

#### URNS

1. Turns (direction changes) are usually made towards the left - towards the ama side
2. Look over your shoulder to the left (and to the rear) for other vessels, before you execute the turn
3. Instruct the crew to paddle forcefully (POWER UP!), to speed up the canoe to facilitate steering.
4. Instruct the stroker to kahi, if you need help to tighten the turn.

#### WATER BREAKS

1. Steerer holds the canoe bow into the sea.
2. Seat 2 and seat 4 lean or sit on the iako - remind them to do so.
3. Remind crew to drink water - to reduce the risk of dehydration.
4. If sea conditions are suitable - advise crew that they may go for a swim
5. Keep track of crew while they are swimming
6. Remind crew to enter and leave the canoe on the ama side
7. Instruct crew members to sit on the iako during the boarding of swimmers or when crew changes seats
8. At least one crew member must stay aboard at all times
9. When you are giving instructions to the crew, have them turn left to face you.

#### AMA LIFTS - canoe is headed for a huli

1. Seat 5 shouts "A M A" and lunges for the aft iako
2. Upon hearing the alarm, seat 3 lunges for the forward iako

3. The remaining crew all crawl towards the ama

### THE HULI

1. A huli usually (almost always) results from a trained steerer's failure to communicate with his crew.....

### HULI RECOVERY

1. Locate (and keep track of) each crew member in the water

2. Remind the crew to - HOLD ON TO THE BOAT

3. If a crew member is injured - assign another crew member to stay with him

4. The following crew assignments are normally ordered

- seat 1 collects the paddles

- all others, 'swim' the canoe so that bow heads into the sea

- seat 2 and seat 4 stand on the iako tongues; lean over the canoe; grab the iako

- seat 3 lifts the iako; seats 2 and 4 rock back to roll the canoe upright.

- seat 5 catches the ama, then sits on (or hangs onto) it to stabilize the canoe

- take a moment to have everyone look for personal belongings in the water

- 2 crew members at a time enter the canoe and bail like crazy

- the remaining crew members continue to 'swim' the canoe towards the shore (while keeping the bow headed into the sea)

5. Normally ordered above, means 'not etched in stone'. The orders given by the steerer must be direct and specific, to instill confidence. Exactly which seat does what is unimportant.

6. The steerer must keep track of each crew member at all times.

7. Resume paddling - continue with the paddling trip plan

### UNRULY CREW MEMBER (a relatively unlikely event, but it has happened)

1. Anyone in your canoe who challenges your commands or repeatedly disregards your instructions, is an unruly crew member.

2. An unruly crew member is a safety hazzard to all aboard.

3. Stop the canoe - maintain a heading into the sea.

4. Speak directly to the unruly crew member - address him by his seat number.

5. Ask him if he understood your orders and if so, why he disregarded them.

6. Explain that his conduct is a safety hazzard to all aboard and cannot be tolerated.

7. Resume paddling.

8. If the crew member continues his unruly behavior - take the canoe ashore on the nearest safe beach or return to the beach at the Club site.

9. Once ashore, eject the unruly crew member from the canoe - (with the support of your crew)

10. Report the incident ASAP to the Club President or other Board Member.

## LANDING THE CANOE ON THE BEACH

1. Within a 1/4 mile of the Club (or other intended beach) - conduct a brief back paddling exercise, - all paddling on the left.
2. Instruct the stroker keep the bow headed into the sea.
3. Explain to the crew that it is a practice exercise is in preparation for going ashore.
4. It is critically important that the stroker and the steerer keep the canoe pointed into the waves, while approaching the beach, backwards.
5. Gain enough momentum and speed to keep the canoe running straight
6. ALTERNATIVE - instruct the stroker to turn 180 degrees in his seat, so he is facing the beach. From this position, the stroker can see well and 'steer' the canoe right onto the beach. The steerer remains in command.
7. The rest of the crew concentrates on back paddling - ALL ON THE LEFT
8. If the bow falls off badly during the approach - immediately paddle forward (IMUA) back out to sea well beyond the break and start the approach over again.
9. The heavier the wave conditions, the further out from the beach you line up, to start back paddling. Typically you have 6 second between waves - that's a short time.
10. Land one canoe at a time, to eliminate the risk of collision
11. Watch the waves and pick a small set to ride in on.
12. To judge the size of the waves in a set from off-shore, watch the beach to see how far up the foam goes.
13. Time is in your favor - don't rush it - in respect to 'when' to go.
14. When the wave you intend to use is say, 100 feet off the bow, order back paddling - keep talking to the crew, to control the pace - "back paddle" "back paddle" "back paddle"
15. Ride the wave towards the beach into shallow water - knee-deep water.
16. ALTERNATIVE for high surf - land the canoe by paddling straight in (bow first) [later, rotate canoe 180 degrees on the beach - away from the breaking waves]
17. Immediately order, "everybody out!" (leave all paddles in the canoe)
18. Seat 2 and seat 4 lift the ama; slide the canoe up the beach until the bow is on shore beyond the waves
19. Have 1 crew member mind the canoe heading seaward - order all others to help with the carrying of the other canoes up onto the beach.

## BEACH ASSISTANCE

1. During the launching and retrieving of canoes, when higher surf conditions exist, one or two 'helpers' situated in waist-deep water can make things safer for all.
2. For the launch - the crew can be boarded and seated in the canoe positioned inside the break - ready to paddle on the left.

3. The 'helper' or 'helpers' keep (hold) the canoe perpendicular to the beach then, at the command of the steerer the canoe is pushed forward directly into the sea.
4. Similarly, when surf is up, the canoe is paddled right onto the beach heading forward. The 'helpers' in this situation hold the canoe perpendicular to the beach until the crew disembarks then, they help slide the canoe up the sand well clear of the ocean.
5. Clear the beach promptly. Get the canoes moved away from the shore up onto the tires as quickly as possible to make room for the canoes still on the water to land without encountering obstructions.

### KEONOLULU BEACH IS A SURFING BEACH

1. The safest outbound "line" (deepest water) is directly towards McGregor Point - stay on the line until your canoe is well past the last steep waves..
2. The safest inbound "line" is directly towards the south-most Palm Tree which can be seen above the Kiawe forest.
3. Intentional surfing is allowed IF the whole crew agrees - otherwise it is not allowed.
4. Surfing can be avoided by:
  - waiting outside the steep waves until a relatively small set occurs
  - inbound - falling off the wave by executing a 45 degree turn to the left  
(thereby putting the ama on the following wave peak)
  - staying on the "line" and away from the huli zone 100 yards to the south.
5. Large sharp outbound waves encountered should be managed by:
  - ensuring seat 1 and 2 know to duck to avoid being hit in the chest and head
  - stay on the line - don't enter the huli zone (100 yards South of the line)
  - quarter the waves - turn 45 degrees right to put the ama on the wave peak
6. Caution the crew to immediately paddle on the left whenever there is an ama rise
7. Caution the crew in respect to eyeglasses - both a lanyard and a float are required.
8. Swamping recovery choices:
  - paddle the canoe submarine style until you are outside the sharp waves
  - paddle and swim the canoe to the beach
  - in both cases - ensure one paddler holds the ama down
9. Debriefing - after the swamping or huli incident, conduct a debriefing on shore including your crew and all other steerers present on the beach
  - why did it happen
  - how could it have been prevented
  - what was poorly done; what was well done
10. Ensure that you carry a minimum of one spare paddle.
11. Departing and returning to the south beach (the sand dunes area)

Outbound from the south beach - head for the fishpond wall then head seaward parallel (quite close) to the wall for quite a long distance - forgetting a McGregor Point heading altogether. Quite a distance meaning way beyond the sharp waves and the shallows and rocks.

Inbound, head for the fishpond north wall - turn left when 150 - 200 feet from the beach. Inbound, when using the Palm Tree line - turn right 150 - 200 feet from the beach.

### SAFETY IN NUMBERS

1. A minimum of two canoes heading out for a paddle is desirable.
2. The two (or more) canoes are to keep together within a half a mile or less, remaining in close proximity, to be able to provide assistance to the other, if required.
3. If a huli occurs, the other canoe(s) should converge to provide whatever assistance is required. And, at least one canoe should standby until recovery is fully completed.
4. The 'stand-by canoe crew' does just that - it is up to the huli boat crew to right the vessel and to bail it free of water.

### INFORMATION.

1. For more information, with respect to the actual steering of an outrigger canoe, the suggested reading is: THE ART AND SKILL OF STEERING - Kanuculture outrigger canoeing technical manual (Batini Books 2003 [www.kanuculture.com](http://www.kanuculture.com)).

### CREW MEMBER IS INJURED OR INCAPACITATED

1. If the steerer is the victim - the stroker assumes command of the canoe
  2. Send a close-by 'buddy boat' (canoe) to the nearest safe beach, to call 9-1-1
  3. First aid, ranked priorities: 1. no heart-beat, 2. no breathing, 3. bleeding 4. anything else
  4. Take immediate first-aid/CPR action (right in the canoe), per the above priorities
  5. Paddle to the closest safe beach with road access for the emergency services vehicle
  6. Continue first-aid/CPR until professional help arrives and takes over
  7. Immediately, on return to the Club - have at least 2 crew members each write a complete statement, describing the incident circumstances, actions taken, identity of the victim, place, time, etc.
  8. Contact the Club President or other Board Member to report the incident.
- NB. In an ideal world, every stroker and every steerer would be first aid and CPR trained and currently certified in those disciplines.

### RECREATIONAL PADDLING CONSIDERATIONS

1. The ama should be rigged high to cause the canoe to lean towards the ama. This is

achieved by the insertion of blocks under the iako.

2. An unusually heavy crew causes the canoe to sit lower in the water and causes the ama to sit higher. The crew should be advised to take extra care in these circumstances to lean to the ama side, to minimize the risk of a huli.
3. The heaviest crew members should be seated in seats 3 and 4; the next heaviest in seats 2 and 5; and, the lightest crew members should be seated in seats 1 and 6. This keeps the canoe (bow and stern) responsive to larger waves and minimizes the taking on of water particularly when the bow does not respond quickly.
4. The trip plan should travel in such a direction that the return leg presents the wind at the paddlers' backs.
5. Never ever paddle the canoe in shallow water near the 'break' except for departing or returning to the beach - a time when canoe is kept perpendicular to the beach.
6. The steerer is always in command - his crew should never take instructions from anyone else - on shore, in another boat, etc. If a Beach Captain must give instructions - they are to be assessed and dealt with by the steerer, only.
7. Never call for all paddlers to paddle on the right.
8. Never intentionally cause the canoe to huli - it is not worth the risk of injury that can occur.
9. Whales must not be approached closer than 6 canoe lengths (100 yards). Should a whale swim closer to the canoe than 100 yards, all paddling is to cease **AND ALL PADDLES ARE TO BE KEPT IN THE CANOE** until the whale moves beyond 100 yards.
10. When whales are about - **NO SWIMMERS ARE PERMITTED IN THE WATER.**
11. Whales **MUST NOT BE HARASSED** - anything that changes their direction of travel or normal behavior could be seen as harassment.

## COURTESY

1. It is customary to wash every canoe, its iako, and its ama with fresh water after use. The steerer should wash - the stroker should bail.
2. It is customary to have every paddler assist with the carrying of canoes to and from the ocean - no paddler should leave the beach until all of the canoes are placed on tires high on the beach safely beyond where they could be washed out to sea at high tide.
3. Paddling sessions should start and end at the scheduled times.
4. Nothing should be left in the canoes - like, personal items, water bottles, paddles, etc.
5. If some canoes are moved temporarily to a remote beach for an event - they should be returned to the Club site promptly, after that event.
7. Every paddler should be prepared to assist with the rigging and de-rigging of canoes.

### A GOOD STEERER:

- is a good communicator - he talks to his crew continually - to motivate them, to advise them of his intentions in advance, to correct them, and to train them in paddling technique;
- does his fair share of paddling - he is not a 'passenger';
- anticipates his crew's needs and limitations, and accommodates them, as best he can;
- is tactful in his use of words and directions to avoid embarrassing any individual;
- admits his own frailties, limitations, and lack of knowledge of certain subject material;
- graciously gives up seat 6 to train a willing paddler to become a steerer;
- who has been away from paddling for a several months or longer
- avoids steering responsibility until he has sharpened his paddling edge during a couple of paddling practice sessions;
- puts crew safety above all else and when need be, errs on the side of caution, and;
- at all times enjoys a leadership role - he represents the Club - he supports the Board - he maintains familiarity with Club policies and procedures, within which, he sets a good example for all to follow.

### INTENDED AUDIENCE

This document is intended to provide information for potential steerers and steerers-in-training - indeed, every paddler - and, it can be used as a syllabus, (in regard to safe practices) for those who train steerers.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Patrick, Ingrid, Kehau, Kawika, Diana, Maria, Kathie, Jim, Colleen, Phil, Shel, Longhi's Dave, Hawaiian Mike, contributed valuable suggestions that materially improved the content of this document.

This document was adapted to Maui Canoe Club Policies and Procedures during the first quarter of 2006. Keep in mind, this document can always be improved further - if you have any suggestions, please advise the writer.

David.