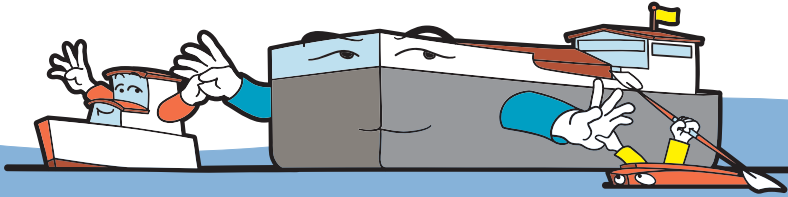


Tips for rowers and canoeists



1. Wear bright clothing

Rowing boats and canoes are so close to the water that it can be hard for people on other vessels to see you. Make yourself more visible by wearing brightly coloured clothing, preferably fluorescent orange or yellow.

2. Look over your shoulder

Rowers face the direction that they're coming from. If you are in a boat without a cox, it is vital that you look over your shoulder frequently to see what is up ahead. Other vessels may be moving faster than you think. Modern river barges sailing unladen can reach speeds of more than 20 kph. On some waterways, speedboats are allowed to go faster than 20 kph. Most dangers will be ahead of you, so keep looking over your shoulder.

3. Keep your distance

Stay close to the shore or riverbank, but keep an eye out for fishing lines. Keep a safe distance from large commercial vessels, as they can cause suction and turbulence. Large ships need plenty of room to manoeuvre in bends and at harbour mouths, so do not stop at these places and give manoeuvring ships a wide berth. Choose a calm place unaffected by the sway and surge of moving ships to launch or land your boat safely.

4. Big ships have a big blind spot

Do not count on the skipper being able to see you, as a big ship's blind spot can extend up to 350 metres in front of the vessel. That's as far as three football fields! Adjust your course and speed so that you stay out of a ship's blind spot. As long as you can see the wheelhouse, the skipper can see you.

5. Keep a clear course

Keep a clear course and a steady speed, so that others can see what you're doing. Avoid making sudden changes to your course or speed.

6. Let other ships overtake quickly

Do not keep rowing or canoeing alongside or just ahead of other vessels. Help overtaking vessels by giving them room and slowing down. The faster the other vessel can overtake you, the sooner the waterway will be safe for you to continue on your way. Do not row or canoe abreast unless there are no other vessels nearby.

7. Be alert to danger signals

A skipper will give a single, prolonged blast on the ship's horn to warn of danger. This signal might be intended for you. React promptly and move out of the way of other vessels.

8. Entering the waterway from a harbour

Take care when you leave a harbour. Other vessels may not see you until you are on the waterway. Groynes or breakwaters may block their view, so keep a good lookout.

9. Good visibility

Do not go out on the water when visibility is less than 500 metres, because you will be difficult to see with the naked eye. Rowing boats and canoes are also difficult or impossible to detect on commercial vessels' radar.

10. Know the rules of navigation

Rowers and canoeists are vulnerable users of the waterways. Make sure you're prepared before you go out on the water. For your safety, you must be familiar with the rules for navigating small craft and understand the traffic signs along the waterways. It's a good idea to obtain a certificate of proficiency in navigating small craft.

For more information,
go to www.varendoejesamen.nl or call
Rijkswaterstaat at 0800-8002.

