

Kayaking Ditch Kit

The below two lists offer some suggestions for what you might want to carry as a “ditch kit” in the event you end up stuck out for longer than you expected due to equipment failure, injury, weather, etc.

The first list includes things that you can carry on your person so you have them in the event you get separated from your boat. You should be able to survive at least 24h with what you have on your person.

You can carry this stuff in PFD pockets, small dry bag, day pack or hydration pack attached to the back of your PFD, a waist pack (stuffed in with your tow rope if you can do that without it becoming too bulky or impeding tow rope deployment), in drysuit pockets, etc. It doesn’t need to all be together as one “kit” – so long as you have all of the items on your person.

The second list adds items that you would have in your boat to make waiting for rescue or repairs more comfortable.

These lists are meant to be initial suggestions only. Add or subtract as you see fit.

Keep on your person while paddling Item	Notes
Communication device	Depending where you are, cel phone, VHF radio, or satellite device (InReach, Spot, etc.) may be best.
Survival blanket(s)	You can get blankets, ponchos, bivvy sacks and even full body suits – carry one or two
Orange garbage bag	Make a poncho, or a flag, or a tarp, or use as part of your repair kit to make a temporary hatch cover or just pick up some garbage!
Food	Granola bars, chocolate bars – anything small and durable
Flashlight & spare batteries	A waterproof headlamp is great, but any light will do. Bring spare batteries too!
Water	500 ml or more if it fits
Knife	Something sharp to make tinder for a fire
Fire starter	Matches, lighter, chemical fire starter
Water purification tablets	In a pinch you can purify water in whatever waterproof bags etc., you used to keep your ditch kit dry. Or bring a large freezer ziplock too.
Hand warmers	Single-use chemical hand warmers
Compass	You may have to hike out.
Map	If you carry a phone, download a map of the area on to it so if you have to hike out you have some idea where you’re going. Otherwise, print a map out and have it with you.
Whistle	Should be on your PFD and accessible while paddling.
Mirror	Signal for help and then fix up your hair before they get there. You only get one chance to make a first impression!
Toilet paper & zip lock to carry out used pieces	Leave no trace!
Copy of driver’s license	So they can identify the body. Or if you hike to a town and then need to rent a car to drive home.

Keep on your person while paddling Item	Notes
First aid items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tensor bandage • Finger cots • Alcohol wipes • Band-aids • Polysporin • Imodium • Tylenol & Ibuprofen • Butterfly bandage / steri-strips 	Just a few basic first aid items – this isn't your full kit Little "finger condoms" to keep a finger band aid clean and dry Diarrhea can be very dangerous as it dehydrates you

Things to have in your kayak Item	Notes
Stove	Integrated system like JetBoil or stove and pot
Food	A freeze-dried meal has a very long shelf life
Water	1 litre or more
Spoon	Because hot food burns your hands
Tarp and rope	
Flares	Many kits also have bear-bangers which can also be used to attract attention, so people are looking roughly the right way when you fire off the flare!
Air horn	Get attention of people who might be able to rescue you! Or, if you're stuck for a long time with someone else, sneak up behind them and scare them – it's a great way to pass the time!
Spare clothes	Toque, fleece, pants, socks. Stay warm!
Small hatchet (can be combined with a multi-tool for repair)	If you're going to be stuck for a while, something to cut firewood is handy
Saw	May be part of a multi-tool or you can get chain or wire saws that are flexible and have a handle on each end
Sit-upon	Something insulated to sit on – you lose a lot of heat into the ground. A foam paddle float is fine, or carry something separate
First aid kit	A "regular" first aid kit to augment the items in the first list – should include gauze pads, tape, triangular bandage, tweezers, irrigation syringe, burn dressing, tick removal tool/tweezers, scissors, etc.
Kayak repair kit	