

## **PADDLE LEASH**

### **Why a paddle leash?**

The loss of a paddle is at the least an inconvenience and at worst a catastrophe. Paddle loss is not limited to expeditionary paddlers but is an unfortunate experience that can happen to someone just out for the afternoon when they put down their paddle to reach for their water bottle, lunch, windbreaker, sunscreen or whatever small necessity that may occur at a given moment. A paddle leash comes in handy any time you need to rest your paddle to free your hands to do something else whether it be to open a chart, cast or retrieve a fishing line, etc. Most of the time a leash can seem like overkill but the one time that your paddle slips away from you will teach you the value of a leash. In calm conditions, consequences are usually inconvenient in extent, resulting in wet hands and sleeves as you hand paddle your boat over to the paddle. However, when conditions kick up, it may not be possible to chase down a loose paddle.

Consequences become more serious when a capsizes occurs. In those chaotic moments, anything that reduces the number of items you have to recover and control is a major advantage. High winds and heavy seas can easily open up a sizable distance between you, your boat, and your paddle. Your first instinct should be to grab your boat. If the paddle is attached to the kayak, all the better.

Sit-on-top paddlers have a particular need for a paddle leash. After all, by definition these boats do not have a cockpit in which to secure their paddle. These types of boats see a lot of off and on use by snorkelers, divers, etc. It's not much fun to surface and find your paddle long gone. For this reason Voyageur makes a paddle leash especially designed for sit-on-tops.

Experienced and knowledgeable paddlers consider a paddle leash as an integral part of their paddling equipment. A leash on your paddle lets you drop it without thought to grab that once-in-a-lifetime photo. Keeping your paddle tethered to your boat reduces the gear you have to control by half and ensures that you won't be up the proverbial creek or bay or estuary without a paddle.

Voyageur's Paddle Leash is constructed of pre-coiled urethane cable. The urethane is impervious to salt water and quiet as well. An injected clip hook at one end of the cable attaches securely to deck pad eyes or deck bungee cord and an adjustable hook and loop collar fits any paddle shaft and holds securely. Voyageur Paddle Leashes are available in 6 (extended)/xx contracted for standard kayaks and 9 extended/29 contracted lengths for sit-on-tops.

## **GUIDELINES FOR USE OF VOYAGEUR PADDLE LEASH**

Clip snap hook on leash to deck pad eye or bungee in front of cockpit or paddling position. A center position on deck rigging is best to minimize the leash complicating your paddle stroke. Experiment with anchor points to identify the anchor that results in the least amount of noise and intrusion of the leash in your paddle stroke. Some paddlers clip to the forward pad eyes, some prefer to clip to a bungee running across the deck so that hook will slide side to side as they paddle.

Sit-on-top paddlers need to be aware of potential entanglement of their feet with the leash. Select an anchor point that provides minimal chance for entanglement. This will vary from boat to boat; some paddlers prefer to clip off leash to anchor point close to them, others prefer points forward beyond their feet.

Never attach paddle leash to a point behind you so that leash wraps around your body in reaching the paddle. This poses a significant entrapment/entanglement potential.

Open the hook and loop collar and wrap around the center of your paddle shaft between your normal hand positions. This position in line with a centered tether to your deck rigging will keep the leash from intruding while paddling. The closer the leash is attached to the center of the paddle the less you will be aware of while paddling. It will tend to be quieter as the center of the paddle moves the least during a paddle stroke. Additionally, a center attached leash will not affect the balance of your paddle.

In event of a capsizes, try to toss your paddle outboard away from you to minimize the chances of entanglement. Since the paddle is tethered you don't have to worry about

it getting away. Once in water, concentrate on locating and controlling your boat, the paddle will be controlled with it.

Should a paddle float rescue be necessary, you should be able to slide the leash down the shaft towards the blade that will be secured under your deck rigging. Many paddle shafts are slightly tapered from center to end to make this easier. If your shaft is not tapered, relax the tension on the collar slightly to enable you to slide leash towards blade. Do not disconnect leash from paddle. Try to route the leash around the opposite side of the cockpit from which you intend to enter and secure it on outside of cockpit by wedging it into underside of coaming. Don't try to re-enter cockpit with leash running across the center of cockpit. If circumstances allow, unclip hook from front attachment and reclip to attachment behind cockpit. Releasing your leash completely should be a final option only.

Rinse leash in fresh water after salt water use. All components of leash are resistant to salt water but a fresh water bath will still provide longest serviceable life. Periodically treat leash with 303 Protectant to maintain urethane pliability and resistance to UV degradation.

# INSTRUCTIONS

## Paddle Leash



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