

OUTRIGGER CANOE CARE

The coaches at the Canoe Club have received many requests from our new members on the proper handling of our canoes. The following guide should be read by all members, experienced or new. It will help keep us all on the same page when handling our expensive investments, our canoes. This document is about respecting the canoes and the tradition that goes along with the outrigger canoe.

THE LOAD IN

Before the canoes go into the water, make sure the inside of the canoe is free of debris, etc. Also insure that the ama is attached and secure. Loading the canoes into the water are done in slow motion. This is the only place where we do not race, and there is NO RUSH. We do not get style points for getting the canoe into the water at a speed other than a crawl.

It has happened multiple times already, whereby the canoes are loaded into the water way too fast - the trolley stops because of deep, wet sand or a large rock in the way, and the canoe goes grinding off the trolley and into the water, scraping the hull on the rock in the shallow water. This is **unacceptable**.

After checking to make sure that the back of the canoe is clear of any low obstacles, the front of the canoe is lifted into the air and the trolley is placed under the center of the boat.

The trolley and the canoe is then **very slowly** moved forward from its parking area, and slowly turned towards the ocean. As the front of the canoe begins to turn, the back of the canoe must be raised upwards to clear the other canoes that are parked together.

After the turn, the back of the canoe is lowered, and the trolley and canoe is pushed **SLOWLY** to the ocean. If there is a steep slope on the beach, make sure that you keep the canoe/trolley motion towards the water slow, and pull on the canoe seats, and trolley to keep it slow.

You may have to dig your heels into the sand to keep it moving towards the water slowly, because the 400 pounds of fiberglass or koa wood canoe wants to leave the trolley way before it's time !

Canoes are **NOT to be dragged** off of the trolley into the water ! The proper method is to take the canoe and the trolley into deep enough water so that the **canoe FLOATS off of the trolley**, and then the trolley is gently removed towards the rear of the canoe. Please try not to drag or scrape the trolley along the sides of the canoe during the load in.

After the first canoe is loaded in, one person should then be stationed to guard the ama, and insure that the canoe is always parked in the water facing into the current, the wind, or the swell, whichever is strongest at the time.

If more boats are to be loaded in, then move the first canoe, north along the beach, all the while keeping it aimed into the current, swell, or wind, so that there is room for the next canoe to put into the water, otherwise we risk damaging the next canoe on the rocks near the south end of the load in area.

After all the canoes are in the water, make sure that the canoe is in deep enough water so that when everyone gets in, the canoe is still floating, **not semi-parked in the sand**. We **do not** load the canoes into the water, drag them up on the sand, then load people in, and then shove the canoe into the water, dragging it through the sand and rocks. No, No ! (Especially the KOA canoe).

Ok, Now Take It Out

When the paddle is over, steersman approaching the shoreline are to slow the boat down, and do a 180-degree turn so that the bow of the canoe is turned into the current, swell, or wind. Once near the appropriate parking area, the Steersman jumps out of the canoe's left side and steady's the boat, protects the ama, and yells out, "#6 is out". This lets the other team members know that the boat is in position for everyone else to get out of the canoe.

This call is not made until number six (the steersman) is out of the boat, standing in the water, and protecting the ama. After all other team members exit the canoe on the LEFT side ONLY, the steersman will assign, or someone may volunteer to protect the ama and steady the boat.

If you guys think that this "protect the ama thing" is being overblown, check out the cover of the last Pacific Paddler Magazine. In three feet of water, the canoe is huli'ing, and the team is being thrown overboard.

Guess what, if you are thrown out of the canoe on a "huli", in three feet of water, you could be injured if your head hits a rock or some other obstruction under the water. Since paddlers are sitting above the center of gravity in the boat, the canoe has great leverage over the people when it flips, so you will be thrown into the water. This does not feel good.

If the canoe is to be temporarily parked, without immediately being taken fully out of the water, have a couple of team members help move the entire canoe (A-Bay) up the beach to the North, where there are NO ROCKS. Gently, Gently move the canoe up and onto the soft sand. Make sure the front of the canoe is pointed into the current, wind or swell, whichever is stronger. A single team member can then guard the ama, and aim the boat while the others get the trolley, or assist the next boat coming in.

If multiple canoes are to be left in the water (like during a fund raiser or ever some races), one team member shall, at all times be with each canoe, protecting the ama, and keeping the boat pointed into the current, wind or swell. **No exceptions.** Strong wind or currents can arise at any time, and could cause the canoes to bang into each other, causing damage to our canoes, and possibly to other humans who might be nearby.

Never leave the canoe just stuck up into the sand and left without a human monitor, unless specifically permitted by a coach. Another issue of Pacific Paddler magazine has a picture of a outrigger canoe floating out in a bay all by itself without any team members nearby.

That clubs members got out of the canoe to take a break, and the tide came in, the wind picked up, and the current moved offshore.

As a matter of fact, since those team members weren't really good "distance" swimmers, and no one around the shoreline was either, it took over three hours to find a guy with a powerboat to take what was left of the team out to the boat to recover it back to the shore. Huh? As Donald Trump would say, "You're Fired".

Contrary to some of the truly funny experiences that have been witnessed out at A-Bay this year, the PROPER procedure for canoe load out is as follows:

CANOES ARE NEVER TO BE MOVED OUT OF THE WATER BY THREE PEOPLE

Why? Because these beautiful canoes are 400 pounds of fiberglass and or koa wood, and unless all three people can bench-press 375 pounds each, **you will injure** yourself and/or the boat. As the weight of the canoe shifts rearward going up the beach slope and out of the water, no single human can handle the weight shift (unless your name is Hulk Hogan), and the result is that the canoe grinds off of the trolley and back into the water (usually scraping through the rocks on the bottom), humiliating the humans, and damaging the canoe, which is precisely opposite of what we are trying to accomplish.

While the canoe is in the water, the trolley is brought up to the rear of the canoe (the bow is always pointed towards the ocean, current, or wind). *At some race locations, this may not always be possible, but is our A-Bay norm.*

Someone shall always guard the ama. Yes, it can and will huli' while getting ready to load the boat either out or in. Although the canoe may be resting close to the beach or load out area, the canoe *must be moved well into the water before* loading onto the trolley.

So if necessary, move the canoe from the shallow shoreline/beach area, back out into the water for load out, prior to placing the trolley underneath the center of the boat. Slide the trolley under the rear of the floating canoe. THE CANOE is NOT ever to be dragged onto the trolley.

The trolley is placed underneath the FLOATING canoe, and slid gently along the side and bottom of the boat, to the "center boat position".

This should be done as gently as possible to avoid scraping or damaging the canoe. ESPECIALLY THE KOA CANOE.

BEFORE the canoe is moved out of the water, a team member should insure that the area where the canoe is to be moved is *clear of obstacles*, people, etc.

After the canoe is positively on the trolley, the trolley FRAME and the CANOE are pushed out of the water, and onto the shoreline. Make sure that the some of the strongest helpers are on the trolley. One other experienced helper can be on the bow of the canoe for guidance and all the rest of the team should be pulling the canoe into the parking area by gripping the seats inside of the canoe. The ama is NEVER to touch the earth. There should be one person on the front iako, and one person on the rear iako to insure that the ama does not touch the earth. No exceptions !

When loading out the canoe into an uphill parking area (A-Bay), the stronger volunteers must stay with the trolley and push the trolley (and or trolley wheels), as well as the other helpers who are pulling the canoe uphill.

If this procedure is not followed, then the canoe's bottom is dragged along the bottom of the trolley. The trolley will then come to a stop, and the canoe will keep moving !

The bow of the boat will then fall off the trolley and you will need Hulk Hogan again to get the canoe back onto the trolley. Looks really dumb when this happens, and everybody on the shore who is watching our gracefulness (or lack thereof) will erupt in a very loud laughter, however in reality, it is not really funny, it just looks funny. Realistically, someone usually gets hurt, and the boat gets damaged, both of which are unacceptable !

PARKING

An experienced team member should be in the front of the boat to guide it to the proper parking location. All parking of the canoes should take place in slow motion. Moving at any speed faster than a slow crawl is an improper method of parking these boats!

When turning canoe from the front, don't forget that there is 40' of 400 lb., fiberglass canoe behind you swinging in a *leveraged arc*.

If the turn is made too fast the tail of the canoe can strike an obstruction, and crack the fiberglass, which in turn causes a structure crack or a dent, which in turn, allows water to seep into the fiberglass layers, eventually weakening the structure and causing a possible failure mode.

Bad news, unless you like swimming for three days from Molokai'i to the Big Island without a boat (which is now located at the bottom of the channel !).

MANDATORY

As the canoe approaches the appropriate parking space, ***slow down even further***. The poor people holding the ama/iako's have no chance to maneuver themselves properly, and move out of the way, when the canoe is being pushed faster than a slow crawl, so as the team moves the canoe into parking position, it is **REQUIRED to *slow down* !**

Have one person position the saddle (where the canoe rests when parked), underneath the boat, where there is a seat structure. This minimizes flexing (cracking) of the fiberglass when the boat is lifted off of the trolley.

WHEN ITS OVER

If for some reason the boats are dirty, use hose located nearby to rinse off boats, particularly where all the ropes are located that hold the iako and ama on the boat. Rinse out the inside of the canoe as necessary. Take out all water bottles, paddles, and any other items that might be in the boat (which should equal "none", since no "other items" are allowed in the boat, ESPECIALLY THE KOA CANOE.

Practice does not end until the boats are properly parked and cleaned and after the team cheer.

The above advice, does not take the place of sound judgment, which is necessary at all times when handling our canoes. Every different location that we might race or practice will have it's own set of traps to look out for, and requires that good common sense is used at all times.

These guidelines are the result of many mistakes being made by all of us, in the handling our canoes, and have evolved over time. These are not "orders from above", but a methodology for loading our boats into and out of the water, with minimum damage to wood, fiberglass, and humans.

If you are a new team member, and you see a canoe being handled improperly, SPEAK UP. No human is immune to making mistake, so we all have the responsibility to insure that our canoes are handled with the utmost of care at all times, so that we can all continue to enjoy years of fun while respecting our assets, and the tradition of outrigger canoeing.

Thanks,

Waikoloa Canoe Club

More interesting info:

<http://www.kanuculture.com/faq.html>