



Universal River Signals

When going on a river trip, it is important that everyone is safe and be concerned about the safety of others. Usually it is too hard to hear our paddle partners over the sound of the water, even when they yell. The following hand signals were developed so that paddle partners can communicate with each other even across long a distances.

The first safety rule is always wear a Personal Flotation Device, (PFD) also known as a safety vest or life preserver. If there are rocks and boulders in the water, you should also wear a helmet. Another important piece of safety equipment is a whistle. It is best to carry the whistle on a string around your neck.



1. Stop.

The first signal is, "Stop." It means there is a potentially dangerous situation up ahead or around the river bend. You need to wait for further instructions before you proceed. You should either hold your paddle horizontally or hold your arms out horizontally and wave them a little. If you see this signal you need to do it too so that the people behind you also know their might be danger up ahead.

2. Help/Emergency:

Three loud blasts on your whistle will let others know that someone needs help. You should help the person in trouble as quickly as possible! If you don't have a whistle just do the hand signal by itself, wave your paddle, helmet, or PDF over your head.



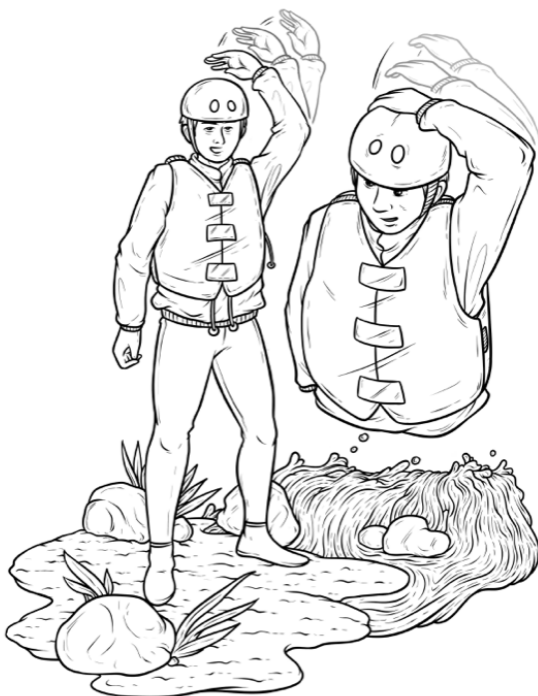


3. All Clear

The “all clear” signal means it is OK to proceed or move forward. You can either hold your paddle or hold one arm up vertically above your head. The paddle should be turned so that the people behind you can see it better. Unless instructed otherwise, always travel down the middle of the river channel.

If it is safer to go left or right instead of down the middle, point your paddle in a 45 degree angle toward the side of the river that is the safer route.

NEVER POINT YOUR PADDLE TOWARD THE OBSTACLE THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED!



4. I'm okay:

The fourth signal means, “I'm okay and not hurt.” Pat the top of your head several times.

Before you go on a river trip, make sure everybody in your group understands these signals. You can also make up other signals that describe other situations, just be sure to discuss these other signals with your paddle partners.

When we follow all the safety rules and watch out for our paddle partners, everyone can feel safer and enjoy the journey through the Grief River.