

How to Use Hand Signals

Often times a signal is used to direct paddlers to take a particular route from their viewing point towards the distant signaler. In fast current or obstructed channels a lead paddler may signal those behind to proceed down a particular side of the channel by raising an arm/paddle and pointing it in the safe direction.

A critical rule for both signaler and recipient: **The signal should always point in the direction of the course to take, and NOT point towards the hazard.**

Common Hand Signals

Most signals are easier to see if kept in slight motion. A paddle held/extended vertically means All Clear/Proceed directly to me, while a paddle waved back and forth over one's head means Help or Danger. Movement as part of the hand signal suggests that action needs to be taken immediately. A few signals are more common among a particular group of paddlers such as the "Back Up" signal for surf landings, or the "walking finger" gesture that indicates a need to portage a portion of a waterway.



Remember- group paddling situations should include a review of hand signals to be used and understood by each member of the paddling party.