

Paddling at Dusk & in the Dark

Paddling at night can be an adventure and picturesque but is more dangerous and should not be undertaken lightheartedly or by novice paddlers.

Go with other competent paddlers who have paddled in the dark. We recommend minimum of 3 paddlers. It is good to buddy up in pairs for safety.



Amongst other things you need to be mindful of fishing lines, overhanging branches, obstructions in the water, weirs all of which are not going to be easily visible in the dark. If there is significant flow consider paddling closer to bank upstream and more mid river on downstream leg; provided you are not putting yourself in extra danger.

Be aware that perspective can be affected in low light.
So consider paddling in a more stable boat.
Wear reflective clothing and/or light coloured clothing.
Take a phone in a waterproof bag, hat and change of clothing in a dry bag.

The EA's rules (A User's Guide to the River Thames) state that, 'If on the water at dusk, after sunset or in restricted visibility an all round white light or two white lights covering 360 degrees must be displayed'. The lights are so others can see you, not for you to see with, and should be diffused so as not to have an impact on the night vision of other paddlers/boat users.

Experienced Paddlers use different lighting methods and here are some suggestions; if you need any further guidance do ask a coach or trip leader.

Cheap bike lights with electrical tape wrapped around them which makes them almost waterproof. Sand down the front with sandpaper which diffuses the beam.

Put a mini light/torch in a plastic yoghurt pot which gives a more diffused light.

As an additional safety measure a light clipped on your BA is a good idea.

Some use head torches but you do need to be lite from both front and back.
Be aware your head torch can impact on other paddlers night vision.

Here are some suggestions of things to purchase:

<https://evaq8.co.uk/emergency-beacon-personal-flashing-rescue-strobe-white.html>

<https://www.puffinswim.co.uk/product/adventure-lights-guardian-expedition-light/>

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Portwest-USB-Rechargeable-Light-Clip/dp/B07ZJJBVVP?pd_rd_w=YGIM7&content-id=amzn1.sym.654f1a8a-3280-4962-b4c7-74cb0d137112&pf_rd_p=654f1a8a-3280-4962-b4c7-74cb0d137112&pf_rd_r=VMNA61JVPCNNMTCH7373&pd_rd_wg=aBbHo&pd_rd_r=843fd040-9d26-4498-96bd-3d53c46c9b27&pd_rd_i=B07ZJJBVVP&psc=1&ref=ped_bap_m_grid_dv_rp_0_29_i

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Torches-LETMY-Flashlight-Adjustable-Camping/dp/B07MHX3TJL/ref=sr_1_10?crid=QL74UGHEWJZN&keywords=small+waterproof+torch&qid=1695907918&refinements=p_36:118658031&nid=118657031&s=diy&sprefix=small+waterproof+torch+torch,aps,120&sr=1-10

Motor boats will display a red light on port side and a green on Starboard.
A rowing boat should display a white flashing light.
You may have lights but others may not! Happy & safe paddling.

