

Paddle trips in the Great Glen and on the Caledonian Canal – Advice from the Coastguard

Emergency procedures / information

Social users and professional groups using the Caledonian Canal and the Great Glen Canoe Trail will hopefully never have to call on the emergency services. However, if something does go wrong, it is vital that you know who to call in the event of an emergency to ensure prompt action. HM Coastguard undertakes the co-ordination and initiation of Search and Rescue operations on the loch systems that make up much of the canal and the canoe trail. What you need to know is how to contact the Coastguard in the event of an emergency and what information you must have to hand.

How to contact the Coastguard in an emergency/distress:

Licensed VHF radio – Channel 16 and call ‘Mayday’

Telephone – Dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

All groups should have shore support but this cannot be guaranteed so individuals and group members should be able to answer questions that are likely to be asked in the event of an emergency. You will be asked questions like ‘What has happened?’ ‘Where?’ ‘When?’ and so on. You must be able to answer those questions accurately, lives may depend on it. To help you be prepared follow the safety advice available from the Scottish Canals and the Great Glen Canoe Trail websites but also:

- Know exactly where you are – carry a GPS, maps, a compass and know how to use them.
- Know your own limitations and that of your group – stick to those limits.
- Know how many people you are with and be able to name/describe them.
- Carry appropriate safety equipment – know how to use it.

There is **no** requirement for **any** group to lodge a passage plan with the Coastguard prior to undertaking a trip or an event. The local Coastguard Officers based at Fort William and Inverness may be able to help with any queries you have when planning your trip or other event (contact details are not for emergency use):

Inverness: T: 01463 220577 email: hamish.young@mcga.gov.uk

Fort William: T: 01397 772122 email: phil.wren@mcga.gov.uk

In an emergency dial 999 ask for the Coastguard, or call on VHF CH 16



**Scottish
Canals**