

Points of Sail adapted by Tom Holtey as applies to kayak sailing limitations-see below and

Beaufort Wind Scale Developed in 1805 by Sir Francis Beaufort of England

Adapted by Tom Holtey for Tourers and Kayak Sailors alike.

A table to help you estimate windspeed by observing the water conditions; or estimate water conditions by listening to windspeeds in weather reports.

1 Knot = 1.15 MPH



Beaufort Force Scale	Rounded to even figures: Wind (MPH)	Original Beaufort Scale: Wind (Knots)	Nautical Terminology	Appearance On Water	Appearance On Land	Notes
0	Less than 1.15	Less than 1	Calm	Sea surface smooth and mirror-like	Calm, smoke rises vertically	Best for beginners.
1	Up to 3.5	1-3	Light Air	Scaly ripples, no foam crests	Smoke drift indicates wind direction, still wind vanes	Easy for beginners.
2	Up to 7	4-6	Light Breeze	Small wavelets, crests glassy, no breaking	Wind felt on face, leaves rustle, vanes begin to move	Easy for beginners.
3	8-11	7-10	Gentle Breeze	Large wavelets, crests begin to break, scattered whitecaps	Leaves and small twigs constantly moving, light flags extended	OK for beginners. Suitable for sailing.
4	12-18	11-16	Moderate Breeze	Small waves 1-4 ft. becoming longer, numerous whitecaps	Dust, leaves, and loose paper lifted, small tree branches move	OK for intermediate paddlers. Best for sailing.
5	19-24	17-21	Fresh Breeze	Moderate waves 4-8 ft taking longer form, many whitecaps, some spray	Small trees in leaf begin to sway	OK for advanced sailing. Advanced paddlers only.
6	25-31	22-27	Strong Breeze	Larger waves 8-13 ft, whitecaps common, more spray	Larger tree branches moving, whistling in wires	Small Craft Advisory is issued.
7	32-38	28-33	Near Gale	Sea heaps up, waves 13-20 ft, white foam streaks off breakers	Whole trees moving, resistance felt walking against wind	Paddlers should be off the water.
8	39-46	34-40	Gale	Moderately high (13-20 ft) waves of greater length, edges of crests begin to break into spindrift, foam blown in streaks	Whole trees in motion, resistance felt walking against wind	
9	47-54	41-47	Strong Gale	High waves (20 ft), sea begins to roll, dense streaks of foam, spray may reduce visibility	Slight structural damage occurs, slate blows off roofs	
10	55-63	48-55	Storm	Very high waves (20-30 ft) with overhanging crests, sea white with densely blown foam, heavy rolling, lowered visibility	Seldom experienced on land, trees broken or uprooted, "considerable structural damage"	
11	64-72	56-63	Violent Storm	Exceptionally high (30-45 ft) waves, foam patches cover sea, visibility more reduced		
12	73+	64+	Hurricane	Air filled with foam, waves over 45 ft, sea completely white with driving spray, visibility greatly reduced		

Wave heights posted above are for open waters with considerable fetch. (Fetch is the distance that wind can blow over the water.) The longer the distance the wind blows across the water the higher the wave height can be. Strong winds blowing across a short distance of water will not produce sizable waves. Wind swell can be "surf" with skill and the right boat, local "storm surf" is usually not preferred for regular surfing and wave riding. Small Craft Advisories are issued by the USCG and other boating authorities. While it is possible for expert kayakers to paddle in a SCA, all small boaters should make for land and/or stay off the water until the advisory is lifted.

