



## **KITEBOARDING SAFETY GUIDELINES**

**1. GET LESSONS.** Kiteboarding is a dangerous sport and it is extremely important to have at least one professional kiteboarding lesson at the very minimum. Lessons not only teaches you the basics, but also gives you a head start and will get you on the water sooner. Kiteboarding lessons are of a high standard worldwide. You will typically cover vital techniques such as how to launch and land your kite, how to self rescue, setting up and attaching your lines, relaunching your kite, board control, waterstart, body dragging and understanding how the kite flies. Most importantly, it teaches you how to get out of situations.

**2. KNOW HOW TO LAUNCH AND LAND YOUR KITE SAFELY.** More than 90% of kiteboarding accidents happen on land, and most of them happen either while or within minutes from launching or landing your kite. When rigging your kite, make sure to double check your lines before launching. Rigging your lines the wrong way around can have fatal consequences. Asking someone to launch your kite isn't always safer than launching your kite from the self launch position - make sure that your helper knows how to launch or catch a kite - an inexperienced helper who lets the kite go too soon can cause a body drag along the beach - possibly over hard objects and people. Assess every launch situation and always choose the safest way of getting on the water. Once your kite is launched make sure you get on the water as soon as possible. It's better to get lofted on the water than on land.

**3. DON'T KITE IN CONDITIONS STRONGER THAN YOU CAN HANDLE, AND LEAVE ROOM FOR ERROR.** Never launch with a kite that is bigger than you can handle. Make sure you know the upper wind range for all your kites. The more power you have in your kite, the less margin for error there is. Rather launch with a smaller than a bigger kite. Make sure that your kite size is smaller or equal to that of other people's kites in the same conditions. If you are not sure, go smaller.

**4. ALWAYS CHECK YOUR EQUIPMENT BEFORE GOING OUT.** Make sure that your kite lines aren't worn or knotted. Knotted lines cut through themselves and cause line failure. Check that your kite, harness, board and wetsuit are all in good condition. Having gear failure out at sea can lead to serious problems. Having a snapped line on land can cause the kite to spiral in the power zone or move very fast through the power zone, resulting in fatal injuries.

**5. KEEP DISTANCE BETWEEN YOURSELF AND ANYTHING ELSE.** Always leave adequate margin for error. As a rule of thumb, always leave at least two line lengths of distance between you and any other objects or persons. One of the biggest problems in kiteboarding is the lack of time and

distance when things go wrong. Kites are powerful and it is difficult to kill the power instantly. Many deaths occur as a result of people dragging into hard objects on land.

**6. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A WORKING QUICK RELEASE SYSTEM,** and that you can safely release from your kite in any situation. Snap shackles are dangerous as they are not meant to release under pressure - make sure you have a kite specific safety system, and that you know how to release in an emergency.

**7. KITE LINES ARE DANGEROUS.** A kite line snagged around a finger or limb will result in the loss of a finger or limb with a fully powered kite. ALWAYS detach your lines from your kite when your kite is not in use, and never leave your kite unattended. People can trip over your lines and launch your kite - with the lines snagged around them. Never launch your kite with people or animals downwind of it - the lines can snag around them. Make sure there is adequate room between your kite and people, and always try and launch downwind of people and obstacles.

**8. KNOW YOUR SELF RESCUE TECHNIQUES, NEVER GO OUT FURTHER THAN YOU CAN SWIM AND CARRY FLARES AS BACKUP.** Make sure you know the self rescue technique for getting back to shore. You might find yourself with the kite down and unable to relaunch due to equipment failure or lack of wind. A self rescue technique will bring you to shore safely by using your kite as a raft and sail. Never go out further than you can swim, and carry small flares as a backup. Flares are visible during day and night and will bring help immediately when you are out of sight and sound.

**9. KEEP AWAY FROM OTHER WATER USERS.** Do not kite between surfers, windsurfers or other water users. Always kite downwind and away from other water users. When things go wrong you are bound to hit anything downwind of you. Don't jump over waves if you can't see what's on the other side, there might be a surfer whom you can land on and seriously injure.

**10. KNOW YOUR HAND SIGNALS.** Make sure you know the universal signs for distress, and that you know the basic hand signs for kiteboarding. Landing and launching your kite are vital signs to know, as people often fail to hear when the wind is blowing and you need help.



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