

Wind

The Beaufort Wind Scale relates sea state to wind speed and to kayaking conditions

Beaufort Number	Wind Speed		Estimating Wind Speed		Kayaking Conditions
	Knots	Seaman's Term	Effects Observed at Sea	Effects Observed on Land	
0	Under 1	Calm	Sea like a mirror.	Calm; smoke rises vertically.	Very easy, flat water paddling; beginners will be at ease.
1	1 – 3	Light air	Ripples with appearance of scales; no foam crests.	Smoke drift indicates wind direction; vanes do not move.	Very easy, still no problem for beginners.
2	4 – 6	Light breeze	Small wavelets; crests of glassy appearance, not breaking.	Wind felt on face; leaves rustle; vanes do not move.	Easy, comfortable kayaking for everyone.
3	7 – 10	Gentle breeze	Large wavelets; crests begin to break; scattered whitecaps.	Leaves, small twigs in constant motion; light flags extended.	Fairly easy; good kayaking weather.
4	11 – 16	Moderate breeze	Small waves, becoming larger; numerous whitecaps.	Dust, leaves and loose paper raised up; small branches move.	Moderate; invigorating for most; comfortable limit for novices.
5	17 – 21	Fresh breeze	Moderate waves, taking longer form; many whitecaps; some spray.	Small trees in leaf begin to sway.	Moderately difficult; novices find boat control difficult and feel unstable. No problem for experienced kayakers.
6	22 – 27	Strong wind	Larger waves forming; whitecaps everywhere; more spray.	Larger branches of trees in motion; whistling heard in wires.	Difficult; hard paddling into the wind; wind catches paddle blades; communication difficult. For experienced paddlers only.
7	28 – 33	Moderate gale	Sea heaps up; white foam from breaking waves begins to be blown in streaks.	Whole trees in motion; resistance felt in walking against wind.	Very difficult; even experienced paddlers may begin to curse; little or no progress into the wind.
8	34 – 40	Fresh gale	Moderately high waves of greater length; edges of crests begin to break into spindrift; foam is blown in well-marked streaks.	Twigs and small branches broken off trees; progress generally impeded.	Extremely difficult; no progress into the wind; boat control is a real problem; communication and rescues very difficult. You'll be on your own!
9	41 – 47	Strong gale	High waves; sea begins to roll; dense streaks of foam; spray may reduce visibility.	Slight structural damage occurs; slate blown from roof.	Dangerous; constant fight to maintain control; rescues and communications almost impossible.
10	48 – 55	Whole gale/ storm	Very high waves with overhanging crests; sea takes white appearance as foam is blown in very dense streaks; rolling is heavy and visibility reduced.	Seldom experienced on land; considerable structural damage occurs.	Very dangerous; survival situation; only real option is to run with the wind or possibly deploy a sea anchor.

*Adapted For Kayaking By John Browning

*Available at KayakWisconsin.net