

Friends of the Kaw
River and Sandbar Safety Signage Text
www.kansasriver.org/river-and-sandbar-safety/

Below is information about how to safely paddle the Kansas River and explore the river's sandbars. This information can also be found on safety kiosks at many Kansas River boat ramps.

A hallmark of the Kansas River is our beautiful braided sandbars. They are one of the Kansas River's greatest features, but it is important to understand how to enjoy the sandbars safely.

You can utilize the sandbars to relax, camp, or fish (with a Kansas fishing license), and use driftwood for a campfire. Please do not go up the banks, which would be trespassing, and make sure you always pack out everything that you bring to the river. Please keep our river clean for all to enjoy, including wildlife, as this is their home!

We recommend the following tips when exploring the Kansas River:

- Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD) whether boating, paddling, or walking on sandbars.
- We recommend that novices paddle when the river is under 5,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) of flow.
- We recommend that more experienced paddlers enjoy the river when it is under 8,000 cfs.
- At 8,000 cfs and higher, there are few sandbars, leaving fewer places to stop and rest.

Sandbars and River Safety

Sandbars in the Kansas River are formed from sand carried downstream from grasslands and farmlands in the river's tributaries. The river's current continually reshapes these sandbars, sometimes dramatically, causing them to shift position and change size. This means an area that appears safe today may look completely different tomorrow, so always use caution when exploring.

Most sandbars have a gentle slope on the side facing the open river, which makes them inviting places to walk, explore, or fish. However, the deep-water side of a sandbar can be hazardous. Here, the riverbed can drop off suddenly into swift, flowing water, with steep cutbanks and hidden debris. Cutbanks are noticeable by the sheer drop-off with

sand falling into the river channel. Powerful eddies (swirling water outside of the current) often form just downstream of sandbars. These swirling waters may look calm on the surface but can be turbulent underneath.

For your safety, please always wear a properly fitted PFD while recreating on or near the river and consider bringing a friend or family member along to explore sandbars. Stay river alert, respect the power of the river, and enjoy the unique beauty of the Kansas River sandbars safely.

For your safety and convenience, Friends of the Kaw and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks have provided loaner PFDs at many of the Kansas River boat ramps. You are welcome to borrow one when exploring the riverbank and sandbars or paddling on the river. Please return them to the safety kiosks at the ramps when you exit the river.

Check these resources below before exploring.

Check River Flows



[US Geological Survey Streamflow Map](#)

Check Reservoir Releases



[US Army Corps of Engineers Reservoir Release
Three Day Forecast](#)