



Kayak and Small-Boat Tech

small, simple boat An Extended Guide · No. 2067

————— An Extended Guide · No. 2067 —————

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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THE 60-SECOND VERSION

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1. The Whole Idea in One Glance If you read only this page, you will paddle out ready and safe. Small-boat tech is about doing a lot with a little. A charged phone in a waterproof pouch, a life jacket, and a whistle are the real essentials. A small fish finder and a lake map app are the fun extras. Keep every bit of it tethered and light, and you have a safe, simple setup. Safety first: a life jacket, a whistle, and a charged phone in a dry pouch A small castable or clip-on fish finder is plenty for a kayak Your phone can be the screen, the map, and the camera all at once Tether everything — on a small boat, a drop means it is gone Keep it light and simple; a kayak is no place for a big, heavy rig You do not need the gear a bass boat carries. On small craft, the goal is the least amount of tech that keeps you safe and helps you find fish. WHY DIFFERENT 2. Why Small-Boat Tech Is Different A kayak or canoe has no dashboard, no big battery, and very little room. Everything you bring has to be light, has to be tied down, and has to earn its place. Gear made for a big fishing boat is often too heavy, too thirsty for power, or too bulky to use from a paddle seat. No dash and no built-in power, so everything runs on small batteries Space is tight — every item must earn its spot A tip or a wave can send loose gear into the water Weight affects how the boat sits and how it paddles TIP Before you buy anything for a small boat, ask three questions: Is it light? Can I tether it? Do I really need it? If the answer to any is no, leave it home.

KEEP IT SIMPLE**5. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

3. Keep It Simple and Light The happiest small-boat anglers carry very little. A phone, a small finder if they want one, a power bank, and their safety gear. More gadgets mean more to charge, more to tether, and more to go wrong. Simplicity is not a compromise on a kayak — it is the whole point. Fewer gadgets mean fewer things to charge and lose Light gear keeps the boat stable and easy to paddle One good multi-use item beats three single-use ones Start with the basics and add only what you miss If you are new to this, resist the urge to deck out the kayak before your first trip. Paddle out a few times with just the essentials and you will know exactly what, if anything, you actually want to add.

SAFETY FIRST 4. Safety Comes First Before any gadget, three things keep you safe on a small boat: a life jacket you actually wear, a whistle to signal for help, and a charged phone in a waterproof pouch. A small boat sits low and tips easily, so these are not optional extras. They are the reason you come home. Wear the life jacket — a kayak can flip without warning A whistle carries farther than your voice across water A charged phone in a dry pouch can call for help Dress for the water temperature, not just the air **WATCH OUT** Cold water is the real danger on a small boat, even on a warm day. A spill into cold spring water saps your strength fast, which is exactly why the life jacket must be worn, not stowed.

THE PHONE

6. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

5. The Charged Phone in a Dry Pouch On a small boat, your phone is your most important piece of tech by far. It calls for help, shows the lake map, and takes the photos. Sealed in a floating waterproof pouch with a lanyard, it stays dry and stays with you even if the boat tips. This one habit does more for your safety than any gadget. Seal it in a floating waterproof pouch every trip Clip a floating lanyard so a tip does not lose it Keep it charged and carry a power bank for longer paddles Download the lake map so it works with no signal My guide on keeping a phone charged and dry on the water goes deeper on pouches, power banks, and mounts. On a kayak, that advice matters even more than on a big boat. THE WHISTLE 6. A Whistle and Basic Signaling A simple whistle is cheap, weighs nothing, and can be heard far across the water when your voice cannot. Clip one to your life jacket so it is always with you, not buried in a bag. Three sharp blasts is the common signal for help. It is the kind of thing you hope never to use and are very glad to have. Clip the whistle to your life jacket, not in a bag Three blasts is a common call for help It carries far better than shouting across water A pea-less whistle still works after it gets wet TIP Many life jackets have a small pocket or loop made for a whistle. Attach it once and forget it, so it is always there when you need it.

FLOAT PLAN

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7. Telling Someone Your Float Plan A float plan is just telling someone where you are going and when you will be back. It costs nothing and it is one of the most powerful safety tools there is. If something goes wrong, someone knows to come looking, and knows where. A quick text before you launch does the job.

- 1 Tell a family member or friend where you will launch
- 2 Say which lake and roughly where you will paddle
- 3 Give a time you expect to be back at the ramp
- 4 Send a quick text when you are safely off the water A float plan works even where there is no cell signal on the water, because you leave it before you go. It is free, and it is the safety habit I most wish every paddler kept. CASTABLE FINDERS 8. Castable Fish Finders A castable fish finder is a little sonar ball about the size of a baseball. You tie it to

your line, cast it out or set it beside the kayak, and it beams what it sees up to an app on your phone. There is nothing to mount and nothing to wire, which makes it a favorite for kayaks and canoes. A small sonar ball that talks to your phone Nothing to mount, wire, or bolt to the boat Shows depth, bottom shape, and fish on the phone app Packs away in a pocket when you are done Brands like Deeper are well known for this style. It is the simplest way to add sonar to a paddle boat, and it moves to the next boat or the dock with you.

HOW IT WORKS

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9. How a Castable Finder Works The little ball floats on the surface and sends sound down into the water, the same way any fish finder does. What bounces back tells it the depth and whether fish are below. It sends all of that up to your phone over its own short-range signal, and the app draws the picture for you.

- 1 Charge the ball and turn it on
 - 2 Open its app on your phone and connect to it
 - 3 Tie it to your line or set it beside the boat
 - 4 Watch the depth, bottom, and fish appear on the app TIP Keep the ball within range of your phone, usually within casting distance. If the app loses the picture, reel the ball a little closer and it reconnects.
- CLIP-ON FINDERS 10. A Small Transducer Finder The other small option is a tiny transducer — the part that makes the sonar — clamped to the side of the kayak, feeding a small screen or your phone. It gives a steadier picture than a castable ball because it stays in the water as you move. It is a step up in capability and a small step up in fuss. A small sonar sensor clamps to the hull or an arm Gives a steady picture while you paddle and drift Feeds a small screen or your phone app Needs a small battery and a simple mount My fish-finder and boat-electronics guide covers the bigger units in detail. For a kayak, the castable ball or a small clamp-on transducer is almost always the right size.

DO YOU NEED IT**9. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech***11. Do You Even Need a Fish Finder?*

Plenty of people fish a kayak happily with no sonar at all. A finder helps you learn a new lake and find the depth where fish hold, but it is a want, not a need. If you fish the same familiar spots, your eyes and your experience may serve you just as well. A finder shines on a new lake you do not know. On familiar water, you may not need one at all. It is one more thing to charge and tether. Try fishing without one first, then decide. **WATCH OUT** Do not let a shiny gadget crowd a small boat before you know you want it. The best anglers I know on small water carry remarkably little. **READING SONAR** 12. Reading the Sonar Simply A fish finder screen looks busy at first, but you only need a few things. The number is the depth under you. The band at the bottom is the lake floor, hard or soft. The little marks above it are fish or bait. Everything else is detail you can ignore while you learn. The big number is the depth right under you. The solid band at the bottom is the lake floor. Arches or dots above the floor are fish. Ignore the fancy settings until the basics make sense. **TIP** Start by just watching the depth as you paddle. Learning where the lake gets deep and shallow teaches you more about where fish hold than any other single thing. **MOUNTING FINDER** 13. Mounting a Finder on a Kayak If you use a clip-on finder or want the phone screen steady, a small mount keeps it in view without taking a hand off the paddle for long. Many kayaks have a gear track or rail made just for this. Keep the mount low and tight so it does not upset your balance or catch a line. Use the kayak's gear track or a clamp on a rail.

POWERING IT

10. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

Keep the mount low to protect your balance Place the screen where a glance reaches it Tether the screen or phone in case the mount fails On a sit-in canoe with no rails, a simple clamp on the gunwale or a suction mount on a flat spot works. Keep it simple and always add a tether. 14. Powering a Small Finder Small finders run on their own built-in battery or a tiny external battery pack. A castable ball charges like a phone and lasts for hours. A clamp-on unit may need a small sealed battery you tuck in a dry hatch. Either way, the power demand is small, and a nightly charge keeps you fishing. A castable ball charges by cable, like a phone A clamp-on finder may need a small sealed battery Keep any battery in a dry bag or sealed hatch Charge everything the night before the trip TIP A castable finder and your phone can both top up from the same power bank. One charged bank in the dry bag covers nearly all the power a kayak angler needs. PHONE AS SCREEN 15. The Phone as Your Screen On a small boat, your phone often does the job of a dedicated screen. It shows the fish finder app, the lake map, and the weather, all on one device you already own. That saves money, weight, and space — three things a kayak never has to spare. The catch is that it leans hard on your battery. One phone runs the finder, the map, and the weather Saves the weight and cost of a separate screen Keep it in a waterproof mount within easy view Carry a power bank, since running apps all day drains it

WATCH OUT**11. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

Running a sonar app and a map together will flatten a phone faster than you expect. Keep the brightness reasonable and keep a charged power bank close by. **PHONE MOUNTS**

16. Waterproof Phone Mounts for Paddlecraft A waterproof phone mount holds the phone in view and shields it from spray. The sturdy ball-and-socket style grips a rail or gear track and adjusts to any angle. Pair it with a waterproof pouch so the phone stays dry inside the mount, and always run a tether as a backstop. A ball-and-socket mount grips a rail and adjusts easily. Keep the phone in a pouch inside the mount for dryness. Mount it low and within an easy glance. Add a tether in case the mount lets go in a bump. A phone popping out of a mount and into the lake is a common loss on small boats. The pouch keeps it dry and the tether keeps it yours. **LAKE MAPS**

17. Lake Maps on a Kayak A lake map app shows depth lines and lets you mark the spots where you caught fish, right on your phone. On a quiet local lake you may not need it, but on a bigger reservoir it helps you find the drop-offs and stay oriented. Download the map before you launch so it works even with no signal. Depth lines show where the lake gets deep and shallow. Mark your good spots to find them again next time. Download the map before launching so it works offline. Your position shows on the map even with no cell bars. My lake navigation and weather guide covers the map apps like Navionics in plain English. For a kayak, the free features often do everything you need.

POWER BANK**12. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

18. A Power Bank Sized for Paddling A power bank is a charged battery in a box that tops up your phone and finder with no outlet needed. For a kayak, a small 10,000 mAh bank is light and plenty for a day. It lives in the dry bag with a cable and keeps your phone alive through a long outing of maps and sonar. A small 10,000 mAh bank is light and enough for a day Charge it the night before alongside your phone Keep it in a dry bag with a sturdy cable It tops up the phone and a castable finder both Resist a big, heavy power bank on a kayak. The weight is not worth it when a small one covers a full day of paddling and fishing.

TETHER 19. Keeping Everything Tethered On a small boat, anything not tied down can end up on the lake bottom in a blink. Tethers, leashes, and clips are the cheapest insurance there is. Your phone, your finder, your paddle, even your tackle box — a short leash on each one means a tip or a bump costs you nothing but a scare. Leash the paddle so a spill does not leave you stranded Tether the phone, the finder, and the tackle Use floating lanyards where you can, so gear stays on top Clip gear to the boat, not just to a bag that could float off WATCH OUT A dropped paddle on a windy lake can drift out of reach faster than you can hand-paddle to it. A paddle leash is one tether no kayaker should skip.

DRY STORAGE

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20. Dry Bags and Hatch Storage A dry bag keeps your spare clothes, power bank, keys, and snacks dry and together. Many kayaks also have a sealed hatch for larger items. Pack the things you need often near the top and clip the bag to the boat so it cannot slide out if you tip. A roll-top dry bag keeps gear dry and organized Use the kayak's hatch for bulkier, less-used items Keep the things you reach for often near the top Clip the dry bag to the boat so it stays with you TIP Pack a dry change of clothes in the bag on cool days. If you go in the water, dry clothes waiting on shore turn a scary spill into a mild story. HANDHELD GPS 21. A Small Handheld GPS, Optional Some paddlers like a small, rugged handheld GPS instead of leaning on the phone for navigation. It floats, it shrugs off water, and its battery lasts far longer than a phone running apps. It is an extra, not a must, but it appeals to folks who paddle big or remote water often. A rugged handheld floats and resists water Its battery outlasts a phone running apps all day Good for bigger or more remote water An extra for frequent paddlers, not a first purchase For most local-lake outings, a phone with a downloaded map does everything a handheld would. Save the handheld for when you are paddling far from help often. TROLLING MOTOR 22. Trolling Motors on Small Boats A small electric trolling motor can turn a kayak or jon boat into a boat you can cover water in without constant paddling. It clamps on, runs off a small battery, and is quiet enough not to spook fish. It adds weight and complexity, so it suits people who want to fish longer and paddle less.

WATCH OUT**14. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

A clamp-on electric motor moves a small boat quietly. It runs off a small deep-cycle battery you carry aboard. It adds real weight — mind the boat's balance and limit. Great for covering water without constant paddling. Some lakes, like Mogadore Reservoir, allow electric motors only. Always confirm the current rules for your lake with Ohio's ODNR before you add a motor.

SPOT-LOCK 23. Spot-Lock and Anchoring Simply. Some trolling motors have a feature that uses GPS to hold the boat in one place, almost like an invisible anchor. It is handy on a windy day when you want to stay over a good spot. On a small boat, though, a simple anchor or a stake-out pole in shallow water often does the same job for far less money. GPS hold keeps the boat over a spot in the wind. A simple folding anchor is cheaper and lighter. A stake-out pole works in shallow water. Match the fuss to how often you will really use it.

TIP For a kayak, start with a small anchor before you spend on a motor with GPS hold. It is a fraction of the cost and keeps the boat simple.

MOTOR BATTERY 24. A Small Battery for the Motor. A trolling motor needs its own battery, separate from your phone's power bank. A small lithium battery is light and holds plenty of charge for a day of gentle trolling. Keep it secured low in the boat for balance, in a case that keeps it dry, and charge it at home between trips. The motor needs its own deep-cycle battery. A small lithium battery is lighter than an old lead one. Secure it low and centered for balance. Keep it dry and charge it fully between trips.

LIGHTS**15. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

My RV and boat batteries guide explains lead-acid versus lithium in plain English. On a small boat, the lighter lithium battery is often worth the extra cost for the weight saved. 25. Lights for Dawn and Dusk Many of the best fishing hours are at first light and last light, when a small boat is hard for others to see. A white light that other boaters can see from all around keeps you safe and is required when it is dark. A small headlamp keeps your hands free for tying knots in dim light. A white all-around light makes you visible at dusk and after dark A headlamp frees your hands for knots and tackle Rechargeable lights save fussing with batteries Keep a spare light in the dry bag just in case TIP Clip the all-around light where it shines over the whole boat, not into your own eyes. A pole or a raised mount keeps it visible without blinding you. NIGHT RULES 26. Required Lights After Dark Being seen on the water after dark is not just smart, it is required. A small, human-powered boat generally needs at least a light you can show in time to avoid a collision, and a powered small boat needs proper navigation lights. The exact rules depend on your boat and your state, so confirm what applies to you. A paddle craft needs a light ready to show after dark A motorized small boat needs proper navigation lights Rules vary by boat and state — confirm the current ones When in doubt, more visibility is always safer WATCH OUT Do not guess on night-lighting rules. Check the current requirements with Ohio's ODNR or the Coast Guard for your type of boat before you head out in the dark.

SPEAKER**16. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

27. A Bluetooth Speaker, Kept Light A small waterproof Bluetooth speaker is a pleasant extra for a lazy paddle, playing music from your phone without draining it as fast as the phone's own speaker. Keep it small and clip it on so it does not roll overboard. It is pure fun, not a need, so let weight be your guide. A small waterproof speaker plays music from your phone Clip it on so it cannot roll into the water Keep it small to spare weight and space Mind the volume — sound carries far across quiet water Sound travels a long way over water, so a speaker that seems quiet to you can carry to the next cove. Keep it low out of courtesy to other anglers and shoreline neighbors. THE CAMERA 28. A Camera for the Trip Your phone takes fine photos of the catch and the view, right through its waterproof pouch. If you want hands-free video of the paddle, a small action camera on a chest or boat mount does the job. Keep any camera tethered and keep the phone as your reliable, do-everything choice. The phone in its pouch takes good catch and scenery photos A small action camera gives hands-free video, if you want it Tether any camera so it does not go in the water The phone is the simplest, do-everything choice TIP A floating wrist strap on a camera or phone means that even a dropped device bobs on the surface for you to scoop up, rather than sinking out of reach.

WEATHER CHECK

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29. Weather Check Before You Launch A small boat is at the mercy of the wind far more than a big one, so the weather check before you launch matters a great deal. A wind and radar app shows you the gusts and any storms rolling in. If the wind is up or weather is coming, a small boat is better left on the trailer. Check wind and gusts before you launch a small boat A radar app warns of storms building nearby High wind makes a kayak hard to control — reconsider When in doubt, wait for a calmer window My weather and lightning safety guide and my lake navigation guide cover the apps like Windy that show wind and storms. On a kayak, wind is the condition to respect most. WATCH THE SKY 30. Watching the Sky on the Water Even with a good forecast, keep an eye on the sky once you are out. Storms can build fast on a summer afternoon, and a small boat needs more lead time to reach shore than a fast one. If you see dark clouds building or hear thunder, head in early. There is no fish worth being caught out in a storm. Glance at the sky often, especially on summer afternoons Dark, building clouds mean head toward shore A small boat needs extra time to reach safety If you hear thunder, the day is done — go in WATCH OUT The 30-30 rule is a simple guide: if thunder follows the flash within thirty seconds, get off the water, and wait thirty minutes after the last thunder before returning. My weather guide explains it fully.

BE VISIBLE**18. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

31. Staying Visible to Other Boats A low kayak or canoe is genuinely hard for a motorboat to spot, especially in chop or low light. Bright colors, a tall flag on a pole, and reflective tape all help other boaters see you. On busier lakes, being visible is one of your most important safety steps. Bright hull and jacket colors stand out on the water A tall safety flag helps motorboats spot you in chop Reflective tape helps in low light Stay clear of busy channels and ramps in a small boat TIP A brightly colored paddle blade flashes with every stroke and makes you easier to see. Small touches like this add up to being noticed in time.

MARINE RADIO 32. A Marine Radio — Do You Need One? On small inland lakes, most kayakers rely on a cell phone rather than a marine radio, and that is usually fine. A handheld VHF radio matters most on big open water where you need to reach other boaters or the Coast Guard. For a quiet reservoir close to shore, a charged phone and a whistle are the common choice. On small inland lakes, a phone is the usual tool A handheld VHF radio matters on big open water Channel 16 is the hail and distress channel Match the gear to the water you actually paddle My marine radio guide covers when a VHF is worth it in plain English. For most NE-Ohio reservoir paddling, you can skip it; for big, open water, give it a look.

SATELLITE SOS

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33. Satellite SOS for Remote Paddles If you paddle somewhere with no cell signal, a way to call for help without bars is worth having. Many newer phones can send an emergency message by satellite with a clear view of the sky, and a dedicated satellite messenger does it more ruggedly. For local lakes with coverage, your phone and a float plan are enough. A newer phone may send an emergency SOS by satellite A dedicated messenger is sturdier for frequent remote use Local lakes with signal need only a charged phone Always leave a float plan, signal or not My satellite messenger guide covers these options in detail. For the quiet lakes near home, you likely will not need one, but it is good to know they exist.

BALANCE 34. Keeping Weight and Balance in Mind Every bit of gear you add changes how a small boat sits and handles. Pile too much high or to one side and the boat gets tippy. Keep heavy items low and centered, spread the weight evenly, and never load past what the boat is rated to carry. A stable boat is a safe boat. Keep heavy items low and in the center Spread the load evenly side to side Do not load past the boat's rated capacity Less gear means a more stable, easier paddle WATCH OUT A kayak loaded heavy and high tips with alarming ease. When you add a battery or motor, think first about where its weight sits in the boat.

GEAR HOME

20. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

35. Where Gear Lives on a Kayak Giving each item a fixed home on the boat keeps the deck clear and keeps you from fumbling. The phone on its mount, the finder in reach, the power bank and keys in the dry bag, the net and tackle within arm's length. A tidy boat is a safe one, and you always know where everything is. Phone on its mount where a glance reaches it Dry bag with power bank and keys clipped in place Net and tackle within easy arm's reach Nothing loose on the deck to roll overboard TIP Set the boat up the same way every trip. When each thing has a home, you reach for it without looking and nothing gets knocked into the water. CARE 36. Freshwater Rinse and Care Our inland lakes are fresh water, which is gentle compared to the sea, but a rinse and a dry still help your gear last. Wipe down the finder, the mount, and the connectors after a trip, and let everything dry before it goes in the bin. Dry storage is what keeps electronics working season after season. Wipe down the finder, mount, and connectors after a trip Let everything dry fully before storing it Keep connectors clean so they make a good contact Store electronics somewhere dry, not a damp garage corner My winterizing guide covers putting boat electronics and batteries away for the Ohio cold. Even simple kayak gear lasts longer stored dry and above freezing.

CHARGE AHEAD

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37. Charging Everything the Night Before The surest way to ruin a paddle is a dead phone or a dead finder. A simple habit the night before fixes it: line up the phone, the power bank, the finder, and any motor battery and charge them all. Pack them in the morning knowing everything is full and ready.

- 1 The night before, gather every device that needs charge
- 2 Plug in the phone, power bank, and fish finder
- 3 Charge the trolling motor battery if you carry one
- 4 Pack it all in the morning, charged and ready WATCH OUT Keep a charging spot by the door with all your cables. When everything charges in one place, you never launch with a half-dead gadget. OHIO LAKES 38. NE-Ohio Lakes for Small Craft Our local lakes are a paddler's gift, and each has its own rules. Mogadore Reservoir allows electric motors

only and is a calm, pretty spot for a kayak. West Branch is large with a state park. Berlin Lake is a big reservoir. The horsepower and launch rules can change, so always confirm the current ones before you go. Mogadore Reservoir: electric motors only, calm paddling water West Branch: large, with a state park and launches Berlin Lake: a big reservoir with open water Confirm current horsepower and launch rules with ODNR On a bigger, open reservoir, wind and boat traffic matter more for a kayak. The smaller, electric-only lakes are often the friendliest water for a relaxed paddle.

LICENSE

22. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

39. Fishing License on Your Phone Ohio lets you buy a fishing license online and carry it right on your phone, so there is no paper to lose in a wet boat. You buy it through the state's wildlife licensing site or app, and the digital license lives on the phone you are already carrying. Confirm the current rules and any exemptions with ODNR. Buy an Ohio license online and carry it on your phone No paper to get wet or lost in the boat The state's HuntFish Ohio app holds the digital license Confirm current rules and exemptions with ODNR TIP My fishing apps and Ohio license guide walks through buying and carrying the digital license step by step. Having it on the phone means it is always with you on the water. A ROUTINE 40. A Simple Launch Routine A short, same-every-time routine at the ramp means you launch ready and safe. Life jacket on, phone sealed and charged, gear tethered, float plan sent. Four quick checks and you are on the water with nothing forgotten and nothing loose.

- 1 Put the life jacket on and clip the whistle to it
- 2 Seal the charged phone in its pouch with the lanyard
- 3 Tether the finder, paddle, and dry bag to the boat
- 4 Send your float plan text, then launch TIP Make the float-plan text the last thing you do before you push off. It takes ten seconds and it is the habit most likely to bring help if you ever need it. COMMON WORRIES 41. Common Questions People Ask Me When folks ask me about outfitting a kayak or small boat, the same questions come up. Here are the honest short answers so you can keep it simple and get on the water. 'Do I need a fish finder?' No — a castable one is nice but never required

YOUR CHECKLIST

23. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

'Phone or a separate screen?' The phone does it all for most paddlers 'What about no signal?' Leave a float plan; a satellite option is for remote water 'Is a trolling motor worth it?' Only if you want to paddle less and fish longer If your question is not here, call or text and ask. A short conversation can save you from buying gear a kayak does not need. 42. Your Small-Boat Tech Checklist Here is the short version to keep with your paddling gear. Check these off and you will launch light, safe, and ready for the water. Life jacket worn, with a whistle clipped to it Phone charged and sealed in a floating pouch with a lanyard Lake map downloaded so it works with no signal Power bank and keys in a dry bag, clipped to the boat Fish finder and paddle tethered, if I carry them A light aboard for dawn, dusk, or after dark Float plan sent to someone onshore Weather and wind checked before launching Tuck this list in your dry bag. A quick glance before you launch keeps every paddle safe and simple. WHEN TO CALL 43. When It Is Worth Calling Me Most small-boat tech you can set up yourself at the kitchen table, and the whole point is to keep it simple. But if you want help choosing a castable finder, setting up lake maps and your digital license on your phone, or getting a clean, charging phone mount sorted for your kayak, that is exactly what I am here for. I have spent more than thirty years making tech easy for folks, and I will tell you honestly what is worth it and what to skip.

TIP

24. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

I can sit down with you, set up your phone and any finder, and make sure you launch charged, safe, and ready to fish. My first in-home visit is a flat ninety-nine dollars, and remote screen-share help is forty-nine — call or text me at (330) 200-8042. CHEAT SHEET Everyday Cheat Sheet Keep this page with your paddling gear. It is the short answer to outfitting a kayak or small boat the simple way. Safety first: life jacket worn, whistle clipped on, charged phone in a dry pouch A castable or clamp-on fish finder is plenty — a big rig is overkill Let the phone be your screen, map, and camera, and carry a power bank Tether everything, including the paddle, so a tip costs you nothing Keep gear light, low, and centered for a stable boat Download the lake map so it works with no cell signal Check wind and the sky — a small boat respects weather most Leave a float plan with someone onshore every trip Get help: call Bill at (330) 200-8042

HOW I CAN HELP

25. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

Your Visit — and My Promise In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included. Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo). My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated. Call or text (330) 200-8042 · Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · bill@billshometech.com This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Which Fish Finder for a Small Boat?

Match the sonar to how you paddle and fish.

Castable Ball

Nothing to mount or wire
Talks to your phone app
Packs in a pocket

Clamp-On Finder

Steady picture while
moving
Needs a small battery
A small mount and screen

Phone App Only

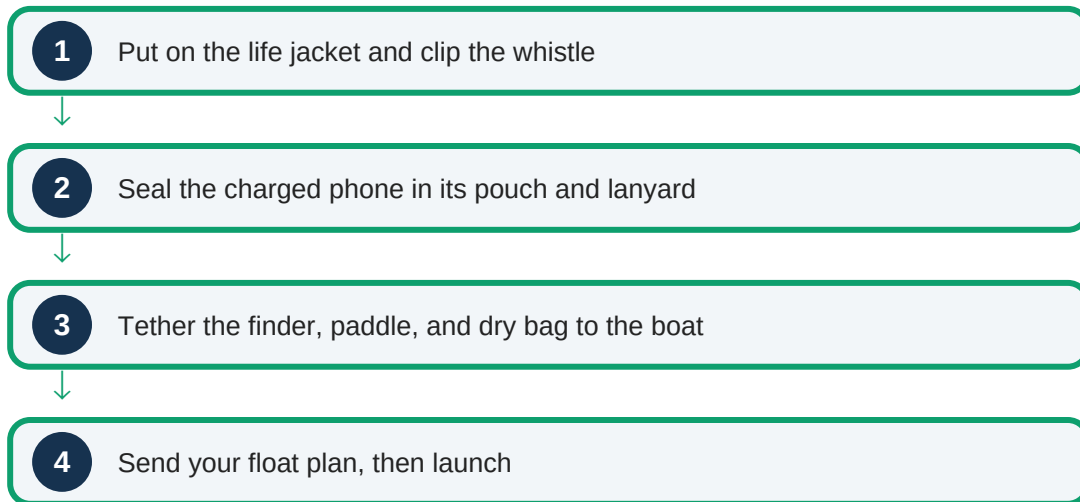
Lake map and your
position
No sonar needed
Lightest, cheapest
choice

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

A Simple Small-Boat Launch

Four steps from the ramp to the water.



BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

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