

The Downtown Boathouse runs a free public kayaking program in New York City between mid-May and mid-October. Any adult who shows up, and who knows how to swim, can go kayaking in the Hudson - in the embayment next to one of the Boathouse docks. Children can also go kayaking, in a double kayak with an adult.

The kayaks used are broad, slow, sit-on-top kayaks (mostly Drifters by Ocean Kayak) so the kayaking experience is decidedly limited. But the boats are safe, and stable, and easy to control, so very suitable for a public kayaking program. We also run 3 hour harbor trips every weekend and holiday morning for more experienced paddlers in faster, thinner boats as well as outreach programs at other locations.

Every participant has to sign a waiver, which is good for the season. At the end of the season the waivers are counted to get an estimate of how many people went kayaking during the year. Below are the numbers for 2009:

Location	Count	Percent
Pier 40	10,462	37%
Pier 96	7,780	28%
72nd Street	7,893	28%
Hoboken (5 days)	856	3%
Governors Island	575	2%
Dumbo, Brooklyn (3)	441	2%
Riverbank Pool	50	0%
Other	29	0%
Total	28,086	100%

For comparison here are the historic number of signed waivers by year:

Waivers Signed per Year						
Year	Pier26	Pier40	Pier96	72ndSt	Other	Total
2009	0	10,462	7,780	7,893	1,951	28,086
2008	0	6,947	7,318	7,584	2,931	24,780
2007	0	5,232	6,149	9,529	1,190	22,100
2006	0	1,387	5,920	7,365	1,252	15,924
2005	12,417	0	735	8,945	856	22,953
2004	9,670	0	0	6,951	1,267	17,888
2003	8,666	0	0	3,829	1,098	13,593
2002	11,141	0	0	0	889	12,030
2001	10,200	0	0	0	0	10,200
2000	7,600	0	0	0	0	7,600
1999	6,700	0	0	0	0	6,700
1998	5,400	0	0	0	0	5,400
1997	2,800	0	0	0	0	2,800
1996	1,200	0	0	0	0	1,200
1995	100	0	0	0	0	100
Total	75,894	24,028	27,902	52,096	11,434	191,354

Because of repeat visits, the total number of kayakers launched is more than two times the number of waivers signed. Thus we estimate have put on the water somewhere near half of a million kayakers since we started.

In the 2 years since our main Pier 26 location closed for reconstruction our numbers declined. This was probably because both of our two new locations lack decent signage, are not on a popular walkway. Many local residents complain that they have trouble finding us. With the completions of the promenade by pier 40 our numbers have begun to rise.