

WKCC - General Risk Assessment for Kayaking and Canoeing

Version 1.0 Mar 2010

This Risk Assessment is provided to give leaders and participants guidance as to the standards and precautions to be expected when taking part in Club activities. It is designed to ensure that everyone can have fun on the water in the knowledge that they are protected from harm to a reasonable degree. It does not guarantee safety but it gives sensible advice to minimise risk. Leaders will need to carry out dynamic risk assessments throughout the activity and act appropriately when circumstances are not covered by this document.

General risk control measures:

Leaders of Club activities must hold the appropriate BCU coach qualification or have experience over several seasons and a variety of locations and grades of difficulty for the proposed activity. Leaders must equip themselves with appropriate knowledge of the particular venue. They must also have experience of and be comfortable on more challenging grades of water and conditions than they find on the day. Leaders must be able to rescue others, control the group and administer first aid, they must plan for emergency situations and know the procedure to be followed for different types of incident. All activities must commence with a group briefing covering hazards, safety, group control, signals, emergency action, any participant illnesses, water confidence and roles.

Leaders should ensure that they and the participants are fit to undertake the activity. Participants exhibiting signs of exhaustion, illness, or the influence of drugs or alcohol must not be allowed to participate. No activity is acceptable if it includes the consumption of alcohol before or during paddling.

The following are Club rules to which there are no exceptions:-

No club water based activity shall take place with less than three participants

A properly fitted buoyancy aid must be worn at all times on the water

All participants will abide by the instructions and decisions of the activity leader

Where an individual is unsure of their ability to run an event they must seek authorisation from a member of the club committee before posting details on the club programme/website. The Club will always support the decision of a leader to cancel, abort, or change the location of, an activity for safety reasons.

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

(Focus on the things over which you have control)

ACTIVITY: Canoeing / Kayaking		Assessment by: Paul Haggett		Date:		Target Date for review:	
Approved by: CLIVE PEARSON		Position: CHAIRMAN		Date: 15/4/10		Additional CM's required? If existing CM's cannot be met or circumstances have changed	
Significant Hazards and Associated Risks Those hazards which may result in serious harm or affect several people	Those who might be harmed Persons at risk from the significant hazards identified	Control Measures(CM's): Controls, including relevant sources of guidance (e.g. BCU Generic Risk Assessment,). Specific CM's not included in the generic RA (e.g. briefings, actions by leaders / participants, qualifications / experience of supervisors)		Residual Risk Rating (H / M / L)			
Inappropriate Leadership	Group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders trained, competent and experienced with clearly defined roles and responsibilities Instructors to hold appropriate and current British Canoe Union (BCU) Coaching qualifications for the prevailing conditions (BCU 'Terms of Reference' for coaching awards) including first aid and resuscitation awards Activity management takes account of group characteristics Supervision levels to be appropriate to the size and competence of the group (1:8, usually with max group size of 12 plus supervisors) Large groups to be split into smaller manageable groups Overall leader remains in touch with all groups and can re group effectively at agreed points. All group leaders appropriately equipped to cope with likely common incidents, as recommended by the BCU, and trained in use 		L			

Lifting and manual handling hazards → long-term injuries	All group members, including leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group appropriately briefed and observe demonstration of good lifting and carrying techniques before activity commences • More than one person to lift / carry each boat • Appropriately trained / experienced leader to supervise the loading / unloading of boats to / from storage racks or trailers 	L
Water → drowning	All group members, including leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants to wear correctly fitted buoyancy aids that conform to EN 393 (or equivalent prevailing) standard • Self-righting buoyancy aids may be appropriate for participants with limited mobility or other special needs • Leaders to check before group goes afloat and monitor throughout session • Capsize drill explained to reduce possibility of participants not making clean exit from upturned craft – “dry” capsizes demonstrated on land beforehand 	M
Unsuitable / inappropriate location → injury or fatality	Group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location has been specifically assessed by technical adviser - BCU Coach, minimum • Weather forecast obtained, weather and water conditions constantly monitored and activity adjusted accordingly 	L
Lodging of kayak mid-stream or 'pinning' <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeist may remain inside kayak leading to injury or drowning	All group members, including leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canoeists are trained how to exit their kayak in the event of a serious pinning • Experienced canoeists are at hand to conduct a rapid and effective rescue appropriate to the given situation • Suitable rescue equipment is carried on the river at all times 	M
Re-circulation of canoeist (with or without kayak) in stopper → Serious injury and drowning	All group members, including leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canoeists are trained to avoid stoppers beyond their ability • More experienced members are trained in stopper rescue and suitable rescue equipment is always at hand 	M

<p>Unavoidable "strainer", e.g. tree or other object in river presenting risk of trapping canoeist underwater → drowning</p>	<p>All group members, including leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canoeists are instructed to avoid potential hazards, and how to react if they are unable to avoid such a hazard. • Swimmers are rescued as quickly as possible. • Canoeists are not to paddle rivers significantly beyond their level of experience. 	<p>Ratio of experienced canoeists to less experienced members is constantly assessed to ensure sufficient rescue-trained individuals if needed</p>	<p>M</p>
<p>Unclean/polluted water → infection/illness (e.g. Weil's disease)</p>	<p>All group members, including leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Group Leader will ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ areas of stagnant water are avoided ○ reasonable steps are taken to check the cleanliness of the water (clarity, dead animals upstream, signs of litter / sewage/pollution, not used by livestock) before allowing activity to take place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ unless the water is tested and known to be clean, swimmers are advised to keep their heads above water and not to drink/swallow water if possible • Participants will cover cuts and wounds with waterproof plasters • Participants will wash their hands and any cuts / wounds with soap and clean water afterwards and before eating ("Wet Wipes" are an acceptable substitute) 		<p>M</p>
<p>Inexperience / Lack of competence of participants → loss of control → collision, capsizing</p>	<p>Group members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group to receive introductory briefing to include, as appropriate the following: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ basic paddling techniques ○ clearly defined area(s) of operation ○ actions in event of capsizing ○ local hazards e.g. other water users, currents, tides, wind etc. ○ basic command signals • Levels of competence established before main activity commences • Activity to be adapted to and appropriate for abilities of group 	<p>River/sea paddlers are trained in swift rescue techniques. Ongoing teaching of strokes, rolling and rescue techniques on the river, sea and pool. Advice and techniques regarding 'reading' rivers are given to all members to improve their river running ability.</p>	<p>L</p>

Exposure to weather, prolonged immersion in water → hypothermia	All group members, including leaders	<p>The Group Leader will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are appropriately clothed for the prevailing conditions • Time on the water is limited (according to the group and water temp) and session will finish if individuals start to show signs of cold or fatigue • hot drinks, spare warm clothes, and adequate shelter are available • Emergency telephone / arrangements in place 	Emergency shelter to be carried during group activity Spare clothing to be carried when appropriate
Inappropriate / inadequate equipment → injury	All group members, including leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft to be used are suitable /appropriately equipped for the prevailing water and weather conditions. If people are using own boats, these are to be inspected by leader prior to commencing activity. • Unsuitable boats will not be not permitted to be used • The Group Leader will ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a full check of boats and personal equipment is made prior to departure ○ All boats to have suitable buoyancy ○ As far as possible with the equipment available, boat and paddle sizes are suitable for each individual, and footrests are adjusted appropriately ○ Paddlers' exit from an upturned craft will not be unduly impeded • All group members to wear safety helmets, where conditions or activity may require them, to be checked visually for defects and correctly fitted before activity commences. 	Equipment log is in place and maintained, and a progressive maintenance programme is undertaken
Slips, trips, falls/ collisions → injuries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All group members to wear suitable footwear with adequate grip that will help protect against stones/broken glass etc. on shore or water bottom 	
Individual becomes separated from rest of group	Group members, including leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants to re-group at appropriate intervals, and wait for everyone to be accounted for before continuing 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders maintain awareness of all participants' locations at all times • Participants to use "buddy" system and briefed regarding procedure if they become separated from rest of group 		
Shoulder dislocation →Inability to exit boat, swim to the side and assist with own rescue. →Permanent injury if not dealt with quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canoeists are constantly under the observation of an experienced member • If shoulder dislocation occurs, the casualty is taken to hospital immediately 	All group members, including leaders	Canoeists explicitly taught how to avoid shoulder dislocations.
REVIEWS:			
DATE OF REVIEW:		REVIEWED BY:	COMMENTS:
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