



Padding Activities Risk Assessment

This Risk Assessment applies to all paddling activities. Some sections will have more relevance in specific settings.

All leaders should familiarise themselves with this generic assessment but it is important that **dynamic approach to risk** is used during activities. Please note Leader is interchangeable with Coach in this document.

Activity: Canoeing and Kayaking		Written by: Claire Hardwick, Ken Tompkins. Updated May 2014 JL added (in red) Aug 2016				
Hazard / Event	Persons affected	Level of Risk		Control Measures in place	Risk with control measures	
		Likelihood	Severity		Likelihood	Severity
Personal Health	Participants Leaders	Medium	medium	Leaders should identify whether participants have any personal health needs by checking medical consent forms and inviting disclosure of needs from participants. (Ask your participants if they have fitness issues today, but be aware of confidentiality issues). Check participants are carrying essential items for personal care (e.g. asthma inhaler). Leader to check, clear or barrier off the landing stage and ramps areas to ensure paddlers are not exposed to hazards from broken glass and landing stage damage (wood splintering, rebar protruding, etc).	Low	Low
Personal Injury	Participants Leaders	High	high	A safe warm up should be undertaken prior to paddling activities. Participants to be asked to wear appropriate footwear.	Low	Medium



				<p>Brief groups on safe lifting practice. Appropriate number of people to carry loads. Supervision of trailer loading. All open canoes/kayaks should be fitted with additional buoyancy to aid any rescues. Use of current best practice during rescues of paddlers, boats and equipment. All leaders to hold a current, appropriate, first aid certificate and carry a first aid kit.</p>		
Head Injuries	Participants Leaders	Low	High	<p>Leader control during activities. Use of helmet when performing higher risk activities such as moderate water on rivers (grade two or above), poling on any water, sea kayaking on rocky shores, surfing, pool polo with paddles, adventurous games. Consider helmets when practicing rescues.</p>	Low	Medium
Hypothermia	Participants Leaders	Medium	Medium	<p>Ensure participants are wearing suitable clothing for the conditions. Suitable head wear. Modify time on the water and activities to the weather conditions.</p>	Low	Medium
Heat Injury, dehydration and sun exposure	Participants Leaders	Medium	Medium	<p>Participants should be encouraged to :- Carry and drink fluids throughout longer activities Consider wearing lightweight full sleeve clothing that protects from the sun. Use of sun screen. Suitable head wear. Encourage use of sunglasses in bright conditions.</p>	Low	Low



Infection	Participants Leaders	Low	Medium	Participants need to be educated about the causes and symptoms of Weils Disease and other waterborne infections. Water fowl and dog faeces in the area. If possible the use a bucket and broom to sweep landing stage on a regular basis. Shower following a wet session.	Low	Low
Swamping	Participants Leaders	Medium	Hugh	All kayaks/canoes to be used should have buoyancy bags/blocks fitted. Leaders should exercise caution when setting up sailing rigs with an awareness of potential swamping. All sailing systems must have a means to drop sails immediately.	Low	Low
Capsize	Participants Leaders	High	High	Correctly fitted Buoyancy Aids. B/As to meet current approved standards. Personal B/A to be checked by coach in charge. Leader to find out if any non-swimmers present. Avoidance of boat swamping and deliberate/unexpected capsize. Shower following a wet session	High	Low
Collision with other boaters	Participants Leaders and other water users	Medium	Very High	Pre-launch briefing. Good group control and supervision. Appropriate choice of venue and adjustments made according to venue use by other users. River Etiquette – paddling on right, making clear alterations of course, giving way to craft with less manoeuvrability.	Very Low	Very High



				<p>Consider special caution in the presence of power craft, yachts and dinghies, in tidal waters and when paddling along or through shipping channels.</p> <p>Leaders to remain vigilant for other craft that may pose a danger to participants.</p> <p>Participants should be made aware of these hazards and leaders should direct group to make changes of course clear, to avoid collisions.</p>		
General River / Sea Hazards	Participants Leaders	High	High	<p>Leaders need to have rescue equipment, appropriate to the water environment, to hand at all times. Leaders need to be familiar with factors that affect conditions (e.g. wind, tide, river flow)</p>	Low	Medium
Locks	Participants Leaders	Medium	Medium	<p>Follow directions from lock keeper.</p> <p>Be aware of hazards from larger boats in locks.</p> <p>Avoid turbulent water as locks fill or empty.</p>	Low	Medium
Weirs	Participants Leaders	Medium	High	<p>Weirs must not be approached unless risk is assessed by suitably qualified coach.</p> <p>Coaches should seek local knowledge of weir safety.</p> <p>Whitchurch weir is not to be approached or paddled at any time.</p>	Low	High
Anglers	Participants Leaders and other water users	Medium	Low	<p>Leaders need to be aware that anglers may be camouflaged and not easily seen.</p> <p>Brief group on avoidance of lines and paddlers should politely ask where an angler would prefer they pass (i.e. near or off side of river)</p>	Low	Low
Strainers	Participants Leaders	Medium	High	<p>Brief group about river signals and need to follow directions from the leader.</p>	Low	Medium



				Leaders to be vigilant for hazard and be aware that participants may need advance instruction for timely avoidance of hazards.		
Foot Entrapment	Participants Leaders	Medium	Medium	Leaders on moving water need to include a “Swim Talk” in the pre paddle brief.	Low	Low
Ropes and Lines	Participants Leaders	Medium	Medium	A suitable legal cutting device should be carried whenever ropes or lines are used. Participants may need guidance on design and safe, legal packing of river knives.	Low	Low
Change in conditions	Participants Leaders	Medium	Medium	Be prepared to alter plans and possibly abandon plans to paddle when conditions deteriorate.	Low	Low
Strong Winds	Participants Leaders	Medium	High	Check weather forecast prior to activity. Plan for conditions. Consider tandem paddling when appropriate. If group lack sufficient experience, consider avoiding areas of open water with long fetch that might cause high waves. Be cautious when setting up rafted canoes for sailing in strong winds.	Low	Low
Lightning	Participants Leaders	Low	High	In event of lightning when on exposed open water, the whole group should get off the water promptly but in a safe setting. Avoid sheltering within 3 metres of high objects, such as masts, trees or vehicles.	Low	Low
Prolonged Rain	Participants Leaders	Medium	Medium	Coaches need to be vigilant to changing river levels.	Medium	Low



				Use of suitable clothing to protect against exposure to wind and rain. Be vigilant for fresh debris both floating on the river subsurface and on the banks.		
Journeys	Participants Leaders Drivers	Medium	Medium	Minibus drivers are required to hold a current MIDAS certificate. Drivers must be aware of the legal restrictions related to use of a minibus and trailer. Lone working, without another adult present, should be avoided. Safeguarding issues during journeys need to be considered.	Low	Low
Trailer Loading / Unloading	Participants Leaders Drivers	Medium	Medium	The minibus driver is responsible for checking that the trailer has been safely loaded, that the electrics and safety wire is connected and working and that the trailer is not likely to be overloaded (e.g. above weight limit of a total of 750Kg)	Low	Low

Operational Notes:- In all conditions	Leader should be aware of appropriate access points to river, including any restrictions imposed by authorities giving permission for access, such as guidance on reservoir and harbour access.
--------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



	<p>If a danger is recognised, the decision of the leader in charge should override any decision made by a less experienced coach or coach under assessment.</p> <p>Medical / consent forms with details of next of kin should either be carried by the group leader or be available without undue delay.</p> <p>Staff Qualifications-</p> <p>Sheltered water- Minimum of BCU level two coach to eight kayaks, six OC solo or six OC tandem. Moderate Water- Minimum of one BCU level three (old system) or new BCU level two coach with moderate water endorsement to six participants. Four Star Leaders may lead up to four competent paddlers. All BCU coaches should be considered current in the BCU update process. All leaders should be up to date with safety courses at the appropriate level.</p> <p>All groups should aim to have two leaders present. Groups may split, but should remain within a communicable distance from each other.</p>
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------