



Paddling 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.

Hazard / Risk / Event	Level of Risk		Control Measures in place	Risk with control measures	
	Likelihood	Severity		Likelihood	Severity
Personal Health	Medium	Medium	<p>Leaders should identify whether participants have any personal health needs by checking medical consent forms and inviting disclosure of needs from participants.</p> <p>(Ask your participants if they have fitness issues today, but be aware of confidentiality issues).</p> <p>Check participants are carrying essential items for personal care (e.g. asthma inhaler).</p>	Low	Low
Personal Injury	High	High	<p>A safe warm up should be undertaken prior to paddling activities.</p> <p>Participants to be asked to wear appropriate footwear.</p> <p>Brief groups on safe lifting practice.</p> <p>Appropriate number of people to carry loads.</p> <p>Coaches should consider choosing boats with additional buoyancy, when capsizes or rescues are part of the planned activity.</p> <p>Use of current best practice during rescues of paddlers, boats and equipment.</p> <p>All leaders to hold a first aid certificate and either carry a kit with them or know the location of 1st Aid kits in the boathouse.</p> <p>Leader to check, clear or barrier off the landing stage and ramps areas to ensure that paddlers are not exposed to hazards from broken glass and landing stage damage (wood splintering, rebar protruding, etc).</p> <p>All leaders to have FSRT training or have attended an update within the previous 3 years.</p>	Low	Medium

Hazard / Risk / Event	Level of Risk		Control Measures in place	Risk with control measures	
	Likelihood	Severity		Likelihood	Severity
Head Injuries	Low	High	Leader control during activities. Use of helmet when performing higher risk activities including adventurous games.	Low	Medium
Hypothermia	Medium	Medium	Ensure participants are wearing suitable clothing for the conditions. Modify time spent on the water and activities to the weather conditions.	Low	Medium
Heat Injury, dehydration and sun exposure	Medium	Medium	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. Use sunglasses in bright conditions.	Low	Low
Infection	Low	Medium	If possible consider washing and sweeping landing stage before session. Participants need to be educated about: Causes and symptoms of Weil's Disease and other waterborne infections and how to minimise the associated risk.	Low	Low
Capsize	High	High	Pre-launch briefing. 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.	High	Low
Collision with other boaters	Medium	Very High	Pre-launch briefing. Good group control and supervision. Appropriate choice of venue and adjustments made according to proximity of other users. Good river etiquette – paddling on right, making clear alterations of course, giving way to craft with less manoeuvrability.	Very Low	Very High

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	Likelihood	Severity		Likelihood	Severity
General Hazards	High	High	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)	Low	Medium
Locks	Medium	Medium	Follow directions from lock keeper. Be aware of hazards from larger boats in locks. Avoid turbulent water as locks fill or empty.	Low	Medium
Weirs	Medium	High	Weirs must not be approached unless risk is first assessed by suitably qualified coach. Coaches should seek local knowledge of weir safety. Whitchurch weir (see Operating Procedures)	Low	High
Anglers	Medium	Low	Leaders need to be aware that anglers may be camouflaged and not easily seen. 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)	Low	Low
Strainers	Medium	High	Brief group about river signals and need to follow directions from the leader. Leaders to be vigilant for hazard and be aware that participants may need advance instruction for timely avoidance of hazards.	Low	Medium
Ropes and Lines	Medium	Medium	A suitable knife should be carried whenever ropes or lines may be used. Participants may need guidance on design and safe, legal packing of river knives.	Low	Low
Change in conditions	Medium	Medium	Be prepared to alter plans and possibly abandon plans to paddle when conditions deteriorate.	Low	Low
Strong Winds	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.	Low	Low

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	Likelihood	Severity		Likelihood	Severity
Lightning	Low	High	In event of lightning when on 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	Medium	Medium	Coaches need to be vigilant to changing river levels. Be vigilant for debris floating in the river.	Medium	Low

Trips Away from the Centre

All of the advice above applies to all paddling activities. The Risks itemised below are in addition to the General advice above.

Hazard / Risk / Event	Level of Risk		Control Measures in place	Risk with control measures	
	Likelihood	Severity		Likelihood	Severity
Personal Health	Medium	Medium	Medical and Consent Form must be completed and handed to the trip leader before commencement of the trip.	Low	Low
Journeys	Medium	Medium	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	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
General River Hazards	Medium	High	Boats being used for trips must have full additional buoyancy River leaders and river coaches should:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always hold an appropriate level of training and qualifications for the environment in which they are working • Have maintained skills and fitness levels sufficient for the environment in which they are working • Work within the ratios specified below • Always be prepared to altered the trip plans if the weather, water conditions or group factors increase the risk of potential difficulties • Give a brief appropriate to the environment, before commencing the activity. 	Low	High



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	Likelihood	Severity		Likelihood	Severity
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain group control. • Only work alone if working alongside other groups. 		

General Operational Guidelines

Operational Notes:-	<p>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> <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><u>Leader to Participant Ratios</u></p> <p>Sheltered water</p> <p>Minimum of BCU level two coach, UKCC Level two coach or holder of “The Coach Award” to eight kayaks, six OC solo or six OC tandem.</p> <p>Moderate Water</p> <p>Minimum of one BCU level three (old system), UKCC level two coach or “The Coach Award” with moderate water endorsement to six participants.</p> <p>Four Star Leaders may lead up to four competent paddlers.</p> <p>All BCU coaches should be considered current in the BCU update process.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Groups may split, but should remain within a communicable distance from each other.</p>
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