



White Water Trip Safety Document

***The risk assessment below is intended as an assessment of the hazards and risks for white water paddling trips and should always be used in conjunction with a site specific risk assessment and pre trip planning. British Canoeing guidelines should be followed at all times.**

***Qualified and/or competent persons (agreed by club committee) in appropriate numbers should be present and on the water. Participating paddlers should have the ability & skills appropriate to the activity/trip, grade of water and the conditions. Further, a trip/activity plan and safety brief should be formulated and delivered to all participants before the start of the trip/activity.**

***In addition to the below risk assessment, a dynamic risk assessment which is on-going throughout the training, coaching or activity must be used to monitor variable hazards (such as changing weather, water levels, ability and morale of the group etc.) This element of the risk assessment is not documented but is as important as the others. This must be undertaken primarily by the coach(s) or leader(s) in charge but should also be informed by all other leaders, assistants & paddlers.**

***Within the dynamic risk assessment process process The British Canoeing mnemonic 'CLAP' should be applied:**

C - Communication. Is there a system in place for frequent communication with the people I am responsible for? If people are out of range of my voice how do I communicate with them (whistle, use of signals etc)

L - Line of Sight. Can I see all the people I am responsible for? If they go out of sight what arrangements have I made to ensure they are being looked after (eg move an assisting paddler to visually watch that section)

A - Avoid the problem. Have I create a scenario where those on the water are naturally moving away from potential hazards?

P - Position of maximum usefulness. Where am I positioned in relation to those I am responsible for and the identified site specific hazards? In What order are those on the water paddling a set course? Are the more experienced paddlers in a position to be able to assist those requiring assistance?

Section 1: Risk Assessment Guidance

The assessor can assign values for the hazard severity (a) and likelihood of occurrence (b) (taking into account the frequency and duration of exposure) on a scale of 1 to 5, then multiply them together to give the rating band:

Hazard Severity (a)	Likelihood of Occurrence (b)
1 – Trivial (eg discomfort, slight bruising, self-help recovery)	1 – Remote (almost never)
2 – Minor (eg small cut, abrasion, basic first aid need)	2 – Unlikely (occurs rarely)
3 – Moderate (eg strain, sprain, incapacitation > 3 days)	3 – Possible (could occur, but uncommon)
4 – Serious (eg fracture, hospitalisation >24 hrs, incapacitation >4 weeks)	4 – Likely (recurrent but not frequent)
5 – Fatal (single or multiple)	5 – Very likely (occurs frequently)

The risk rating (high, medium or low) indicates the level of response required to be taken when designing the action plan.

Remote	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	4	8	12	16	20
Very likely	5	10	15	20	25

Rating Bands (a x b)		
LOW RISK (1 – 8)	MEDIUM RISK (9 - 12)	HIGH RISK (15 - 25)
Continue, but review periodically to ensure controls remain effective	Continue, but implement additional reasonably practicable controls where possible and monitor regularly	-STOP THE ACTIVITY- Identify new controls. Activity must not proceed until risks are reduced to a low or medium level

Section 2: White Water Trips

Risk Assessment Record

Risk Assessment of: White Water Trips	Assessor(s): Michael Dalby	Date: 08/08/2021
Overview of activity / location / equipment / conditions being assessed: On a regular basis the club runs trips to areas of white water. Commonly North Wales or Dartmoor due to their more stable water levels but also further afield to South Wales, Yorkshire & North East England etc. The grade of the rivers run is based on the ability level of the group participating and is in line with the international grading system. The format of these trips is that we drive to the start of the section of river we paddle, get all boats and kit off then run a shuttle to the bottom so that all dry kit is there and then at the end collect the other vehicle. Generally we operate on a 1 leader/coach to 6 participants ratio, often with one of these being a competent seconder. Exceptions are made on an experienced leader's discretion and depending on the number of competent paddlers present. The boats, paddles, helmets, buoyancy aids and other equipment used for these trips are usually the personal property of the participants but every effort is made to encourage participants to check the serviceability of their kit.	On the rare occasions club owned kit is used, this will be checked and evaluated by the equipment officer prior to use to ensure it is in the required condition and of the relevant standard.	
Generic or specific assessment? Generic risk assessment	Context of assessment Annual update 2022	

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
1	Drowning	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All participants be able to swim 25 metres All participants should be familiar with the process of wet exiting the kayak and should have attended a minimum of three flat water sessions and five pool sessions before attending a moving water session. Group leader has responsibility for ensuring 'CLAP' protocol is followed in line with British Canoeing instruction Buoyancy Aids (British Standard 50N) to be worn by all 	5	1	5	<p>Pre session briefing – action required in the event of a capsized. Coaches/Leaders to check BAs fitted correctly.</p> <p>Swim check at pool sessions.</p>
2	Collision of boat/paddle and person	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders should instruct their groups to leave an appropriate amount of space between boats Buoyancy aids and helmets provide padding & protection and are compulsory First aid kits carried by coaches/leaders 	3	3	9	Pre session briefing - The "upstream paddler has right of way" rule should be observed to avoid collisions
3	Hypothermia	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone briefed on what to wear Leaders/coaches to check participants are wearing appropriate clothing and carry a warm drink. Emergency services can always be contacted by a mobile phone carried by the leader If the conditions require, a member of the group should carry a group shelter and appropriate extra layers to deal with the conditions A first aider must be present on the trip. At least one first aider per river group is best practice. 	5	1	5	

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
4	Lifting Kayaks/Canoes	Anyone participating or around the boats/members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kayaks and canoes are heavy and awkward. They need to be lifted from vehicles and onto/off of the water. Occasionally they will also need to be carried past river hazards (portaged). Use of correct lifting techniques to be used and encouraged (knees bent, protect the back). Minimise risks by sharing load, use of slings, trolleys, minimal carry distance. 	3	2	6	
5	Injury caused by hard/sharp objects (rocks, tree roots etc)	Anyone paddling or on bankside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate footwear worn by all participants Participants made aware of the risk of cuts Always have a qualified first aider on the trip Open cuts/grazes to be covered with waterproof plaster to reduce risk of infection from contaminated water. 	3	2	6	The "tuck forward" technique should be highlighted on beginner trips as the most protected way of exiting a kayak in whitewater.

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
6	Boat Entrapment	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All participants should be familiar with the process of wet exiting from a kayak and should have attended a minimum of three flatwater sessions & five pool sessions before attending a moving water session. Leaders should have an appropriate level of experience to be able to manage an entrapment situation. The spray deck used should be the correct size for the cockpit and the participant Paddlers should check the grab loop on the spraydeck is correctly positioned before moving off. 	5	1	5	
7	Paddler getting caught in a strainer or otherwise pinned on an obstacle	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good leadership practise will avoid contact with strainers and obstacles Leaders should have relevant experience to be able to extract a paddler from a strainer in case of incident. Appropriate rescue equipment carried to enable safe & quick rescue (slings, throwlines, pulleys, karibiners etc). 	5	2	10	Participants advised to avoid trees and other strainers and made aware of the dangers in a pre session briefing

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
8	Swimming due to exiting boat	Anyone who exits their boat whilst on the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are briefed on how to swim defensively to mitigate the risks of swimming in a whitewater environment and avoid obstacles. Any cuts obtained will be treated by a first aider 	2	4	8	
9	Foot Entrapment	Anyone who exits their boat whilst on the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are briefed on how to swim defensively so that there is little risk of rock/river bed entrapment before getting on the water Importance of “do not stand up” to be stated during beginner intro talk Leaders should have an appropriate level of experience to be able to manage an entrapment situation 	5	1	5	
10	Siphons	Anyone paddling/Anyone who exits their boat whilst on the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siphons are usually only found on higher grade rivers and so are paddled by those who are deemed experienced and so are less likely to get into difficulty and if they do can deal with it accordingly. When possible, siphons are commonly portaged. 	5	1	5	Research river prior to paddling. Seek local knowledge where possible. Dynamic risk assessment.

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
11	Adverse river/weather conditions	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water levels are monitored by the leader and if inappropriate for the group, then the trip will be cancelled. Both before the trip commences and on the river itself. If the weather becomes dangerous then the trip will also be cancelled. Before getting on the river a visual inspection is made by the leader. Good pre-trip planning 	3	2	6	
12	Kit failure (buoyancy aid sinks/ boat cracks/ helmet fails)	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are instructed on how to properly adjust PPE and check one another's kit. Paddlers briefed not to paddle with faulty kit. Basic repair kit/spare paddles to be carried by coaches/leaders. 	4	2	8	
13	Weils disease/Leptospirosis – infection from contaminated river water	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All open cuts and grazes to be covered with waterproof plasters. Wash hands, preferably with alcohol gel after paddling/before eating. Avoid drinking and/or swallowing untreated river water. 	4	2	8	

Assessor signature: Michael Dalby (BCC Chair 2022 - 2023)	Print name: Michael Dalby	Review date: 08/08/2022
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Section 3: Site specific assessment:

Name of river/area:	Assessor signature:	Print name:	Assessment date:
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