



## Sea Kayak Trip Safety Document

**\*The risk assessment below is intended as an assessment of the hazards and risks for sea kayaking 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)	
<b>1 – Trivial</b>	(eg discomfort, slight bruising, self-help recovery)	<b>1 – Remote</b>	(almost never)
<b>2 – Minor</b>	(eg small cut, abrasion, basic first aid need)	<b>2 – Unlikely</b>	(occurs rarely)
<b>3 – Moderate</b>	(eg strain, sprain, incapacitation > 3 days)	<b>3 – Possible</b>	(could occur, but uncommon)
<b>4 – Serious</b>	(eg fracture, hospitalisation >24 hrs, incapacitation >4 weeks)	<b>4 – Likely</b>	(recurrent but not frequent)
<b>5 – Fatal</b>	(single or multiple)	<b>5 – Very likely</b>	(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	<b>-STOP THE ACTIVITY-</b> Identify new controls. Activity must not proceed until risks are reduced to a low or medium level

## Section 2: Sea Kayaking Trips

### Risk Assessment Record

<b>Risk Assessment of:</b> Sea Kayaking	<b>Assessor(s):</b> Barry Iszard/Michael Dalby	<b>Date:</b> 21/06/2023
<b>Overview of activity / location / equipment / conditions being assessed:</b> On a regular basis the club runs trips to on the sea both in open sea and in estuaries/close in shore. Commonly the Essex coast is used for reasons of locality but often trips are run further afield such as the Dorset Coast, Anglesey, Suffolk coast, Thames estuary etc. Trips are planned taking into account the ability level of the group participating as well as the coaching/development goals. The format of these trips is usually of a paddle out and back format but occasionally car shuttles may be run. Generally we operate on a 1 leader/coach to 6 participants ratio, often with one of these being a competent seconder. Exceptions are made at 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 (or coach/leader) prior to use to ensure it is in the required condition and of the relevant standard.	
<b>Generic or specific assessment?</b> Generic risk assessment	<b>Context of assessment</b> Annual update 2023	

#	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"> <li>All participants be able to swim 25 metres.</li> <li>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 sea kayaking activity.</li> <li>Group leader has responsibility for ensuring 'CLAP' protocol is followed in line with British Canoeing instruction.</li> <li>Buoyancy Aids (British Standard 50N) to be worn by all.</li> </ul>	5	1	5	<p>Pre session briefing</p> <p>Coaches/Leaders to check BAs fitted correctly.</p> <p>Swim check at pool sessions.</p>
2	Collision of boat/paddle and person	Anyone present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders should instruct their groups to leave an appropriate amount of space between boats.</li> <li>Buoyancy aids provide protection and are compulsory. Helmets should be worn in areas where rocks/hard surfaces are likely to be encountered.</li> <li>First aid kits carried by coaches/leaders.</li> </ul>	3	3	9	<p>Pre session briefing</p> <p>Conditions should be taken into account when deciding how much space to leave between boats</p>
3	Slips & Trips at ingress & egress points	Anyone present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders/coaches should be aware of slippery surfaces and trip hazards on slipways, steps and rocks etc. Make the group aware of the potential hazard.</li> </ul>	3	3	9	<p>Pre session briefing.</p> <p>Coaches/leaders to carry first aid kits</p>

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
4	Hypothermia	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone briefed on what to wear.</li> <li>• Leaders/coaches to check participants are wearing appropriate clothing and carry a warm drink where necessary.</li> <li>• Emergency services can always be contacted by a mobile phone and/or VHF radio carried by the leader.</li> <li>• If the conditions require, a member of the group should carry a group shelter and appropriate extra layers to deal with the conditions.</li> <li>• A first aider must be present on the trip. At least one first aider per group is best practice.</li> </ul>	5	1	5	
5	Lifting Kayaks/Canoes	Anyone participating or around the boats/members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kayaks and canoes are heavy and awkward. Sea kayaks are particularly difficult to handle because of their length. 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. If boats are loaded (camping trips etc) at least 4 people should be used to carry/unload boats.</li> </ul>	3	2	6	

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
6	Other watercraft	Anyone participating	Other watercraft are likely to be in the vicinity of most if not all trips. Paddlers to be made aware of the hazards and care taken to avoid and/or maintain safe distance from other water users/watercraft (ships, jetskis, other kayaks etc).	5	2	10	Pre session briefing, general training, dynamic risk assessment
7	Injury caused by hard/sharp objects (rocks, tree roots etc)	Anyone paddling or or shoreside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate footwear worn by all participants.</li> <li>• Participants made aware of the risk of cuts becoming infected.</li> <li>• Always have a qualified first aider on the trip.</li> <li>• Open cuts/grazes to be covered with waterproof plaster to reduce risk of infection from contaminated sea water.</li> </ul>	3	2	6	Less experienced paddlers should keep away from rocks or other hard surfaces which may be encountered on the water (Buoys etc)

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
8	Boat Entrapment	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All participants should be familiar with the process of wet exiting from a kayak and should have attended a minimum of three flatwater sessions &amp; five pool sessions before attending a sea kayak activity.</li> <li>Leaders should have an appropriate level of experience to be able to manage an entrapment situation.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	5	1	5	
9	Extreme weather/storms/lightning	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good pre paddle research and planning</li> <li>Leaders should have a plan for getting off the water quickly and safely (emergency egress) if severe weather and/or lightning starts.</li> </ul>	5	2	10	
10	Swimming due to exiting boat	Anyone who exits their boat whilst on the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are briefed on how to swim safely and to stay in contact with their boat/paddle.</li> <li>Any cuts obtained will be treated by a first aider.</li> </ul>	2	4	8	



#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
11	Rescue failure/Not being rescued	Anyone who exits the boat whilst on the water and/or gets separated from the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach/leader responsible for group management and to use C.L.A.P. Formula.</li> <li>• Coach/leader has training in alternative rescue methods (e.g. scoop/sling rescue) and is proficient in using them.</li> <li>• All participants advised to bring communications equipment (Radio/Phone/Lights/Flare etc)</li> <li>• Leader to ensure group is NOT split and make this clear in pre session briefing (CLAP principles)</li> </ul>	5	2	10	Group members encouraged to have their own communication equipment.
12	Incapacitated paddler	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach/leader to have first aid training and carry a first aid kit</li> <li>• Coach/leader to have appropriate communication equipment (VHF radio/Mobile phone) to call for assistance if necessary.</li> <li>• Flares/signalling device to be carried by coach/leader along with tow lines.</li> <li>• Leader/coach to carry additional clothing</li> <li>• Leader/coach to be first aid trained.</li> <li>• Group members encouraged to bring their own safety kit and go through training in it's use.</li> </ul>	5	1	5	Participants encouraged to bring their own comms equipment, first aid kit/towlines and signalling equipment to strengthen the group as a whole.

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
13	Adverse sea/weather conditions	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sea state &amp; weather are monitored by the leader and if inappropriate for the group, then the trip will be cancelled or an alternative paddling option used.</li> <li>Before getting on the water a visual inspection is made by the leader/coach.</li> <li>Good pre-trip planning.</li> </ul>	3	2	6	
14	Kit failure (buoyancy aid sinks/ boat cracks/ helmet fails)	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants are instructed on how to properly adjust PPE and check one another's kit. Paddlers briefed not to paddle with faulty kit.</li> <li>Basic repair kit/spare paddles to be carried by coaches/leaders. This mitigates the risk of equipment failure preventing the paddler from finishing the journey.</li> </ul>	4	2	8	
15	Infection from contaminated sea water	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All open cuts and grazes to be covered with waterproof plasters. Wash hands, preferably with alcohol gel after paddling/before eating.</li> <li>Avoid drinking and/or swallowing sea water.</li> </ul>	4	2	8	
16	Straying into more advanced conditions	Anyone paddling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good pre paddle planning by coach/leader with good dynamic risk assessment</li> <li>Leader/coach experienced in paddling/leading/conducting rescues in conditions more advanced than those planned for on the trip.</li> </ul>	4	2	8	

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
17	Launching/landing on crowded and/or surf beaches	Anyone paddling/Members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiet areas of beach to be used wherever possible.</li> <li>• Experienced paddler with skills sufficient for the conditions to land first to assist others. Coach/group leader to remain on water to assist until all other participants have landed.</li> <li>• Alert other water users/members of the public of intentions.</li> </ul>	5	2	10	Proper dynamic risk assessment from all coaches/leaders. Research on characteristics of beaches likely to be used for access/egress

#	Hazard(s) identified	Persons affected	Existing controls & measures	A	B	A x B	Additional controls required
18	Overfalls, Tide races and headlands	Anyone participating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coach/leader appropriately trained to paddle/lead group in these conditions. Group should also have the required/appropriate paddling skill level for the environment. Leader/coach to avoid these environments if inappropriate for the group (go by weakest/least skilled paddler).</li> </ul>	4	3	12	Pre-training for groups before attending trips that may feature these hazards.
19	Harbours, shipping channels	Anyone participating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be avoided unless necessary. Paddlers to</li> </ul>	5	2	10	

<b>Assessor signature:</b> Michael Dalby (BCC Chair 2023 - 2024)	<b>Print name:</b> Michael Dalby	<b>Review date:</b> 21/06/2023
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### Section 3: Site specific assessment:

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