

Wansbeck Paddle Sports Club

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WPSC: Moving Water Risk Assessment

Activity / Venue: Canoeing/ Kayaking on moving water environments. E.g. River Wansbeck (Grade 2), River South Tyne (Grade 2), River N. Tyne (grade 2/3)

Completed by: Chris Scott

Date of Assessment: 1/9/2021

Checked By: Gary Cadman

Date: 26/08/2024

Activity	Hazards	Possible outcomes/ injuries	Who Affected	What controls	Further Controls / comments
Travelling to venue	Other traffic etc.	Road accidents (collisions, leaving road, fire)	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All drivers to hold appropriate driving license. Driver to tell participants to fasten seat belts prior to leaving The Club & following any stops Under no circumstances should the maximum seating capacity be exceeded 	
Paddling	Incorrect paddling technique	Strain & muscle/joint Injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm up completed prior to strenuous paddling or heavy lifting. Correctly sized & fitted boats to be used. Back and foot rests to be fitted and secure effectively. All participants are coached on safe/effective paddling techniques e.g. active posture, paddlers box, etc. to help avoid injury. 	
Paddling	Rescuing capsized boats	Strain Injury during rescue, injury to capsized paddlers, rest of group during drifting during rescue.	Instructors, participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches who perform the rescues use the correct technics (as recommended by British Canoeing) to avoid injury. Participants briefed and coached on what to do in the event of a capsized. Coaches to use other people to help if needed. Boats to be fitted with operational air bags. 	Coach to consider PoMU (Position of Most Usefulness) in order to maintain a line of sight with whole group while dealing with a capsize and direct group accordingly.

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified instructor/coach supervision & control. 	
Paddling	Shallows	Cutting feet, slips and trips, spraining ankles & wrists, shoulder/head/neck injury from capsizing, foot entrapments.	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid shallow sections of the river where possible and instructor to direct group away from shallows accordingly. • Avoid playing 'wet games', with high likelihood of capsizing in shallow water. • Everyone to wear helmets when kayaking and consider re. canoeing if appropriate. • Warn participants of hazards and considerations of foot entrapments if appropriate. • Participants and instructors to wear appropriate footwear. • Qualified instructor/coach supervision & control. 	
Paddling	Paddles	Impact injuries, e.g. cuts and bumps to face and head.	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants and instructors to wear helmets when kayaking. • Choose games/activities to match the ability and maturity of the group. • Participants made aware that controlling their paddles during games is important to avoid hitting others. • Qualified instructor 	Participants are made aware that controlling their paddles during games is important to avoid hitting others
Paddling	Water quality	Leptospirosis, etc. and general sickness	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid rivers/areas where there is a known problem. • If there is a question about the water quality, avoid all planned immersion activities. • Participants made aware, told to wash hands before eating and after getting off the water. • Participants also advised to cover any open cuts. • Qualified instructor/coach supervision & control. 	<p>Monitor. Contact Environment Agency if problem occurs.</p> <p>Be extra vigilant if paddling in spate conditions re. run-off from fields and avoid stagnant water.</p>

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<p>Paddling</p>	<p>Fishermen</p>	<p>Entanglement & cuts</p>	<p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors constantly check river banks for fishermen and lines and direct participants accordingly. • Instructor to carry knife in BA in case of entanglement re. fishing line in tree branches, etc. • Qualified instructor/coach supervision & control. 	<p>Participants made aware of keeping a suitable distance from fishermen.</p>
<p>Paddling</p>	<p>Other water users</p>	<p>Strains & Sprains. Crush injuries</p>	<p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors constantly check for other water users and direct participants accordingly. • If paddling in a harbour, it may be necessary to contact the harbour master prior to the session to check on traffic and gain information about busy times, areas to avoid, etc. • Qualified instructor/coach supervision & control. 	<p>Participants are made aware of other water users</p>
<p>Loading canoes and kayaks onto trailer and transit of boats.</p>	<p>Poor manual handling, Boats falling from trailer, trailer malfunctioning or unexpected disconnection from vehicle in transit.</p>	<p>Various injuries from poor manual handling, accident/injuries resulting from boats or trailer. Road Traffic accident due to incorrectly secured trailer or load.</p>	<p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor supervision and control. • Participants trained in effective manual handling techniques and communication in relation to lifting, moving and loading boats and moving the trailer. • Participants trained on how to secure boats to the trailer. • Driver/Instructor to always check boats are secured effectively before driving. • Driver/Instructor to always check that trailer is secured to bus effectively. • Trailer not to be overloaded (and guidelines on maximum weight limit and compatibility with vehicle flowed). • Driver to have appropriate driving license for towing a trailer. • Periodic checks of trailer during transit and stop and adjust if necessary. 	<p>The Club are responsible for maintenance of the trailer and ensuring that it is roadworthy.</p>

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Carrying Handling & recovery of canoes and kayaks	Heavy canoes, water-logged kayaks.	Strains & Sprains. Crush injuries	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants trained in effective manual handling techniques and communication in relation to lifting, moving and, if appropriate, rescuing boats. Teamwork encouraged; Lift canoes in pairs, with a person ready to assist if needed. Boats should be white water spec, e.g. be fitted with inflated airbags, etc. Instructor supervision/control. 	
Paddling	Water/flow (increased hazard when in spate)	Drowning, loss of group control.	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check weather forecast and water levels/conditions prior to session. Check for scheduled reservoir releases. Participants to be coached in skills needed to progress to a moving water environment. Avoid if water levels aren't suitable for the group and level of qualification of the instructor/coach. Mandatory use of buoyancy aids. Buoyancy aids to be well fitted and checked by the instructor/coach before getting on the water. Qualified instructor/coach supervision & control. 	<p>Instructor to carry rescue equipment suitable for the environment, conditions and the number in the group.</p> <p>Annual flotation and general PPE tests to be carried out on BAs by an appropriately qualified person for the The Club. The Club to identify who this person is and record maintenance checks.</p>
Paddling	Rapids (some rapids may be more hazardous in low water and some in high water)	Pinning, drowning.	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above. Instructor/coach to have knowledge of individual rapids at different water levels, e.g. grades, features, etc. Qualified instructor always to inspect rapid first to ensure that there are no new obstacles, etc. Qualified instructor to make a dynamic risk assessment on the day in relation to the given rapid, the conditions and the group with regards to whether it is appropriate to paddle the rapid. 	

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the rapid is paddled, then appropriate control measures must be put in place in relation to the rapid and group (it may be an approach of read and run, or it may be inspect and protect, depending on the situation). • Instructors to consider PoMU at all times and will guide/direct participants away from hazards. • If in doubt, avoid rapid and portage. • Instructor to 	
Paddling	Trees/strainers (increased hazard when in spate)	Pinning, drowning.	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above. • Avoid. • Warn participants and instruct them on what to do and what not to do if they get close to a tree. • Check weather forecast and water conditions prior to session and avoid an area if water levels aren't suitable for the group and the instructor/coach in relation to the remits of their NGB qualification. • Qualified instructor/coach supervision & control. 	Instructor to carry rescue equipment suitable for the environment, conditions and the number in the group.
Paddling	Weirs	Drowning	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above. • Qualified instructor to make a dynamic risk assessment on the day in relation to the given weir, conditions and group with regards to whether it is appropriate to paddle any weirs. • If the weir is paddled, then appropriate safety measures must be put in place (inspect and protect). • If in doubt, avoid weir and portage. • Instructors will guide/direct participants away from the weirs during sessions and set boundaries if needed. 	<p>Participants are made aware of the potential dangers of weirs if applicable to the journey and appropriate for the group.</p> <p>Instructor to carry rescue equipment suitable for the environment, conditions and the number in the group.</p>

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warn participants and instruct them on what to do and what not to do if they get close to a weir or stuck in a stopper (if appropriate). Qualified instructor/coach supervision & control. 	
Paddling	Weather (strong winds, cold & hot temperatures, etc. Increased hazard in winter.)	Drifting and split-up group, Capsizes, loss of group control (especially in canoes) Hypothermia through exposure/immersion, sun burn.	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified instructor supervision & control. Weather forecast to be obtained prior to session. River levels to be checked prior to session. Session to be adapted/postponed/cancelled if conditions are not appropriate. Participants and instructors to wear & carry appropriate clothing and equipment for conditions. Instructor to carry full leadership equipment including group shelter. Adequate & appropriate food to be eaten prior to the session and carried. Water/drink (hot &/or cold) to be carried. Participants to be encouraged to eat regularly and keep energy levels up. Participants encouraged to drink regularly and keep hydration levels up. Instructors & participants to wear sun protection. Planned carefully around hours of light available for session. 	Instructor to carry rescue equipment suitable for the environment, conditions and the number in the group.
Warm up	Dog foul	Bacterial illness, Blinding.	All	Instructor choses an area of grass with no dog foul or remove the dog foul	Make participants aware of dog foul.

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Warm up	Muddy/slippery or uneven terrain	Slips, trips, Twists and sprains	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor choses an area of ground that is most suitable and appropriate. • Adapt warm-up to a more static activity if the ground isn't appropriate for running around. • Instructors and participants to wear appropriate footwear. • Instructor/coach supervision & control. 	
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Paddle sport Sessions (moving water environment) Risk Assessment:

* A qualified British Canoeing (BC) Moderate Water Leader or higher is required to run a session on these moving water environments. They must hold a current and appropriate first aid certificate and be 'up to date' in terms of BC revalidation. The recommended maximum ratio for journeys and coaching sessions on moving water is 1:6, but this will depend largely on the experience and ability of the group and the instructor/coach. If a second instructor/coach or safety boater, e.g. someone with WWSR is present, then the ratios may be increased, e.g. 2:10. In this instance, river journeys and ratios should be discussed with the Coaching Officer: tom Thomas. The Club instructors/coaches will follow the following leadership principles during sessions:

** River Leadership Core Principles:

1. Avoidance is better than cure

Leaders should use good judgement to prevent rescues in the first place.

2. Line of Sight

The lead paddler will always try to leave two eddies between the eddy that they are in and the point at which the river goes out of sight.

The leader should endeavour to have their whole group in line of sight on the section of river that they are running. Clear communication is a key part of this and agreed signals should be confirmed with the group at the beginning of the session. The groups should also be informed of a 'No Signal – No Go' policy and told to get to the side of the river, get out and walk down the bank if they lose sight of the instructor/coach, e.g. during a capsize and rescue of another group member.

3. Maximum Usefulness

Leaders should position themselves where they will be of most use, i.e. to prevent, or respond to, the most likely incident - Not the most potentially disastrous. A simple incident can become serious if not handled immediately. Avoidance is better than cure.

4. The Clean Rope Principle

Remove any knots or handles from the end of throw-bags and have a knife to hand during rescues.

5. Atmosphere The Club river leaders should guide participants in 'the right atmosphere'. This will be one of encouragement and support and each member's decision whether or not to paddle a rapid should be respected. Peer pressure is not conducive to safe white-water paddling and challenge by choice should underpin all sessions. This may require individuals portaging sections of the river, so time for this should be planned into the day, and it is essential that the activity is matched appropriately to the skill levels and ability of the individual.

*** The following safety equipment should be carried by the river leader and/or assistant:

First Aid Kit, Throw Bag, Knife, Spare Clothes, Fleece hat, Survival bag, Group Shelter (enough for whole group), Spare Food, Hot Drink, Towing device, e.g. sling and krab, Split Paddles, Repair Kit, torch, Mobile Phone. A map & compass or Sat Nav may be appropriate depending on river.

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**** Much emphasis is placed on instructor control and judgement and ideally the river leader will have previous knowledge/experience of the river. The level of control, supervision and leadership style will depend on the group and the given situation. If the trip is being used to develop participants' own leadership skills then a 'laissez faire' leadership approach may be adopted by the river leader. It is important however, that the river leader has overall control of the situation and that they are able to follow clear strategies and step-in if things go wrong. It is important that the participants have developed appropriate skills and knowledge prior to the trip and that an approach of progression is adopted by The Club Coaches/leaders. An ongoing, dynamic risk assessment approach should also be adopted by the river leader during the trip.

Names & positions of those carrying out this risk assessment: Chris Scott (Club Chair)	Signatures and date: <i>Chris Scott 1/9/2021</i>	Date that this risk assessment was last reviewed and updated: 26/08/2024 Date for next review: 26/08/2025
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