

OUCKC Safety Guidelines For Canoeing Trips 2015-2016

(General Risk Assessment Information)

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1. Introduction

An assessment of risk is nothing more than a careful examination of what, during canoeing activity, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you've taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt, or becomes ill and the activity is completed in the safest possible way.

There are five steps to risk assessment:

1. Look for hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed, and how.
3. Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done.
4. Record your findings
5. Review your assessment

The following section deals with steps 1 - 4 of the above by identifying general hazards that can be encountered during the various canoeing disciplines (e.g.: surf, inland, placid water etc...). It is acknowledged that there are also site specific hazards that are not dealt with in this document.

In order to evaluate the risks, we score each risk on a scale from 1 to 5 for both severity and likelihood of harm. The following table is a guideline as to what each score represents

| Score | Likelihood | Severity |
|-------|----------------|--|
| 1 | Rare | Minor Injury, no first aid required |
| 2 | Unlikely | Minor Injury, first aid required |
| 3 | Possible | Major Injury, Doctor/Hospital Treatment required |
| 4 | Probable | Major Injury, Possible disability resulting |
| 5 | Almost Certain | Fatality |

The two scores are then multiplied together to give a risk as a number from 1 to 25, 1-8 is low risk, 9 to 15 is medium risk and 16 or above is high risk.

Low risks are generally acceptable, subject to procedures to try and minimise themselves

Medium Risks are only acceptable in the short term, and in the longer term they must be brought down to the low risk category

High Risks are not acceptable, and no activities are permitted until the risk from this is reduced.

General information

Trip registration forms should be submitted by 5pm on the Thursday before a weekend event.

Overseas trip registration forms must be submitted at least 1 month prior to trip departure.
 Club Committee will supply Sports Federation Safety officer with travel insurance details and trip risk assessment for trips abroad.

In the event of a major accident University Security Services must be contacted (01865 289999)

2. General Canoeing Hazards

| Hazard | Likelihood | Severity | Risk Score | Control Measures |
|---|------------|----------|------------|---|
| Effect of weather and/or cold water. | | | | DO NOT PADDLE IN UNSUITABLE CONDITIONS. (Entirely at the discretion of the group leader(s). They should not paddle if they feel inexperienced or uncomfortable on a given stretch of water in given conditions. Clothing worn should be appropriate to the conditions, including sun cream where necessary. All members should keep watch on other members of the group for signs of exposure/hypothermia/hyperthermia. |
| Exposure/ sunburn | 3 | 2 | 6 | |
| Hypothermia | 1 | 3 | 3 | |
| Remote/Unfamiliar areas (getting lost) | 5 | 1 | 5 | Carry a whistle or other means of communication (mobile phone in waterproof container) Sufficient survival bags and/or group shelters should be carried for the group. Group leaders should be familiar with the emergency evacuation route and options. |
| Losing contact with the group | 2 | 2 | 4 | Group leader to define the boundaries of the paddling area. Members should be told to keep within eye-sight of the group. |
| Inappropriate instruction | 1 | 4 | 4 | Instructors to be assessed for safety and suitability by the Committee. The Committee will welcome and investigate any complaints of inappropriate instruction. Instructors should welcome constructive criticism of their coaching/leading style from participants. |
| Capsizing without a spraydeck | 4 | 1 | 4 | Instruction must be given prior to an individual getting on the water for the first time of how to safely exit a boat. A spraydeck test must be performed to the satisfaction of the Equipment and Safety Officer. Never paddle alone. Leaders must be aware of the procedure to right a boat, and of how to remove a spraydeck from their own boat/the water. |
| Capsizing with a spraydeck | 2 | 3 | 6 | |
| Accidental injuries | | | | One or more first aid kits should always be carried by experienced paddlers and first aiders in the group, and a trained first aider should be available. Appropriate protective clothing must be worn. Emergency evacuation procedures and options should be known by group leaders and first aiders. |
| Minor | 3 | 2 | 6 | |
| Major | 1 | 4 | 4 | |
| Organisms, disease and pollution (Weils disease) | 1 | 5 | 5 | Members should be warned about the symptoms of Weil's disease. Members should be advised to cover any open cuts before going on the water. |

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| | | | | Members should clean and sanitise as soon as possible any cuts they get when on the water. |
| Physical Hazards (barbed wire, sea walls, rapids) | 2 | 2 | 4 | Members should be advised of physical hazards and their dangers. Paddlers should be wearing suitable footwear. |
| Buried Objects (glass, tins, cans) | 1 | 3 | 3 | |
| Floating Objects (bottles, buoys) | 1 | 2 | 2 | |
| Equipment specific hazards | 1 | 4 | 4 | Equipment, personal and club, should conform to the relevant guidelines and should be checked regularly. Members discovering unsuitable kit should inform the Equipment and Safety Officer. Any kit failing to meet safety criteria should be marked 'not for use' and either safely repaired before being returned to service, or put beyond reasonable use. |
| Back injuries (due to carrying kayaks or poor paddling posture) | 1 | 4 | 4 | Ensure that all group members are familiar with good lifting practice. 2 people to share carrying load where possible. Leaders/Coaches should advise members of correct and safe 'upright' paddling posture Warm up before strenuous activities. |
| Sports Injuries (eg. muscle strains) | 2 | 3 | 6 | |

3. Placid Water Hazards

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| Other water users (esp. rowers, barges & motorised craft) | 1 | 3 | 3 | Warn all group members to respect all other water users. Keep to the right of the river, and close to the edge where possible. Keep a look-out for other water users. |
| Locks/weirs | 2 | 3 | 6 | Avoid paddling close to locks/weirs. Portage around all locks, and any weirs necessary. |
| Rubbish | 3 | 1 | 3 | Everyone should have footwear on at all times. |
| Wildlife (esp. swans) | 2 | 2 | 4 | Members should be warned to keep the noise to a minimum and not to interfere with the wildlife. |
| Slippery banks | 3 | 2 | 6 | Care should be taken when climbing up muddy banks |
| Access | 4 | 1 | 4 | Investigate whether the area of water you are paddling has an access agreement and if so ensure you have relevant permission/permits. |

4. Canoe Polo Hazards

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| Moving fast whilst refereeing | 4 | 2 | 8 | Refs should be wearing suitable footwear and the area they will be running in should be kept clear of all obstructions including people. |
| Impact injuries | 2 | 3 | 6 | Ensure all players are aware of the rules, and avoid dangerous play. |

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| | | | | Ensure members wear helmets with full face guards, and buoyancy aids, all appropriately fitted. |
| Equipment related injuries | 2 | 2 | 4 | Ensure all boats are padded, and conform to polo rules. All paddles should be of the required blade thickness. This will be negligible at tournaments as equipment is checked prior to competing. |

5. Marathon/Sprint Hazards

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| Long distance difficulties (Getting lost, unfamiliar territory, away from assistance, exhaustion, unstable boats) | 2 | 3 | 6 | Marathon training only undertaken by people with suitable experience, and under suitable guidance from Marathon Rep. Map, compass, mobile phone, food, drink, spare clothes should be carried where appropriate. |
| Capsizing | 3 | 2 | 6 | Participants should be made aware of safe swimming techniques and safe boat emptying techniques specific to marathon boats. |
| Small group size | 1 | 3 | 3 | Another person must be told who is going out, where they are going, and when they are expected back. Lone paddling is non a club activity. Weirs must be avoided. |

6. Inland White Water Hazards

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| Currents /rapids | 2 | 3 | 6 | Ensure that all members of the group are aware of the effect of the river hazards and the counter action they may have to take. When conditions require it, scout rapids before attempting to paddle them, position bank support if necessary |
| Physical hazards (rocks, bridges) | 2 | 2 | 4 | Ensure all equipment is to white water specification and all kayaks are fitted with air bags. |
| Stoppers and standing waves | 2 | 3 | 6 | Members should visually investigate all stoppers and standing waves before playing on these features, especially where less experienced paddlers are present. |
| Other water users (fishermen) | 1 | 2 | 2 | Brief the group on other water users and be aware of fishing lines |
| Access | 3 | 1 | 3 | Investigate whether or not the river has an access agreement and obtain relevant permission/permits |

6.1. Beginners' Trip Hazards

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| Beginners being unable to read water conditions | 2 | 2 | 4 | Leaders should advise and instruct novices in reading water conditions and features. The group leader has ultimate say and responsibility for paddling (ie. if it is unsafe for the group to continue, they MUST get off). |
| Beginners being unused to | 2 | 3 | 6 | Instruct on safe white water swimming before getting on the |

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| swimming in white/moving water | | | | water. Leaders should respond quickly to anyone who capsizes. The priority is always the rescuer, then the group, then the casualty/swimmer, followed by any kit. |
| Coldness/Hypothermia due to unsuitable clothing | | | | Group leaders should be especially aware of this and watch for early symptoms. Beginners' rivers should always have easy access to roads to avoid a long walk out. Leaders should have hot drinks with them if possible and administer as necessary. Make sure all novices have a dry change of clothes for the end of the paddle. |
| Coldness | 3 | 2 | 6 | |
| Hypothermia (Typical) | 1 | 3 | 3 | |
| Hypothermia (Worst Case) | 1 | 5 | 5 | |
| Lack of control on moving/white water | 2 | 2 | 4 | This is to be expected, practice will help. Make sure all hazards are made safe – either by leading around them or by portaging around them. |
| Access & Other river users | 3 | 2 | 6 | Any queries should be dealt with by the group leaders, and contested rivers should be avoided for all novice-level trips. |

7. Surf Kayak Hazards

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| Other water users (surfers, body boarders and swimmers) | 3 | 2 | 6 | Warn all members of the group to respect other water users (obey the rules of the road) |
| Large wave sets | 1 | 4 | 4 | Ensure that emergency kit is nearby, if not in your kayak, and the location of the nearest public phone is known in case there is no mobile signal available |
| Currents (rips and long shore drift) | 1 | 3 | 3 | Identify hazardous currents to the group and reinforce the dangers of the off shore winds Use two landmarks or two flags to keep the group in one location |
| Off shore winds and strong cross winds | 2 | 3 | 6 | |
| Tidal changes | 1 | 2 | 2 | Check tide times and highs and relay to the group |
| Physical Hazards | 2 | 2 | 4 | Identify local hazards, and agree boundaries with group if necessary |

8. General Swimming Pool Hazards (see Risk Assessment for Iffley Road Pool, Section 10 below)

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| Slippery floors | 1 | 3 | 6 | Obey pool rules |
| Getting stuck in kayaks | 1 | 4 | 4 | Ensure appropriate supervision |
| Swimming related hazards | 1 | 2 | 2 | Make sure a qualified lifeguard is on duty at all times during the session Be aware of people in the water teaching at beginners sessions |

9. Transport Hazards

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| Accidents | | | | Seat belts should be worn The Highway code must be followed Drivers must not drive (or must stop driving) when they are tired. |
| Typical | 1 | 3 | 3 | |
| Worst Case | 1 | 5 | 5 | Drivers should not drink |
| Transporting boats | 2 | 2 | 4 | Boats must be securely tied on to a roofrack or trailer Care should be taken, and proper lifting techniques used when loading boats onto vehicles. Long boats must have a brightly coloured flag tied onto the end. Ensure vehicle is not overloaded. |
| Insurance | 1 | 2 | 2 | All vehicles must be properly insured. It is advisable for this to be comprehensive. Club committee will check the insurance of drivers. Drivers will comply with current Road Safety Laws Drivers must have a full driving licence. Hire vehicle drivers must have passed the university accredited driving course. Drivers of hire vehicles must be 21 or over. |

It is not practical to set down precise guidelines about how to manage an emergency during a canoeing session. This is because there are countless variables that can affect the situation (e.g.: weather, location, ability of the group etc....) The following information is designed to give some general points when faced with a situation.

Prevention is always better than cure. However accidents do happen, some of which are unavoidable.

When leading a canoeing a session it is important to remain alert at all times. By doing this it should be possible to recognise a situation developing before it actually occurs. If incident does occur, all participants must remember they have a responsibility not only for the people involved in the incident but also to themselves and the rest of the group.

ASSESS the situation. Look for and assess further danger, try to get a complete picture of the situation and formulate an action plan.

ACTION can be taken in any way you deem necessary to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

REASSESS the situation. Has anything changed? What needs to be done next? If necessary take further action.

In some cases it may be necessary to provide **AFTER CARE** to members of the group involved. In all situations it is important to **EVALUATE** your own action. How did it go? What did you do? When, Where and Why?

The Safety officer will also want a **REPORT** of any major incidents which occur during the canoeing.

10. Risk Assessment for Iffley Road Swimming Pool

| UNIVERSITY of OXFORD SPORTS DEPARTMENT | | | |
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| OXFORD UNIVERSITY CANOE AND KAYAK CLUB RISK ASSESSMENT FOR IFFLEY POOL 2013/14 | | | |
| <i>Activities usually carried out by the club at the Iffley Road Swimming Pool.</i> | | | |
| Rolling Sessions: Sessions to primarily teach the skill of Eskimo rolling. | | | |
| HAZARD | CONTROL MEASURES IN PLACE | RISK FACTOR | FURTHER CONTROL MEASURES |
| Faults with the building e.g. defective lighting, poor water quality etc which could heighten the chance of an injury. | Members of OUCKC Committee should report any building defects to the Facility Manager and/or the Sports Manager on duty. The Sports Manager will close the pool if he/she thinks the Pool is unsafe for use. | Low | |
| Slips, trips and falls on a slippery poolside. | Anti-slip tiles. No running allowed on Poolside. Orderly behaviour at all times. | | |
| Faults with the Kayak equipment e.g. sharp edges of paddles. | All defective equipment to be reported to the OUCKC Equipment & Safety Officer and/or the pool facilities manager as appropriate. All paddles to conform to canoe polo standards (e.g. 5mm thickness). | Low | Equipment inventory required for all club kit stored in the Pool area. |
| Manual Handling | All equipment is to be stored correctly in the Poolside store. Ensure members are familiar with good lifting practise. | Med | |
| Sports injuries e.g. muscle strains | Warm up before strenuous activity. | Med | |
| Lack of Lifeguard Cover causing heightened chance of lack of response by the Sports Department staff. | OUCKC must not enter the Swimming Pool without a Lifeguard present. If no lifeguard is present the club must report the matter to the Sports Manager on duty. | Low | The NOP (Normal Operating Procedure) for the Swimming Pool states that all club sessions must be life guarded by Sports Department staff. |
| Fire | If the Fire Alarm sounds all members of the club are to leave the pool as directed by the Lifeguard and meet at the deep end next to the double doors ready for evacuation. | Low | The EAP (Emergency Action Plan) for the Swimming Pool states the procedure to be followed by the Sports Department staff |
| Hydraulic Floor | For all rolling sessions the pool floor will be raised to 1m. No club members should dive into the pool at any time. When the hydraulic floor is being raised or lowered no members of the club are allowed in the water. | Low | |

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| Drowning. | For all club sessions, where the pool alarm is activated, the lifeguard will blow the whistle 3 times and all swimmers are to leave the Pool. Ensure appropriate supervision at all times. | Low | |
| Members Medical Conditions | All new members are to be asked to complete a membership form, outlining any medical conditions which the swimmer may have. Medication must be brought to the poolside e.g. asthma inhalers etc. The lifeguard should be alerted about any medical condition which the swimmer may suffer from e.g. epilepsy. | Med | All new members must be asked to complete a membership form and all new members are referred to the club Risk Assessment, Code of Conduct and Constitution. |
| Dangers involved with the Sport. | Training is conducted by a coach or member qualified by experience to minimise the risk of injury to participants. | Low | |
| Potential injury or damage by being struck by a fellow kayaker kayak or paddle during the practice. | Coaches to maintain an appropriate distance between those practising. A limited number of boats will be used to prevent overcrowding. An appropriate ratio of instructors to participants should be ensured. | Low | |