

# Paignton Canoe Club - Risk Assessment

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*This assessment should be read in conjunction with the other club documents*

## General statements

Canoeing and Kayaking are 'Assumed risk water contact sports', that may carry attendant risks. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks, and be responsible for their own action and involvement.

Paignton Canoe Club, it's officers and members cannot be held responsible for any loss, damage, injury or death however caused.

It is the individual's responsibility to ensure they have the sufficient knowledge, skills and equipment for the activity they have chosen to partake in.

Ensure you are familiar with all the relevant safety practices and procedures for your equipment and for the location in which you are using it

## There is no substitute for common sense and local judgment

- Rule One is to take actions to avoid emergency situations. This assessment is intended to help.
- Rule Two, in an emergency, avoid any response that adds casualties to the situation
- Rule Three is that kit can be replaced, people cannot. Focus on the people.

For each trip a leader should be appointed. That person should be the most experienced person for the location, conditions and planned activity.

Advice and opinion can and should be offered and sought from the group

The whole group must acknowledge and allow the leader to lead.

Experienced paddlers should be role models of good behaviour and judgment in their actions

Experienced paddlers should mentor, explain and encourage good behaviour with beginners

Encouragement is good. Peer pressure is bad.

Everyone is responsible for their own safety

Everyone is responsible for the safety of the group

Speak up if someone has concerns for themselves, or for others

Making a decision not to do something is braver and more sensible than pressing on against your better judgment.

Canoeing and kayaking are activities based in a dynamic environment, therefore dynamic (continual) assessment of risk against current group abilities needs to be made

For brevity the risks and preventative measures are generally not repeated between Scenarios. Check the 'See also..'

This document should be read in conjunction with

- The Club Health and Safety Document
- The Club Operating Procedure

Scenario	Hazard	Seriousness	Preventative measures
<b>Travel</b>			
	Poor lifting of boats and kit	Back strain Damaged equipment and vehicles	Encourage buddy lifting and carrying, experienced paddlers help beginners and those with poor practice Train members appropriate lifting techniques ('Improver' training).
	Poorly secured boats to roof racks or trailer	Injury or death to other road users Damage to equipment	Inspect rope or straps regularly. Do not use bungee cord. Train members to secure boats ('Improver' training). When unloading place one strap on driver's seat as a reminder Driver to take responsibility for load Ensure load is within capabilities of vehicle and securing system Check load security before travel, after 10 minutes driving and then regularly through journey
	Trailer accident	Damage to equipment Injury or death to other road users	Check tyres and car towing capabilities. Tow at correct speed. Take extra care when reversing and ask for help
	Car park accidents	Injury or death to pedestrians Damage to equipment and vehicles	Beware of moving vehicles, especially when changing after a paddle when tired. Look out for vehicles, other paddlers and equipment
	Travel accidents	Injury or death Damage to equipment	Remember wind and weight loading on vehicle, modify driving style to suit. Beware of tiredness affecting judgment after paddling Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover

<b>Swimming Pool</b>			
	Water	Drowning	Obey pool rules. Ensure Lifeguard is on duty at all sessions. Ensure participants can swim. Teach wet exit (Beginners) and capsize drill. Experienced paddlers observe and respond
	Capsize entrapment	Drowning	Teach wet exit, Eskimo rescue, hand of God and rolling. Experienced paddlers observe and respond
	Overcrowding	Head injuries against pool-side or other users in close confines	Ensure people advised of dangers. Wear helmets if considered necessary. Restrict number of people in pool dependent on activity Stop play boat moves or swimmers if necessary
	Slippery Floors	Falling injuries	Obey pool rules. Do not run.
	Kayak football and other games	Injury Drowning	Wear helmets and buoyancy aids Have a referee, empowered to challenge dangerous behaviour Restrict number of players appropriate to pool conditions Experienced paddlers support capsizes or swimmers Stop play if paddler in difficulty
<b>Canals and placid water,</b>			
	Water	Drowning	Appoint leader for activity Leader is to lead Group is to accept leadership Other experienced paddles to assist leader Ensure the activity is within capacity of the whole group Wear buoyancy aid Carry a whistle Carry mobile phone and car keys on your person in waterproof container Clarify group signal arrangements Ensure group awareness (buddy partners) Ensure group know who is carry what safety related equipment
	Collision or interference with other water users	Collision, injury, death damage to equipment	Keep a strong watch out for other craft. Know the rules of the 'road' and any local considerations Be mindful of appropriate group control for minimum impact on others Move out of the way of all other water users, kayaks can easily maneuver in shallow waters. Respect fishermen and other bank users Be aware of diving and swimming activities Carry first aid kit and know how to use it Join the BCU for third party insurance
	Weirs and locks	Drowning	Avoid locks. Portage around them An experienced person should inspect weir hydraulics before paddling near weirs. Consider using appropriate white water equipment and rescue cover.
	Collision with hard objects	head injury	Wear helmets if exploring overhangs, low bridges or other such features Look out for other water users
	Rubbish	Cuts, other injuries	Look out for and avoid. Have first aid kit with party. Have and know who is a trained first aider Load a First Aid app on your smart phone
	Contaminated water	Contracting illness	Avoid obvious pollution Do not ingest water. Shower after paddling. Be aware of Weil's disease etc
	Cold Weather	Hypothermia, poor judgment, death	Dress appropriately for conditions. Speak up if getting cold Group members monitor themselves and others in cold conditions. Carry ability to provide warm drinks and shelter for extended trips away from civilization
	Hot Weather	Heat stroke / sunburn / dehydration	Dress appropriately for conditions. Group members monitor themselves and others in hot / sunny conditions. All members advised to wear hats and apply water resistant sun-cream Wear sunglasses if water glare Carry drinking water and other refreshments
	Cold water	Hypothermia, Immersion Hypothermia	Dress appropriately for conditions Group members monitor themselves and others in cold conditions. Train and practice rescue techniques
	Overexertion	Muscular injury Poor judgment	Perform warm up exercises at start of activity Teach correct movement. Consider group members abilities when planning trip. Plan a rest stop for at least every 2 hours Have tow line in group Ensure someone ashore knows of paddle plan, expected return time and what to do if late
	Entanglement	Injury, death	Keep a strong look out for fishing lines, cordage and rope Carry a knife in an accessible position

<b>Estuaries and sheltered sea, including harbours. Also see canal and placid water</b>			
	Cold	hypothermia death	wear appropriate clothing, esp. cage and wet suit, or dry suit Dynamic review regarding local conditions (include weather, participant skills and experience)
	Currents	Exhaustion, capsize, drowning	Plan for strength and direction of currents Monitor relative motion with respect to moored buoys and land features
	Collision with hard objects	head injury	Wear helmets for rock hopping and harbour based activities Look out for other water users
	Entanglement	hypothermia death	Look out for ropes and fishing lines Avoid wearing a cord around neck carry a knife
<b>White water Grade 2 or higher. Also see estuaries and sheltered sea</b>			
	Bank side	slips, head injury, drowning	Wear appropriate shoes wear buoyancy aid and helmet when close to water have throw line to hand
	Water	Being put off the sport, Capsize, Hypothermia, Drowning	Appoint leader for activity Leader is to lead Group is to accept leadership Other experienced paddles to assist leader Ensure the activity is within capacity of the whole group Check that equipment (inc boat) is appropriate for the activity Wear buoyancy aid wear wetsuit and cag, or dry suit Be aware of current and expected water levels (rain history and forecast?)
	Collision with hard objects	injury, death	Wear helmet Adopt correct defensive position if capsized Carry first aid kit in group Carry map and compass to identify location
	(Foot) entrapment	Hypothermia, injury, drowning	Learn to roll to reduce risk of swims Wear appropriate foot wear Adopt defensive swimming technique Learn ww rescue techniques Carry a whistle
	Pinning, strainers, stoppers and holes etc	Hypothermia, injury, drowning	Scout ahead to avoid hazards Leaders point at the safe path not the hazard Train for correct defensive procedure if trapped Ensure training in group for ww rescue techniques Know who in group has what rescue kit
	Long days	Poor judgment, death	Monitor group and self Carry group shelter, hot drinks, energy foods Remember there is still the journey home
	Lost and broken equipment	Cost, stranding	Rescue the person first Inspect equipment before use and after events Carry car keys and mobile phone on person Carry splits as spare Mark boat and paddle with phone number for possible re-union Inform authorities if kit lost, to avoid unnecessary rescue alerts
<b>White water Centres. See also white water Grade 2 or higher.</b>			
	Water	injury, drowning	Obey the rules of the centre
<b>Coastal exposed. Also see estuaries and sheltered sea</b>			
	Remote incidents	Hypothermia, death	Agree group communications, whistles, arm signals etc Wear and carry appropriate clothing Carry VHF radio Carry day and night flares Carry tow line Carry splits Have a shore watch who knows plan and what to do if late
	Capsize	Hypothermia, death	Learn to roll Practice other self and group rescue techniques Carry a pump
	Navigation	Hypothermia, death	Weather forecast, tidal currents and races, overfalls, Carry maps or charts and compass Train in navigation skills
<b>Surfing. Also see estuaries and sheltered sea</b>			
	Water	Hypothermia, death	Wear buoyancy aid Wear appropriate clothing
	Collision with hard objects	Injury death	Wear a helmet Be aware of other water users and coastal geography Obey the rules of the road
	Current and tides	Hypothermia, death	Check with experienced surfers and paddlers Dynamic risk assessment of weather, rip tides and other influences
	Entanglement	Hypothermia, death	Be aware of ropes, lines, moorings, fishing lines etc Carry a knife

In addition to the above, these local hazards should be part of the leader's judgment:

### **Paignton Harbour area**

The area of the Coastguard depot and associated parking should not be blocked at any time.

The Sailing Club changing room door opens straight out onto roadway. Take care when exiting.

Under some sea states there can be a large surge affecting the main south slipway and the pontoon; consider using the west slip if necessary.

There is much activity from many interested groups around the slipways, both on and off the water. These include:

- Reversing cars and trailers
- Long rowing boats and gigs
- Power boats and jet skis
- Sailing boats
- Other vehicles and craft

Not all these users will be experienced handlers of their equipment. Exercise great care and watch out for others who may be tired or otherwise with reduced judgment, lest they become either hazards or victims.

At low tides the harbour dries. Beware of soft sand patches; it is not recommended to drive vehicles onto the sand.

Beware of fishing lines and surf rolling past the mouth of the harbour

Paignton Harbour mouth is unusual in that passage is on the left because of the location of the passenger embarkation. Exit and enter the harbour on the left and as a close group for maximum safety and mutual support whilst making minimum disruption to others.

The perch and pier present hazards both from the metalworks and crustacean attached. Helmets should be worn if close manoeuvring in these areas is planned.

The ducted stream from the harbour to the perch and associated reef dries at low tide. There are iron works protruding from these features that will damage people and equipment at certain tide heights. Ensure sufficient water for the sea state is over these features before venturing into the area protected by the perch cardinal marker.

In the cove on Roundham Head (Savage Hole) there are the remains of a WW1 submarine. Around low tides some ironworks present a hazard. Avoid this feature under those conditions.

Peregrine Falcons nest on Roundham Headland. When eggs and young are present they may be very opinionated about small boat activities nearby. Move away quietly and quickly if there are signs of disturbing the birds.

Caves underneath Livermead Head require helmets and awareness of sea state and tide before entering.

Reviewed at AGM Sept 2012