

Risk Assessment - Racing Paddle Sport General Activities.

Doc No: SOUCC-H&S-RA001

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Assessors Name:	Russell Meyer	Review Date:	June 2026
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Description of assessment	<p>Club Risk Assessment for Racing paddle sport activities delivered by Southampton Canoe Club.</p> <p>This RA covers the regular club paddling training activities in flat water racing boats and surf skis.</p> <p>Risk assessment to be read in conjunction with the Standard Operating Procedures & Code of Conduct, First Aid policy & Health and Safety policy.</p>
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Location Details	<p>Pond at Woodmill Activity Centre</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Pond is a very sheltered inland non-tidal pond with no currents. There is good bank access to all sides. (PUK Definition = Very Sheltered Water) 2. The canal. non-tidal section of river with easy access from the bank and moderate current under normal conditions. (PUK Definition = Very Sheltered Water) 3. Woodmill to Cobden bridge. Tidal section of river flow is also affected by the river Itchen above Woodmill. This is a sheltered river and most sections have reasonable access to the bank. Area is used by Rowers. (PUK Definition = Sheltered Water) 4. Cobden bridge to Northam bridge. Tidal section of river. More exposed and less good access to the bank. At low tide bank access is difficult. Area used by rowers with their motorised support boats and occasional use by other powered craft. (PUK Definition = Sheltered Water) 5. Northam bridge to Itchen bridge. Wide and exposed tidal section of river with poor access to the bank. Area used by rowers with their motorised support boats s and occasional use by other powered craft. (PUK Definition = Moderate Water) <p>River Hamble.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shore road car park to Fairthorne Manor YMCA. Tidal section of river, Paddler need to pass Swanick and Deacons marinas used by large motor cruisers and yachts. Sometime strong & difficult currents under the A27 road bridge. Once past the M27 Bridge the river is sheltered with good bank access. (PUK Definition = Sheltered Water)
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Shore Road Car Park to Mercury Marina. Tidal sheltered river. Many marinas and moorings for yachts and motor cruisers. Poor access to bank in some sections but there are many pontoons (private) that could be used in emergency. (PUK Definition = Moderate Water) 3. Mercury marina to Hamble Point Marina. Tidal river that is more exposed and has significantly more sailing and motorised river traffic. (PUK Definition = Moderate Water) <p>River Test</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Eiling toll Bridge to Goatee Beach. Tidal sheltered short section of river. Good bank access. Occasional use by powered craft. (PUK Definition = Sheltered Water) 4. Goatee Beach to Marchwood Beach. Exposed section of river that often has larger waves, Reasonable access to the bank when keeping close to Gootee Beach side. This RA is limited to keeping within 60m of the bank which should keep paddlers away from most powered craft. Leads to very exposed areas outside this RA. (PUK Definition = Moderate Water)
<p>Notes:-</p>	<p>Note the Very sheltered water, Sheltered Water, moderate water noted are in line with the PUK “Environmental Definitions and Deployment Guidance for Instructors, Coaches and Leaders</p> <p>Tide and weather affect the Puk environmental definition.</p> <p>Moderate water - Wind strength does not exceed force 4. Tidal Flow does not exceed 2 knots. Sheltered Water -Wind strength does not exceed force 3. Tidal flow does not exceed 0.5knots</p> <p>Competent groups of three or more adult paddlers can operate independently of formal coaches. See notes in RA below.</p> <p>Coaches and leaders must only operate only within the scope defined by their formal training, certification and PUK standards of deployment.</p> <p>Only activities listed on the canoe club website calendar are authorised club activities.</p>
<p>Exemptions from this risk of assessment.</p>	<p>This RA does not cover the following activities. See separate RA document where appropriate.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. White water paddling. 2. Sea Paddling. 3. Gym and circuit training. 4. Traveling to other venues and races & any risks associated with other venues not listed below. 5. SOU CC Races. 6. Polo & polo competitions. 7. Paddlers with special medical considerations. e.g. Epilepsy 8. Training session more than 2 hours. 9. Any areas outside the locations as detailed above.

10. Talent Club activities.

Risk assessment to be read in conjunction with the Standard Operating Procedures & Code of Conduct, First Aid policy & Health and Safety policy.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Collaborative club activity – competent groups acting independently of leaders / coaches	Group members .	<p>Paddlers in groups of competent adults operating without a formal leader or coach. Group members must be competent and are responsible for their own actions and making their own safety related judgements.</p> <p>Groups must be three or more. The group must stay in visual and audible communication distance from each other.</p> <p>Groups must not go beyond Itchen Bridge / Hamble Point Marina.</p> <p>All individuals must be competent to make their own safety judgements and decisions regarding changing conditions and emergencies. Typically, competent paddlers will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUK “Paddle Explorer standard” • 3 years’ experience in racing boats at a racing club. • Have PUK on water membership. 	If any individuals are in doubt of their competence / ability should seek guidance from a coach with the credentials to lead within the relevant discipline and on the types of water.	Group members	As required	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be very unlikely to capsize or need any assistance. • Carry mobile phone & FA kit (one per group) <p><u>Juniors and adult novice paddlers cannot paddle as part of collaborative club activities</u></p>				
Uncontrolled club members on the water, leading to lone and unsupported paddling.	Club Members Becoming detached from the group.	<p>Session briefings to take place on land before getting onto the water.</p> <p>Briefing will include.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of session. • Group member & leaders defined for each group. • Define an on-water meeting point in a safe place close to ingress point. <p>Once on the water groups all paddlers to congregate in agreed meeting point until the coach is happy that all group members are present and ready to start the session.</p> <p>Group coaches to monitor and account for all paddlers in their group throughout the session.</p> <p>Paddlers allocated into a group to stay together within visual and audible shouting range.</p> <p>Session leader to carry mobile phone.</p>	<p>Coach to adjust session as required to maintain group contact. This may include head starts, alter courses etc..</p> <p>Particular attention to be paid to juniors and novice adult group members.</p>	Session leaders, Coaches & Paddlers.	Every Session.	
Paddlers overwhelmed by conditions leading to	Members Non-member participants	Session to be led by Coaches or leaders who hold appropriate updated BC Coaching Award. Coaches only operate	BA to be regularly checked.	Coaches, & Paddlers	Visual check of BA for suitability and fit every use.	

<p>injury / exhaustion / drowning..</p>	<p>Volunteers Drowning by Immersion in water and ingestion of water.</p>	<p>in waters and with craft applicable to their award.</p> <p>Refer to Paddle UK “ Environmental Definitions and Deployment Guidance for Instructors, Coaches and Leaders”.</p> <p>Novice paddlers to complete an introductory / taster course run by the club.</p> <p>Paddlers and family to be made aware of the hazards.</p> <p>Coaches to satisfy themselves that any experienced new paddlers have sufficient competence to join in club paddling activities.</p> <p>Club coaches are responsible to ensure athletes in their group have declared they are confident in water.</p> <p>Boats must have sufficient buoyancy to keep them afloat and support the paddler in the event of a capsize.</p> <p>If any paddler spots an individual in trouble, they must render every assistance they can without putting themselves in danger.</p> <p>Coaches to make sure that their group members are sufficiently competent to use the location they are planning to paddle in.</p> <p>BA are mandatory for paddlers who may be susceptible to capsizing. Typically, this would be Marathon Div 7 or below</p>	<p>Thorough annual inspection of BA's during club maintenance day. Replace as required.</p> <p>Coaches & paddlers ensure BA's fit paddlers correctly.</p>		<p>Thorough annual inspection of BA's during club maintenance day. Replace as required</p>	
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		<p>standard. Ability is determined by the coach or session leader not by ranking.</p> <p>BA are mandatory for all paddlers in the dark.</p> <p>BA are mandatory for all paddlers at Club Sessions during Greenwich Mean Time.</p> <p>BA's are mandatory for all paddlers during Saturday morning coached sessions.</p> <p>BA's are mandatory for all under 18-year-olds unless they have the appropriate ability to their coach's satisfaction. They must have a BA Exemption form signed by their Parental/ guardian & head coach. See club operation policy.</p> <p>When volunteers are on the bank consideration will be given to proximity to water and likelihood of falling in as to whether they wear buoyancy aids / life jackets.</p> <p>All members intending to go on the water should be able to swim 50 meters in canoeing clothing (including buoyancy aid).</p>				
Paddling in the Dark	<p>Club Members</p> <p>Increased risk of collision with other paddlers, other river users and fixed objects, more difficult to locate paddlers in the water.</p>	<p>Only members who are very unlikely to capsize (typically div 7 and above) should paddle in the dark. Ability is determined by club coach and considers the type of craft being paddled. It is not simply based on ranking alone.</p> <p>All paddlers must have a red flashing light affixed to the shoulder strap of their buoyancy aid.</p>	<p>The session leader / group coach has the ultimate judgement as to whether a paddler can participate in paddling session in the dark.</p> <p>Land based training alternative options are available for all paddlers during club sessions in the dark.</p>	<p>Club coaches and paddlers.</p> <p>If paddlers are in any doubt of their competence to paddle in the dark, they should consult with their coach prior to the session.</p>	Prior to session.	

		<p>Location 4,7&9 are not suitable for paddling in the dark.</p> <p>See above BA requirements.</p>				
<p>Adverse weather that could lead to cold and or hypothermia.</p>	<p>Members</p> <p>Non-member participants</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Due to cold weather, wind chill, cold water immersion.</p>	<p>Session to be led by Coaches or leaders who hold appropriate updated BC Coaching Award.</p> <p>Appropriate clothing and equipment are to be always worn both on and off the water.</p> <p>Volunteers and members aware of signs and symptoms of hypothermia.</p> <p>When athletes start showing signs of being cold, they will be taken off the water to shelter away from the elements.</p> <p>Safety blanket / Foil sheets should be carried by coaches to provide for athlete and coach recovery from cold.</p>	<p>Paddlers and coaches to monitor weather forecast prior to every session.</p> <p>Coaches may enforce the use of spray decks, cags, and hats in cold conditions.</p> <p>Paddlers may have to stay local to the club to mitigate adverse weather issues.</p> <p>Close monitoring of individuals throughout sessions</p> <p>Dynamic RA's during session. Coaches and paddlers monitor themselves and others for signs of cold and hyperthermia.</p>	<p>Coaches, & Paddlers</p>	<p>Each Session</p>	
<p>Adverse weather that could lead to heat exhaustion and or hyperthermia.</p>	<p>Members</p> <p>Non-member participants</p> <p>Volunteers</p>	<p>Wear sun cream UV (SP 30 min) hats and tops in strong sun.</p> <p>Paddlers to be sufficiently hydrated prior to the session. Bring drinks in hot weather.</p> <p>Appropriate clothing and equipment are to be always worn both on and off the water.</p> <p>Volunteers and members aware of signs and symptoms</p>	<p>Paddlers and coaches to monitor weather forecast prior to every session.</p> <p>Dynamic RA's during session. Coaches and paddlers monitor themselves and others for signs of heat exhaustion and hyperthermia.</p>	<p>Coaches, & Paddlers</p>	<p>Every Session</p>	

		Close monitoring of individuals throughout sessions				
Adverse weather that could lead to dangerous paddling conditions. Eg strong wind lightning.	Members Non-member participants Volunteers	Coaches to review weather forecast prior to every session. Club session should not take place if there is a risk of lightning or winds greater than force 6. Sessions limited to locations 1,2,5, & 8 in winds of 5-6.	Paddlers and coaches to monitor weather forecast prior to every session. Paddlers to use spray decks if waves expected. Paddlers may have to stay local to the club to mitigate adverse weather issues. Dynamic RA's during session. Coaches and paddlers monitor conditions and take advance action if conditions are worsening more than expected. ie move to a different location or abandon session.	Coaches and paddlers.	Every Session	
Boats becoming swamped due to waves. May result in capsize.	Paddlers	When paddling groups to stay clear of other river users creating large wakes. Paddlers alter course to head directly into waves. Paddlers to wear spray decks if it is apparent that there a significant number of river users or weather / tide are creating large waves. Paddlers to choose a boat suitable for their ability in the current conditions.	Consider alternative training venue if conditions are likely to cause large waves. Discuss suitable boat options with coach if unsure. Consider land based training to avoid poor river conditions. Dynamic RA - Coaches may need adjust or abandon session if conditions do not permit a safe paddling.	Coaches and paddlers.	Each Session	

Entrapments & Entanglements	Members Non-member participants Volunteers	<p>Coach to be satisfied that paddlers can get into and out of the craft safely.</p> <p>Coach to be satisfied that all paddlers can get out of their craft efficiently and safely in the event of a capsize.</p> <p>Paddlers to be trained in capsize drill for closed cockpit boats if relevant.</p> <p>Suitable leg and footwear without loose laces or straps that may get entangled in seats, footrests etc to be used.</p> <p>Any straps to be securely tucked away.</p> <p>Leashes for watches mounted on the deck should not be able to tangle around legs.</p> <p>Leashes for first aid kits, buoyancy, phones inside boats should not be able to entangle paddlers legs.</p>				
Slips, Trips and Falls	Members Non-member participants Volunteers Spectators	<p>Non-slip floors in changing rooms. Mop any puddles form floor. Leave changing rooms clean and tidy after use.</p> <p>SOU CC to clean pontoon as required. All boats and paddles to be taken clear of river access and egress points as soon as practical.</p> <p>Novice and newer paddlers are recommended to wear suitable nonslip footwear at all times.</p> <p>Competent paddlers recommended to keep footwear in their boats in case of capsize and need to walk out.</p>	<p>Easy access to Personal First Aid Equipment.</p> <p>Pontoons, slipways and Launch points to be cleaned as required.</p>	All participants Parents Volunteers	Each Session	

		<p>Suitable footwear to be worn for all portage training. This should be able to resist sharp objects.</p> <p>Store kayaks, paddles and other equipment safely away from pedestrian routes.</p> <p>Suitable footwear to be worn when moving around the activity site.</p>				
Manual Handling of paddling related equipment	<p>Members</p> <p>Non-member participants</p> <p>Volunteers</p>	<p>Correct lifting, emptying techniques to be always used. Coaches to instructed on the best way to lift and carry boats at taster, try-out sessions or induction.</p> <p>Members briefed to consider asking for help.</p> <p>Where suitable nonslip footwear.</p> <p>Heavier boats to be lifted in pairs.</p> <p>Adults to assist weaker paddlers when carrying boats.</p> <p>Members instructed on how to empty the boats and rescue them safely.</p> <p>Adults to supervise and assist juniors and new members when racking boats in storage containers.</p>	<p>Kayak trollies provided for use where needed.</p> <p>Keep pontoons clean so they do not become slippery.</p> <p>Ongoing manual handling training.</p> <p>Lookout for people who maybe struggling and help.</p>	Coaches, paddlers, parents & volunteers.	Each Session	
On Water Collisions. Collision with other river users, fixed and floating objects. May cause damage	<p>Members</p> <p>Non-member participants</p>	<p>Understand and follow the navigation rules of the river. Paddlers to use right-hand side of the river unless they have good clear view of the river ahead and it is safe to use other parts of the river.</p> <p>Stay out of main channel used by larger vessels where possible.</p>	<p>Coaches and all paddlers to maintain all round observation during the session.</p> <p>Watch out for floating or partly submerged debris. Warn others in the group of you see any objects that paddlers may collide with.</p>	Coaches and paddlers.	Each Session	

to boats and or capsize.		<p>Paddlers to cross main channel as a group and under coach supervision.</p> <p>Be particularly mindful of rowers as their forward visibility is limited.</p> <p>More experienced paddlers have knowledge of fixed objects / wrecks etc to advise others in the group before and during the session.</p> <p>Paddlers to have the correct skill set and be suitably competent to avoid other water users.</p> <p>Paddlers to move well away (>10m if possible) from rowers, motorised boats and boats under sail.</p> <p>In the event of a capsize paddlers and rescuers to follow capsize drill. Do not hesitate to leave a boat whilst paddler is taken to safety if there is any risk of collision.</p>	<p>Dynamic Risk Assessment Coaches and paddlers to monitor other river users. Make decisions to move the session to a different location or take mitigating action as required to avoid collisions.</p>			
Allergies and asthma.	<p>Members</p> <p>Non-member participants</p> <p>Volunteers</p>	<p>All allergies and asthma are to be declared on the club joining form. People should make the coach and peer group aware of their condition and any medication that they have.</p> <p>Medication including inhalers and adrenaline auto-injector pens should be carried by the paddler. Coaches to be FA trained and should familiarise themselves with any medicine and how and when it is to be administered. Coaches should not administer auto-injector adrenalin unless trained to do so. Paddlers will normally administer their own medication if needed.</p>	<p>Consider auto-injector training for any coaches with people in their group that carry adrenaline pens.</p> <p>Coaches to be able to access emergency contact information for all member of their group.</p> <p>If anyone is having an anaphylactic reaction Call 999 / 112 immediately.</p> <p>Always call 999/112 after the administration of adrenaline even if the person appears well.</p>	Coaches, paddlers, parents, volunteers.	Each Session	

		<p>Avoid contact with allergens.</p> <p>Coaches to carry mobile phones.</p>				
Exhaustion / injury though physical activity.	Paddlers, more likely after illness or injury.	Paddlers should declare and discuss any health condition with their coach before activity and make it know to their peers that they are training with.	<p>Consider land based ergo / gym training to regain strength prior to on water training where risk are higher.</p> <p>Coaches and paddlers in group to be extra watchful of people returning to training after illness or injury.</p>	Coaches, paddlers, parents & volunteers	As required.	
<p>Water borne illness. – weill's disease / leptospirosis.</p> <p>Gastro-intestinal illness.</p>	<p>Members</p> <p>Non-member participants</p> <p>Volunteers</p>	<p>Avoid stagnant water.</p> <p>Shower after paddling.</p> <p>Avoid swimming capsized adjacent to sewage outlets or known suspected discharges. Take particular care after heavy rainfall.</p> <p>No deliberate splashing or swimming activities other than rescue training.</p> <p>Avoid paddling with open wounds.</p> <p>Wash hands prior to consuming food.</p> <p>Wash kit after use.</p> <p>Avoid swallowing water.</p> <p>Cover cuts, grazes broken skin with water proof dressing.</p>	<p>Be aware of leptospirosis / weill's disease symptoms. These include high temperature, headache, body aches and pain, tummy ache, feeling sick or being sick, diarrhoea, redness in the white part of your eyes, yellowing of the skin. Inform your doctor that you have undertaken outdoor water activities. Request a check for leptospirosis.</p>	Coaches, paddlers, parents & volunteers.	As required.	

Overhanging branches/trees may hit a paddler and injure them and/or cause them to capsize. Paddler getting caught in fishing lines suspended from overhanging trees.	Coaches, Paddlers	<p>This mainly applies to River Itchen upstream of Woodmill (location 1) also any location where people fish.</p> <p>Coaches paddlers to make others aware of the hazards imposed by trees and lines.</p> <p>Paddlers should avoid paddling under low branches. If paddlers need to paddle under branches, they must satisfy themselves that there is sufficient head room and that there are no hanging lines.</p> <p>If paddlers see a fishing line, they should warn others to go around it.</p>	<p>Notify environmental agency of any significant tree hazard.</p> <p>Dynamic Risk Assessment.</p> <p>If lines or tree hazards are spotted the coach / group should take appropriate action to avoid entanglements.</p>	All participants	Each Session	
Canoe/Kayak failure	Members Non-member participants Volunteers	<p>Paddlers to check all equipment for safety prior to going on the water. Particularly any hull damage, sufficient buoyancy and any steering mechanism.</p> <p>Any safety item showing wear or damage to be assessed for use by a coach.</p>	<p>Any defects in boats and equipment to be reported to the quartermaster.</p> <p>Annual thorough check of all club boats and equipment during the club maintenance day.</p> <p>Coach's / quartermaster to quarantine any damaged equipment so it's not used.</p>	All participants	Each Session	
Foot Injury. Debris underwater including glass, sharp objects etc..	Members Non-member participants Volunteers.	<p>When portaging appropriate footwear to be worn.</p> <p>Where possible launch and egress from inspected areas.</p> <p>Avoid putting feet down after capsizing.</p>	First Aid kits to be carried by coaches.	Coaches and paddlers.	Each Session	

Entrapment in mud flats.	Paddlers, Coaches.	Coaches and paddlers are aware that at low tide there are significant areas of mud at the sides of the river. Coaches and paddlers trained to rescue capsized boats in deep water without having to reach the bank, as this may be difficult in some locations. Paddlers instructed to stay with their boat and not attempt to wade through mud towards the bank until assistance is provided.	Rescue training as required. Coaches to brief paddlers in low tide conditions.	Coaches and paddlers.	As required.	
Crossing Woodmill lane with and without boats. Pedestrians in car parks. Risk to traffic accident.	Members Non-member participants Volunteers	Use "green cross code" when crossing road. Pedestrians to congregate away from car park areas where vehicles move. Warning to all paddlers to be cautious of moving vehicles. Adults to supervise juniors when moving boats. Lightning group members must always be supervised by adults when crossing road and in car parks.	Land based volunteers and parents to assist with lightnings paddlers crossing roads and through car parks.	Coaches, parents, volunteers, paddlers.	Each Session	
Woodmill Sluice Gates open causing very strong water jet and current.	Paddlers	Often and particularly after heavy rain the sluice gates are open to allow fresh water out of the river upstream of Woodmill. This emits a large strong jet of water from the sluice gate into the pool by the Woodmill beach. Whilst the sluice gates are open paddlers should not use the beach to access to the river. Paddlers should access and egress the river from the pontoon and head away from the sluice gate down river.	When sluice gates are open there may be strong currents around the pontoon. Stronger / more confident paddlers assist others getting in and out of boats.			

Wildlife on the river. (Swans and Seals).	Paddlers	<p>Paddlers should go around swans. Avoid paddling within a group of swans. Never go between an adult swan and its young.</p> <p>Seals are seen on all stretches of river other than upstream of Wood mill. They generally are not interested in paddlers, but they should not be approached.</p>	Pass on any meeting with particularly aggressive swans to other club members.	Paddlers, coaches.	Every Session.	
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Office use only (to be completed by a risk assessment checker if selected for sampling)

Checked by:	GH	Position:	Chair	Date:	20.6.24
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Notes:

Group leaders / coaches to carry mobile phone, thermal blanket and First Aid kit if paddling more than 200m from the access / egress point.

Coaches to ensure that they can always access the emergency contact details of all their group members during club paddling activities.