

# WCC Risk Assessments

## Introduction and Purpose:

This risk assessment examines the dangers inherent in the activities carried out by Welshpool Canoe Club. Through consideration of the means by which these dangers (risks) could be eliminated or reduced in severity or likelihood, a number of control measures have been suggested. Those using this risk assessment should note that the dynamic and varied nature of the sport of canoeing, does not allow a completely comprehensive risk assessment to be made. Paddlers, particularly those leading groups, should carry out their own informal and dynamic risk assessments before and during any canoeing activity. This is particularly important on open and moving water, indeed it could be argued that the ability to carry out dynamic risk assessment is the basis of effective leadership.

## Using This Document:

The probability of risks occurring (Prob.) is assessed as high (H), medium (M) or low (L). A high probability indicates that the risk occurs regularly on Club activities. Medium probabilities relate to events that have occurred on Club activities or which are likely to do so at some time, whilst low probability risks have never occurred (and are unlikely to do so). It is important that all paddlers are familiar with the risk assessments **and it should, therefore, be published on the Club website**. It must be recognised that the document will need to be updated regularly. This will be the responsibility of the committee. As a minimum the risk assessment should be reviewed:

- After the Annual General Meeting by the Committee
- After any accident or 'near miss'
- When any member identifies a significant hazard not already mentioned in the document, or after a change in legislation.
- All significant findings must be recorded.

## Carrying Out a Risk Assessment

It is important that those updating this document know how to carry out a risk assessment. These guidelines may also be useful to those carrying out their own dynamic risk assessments when on the water. There are 5 steps to carrying out a risk assessment:

1. Identify the hazards – those things with potential to cause harm
2. Identify the risks – who might be harmed and how?
3. Develop control measures to either eliminate the risk or reduce it to an acceptable level
4. Evaluate the probability that the risk will occur
5. Record your findings and review them

**A Dynamic risk assessment is a continual process that starts before the activity, and continues after the activity has finished. This kind of assessment is the Leaders response to the actual conditions prevailing, and how they will affect risk for the planned activity.**

It is important to keep the 'big picture' in mind and not get bogged down in detail. Risk assessments are best carried out by a group, to use a wide pool of knowledge and ideas.

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Reviewed by: Club Committee

Action points:

## Risk Assessment:

### Swimming Pools (The Flash) (BCU/UKCC L1 Coach and above)

Hazard	Risks	Control Measures	Prob.
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Preparing for start of Session	Swimmers in pool & Blocking Fire Exit / The Group	Boats to be positioned at top end of pool, avoiding Fire Exits and not overhang pool edge. Use good manual handling techniques. Paddlers and coaches, must wear helmets, while in the water. Brief group (max12) of session aims (the use of the safe storage area for boats and equipment, at the beginning and at the close of the session is supervised by the lead coach or designated person)  <b>- Use appropriate warm-up -</b>	M
Knock unconscious	Head injuries	Check correct fitting of helmets and report any damage (the use of helmets is mandatory for any person in the water)	M
Slips & Trips	Falling injuries	Obey pool rules. Do not run. (Flash Risk assessment) Report sharp edges or loose tiles, to pool Lifeguard and reception	L
Water	Drowning (near drowning)	Ensure participants can swim (If not, 1 to1 coaching, should be used) Teach capsize drill. Lifeguard on duty at all sessions. Coaches running sessions are experienced  (BCU/UKCC L1 and above)	L
Equipment/ People	Entrapment in boat on Capsize/Cuts & Bruises – Lifting boats -Muscular & Joint damage	Teach capsize drill. Boats are easy to exit. Maintain equipment, Duty coaches and paddlers , to check and report all faulty equipment. Equipment is stored safely at end of pool session. Teach good manual handling, and encourage during all pool sessions. Experienced paddlers often observing sessions.	M

## Very Sheltered Waters & Sheltered Waters (Glossary of terms should be used)

### (BCU/UKCC L1 Coach and above)

As for swimming pools, with the following extra hazards:

Hazard	Risks	Control Measures	Prob.
Injury or medical conditions	Condition worsening or Lack of treatment	Check Child Permission forms. Question Adults current health. Current First Aider available.  Use Appropriate warm up.	L
Other water users	Collision	Watch out for other craft. Move out of the way of all water users.	L
Locks / Weirs	Getting caught in deep recirculating hydraulics	<b>Avoid locks - Avoid weirs. (Define safe paddling area)</b>	L
Rubbish	Cuts, other injuries	Avoid (Define safe paddling area) First aid kit.	L
Knocked unconscious	Drowning (Near drowning) Head injuries	Use approved Buoyancy Aids (check correct fitting) Suitable helmets to be worn or required by Lead Coach – Check for correct fitting.	L
Weather/Cold water	Hypothermia, Immersion Hypothermia	Dress appropriately for conditions. Group members to monitor themselves and others in cold conditions. Event to be cancelled if weather or water is too cold.	L
Boats & Equipment	Manual Handling Injuries	Teach and use correct lifting and rescue techniques. Buoyancy bags should be correctly fitted.	L
Water	Contracting Illness – E.g. Weil's disease	Do not ingest water. Wash hand before eating. Shower after paddling.	L
Environment	Trees overhanging bushes	Avoid – Define safe paddling area	L

## Polo

As for swimming pools or placid water, with the following extra hazards:

Hazard	Risks	Control Measures	Prob.
Other Players	Impact Injuries	Wear polo helmets with face guards, Obey rules.	M

## Risk Assessment: Rivers and Open (inland) Waters

### (River and Canoe Leaders)

(Glossary of terms should be used)

The following risk assessment covers typical paddling trips on rivers and open inland water in the UK and abroad. The hazards present and their severity will vary depending on the waters. This risk assessment is relevant to paddling on artificial courses.

Hazard	Risks	Control Measures	Prob.
Travel	Car/ Minibus accidents	Follow the Highway Code. Do not drive when tired. Plan and allow time for shuttles, do not rush. Use seat belts	L
Roof rack problems	Train members to secure boats.	(1&2* training). Check roof racks before travel.	M
Trailer accidents	Tow at correct speed	Check Trailer and Boats are secure, take extra care.	M
Long Days	Exhaustion	Adjust trip length to suit participants. Carry food and drink. Flask - Hot drinks or means of making a hot drink.	L
Poor Leadership	Loosing control of Group	C.L.A.P.	M
Environment	Hypothermia	Dress correctly for expected conditions. Carry hot drinks, spare clothing, Group Shelter/Tarp or exposure bags. Appropriate level of First Aid provisions.	M
Environment	Hyperthermia	Carry cold drinks on hot days.	L
Water	Accelerated/ Immersion Hypothermia	Rescue swimmers fast. Teach rolling. Competent River Leadership	M
Water	Drowning (Near drowning)	Require that all members are competent swimmers. Instruct on capsize drill, rolling and swimming in moving water. Teach rescue techniques. Competent River Leadership	L
Water	Waterborne diseases	Try not to ingest water. Take further precautions when there is a known problem.	L
Water	Large Stoppers etc.	Avoid by good Leadership. Teach methods for paddling through, in and out of friendly stoppers. Identify unfriendly water features. Paddlers should be made aware about correct swimming position and rescues from stoppers.	M
Rocks	Head Injury	Helmets must be worn, during all river trips or as required by	M

		Canoe or Sea Leaders. Buoyancy aids are mandatory during all water activities. Avoid rocks by use of good technique.	
Rocks/Trees	Pinning	Avoid rocks by good leadership and paddling. Know how to cope with broaching on a rock. Group Leaders know how to rescue from pins e.g. leaning onto rock.	M
Rocks/Trees	Entrapment	Use correct technique when swimming. WWSR training; to be conveyed to group and practice and refresh techniques, when appropriate.	L
Trees	Caught in strainer	Avoid trees in river by good leadership. Knowledge of swimming techniques. WWSR.	L
Equipment	Poor group safety	Leaders should pre-trip, check their personal kit e.g. Rescue kit Mobile phone, First Aid Kits and Maps or Guides, Weather conditions and adapt accordingly  <b>(This demonstrates an active dynamic process)</b>	M
Equipment	Entrapment in boat	Inspect individuals equipment e.g. Foot rest & Air bags are secure. Check appropriate footwear. Teach Capsize drill. Keep area between legs clear. Inspect boats and equipment, as part of initial Leadership brief.	L
Equipment	Breakage	Inspect equipment and use appropriate equipment for conditions. Carry Splits or Repair kit within group.	M
Equipment	Entanglement in rescue equipment	Learn how to use throw lines and chest harnesses properly. Carry knife. Competent River Leadership	M
Equipment	Manual Handling Injuries	Teach good and appropriate techniques at all levels. Ask for assistance when required.	M
River Bank	Falling Injuries	Wear helmet and buoyancy aid at all times. Wear appropriate footwear. Take care.	L
Slips & trips	Falling into river/sea or open water	Wear helmet as required by Leader. Wear appropriate footwear. Take care.	L

## Risk Assessment: Sea (Glossary of terms should be used)

As for rivers and open waters, with the following extra hazards:

Hazard	Risks	Control Measures	Rob.
Tides & Weather	Losing control of group	Good Leadership and planning. Consider the expected speed of the group. Consult tide times closely. Calculate timing of loss of light at dusk. Carry working VHF Radios/Phones/ EPIRB and Flares, Strobes if required. Plan route carefully, including emergency routes, with maps, guides and charts, contact coast guard if required. Ensure that you have a comprehensive weather forecast. Assess the likely effect of the weather. Consider the sea state and possible influences, such as tide and current.	M
Other sea vessels	Collision & Capsize	Avoid large vessels, with good Leadership and planning.	L