PORT OF PLYMOUTH CANOEING ASSOCIATION
70 Lawrence Road, Plymouth, PL9 9SJ
Devon, United Kingdom
www.ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

Risk Assessment: Sea Kayaking

RA Activity Details:	Sea Kayaking	**RA Reference No:**	PPCA 004				**Date of RA:**	Feb 2024	
Area:	Coastline & Estuaries United Kingdom	**Pre-Control Risk Score:**	High				**RA Review Date:**	Feb 2025	
Guidance Documents Referenced:	(1) Canoe England Safety Guidelines for Paddlers, Clubs and Volunteers (2) PPCA Club Operating Policy	**Post Control Risk Score:**	**Low**	Low	**Medium**		**High**		
RA Review Completed By [Name]:	Damean Miller	Risk Change Controls Needed [YES or NO]:			No				
RA Approved By [Name]:	Mark Perry	Dynamic Risk Assessment Required (YES or NO)			Yes				

This generic risk assessment for sea kayaking in UK waters has been compiled to fulfill our insurance requirements and the moral obligation of the PPCA. The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify and manage the hazards and risks that may be incurred by all those participating in sea kayaking, to then examine what controls and management are necessary to reduce those risks and if necessary, and possible, identify any further actions that may be required by either the club or its members to reduce the risks as low as reasonably practicable.

It should be expected by those taking part in sea kayaking that minor 'injuries', for example blisters, bumps and bruises, are 'normal' occurrences and do not constitute a 'significant' risk within the context of risk assessment. Consequently these factors do not form part of this written risk assessment. The following should be noted:

- All trips will be sanctioned by the Club Leader and the Session Leader (or his nominated representative) is duly authorized, qualified and experienced to lead the paddle.
- Appropriate safety equipment will be carried by the Session Leader, Coaches and other designated 'helpers'. As a minimum this should include a VHF radio, spare clothing, survival bag, 1st Aid kit, tow lines, flares, food and hot drink.
- Escape Routes and 'Action in the event of an emergency' will have been pre-planned by the Session Leader. Session Leader must carry an Ordnance Survey map (or marine chart) of the area being paddled and be able to give a 6 fig grid reference (or lat/long reference) to the Emergency Services if required.
- In the days leading up to a PPCA Club paddle taking place the Session Leader is responsible for studying the weather and other environmental conditions to assess if the sea conditions are suitable for the intended group. The result of this deliberation should be promulgated when a decision has been made, ideally 24 hrs before the intended start time.
- Session Leaders and Coaches may prevent anyone from paddling that they believe unfit to do so, or that they believe not of sufficient experience or skill to handle the conditions, or if to allow them onto the water may jeopardise the safety of themselves or others, or place unnecessary risks on others.

At the launch location the Session Leader should conduct their 'dynamic risk assessment' and use this information to form part of his group briefing prior to getting on the water.

All accidents, incidents or near misses must be reported to the PPCA Committee using the incident report form in the Club Operating Policy. Details of any incident which results in injury requiring hospital attendance / treatment will also be passed to Paddle UK for their records on sports injuries and to form a record for the insurance company in case of any resulting claim.

LIST ALL ACTIVITIES BEING UNDERTAKEN DURING THE TRIP	LIST ALL POTENTIAL HAZARDS IN COMPLETING THE ACTIVITY	PRE CONTROL MEASURES RISK SCORE (High, Medium, Low)			LIST ALL EXISTING PREVENTATIVE MEASURES & INCLUDE ALL NEW PREVENTATIVE MEASURES THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED, THAT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO REDUCE THE RISK TO AS LOW AS REASONABLE PRACTICABLE	POST CONTROL MEASURES RISK SCORE (High, Medium, Low)			NAME PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTION OR ACTIVITY
ACTIVITY	HAZARD	H	M	L	CONTROL MEASURES	H	M	L	ACCOUNTABILITY
Moving club sea kayaks from/to the Mountbatten Storage sheds and vehicles	(1) Muscle strain/injury to the person(s) moving the kayak to kayak weight/shape. (2) Collision with other members/members of the public/other users of Mountbatten club causing personal injuries. (3) Collision with vehicle/trailer causing personal injuries. (4) Personal injury due to kayaks/equipment toppling over within the sheds.		M		(1) Manual handling technique's taught from in the first club kayak lesson. Boats to be moved around by 2 people if required. Use of trolleys to move kayaks encouraged. Consideration of environmental conditions, e.g. wind whilst carrying kayaks. Adults/coaches to supervise young/vulnerable persons. (2) Young person's/beginners taught from the first club kayak lesson to be aware of their surroundings and other persons in the area. Adults/coaches to supervise young/vulnerable persons. (3) Members made aware of dive boat trailer movements and vehicles coming in and out of the courtyard area. Move boats and equipment out of the courtyard area as soon as practicable. Do not block access for other courtyard users. (4) Ensure securing straps are in place on boat trailer and vertical storage bays after use.			L	Individual Paddler
Transporting club kayaks by vehicle to the rendezvous point	Sea kayak not secured correctly to the vehicle causing a danger to other road users	H			(1) Members shown how to secure sea kayaks on a vehicle roof using appropriate roof bars and straps during training sessions. (2) Ropes and straps can work loose. Stop regularly to check them. (3) The driver of the vehicle should satisfy himself that the kayak(s) are secure before driving away. (4) No personal gear should be left in the kayak during transit and it is recommended hatch covers are removed.			L	Vehicle Driver

ACTIVITY	HAZARD	H	M	L	CONTROL MEASURES	H	M	L	ACCOUNTABILITY
Moving sea kayaks from the Mountbatten Storage sheds to launch point(s) / moving sea kayaks from vehicles to launch point (on trips away from Mountbatten) and visa versa.	(1) Muscle strain/injury to the person(s) moving the kayak due to kayak weight/shape. (2) Collision with other members/members of the public causing personal injuries. (3) Collision with vehicle/trailer causing personal injuries. (4) Slips & trips due to wet surfaces, undergrowth, algae on slipways/rocks and uneven ground causing personal injuries.		M		(1) Manual handling technique's/lifting etiquette taught from first club kayak lesson. Boats to be moved around by 2 people if required. Use of trolleys to move kayaks encouraged. Consideration of environmental conditions, e.g. wind whilst carrying kayaks. Adults/coaches to supervise young/vulnerable persons. (2) Young person's/beginners taught from first club kayak lesson to be aware of their surroundings and other persons in the area. Adults/coaches to supervise young/vulnerable persons. (3) Members made aware of dive boat trailer movements and vehicles coming in and out of the courtyard area. Move boats and equipment out of the courtyard area as soon as practicable. Do not block access for other courtyard users. (4) Paddlers should be wearing suitable footwear for sea kayaking activities. (5) Paddlers are taught on various courses the hazards surrounding kayaking launch points and steps to take to reduce the risk of slipping/tripping.			L	Individual Paddler
Group control before launching.	(1) Slips and falls causing personal injury. (2) Drowning.		M		(1) No one to enter their kayak until Session Leader is satisfied everyone has signed onto the session register and a head count has been taken. (2) All persons must be wearing a buoyancy aid and suitable clothing for the anticipated conditions. (3) No one to enter their kayak until a trip brief has been given by the Session Leader (or their nominated representative). This brief will include details from the dynamic risk assessment factoring in such details as weather, water temperature, distance & route, tide times and any other details which have significantly altered causing any changes to the plan.			L	Session Leader
Sea Kayaking (General)	Launching/landing in surf conditions leading to capsize and possible personal injuries due to contact with seabed/beach.		M		(1) Under 18's must wear helmets when paddling with the club. (2) All adult paddlers strongly advised that helmets should be worn in surf conditions. (3) Session Leader to assess surf conditions & the group's ability. If necessary seek more sheltered launching/landing point.			L	Session Leader

ACTIVITY	HAZARD	H	M	L	CONTROL MEASURES	H	M	L	ACCOUNTABILITY
Sea Kayaking (general)	Environmental conditions leading to hypothermia, heat stroke and other personal injuries.	H			(1) All paddlers encouraged to disclose any pre-existing illnesses/medical conditions to the Session Leader prior to launching. (2) All paddlers to be wearing clothing suitable for the anticipated weather conditions/water temperature. (3) Session Leader/coaches to constantly monitor environmental conditions as part of their ongoing assessment during the paddle and take appropriate action if required, e.g. alter the route to sheltered conditions. (4) Buoyancy aid to be worn by all paddlers whilst on the water. (5) All paddlers should bring their own sunscreen and water bottle. (6) All paddlers are briefed to bring food, drink and spare clothing for the trip. (7) All paddlers will have completed 1* or Discover training as a minimum before being allowed to sea kayak. (8) The Session Leader can assign an experienced paddler to accompany a novice to sea kayaking. (9) Session Leader/coaches are first aid trained and first aid equipment is carried within the group.			L	Session Leader
Sea Kayaking in or near estuaries	Contaminated water leading to illness / infection e.g. Leptospirosis		M		Members advised to cover cuts and abrasions before the paddle. Session Leader, if required, discuss possibility of Weil's disease. Advice given to shower as soon as possible and to follow good personal hygiene before eating.			L	Session Leader
Sea Kayaking (general)	Capsizing (including wet exit) leading to drowning or personal injuries.	H			(1) Buoyancy aids must be worn and be of suitable size. Sea kayak will be suitable for the paddler, in good condition and hatch covers fitted. Spray deck is the right size for the kayak, grab loop in good condition. (2) Minimum standard for sea kayak paddlers is experienced 1* / Discover undertaking Explore training. (3) Capsize and rescue drills undertaken during club training sessions. (4) Session Leader can nominate experienced paddlers to 'buddy up' with less experienced paddlers. (5) During a capsize rescue those paddlers not involved in the rescue to group together. (6) Session Leader, coaches / helpers appropriately qualified, experienced, first aid trained and 1st aid kit available. Rescue plans (including escape routes) made and discussed amongst Session Leader / coaches.			L	Session Leader
ACTIVITY	HAZARD	H	M	L	CONTROL MEASURES	H	M	L	ACCOUNTABILITY

Sea Kayaking (general)	Capsizing & wet exit causing hypothermia from cold immersion and/or exposure which could result in death, collapse or other symptoms.	H			(1) Environmental conditions usually promulgated on PPCA website/Facebook 24 hrs before the trip with comments made about dress etc. (2) Paddlers are briefed regarding suitable clothing during club training sessions. (3) All paddlers will have received sufficient practice on capsize drills and wet exits during club training sessions. (4) During a capsize rescue those paddlers not involved in the rescue to group together. (5) On completion of rescue Session Leader will re-assess the situation to determine if a change of plan is required, e.g. paddle to nearest landing point to change into dry clothing (paddlers encouraged during training to carry spare clothing plus survival bag) (6) Session Leader / coach's appropriately qualified, experienced, first aid trained and 1st aid kit available. Rescue plans (including escape routes) made and discussed amongst coaches / Leaders. (7) If a paddler is displaying symptoms of hypothermia the paddler should be treated as a casualty. If possible apply dry clothes/hat/gloves etc., use tow lines to get the casualty ashore. (8) If necessary make a 'Mayday' or 'Pan Pan' VHF call for assistance.			L	Session Leader
Sea Kayaking (Rock hopping)	Collision with other paddlers/static objects (including fishing pots/buoys etc) leading to capsize/personal injuries.		M		(1) Helmet to be worn by all paddlers' whilst rock hopping. (2) All paddlers will have received sufficient information and training on capsize drill & wet exits during club training sessions. (3) Session Leader/coaches to keep the paddlers as a group. (4) Session Leader / coach's appropriately qualified, experienced, first aid trained and 1st aid kit available. Rescue plans (and escape routes) made and discussed amongst Session Leader & coaches.			L	Session Leader
Sea Kayaking close to shore	Entanglement with fishing lines possibly leading to cuts from hooks.			L	(1) The group to be aware that should anglers be seen on the shore a verbal warning is passed back alerting the group to a possible hazard. (2) If a fishing line/float is spotted in the water a verbal message should be passed between the group and pointing out the position and paddlers to take avoiding action. (3) If entanglement takes place Session Leader / coaches will take appropriate action, apply first aid if required and exchange any details required with the anglers involved.			L	Session Leader

ACTIVITY	HAZARD	H	M	L	CONTROL MEASURES	H	M	L	ACCOUNTABILITY
Sea Kayaking (General)	Wildlife encounter e.g. Swan attack or jelly fish sting leading to personal injuries.			L	(1) If swans (or other animals likely to attack) are seen Session Leader / coaches must direct the paddling group to give the swans (or animal) a wide berth and avoid disturbing them if possible. (2) Paddlers must be briefed to keep clear particularly if there are young swans/animals in the vicinity. (3) If jelly fish are spotted a verbal message should be passed amongst the group warning of the danger. Someone stung by a jellyfish should be treated as a casualty and brought to shore in case symptoms become severe and a 999 call is required.			L	Session Leader
Sea Kayaking (General)	Sea conditions/wind/ tidal streams, tide races and overfalls leading to group splitting up, lost paddler(s) and capsize.		M		(1) Session Leader to have studied the paddling area in particular any tidal streams, tide races, overfalls likely to be encountered. (2) Session Leader to assess ability of the group and change route if necessary. (3) Session register to be filled out by all paddlers before getting on the water. Float plan to be filled out by Session Leader. Detailed safety briefing to be given by the Session Leader before launching. Trip leader to regularly carry out a head count of the group. (4) If required i.e. a large group or poor visibility lead and rear paddlers should be nominated to control the spread of the group. (5) Session Leader to carry a compass and relevant maps / charts of the area. (6) In case of capsize & wet exit normal rescue drills to be conducted as per club training sessions.			L	Session Leader
Sea Kayaking (General)	Collision with shipping or other craft leading to personal injury/death.	H			(1) Session Leader, during their planning of the trip, must identify hazardous areas such as shipping lanes, port/harbour entrances. (2) Where possible the group should keep close in to shore. (3) If required to cross shipping lanes do so by the shortest and safest route taking into account the relative speed of other craft. (4) Trip leaders should observe racing lines of dinghy and yacht races and not cause an obstruction. (5) Trip leaders are to be aware of designated bathing areas and keep clear if possible or transit slowly keeping a watch for swimmers. (6) Avoid paddling into areas designated as “Water Skiing” or high speed craft, e.g. jet skis. (7) Session Leaders should have a knowledge of the Collision Regulations.			L	Session Leader
ACTIVITY	HAZARD	H	M	L	CONTROL MEASURES	H	M	L	ACCOUNTABILITY

Sea Kayaking (General)	Paddling in darkness (both planned/unplanned) possible collision with static objects/shipping leading to capsize/personal injuries/death.	H			(1) All paddlers are encouraged to carry white lights/head torches/cylumes (light sticks). (2) If there are paddlers without lights they must be placed within the centre of the group. (3) If possible the group should move and paddle close inshore to avoid the possibility of collision with larger craft/shipping. (4) If shipping lanes need to be crossed this should be at right angles and the group should move as quickly as possible. (5) If necessary a VHF call to the Coastguard can be made.			L	Session Leader
Sea Kayaking (General)	Paddling in restricted visibility e.g. fog, torrential rain leading to lost paddler(s), collision with other vessels/capsize/ personal injuries/death.	H			(1) Session Leader to get all paddlers into a tight group and conduct a headcount. (2) Use compass/float plan/map or chart to get a bearing to nearest safe coastline. (3) In fog the group should paddle to shallow water/coastline for safety to reduce risk of collision with other vessels. (4) In fog the group should remain quiet and listen/be vigilant for other water borne craft. If risk of collision is imminent use whistles to indicate position. (5) In the event of a collision and injuries are sustained a 'Mayday' or 'Pan Pan' VHF call should be made seeking assistance.			L	Session Leader

Dynamic Risk Assessment

The dynamic risk assessment is the final link in this risk assessment process, it takes place within circumstances that are unforeseeable and / or are changing constantly (e.g. a white water river). It is this final assessment which we rely upon to allow us to carry on our paddling activities safely, and to make carefully considered judgements. The dynamic approach is a continuous thought process.

Prior to launching, gather information, evaluate situations and then apply your judgement to decide the most appropriate course of action. Hazards must be identified continuously and the risk to all concerned considered throughout the trip.

Front Cover PPCA Sea Kayak Dynamic Risk Assessment

PPCA Sea Kayak **Dynamic Risk Assessment Aide Memoire**
Only discuss the pertinent & relevant points (**or use question & answer technique, involve the group!**)
1. Everyone signed the session register / headcount. 2. Any personal health issues? 3. Weather? Temperature (including water)? Tide times? Sunset? 4. Warm up / Stretch / Everyone correctly dressed? Food? Drink? Survival bags? 5. Safety kit carried e.g. 1st aid kit? Tow lines? Mobile phone / Comms? Survival bags? Spare paddles? 6. Actions on capsize? 7. Actions on injuries? 8. Actions on bad weather/strong tidal flow etc? 9. Any specific navigation challenges? 10. Any Questions?

Rear Cover PPCA Sea Kayak Dynamic Risk Assessment

PPCA Sea Kayak **Dynamic Risk Assessment Aide Memoire**
PPCA
For use by all Session Leaders, Coaches & Helpers on PPCA Sea Kayak paddles.