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

# Risk Assessment: White Water Kayaking

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **RA Activity Details:** | White Water Kayaking | **RA Reference No:** | PPCA 003 | | | **Date of RA:** | Feb 2024 | | |
| **Area:** | Local Rivers (e.g. Dart) | **Pre-Control Risk Score:** | Medium | | | **RA Review Date:** | Feb 2025 | | |
| **Guidance Documents Referenced:** | (1) Canoe England Safety Guidelines for Paddlers, Clubs and Volunteers<br>(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 white water kayaking risk assessment 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 white water 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 white water 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'.
- 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 of the area and be able to give a 6 fig grid 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 river conditions are suitable for the intended group, e.g. intermediate or beginners. 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 ~~his~~ 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 PPCA ~~i~~Incident R~~r~~eport F~~f~~orm ~~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.

**Commented [AC1]:** PUK reference?

**Commented [AC2]:** Need to check this with WWLs (Pete, Julian and Clive)

**Commented [AC3]:** Link

| 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 kayaks from the Mountbatten Storage sheds to vehicles | (1) Muscle strain/injury to the person(s) moving the kayak to kayak weight/shape.<br>(2) Collision with other members/members of the public/other users of Mountbatten club causing personal injuries.<br>(3) Collision with vehicle/trailer causing personal injuries.<br>(4) Personal injury due to kayaks/equipment toppling over within the sheds. | | M | | (1) Manual handling technique's/lifting etiquette taught from first club kayak lesson. Boats to be moved around by 2 people if required. Consideration of environmental conditions, e.g. wind whilst carrying kayaks. Adults/coaches to supervise young/vulnerable persons.<br>(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.<br>(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.<br>(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 | Kayak not secured correctly to the vehicle causing a danger to other road users | H | | | (1) Members shown how to stow kayaks on a vehicle roof using appropriate roof bars and straps during training sessions.<br>(2) Ropes and straps can work loose. Stop regularly to check them.<br>(3) The driver of the vehicle should satisfy himself that the kayak(s) are secure before driving away. | | | L | Vehicle Driver |

**Commented [AC4]:** Standardise to the sea kayaking RA

**Commented [AC5]:** Standardise to the sea kayaking RA

| ACTIVITY | HAZARD | H | M | L | CONTROL MEASURES | H | M | L | ACCOUNTABILITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Moving club/private kayaks from vehicles to the river bank/river entry area. | (1) Muscle strain/injury to the person(s) moving the kayak to kayak weight/shape.<br>(2) Slips and trips due to uneven and slippery ground. | | M | | (1) Manual handling techniques/lifting etiquette taught from first club kayak lesson. Boats to be moved around by 2 people if required. Consideration of environmental conditions, e.g. wind whilst carrying kayaks. Adults/coaches to supervise young/vulnerable persons.<br>(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.<br>(3) Members to be reminded adequate footwear is required. | | | L | Individual Paddler |
| Group control before launching. | (1) Slips and falls causing personal injury.<br><br>(2) Drowning. | | M | | (1) No one to enter their kayak until club coach is satisfied everyone has signed onto the session register and a head count has been taken.<br>(2) All persons must be wearing a buoyancy aid and helmet anywhere near the water/river.<br>(3) No one to enter their kayak until a trip brief has been given by the Session Leader (or his nominated representative). This brief will include details from the dynamic risk assessment factoring in such details as weather, water flow rates, water temperature, hazards and any other details which have significantly altered causing any changes to the plan. | | | L | Session Leader |
| Kayaking the river | Contaminated water leading to Illness / infection e.g. Leptospirosis | | M | | Members advised to cover cuts and abrasions before session. Coach, 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 |

| ACTIVITY | HAZARD | H | M | L | CONTROL MEASURES | H | M | L | ACCOUNTABILITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kayaking down the river | Capsizing leading to drowning or personal injuries. | H | | | (1) Buoyancy aids must be worn and be of suitable size. Kayak will be suitable for the paddler, in good condition and with buoyancy bags fitted. Helmets to be worn by all paddlers. Spray deck is the right size for the kayak, grab loop in good condition.<br>(2) Groups will be split between beginners, intermediate etc. Beginners are to have sufficient coaches/helpers. Beginners will have received sufficient information on capsize drill/what to do in an emergency.<br>(3) 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 |
| Kayaking down the river | Capsizing causing hypothermia from cold immersion and/or exposure which could result in death, collapse or other symptoms. | H | | | (1) Paddlers briefed start of the season regarding suitable clothing (plus survival bags) for white water kayaking.<br>(2) Beginners clothing should be checked for suitability by Session Leader / coach's prior to paddling.<br>(3) Beginners will have received sufficient information on capsize drill/what to do in an emergency.<br>(4) 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. | | | L | Session Leader |
| Kayaking down the river | Capsize resulting in head injuries or other personal injuries. | H | | | (1) Helmet to be worn by all paddlers whist on the water.<br>(2) Session Leader / coaches appropriately qualified, experienced, 1st aid trained and 1st aid kit available. Rescue plans (including escape routes) made and discussed amongst coaches / leaders. | | | L | Session Leader |
| Kayaking down the river | Collision with other paddlers/static objects leading to capsize/personal injuries. | | M | | (1) Helmet to be worn by all paddlers whilst on the water.<br>(2) Beginners will have received sufficient information on capsize drill/what to do in an emergency.<br>(3) Session Leader / coaches 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 |

| ACTIVITY | HAZARD | H | M | L | CONTROL MEASURES | H | M | L | ACCOUNTABILITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kayaking down the river | Entanglement with fishing lines possibly leading to cuts from hooks. | | | L | (1) The group to be aware that should anglers be seen on the river bank a verbal warning is passed back alerting the group to a possible hazard.<br>(2) If a fishing line is spotted in the water a verbal message should be passed to the group of the position and paddlers take avoiding action. Techniques for avoiding problems (such as edging and leaning) should be demonstrated in preparation.<br>(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. A~~n~~ PPCA Incident Report Form ~~'Accident Report'~~ will be completed, as detailed in the Club Operating ~~Policy and the Club Leader informed when possible (if required).~~ | | | L | Session Leader |
| Kayaking down the river | Wildlife e.g. Swan attack | | | 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.<br>(2) Paddlers must be briefed to keep clear particularly if there are young swans/animals in the vicinity. | | | L | Session Leader |
| Kayaking down the river | Entrapment in rocks or trees leading to drowning / personal injuries. | | M | | (1) Session Leader / coaches should be aware and alert for the danger of entrapment in rocks and trees and have the practical skills and experience to avoid such hazards and enable a safe rescue should it become necessary.<br>(2) Where conditions and situations may have changed (fallen trees etc.), the Session Leader / coach should take steps to ensure that all rapids are safe. This may require the scouting of rapids from the banks in advance.<br>(3) Attendance on a 'white water safety and rescue' course is required for session leaders / coaches and all regular club white water paddlers are encouraged to attend one. | | | L | Session Leader |

**Commented [AC6]:** Link

| ACTIVITY | HAZARD | H | M | L | CONTROL MEASURES | H | M | L | ACCOUNTABILITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kayaking down the river | Rapids (unknown), river conditions unknown / uncertain | | M | | (1) Session Leader / coaches to hold the group in a safe location whilst they assess the situation/conditions.<br>(2) If there is doubt safety cover should be deployed e.g. experienced paddlers at strategic points, rescue throw lines made ready.<br>(3) The weakest paddlers in a group may be asked to 'portage' a rapid for their own safety and confidence. At any time, members of the group should be given the opportunity to 'portage' rapids that they feel uncomfortable about paddling. | | | L | Session Leader |
| Kayaking down the river | Environmental conditions leading to hypothermia, heat stroke and other personal injuries. | | M | | (1) Session Leader / coaches to constantly monitor environmental conditions as part of their ongoing assessment during the paddle.<br>(2) All paddlers should bring their own sunscreen and water bottle.<br>(3) All paddlers are briefed to bring food & drink for the trip. | | | L | Session Leader |
| Kayaking down the river | Locks / Weirs /Stoppers / Holes leading to entrapment, capsize, drowning or personal injury. | H | | | (1) Session Leader / coaches to hold the group in a safe location whilst they assess the situation/conditions.<br>(2) If there is doubt safety cover should be deployed e.g. experienced paddlers at strategic points, rescue throw lines made ready.<br>(3) The weakest paddlers in a group may be asked to 'portage' a rapid for their own safety and confidence. At any time, members of the group should be given the opportunity to 'portage' rapids that they feel uncomfortable about paddling. | | | L | Session Leader |
| Kayaking down the river | Shoulder and upper limb injuries | | | L | (1) Helmet to be worn by all paddlers' whilst on the water.<br>(2) Beginners will have received sufficient information on capsize drill/what to do in an emergency.<br>(3) 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 |

**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 White Water Dynamic Risk Assessment** **Rear Cover PPCA White Water Dynamic Risk Assessment**

Commented [AC7]: See my comments on this elsewhere. Possibly ask WWLs for their briefing abcs

| **PPCA White Water Kayaking Dynamic Risk Assessment Aide Memoire** |
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| Only discuss the pertinent & relevant points (**or use question & answer technique, involve the group!**) |
| 1. Everyone signed the session register / headcount.<br><br>2. Any personal health issues?<br><br>3. Weather? Water levels / flow / temperature?<br><br>4. Warm up / Stretch / Everyone correctly dressed? Food? Drink? Survival bags?<br><br>5. Care on the river bank, BS + helmet to be worn.<br><br>6. Safety kit carried e.g. 1st aid kit? Throw lines? Mobile phone / Comms? Survival bags? Spare paddles?<br><br>7. Actions on capsize?<br><br>8. Actions on injuries?<br><br>9. Actions on rapids / obstacles etc?<br><br>10. Any Questions? |

**PPCA White Water Kayaking Dynamic Risk Assessment Aide Memoire**




For use by all Session Leaders, Coaches & Helpers on PPCA White Water River paddles.