

## CANOE ADVENTURES: SMALL CRAFT SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT

### Risk Assessments by Activity:

1. Generic across all paddle craft, Page 1.
2. Paddleboard Specific, in addition to generic operational risk assessment. Page 4.
3. Canoe Specific, in addition to generic operational risk assessment. Page 5.

<b>Activity:</b>	<b>All Small Craft Paddle activities</b>				<b>Compiled by:</b>	Hal Gillmore, Director	
<b>Staff Qualifications:</b>	<b>Lead staff:</b> Boatman's License issued by Dart Harbour Authority, and Paddlesport Leader Award or equivalent/above. <b>To lead water-based activities in support role to Lead Staff:</b> Paddlesport Leader Award or equivalent/above.				<b>Date completed:</b>	01/05/26	
<b>Staff levels:</b>	<b>Shore or safety boat staff:</b> At least one. <b>To lead paddle activities:</b> 1:6, 1:8 Max 1:12, depending on activity. See activity specific risk assessments below.				<b>Date of Review:</b>	Ongoing dynamic, reviewed annually, checked by DHA	
<b>Location:</b>	River Dart Estuary between Tonnes weir and Dartmouth Castle. Operated mainly from shore between Stoke Gabriel, Tuckenhay and Sharpham.						
<b>STEP 1</b>	<b>STEP 2</b>	<b>STEP 3</b>	<b>STEP 4</b>	<b>STEP 5</b>			
List potential Hazards here:	List groups of people at risk from hazards. Including those most vulnerable:	List existing control measures or note where information may be found:	Calculate the residual risk taking the presence and effectiveness of existing measures into account: Severity x Likelihood = Risk Rating	List further control measures necessary to reduce risk to an acceptable level and date of their proposed introduction:			
Tidal influences – strong currents, standing waves, getting stuck	All group members	Activities planned in advance around tide timetables. Water flow in river constantly monitored in times of heavy rain. Full briefing given before and supervision during activity.	2	1	2	Lead staff to make their own checks and check-in with company director beforehand	

Note – Risk Ratings of 4 or more are significant and require further action to control risk

**Severity:** **1=Slight** (all injuries not defined as major or serious); **2=Serious** (injuries that are not major but are likely to prevent someone working normally for more than 3 days); **3=Major** (death or major injury e.g. fracture of a bone, amputation, serious damage to an eye etc)

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Wind effect – overpowering paddlers-getting stuck. Exhaustion. Wind chill.	All group members	Beware of wind influence and its effect on the group and ability. To consider combined effect of wind, tide and temperatures on enforcing limit. Wind limit IRO 15-20mph, depending on craft (SUP<canoe<kayak) & other factors (tide, group skill level).	2	1	2	Lead staff to make their own checks and check-in with company director beforehand and observe over the day.
Drowning	All group members	Briefing details necessary action to take in case of capsized or MOB. Buoyancy aids sized for each paddler and shown how to wear at all times whilst on the water. To check in advance swimming competence of individuals.	3	1	3	Lead staff to ensure each customer is fitted with correct BA and equipment before going afloat.
Other water users – collisions, swamping, reputation of company and the sport of canoeing	All group members	Busy during Summer period with ferries, occasional swimmers/paddle boarders. Full briefing given. Vigilant observation of other water users and wash effect.	2	2	4	Lead staff has VHF to communicate with other vessels on ch16, DHA ch11.
Rocks, fixed obstacles & underwater obstructions – capsized, damage to essential equipment, getting stuck.  SUPs specific attention to moorings & pontoons.	All group members	Briefing carried out and appropriate supervision & control measures conducted by staff  SUPs specifically: The use of leash significantly increases the risk presented by fixed obstacles in the water, such as moorings, buoys and pontoons. Quick release belts provided for solo users. Clear briefing and close supervision when paddling near such hazards in areas of strong tidal flow, eg approach to SG Mill Creek. No landing on Mill point pontoon except at slack water HW.	2	1	2	Lead skipper ensures local knowledge of known hazards are passed on to new, freelance staff.
Mud banks – landing on soft mud, getting stuck.	All group members	Safe passages to be adopted by all staff and good group management. Staff to practise rescue using throw line	1	2	2	Lead skipper ensures local knowledge of known hazards are passed on to new, freelance

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		and single kayak as secure base to rescue from.				staff.
Under 18s 1. To ensure stamina and strength of crew 2. To ensure safeguarding policy	All staff, All Group members	Appropriate ratio of adults to youngsters agreed in advance of outing. Tow lines on craft so they can tow each other.				Information provided on booking and full briefing given before hire. Assessment of crew on arrival.
Oyster shells; cutting feet (and hands and dry bags!)	All Group members	Footwear to be worn on low tide landings where risk is known, especially swimming or paddling.	1	3	3	Ask customers to report any incidences, and share this information with all staff so they can update their customer brief.
Raft Building activity	All group members	Additional considerations for working on shore, and the quality of 'self-built' craft. Staff to agree with each other and check conditions (tidal, wind, river traffic) if they are to permit craft to 'fall apart' on the water.				See additional, site specific risk assessment
Water Pollution from unsafe levels of faecal contamination, leading to risk of illness	Anyone swimming, particularly submerged.	Keeping up to date and monitoring local conditions. Visual check every day of operating and monitoring of outflow status reports, especially during or after heavy rainfall. Swimming at high tide only and after at least two complete tidal cycles following heavy rain, in areas of known (recent) historical issues. SG Mill Creek and up stream. (Gurrow and 'Facing Beach' OK at low tide.) No swimming in Totnes. Swimming in shallow zone, chest and shoulders, ie depth to which UV light penetrates and kills harmful bacteria. Washing hands and face if submerged or exposed to water for long periods.	1	1	1	New information shared with staff by email and in discussion when setting up trips. Keeping up to date with reports in water quality changes and seeking external advice.

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<p><b>2. Activity:</b></p>	<p><b>Paddleboard Specific, in addition to generic operational risk assessment.</b></p>	<p><b>Compiled by:</b></p>	<p>Hal Gillmore, Director</p>
<p><b>Staff Qualifications:</b></p>	<p><b>To lead guided trips:</b> Paddlesport Leader Award or equivalent  <b>To lead coaching sessions:</b> Paddlesport Leader Award or equivalent + Coaching qualification.                      Aspirational benchmark: SUP Adventure Guide, Water Skills Academy, or equivalent. (Max 2 knots tide, force 3 winds, 2 km between access/exit points). To monitor how other 'national bodies' develop their qualifications.</p>	<p><b>Date completed:</b></p>	<p>01/05/26</p>
<p><b>Staff levels:</b></p>	<p><b>To lead guided trips:</b> 1:6. Less if total beginners; ideally 1:2  <b>To lead coaching sessions:</b> 1:6</p>	<p><b>Date of Review:</b></p>	<p>01/05/26</p>
<p><b>Additional considerations:</b></p>	<p>As per generic operational risk assessment except risk is greater for paddleboards than kayaks and conditions considered accordingly:                      - Total beginners over high tide only during spring tides; so there is minimal tidal flow and negligible mud, rocks and submerged hazards                      - The use of leash significantly increases the risk presented by fixed obstacles in the water, such as moorings, buoys and pontoons. Quick release belts provided.                      Greater exposure to wind and wind chill + harder to tow home from other craft                      - Lower wind speed limit than kayaks; force 3; &lt;12mph approx. depending on other factors.                      - Older lower age limit: advised 10 or 11 years old, depending on size, experience &amp; conditions.</p>		

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<b>3. Activity:</b>	<b>Canoe Specific, in addition to generic operational risk assessment.</b>	<b>Compiled by:</b>	Hal Gillmore, Director
<b>Staff Qualifications:</b>	To lead guided trips: Paddlesport Leader Award or equivalent	<b>Date completed:</b>	01/05/26
<b>Staff levels:</b>	To lead guided trips: 1:8, no more than 4 separate canoes	<b>Date of Review:</b>	01/05/26
<b>Additional considerations:</b>	As per generic operational risk assessment except where risk is greater and more more specific to canoes, particularly in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- becoming overpowered by wind and tide,</li> <li>- how a fleet can get spread out quicker than other paddle craft,</li> <li>- the significantly higher skill level required to self-rescue.</li> </ul> Conditions considered accordingly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establish skill level of participants in advance of session</li> <li>- Extra time factored for briefing.</li> <li>- ensure competent handling of craft before leaving creek and entering main river channel</li> </ul>		

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