

Risk Assessment: kayaking and canoeing on the Thames in Abingdon and local waters (generic flat water)

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Hazard	Who might be harmed	Probability (1,2 or 3)	Severity (A, B or C)	How is risk Controlled	Action by Whom	Special Circumstance Control	Residual Risk
Water levels - high water, flood water	coaches, helpers and students	3	A	Assess water levels before getting on water. Assess paddling ability of group.	BCU qualified coaches	Abandon session if water levels not suitable.	NIL
Water Quality - pollution, bacteria, litter, effluent and harmful solids	coaches, helpers and students	3	B	Weil's Disease Notes. Open cuts and sores covered. Post activity shower. Suitable clothing and footwear. Pre and post activity briefing. Notes on Weils disease. Hygiene control when eating and drinking on the water.	BCU qualified coaches, helpers, and students	Dynamic, visual review of area worked. Minimise immersion time if water conditions suspect. Watch for syringes in public areas.	acceptable
Other water users - launching, landing, visibility, organised events, rowing and sailing boats, holiday traffic, fishermen	coaches, helpers and students	2	B	Pre activity briefing. Considered choice of suitable areas to work. Appropriate ratio of students to staff. Visual and dynamic review of area worked. Be particularly aware of river traffic using rowing club next door to canoe club HQ.	coaches assisted by feedback from students and other helpers	Avoid busy stretches and locations. Follow accepted river practice: keep to 'right' side of the river; give way to other users.	acceptable
Site river access	coaches, helpers and students	3	C	Pre launch briefing as to hazards relating to slipway, pontoon and moored boat(s) Pontoon slippery in certain conditions. Boats blocking slipway.	Coaches and volunteers	Coaches and volunteers to supervise paddlers on to and off water. Coaches and volunteers only to move moored boats to provide river access if deemed appropriate. Pontoon to be used for general river access, providing not deemed too slippery. Use rowing club pontoon if necessary, which does not get slippery.	acceptable

Vehicles	coaches, helpers and students	3	B	Awareness of vehicles on and near the site.	Coaches, volunteers, students and others	Coaches and volunteers to supervise students when vehicles are present. Extra vigilance with moving vehicles.	acceptable
Water Obstructions - trees, wild life, poor bank conditions, underwater obstructions e.g. trolleys, bicycles	coaches, helpers and students	3	B/C	Pre activity brief and choice of areas worked. Avoid working in inappropriate areas. Helmets to be worn at all times.	coaches assisted by feedback from students and other helpers	Visual and dynamic review of area worked. Be aware of swans and nesting birds in the spring.	acceptable
Equipment Failure	coaches, helpers and students	3	B	Pre season equipment audit and regular physical check. Embargo damaged items. Check all gear as issued to students. Ensure equipment is suitable for purpose and is worn correctly.	BCU qualified coaches, helpers and students	Review suitability of equipment to be used for individual students	acceptable
Medical conditions - pre diagnosed, issues arising on water, injuries sustained whilst taking part in activity	coaches, helpers and students	3	B	Coach holds appropriate first aid and BCU qualifications. Coach has appropriate experience. Ability and experience of group is considered when planning activity. Equipment is CE marked and checked. PFD and helmets are worn on and near the water. All boats have suitable fixed buoyancy. Activities undertaken are consistent with water and weather conditions. First aid kit carried at all times. Consent/medical forms completed by parents/guardians of all students under 18.	BCU qualified coaches, helpers and students	Coach to be made aware of pre existing medical conditions at start of activity. Review suitability of proposed activity. Capsize drill undertaken, under controlled conditions, as soon as appropriate to minimise distress from capsizing. Mobile phone to be carried on river journeys to raise help if necessary.	acceptable

Head Injury - underwater obstacles, paddle blades	coaches, helpers and students	3	B	Protective helmets to be worn during all river based activities - on water and bank. First aid kit to be carried at all times.	BCU qualified coaches, helpers and students	Helmets must be worn during warming up exercises that involve paddles.	acceptable
Drowning	coaches, helpers and students	3	A	Pre activity brief. Careful consideration given to paddling area. CE marked and checked PFD to be worn at all times on and near the water. Vigilance to be maintained by coaches, helpers and students. Capsize drill undertaken, under controlled conditions, as soon as appropriate to minimise distress from capsizing.	BCU qualified coaches, helpers and students	Ensure that students do not remove PFD under any circumstance when on or near water. Throw line to be carried at all times by coach.	acceptable
Exposure to weather - Hypo / hyper thermia, dehydration	coaches, helpers and students	3	B	Pre activity brief on suitable clothing and footwear. Choice of areas worked. Control of activities undertaken. Clothing to include appropriate wind and sun protection. Change of clothes. Coach to outline importance of drinking water. Students to carry own drinks.	BCU qualified coaches, helpers and students	Weather forecast and vigilance by coaches. Coach to carry spare clothing and drinks, sun screen. Helmets will protect heads from sun.	acceptable
Lifting and carrying	coaches, helpers and students	2	B	Manual handling briefing by qualified BCU coaches. Correct technique for lifting and carrying demonstrated. Good practice displayed by coaches and helpers. Inform students of importance of working together/team work.	BCU qualified coaches, helpers and students	Smaller and less able paddlers to be given extra help with manual handling.	acceptable
Local weirs - Abingdon weir, Sutton Courtney weir, Ock weir, 2 weirs down Swift Ditch.	coaches, helpers and students	3	B	Assess suitability of weir / moving water to practise moving water skills. Assess suitability of weirs in relation to skill of individual paddlers.	BCU qualified coaches, helpers and students	Throw line to be carried by coach at all times. Briefing on the dangers of weir and different types of weirs.	acceptable

Disabilities - hearing, sight, mobility, medical, concentration.	coaches, helpers and students	2	B	Coaches to follow BCU guidelines on good practice. Specific and suitable training and experience by all coaches and helpers involved. Clear and full information from students and helpers. Suitable choice of craft, location and programme	BCU qualified coaches, helpers and students	Prior briefing to all involved. Coach to student ratio reduced. Use of buddy system.	acceptable

Risk Rating

Risks need to be assessed to ensure that harm is avoided and that in the event of a incident, swift, effective and appropriate action is taken to minimise consequences. The formula below is intended to indicate the scale of risk. Risk is based on the severity of harm or consequences and the likelihood or probability of the hazard causing harm.

Likelihood/probability

1 = can occur

2 = infrequent

3 = rare

Severity/consequence

A = death / major injury / major damage or loss to property or equipment.

B = over 3 day injury / damage to property or equipment

C = minor injury / minor damage to property or equipment

Using the risk rating formula to estimate the risk

(i) Assign a number from 1 to 3 to denote the likelihood of the event causing the hazard to be realised

(ii) Assign a letter from A to C to denote the severity of harm or consequences of the hazard

(iii) Look up the combination in the risk rating chart and link it to the action criteria

Risk Rating Scale

	A (serious)	B (harmful)	C (minor)
1 (often)	A1	B1	C1
2 (infrequent)	A2	B2	C2
3 (rare)	A3	B3	C3

A1 Unacceptable. Must receive immediate attention to remove or reduce risk.

A2/B1 Urgent: must receive attention as soon as possible to reduce hazard or risk

A3/C1 Attention required to verify if hazard (A) or risk (1) can be reduced. Check if satisfactory systems are in place

B2 Check if hazard or risk can be reduced and that satisfactory procedures are in place and followed.

B3/C2 acceptable. Review from time to time

C3 acceptable

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