



Risk Assessment

Introduction

Purpose

This risk assessment examines the dangers inherent in the activities carried out by Kayak Northumbria. 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. These have been used as the basis of the Club's safety policy. 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 moving water, indeed it could be argued that the ability to carry out dynamic risk assessment is the basis of effective river leadership.

Using This Document

The risk assessment is split into two discrete sections: placid water (which includes polo and swimming pool activity) and moving water (artificial courses and wild rivers). 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 assessment 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 nominated Trip Co-Ordinator. As a minimum the risk assessment should be reviewed:

- After the Annual General Meeting by the new Committee
- After any accident or 'near miss'
- When any member identifies a significant hazard not already mentioned in the document

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

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.



Risk Assessment: Placid Water

Swimming Pools

Hazard	Risks	Control Measures	Probability
Water	Drowning	Ensure participants can swim. Teach capsize drill. Lifeguard on duty at all sessions. Experienced paddlers often observing.	L
Equipment	Entrapment in boat on capsize	Teach capsize drill and rolling. Boats are easy to exit. Appropriate supervision and wear appropriate footwear	L
Slippery Floors	Falling injuries	Obey pool rules. Do not run.	L
Other Paddlers	Impact Injuries	Space paddlers out, no swimming	L

Placid Water

As for swimming pools, with the following extra hazards:

Hazard	Risks	Control Measures	Probability
Other water users	Collision	Watch out for other craft. Move out of the way of all other water users	M
Locks / Weirs	Getting caught in deep recirculating hydraulics	Avoid locks. An experienced person should inspect weir hydraulics before paddling into them. Use appropriate white water equipment	M
Rubbish	Cuts, other injuries	Avoid. Keep first aid kit in boats. Encourage appropriate footwear	L



Weather	Hypothermia, Immersion Hypothermia	Dress appropriately for conditions. Group members monitor themselves and others in cold conditions	L
Cold water	Hypothermia, Immersion Hypothermia	Dress appropriately for conditions. Group members monitor themselves and others in cold conditions	L
Heavy Boats	Manual Handling Injuries	Teach and use correct lifting and rescue techniques	L
Water	Contracting Illness	Do not ingest water. Shower after paddling	L
Overexertion	Muscular injury	Warm up. Teach correct movement. Consider group members when planning length of trip	L
Riverbank	Injuries due to slips and falls	Encourage appropriate footwear. Advise paddlers to take care. Maintain site	L

Risk Assessment: Moving Water

The following risk assessment covers typical paddling trips on wild rivers in the UK and abroad. The hazards present and their severity will vary depending on the river. This risk assessment is relevant to paddling on artificial courses, but see the notes below the table.

Hazard	Risks	Control Measures	Probability
Travel	Car accidents	Follow Highway code. Do not drive when tired	L
	Roof rack problems	Train members to secure boats (2* training). Check roof racks before travel	M
Long Days	Exhaustion	Adjust trip length to suit participants. Carry food	L
	Hypothermia	Dress correctly for conditions. Carry hot drinks, spare clothing, group shelter and/or exposure	M



		bags	
	Hyperthermia	Carry cold drinks on hot days. Don't over-dress	L
Water	Accelerated/ Immersion Hypothermia	Rescue swimmers fast. Teach rolling	M
	Drowning	Require that all members are competent swimmers. Instruct on capsize drill, rolling and swimming in moving water. Teach rescue techniques. Carry appropriate rescue equipment	L
	Waterborne diseases	Try not to ingest water. Take further precautions when there is a known problem	L
	Stoppers and other river features etc	Avoid by good leadership and paddling. Teach methods for paddling through and in stoppers. Paddlers should know about swimming in and rescue from stoppers	M
Rocks	Knocked Unconscious	Wear helmet. Adopt correct position when capsized and when swimming	L
	Injury	Wear helmet and buoyancy aid. Avoid rocks by use of good technique. Carry first aid kit	M
	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	M
	Entrapment	Use correct technique when swimming	L
Trees	Caught in strainer	Avoid trees in river by good leadership. Knowledge of swimming techniques	L
Equipment	Entrapment in boat	Inspect equipment. Teach Capsize drill. Keep area between legs clear	L
	Breakage	Inspect equipment and use appropriate equipment for conditions. Carry splits	H
	Entanglement in rescue equipment	Learn how to use throwlines and chest harnesses properly. Carry knife	M



	Manual Handling Injuries	Teach good technique 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
	Falling into river	Wear helmet and buoyancy aid at all times. Wear appropriate footwear. Take care	L

Artificial courses will not have the same problems relating to long days, nor will the objective hazards (rocks, trees, stoppers etc.) be as severe. It is for this reason that artificial courses are useful sites for training, particularly for less experienced paddlers. However, the leaders of less experienced groups on these sites must be aware that the control measures based on individual skills may be unworkable and balance this against the lower objective danger. In addition, the artificial sites used have site specific risks, listed below.

Site	Risks	Control Measures	Probability
Tees Barrage	Collision with rafts	Ensure all participants are aware that rafts are active on the course. Teach everyone to look upstream before making any manoeuvres into the mail flow.	L
	Collision with Rapid Blocs	Teach people to avoid obstacles and actively paddle (2* training)	M
	Contracting waterborne illness	Brief paddlers. Wash before eating. Do not ingest water.	L