



Standard Operating Procedures

Kayak Northumbria is an active and friendly local club for the North East which gives new and inexperienced paddlers the opportunity to learn to kayak, and provides competent paddlers with the opportunity to enhance and develop their own skills. As Kayaking/Canoeing can involve risks if not run responsibly, the club has a clear procedure for all paddlers to follow to ensure that the foreseeable risks are minimised in line with Canoe England standards.

The club's ordinary schedule is as follows:

- Pool sessions are held at Outer West Denton Leisure Centre on a weekly basis in evenings during term time. General skills are taught, learnt and practiced in preparation for outdoor trips
- River trips, ranging from introduction to white water to more advanced trips, which occur every couple of weeks
- Advanced white water paddles, run as a group of equal peers, with access by invitation to people with sufficient skill levels
- Trips abroad, for example to the French Alps, where a standard of paddling is specified and checked before access is agreed
- Training courses and providers will be suggested to all members throughout the year

Club Responsibilities

The club will produce and have approved by committee a set of Risk Assessments for activities it organizes and promotes. These general assessments will need any site specific additions, which may not be written but made at the scene (e.g. rising water levels).

Personal Equipment

The club will provide each member, if required, with equipment conforming to Canoe England standards. This equipment shall be as follows:

- A buoyancy aid of correct size and capacity for the paddler
- A helmet that fits securely with adequate fastening
- A spray deck of sufficient size and fit for the boat being paddled
- A kayak or canoe of suitable shape, model and maintenance. The kayak shall be suitable for the person and the river grade being paddled
- Correct handed paddles
- Wetsuit to fit, as available
- Waterproof Cag to fit, as available

Safety Equipment will also be carried by river leaders:

- First Aid equipment
- Split paddles
- Throw lines of suitable length and number for the activity. Throw lines are carried by those people who are trained in their use and know how to use river knives
- Group shelter
- Mobile phone



Club equipment shall be marked as Kayak Northumbria property. Equipment is monitored and maintained by the Kit Officer, who will keep records of the maintenance carried out electronically. The equipment is formally inspected on a regular basis (annually or sooner) and an inventory is kept, detailing the age, condition and value of every piece of equipment.

Any personal equipment that is used is the owner's responsibility and the owner should ensure that it conforms to the necessary standards for the activity being undertaken. The person organising the activity may however prevent an item of equipment being used if they feel that is unsuitable for the activity being undertaken. The club assumes no responsibility for any personal equipment used.

Transport

Personal cars are used to transport members and equipment, the following good practice should be in place:

- Ensure each person wears a seat belt
- Park considerately
- Ensure the correct MOT, tax and insurance is in place
- It is the driver's responsibility to check the kayaks are properly secured onto roof bars before every journey

Personal Responsibilities

Whilst the club aims to cover the majority of safety aspects for the members, responsibility for personal behaviour ultimately rests with individual club members. These responsibilities are:

- Read and understand the club's Standard Operating Procedures, which are to be freely available on the website
- Declare on the membership form any medical conditions or allergies
- Be able to swim at least 50 metres in light clothing
- Always pay attention to and adhere to the advice and instructions of the club member leading the activity
- Inform the trip/group leader of any medical conditions or injuries that could prove problematic during the course of the activity
- Always carry any necessary inhaler or other personal medication that may be required that is not kept in the first aid kit
- Not jeopardise the safety of others during club activities
- The decision to paddle always rests ultimately with the individual

On trips the club member shall:

- Have attended a minimum of one pool session
- Ensure that they wear a correctly fitting buoyancy aid and helmet as provided by the club where required
- Alert the trip leader to any possible problems with their equipment
- Inform the trip/group leader if they have any doubts about their ability/desire to participate further in the club activity
- Raise and discuss any safety concerns
- Only get on the water when and where instructed to do so



Normal Operating Procedures

Pool Sessions

If a paddler is new to the sport, they will be trained how to carry, launch and get into a kayak safely. They will be trained to capsize and exit the kayak safely, using a spray-deck, before using a paddle and doing any other skills training. This essential safety training will be done on a one to one basis with the trainer standing in the pool.

Administration of the session will be managed by the Secretary and Treasurer. Coaching will be delivered by qualified coaches and experienced paddlers.

River Trips

The annual river trips list can be found on the Kayak Northumbria website. All abilities will be catered for; all new members start by attending an introduction to white water, and then move on to more challenging trips dependent upon progression. Every effort will be made to help a paddler improve their paddling skills during every river trip. The club committee will monitor the progression of each paddler and make sure that a member does not participate in a river trip that will be too difficult.

Some rivers or site may not be chosen until local weather conditions are known due to the variance in water levels. If any changes to a schedule need to be made, all participants will be informed. Before any trip, participants will identify by online form what kit will be required; this kit will then be sorted by the kit officer.

Informal trips

Trips may be organized at short notice. These trips will be seen as peer trips, among a group of friends, without formal leadership. It is for individual paddlers to take responsibility for themselves, perhaps guided by more experienced paddlers in terms of equipment and skills. The issues to be considered are equipment, logistics, weather, tidal conditions, and food & drink.

Surfing

The same procedure applies to surfing trips as to river trips, but with the following differences. The organiser is responsible for checking the tide times, swell and period to ensure that the conditions are suitable. The club requires that all paddlers wear helmets and a buoyancy aid. All paddlers will have been briefed in surf etiquette before entering the water.

Landmarks should be noted and agreed as boundaries along the beach. This will help avoid people spreading out too much and will counter the effects of tidal drift. The group size should be limited by the numbers of competent paddlers to beginners on a ratio of one experienced to no more than two beginners. First aid equipment and a mobile phone should be easily available.

Emergency Operating Procedure

In the event of an incident or emergency the following procedure shall be adhered to:

Everyone

Participants should follow training given during any training they have received to the best of their ability given the situation. However, they have no responsibility to attempt rescues if it puts themselves or the group at risk. The safety paddlers are volunteers. They must always put their own safety and the safety of the group first and are never required to carry out a rescue if they do not feel safe or confident enough to. All club members have the right



to refuse to act as safety, to lead on rivers, or to carry rescue equipment should they not wish to. This should be an informed decision, as in some situations this may prevent others from being able to paddle.

River leaders

The river leaders have a responsibility to manage a rescue situation professionally and sensitively, as far as they are able to. Their own safety and that of the remaining group must be paramount. Safety training, for example White Water Safety and Rescue should be updated regularly to ensure best current practice. In the event of a serious incident, communication restrictions must be imposed to prevent false rumours, and under no circumstances must anyone talk to the media or general public until after consultation with the Canoe England, which provides Public Liability insurance to affiliate clubs and BCU members.

Incident Management

The trip leader (or most highly trained first aider) should take charge and delegate responsibilities. They should ensure that appropriate emergency services are contacted and head counts are taken. Communication restrictions should be imposed, an incident log written and Canoe England must be informed where a member has to be hospitalized. The incident log should include the time and date, nature, names and numbers of casualties and the condition of the casualties. If the incident takes place in a swimming pool, then the pool operators must be informed.