

Water Sports Risk Assessment

Activity: Canoeing Kayaking, Pedalos, Paddle Boarding, Raft building & Boat Hire (Open Lake)

What are the hazards?

- The water,
- Unauthorized use of equipment
- Hypothermia
- Other water users (anglers), including getting hooked by fishing lines.
- Glass, sharp objects underwater and on the ground around the activity base.
- Dropping equipment and being hit by equipment.
- Infection from cuts including Weil's disease.
- Unable to return to the bank due to fatigue or lack of skill.
- Manual handling

Who is at risk?

Staff, participants, and members of the public.

What are the risks?	Existing safety measures/controls	Likelihood	Risk Rating
<p>Hypothermia – most likely caused by falling into cold water.</p> <p>Drowning from capsize/overboard (on session)</p> <p>Non-swimmers using equipment outside sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good instructor awareness – understanding of water temperatures and seasonal closure of certain activities. • Buoyancy aids or life jackets worn on every session. • Qualified instructors (BC Paddle sport instructors or higher coaches) trained in rescues on every session. • Swimming ability section on medical form to be completed for all participants. • A radio and first aid kit available at the activity base for all sessions. • Emergency action plans in place including access to a Defibrillator. • A capsize / overboard brief is given to all participants at the start of every session. • First Aid trained instructors on each session. • Life rings positioned around the lake. • Danger signs erected. • All equipment is secured when not in use. • Boathouse unlocked during session. • Warm showers in boathouse • Participants are not encouraged to enter the water. 		
<p>Getting hooked or tangled in fishing lines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good instructor briefings and awareness • All anglers given lake rules prior to fishing. • Designated fishing and lake sports areas. • No over casting allowed. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake induction given to all new instructors as part of their training process. • Instructors carry knives on sessions. • Regular patrols by maintenance staff to clear anglers' lines and rubbish. 		
<p>Cuts – in particular injuries to feet.</p> <p>Potential later infection including Weil's disease.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footwear on all lake sessions is compulsory. Securely fitting, closed toed. • Good instructor briefing and instructor awareness. • All instructors are first aid trained. • All cuts cleaned and covered and first aid kit at activity base. • Participants warned of possible symptoms. • Participants advised to wash their hands immediately after sessions, particularly if they have been in water. • Participants not encouraged to enter the water. 		
<p>Twisted ankles and broken bones from trips slips and falls and from carrying or dropping equipment. Sprained muscles. Cuts and Bruises</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good instructor awareness and briefing. • No running around the activity base. • Participants shown how to carry and hold equipment correctly. • Encourage teamwork. • Group leaders to assist in-group control. • Participants are shown how to get into and out of boats properly and have their boats stabilized by a group member, leader or instructor if required. • Group leader to assist in seal launching participant's kayaks if required. • Seal launch procedures organised (i.e., one at a time and spaced out) • Instructor afloat before participants when appropriate. • All participants given a paddle and explained what to do if they capsize. • Games played on Paddleboards are appropriate for the group's age and weather conditions with full briefs being giving by instructors. 		
<p>Entrapment, being stuck under raft or boat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rafts tested for integrity and poor designs adjusted before being allowed on the water. • Instructors aware of poor designs rafts and will help in a rebuild/improve if necessary. • First Aid qualified staff on session. • Good instructor briefing and awareness. • Instructors to carry rescue knives on the water. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All group members advised of the safe methods to carry equipment, and when moving rafts all team members should help. Good instructor awareness and briefing. For Open Lake boundaries are set and the instructor is kitted up with a boat ready should they need to get onto the water. In event of capsize participants asked not to swim under boats and to shout 'Swimmer, Swimmer, Swimmer' to attract attention. Capsize/overboard brief given to all participants before going on the water. 		
Head injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only appropriate games for the group's age and ability levels will be played. The instructor will supervise games. Helmets must be worn by the instructor and participants on raft building. They are optional and at the instructor's discretion for kayaking, canoeing, pedalos & SUPs. Participants must kneel on SUPs when within a board's length of an edge, jetty, bank, or building. Good instructor briefing and monitoring on all sessions. For Open Lake boundaries are set and the instructor is kitted up with a boat ready should they need to get onto the water. 		
Vehicle related injuries from nearby drive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-operation in-group control by group leaders. Speed restrictions signs posted. Limited vehicle access Good instructor awareness of group and environment 		
Human error – groups not listening to briefings and not taking in vital information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full co-operation from leaders in group control and discipline. Instructor will ensure group understanding. 		
Injury due to poor manual handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant will not be involved in getting the pedalos off the water. Removing the Pedalos off the water will be supervised by a senior member of staff and use a vehicle to help. Staff receive annual update on manual handling. All instructors trained in rescue techniques with British Canoeing & Foundation Safety and Rescue award. Air bags/ blocks in Kayaks and Canoes to limit water/weight. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group encouraged to help each other and use the group leader where appropriate. 		
Language barriers with non-English speaking groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translators required and to be provided by group for non-English or limited English speakers. This is checked with group leaders before sessions along with general information / medical checks. 		
Injuries from faulty equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the infrequency of use the Pedalos will be inspected prior to use by a lake qualified person. All equipment visually inspected before issuing out. Regular safety checks of other equipment and PPE recorded and monitored on Papertrail. 		
Weils disease, Leptospirosis, biological contaminants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All cuts and abrasions have waterproof plasters prior to the session commencing. Any significant wound/opening to the body to be discussed with individual/group leader (senior staff to support if needed) to determine whether the risk of infection is acceptable. Groups told to wash hands and faces after the session and/or before eating/drinking. Group encouraged to shower following sessions especially if entered the water. Instructors to encourage staying on the boat/craft rather than entering the water. Information available on signs and symptoms. Instructors to be vigilant for signs of disease spreading (e.g., seeing rats) and report this to the Head of delivery and/or inform the Maintenance team. 		
Being hit by paddles / other craft when playing games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor will issue helmets if there is a high potential for impact. People on Paddle boards must be kneeling when within a board's length of any object. 		
Increased ratios in relation to governing bodies guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake used can be classified as below very sheltered water as defined by NGB as no change in water conditions (i.e., no gentle, slow moving currents) and due to sheltered nature of the lake a limited change in environment. 		

Reference to other manuals:

- British Canoeing Guidelines
- UK Youth Health and Safety policy

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