



Ardmore House

**PADDLESPORTS
RISK OVERVIEW**

Paddlesports

Aim and benefits of Activity

To introduce and/or develop skills in a range of water craft including: open canoeing (using a single bladed paddle), kayaking (using a double bladed paddle) or Stand Up Paddle Boarding, whether on lake, river or sea, depending on the age, experience and ability of students. Open canoes are designed for journeying and therefore the skills are often combined with camp-craft skills. Paddlesports present a fun experience and an environment where participants can build resilience through challenging themselves against the elements and overcoming adversity.

Hazards	Resulting harm	Who is at risk	Risk management measures
Cold water Deep water Rapids and waves Weirs Stoppers Rock ledges and obstructions Entrapment Swamping Manual handling Blowing offshore Other water users Student behaviour Water quality Flora and Fauna Traffic	Broken bones Cuts and abrasions Drowning Hypothermia Dislocation Death Illness	Students Visiting staff Instructors Public / other users	Competent, experienced and approved staff who have a working knowledge of the river or inland/sheltered tidal water environments and who hold the appropriate BCU award. Appropriate planning including weather forecast and suitable equipment for both students and staff including safety equipment Appropriate canoeing management protocols when paddling, including briefing, familiarisation, activity management and instructor position when leading. Appropriate information on water borne diseases and other environmental issues. As many of the man made weirs on our rivers are in a state of disrepair staff must exercise caution.

<u>Regular Locations</u>	<u>Associated additional specific hazards</u>
<u>Castlewelan lake</u>	<u>There are no specific hazards to this location</u>
<u>Quoile</u>	<u>Water quality issues below Inch Abbey</u>
<u>Strangford Lough</u>	<u>There are no specific hazards to this location</u>
<u>River Bann (Upper)</u>	<u>Weir below Young Farmers' Club has been damaged and there is a risk of entrapment</u>
<u>(Lower)</u>	<u>Lock Gates may need to be portaged in the off-season.</u>
<u>Other rivers and lakes as required</u>	<u>There are no specific hazards identified for these all have a range of hazards as listed above.</u>

Maximum Operating Ratios

1. Canoeing

A good principle is that normally an instructor should not operate with more than 6 boats (whether double or solo)

Flat water (i.e. Castlewellan lake / Quoile)

Un-rafted

In singles 1:6

In doubles 1:12 (including staff)

Rafted

1:12 (including staff and max 2 rafts)

1:18 with the assistance of an APPROVED assistant (including staff and max 3 rafts)

Strangford Lough (excluding the narrows)

Un-rafted

1:8 (including staff)

Rafted

1:12 (including staff and max 2 rafts)

1:18 with the assistance of an APPROVED assistant (including staff and max 3 rafts)

Moderate white water (up to grade 2)

Un-rafted

1:6 (including staff)

1:8 with the assistance of an APPROVED assistant (doubles only)

Rafted

1:6 (including staff – 1 raft)

1:12 with the assistance of an APPROVED assistant (including staff - max 2 rafts)

2. Kayaking

Flat water (i.e. Castlewellan lake / Quoile)

1:10 (including staff)

1:13 with the assistance of an APPROVED assistant (Including staff)

Strangford Lough

1:8 (including staff)

1:10 with the assistance of an APPROVED assistant (Including staff)

Coastal Sea kayaking (moderate conditions)

1:6 (including staff)

1:8 with the assistance of an APPROVED assistant (including staff)

Moderate white water (Up to grade 2)

1:6 (including visiting staff)

1:8 with the assistance of an APPROVED assistant (including staff)

Moderate Surf

1:6 (including staff)

3. Stand Up Paddleboard

Flat water (i.e. Castlewellan lake / Quoile)

1:8 (including staff)

1:15 with the assistance of an APPROVED assistant (Including staff)

Appropriate operating ratios are dependent on all of the factors outlined below, including experience and competence of staff. However, the above ratio will, under no circumstances, be exceeded.

SECTION 1 - Flat water paddling including canoe trails:

This is divided into 3 distinct categories:

Sheltered - Areas of open water where it is not possible to be more than approx. 200m from a bank

Moderate - Large areas of open water that exceed the sheltered water definition, where it is not possible to be more than approx. 500 metres from a bank

Advanced - Large areas of open water which exceed the Moderate Water definition.

1. Factors to be taken into account when decision making must include:

- Wind strength
- Wind direction
- Fetch
- Air temperature
- Precipitation
- Water temperature

- Fog
- Water levels and flow rates

Where the instructor is concerned for the safety of the group given the prevailing weather conditions, the level of the activity should be moderated or the site abandoned.

2. Equipment

Students

- The participants' clothing and footwear should be appropriate to the nature of the activity and the prevailing weather conditions.
- Wetsuit - optional, depending upon a number of variables e.g. nature of activity; environmental conditions; experience of participants; remoteness.
- Gaiter or waterproof jacket - likely to be worn and if not worn, must be available.
- Buoyancy aid - correctly sized and properly fitted ensuring that buckles are tightened.
- Helmet (properly fitted)
- Paddle - appropriately sized
- Whistle when journeys on moderate and advanced waters are being undertaken

- **Canoe**

- Must have adequate buoyancy to float a laden boat if swamped
- Must have suitable painters of non-kinking floating rope
- Must have thwarts and seats

- **Kayak / Sit on top**

- Must have adequate buoyancy
- Must have suitable grabs
- Should have a footrest
- Paddle - left or right handed

- **Paddleboard**

- Must have leash
- Be appropriately inflated

Instructors

- Clothing must be appropriate according to conditions
- Buoyancy Aid must be worn during session
- Spray deck must be worn when using in kayaks.

Safety Equipment carried by The Instructor

- First aid kit.
- Additional insulating clothing/sleeping bag according to prevailing conditions.
- Shelter tent depending on the nature of the site.

- Stove or flask with warm drink and additional food for journeys
- Appropriate rope to create a tow line.
- Throwline
- Additional rope / string /bungees for rafting / tying craft together.
- Knife (essential if sailing rigs or improvised sailing / rafting are being used).
- Distress signalling equipment as appropriate for journeys. Minimum requirement is that a mobile phone is carried.
- A baler for dealing with swamping
- Hat and sun cream can be important additions depending on conditions

Note: Buoyancy aids must be worn at all times – however in exceptional circumstances there may occasions whereby the instructor wishes the students to remove a buoyancy aid for specific coaching purposes.

3. Other User Groups

- Care should be exercised in the vicinity of other watercraft.
- Care should also be exercised in the vicinity of other water users in a more vulnerable position than the canoeist e.g. swimmers.
- As it is often unreasonable to expect novices to anticipate the outcome of their actions, it is the instructor's responsibility to ensure that participants' activity is appropriately controlled.

The instructor must undertake to manage the group in accordance with current British Canoeing good practice and as determined by the circumstances of the occasion.

4. Group Management

Briefing

- Action to be taken in the event of a capsize:

Canoeing

- how to exit the canoe if caught underneath
- importance of staying with the canoe
- importance of retaining paddle
- importance of retaining the canoe if a fall out rather than a capsize occurs.

Kayaking

- how to remove the spraydeck
- how to exit the kayak if caught underneath
- importance of staying with the kayak
- importance of retaining paddle

Paddleboarding

- importance of staying with the paddleboard
- importance of retaining paddle
- Define parameters within which to stay.
- Nature of hazards which may be encountered.
- The action required of the group following a capsize of a boat.
- A clear model for group control should be established when appropriate
- Clear visual instructions should be established when appropriate.

On the water

- Designation of a working area when a journey is not planned.
- Where a journey is planned, the group must understand the imperative of remaining within communication distance of each other.
- Where a journey is planned designating front and back marks may be useful.
- Constant monitoring of the state of the conditions and the weather is essential particularly in areas of moderate or advanced water due to the risk of swamping and/or the craft being blown out of control.
- If sailing rigs and / or improvised sailing is undertaken then designated meeting points need to be established.

5. General

The route choice or venue must take into account all of the above considerations. It is essential to gauge the suitability of the conditions combined with the experience, age and ability of the group and modify the activity or venue if required.

SECTION 2 - River paddling including white water:

This is divided into 3 distinct categories:

Sheltered - Ungraded rivers that involve flowing water, but not involving the shooting of, or playing on weirs or running rapids.

Moderate – Up to Grade 2(3) The overall standard of the run would be up to grade 2, but there may be a few (normally one or two) grade 3 rapids that can be portaged if required

Advanced – Grade 3 and above.

1. Factors to be taken into account when decision making must include:

- Water levels
- Air temperature
- Precipitation forecasted and actual
- Water temperature
- Flow rates
- Wind

Where the instructor is concerned for the safety of the group given the prevailing weather conditions, the level of the activity should be moderated or the site abandoned.

2. Equipment

Students

- As mentioned in Section 1

Instructors

- As mentioned in Section 1

Safety Equipment carried by The Instructor

- As mentioned in Section 1 but to include:
 - Additional painters to use for lining / tracking as required.

3. Other User Groups

- As mentioned in Section 1

The instructor must undertake to manage the group in accordance with current British Canoeing good practice and as determined by the circumstances of the occasion.

4. Group Management

Briefing

- Action to be taken in the event of a capsize:

Canoeing

- how to exit the canoe if caught underneath
- importance of swimming well clear of the canoe in white water
- how to use swim lines to get the canoe into a bank
- importance of retaining paddle
- How to swim/float defensively in WW
- Define parameters within which to stay.

Kayaking

- How to remove the spray-deck
 - how to exit the kayak
 - importance of staying with the kayak
 - importance of retaining paddle
 - How to swim/float defensively in WW
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- Nature of hazards which may be encountered.
 - The action required of the group following an individual's capsize.
 - A clear model for group control should be established when appropriate
 - Clear communication mechanisms should be established.

On the water

- The use of CLAP principles in managing the group is important
- Designation of a working area when a journey is not planned.
- Where a journey is planned, the group must understand the imperative of remaining within communication distance of each other.
- Where a journey is planned designating front and back marks may be useful.
- Defining and identifying river features and lines of approach are important.
- Appropriate bank/water support should be established at any rapid grade 2 or above.
- Where there is a specific concern for an individual's ability to successfully run a given weir or rapid where the outcome could be serious, portaging should be considered.
- Large suitable eddies should be sought by the instructor due to size of craft.
- Instructors must give serious consideration to the level and grade of water that minors with appropriate training should be exposed to, in the understanding that ownership of risk rests entirely with the instructor.

5. General

The route choice or venue must take into account all of the above considerations. It is essential to gauge the suitability of the conditions combined with the experience, age and ability of the group and modify the activity or venue if required.

SECTION 4 Rafting Open Canoes

- Rafting open canoes is a useful means by which control can be ensured when working with young beginners or when conditions are difficult.
- Care needs to be taken so that participants are briefed to avoid trapping fingers between thwarts and poles.
- In windy conditions it may be difficult to reach an upwind swimmer in a raft with limited drive.
- Activities where there is an unmerited risk of injury to the participant in the event of a fall must be avoided e.g. gunnel bobbing and aggressive games.
- Ensuring that weight is evenly spread throughout the boats so that there is not undue pressure on any of the poles is important.
- Awareness of the increased risk from flailing paddles due to the number of students in close proximity should be taken into account.