



Ardmore House

**COASTEERING
RISK OVERVIEW**

Coasteering

Aim and benefits of Activity

Aim is to traverse a section of coastline utilising swimming, scrambling on rocks and jumping in from height. The benefits include creating a sense of adventure and developing skills in balance, agility, judgement, mutual and team co-operation as well as overcoming personal challenge and a sense of increased self esteem.

Balancing the excitement, challenge and enjoyment that can be heightened by prevailing conditions and managing the risks is a very important element to this activity.

Hazards	Resulting harm	Who is at risk	Risk management measures
Wet slimy rocks Rogue waves Swell Tidal currents Sharp rocks and barnacles Shallow water Falling from a height on to ledges/rocks Exposure to cold water and air. Access and egress Participant behaviour	Broken bones Abrasions Cuts and bleeding Drowning Hypothermia Crush injuries Being swept away Death	Staff Students Public	Competent, experienced and approved staff who have a working knowledge of site-specific issues. Appropriate planning including weather and sea state forecasts Suitable equipment for both students and staff including safety equipment Appropriate coasteering management protocols when on site, including briefing, familiarisation, activity management and instructor position.

<u>Key Locations</u>	<u>Associated specific hazards</u>
<u>Bloody Bridge to Newcastle</u>	North and East through to S swell Traffic on main road – this is managed through appropriate staff placement and communication to ensure that all participants are managed in the vicinity of the road safely. Egress issues
<u>Ballyhornan</u>	East through to S swell
<u>Dunseverick Harbour</u>	<u>There are no specific hazards to this location</u>
<u>Ballintoy Harbour</u>	<u>There are no specific hazards to this location</u>

Maximum Operating Ratios

1:6 (including staff staff)

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

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

Conditions to be taken into account

- Air temperature, wind chill factor, and water temperature including time of year must be taken into account.
- Offshore winds should be treated with utmost caution as conditions can appear benign.
- Sea state forecast and actual conditions encountered must be taken into account
Conditions **associated with** open water force 4 or more could leave participants susceptible to injury from wave action on rock and create difficulties for exiting on to rocks and therefore decision making should be carefully thought through.

Thus, a suitable weather forecast must be gained and this should be interpreted for the environment which is being used for Coasteering.

- Tidal streams:
The primary locations named above are not susceptible to strong tidal currents
- Height of tide
The depth of water can vary in the above locations by up to 3.5m and combined with wave action can create difficult conditions.
At low water the conditions become much more slippery, and the lack of depth can make some of the jumps unusable.
The venues above work at their best from 3 hours either side of High Water.
- Remoteness.
The availability of relatively easy access to the vehicle must be taken into account.

Equipment

Personal minimum Equipment Used By Students

1 Clothing

- Wetsuit
- Additional layers as required according to temperature
- Participants must wear either a full arm wetsuit or a cag to protect arms and provide warmth.

2 Buoyancy Aid

- Correctly sized and fitted.

3 Helmet

- Correctly sized and fitted paddlesport helmet.

4 Footwear

- Appropriate footwear, which may include personal mountain boots or training shoes should be worn. Footwear must be vetted by the instructor leading the activity

Personal Equipment Used by Instructors

1 Clothing

- Wetsuit or dry suit, helmet, boots

2 Buoyancy Aid

- A Buoyancy Aid must be worn when coasteering.

3 Helmet and appropriate footwear must be worn.

Safety Equipment Carried by Instructors

The following should be considered as a minimum requirement:

- First Aid kit
- Additional insulating and wind proof clothing appropriate to the conditions
- Group shelter
- Throw-line/floating rope
- Mobile phone
- Whistle
- Watch
- Knife

The following can be considered as useful additions

- Flares
- Fins
- Additional rope (must be floating) & krab
- Neoprene gloves
- Warm drink (may be left at an easily accessible base e.g. bus or at start of area)
- Additional emergency clothing and equipment can be left at an easily accessible base e.g. bus or above the venue at the top of the shore.

Group management

• Briefing the Group

Outline the general nature of the activity and define any constraints including the following:

- Keeping all equipment on
- How to enter and exit the water safely
- Swell and its effects
- Agreed procedures
- Jumping procedures
- Importance of remaining in verbal/visual contact with the instructor
- Signals and the importance of that which means stop/wait.
- Outline the main hazards associated with the activity/venue and educate participants into how the risk can be managed effectively.
- Agree with the visiting leader his/her role if required.

- ***The Instructor's role***

- Due to the ever-changing nature of the marine environment, staff should test slides and jumps as appropriate to demonstrate techniques required and ensure that they are viable.

- ***Familiarisation activities***

- Ensure that group members have reasonable water confidence by getting them to swim a short stretch.
- Start off with a low easy jump of less than 1 metre to gauge the reaction of students when jumping into cold water.
- If the confidence and competence of the participants is low – then the route / activity planned should be modified accordingly.

- ***Managing the activity including jumps***

- When undertaking any jumps, it is imperative that participants have a clear descent into the water and do not have to clear any significant obstacles/ledges.
- The depth of water below any jump should be checked first by the instructor to ensure that it is suitable. Careful attention must be paid to the height of the tide.
- A clear explanation of a suitable method of entering the water at a given site must be provided when jumping.
- Depth of water below a jump must not be dependent on swell and therefore timed jumps are inappropriate.
- Ardmore House policy is that no-one should jump in from a height greater than 7m as the potential for and the consequences of an injury, even in deep water becomes greater.
- While participants are undertaking jumps the instructor must ensure that the rest of the group are in a suitable "waiting zone" and are not placed in a vulnerable position where jostling for position could result in a fall.
- Instructor should be in verbal and/or visual communication with the group at all times.
- Buddy systems should be employed for participants to support each other.

- ***The Instructor's position in relation to the Group***

The position of the instructor in relation to the group is likely to vary according to the nature of the coastline and any particular sections.

- When leading from the front, care must be taken to ensure contact with the back of the group is maintained.
- The instructor must be continually aware of sea conditions and other potential hazards and must adopt a position in order to manage risk effectively.
- When undertaking a jump, the instructor must position themselves to be able to affect a reach or other form of support to a panicky participant after completing a jump as the shock of cold water can result in even the most confident of swimmers becoming panic stricken.
- If there is any chance that a significant injury would result from a slip or fall while negotiating a climb out, rock step or traverse, the instructor must manage the group by taking up a position below or along side the difficulty which enables effective 'spotting' or assistance to be given. This is of particular importance when a fall would not result in landing in water.

The "CLAP" principles are very useful when Coasteering:

- Communication
- Line of Sight
- Avoidance is better than cure
- Position of most usefulness

- ***The use of Slings & Ropes***

- When a rock step, being ascended or descended, cannot be effectively managed by 'spotting;' a line must be attached to the participant by an appropriate means and the ascent/descent secured by means of a suitable belay system.
- A hand-line may be rigged to assist the group in negotiating a difficult section. It is not a suitable alternative for 'spotting' or belaying where, in the event of a slip or fall, injury would result.
- Where a hand line is used the instructor must position themselves to ensure that the participant does not lean back when making an ascent or descent – as there is a tendency for inexperienced participants to do this.

- ***Identifying Safe Assembly Points***

- In any situation where the instructor has to remain static to guard the group through a potential hazard, clear instruction must be given as to a safe assembly position before and after the hazard which should be within visual and verbal contact of the instructor.

- ***Controlling the numbers exposed to risk***

- The instructor should limit the number of students involved in negotiating a potentially hazardous section at any one time to ensure that, given the worst case scenario, he/she will be able to retain control of the situation.

- ***Egress Points***

- It is of the utmost importance that the instructor has considered safe access / egress points to get participants out of the water.
- The distance between access / egress points and the difficulty of egress at these zones must be considered prior to entry into the water.

- ***The role of the accompanying members of staff (Not assistants)***

- The accompanying member of staff must never be asked to undertake a role where an inappropriate action may endanger his/her safety or the safety of the group members.
- When a non - assistant attempts to assist thereby creating a potentially hazardous situation, albeit in good faith, it is the responsibility of the instructor to dissuade him/her from doing so.

General

If after assessing the above issues, the instructor feels that due to unforeseen sea conditions or circumstances the level of risk is too high, then the instructor should either change the activity or level of the activity should be moderated or the site abandoned and base to be informed as soon as practicable.

