

Gloucester Canoe Club Risk Assessment – Generic Paddling Canal, Flat Water & Lakes

Risk assessment	
Activity/Task Assessed:	Paddling on the canal
Location and date (if appropriate):	Canals, flat moving water and lakes
Assessment Date:	March 2024
Assessed by:	Paul Gibson
Date Written/Reviewed:	March 2024
Assessment Review date:	January 2025

NOTES

1) This risk assessment must be read in conjunction with the Gloucester Canoe Club Safeguarding Policy and with the British Canoeing Awarding Body Environmental Definitions and Deployment Guidance for Instructors, Coaches and Leaders – the most up to date version is available at <https://britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/environmental-definitions-and-technical-advice/>

2) Definitions

Hazard: Something that has the potential to cause harm

Severity: The degree of harm which the uncontrolled hazard has the potential to cause

Likelihood: The probability that the hazard potential will be realised, taking into account any risk control measures in place

Risk: Risk expresses the likelihood that the harm from a particular hazard is realised, taking into account Severity.

RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD SHEET:

Possible Hazards	Severity (without control measures)	Likelihood (with control measures)	Risk Level	Action Required	Action Completed (date and signature)
Location – Any Canal / Flat moving water / Lake					
Capsize leading to prolonged time in the water leading hyperthermia or drowning)	High	Not Likely	Medium	Paddlers to attend pool session prior to paddling on the canal to include basic capsize drill and safety advice. All paddlers to wear appropriate kit (eg. BA's) and clothing. (thermals. cags/wind proofs, wet suits etc according to temperature) advice on clothing given in advance of the session along with other info on the session. Paddlers confirm they can swim confidently Paddlers to paddle suitable kayaks to reduce risk of capsize (for size and ability) Leaders to be in boats that they can rescue safely from, and be able to aid a swimmer back into their boat and/or able to tow a swimmer to a safe place to exit the water. Paddlers to have spare warm clothes to change into and access to warm drinks. Paddlers advised to paddle in groups. Paddlers advised to attach light to BA if paddling after dark. Solo paddlers are advised to have a shore contact to notify when off the water and to carry a mobile phone for communication. Leaders to scout weirs	
Entrapment in boat or in trees	Low	Possible	Low	Leaders to guide group away from bankside trees and obstacles	
Harm to Juniors	Medium	Not Likely	Low	Juniors to be accompanied by a parent/guardian (on site) Leader to ensure juniors are wearing the right clothing and equipment and are in a boat that suits their size. Juniors are not be left with individual club members in a one to one situation. Club safeguarding policy to be adhered to.	
Injuries/medical emergencies	Medium	Not Likely	Low	Health declarations to be completed by paddlers. Paddlers made aware prior to starting they will need to disclose medical conditions. Leaders have access to a mobile phone for emergencies If at Boathouse site, ensure that the barrier is manned once an emergency	

				has been declared to allow access. First aid kits to be carried and available in the clubhouse Defibrillator in the main clubhouse	
Collisions with other watercraft or other water users	Medium	Possible	Medium	Briefing will highlight right of way regarding other water craft. Paddlers to be made aware of fishermen and fishing lines	
Conditions – water level, light and weather	Low	Not Likely	Very Low	Canal rarely changes level due to levels being managed and maintained. Rivers can change level and flow rates. Leaders to conduct dynamic risk assessment. Paddlers advised to paddle in groups, with lights in low light level conditions. Paddlers advised to consider using a more stable boat in windy or choppy conditions. Leaders to be aware of impact of wind on lakes, potentially blowing group away from shoreline. Paddlers advised to wear additional clothing in cold weather Paddlers advised to wear hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and carry water in hot weather. Paddlers to be advised not to paddle in the event of thunder and lightning. Sessions will be cancelled in the event of adverse weather conditions	
Environmental Considerations					
Hazardous Materials	High	Not Likely	Medium	Biohazards such as fuel oil could leak from watercraft into water causing impact on wildlife or swimmers. Minimise time spent in the water.	
Wildlife	Low	Possible	Low	Paddlers to be made aware of birds on canal and advised to avoid them, in particular not to pass between adults and chicks.	
Generic					
Collisions with motor traffic in parking areas	Medium	Not Likely	Low	Pedestrians and paddlers carrying boats to be made aware of risk of moving traffic	
Slips, trips and falls, musculoskeletal injuries	Low	Possible	Low	Paddlers advised to load and unload boats in pairs. Paddlers to carry boats with assistant if appropriate Paddlers will be instructed in good manual handling of craft at induction Ensure path to destination is clear of obstructions and low friction areas – e.g. ice, bird droppings Suitable footwear should be worn	

Collisions with towpath users at Boathouse site	Low	Possible	Low	Paddlers to be made aware of risks of cyclists, runners and walkers	
Collisions with other landing stage users at Boathouse site	Low	Possible	Low	Paddlers to share the space, leaders to manage landing stage congestion.	
Weil's disease & Leptospirosis	Medium	Not Likely	Low	Paddlers to be made aware of risk of contracting waterborne disease through mucous membranes, cuts and abrasions. Paddlers to be advised to cover cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings. Paddlers to be advised to shower after paddling Paddlers advised to wash cuts and abrasions with soap and running water. Paddlers advised to consult GP if flu-like symptoms develop after paddling	

Risk Assessment - "Aide Memoir"	
Hazard Severity	Examples of Type of Injury
Low	Scratch, bruise, minor cut, minor burns. Normal work possible after first aid treatment.
Medium	Burns, severe cuts, minor fractures (fingers & toes), strains, sprains, temporarily disabling back injuries. Accident results in loss of time less than 3-day injury.
High	Permanent disability, amputations (e.g. loss of finger), other fractures, over 3-day injury, multiple injuries, fatalities.
Description of Likelihood	Example
Not likely	Harm will seldom occur. So Not Likely, probability close to zero, e.g. the chance of being struck by lightning in UK.
Possible	Harm will occur frequently.
Likely	Harm is certain or near certain to occur. Occurs repeatedly, to be expected. If conditions continue an accident or incident is almost certain to occur.

Express the level of risk associated with identified hazards by multiplying the **hazard severity** by the **likelihood** of the hazard occurring. Consult the risk matrix, to express the risk level:

Risk Level

Likelihood Hazard Severity	Not Likely	Possible	Likely
Low	Very Low	Low	Medium
Medium	Low	Medium	High
High	Medium	High	Very High

Risk-based Control Plan

Risk Level	Action
Very Low	No action is required, though assessment must be recorded.
Low	No additional controls are required. Consideration may be given to improvements. Monitoring is required to ensure that the controls are maintained.
Medium	Efforts should be made to reduce the risk, but the implications of mitigation should be carefully evaluated. Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period. Where moderate risk is associated with extremely harmful consequences, further assessment may be necessary to establish more precisely the likelihood of harm as a basis for determining the need for improved control measures.
High	Activity should not be started until the risk has been reduced. Restrictions may have to be imposed to reduce the risk.
Very High	Activity should not be started until the risk has been reduced. If it is not possible to reduce risk even with severe

restrictions, the activity should not be started.