

## Regents Canoe Club Risk Assessment – Events and Trips

Assessment to follow the 5 step process as recommended by the HSE and set out below. Further information can be found online: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm>

- Identify any hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risk and decide on precautions
- Record your findings
- Review and update as necessary

**Assessment undertaken:** June 2021

**Signed:**

**Post:**

**Next review due:** December 2021 (or until significant changes to government covid guidance)

| Significant Hazards  | People at risk from identified hazard | Precautions taken to minimise the risk   |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Injury or drowning while paddling on a river</b></p> | <p>All trip participants</p>          | <p>White Water kayaking is an assumed-risk sport, and this is made clear to every member when they join.</p> <p>Dynamic decision making will be required by trip participants around whether a river at a level is suitable for the group. It is trusted that experienced members can make these decisions in a collaborative way with, and on behalf of the rest of the group.</p> <p>The club has and will continue to embed a culture where a ‘leaders meeting’ is held in the morning before paddling to make a group decision about what river to paddle and to assess suitability of participants. In addition the items below should be consistently built into the club’s paddling culture to improve safety.</p> <p><b>Trip participants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure trips have an appropriate ratio of experienced / inexperienced paddlers. This is specified in the trip organising guidance.</li> <li>- Committee to verify that the member who is organising the trip is experienced enough to ensure an appropriate level of experienced people for the planned rivers, or if not that the trip organiser is being advised by someone who is sufficiently experienced to do this before the trip is advertised in NfC.</li> </ul> <p><b>Groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RCC members on club trips must paddle in groups of at least three. Solo paddling or paddling in pairs will not be allowed</li> <li>- Groups to be decided by the trip organiser in collaboration with experienced leaders on the trip and discussed at the leaders meeting if there are any doubts about the ability of participants.</li> <li>- Large groups (7+ people) will rarely be appropriate as it becomes difficult to keep track of everyone in the group</li> <li>- Leaders and trip organisers should feel empowered to tell less experienced paddlers that they cannot get on a river, even if this means not paddling at all</li> </ul> |

- RCC runs a leadership training session periodically for paddlers starting to take on leadership roles and also leaders meeting to share good practice and continue to develop a culture of safe river leading.

#### **Paddling**

- A culture of holding a group meeting before getting on the river will be encouraged. This meeting to be used to go over what to expect, behaviour, group structure, signals, safety equipment, swimming technique, what to do if someone in the group swims.
- Leaders should feel empowered to assess conditions and make decisions around safety, including taking the group off the river and walking out if necessary
- Paddling under the influence of alcohol is not allowed on club trips

#### **Equipment**

- No one to get on a white water river without wearing helmet, white water buoyancy aid, spraydeck and appropriate warm clothing and shoes. Trip organiser and leaders to be empowered to prevent members from paddling if they are not wearing appropriate equipment
- If members hire equipment from the club it is their responsibility to check that it is safe to use. The equipment officers on duty will remind people of this when they hire
- Members to be encouraged to check each other's kit and point out any issues at the IWWK course and on beginner trips.
- It is an individual's responsibility to check the kit they are wearing.

#### **Safe swimming**

- Safe swimming technique (on the back, legs up and in front, hand movements towards an eddy then front crawl into the eddy) to be taught to all members who take part in dedicated beginner trips (IWWK course and MEM trips)
- All members to be encouraged to drop their kit if they swim and focus on getting safely to the side. This in particular to be emphasised to anyone hiring club kit

#### **Rescue / dealing with issues**

- All members to be encouraged to go on an Introduction to White Water Safety and Rescue course with a certified provider. The club offers a subsidy to members who do this course
- The club recognises paddling experience as well as course attendance
- All members to be encouraged to go on a first aid course with a certified provider. The club offers a subsidy to members who do a suitable First Aid course
- Leaders should carry appropriate safety and rescue equipment, including a throwline and a first aid kit
- Leaders to be regularly reminded of the following protocol: if a swim occurs, ensure the paddler is fully out of the water and has verbally confirmed that they're OK before being left alone
- Less experienced paddlers to be advised to get into and stay in an eddy if a swim occurs, and not to attempt to join in a boat chase unless they are told to by their leader
- Trip organiser to circulate information about the location of the nearest A&E department as part of trip planning. (This is included in information about how to organise a trip)
- On trips abroad members must demonstrate they have appropriate health insurance in place

#### **Sharing lessons learned**

|  |                                     |  |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
|  |                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An incident form to be filled out for any injury requiring a hospital visit. Incident forms to be discussed by the committee and any lessons learned enacted. Incident forms to be retained for three years</li> <li>- A leaders meeting to be held at least twice a year to encourage leaders to share information about what has gone well / less well, what could be improved etc. This to be minuted by a committee member and the minutes made available to the whole club</li> <li>- Members to be encouraged to hold a short post-paddle group meeting to discuss any issues</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Confrontation with members of the public</b>          | All members and guests and visitors | Regent's members should behave in a polite, non-confrontational way towards members of the public and attempt to resolve any dispute in a civilised manner   |
| <b>Injury from BBQs or other events held at the club</b> | All members in attendance           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Members should behave sensibly around the BBQ to avoid injury</li> <li>- The BBQ should be fully extinguished when the event ends before the site is vacated</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Carrying boats and tying boats to vehicles</b>        | All trip participants               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New members to be advised about correct manual handling of boats when they join the club. This is part of the brief on NMEs and the IWWK course</li> <li>- Tying boats onto cars is left to the discretion of individual car owners, but the club recommends the use of uprights and specialist straps with a non-slip buckle</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Lightning strike</b>                                  | All trip participants               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If thunder and lightening are audible/visible there is a risk of a lightning strike</li> <li>- The safest option is to check in advance and not to get on the water if thunder and lightning are forecast. However it is recognised that as white water kayakers the high water levels that come with stormy weather are what we look for, so members may find themselves in an exposed environment during a storm.</li> <li>- If there is a risk of lightning the safest option is to seek shelter in a building or car. On a typical kayaking trip the nearest shelter is likely to be a car left at the get on / get off</li> <li>- It is not safe to seek shelter under a tree or within 20m of a tree. This means if a thunderstorm arrives it is not advisable to get off the water if the river banks are tree-lined. In this situation the most sensible action is to continue downriver with all reasonable speed and seek shelter at the get off</li> <li>- If a group is at or very near the start of the river it may be preferable to wait in a car for the storm to pass</li> </ul> |
| <b>Risk of catching or spreading covid-19</b>            | All trip participants               | <p>Ensure the government rules &amp; guidelines for the location of departure and trip target location are met by organiser and participants. Consideration given to the different rules for Wales, Scotland, England and Ireland.</p> <p>Please see the separate Risk Assessment for COVID-19 for more details and mitigating steps.</p>  |