

**Richmond Canoe Club  
OPERATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT**

**Water based activities in kayaks and canoes**

08-Dec-23

Completed by:	<u>PRINT NAME and SURNAME</u>	<u>Signature</u>
	Robert Ames	Robert Ames
	Date: 08-Dec-23	
	Reviewer:	
Safety officer:	Robert Ames	Robert Ames

<b>Severity (S)</b>	<b>Likelihood (L)</b>	<b>Risk Factor: Worked out by: S x L = R</b>	<b>S x L = R</b>
1 Negligible - all in a day's work	1 Improbable	<4 Risk may	= Beginner/improver
2 Minor - minor injury with short term	2 Remote -	4-6 Risk must be	= Improver/Intermediate
3 Severe - major injury/disability	3 Possible - may	7-9 Hazard must	= Advanced
4 Extreme - fatal	4 Probable -	>9 Hazard must	= No one

Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description	People at risk	Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
			Severity	Likely	Risk		Severity	Likely	Risk	
1 - 29	ON THE WATER/PADDLERS	Paddlers and				Detailed for individual item				Detailed for individual item
30 – 50	CLUB HOUSE, GYM AND BOAT SHEDS	Club members				Detailed for individual item				Detailed for individual item
51 – 58	SAFETY LAUNCH OPERATIONS	Paddlers, Coaches				Detailed for individual item				Detailed for individual item
PC1 – PC18	JUNIOR PADDLE CAMPS	Paddle				Detailed for individual item				Detailed for individual item
<b>IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT GO OUT</b>										
	SEE MAP OF RISKS AND DANGERS FOR: LOCATION	People at Risk				Prevention controls				Contingent actions, if the risk comes to pass. What to do to minimise the effect.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>					<b>Initial Assessment</b>	<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>		<b>Actions – Contingent</b>

1	Drowning.	All	4	2	8	<p>Buoyancy Aids (BA's) must be worn by all novice paddlers and by other paddlers who have not yet achieved Hasler division 6. The condition of BA's should be checked and recorded annually. In 'Amber' conditions, division 4-6 paddlers must wear a BA. In 'Red' conditions, all paddlers, including division 1-3 and equivalent International level, must wear a BA. 'Paddler safety guidelines' <a href="https://richmondcanoecub.com/paddler-safety/paddler-safety-guidelines/">https://richmondcanoecub.com/paddler-safety/paddler-safety-guidelines/</a> makes this clear on the club website, noticeboard and in the galley folder.</p> <p>Parental consent forms and adult membership registration/renewal forms which acknowledge that canoeing and kayaking is a risk sport, must be completed for all members.</p>	3	1	3	If an immersion casualty is unconscious, call 999. All Club Coaches are trained in First Aid including drowning protocols/CPR and use of defibrulator.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
2	Low Temperatures/ wind chill and Hypothermia	All	4	2	8	<p>When air temperature is below 0 degrees C, consider waterproof outers and more base layers. All paddlers should bring changes of warm clothing in cold weather.</p> <p>Coaches will, for each session; Assess their group for correct clothing for the prevailing conditions. Monitor all group members for signs of hypothermia, especially those who have capsized on this session.</p> <p>Carry out dynamic risk assessments and may decide to cancel or amend a session</p> <p>Peer Paddlers, race organisers, event/race marshals, safety boat drivers must all be especially vigilant in cold conditions and must carry out dynamic risk assessment.</p>	3	1	3	For unconscious casualty or suspected hypothermia, call 999. Warm drinks are available at the clubhouse. Do NOT put a suspected Hypothermia casualty in a warm/hot shower because it may prove fatal. Coaches are trained in first aid, including hypothermia. Extra emergency blankets are available at entrance to main boat shed.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent

3	Juniors operate under a tighter set of risk management factors for all water based activities which are summarised here.	Juniors	NA	NA	NA	<p>These additional risk mitigation factors, serve to protect Junior paddlers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Junior paddlers are coached only by approved and vetted Juniors Coaches.</li> <li>2. Junior paddlers coached sessions on the river will only take place during daylight hours. Exceptions to this rule may only be granted by the Coach of the most senior Juniors group</li> <li>3. A safety boat will accompany every Juniors Coaching session on the river.</li> <li>4. Junior paddlers must not paddle outside of established group sessions on the river and it is the responsibility of Juniors Coaches to ensure that each Junior understands this.</li> </ol>	NA	NA	NA	Any reports concerning Junior Paddlers must be passed by the Coach of those Juniors, to the Club Welfare Officers without delay. Welfare Officers are responsible for notifying parents of affected Juniors and if necessary, for engaging those parents in follow-up actions. The Club Welfare Officers will maintain a working update to the Club Committee and the Club Health and Safety Officer.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
4	Capsize of canoe or kayak	All	1	1	1	<p>Capsizing in itself, is an integral part of the sport of kayaking or canoeing.</p> <p>Novices paddle only in groups supervised by an Approved Club Coach where they are taught capsize drills. Coaches are responsible for carrying out dynamic risk assessment before and during all training activities.</p> <p>Qualified peer paddlers and racers of division 6 and above have demonstrated they can perform capsize drill, self rescue and also rescue other peer paddlers.</p> <p>Transition to faster (hence less stable boats which may be more prone to capsize if not properly handled) should be carried out near the clubhouse (near River Lane and around Glovers Island) until competent to travel further.</p>	1	1	1	Assistance to rescue a capsized paddler may be given by any competent club paddler. Rescue, in this context means either assisting a paddler to get to the river bank with their boat, or assisting a capsized paddler to get back into their boat (also known as a deep water rescue).
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
5	Cuts/injuries to feet/legs from debris on river bed	All	3	2	6	<p>Novices are advised to wear footwear during training sessions. Competent paddlers are recommended to keep foot wear in their boat in case of capsize and if they need to walk out. Sharp objects can cause serious injury if a Paddler walks on river banks or river bed.</p>	3	1	3	Coaches are first aid trained and there are three first aid kits at the club. In case of serious injury call 999.

Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
6	Heat exhaustion - Heat stroke	All	4	1	4	Paddlers advised to wear caps/visors and sunglasses and to stay hydrated while training on or off the water. Peer paddlers to monitor other paddlers for abnormal behaviours.	3	1	3	Where appropriate, assist peers to return to clubhouse. Coaches are trained to give first aid including heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Where necessary call Emergency Services.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
7	Boats sinking	All	2	2	4	Before putting-in, every paddler should check their boat, ensuring that it has sufficient buoyancy. If in doubt, ask a Coach. Buoyancy is available for club boats. Paddlers are responsible for arranging buoyancy for personal boats.	2	1	2	In the event that a boat sinks, participants must stay together, and try to get out of the water as quickly as possible and swim to shore. Peer paddlers and Coaches are trained to rescue the person as top priority.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
8	Paddling in darkness (early mornings and late evenings) makes it harder to spot hazards.	All	3	3	9	Paddlers of all levels must operate in accordance with the table “Paddler Safety Guidelines” which is displayed on the club notice board, on the website and in the galley reference folder. If you don’t understand any part, ask a Coach. Boats must be properly lit in accordance with PLA instructions and lighting is to be checked by Coaches. Peer paddlers must check each others lights with a mutual duty of care.	3	1	3	Coaches are empowered by the Committee to protect club safety and club position within the PLA community by enforcing “no lights, no session” (even for competent paddlers). Peer paddlers may report non-compliance to any Coach or committee member.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
9	Overhanging branches/trees may hit a paddler and injure them and/or cause them to capsize.	All	3	2	6	Avoid training close to the banks during dark hours.	3	1	3	If an overhanging branch causes a capsize, hold paddle and stay close to the boat until the flow takes you into clear water. Then follow capsize drills.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
10	Collision with fixed obstacle	All	3	2	6	Paddlers are trained regarding the known obstacles on their club stretch. Planning of current conditions combined with anticipation of changes will inform prevention of collision by early avoidance. A map showing the Richmond stretch is on the wall of the galley and the doors of the main canoe shed for training and ongoing review purposes.	3	1	3	After a collision, normal capsize rescue actions are employed.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent

11	Collision with Rowers	All	3	2	6	Paddlers are trained to keep to rules of the river. All-round awareness and observation is essential by all. This especially includes leaving and returning to the club pontoon. Avoidance is essential.	3	1	3	It is more difficult for a rower to recover from a capsize because their footwear is attached to their boat. Therefore, if the Rower Coach launch is not available, Coaches and Peer Paddlers should assist a rower as they would assist any river user.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
12	Collision with floating debris	All	2	2	4	Keep a good look-out. Remove debris where practicable.	1	2	2	If a collision happens, check the boat for damage soon afterwards.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
13	Collision with powered river vessel.	All	4	2	8	Paddlers are trained according to the rules of the river and must act responsibly at all times, both on and off the river. Continual all round observation and anticipation of risks are essential.	3	1	3	Immediate first aid where required. Call emergency services if necessary. Safety launch to water. All incidents must be recorded in the RIC Accident log book which is held online at the club website. Club Committee considers further requirement actions. .
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
14	Wind & stream causing large waves: danger of boats taking in water and swamping.	All	3	2	6	Paddlers to be briefed on areas where waves are prevalent. Paddlers to choose a boat appropriate to their capabilities. Online meteorological forecasts will inform the decisions made.	3	1	3	Club Coaches act to ensure the safety of any paddler. Coach decision whether safety launch may be required or whether to postpone the session and work on ergos/gym instead .
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
15	Spring/ High Tide leading to high river conditions	All	3	2	6	Flow rates are higher on springs. Thames path submerged. Canoe sheds water rise. Cyclists and walkers using Thames path may become casualties or may be cut off. Coaches and Peer Paddlers must plan sessions accordingly.	2	1	2	Be prepared to provide assistance/first aid when by-passers may need assistance when cut-off. Cyclists regularly ride too fast down the path and then skid and fall either avoiding water levels or when riding their cycles into water.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
16	Draw off/ Low tide- line of bank underwater. Risk of running aground, damaging fin, rudder, or worse.	All	1	3	3	All Paddlers to be aware of different navigation hazards which are presented at low tide.	1	2	2	Familiarise self with map showing areas of shallows. Highlight areas to get out with the higher river levels.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>

17	Incidents or accidents while Portaging/ moving boats	All	3	2	6	Paddlers are trained to the correct way of getting in and out of a boat and how to carry it properly. Particular care to be taken on the pontoon walkway at low tide (steep walkway) and when moving across the Thames path with a boat at busy times.	2	2	4	Help to be provided if a paddler in unable to put a boat back.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
18	Newer/less experienced Coaches may cause or contribute to a dangerous situation on the water.	All	4	2	8	Club Coaches at Richmond CC are experienced, trained and selected to be the best in class. As self reflecting practitioners, each Coach is focussed on meeting a constant balance of paddler safety, paddler development and club/committee policy. Newer Coaches may be accompanied by a more experienced Coach who gives feedback for improvement. Coaches are responsible for carrying out dynamic risk assessment before and during all training activities.	2	1	2	If any Coach acts outside of best practice, the Committee may review the Coach appointment and take appropriate action.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
19	Following an illness or medical condition, a paddler doesn't have the necessary health/strength to paddle (return to paddling too early),	All	4	2	8	Paddlers must declare and discuss any health conditions to a Coach before going out on the water <u>and</u> also make it known to any other Peer paddlers that they arrange to paddle with. The Coach may propose a period of gym and/or ergo training to regain strength and revise technique, before going out on the water. It is also essential to inform the Coach and Peer Paddlers of any likely needs (i.e. bring inhalers and/or medicines and show where these are kept, in waterproof container).	3	1	3	If any Coach or Committee member is concerned that a paddler may be insufficiently recovered from an illness or medical condition, the paddler may be <u>either</u> sent home until they have recovered or told to stay off the water until they are full recovered and strong enough. Note that certain infections which may appear insignificant, are highly infectious and it is important to minimise transmission to other club members.
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20	Paddler is not Current in paddling. Have they had a long break (years?) which could result in lower standards of paddling, decision making, awareness or reaction?	All	4	2	8	Non-current paddlers are advised to join an appropriate Coach for a session or a group at an appropriate level (lower level than they paddled at previously), before peer paddling. This is a particular risk for new joiners who were not trained by Richmond cc and are not familiar with this stretch of River Thames.	2	2	4	Any Coach may, initiate a review of a Paddler who has not initiated a 'return to paddling' session for themselves.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>

21	Fast and/or unusual/swirly flows when paddling past weirs/locks/rollers may cause a paddler to hit a fixed object or a moving object.	All	4	2	8	All weirs are signposted, so paddlers are warned to be observant and take avoiding action early. Paddlers are warned of the risks posed by Teddington weir and on other weirs during longer paddles. Stay well clear from the upstream when portaging through Teddington rollers. Only senior groups should be training in the weir pool and	3	1	3	If you or another paddler falls at a roller, assess your physical condition before moving on. Minor injuries from falls may not be apparent immediately due to adrenalin. After a self assessment, if necessary walk out at the lock and stay safe.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
22	High rates of flow on the River may also increase turbulence, which combined may cause the paddler to be swept more rapidly onto other hazards.	All	4	3	12	All Richmond CC club members and visitors/guests (regardless of capability/level) must operate in accordance with the table “Paddler Safety Guidelines” which are posted on the noticeboard, on the website and in the galley reference folder. <a href="https://richmondcanoecub.com/paddler-safety/paddler-safety-guidelines/">https://richmondcanoecub.com/paddler-safety/paddler-safety-guidelines/</a> If you don’t understand any part, ask a Coach. Coaches are further informed by River conditions are updated daily by the Richmond CC Management committee, to identify those paddlers who may or may not paddle. <a href="https://richmondcanoecub.com/about/rules/paddler-safety-guidelines-additional-notes-for-coaches/">https://richmondcanoecub.com/about/rules/paddler-safety-guidelines-additional-notes-for-coaches/</a> Those who are authorised to paddle should also make a personal review to consider using of a more stable boat than usual, for these conditions.	2	2	4	It is the Coaches responsibility to keep people in their group safe. The people in the group expect the Coach to keep them safe. Coaches have the last word to instruct, advise and decide for any paddler(s) as appropriate, to ensure the safety of any paddler(s). Online meteorological forecasts, tide tables and flow rates at specific points may also inform the decisions made.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent
23	Paddling in High Winds	All	2	3	6	Coaches may take groups out in wind conditions according to a dynamic risk assessment of the capability of the Coach and the capability of the group members. This dynamic risk assessment will include the effects of wind-over-tide/flow in specific sections of this stretch of the Thames. Higher wind conditions may be trained in by Race training groups and Peer Paddlers where they have successively built up, to develop personal capabilities. If there is any doubt, discuss the conditions with a Coach and ask for advice. Consider using a more stable boat.	1	2	2	It is the Coaches responsibility to keep people in their group safe. The people in the group expect the Coach to keep them safe. Coaches have the last word to instruct, advise and decide for any paddler(s) as appropriate, to ensure the safety of any paddler(s). Online meteorological forecasts, tide tables and flow rates at specific points may inform the decisions made.
Hazard Ref.	Hazard Description		Initial Assessment			Control Measures – Prevention	Residual Risk			Actions – Contingent



24	Paddling in Thunderstorms may attract a lightning strike	All	4	2	8	If there is an imminent threat of lightning strike (as indicated by thunder sound and/or lightning flash), all paddlers and should stop paddling immediately and return to the river bank by the shortest possible route. If the paddle session has not commenced, delay going out until the storm passes.	2	2	4	Coaches (and where necessary) Paddlers should act to prevent any club paddler from going out in a thunderstorm. If we see other water users placing themselves at risk, we are all empowered to draw their attention to the risk and ask them to quickly and safely, move to the bank.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
25	Paddling in Snow or Ice conditions may cause cold injuries especially when combined with a capsize.	All	4	2	8	Paddling in snow and ice require specific planning and preparation, including (but not limited to) specific dress. Discuss this with a Coach before putting on to the water. Training through a winter season with one or more of the club Coached racing groups, is a good way to develop the necessary knowledge and skills. Those who are authorised to paddle should make a personal review to consider the use of a more stable boat in these conditions.	3	1	3	Any Coach or Committee member may instruct and/or deter any club member paddler(s) as appropriate, to ensure their personal safety and the well being of the club. Online meteorological forecasts, tide tables and flow rates at specific points may inform the decisions made.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
26	Illness from water bourne element, bacteria, virus or parasite.	All paddlers, swimmers and boat crews	3	3	9	All to be aware of Weil's disease symptoms. Avoiding stagnant water reduces risks. Cover open wounds. Shower after paddling. <a href="https://www.rospace.com/leisure-water-safety/water/advice/weils-disease">https://www.rospace.com/leisure-water-safety/water/advice/weils-disease</a> Gastroenteritis - higher risk after discharge of sewage by Thames Water associated with heavy rainfall. Avoid capsizes or swimming after known / suspected discharges. Wound infections - Thames water should be considered 'dirty' and paddling should be avoided until open wounds have healed. Wound infections can lead to serious health problems including sepsis.	3	1	3	Weil's symptoms are similar to those of the flu, including high fever, severe headache, chills, muscle aches, and vomiting, and may also include a rash. Further symptoms can vary according to severity and may include jaundice (yellow skin and eyes), red eyes, abdominal pain, and diarrhoea and can be similar to those of meningitis. Severe cases can also cause the failure of kidneys or liver. Death can occur due to heart, liver or respiratory failure. Seek medical advice immediately if these symptoms exhibit and tell the GP where you have paddled/swum so that they can test for Weil's.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>



27	Entanglement in fishing lines may cause a capsizes, especially during fast flow.	All	2	3	6	Avoiding lines is the best policy. If you see a line ahead, steer to avoid it, but do not steer into other river traffic or other obstacles. Call to others in your group, to make them aware of the fishing line. Carrying a hook knife or river knife may allow you to escape danger by cutting a line.	1	2	2	If you or your boat become entangled, try once to untangle yourself but do not place yourself in danger. Focussing on the entanglement may cause you to drift into an obstacle. A tightening line during flow may cause a capsizes. While cutting a line may not be ideal for relationships with Anglers, safety always comes first.
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
28	Sunburn. Too much sunlight is harmful to your skin. A tan is a sign that the skin has been damaged. The damage is caused by ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight. Sunburn can blister the skin and make it peel. Longer term problems can arise.	All	2	3	6	Keep your top on. Wear a hat with a brim or a flap that covers the ears and the back of the neck. Stay in the shade whenever possible, during your breaks and especially at lunch time. Use a high factor sunscreen of at least SPF15 on any exposed skin. Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration. Check your skin regularly for any unusual moles or spots.	2	2	4	See a doctor promptly if you find anything that is changing in shape, size or colour, itching or bleeding. <a href="https://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/employ/sunprotect.htm">https://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/employ/sunprotect.htm</a>
<b>Hazard Ref.</b>	<b>Hazard Description</b>		<b>Initial Assessment</b>			<b>Control Measures – Prevention</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b>			<b>Actions – Contingent</b>
29	Severe Allergic reaction to insects sting, medication, shared food/drink or purchased food/drink <i>while on the water</i> (possibly even for the first time in someone's life).	All	3	3	9	Anaphylaxis (pronounced ana- fill – axis) is a medical emergency, common causes of anaphylaxis include food, wasp/bee venom (stings) and medication. Allergies to pollen, foods, venom etc are common and people with allergies can have an anaphylactic reaction for the first time (without having an adrenaline auto-injector). Risks of a serious allergic reaction while paddling are compounded by risks of water / exposure. If you or someone you know are Allergic to any substance, ensure the awareness of your Coach and/or Peer Paddlers. If you have an epi pen, make sure that they know where to find it and how to use it. Avoid contact with allergens, know the symptoms and signs of allergic reactions.	3	2	6	Recognising the signs and symptoms early and treating quickly with the medicine 'adrenaline' is vital to save life. This includes calling 999 if needed. Club Coaches and some other club members are trained in First Aid training including Anaphylaxis.