

RA CAN3 - THIS RISK ASSESSMENT IS TO BE USED FOR ALL OFFICIAL AOAC CANOEING AND KAYAKING EVENTS ON OPEN WATER AND THE SEA AND SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH BOTH THE GENERIC AND APPLICABLE SITE SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

AVON OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES CLUB

Risk Assessment Activity: Canoeing and Kayaking (Surf, Sea and Open Water)

| Risk | Who may be Affected | Mitigation |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| Obstructions to Passage | | |
| <p>a) Manmade (bridges, stanchions, piers, jetties, locks, harbour walls etc)</p> <p>b) Natural (rocks, steeply sloping beaches, seaweed etc)</p> | Activity Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inspection, reconnaissance, information from guide books etc. If in doubt avoid paddling in, around or under manmade structures. - Assess safe landing and launching points. - Identify slip and trip hazards. - Briefings and group control. - Employ launching and landing strategies. - Novices only surf at beaches with sandy and shallow sloping beach (non dumping). - Employ 'zoning' during surf sessions (paddle out and surf in). - Consider having a 'surf watcher' on the beach and buddy system whilst surfing. - Learn about wave 'sets'. - Observe and follow local guidelines including flag systems and safe zones. - Only venture into known 'safe' caves at suitable tidal levels – don't linger in caves. - Wear helmet when rock hopping, surfing or landing on rocky shores with surf. - Dynamic Risk Assessment. |
| Powerful Water | | |
| Rip tides, overfalls, tidal races and waves | Activity Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train and develop ability to assess water conditions amongst participants, especially coaches and leaders. - Review information sources (guidebooks etc). - Swim perpendicular to rip currents (i.e. along the beach). - Employ group safety strategies as required particularly when paddling out/in through surf, overfalls and tidal races. - Dynamic Risk Assessment. |
| Tides, Weather and Time | | |
| <p>a) Tidal variations (high, low, springs, neaps, rule of constants, twelfths, thirds etc)</p> <p>b) Wind, fog etc</p> <p>c) Being out after dark</p> | Activity Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review up-to-date information sources (tide tables, maps, charts, pilots, metoffice inshore waters forecast etc). - Leaders should learn about coastal navigation and planning and have completed the BCU Coastal Navigation and Tidal Planning course or similar (e.g. RYA). - Plan alternative stop/end points in case of bad weather or loss of light. - Calculate and let coastguard plus another responsible person know ETD, ETA and crux points. - Learn about Beaufort scale and the impact of wind on/over tidal flow, large bodies of water and around land |

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| | | <p>masses etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dynamic Risk Assessment. |
| Other Water Users | | |
| Swimmers, surfers, fishermen, other watercraft, marine life etc | <p>Activity Participants</p> <p>Others</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check if there is any local guidance or codes of practice (i.e., Pembrokeshire Marine Code). - Be aware of likelihood of other water users. - Keep an eye and ear out for likely signs. - Maintain a reasonable distance. - If separate surfing/swimming areas have been established use them. - Learn surf etiquette (don't drop in). - Learn how to avoid a collision (deliberate capsizes). - Be courteous. - Don't linger in an area or restrict the rights of other users. - Consider the bow wave or wake of large craft (particularly catamaran ferries). - Give way to larger craft. - Learn about the risk of paddling near sea bird nesting sites during the nesting season (particularly from gull attack) or seal areas when young pups are around. |
| Communications | | |
| <p>a) Poor or no phone signal.</p> <p>b) Groups become spread out.</p> <p>c) Poor briefing.</p> | Activity Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use AOAC Leaders' Aide Memoire when planning or briefing a trip. - Don't rely on mobile phones but do carry one whenever possible. - Make a plan and let someone know when to expect you back or to be off the water. - Carry a VHF radio if possible (requires licence). - Notify coastguard of intended paddle, variations and completion. - Carry strobes, flares, torches, glowsticks etc. - Establish a rendezvous point and time if paddling with other groups. - Establish an Incident Plan to be followed during the trip i.e. 'Actions on' a paddler having a swim. - Use CLAP strategy during trip. - Brief and use simple verbal and visual instructions. - Check understanding. - Gather the group regularly. - Check paddler welfare. - Dynamic Risk Assessment. |

Last Reviewed: Aug 2015 by S Gay