

AOAC PADDLE SPORT ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)

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2. Introduction

2.1 AOAC paddle sport activities must be carried out by AOAC members with regard to an appropriate duty of care, following the generally accepted canoeing best practice guidelines and in accordance with AOAC management documents, Paddle Sport Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Risk Assessments (RA).

2.2 The Paddle Sport SOPs are:

- a) Paddle Sport Activity Management (this document).
- b) Store and Equipment SOP.

3. Definitions

3.1 Coaching

The act of imparting knowledge to a person in order to develop their skills, experience and knowledge. Coaching can be a planned or an opportune activity.

3.2 Leading

To manage a group for the purposes of a journey where the intent is to provide a recreational experience. The activity and environment should be selected to avoid "coaching by default", arising from a situation where a participant's skill level is insufficient for the activity environment.

3.3 Paddle Lead

The title given to an individual charged with the responsibility for coordinating the paddle sport activity when on a formal Club Activity, Event or Trip. The Paddle Lead may be a qualified or extended remit Coach or Leader.

3.4 Leader

Person in charge of a group who has been approved to lead AOAC paddle sport events. may also have an overview responsibility of a Second Leader led group. The overview will include all major decisions on risk management and group organisation.

3.5 Second Leader

Person in charge of a semi-autonomous group, being responsible for dynamic RA and management of the group under the overview of the Leader.

3.6 Participant

Member of a group that is being led.

3.7 Club Activity (Events and Trips)

Activities which are considered as being carried out as official AOAC "Club Activity" as defined in the AOAC Health and Safety Policy and AOAC Activity Management Policy (i.e. only those which have been advertised on either the Calendar, or Forum, or both and have an Approved Activity Leader). Club Activities have third party liability insurance cover under the club policy. Coaches/Leaders must comply with this SOP when taking part in Club Activities.

3.8 Private Activity (Events and Trips)

Activities that are not classed as Club Activities and therefore, are not covered by club policy or insurance. It is advised that Coaches/Leaders and Participants of such activities should follow the spirit and guidelines of "Club Activities". However, there may not be an AOAC approved Coach/Leader on these activities or a Coach/Leader may be operating above their qualification or extended remit. Participants must make their own judgement as to whether or not to go on such events. Private events and trips may be advertised on the AOAC Forum but it must be made clear that the event is 'Private' and not covered by club policy.

3.9 Competent Paddler

A Competent Paddler is a Participant with satisfactory ability to paddle relative to the environment (e.g. river grade or sea conditions). It will, in all cases be taken that this will be a minimum of British Canoeing (BC) Explore (old 2 Star) standard for all activities not led / coached by a qualified or Extended Remit Coach.

3.10 Activity Venue

A location at which the activity is to be undertaken. This may be stated as a specific named river section, beach, coastal section, estuary, lake / lock or canal.

3.11 Environment Level

The expected or prevailing river grade, surf height or sea condition. Activities will usually be undertaken in "normal" conditions, i.e. a river grade is taken as the conditions on which the majority of people will paddle it, this being the grade usually stated in guide books.

3.12 Extended Remit

An AOAC RA process carried out in order to approve an extension to the current qualification held by a Coach or Leader. The Extended Remit may be full or limited.

3.14 Event Organiser

The person who has taken on responsibility for organising a specific club activity. The Event Organiser does not need to be a qualified coach or leader.

4. Applicability

4.1 This SOP is applicable to all AOAC canoeing and kayaking Club Events and Trips.

5. Approval of Extended Remit for Coaches and Leaders

5.1 It is accepted that BC Qualified Coaches and Leaders can operate in accordance with the BC remit applicable to their qualification. This operating remit may be "extended" for AOAC activities in accordance with this SOP. An individual's BC award will be recorded alongside the Extended Remit in order to assist Event Organisers when selecting suitable Coaches and Leaders for events.

5.2 Any person wishing to act in a Coach or Leader capacity with "Extended Remit" must satisfy themselves, the Paddle Sports Coordinator and, through the unanimous consensus of three or more Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person(s), that they have sufficient personal experience, competence and currency of performance for the desired extension. The following factors will determine this level:

- a) Valid and current BC qualifications already held. Copies / verification of award certificates will be required.
- b) Valid and current BC safety and rescue training courses, which have been attended as applicable to the environment.
- c) Personal paddling experience and ability (minimum BC Explore (old 2 Star) standard.
- d) Ability to manage and control a group, including RA, briefing, use of CLAP, safety consideration and rescue skills.
- e) Familiarity with the activity venues and environmental conditions.
- f) Evidence of self-reflection and awareness of training needs and any gaps

5.3 To be considered for Extended Remit paddlers must submit an application (template available on AOAC website or from Paddlesport Coordinator), providing the information stated above, to the Paddle Sports Coordinator for consideration.

5.4 There are 2 levels of extended remit:

- a) Limited. This is the normal level of extension that may be granted and allows the leader/coach to work in locations and conditions that they are suitably familiar with. The number of participants in a group led/coached by the holder of a limited extended remit is not to exceed the BC guidelines.
- b) Full. This level of extended remit should only be given to an individual who is exceptional and who has clearly proven that they have all of the skills, experience and personal attributes required of the full BC qualification. Any leader granted a full extended remit must have completed the relevant BC training course for the qualification for which they are granted extended remit.

5.5 In either case the Extended Remit will not exceed one level above the BC qualification held , and applicants will be encouraged to undergo the relevant BC training prior to being granted Extended Remit. All Extended Remits are to be reviewed at the annual canoe sport development meeting. Extended Remit coaches/leaders should be encouraged to gain the full BC qualification in due course.

5.6 Records of all Coaches' / Leaders' BC awards and Extended Remits will be held by the Paddle Sports Coordinator and Coaching Deputy, copied to the AOAC Policy Officer and made available to all AOAC Coaches and Event Organisers.

5.7 Only suitably qualified BC Coaches or Extended Remit Coaches are permitted to lead participants that are below Explore (old 2 Star) ability. However, a Coach may, at their discretion, supervise an unqualified person assisting in the delivery of a Club Activity.

5.8 When on an official Club Activity, Leaders may only lead a group of Competent Paddlers. A leader may lead a group of participants of lower skill level than his or her self but only at a venue and environment level where the group are competent. The environment level must always be within that described in the BC definition of the leader qualification or extended remit held.

5.9 When operating on their own or as the senior coach/leader within a team, a coach/leader granted a Limited Extended Remit is not permitted to coach/lead at any activity venue that they are unfamiliar with, even if that venue is similar to another venue that they are familiar with (they must have previously paddled a particular section of river, canal, lake or coastline). The same principal also applies to situations where the environmental conditions are unfamiliar. However, when operating as a Second Leader or Deputy Coach the Limited Extended Remit holder may do so at a venue or in conditions that they are unfamiliar with, as long as they are supervised by a suitable fully qualified (BC or Extended Remit) coach or leader.

5.10 Despite holding an Extended Remit, a Coach / Leader must also consider the prevailing factors prior to commencing and during the event, when assessing if they have sufficient capabilities and resources to manage the risks of the activity.

5.11 Any Coach or Leader found to be acting in disregard to these SOP may be considered negligent and is to be reported to the AOAC Committee for possible disciplinary action.

5.12 Club events may have a Paddle Lead appointed. The Paddle Lead is a coordinating role and the incumbent is to consult with the other coaches and leaders (taking part in the event) in carrying out the responsibilities of the role. The Paddle Lead responsibilities are:

- a) To decide, before the event commences, whether or not a paddler is competent to take part in the event.
- b) To agree and allocate Coaches, Leaders and Participants to groups, bearing in mind the rules on extended remits contained in this SOP.
- c) To support the Event Organiser by providing advice on the planned activity.

5.13 The Paddle Lead does not need to be the most senior Coach/Leader on the trip. Once activity has commenced the allocated Coach/Leader for a group has responsibility for ensuring that they and their group act in accordance with the club rules, SOP and RA.

6. Risk Management

- 6.1 The AOAC Paddle Sports Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the club has up-to-date:
- a) Generic Canoeing and Kayaking RA.
 - b) Environment specific Canoeing and Kayaking RA – where applicable

6.2 All Coaches and Leaders are to be familiar with the contents of the Generic Canoeing and Kayaking RA.

6.3 Activity Venues that are used regularly may have a Site Specific RA produced and held by the club. The Paddle Sports Coordinator is responsible for deciding if an Activity Venue warrants the production of a Site Specific RA and for overseeing the production. Coaches and Leaders should familiarise themselves with the Site Specific RA where they exist.

6.4 All Coaches and Leaders must take reasonable and practicable steps to minimise risks in accordance with the AOAC – Generic, Environment and Site Specific Canoeing RA.

6.5 Prior to the day's activity, all Coaches and Leaders are to carry out a "daily" RA. A Coach/Leader Aide Memoire is available from the club website to support this.

6.6 Throughout the activity, a Coach/Leader is to undertake continuous, dynamic RA.

6.7 All Coaches and Leaders must work within the AOAC Health and Safety Policy.

6.8 A Coach or Leader has the right to cancel, suspend or modify an event or to decline or curtail a person's participation in an event if, in their opinion, that person has insufficient experience to participate in the event to an acceptable level, or for any other reason as defined in the AOAC Health and Safety Policy, or AOAC Club Rules, or if the aims of the event can no longer be achieved.

6.9 Occasionally, whilst on a Club Activity a Coach/Leader and Participants may wish to paddle outside of the terms of this SOP and the club RA. AOAC accepts that, as adults, such paddlers are within their rights to make that decision and will not seek to curtail that activity. However, such activity then becomes a Private Activity and as such is not subject to club rules or insurance policy. The Paddle Lead must make clear to all participants when the activity is regarded as a Private Activity.

6.10 The Event Organiser may be a different person from the person coaching or leading the event activity. It is vital that the Event Organiser is aware of any relevant health and safety issues, or other restrictions for each Participant of an event. The Coach / Leader and Event Organiser must, where known, make each other aware of such issues.

6.11 The Event Organiser should complete a list of the event participants for an event. This may be done through the Event Proposal form on the website.

7. Hazard and Incident (Accident) Reporting

7.1 If an incident, accident or near miss occurs it should be reported using the AOAC Accident Report form. Where there has been a major incident, for example a fatality, the Leader or Coach will need to assist the Police; all other matters can be handled by the AOAC Communications Officer who

should be contacted and will deal with any press communication. If the Communications Officer is not available another member of the Committee should be contacted.

8. Leader, Coach and Event Organiser Resources

8.1 Best practice is detailed on the BC website. Additional, recommended sources of information will be listed on the AOAC website, for example: Aide Memoir, books, DVDs, How To Organise Events information and RA etc.

9. Equipment

9.1 A Coach / Leader must ensure that they personally and all Participants collectively have sufficient safety and rescue equipment applicable to the activity being undertaken. Participants are encouraged to share in owning and carrying such kit in order to create a larger pool of resources to deal with any incident. White water and sea kayaking leader packs are available free of charge for all Coaches/Leaders. They contain the key safety equipment a coach/leader could be expected to carry.

9.2 Club equipment can be used by members on both Club Activities and Private Activities, provided that it is hired and used in accordance with the club Equipment Policy.

9.3 When a paddler is providing their own equipment, the Coach / Leader may decline a person's participation if, in their opinion, the equipment is unsafe or unsuitable for the activity being undertaken.

10. Training, Professional and Personal Development

10.1 All Coaches and Leaders are encouraged to undertake Continuous Professional Development to at least the minimum required by the BC to maintain their qualification, in accordance with generally accepted canoeing best practice standards.

10.2 Extended Remit and potential Coaches / Leaders and assistants are also encouraged to undertake BC training courses, participate in club mentoring activities and seek further development opportunities.

10.3 Coaches and Leaders may apply for subsidised training / assessment costs in accordance with the AOAC Training Policy.

11. Events Programme

11.1 The Paddle Sports Coordinator will prepare the outline of the 6 monthly (summer and winter) canoeing event programme. Meetings will be held to agree the programme and determine Event Organisers, Paddle Leads for each event. The Event Organiser will then submit the event forms, in accordance with the "How to Organise an Event" guidance.