Risk Assessment

Date of most recent review: 05/2020 – Chris Woolley

Introduction

Purpose

This risk assessment examines the dangers inherent in the activities carried out by Cambridge University Canoe Club. Through consideration of the means by which these dangers (risks) could be eliminated or reduced in severity or likelihood, a number of control measures have been suggested. These have been used as the basis of the Club's safety policy. Those using this risk assessment should note that the dynamic and varied nature of the sport of canoeing does not allow a completely comprehensive risk assessment to be made. Paddlers, particularly those leading groups, should carry out their own informal and dynamic risk assessments before and during any canoeing activity. This is particularly important on moving water; indeed, it could be argued that the ability to carry out dynamic risk assessment is the basis of effective river leadership.

Using This Document

The risk assessment is split into two discrete sections: placid water (which includes polo and swimming pool activity) and moving water (artificial courses and wild rivers).

The probability of risks occurring (Prob.) is assessed as high (H), medium (M) or low (L). A high probability indicates that the risk occurs regularly on Club activities. Medium probabilities relate to events that have occurred on Club activities or which are likely to do so at some time, whilst low probability risks have never occurred (and are unlikely to do so).

The severity of each risk (Sev.) is also assessed as high, medium or low. A high severity indicates risk of severe hospitalising injury or death. A medium risk is one which may require a visit to A&E or less urgently to a doctor. Low severity relates to events which can be dealt with on site and don't require intervention by medical professionals. Risk severity also aims to account for possible effects on the group or bystanders as a result of the initial incident. This is particularly relevant to those providing safety and rescue as required rescue techniques may also carry significant risk. This is marked (SR) where risk to those providing safety is elevated (for example where "go rescues" such as live-baiting are necessary).

To provide a broader spectrum, risk categorisation levels are sometimes given as between high and medium, or medium and low. These are designated as M/H and L/M respectively.

It is important that all paddlers are familiar with the risk assessment and it should, therefore, be published on the Club website. It must be recognised that the document will need to be updated regularly. This will be the responsibility of the nominated Coaching and Safety Officer. As a minimum the risk assessment should be reviewed:

- After the Annual General Meeting by the new Committee
- After any accident or ‘near miss’
- When any member identifies a significant hazard not already mentioned in the document

Carrying Out a Risk Assessment

It is important that those updating this document know how to carry out a risk assessment. These guidelines may also be useful to those carrying out their own dynamic risk assessments when on the water. There are 5 steps to carrying out a risk assessment:

1. Identify the hazards – those things with potential to cause harm
2. Identify the risks – who might be harmed and how?
3. Develop control measures to either eliminate the risk or reduce it to an acceptable level
4. Evaluate the probability that the risk will occur
5. Record your findings and review them

It is important to keep the ‘big picture’ in mind and not get bogged down in detail. Risk assessments are best carried out by a group to use a wide pool of knowledge and ideas.

Risk Assessment: General

Hazard	**Risks**	**Control Measures**	**Prob.**	**Sev.**	**Further Action**
Member conduct	Physical or psychological injury or mental health problems caused by: aggressive or violent behaviour, poor practice, rule violations,	Code of conduct, health and safety, welfare and safeguarding policies and disciplinary procedures in place. Appropriately experienced and/or qualified coaches/session leaders in place for the level of participant. Appropriately experienced and/or qualified officials for in place for the level of competition.	L	M	Annual Club handover ensure clear understanding of Club governance and oversight from the University Ensure Club members sign up to Club policies annually.

	harassment or bullying.				
Social Activities and Alcohol	Physical injury or illness Damage to property or equipment	Code of Conduct in place If an individual turns up to train or compete having been drinking or clearly suffering from the effects of a night out, they will not be permitted to participate in sporting activities. The club will provide non-alcoholic drink options and access to food as part of their social activities. The club will not pressure anyone to take part or pass any form of initiation as part of their membership of the Club. Social activities will not involve, or promote, unsafe, illegal, degrading or anti-social behaviour or be based on the excessive consumption of alcohol. Anyone who does drink to excess will be supported in returning to their college or residence and someone, who has not been drinking and can monitor their wellbeing, will be informed of their condition.	L	L/M	Have clear disciplinary procedure published.
Equipment (Specifics covered below in water focus section)	Injury due to equipment failure	Adhere to National Governing Body and/or statutory standards for equipment purchases. Club management of asset list and knowledge of condition and replacement timelines. Mark and remove unsafe equipment from use and appropriate, safe disposal	L	M	

		Appropriate equipment checks, inspections and service regime			
	Injury due to lack of appropriate equipment	Ensure that all people partaking in an activity are aware of and make use of essential equipment. The club provides all essential equipment.	L	M	Replace any out of service equipment.
	Injury due to misuse	Ensure that all people using equipment are informed of correct use. Have adequate supervision by experienced paddlers where technique is being learnt.	L/M	M	

Risk Assessment: Placid Water

Swimming Pools

Hazard	Risks	Control Measures	Prob.	Sev.	Further Action
Water	Drowning	Ensure participants can swim. Teach capsize drill. Lifeguard on duty at all sessions. Experienced paddlers often observing.	L	H	
Equipment	Entrapment in boat on capsize	Teach capsize drill and rolling. Boats are easy to exit. Appropriate supervision and wear appropriate footwear	M	L	
Slippery Floors	Falling injuries	Obey pool rules. Do not run.	M/H	L/M	
Other Paddlers	Impact Injuries	Space paddlers out, no swimming	M	L/M	

Placid Water (The Cam)

As for swimming pools, with the following extra hazards:

Hazard	Risks	Control Measures	Prob.	Sev.	Further Action
Water	Drowning	Where buoyancy aids while on or near water. Ensure participants can swim. Teach capsize drill.	L	H	Annually test buoyancy aids.

Other water users (esp. rowers)	Collision	Watch out for other craft. Move out of the way of all other water users.	M	L/M	
Locks / Weirs	Getting caught in deep recirculating hydraulics	Avoid locks. An experienced person should inspect and research weir hydraulics before paddling into them. Use appropriate whitewater equipment.	L	H (SR)	
Rubbish	Cuts, other injuries	Avoid. Keep a first aid kit in sheds. Encourage appropriate footwear	L/M	L/M	Train enough first aiders that there can be at least one on every session.
Weather	Hypothermia, Immersion Hypothermia	Dress appropriately for conditions. Group members monitor themselves and others in cold conditions.	L/M	L/M	Add informative posters around site.
Cold water	Hypothermia, Immersion Hypothermia	Dress appropriately for conditions. Group members monitor themselves and others in cold conditions.	L/M	M	
Heavy Boats	Manual Handling Injuries	Teach and use correct lifting and rescue techniques.	L/M	L/M	Add informative posters around site.

Water	Contracting Illness	Do not ingest water. Shower and wash hands after paddling.	M	M	Add informative posters around site. Introduce a reporting system to keep track. EA water report.
	Weil's Disease	Cover open wounds with waterproof plasters. Consult a doctor if flu like symptoms develop, informing them of Weil's disease risk. For more info: https://www.rospa.com/Leisure-Safety/Water/Advice/Weils-Disease	L	H	Add informative posters around site.
Overexertion	Muscular injury	Warm up. Teach correct movement. Consider group members when planning length of trip.	L	L/M	
Riverbank	Injuries due to slips and falls	Encourage appropriate footwear. Advise paddlers to take care. Maintain site.	M	L/M	

N.B. When flooded the Cam may become far more dangerous. It should then be treated as a 'wild river' and the appropriate precautions taken.

Polo

As for swimming pools or placid water, with the following extra hazards:

Hazard	**Risks**	**Control Measures**	**Prob.**	**Sev.**	**Further Action**
Equipment	Entrapment in boat on capsize	Teach rolling. Appropriate supervision and wear appropriate footwear.	M	M	Perform additional capsize drill for use of fibre boats.

Other Players	Impact Injuries	Wear helmets, faceguards, polo buoyancy aids. Obey rules. Use paddles suitable for polo. Gauge player competency before doing contact drills.	M	L/M	
Slippery Surfaces	Falling injuries to referee	Wear appropriate footwear. Avoid running.	M	L/M	
Travel to matches	See relevant section in 'Moving Water'				

Risk Assessment: Moving Water

The following risk assessment covers typical paddling trips on wild rivers in the UK and abroad. The hazards present and their severity will vary depending on the river. This risk assessment is relevant to paddling on artificial courses but see the notes below the table.

Hazard	**Risks**	**Control Measures**	**Prob.**	**Sev.**	**Further Action**
Travel	Car/ Minibus accidents	Follow Highway code. Do not drive when tired. Suitably qualified and experience driver. Sufficient time provided for trip with adequate rest breaks. Appropriate insurance and breakdown cover.	L	H	Have contingency plans in place.

	Breakdown, vehicle unsafe to drive	Vehicle must be in good working order. Appropriate insurance and breakdown cover. When renting, do so from reputable businesses.	L	M/H	
	Roof rack problems	Train members to secure boats (BC 2* or equivalent training). Check roof racks before travel.	L	M/H	
	Trailer accidents	Tow at correct speed, take extra care.	L	H	
	Getting lost	Ensure precise destination and recommended route are known beforehand. Travel in convoy where roads are less well known by drivers.	M	L	
Long Days	Exhaustion	Adjust trip length to suit participants. Carry food.	M	M	
	Hypothermia	Dress correctly for conditions. Carry hot drinks, spare clothing, group shelter and/or exposure bags.	M	M	
	Hyperthermia	Carry cold drinks on hot days.	L	L/M	
Water	Accelerated/ Immersion Hypothermia	Rescue swimmers fast. Teach rolling.	M	M	

	Drowning	Require that all members are competent swimmers. Instruct on capsize drill, rolling and swimming in moving water. Teach rescue techniques. Carry appropriate rescue equipment.	L	H	
	Waterborne diseases	Try not to ingest water. Take further precautions when there is a known problem	L/M	M	
	Stoppers and other river features etc.	Avoid by good leadership and paddling. Teach methods for paddling through and in stoppers. Paddlers should know about swimming in and rescue from stoppers.	M	M (SR)	
Rocks	Knocked Unconscious	Wear helmet. Adopt correct position when capsized and when swimming.	L	H (SR)	
	Injury	Wear helmet and buoyancy aid. Avoid rocks by use of good technique. Carry first aid kit.	M	M	
	Pinning	Avoid rocks by good leadership and paddling. Know how to cope with broaching on a rock. Group leaders know how to rescue from pins.	M	M	
	Entrapment	Use correct technique when swimming.	L	M/H (SR)	

Trees	Caught in strainer	Avoid trees in river by good leadership. Knowledge of swimming techniques	L	H (SR)	
Equipment	Entrapment in boat	Inspect equipment. Teach Capsize drill. Keep area between legs clear.	L	M/H	
	Breakage	Inspect equipment and use appropriate equipment for conditions. Carry splits.	H	L/M	
	Entanglement in rescue equipment	Learn how to use throwlines and chest harnesses properly. Carry knife.	M	M	
	Manual Handling Injuries	Teach good technique at all levels. Ask for assistance when required.	M	L/M	
Riverbank	Falling Injuries	Wear helmet and buoyancy aid at all times. Wear appropriate footwear. Take care.	M/H	L/M	
	Falling into river	Wear helmet and buoyancy aid at all times. Wear appropriate footwear. Take care.	L/M	L/M	

Artificial courses will not have the same problems relating to long days, nor will the objective hazards (rocks, trees, stoppers etc.) be as severe. It is for this reason that artificial courses are useful sites for training, particularly for less experienced paddlers. However, the leaders of less experienced groups on these sites must be aware that the control measures based on individual skills may be unworkable and balance this against the lower objective danger. In addition, the artificial sites used have site specific risks, listed below.

* Risk severity is provisional due to lack of site experience; these need to be confirmed. Severity is likely overestimated to ensure extra caution (estimated as if it were wild water). Artificial sites typically have less severe risk due to easier safety provision, though in some cases the scenario is similar to white water despite this.

Site	**Risks**	**Control Measures**	**Prob.**	**Sev.**	**Further Action**
Cardington	Catching fingers in metal loops	Instruct paddlers to keep hands away from riverbed.	M	M/H*	
	Impact on shallow channel	Wear helmets.	M	M/H*	
	Pinning on fibreglass ‘rocks’	Set course up to avoid hazards. Have rescuers ready on bank	M	M*	
Nene	Pinning on bottom ‘splat rock’	Instruct paddlers to break out as early as possible. Teach paddlers to lean onto obstructions.	H	M*	
Nottingham	Problems with paddling, swimming and rescue caused by	Brief paddlers carefully about course and rescue procedures. Group leaders should be experienced in paddling at the course.	H	M*	

	water conditions				
	Contracting waterborne illness	Brief paddlers. Wash before eating. Do not ingest water.	H	L/M	
Lee Valley	Collisions with rafts	There is an assessment for the Olympic Course. Brief Paddlers.	L	L/M*	

Risk Assessment: CUCC Site

Site	**Risks**	**Control Measures**	**Prob.**	**Sev.**	**Further Action**
General Site	Cuts / grazes from foliage.	Take care.	M	L	Clear intrusive foliage. Annual clear out of site and sheds. Mark overhanging branches.
	Falling trees / branches	Don't run sessions in high wind / storm conditions.	L	M/H	Have formal annual tree assessment / management.
	Trips and falls from uneven surfaces.	Take care. Wear appropriate footwear. Do not run.	H	L	Mark steps and other trip haxards.

Track to Road	Tripping / falling injuries.	Wear appropriate footwear. Do not run.	H	L	Clear trip hazards which can be. Mark temporary ones. Re-work path and esp. Matting. Possibly improve drainage.
	Cuts/grazes from foliage.	Take care.	M	L	Clear intrusive foliage.
Paths	Tripping / falling injuries.	Wear appropriate footwear. Do not run.	H	L	Clear trip hazards which can be. Mark temporary ones.
Boardwalk	Tripping / falling injuries.	Wear appropriate footwear. Do not run.	H	L	Clear trip hazards which can be cleared. Mark temporary ones. Improve boardwalk grip surface.
	Falling into water.	Wear a buoyancy aid near the water.	L	L	Improve boardwalk grip surface.
	Crushing / collision with overhanging polo goals.	Keep them as clear from the boardwalk as possible.	L	L/M	Remove and rebuild polo goals.
	Falling from river ladder		M	L	Re-secure or replace river ladders
Whitewater Kit Shed	Cuts / bumps on racks and fixings.	Pad inside of racks. Tape / grind off sharp corners. Keep storage tidy. Have light available for dark conditions.	M	L	Zip-tie pads on. Further taping/rounding off. Find permanent lighting solution.
Polo Kit Shed	As whitewater kit shed with				

	the following:				
	Trips / falls / collision	Keep central area as clear as possible.	M	L	Build more space for bits/bobs/safety equipment currently in central area.
Personal Boat storage	As whitewater kit shed with the following:				
	Crushing under / between boats.	Do not go under the rack. Store boats in a secure and organised fashion.	M	M	Rebuild boat rack for easier more secure storage.
	Collapse of the rack itself.	Do not go under the rack. Do not tamper with the rack or supports. Any structure deterioration reported to committee.	L	H	Rebuild boat rack to be stronger and more stable.
Playboat Storage	As personal boat storage.				
Whitewater Boat Rack	As personal boat storage with the following:				
	Tripping on the open rack gates.	Take care. Do not run. Gate wire is wound together.	H	L	Mark gate frames with high vis tape. Rebuild boat rack with different door design. Permanent light solution.
	Crushing / entrapment under gates	Take care. Gates can only be opened by those with keys. Keys are only given to those who are responsible and familiar with the site.	M	L	Re-design upon rebuild.
Polo Boat Rack	As WW boat rack.				
Changing rooms	Tripping /	Keep floor clean and tidy. Provide light for dark conditions.	L	L	Mark / grip tape the ledge.

	falling injuries.				

REVIEW DATES

Reviewed by (name)	Signature	Date	Indicate changes here