



Haverfordwest Kayak Club

Health and Safety Policy

Scope

This policy concerns all water-based leisure activities associated with the sport of kayaking and canoeing, organised and undertaken by the Club as part of its programme of events.

Membership

The Club was established in 2002. It has approximately 100 members, including a junior section, and is managed by a committee of volunteers drawn from the membership. Within that membership there is a mix of abilities ranging from those with coaching qualifications, supported by many years of advanced paddling experience, through to complete novices with little or no familiarity with the sport or associated equipment at the time of joining. The club aims to bring together this diverse resource in order to provide an opportunity both indoors and on open water, for members to learn and gain experience in an environment that is challenging, enjoyable, and fun.

Applications from new members are invited subject to capability and membership capacity. For beginners and less experienced new members, the induction includes an initial series of pool based training activity followed by an introduction to sheltered open water.

Activities

The club arranges a range of open water paddling mostly, but not exclusively, in late spring, summer and early autumn. This activity is supplemented by weekly training sessions in the swimming pool at Haverfordwest Leisure Centre from October to March. In both cases, the junior sessions are run separately to the adult events. Pool training sessions are led by the more experienced members, some of whom possess relevant coaching qualifications, or are in the process of working towards them. A similar approach is employed when leading open water paddles.

Many members own and use their own equipment for open water paddling. However, the Club has a number of craft and associated equipment available for hire by its members in return for a nominal fee. A member of the committee maintains an inventory of club-owned kit and monitors its condition.

The sport of kayaking presents many hazards to its participants, particularly on open water. The Club aims to manage the health and safety of members prior to and during club activities by analysing the hazards and taking the appropriate steps to minimize risk. In order to facilitate this approach, the leaders of water-based club activities will be suitably experienced kayakers, familiar with the conditions likely to be encountered and the level of experience of the groups being led.



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Leadership

Members participating in club activities are reminded that they have a responsibility towards personal health and safety and that of other members. Ensuring that clothing and equipment match the conditions is primarily a personal responsibility, though the Leader will endeavour as far as is reasonably possible, to ensure that all participants are suitably equipped prior to launch.

Leaders of Club activities hold an appropriate BCU coach qualification, leadership qualification and/or have suitable experience of a variety of locations and grades of difficulty for the proposed activity. Leaders acquaint themselves with appropriate knowledge of a particular venue. They have experience of and are comfortable on more challenging grades of water and conditions. Leaders are able to rescue others, control the group and administer first aid. They are trained to plan for emergency and know the procedure to be followed in the event of an incident.

Hazard Analysis and Risk Assessment

Set out in tabular form below is an analysis of the significant hazards that may be encountered on a club event and the control measures that the Club puts in place to mitigate risk. All club members have access to this information and are encouraged to familiarise themselves with it regularly. In addition, the leader of an event, or a nominated other person, will undertake a risk assessment immediately prior to launch, using an agreed checklist used in conjunction with the safety briefing. This assessment will be supplemented by a dynamic assessment of each group as the activity progresses. Appropriate remedial action will be taken on the water if necessary. Each risk assessment and any other comments relevant to the event will be held in club records for future reference.

Review

The Committee will review this policy annually or sooner if needed, and this process will take account of any potentially harmful incidents or formal complaints arising during club activities that warranted intervention by the leader.



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Hazard Analysis and Control Measures

| Hazard | Risk | Control Measures |
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| Impact of individual with vehicle | Low | <p>Members ensure that vehicles are parked safely, preferably in lay-bys, parking bays or car parks. Extra caution is observed when transporting boats across roads (for example, Broad Haven, Dale and Gelliswick). Children are supervised by nominated adults at venues where this risk is heightened.</p> |
| Physical exertion/Fitness to paddle/musculo-skeletal injury | Medium | <p>All participants abide by the instructions and decisions of the activity leader.</p> <p>All waterborne activities commence with a group safety briefing covering hazards, group control, signals, emergency action, any participant illness, water confidence and roles.</p> <p>Welfare Officer is available to discuss any individual concerns or needs of club members in confidence.</p> <p>Leader endeavours to determine that participants are fit to undertake event. Participants exhibiting signs of exhaustion, illness, or the influence of drugs or alcohol are excluded from participation. No Club activity will involve the consumption of alcohol before or during paddling. No member will deliberately endanger themselves or others on the water.</p> <p>Members are encouraged to seek assistance with loading, unloading and carrying boats in order to minimise stress and fatigue prior to launch. Particular caution is taken with junior and older members. A club member able to offer advice on lifting and carrying techniques will be present at every club event.</p> <p>Paddlers are trained in appropriate paddling techniques to avoid injury and minimise fatigue.</p> <p>Training in on-water rescue methods avoiding excessive strain when handling waterlogged boats and paddlers in the water forms a key part of club training.</p> <p>Event leaders take account of competency of group prior to launch.</p> <p>Safety measures including tow ropes are available and employed for any member needing support on the water.</p> |



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| Emergency | Low | <p>No club water based activity shall take place with less than three participants.</p> <p>Pre-launch risk assessment includes consideration of well-being of group members.</p> <p>All members carry a whistle for raising alarm on the water.</p> <p>At least one member of the group is trained to carry out first aid response and resuscitation techniques.</p> <p>Passage planning will include contingency for escape or refuge.</p> <p>Leader will carry fully charged mobile phone and/or short wave radio.</p> <p>At least one member will carry signal flares.</p> |
| Accidental Capsize | Medium | <p>Members wear a correctly sized and fitted buoyancy aid on the water.</p> <p>All members are trained in rescue methods for capsized boats.</p> <p>Rolling a kayak is practised in training sessions.</p> |
| Entrapment following capsize | Low | <p>Members are trained in correct means of exit following capsize and subsequent rescue techniques.</p> <p>Members will wear appropriate clothing and footwear to ensure safe, unrestricted exit.</p> |



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| | | <p>Paddlers encouraged to remain in a tight group on the water.</p> <p>A risk assessment specific to fast flowing inland water raises awareness to risk from overhanging branches.</p> |
| Close proximity to rocks or other hazards | High | <p>Head protection is worn by all members.</p> <p>Leader or experienced member proceeds ahead of main group of paddlers, carrying out dynamic risk assessment of sea conditions, submerged hazards and potential for harm from immediate environment. Experienced members supervise less experienced paddlers at all times.</p> <p>Experienced member placed at the rear of the group.</p> |
| Hyperthermia/Hypothermia /Excess sun exposure | Low | <p>Leaders ensure all paddlers are appropriately clothed for the activity</p> <p>Leader is trained to recognise symptoms of stress due to adverse temperature or exposure. Appropriate equipment is carried on the water to provide initial response.</p> <p>Leader ensures that particular care taken of capsized paddler, post rescue.</p> |
| Weather conditions | High | <p>Leader obtains a reliable local weather forecast and decides whether or not to proceed, taking account of competency of group and capability of boats.</p> <p>Pre-launch risk assessment considers wind strength, direction, sea state, visibility and other relevant matters at launch point.</p> <p>Passage plan includes a suitable emergency escape route and refuge.</p> |
| Waterborne disease | Low | <p>Pre-launch risk assessment considers potential for contact with bacterial, chemical or algal contaminants.</p> <p>Members are reminded of the need to cover cuts and abrasions when paddling on inland waters</p> |



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| <p>Collision with other water users</p> | <p>Low</p> | <p>Pre-launch risk assessment considers potential hazards.</p> <p>In surf conditions, the leader will segregate members according to experience and enforce surf etiquette to ensure separation from surfers and other users.</p> <p>On white water, appropriate scouting technique is used to ensure no blind/out of control running of features.</p> <p>A safe separation distance is maintained from other waterborne leisure craft as well as commercial shipping, particularly in low visibility or poor light conditions.</p> |
| <p>Conflict</p> | <p>Medium</p> | <p>Passage planning includes advice on access on inland waters</p> <p>Pre-launch risk assessment raises awareness to potential hazards of fencing blocking/crossing rivers</p> <p>Members are reminded to be considerate to anglers and other users of the waterway and to behave in a non-confrontational manner on the water at all times.</p> |

Reviewed on.....by HWKC Committee. Next review due.....