



Devizes Canoe Club Safety & Operating Policy

HEALTH & SAFETY

1. General statement of policy

Canoeing is a sport with attendant risks. The DCC Committee agree that it is the duty of the Club, so far as is reasonably practicable, to maintain a healthy, safe and effective environment within which to enjoy all paddlesport at DCC.

To implement this policy effectively the Club has a duty to carry out assessments of all paddling activity and Club equipment in order to manage any attendant risks by: conducting risk assessment, bringing to participants' attention the hazardous nature of any activity they are engaged in and, where a risk is involved, implementing safe systems of operation and advising on ways to mitigate or eliminate the risk.

We will have a safe and enjoyable club when all Club members assume individual responsibility to co-operate with this Operating & Safety Policy and develop a general safety awareness culture within the Club.

2. Organisation and responsibilities for carrying out the policy

- Club Chairperson. The HAS Officer and other officials are accountable to the Club Chairperson for safe and efficient operation of the Club. Overall responsibility for safety thus rests with the Chairperson who has delegated day-to-day responsibility for health and safe operations to the Club's HAS Officer.
- Health & Safety Officer. The Club's Safety Policy is sponsored by the HAS Officer appointed by the Committee. The HAS Officer has a wide-ranging remit, working with coaches, other officials, parents/guardians and paddlers to ensure that we are operating in a safe way and managing risk.
- Head Coach. The Head Coach has lead responsibility for the safe conduct of 'on the water' activities and development programmes. The Head Coach is to ensure that Coaches take reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of participants under their supervision.
- Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator has responsibility for Club catering operations as required. He/she will ensure that safe kitchen and catering procedures are adopted and that volunteers are appropriately trained and equipped to ensure the health and safety of members.
- Officials. All Club officials share a responsibility for supervising general activities (including social activities) 'off the water' to ensure safe and responsible practice.
- Club Members. Every member has an individual responsibility to behave sensibly, act with common-sense and co-operate with the Club's operating and safety guidelines issued by the Club, to keep up to date with policy changes and develop a 'safety aware' culture at the Club.

3. Provision of HAS information

HAS information will be provided in summary form at the Club's premises at Lower Wharf and communicated on a case by case basis when the Club is operating remotely from Lower Wharf by the nominated Coach, Official or senior paddler with overall responsibility for organising and leading the activity.

Communication of and ensuring overall Club compliance with HAS policy is the responsibility of the HAS Officer. This Safety and Operating Policy is to be available to all members on the DCC website.

4. DCC Safety Principles

DCC has a responsibility in law to see that reasonable precautions are undertaken to ensure the safety of people participating in organised Club activities.

Where obvious hazards exist, therefore, it is expected that organisers will undertake to identify and take such precautions as seem appropriate and reasonable in the circumstances to provide for the safety of event organizers, volunteers and participants.

These could include:

- Ensuring that a risk assessment of the event or activity has taken place to establish that any planned activity or event is indeed safe and reasonable.
- That any identified hazard can be controlled, that monitoring activities for the event or activity are in place and that established cut off procedures are in place.
- Giving factual information to participants concerning the particular nature of any hazards which may exist. This could be by way of ensuring access to and knowledge of the BRITISH CANOEING Statement of Participation.
- Ensuring that each participant is aware of any risk and agrees to take action directed by the Coach to mitigate or remove it.

These actions do not absolve the organiser from his or her responsibility to undertake reasonable precautions, nor do they remove the participant's right in law to sue for damages should negligence be involved. These principles affirm that the attention of the person 'at risk' has been drawn to the hazardous nature of the activity, where one is involved.

5. Risk Assessment.

Canoeing does involve some potentially hazardous environments and has some attendant risks. All paddlers, irrespective of their experience, have a responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others.

DCC will adopt BRITISH CANOEING guidelines for risk assessment. Risk assessments are not new. They formalise what responsible organisations and activity leaders have always sought to do: to identify the potential hazards involved with an activity, to understand the risk involved and to remove, reduce or manage that risk to an acceptable level.

Responsibility for Risk Assessment. The Club HAS Officer will coordinate risk assessment, working with the Coaching Coordinator in respect of on-the-water risk. Risk assessments are to be recorded in written form and copies kept to support Club records in accordance with BRITISH CANOEING policy. DCC will maintain risk assessments as follows:

Generic risk assessment: a broad risk assessment for canoeing activity wherever it takes place. This will establish general practices for healthy and safe canoeing at DCC.

Site/Event Specific Risk Assessments. These will cover activity at specific sites, such as Lower Wharf, Swimming Pools or events such as DCC organised trips or Club races.

Dynamic Risk Assessment. Refers to the ongoing assessment that activity leaders and experienced paddlers make throughout a session or an activity as the conditions

change. Dynamic risk assessment complements any generic or site/event specific risk assessment.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING HAS POLICY.

6. Procedures for reporting and recording accidents and dangerous incidents/near misses

DCC has published procedures for reporting accidents and near misses.

An Accident and Near Misses book is to be maintained at Lower Wharf and available to all members. The book is to be checked at every organised Club session so that appropriate action or follow-up can be planned.

In summary, all accidents and incidents that could have resulted in accident or injury are to be reported in the Accident/Near Misses book in accordance with BRITISH CANOEING guidelines. Reports should include:

The date, time, name of injured person, nature of the injury, action taken and by whom.

It is also useful to record how the accident occurred, precisely what the injured person was doing, where and what was considered to be the cause of the accident. If a hazard is identified then steps can be taken to prevent a reoccurrence.

Any action taken should then be recorded. This might also apply to an incident where no one was injured but considered a 'near miss', to prevent an accident in the future.

7. First Aid

Location of first aid boxes. DCC First Aid kits are to be located:

The club house at Lower Wharf.

In one of the cars travelling to organised Club events remote from the Wharf. This kit is to be collected from the Club Secretary in advance of trips away from Devizes unless a personal, comprehensive First Aid kit is available.

First Aid Equipment Checking and Replenishment. The HAS Officer has responsibility for checking First Aid kits and replenishing supplies. These checks are to be checked on the first Club Night of every month. This check will be carried out by the HAS Officer or other person nominated by them. .

Recording the Use of First Aid Equipment. First Aid kit used is to be reconciled with the Accidents Book. With the exception of adhesive plasters used to treat very minor cuts and abrasion all First Aid kit use would require an entry in the Accidents Book.

Details of qualified first-aid personnel. All Club coaches should aim to complete an Aquatic First Aid course as part of their development. The Club Details Record records all trained First Aiders and a list of currently qualified First Aid personnel is located with the Club First Aid kit at Lower Wharf.

8. Fire procedures

The DCC Club Facilities Management Policy contains full details of fire procedures and the policy for Fire Prevention and Safety at Annex B.

9. Codes of Conduct

DCC Club Code of Conduct exists to ensure welfare of Club members and the safe enjoyment of Paddlesport by all Club members. Club members are to familiarise themselves with, and are expected to adhere in full to, the Club Code of Conduct which has been adopted by the Committee and is revised from time to time:

CLUB OPERATIONS

10. General

This section of the Club's Operating & Safety Policy summarises general precautions that apply to all Club members. These rules are detailed (and available to Club members) in other reference documents:

- DCC Boat Usage Policy
- DCC Boat Loan Agreements
- DCC Facilities Management Policy

11. Club Sessions

The Committee has endorsed a set of rules to enhance the safety, enjoyment and development of paddlers at Club sessions:

An Adult Club member will act as "Responsible Adult" at each Club session. There will be a rota for Responsible Adults which will be produced by the Club Secretary and sent out to members and posted on the Club notice board. All adult Club members will take a place on the rota and if they are unable to attend it will be up to them to organise a replacement adult Club member and to notify the secretary of his or her name in advance of the session.

The Responsible Adult will;

Open up the Club gates and the Boat store.

Ask that members swipe their fobs at the Club session.

Ask that members use their broom handles when going on and coming off the water.

Report any members that fail to swipe fobs or use broom handles to a coach or member of the committee.

Deal with enquiries from non Club members and/or refer enquiries to a coach or committee member.

Ensure that any incidents accidents or near misses are recorded in the Accident/Near misses/Incident log(s).

Ensure that any damage to equipment is reported to a coach or committee member.

Check that the premises are empty and broom handles removed from pegs and so far as possible that all members are off the water at the end of the session.

Ensure that boats and equipment are returned to the appropriate place at the end of the session and buoyancies are hung up.

Check the changing rooms are reasonably clean and tidy, all lights are turned off and ensure that the Boat Store and gates are locked at the end of the session.

Members are to turn up on time. Adult late-comers must accept that they might not get a paddle unless suitable boats are available.

Junior paddlers arriving late should not expect to paddle as the organised session may already be underway.

All juniors **MUST** participate in the planned organised session. For the avoidance of doubt the planned session will be published on the Club noticeboard or on a whiteboard.

Buoyancy aids **MUST** be worn in accordance with Club rules.

Shoes MUST be worn.

12. Advice in respect of non-members/visitors

We welcome interest from non-members and visitors who regularly visit or observe Club sessions. They will be unfamiliar with our operating procedure and these guidelines. Visitors should be introduced to an adult member or volunteer at the earliest opportunity:

We have an absolute responsibility to take every possible precaution to ensure that interest in our activities, especially those involving junior members, is healthy and appropriate.

We need to keep ourselves and visitors safe, especially when moving around the Lower Wharf area and moving boats.

Visitors do not necessarily appreciate when they are causing an obstruction or putting themselves at risk, for example by standing too close to the canal bank or cycling on the towpath.

We are part of the community and conversations with members of the public are quite natural and to be encouraged. Members are, however, expected to report 'unfriendly' or hostile interactions with members of the public to a committee member.

13. Personal Buoyancy

The Club's water safety policy is that all paddlers SHOULD be capable of swimming 50 metres unsupported and treading water for 5 minutes. Anyone who is unable to do this, or finds it challenging MUST wear a buoyancy aid when using Club equipment or taking part in Club sessions. The fitting of buoyancy aids by novices WILL be checked by coaches with instructions on suitable application and use provided. Specific Club rules apply to all members taking part in Club sessions or using Club equipment are as follows:

Flat Water Racing/Training.

Paddlers ranked Div 7 and below (K1 or K2) MUST wear buoyancy aids at all times on the water.

Adult paddlers ranked Div 6 and above MAY dispense with buoyancy aids by day if they wish.

Junior paddlers (U18) ranked Div 6 and above MAY dispense with buoyancy aids with parental permission and at the discretion of the coach in charge of the session.

All paddlers MUST wear buoyancy aids at night AND when directed to do so by a Coach or organiser in the event of inclement weather or fast river flow conditions. The organiser's word is final in this matter.

Paddlers taking part in races MUST follow race organiser instructions regarding the use of buoyancy aids at all times.

No matter what experience you have the Club rule is clear: if you are unranked or ranked Div 7 or below you MUST wear a buoyancy aid.

White Water Paddling. All participants MUST wear buoyancy aids irrespective of marathon ranking

Courses. All participants (including coaches) on novice/beginner courses MUST wear buoyancy aids. On other courses buoyancy aids may be worn at the Coaches discretion.

Swimming Pools. Paddlers participating in swimming pool sessions MAY dispense with buoyancy aids at the discretion of the coach in charge of the session.

14. Club Equipment

Club equipment is to be maintained to BRITISH CANOEING recommendations. This includes all canoe/kayak fixtures and fittings including, but not restricted to, footrests, seats, carrying handles/straps, integral or inflatable buoyancy as well as safety helmets, spraydecks and buoyancy aids.

Responsibility for equipment checking:

Coaches are responsible for conducting equipment checks on organised sessions.

Every member is responsible for individually checking the equipment they are using and following Club guidelines on safe use. This includes ensuring that they use boats that are suitable for their experience and ability levels.

Periodically the Club's Lead Coach will organise a deliberate check of equipment serviceability and report any maintenance required.

All damage, however caused, is to be reported immediately so repairs can be affected before equipment is beyond economic repair or becomes dangerous to use.

Club members and students on Club courses should be trained in the application and use of all equipment that is unfamiliar to them. This responsibility is shared by Coaches and experienced paddlers alike.

The Club has adequate storage space in the boat store at Lower Wharf. Equipment should be stacked carefully and safely using the racks provided. Care should be taken when lifting any heavy items, especially Canadian Canoes. Canadians and K2s should always be lifted by two people to minimise risk of injury.

15. Winter Rules/Night Paddling

DCC sponsors a 'year-round' paddling season. To ensure safety during the winter months the Club will adopt Winter Rules. On a date to be published on the Club notice board (typically by the end of September) the Club will notify paddlers at Lower Wharf in advance that Winter Rules are to come into force from a specified date. When this is declared:

It is compulsory for all paddlers to wear buoyancy aids after dusk.

All Club boats and ANY member paddling from Lower Wharf is to display lights in accordance with this section.

Irrespective of the season many DCC paddlers chose to paddle in the dark to extend the paddling season and to train for overnight races such as the DW. We operate on a section of canal that has very limited use after dark but we do have experience of movement on the canal after dark by narrow-boats and therefore insist that:

All Club members show a forward facing white light and a rear facing red light when paddling on the canal after dusk.

Young people (U18) will not be allowed on the water without the required lights in these situations.

When paddling away from the Club in darkness (for example of the River Thames or any flowing waterway) lights are COMPULSORY for all paddlers taking part in organised Club activities.

16. Water Conditions

Our section of the canal has no hazards associated with flow or weirs. This makes it ideal for training but may lead to a lack of awareness about situations elsewhere where the water conditions are more hazardous.

DCC plans trips to others areas including the lower sections of the K&A canal, the River Thames and river estuaries where the flow increases during periods of heavy rainfall and at certain states of the tide. Paddlers are advised that to paddle safely in these conditions they should:

Not go out alone; always buddy up on the water even if you have a support crew on the river/canal bank.

Wear a buoyancy aid

Let someone know where you are going, your launch and recovery point and an estimated time you expect to be out on the water.

Check the Environment Agency website for strong stream warnings (especially on the River Thames) and stay off the river when it has 'Red Board' conditions

Paddlers should take account of two specific water conditions relevant to the canal. The incidence of illness caused by both these conditions can be reduced by taking sensible precautions:

In summer, particularly when there has been little rainfall, the canal can become stagnated on the 'Long Pound' between Devizes and Wootton Rivers. These conditions may result in formation of blue/green algae. ***Avoid paddling in areas where you see algae and always shower and wash as soon as you come off the water.***

Weil's disease (or leptospirosis) is a relatively rare bacterial infection caused by allowing water that has been contaminated by rat's urine to come into contact open wounds, the eyes, or with the mucous membranes. In this country most cases of Weil's Disease occur in the summer and early Spring. ***Always wash your hands as soon as you come off the water and avoid eating or putting your fingers anywhere near your mouth/nose/eyes until they have been thoroughly washed.***

Paddlers are STRONGLY ADVISED to read information leaflets about Weil's Disease and to become well informed about the risks, sensible precautions that can be taken to avoid infection and the recommended action to take if you think that you have been infected.

17. Hazards associated with ice.

The Canal regularly freezes in the winter months and ice is a common hazard from late December to February. Different sections of the canal freeze at different times unless there is a sustained cold spell. Ice is particularly dangerous for paddlers because:

It can damage boats and rudders

It increases the risk of capsizing

It can prevent capsized paddlers from reaching the bank

Paddlers MUST portage sections of the canal that are iced up. Do not attempt to paddle through ice.

The club reserves the right to ban the use of Club equipment if the general weather and ice conditions are considered too dangerous for paddling to take place.

ROUTINE CLUB OPERATING PROCEDURES

The basis of this section of the document is to guide instructors, volunteers and officials at the Club to ensure the efficient safe and secure routine operation of the Club. It will help to prevent problems as a result of people "not knowing" how we operate.

18. Access to the Club

The DCC Facilities Management Policy contains full details of Access and Parking arrangements on the land leading to the Club premises.

The main gate and Boat stores will be locked with combination locks. Adult Club members will be provided with the combination code for the main gate lock which will be changed annually or

as circumstances require. Breaching the rules about access may result in access being refused outside Club sessions.

The Boat Store combination will be changed on the first Tuesday of each month and the new number notified to the committee and Club Coaches and the following month's Responsible Adult for Club sessions.

The Club changing rooms will be locked with an electronic fob system. All members will be issued with a fob to permit access. The fob must be swiped without fail on every attendance at Club. Failure to do this will jeopardise our grant funding and therefore the Club's future and will result in disciplinary action which could lead to expulsion.

Members who have signed up to a Boat Storage agreement will be provided with a combination code (for the side access gate lock and) to the private members section of the boat store.

In all cases where the Club premises are used outside Club sessions and other sessions organised by or for the Club no one other than Club members is to be permitted access to the Club premises. Care should be taken to avoid noise and nuisance to local residents and canal users.

After access and Club sessions the boat shed, changing rooms, main building and the gates are to be securely locked by the last adult to leave the site.

19. Equipment Usage

The use of Club boats and other equipment will be regulated in accordance with the Boat Usage Policy.

20. Coaching

DCC has a number of qualified coaches and experienced paddlers who can pass on helpful guidance to others. The Club Policy is to follow British Canoeing guidelines in relation to courses of instruction and safety and the Club has a Child Protection and Harassment Policy, Risk Assessments, and has adopted an Equality Statement and a Club Code of Conduct.

There are some rules and guidelines that should be observed by Coaches in relation to courses or sessions organised by or for the Club and any courses and sessions that take place partly on Club Premises or where Club Premises are used.

Course Fees should follow the Club's existing fee structure unless a variation is agreed by the Committee.

Session Fees may be charged with the prior authorisation of the Committee.

Coaches may claim a sum in relation to expenses with the prior authorisation of the Committee.

If Coaches arrange ad hoc courses or sessions using any part of Club premises they should advertise the course or session on the Club notice board prior to it taking place so that it is available to all members. It is understood that different levels of paddler competence may be required to attend and this should be clearly stated on the notice.

21. Boat Loans and Use of Club Equipment Away from Lower Wharf

The use of Club equipment at Lower Wharf is covered in paragraph 19 (above). In addition to these rules equipment may be loaned to paddlers for longer periods and in order to participate in specific events such as the Waterside Series, Hasler Series and DW. The Club has a specific

procedure to cover boat loans. In summary:

Club equipment on loan to members will be the subject of a formal boat loan agreement. Details obtainable from the Club Secretary.

Boat loans will attract a charge agreed between the Club and individual(s)

Members who borrow boats on a longer-term basis will remain completely liable for their safe transport, storage and use.

All problems with equipment including repairs necessary are to be notified to the Club Secretary at the earliest opportunity so they can be addressed in time.

Boats will be inspected before and at the end of the loan period. Repairs will be arranged by the Club and will be the sole financial responsibility of the individuals (or their parents/carers) signing the loan agreement.

Individuals borrowing Club equipment on boat loans will additionally be expected to be full Adult or Junior members of the Club in the year in which the loan takes place.

External organisations may be authorised to use Club equipment however, this is limited to 'plastic' GP kayaks and canoes, and Club equipment is only to be used when supervised by a qualified coach.

22. Emergency Procedures

The Club will hold an emergency contact number for a parent or guardian (and school number) if applicable for all junior paddlers taking part in club sessions or courses.

All paddlers attending a DCC canoeing course MUST complete a health declaration (in writing) and the instructor should ask if they have any medical conditions that they should know about. For young people this information MAY be provided by a parent or guardian.

DCC will publish emergency incident procedures and make them available to all paddlers on the Club's notice board at Lower Wharf:

Stay calm but act swiftly and observe the situation.

Is there danger of further injuries?

Listen to what the injured person is saying.

Alert the first-aider who should take appropriate action for minor injuries.

In the event of an injury requiring specialist treatment, call the emergency services.

Deal with the rest of the group and ensure that they are adequately supervised.

Do not move someone with major injuries. Wait for the emergency medics.

Contact the injured person's parent/carer.

Complete an incident/accident report form.

Important: if you witness a 'near miss' which is an incident that could have resulted in an injury or serious accident it is very important to record it (anonymously if you wish) in the 'Near Miss' book.

This will enable us to learn and take the appropriate corrective action before an accident happens. In the event of a serious incident Club Officials are not to speak to the media/press about the incident without clearing a line to take with the Club Chairperson, who may decide to contact the BRITISH CANOEING Press Officer for further advice. It is particularly important that the following line is taken:

No admission of liability

No further comment until all the facts are known

The club's immediate concern is for the welfare/safety of the individuals involved (if appropriate)

23. Club Courses

The Club's policy is to follow BRITISH CANOEING guidelines for coaching and with respect to safety on courses and programmes of instruction.

Coaches are to gather information about the group that they will be working with to include medical information, particular needs (including behavioural/social needs) and swimming ability.

It is not essential to be able to swim but paddlers SHOULD be capable of swimming 50m unaided and treading water for 5 minutes. Students that cannot do so MUST wear buoyancy aids on the water at all times and SHOULD be encouraged to attend aquafit sessions to improve swimming ability and water confidence.

Students are to be advised what to do with valuables, spectacles (if worn) and sun cream. It sounds obvious but people need reminding.

A safety briefing is to be given to students warning of any potential hazards identified through risk assessment and actions to take in the event of capsizing or emergency.

Coaches are to ensure that a First Aid kit is available within reasonable range, that they have a mobile telephone to summon assistance if remote from a support crew with First Aid kit or from Lower Wharf

Coaches are to ensure that they are themselves familiar with and have understood the Club Safety and Operations policy

Coaches are to ensure that clothing worn is appropriate to the ability, air/water temperature, wind chill factor. All paddlers are to wear protective wear shoes or wetsuit boots in accordance with Club policy.

DCC guidelines for coach to student ratios are to be applied for all introductory courses and for coached sessions on moving water. Recommended Coach to Student ratios are 1:6. Coaching ratios for experienced paddlers and for flat water sessions may be altered at the Coach's discretion although should not exceed 1:8 unless the coach is experienced and has completed a risk assessment for the activity proposed.

24. Trips away from Lower Wharf

BRITISH CANOEING guidelines are followed for Club trips and journeys away from Lower Wharf. The general risk assessment applies to these trips and Coaches are responsible for making a dynamic risk assessment for all trips run by the Club. Paddlers are to read the detailed guidelines in the 'Participation in Trips Organised by Devizes Canoe Club' document. This may be requested from the Club Secretary and is published on the website.

25. Conduct outside Club Sessions

DCC is a friendly club that encourages social activity off the water and particularly supports events where adults and junior members are able to socialise together in a safe and healthy manner.

If you can think of a way to improve this Policy please discuss it in the first instance with the HAS Officer who has overall responsibility for the Club's Safety & Operating Policy.

DCC POLICY REFERENCES

DCC Club Risk Assessments

DCC Code of Conduct

DCC Junior Section Code of Conduct

DCC Boat Usage Policy
DCC Equity Policy
DCC Facilities Management Policy

ADDITIONAL POLICY REFERENCES

BRITISH CANOEING Duty of Care Policy
BRITISH CANOEING Coaches Code of Conduct
BRITISH CANOEING Participation Statement
BRITISH CANOEING Club Operating & Safety Procedures
BRITISH CANOEING Risk Assessment Guidelines

Declaration:

Devizes Canoe Club hereby declares that this Safety & Operations Policy is adopted by the Committee of the Club. The Sponsor for this Code of Conduct is the HAS Officer who will coordinate its implementation with other Officials as required.

Name (print): _____ **Position in Club:** _____

Signed for the Committee: _____ **Dated:** _____