

Lincoln Canoe Club - Paddling Safety Information

Buoyancy Aids

The Club's primary competitive activities are Sprint and Marathon Racing, for which buoyancy aids are not normally required to be worn, except by younger or less experienced paddlers. This has led to it being customary for experienced club paddlers to not wear a buoyancy aid while training on local waterways. However, all club paddlers categorised as Beginner, Improver or Competent and all junior members (under 18 years of age) of any standard, must wear a buoyancy aid when on the water. Exceptions may be made for junior members undertaking advanced training, but a 'Buoyancy aid Exemption Form' must be completed and signed by the paddler's parent or guardian and the club's Head Coach or Coaching Coordinator.

Lincoln local waters

For general club canoeing sessions, the Lincoln Waters are defined as the Brayford Pool, the Fosdyke Canal and the Upper Witham towards Hykeham.

(The River Witham downstream from Brayford Pool and tributaries from it must not be paddled except when experienced members and coaches run organised trips along these waterways.)

Waterway conditions

Conditions on our local waters do not normally change rapidly. The waterways traffic light indicates current river levels. This light is located where the River Witham leaves Brayford Pool to run down to Stamp End. The light is clearly visible from the club indicating:

Green – Normal river level.

Red – High water conditions – flows will be evident in the Brayford Pool. Only experienced paddlers may use the 'High Street' section of the River Witham.

Flashing Red – Extremely high river levels. Canoeing only permitted under the supervision of experienced paddlers. No paddling on the 'High Street' section of the River Witham and no paddling after dark.

Weather

Sun - The cooling effect of the water and reflections from the surface can be very deceptive in sunny weather. Wear sunscreen, keep your head and neck covered and drink plenty of fluids.

Wind – strong winds are capable of capsizing an inexperienced paddler.

Ice & Cold – There can be a risk of hypothermia if appropriate clothing is not worn. A special 'Winter Safety Information' notice is displayed at the beginning of the winter season.

Storm - If caught in a storm or lightning, paddlers should leave the water immediately and not shelter under trees.

Good Practice

1. Ensure your canoeing equipment is in good condition before you use it.
2. Help each other when carrying canoes and equipment, especially the younger paddlers.
3. Behave responsibly at all times, doing your best to maintain the club's reputation and good relations with other users of the waterways.
4. Keep well away from moored boats and people fishing.

5. When in a group, paddle slowly past the Residential Moorings after the Canal and River Trust's depot.
6. Keep to the **RIGHT** when meeting any boats (including canoes) on all waterways, and be aware of wash from larger craft that can capsize an unwary canoeist.
7. Unless you are a very experienced paddler, you should not canoe alone, even in good weather conditions, and never paddle alone in darkness.
8. If someone capsizes, rescue and care should be a matter for the whole group.
9. Water quality in Lincoln is 'good', but there is still some risk from water borne diseases. Cover open cuts before paddling, avoid swallowing any water and shower as soon as possible after canoeing. See also the separate notice 'Leptospirosis and the Canoeist'.

4.4.6 - 02 Revision history

Rev	Date	By	Details of change
0	June 2008	RG	Initial issue.
1	Nov 2008	RG	New paragraph added highlighting the need to protect young paddlers.
2	Nov 2009	RG	Paragraph 4 – under 11 changed to under 8.
3	Mar 2012	DJM	Major update and rationalisation with document 4.4.2-02 'Definitions and Canoeing Standards.' Renamed 'Paddling Safety Information'
4	May 2012	DJM	Add new paragraph 5 and renumber remainder.
5	June 2015	DJM	Amended British Waterways to Canal and River Trust.
6	August 2016	DJM	Added new section - Buoyancy Aids.