



Lincoln Canoe Club H&S Manual

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BRITISH CANOEING SAFETY MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

The purpose of this guide is to present to you British Canoeing's guidance and support in all areas of safety management. As a National Governing Body British Canoeing has a responsibility for health and safety. This guidance provides coaches, clubs and centres operating and running activities in the name of British Canoeing, with guidelines to support and ensure that the safety of British Canoeing members and members of the public with whom they come into contact receive appropriate attention and consideration in all circumstances.

At the heart of health and safety and indeed safety management in general is 'Risk Assessment'. Mention of the words 'Risk Assessment' conjures up all sorts of images in people's minds, and central to this is dread and fear. Dread at the mere thought of having to undertake the work, fear at the thought of the essence of our sport being eroded by society's desire to remove risk from everything that moves.

As a National Governing Body and as coaches, club officials and centre management we need to achieve an acceptable balance in terms of safety management. It is clear to us all that we have a duty of care to others with whom we come into contact. We can only be sure that we are meeting that duty if we take steps to analyse the risks involved while participating in canoeing events and activities.

That said we do need to keep things in perspective. As paddlers, coaches, club and event managers we are all driven by a desire to take part, compete, or assist others in doing so, and rightly so, given that we do so (in the main) voluntarily we wish to see such opportunities maximised. Spending lots of time on administration is often seen as counter productive and as such never makes it to the top of the Urgent and Important file. Nonetheless ensuring that we address the issue of safe participation is important – risk assessment is fundamental to this. We can keep it in perspective, if we understand the fundamentals of risk assessment and are able to be efficient, comprehensive and concise when carrying out risk assessments.

By way of further support the document provides information on risk assessment and the recording of risk assessments. The information is presented so that the volunteer coming to the task of producing a risk assessment from scratch is able to understand the basic,



essential background and theory, along with template outlines to allow them to produce an effective and living document to support participants and events.

Those of you who already have a clear understanding of risk assessment may not need to dwell for long on the information presented, however, you may wish to view the templates in the final section of the document. These may remove some of the work needed to produce your own risk assessment and perhaps importantly for us all, they may assist in maintaining consistency in their production and ensure that risk assessment is a means to an end – not an end in itself.

The contents of this document are set out as follows:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 British Canoeing Health and Safety Policy
- 3 Outline Health and Safety Policy
- 4 British Canoeing Events
- 5 Safety Principles
- 6 Notification of Accidents
- 7 Insurance
- 8 Support References

Not every type of canoeing is a 'risk' activity. No adventure sport can ever be totally safe. Respect and admiration is due to those who, knowing their sport and their abilities, push back the frontiers of feasibility by tackling ever harder grades of water; or choose to explore in wild and lonely places; or undertake solo paddling be it in one of these contexts, or simply to find their own level of self-fulfillment.

We do not agree with those who regard the occasional inevitable loss of life in these circumstances as disastrous for the sport. Nor that those who choose these outlets – knowing what they are at – are acting in an irresponsible manner. Far from it. They are keeping alive, in fact they are furthering, the essential spirit in mankind to advance against the elements.

We are, however, faced with a dilemma. We all want and British Canoeing recognises the following events and demand 'freedom'. In reality, however, if the exercise of activities:

that 'freedom' causes us harm, a growing number of people then want to apportion blame. Some would seek recompense against those who permitted or set up the activity. The media joins in this process. In consequence, incidents are distorted beyond recognition, and the dividing line between freedom of action, and responsible provision, becomes difficult to define.

Numerous examples of this process can be cited, sometimes leading to increased legislation.

Some forms of canoeing have an inherent risk factor. Regrettably, when a tragedy does occur, the media tends to react out of all proportion to the actual very low incidence of fatalities within the sport. The difficulty for British Canoeing, as the Governing Body, is to tread the border zone of taking reasonable precautions, yet retaining the adventurous nature of those aspects of the sport which carry an element of danger.

Our order of priority in deciding whether action of any kind should be taken, is:

1. That no one should lose their life or be seriously injured, if this could have been avoided through the implementation of simple warnings or safeguards.
2. British Canoeing and its coaches work to ensure that those taking part in canoeing are able to do so protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff, coaches and / or volunteers. This is particularly true in respect of children and vulnerable adults.
3. That unnecessary adverse publicity should not accrue to the sport, hastening the day when further restrictive legislation may be applied, or giving excuse to those who would even now use any reason to bar our activity.
4. That where reasonably possible, grounds for a claim that would invoke our insurance policy be avoided, in order to ensure the continuance of this benefit as a

final compensation to an injured party, at a reasonable cost to the membership.

Those staging canoeing events are asked therefore, to take such reasonable precautions as are practicable in the light of this policy.

BRITISH CANOEING EVENTS

1. British Canoeing events and activities. These are those occasions which are directly organised, or directly administered, or are directly within the control of British Canoeing, or its Committees, which directly necessitate the use of their services or resources. Thus, this definition will include all events and activities organised or administered or which are within the control of the Regions, or Sports, or Recreation Committees, and refers to all competitive events which are ranked, divisionalised, or otherwise classified by British Canoeing or its Committees together with Tours, Rallies and other miscellaneous activities.
2. Courses run by suitably current members of the British Canoeing Coaching Scheme.
3. Other events run by currently affiliated clubs. Such events should be listed in the club's Newsletter or Diary.
4. Events organised by ad-hoc groups of members are not 'British Canoeing Events' unless specific application is made for them to be so recognised, and agreement is received in writing from the Director of Coaching, who will consult with relevant officers or committees of British Canoeing, as necessary, before offering such recognition.
5. The inclusion of events on the British Canoeing Calendar or their notification in British Canoeing Publications does not, in itself, imply British Canoeing recognition or indemnity under British Canoeing's Third Party Liability Insurance Policy.

SAFETY PRINCIPLES

There is a responsibility in law for organisers of activities to see that reasonable precautions are undertaken to ensure the safety of participants.

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 has signed an acknowledgment of risk. See appendices.

These actions do not absolve the organiser from his or her responsibility to undertake reasonable precautions, nor does it remove the participant's right in law to sue for damages should negligence be involved. It does, however, affirm that the attention of the person has been drawn to the hazardous nature of the activity, if such is involved.

- Ensuring safe Codes of Practice that cover all reasonable measures to protect all those taking part in canoeing activities keeping them safe from unhealthy and unwanted advances, and role modeling.

Where 'open water' is involved in a competitive event or rally (other than tours – by groups of paddlers trained and equipped for the venture, or under the leadership of suitably qualified current British Canoeing Coaching Scheme members): the provision of sufficient safety craft for any situation which could develop in the conditions in which the event, held in part or in whole on open water, is to be run.

Where 'white water' or the shooting of weirs, is involved: the wearing of buoyancy aids and crash helmets is mandatory for slalom and wild water racing, and should be strongly advised for other events where an obvious risk is present.

Participation should be limited to those who declare themselves competent to handle the conditions, taking into account the type and amount of safety cover it is practical to provide at sites of particular difficulty.

Suitable safety cover for events involving weirs or rapids of particular difficulty could range from having reliable, competent canoeists strategically placed, to having trained bank-side rescue parties or divers on hand.

OTHER PROBLEMS

Where electrical or mechanical apparatus is used in the running of an event, care should be taken to ensure that it is operated in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

SPECIALIST COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Each Specialist Committee should keep under review its guidelines regarding the provision of safety precautions which it considers reasonable for its particular discipline.

INSURANCE BENEFITS AND PROCEDURES

Third Party Liability (Perkins Slade) Third party insurance cover is a benefit of British Canoeing membership and applies to; individual British Canoeing members, resident in the UK, affiliated clubs and registered members of affiliated clubs resident in the UK. The limit of indemnity for any one accident is to a maximum of £5,000,000 for a claim arising from loss, injury to, the death of or damage to the property of a third party. The insurance is valid for any canoeing or related activity worldwide. Member to member liability is included, as are members of the coaching service acting in an instructional capacity. This includes paid coaching work but only if this coaching takes place within British Canoeing to members or clubs (see Professional Indemnity).



Irresponsible or careless leadership will not invalidate the third party insurance. The law requires us to take reasonable care for the safety of others. The moral code clearly also implies this duty. In practical terms, if a large claim occurred, the renewal premium could be prohibitive. Therefore there is a duty on all of us to ensure that it remains at modest cost to British Canoeing for the benefit of the member who may become the genuine victim of circumstance. It is important that the policy is not invoked through irresponsibility.

BRITISH CANOEING LIABILITY INSURANCE

Professional Indemnity (Perkins Slade), British Canoeing's Civil Liability policy wording has been amended to automatically include all registered coaches when providing tuition, whether for a fee or not, as an individual. Where any such coach is operating as a business by using a business or company name, separate insurance arrangements must be made.

NOTIFICATION OF ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

On 26 April 1999, the Civil Justice system was amended to reflect a number of changes now known as the Woolf Reforms, the purpose being to resolve disputes more quickly but without necessarily having to resort to litigation. For Personal Injury claims in particular, the consequences for Sport and Recreation are considerable.

If an individual (the claimant) sustains an injury he or she has up to 3 years to issue a claim (formerly a writ) against another individual or club (the defendant) considered to have been negligent in causing the injury. The defendant has only 21 days to acknowledge receipt of the claim and a further 90 days either to accept or deny liability and, in the case of a denial, to produce supporting documentation and evidence.

Failure to observe these time scales could give Insurers an opportunity to limit or even deny indemnity which, of course, could have serious ramifications for the defendant. That being the case, all those involved in Sport are now required to report (to their Insurance Brokers) every incident, particularly those involving a personal injury, which could give rise to a subsequent claim. This will ensure that detailed records are kept, so that in the event of a claim a defence may be more quickly and accurately mounted.

This being the case we would encourage clubs, every member, particularly coaches, to note in detail instances of injury to students. Obviously, there is also a responsibility on every individual member to pass on relevant information regarding any incident.

See appendices for an example incident report form. Forms are also available from the Coaching Office and from the British Canoeing website to allow you to record such incidents.

We would further encourage information of this nature, on the said forms, to be forwarded to the British Canoeing Coaching Office. As well as being able to ensure that the information is appropriately archived it will provide a database of injuries and incidents to support developments in best practice, technique development. Indeed it will ensure that practitioners, not insurance companies dictate safety policies.

All paddlers and coaches have a responsibility towards safety management through the appropriate application of 'risk assessment' practices appropriate to the activity they are taking part in and or leading.



DUTY OF CARE

This document contains a **very general** and **basic** view of negligence. It sets out and hopefully answers the questions that you ought to be asking. The term 'injury' used herein means primarily physical injury and consequential financial losses.

1. WHERE DOES NEGLIGENCE FIT INTO OUR SOCIAL FABRIC?

- 1.1. All of us understand that deliberately causing injury to others is a criminal offence ordinarily resulting in punishment of the perpetrator.
- 1.2. All of us understand that some injuries are accidental, i.e. the circumstances giving rise to them are wholly unforeseeable. No one is responsible. No compensation is payable.
- 1.3. In between those two ends of the spectrum are 'negligent acts', i.e. they are not deliberate, but the injury is foreseeable. The negligent person will not be punished, however, the injured party may seek financial compensation as a result. The compensation is paid by the individual who has caused the loss and could amount to millions of pounds!

2. WHAT DOES IT DO?

- 2.1. The system of rules is designed to determine in any incident or injury whether the negligent act actually caused injury, whether compensation should be paid, and if so, how much.

3. HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?

- 3.1. Each of us owes a 'Duty of Care' to our 'neighbours' not to cause them injury by our negligent acts and omissions.
- 3.2. In order to satisfy or 'discharge' that duty of care you must behave as a 'reasonable person' would, but taking into account your specific skill, knowledge and experience. For example, a 'reasonable' non---medically qualified 'rescuer' might be forgiven a medical mistake which a reasonable qualified paramedic would be expected not to make.
- 3.3. Your neighbours are those people whom, if you thought about it might be injured by your negligent acts and omissions.

For example:---

- a) When driving a motor car your neighbours would include:---
 - any passengers in your car
 - other road users, drivers and their passengers

--- pedestrians, cyclists etc

--- owners of property adjoining the road

- b) Anyone for whom you have accepted responsibility (see later for the effect of being a group leader/club's officer).
- 3.4. The Duty of Care requires you to consider the consequences of your acts and omissions and to ensure that those acts and/or omissions do not give rise to a foreseeable risk of injury to any other person. Clearly, one is not expected to guarantee the safety of others, merely to act reasonably.
- 3.5. In short, all of us owe a duty not to injure other people by our negligent acts and omissions and that is an individual duty which each of us owe all of the time to our 'neighbours'.

4. DOES ORDINARY MEMBERSHIP OF A CLUB OR SOCIETY AFFECT MY ORDINARY DUTY OF CARE?

- 4.1. Not usually. You still owe the individual duty of care to your neighbours. However, the people who are your 'neighbours' might alter and/or increase to include other club members and others with whom you may now come into contact as a result of membership of that club.

5. WILL BEING A GROUP LEADER OF A CLUB OR OTHER ACTIVITY ALTER MY ORDINARY DUTY OF CARE?

- 5.1. It may do. As a group leader (or team captain) you have accepted the responsibility of leading others. You owe them a duty to ensure that they are not exposed to a foreseeable risk of injury as far as you reasonably can.
- 5.2. It should be noted that on any outing where a group leader has not been appointed the most experienced and or qualified person there ought reasonably to intervene and at least advise if a foreseeable risk of injury arises.

6. WILL ACCEPTING OFFICE IN A CLUB AFFECT MY DUTY OF CARE?

- 6.1. Yes, it may well do so. If you accept a position you are likely to agree to carry out certain functions which may affect the safety of others both inside and outside the club. You are accepting responsibility and you must fulfil those duties to the best of your ability without negligence. That is, you must not create a foreseeable risk of injury and you

must take reasonable steps to deal with any foreseeable risk of injury which exists or arises.

For example: if you agree to be the equipment officer you must make reasonable inspections of the equipment to see that it is reasonably safe.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. The law of negligence seeks to ensure that as individuals we are responsible for our actions and inactions, and that we consider those who might be injured by those acts and omissions.
- 7.2. The actual standard varies according to an individual's skill and experience, and requires us all to behave reasonably.
- 7.3. It is not possible to lay down golden rules which if followed will preclude the possibility of a successful

civil claim. However, behaving responsibly and considerately is likely to mean that no injury will be occasioned in the first place.

- 7.4. The safety net that we all hope we will never need is third party liability insurance. If a compensation claim is successfully brought then this insurance should pay out. All current members of British Canoeing automatically have such cover. Members of certain clubs may have additional cover where affiliated to NGB's with that facility.

c P.J. Debney, Partner, Cartwright and Lewis, Solicitors 1998

Sponsored by The Student Activities Safety Association



INCIDENT REPORT FORM

On 26 April 1999, the civil Justice system was amended to reflect a number of changes now known as the Woolf Reforms. These changes relate specifically to resolving disputes and personal injury claims. As a result it is important that details of any known incidents or injuries that occur to students, while undergoing coaching or taking part in canoeing or kayaking activities, are recorded. Indeed those involved in any sport are required to report (to their insurance brokers) every known incident, particularly those involving a personal injury, which may give rise to a subsequent claim.

While it is recognised that centres and clubs may already hold information relating to incidents and accidents in their accident and or near miss books, this form is provided for the use of all individual coaches wishing to report incidents, particularly those operating under the British Canoeing third party liability scheme. Covered or not through a centre or club, we would encourage you to ensure relevant information is recorded via this route. Sharing this information with British Canoeing will ensure that the information is passed through to British Canoeing's insurance brokers and perhaps, more importantly, the information will allow us to build a database of injuries and incidents that will enable us to further develop future good practice guidelines to help protect those taking part in paddlesports.

Individuals reporting incidents in this way need have no fear or concern about action being taken against them. The details of incidents reported will only be used for the purpose stated and will be held confidentially. The purpose of this form is to ensure that reporting requirements are met and that in the unlikely event that a claim is made against you insurers can act speedily to cover the claim.

Please help us support you in this matter. The non-reporting of this type of information could result in insurers limiting cover or denying indemnity.

Please complete this form in clear print and using black ink. Return to: British Canoeing Coaching Office, National Water Sports Centre, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG12 2LU Tel: 0845 370 9500

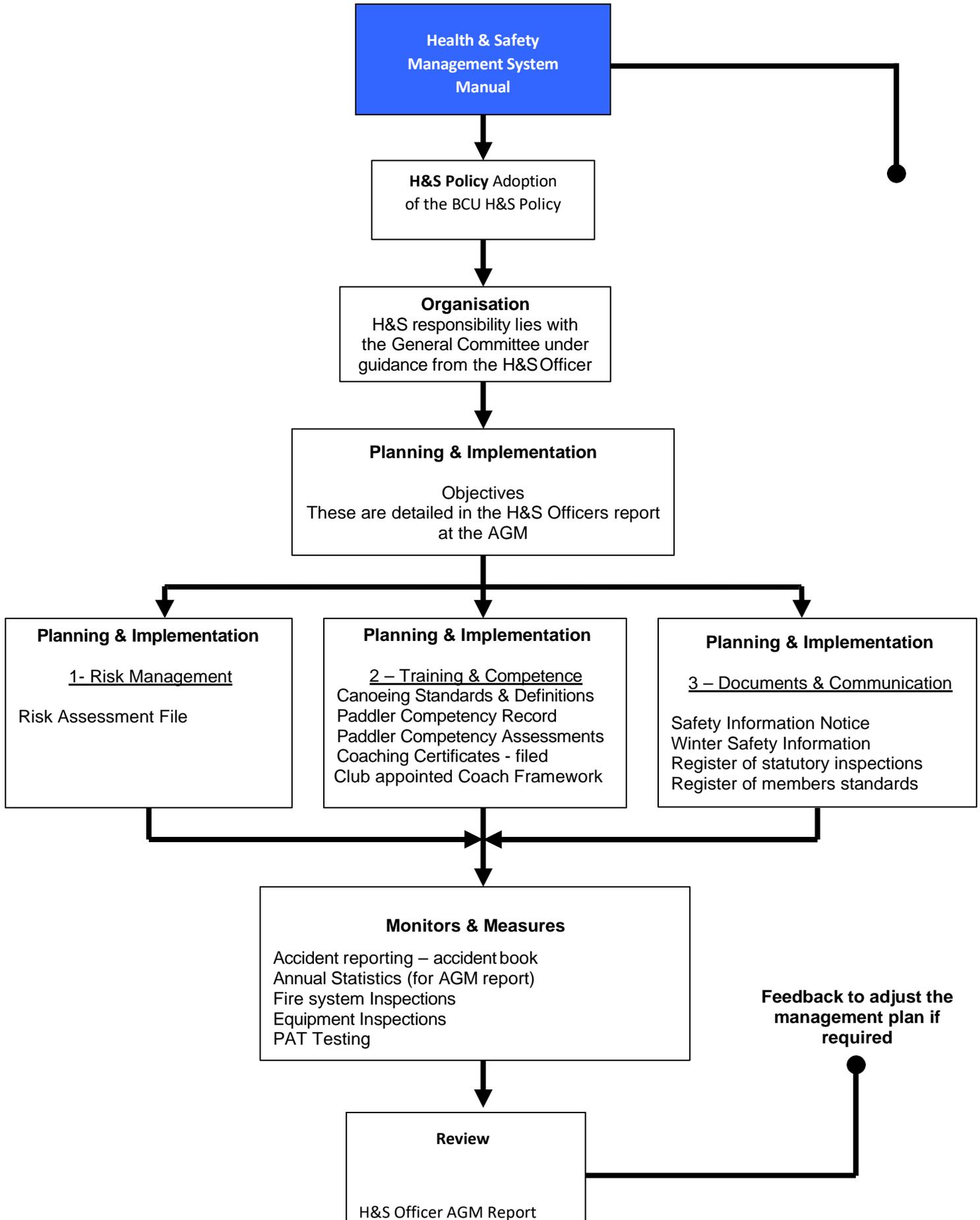
Club / Centre / Organisation:
Your name:
Your contact details:
Date and time of incident:
Name of individual(s) involved in incident:
Contact details of individual(s) involved in incident or injured:
Brief description of incident:

Details of any injuries:
Outline of actions taken:
Details of on-site first aid:
Details of any emergency service support:
Details of any evacuation:
Details of any witnesses:
Outcome (as far as can be determined at time of report):
Any additional information:

Thank you for filling in this form.

Please return to: British Canoeing Coaching Office, National Water Sports Centre, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG12 2LU Tel: 0845 370 9500

Overview of H&S for Lincoln Canoe Club



CLUB SAFETY REVIEW

The purpose of this document is to assist you and your club assess the management of safety within your club and club activities, and in particular assist you in producing a club Safety Plan. At this stage it is not meant to be comprehensive, merely a guide to which you may wish to add further items and comments as a means of completing a thorough review as part of an ongoing safety management process.

This document outlines a number of responsibilities and actions for club members, committees and coaches / leaders.

IS YOUR CLUB A SAFECLUB?

PERSONAL

All members should read, acknowledge and follow all appropriate safety guidelines within the club Safety Plan.

CLUB (CLUB COMMITTEE)

- Actively promote a culture of safe practice
- Produce and communicate a Safety Plan for all your members and coaches to follow
- Modify the Safety Plan in the light of incidents, risk assessments and current good practice
- Be clear about when club activity is club activity

COACH

Coaches should educate and train paddlers in understanding safety management practices and in understanding and following the club's Safety Plan.

CLUB SAFETY ADVISER

It is advisable for clubs to appoint, from within their committee, a safety adviser or officer to:

- Advise on matters of safety for the club and all club activities
- Advise on the effectiveness of the club's Safety Plan
- Undertake an annual Safety Plan review

Minimum standards to be adopted within the safety plan.

SAFETY PLAN

A Safety Plan must be formulated and communicated by the club, by all appropriate means possible to educate and train its members, including Induction Programmes for all new members. All new members must receive a copy of the Safety Plan and participate in an Induction Programme.

It is the primary function of the Safety Plan to care for the safety of club members, other waterusers and the public at large.

As a matter of good practice clubs are advised to complete, ahead of producing a safety plan, a thorough audit of club activity and current practice. Such an exercise will then provide an indication of existing areas of good practice as well as areas needing further work / development in order to ensure the safety of members in all club activities.

Further documents are available to assist you in this process– **British Canoeing Event Safety Audit, British Canoeing Safety Checklist – All Activities.**

THE CLUB SHOULD PROMINENTLY DISPLAY:

- A plan of the local water highlighting hazards, any zoning, navigation or circulation rules along with emergency access points (named and where necessary with postcodes).
- Guidance to members when taking part in club events.
- Guidance on the club's Health and Safety policy.
- Guidance on the club's Child Protection and Screening policy.
- Instructions to cover any variation to normal procedures needed to manage risks resulting from tidal currents, stream, wind or other climatic conditions.
- Visual Aids on safe practice, life saving and up-to-date resuscitation techniques.
- Instructions for reporting incidents.
- Telephone numbers for Emergency Services including the exact location and directions to the club, and any access points including postcode or identifiers used by the Emergency Services.
- Vital telephone numbers relating to safety e.g. club officials, First Aiders, the local accident and emergency hospital, navigation authority, river or harbour police, RLNI, etc.
- Clear directions to the nearest and alternative telephone points.
- The position of First Aid Boxes and equipment.

Further good practice (in addition to minimum standards to be adopted):

- Emergency services, local navigation authorities and other water users should be provided with a copy of the Safety Plan for any comment or suggestion to be made.
- Safety Plans should be modified in the light of incidents or changes in good practice.

Topics to be addressed by the Safety Plan should include:

- Rules for club members relating to their responsibilities in relation to safe practice.
- When and where crews can train, warm up and cool down on the water.
- The criteria for assessing the risks associated with any local on the water activity.
- Rules relating to the training of junior members.
- Emergency Action Plan – members should be made aware of their roles and action to be taken in the event of an emergency.

1. BRITISH CANOEING HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

This policy applies to:

1. British Canoeing events and activities which are directly organised, administered, or within the control of British Canoeing, its Committees, Regions, Sports and Recreation Committees, which directly necessitate the use of their services or resources (NB. The inclusion of events and activities in the British Canoeing Calendar, or notified in British Canoeing publications, does not necessarily constitute British Canoeing recognition).
2. Courses run by members of the British Canoeing Coaching Scheme.
3. Other events and activities run by affiliated clubs, which are listed in the club's Newsletter or Diary.
4. British Canoeing qualified coaches and leaders participating in these events and activities.

The policy does not cover ad-hoc activities organised by groups of members. Canoeing* is an assumed risk sport, but all reasonable steps should be taken to reduce that risk. No one should lose their life or be seriously injured if this could have been avoided through the implementation of simple warnings or safeguards. Canoeing events and activities should be made as safe as is reasonably practicable through the application of risk assessment. The level of detail and formalisation of risk assessments should be proportionate to the level of risk. Typically site and major event risk assessments should be formally recorded, whilst ad hoc assessments may be verbally agreed between relevant personnel, who may include coaches, students and club officials, whereas dynamic risk assessments will often be undertaken by one person as situations arise.

Risk assessments should consider 'good practice', which is largely defined in British Canoeing guidance, coaching & leadership qualifications. Good practice is not mandatory, but deviations from it should be risk assessed. Routine deviations from British Canoeing guidance, coaching or leadership qualifications should be supported by written risk assessments. Where appropriate the written risk assessments should also identify the conditions for cancellation of the event or activity when the risks would be considered unacceptable.



The level of risk that children and vulnerable adults may be exposed to should be significantly lower than that of knowledgeable and experienced adults, who would be capable of making their own judgements. Participants should be aware of the risk nature of canoeing and should also be made aware of the most significant hazards relevant to the location or activity. Participation in competitive events should be limited to those who declare themselves competent to handle the conditions, taking into account the hazards and safety cover provided.

Where 'open water' is involved the risk assessment should identify the appropriate level of rescue provision (taking into account factors such as distances, types of canoe or kayak, use of buoyancy aids, ability of participants, water temperature, weather conditions and currents). It is recognised that rescue provision may not always be practicable, especially for tours by groups of paddlers trained and equipped for the venture, or under the leadership of suitably qualified current British Canoeing Coaching Scheme members. Where 'white water' or the shooting of weirs is involved the wearing of buoyancy aids and crash helmets is mandatory for slalom and wild water racing, and is strongly advised for other events and activities of this type where an obvious risk is present. Suitable safety cover could range from having reliable, competent canoeists strategically placed, to having trained bank-side rescue parties, or even divers on hand.

**Canoeing refers to open canoes, kayaks, stand up paddle boards and sit on tops, with single or double bladed paddles*

