



**Hemel Hempstead Canoe Club**  
**Risk Assessment Form**

<b>Site:</b>	Nash Mills Recreation Centre	<b>Assessment No:</b>	2025_001
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<b>Assessor:</b>	Gary Archer	<b>Description of Building or Area</b>	Grand Union Canal 2 mile stretch from Red Lion Lane to Kings Langley lock
<b>Qualification:</b>	L3 WW coach with AWWSR		
<b>Date of Assessment:</b>	27/03/2025		
<b>Task/Activity/Process/Equipment</b>	Coached Sessions	<b>Equipment used (if applicable)</b>	Kayaks Canoes Stand up Paddleboards (SUP)
<b>When identifying HAZARDS consider:</b> a) The task (Who, What, Where, When, How) b) The environment (temperature, noise, lighting, dust, fumes) c) Materials, Equipment and Substances (machinery, tools, chemicals etc)			

RA Ref No.	Hazard	Description of potential accident/injury/loss	Persons affected	Precautions/Controls already in place	Further control measures required?	Action by whom required?
<b>General Hazards</b>						
1.	Illness	Any pre-existing illness or injury that could cause problems	Participants	Pre-session forms Coaches will be informed of any issues Users to be advised to take any medication that may be needed during the session e.g. asthma inhaler, on the activity	Medical assistance will be sought when necessary	Instructor/Coach /Participants
2.	Injury requiring First Aid	Hazards identified that cause injury to participant/coaches	Participants/Coaches	All coaches undergo a basic requirement of Paddle UK approved first aid and carry a first aid kit at all times  Coaches always carry a mobile phone, location coordinates and have access to participant details, NOK emergency contact details	Coaches will administer first aid and call 999 /111 for medical assistance if required	Instructor/Coach
3.	Insurance	To loss or injury to participant/members of public/staff		Insurance cover in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Liability – covered by Paddle UK membership</li> </ul>	No	Club Committee
<b>Environmental Hazards</b>						
4.	Paddling Environment	Hazards we may come across whilst paddling on sheltered waters e.g. boats, swans, geese, people fishing, over hanging and sub water surface trees, nettles, brambles, weirs, locks.	Participants/Coaches/Public	Full safety briefing provided prior to getting on the water, instructor has good awareness of environment and potential hazards, Instructor will set safe parameters for group	No	Instructor/Coach /Participants
5.	Weirs/Locks	Strong current above and below weirs, numerous hazards associated with locks	Participants/Coaches	Included in safety briefing prior to getting on water where appropriate Instructor to be vigilant around weirs and keep paddlers away from strong currents (above grade 1) All locks will be portaged by group (get out and carry equipment)	Correct lifting techniques applied for portage	Instructor/Coach /Participants
6.	Climatic reaction	Sunburn Heat stroke Hypothermia Hyperthermia Dehydration	Participants/Coaches	Briefing participants /staff on the need for skin protection, appropriate hydration, and reducing exposure	Coaches will provide advice/guidance during the session	Instructor/Coach /Participants

7.	Change in/adverse weather conditions	Loss of confidence Inability to paddle and control board Blown overhanging trees	Participants/ Coaches	Dynamic assessment of weather conditions Brief customers on activity area Appropriate clothing (as advised) Wind less than 6 / 8 Knots on sheltered waters	Good communication with updates on conditions/final decision	Instructor/Coach
8.	Adverse weather; lightning	Hit by lightning, possible death	Participants/ Coaches	If there is thunder and lightning, the activity is stopped and participants exit the water until at least 15 minutes without lightening has passed	Monitor	Instructor/Coach
9.	Adverse weather; high wind	Group dispersed across canal	Participants	Activity is restricted to canal, individuals can paddle to side and exit water	Monitor	Instructor/Coach
10.	Effect of cold	Hypothermia	Participants/ Coaches	Activity only happens between 1 <sup>st</sup> April and 30 <sup>th</sup> September. Participants told to wear suitable clothing for conditions	Monitor	Instructor/Coach
11.	Water quality	Leptospirosis Sewerage contamination Boat discharge	Participants/ Coaches	Information printed around the club for reference Need to wash hands covered in briefing at start, and reminded at end	Coaches will provide advice/guidance during the session	Instructor/Coach /Participants
12.	Members of the public	Getting in the way whilst carrying vessels. Consideration for other users	Participants/ Coaches/Public	Try and be wary of public Good group management Sessions delivered away from busy areas	No	Instructor/Coach /Participants
Activity Hazards						
13.	Injury associated with lifting, carrying, dropping and falling from vessels	Improper technique Lack of instruction Back muscle injury Damage to feet Kneel when paddling SUP in water depth <1m/3ft	Participants/ Coaches/Public	Ensure participants are briefed on heavy lifting technique Carry in pairs if necessary Coaches prepared for session and to advise on relevant safety measures.	Liaison with group participants, establish pre-existing conditions/special needs	Instructor/Coach
14.	Slips, trips and falls	Cuts and bruises Chains, ropes, steps, slipways, stones, seaweed	Participants/ Coaches/Public	Good briefing Enough coaches and participants to handle lifts and shifts Suitable footwear Participants under club supervision	No	Instructor/Coach /Participants
15.	Collisions	Boats Other water users, trees, banks	Participants/ Coaches/Public	Ensure good group management Set session boundaries Teach 2m spacing from one another/other water users. Participants will be told to kneel on SUPs when launching, returning to bank or close to bank to avoid injury	No	Instructor/Coach /Participants
16.	Separation from instructor/equipment	Loss of confidence Bad weather	Participants	Ensure good group management Teaching ratio recommended 6:1 (discretionary depending on ability of group) but no fewer than 8:1 Use of SUP leashes when on water No more than 250m from shore Session only runs if instructor is confident and feels session is safe to go ahead	Additional resources will be deployed where required	Instructor/Coach
17.	Entanglement	Leg leash/moorings/anchors/anglers/swimmers	Participants/ Coaches	Keep group from moorings/busy areas/boat channels/bathing areas	No	Instructor/Coach /Participants
18.	Drowning	Head injury Lack of confidence Poor swimming ability	Participants/ Coaches	PFDs will be supplied to all participants Ensure conditions are suitable Coaches pay close attention at all times If secondary drowning suspected access A&E Public Liability Insurance in place Appropriate training of coaches	Medical assistance will be sought when necessary	Instructor/Coach
19.	Equipment failure	Splinters, cuts, bruises, separation from equipment	Participants/ Coaches	All craft checked before use and by Club equipment officer. Coaches re-unite participants with separated equipment.	No	Instructor/Coach
20.	Paddle hitting head	Head injury	Participants	Group told to keep apart, appropriate venue used (helmets where risk of head injury). Canal assessed as minimal risk.	As deemed appropriate by Coach	Instructor/Coach /Participants

				Care taken when carrying equipment (see above)		
21.	Trapped in boat	Drowning	Participants/ Coaches	Group told how to get out of boat. Correct use of spray decks is taught and demonstrated by participants prior to entering the water. All participants to wear Buoyancy Aids/PFD's. Large cockpit kayaks to avoid entrapment.	As deemed appropriate by Coach. eg. Refusing use of spray deck.	Instructor/Coach
22.	Being in collision with another boat	Capsize or possible head injury	Participants/ Coaches	Tell participants to keep out of the way of other vessels. Instructors alert to other canal users	Monitor	Instructor/Coach /Participants
23.	Injury from loading trailers	Back injury	Coaches	Volunteers trained in lifting	Monitor	Volunteers
24.	Injury from emptying boats	Back injury	Participants/ Coaches	Coaches trained in how to safely empty boats on and off the water. Participants told how to empty boats at the bank and where relevant from the water.	Monitor	Instructor/Coach /Participants
25.	Multiple capsizes	Many people in the water adding to time in potentially cold water	Participants	1:8 ratio of staff to participants. Restricted area see ref 5 above	No	Instructor/Coach
26.	Group ability/Ratios	All groups will have different levels of ability, skill and understanding	Participants/ Coaches	A typical ratio would be 1:6 - 1:8 students depending on a number of factors. The higher the needs of the group, ratios will be increased, tighter parameters will be applied	Static risk assessment of all groups	Instructor/Coach