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| **What are the hazards?** | **Who might be harmed and why?** | **What are we doing to reduce the risks?** |
| Deep moving water with currents | Participants may capsize and drown | Trip leader to seek confirmation that all participants can swim 50m in light clothingParticipants not permitted to wear excessively bulky footwear (entrapment risk)Trip leader to check suitability of each boat for each participant (cockpit of a kayak not too tight) Equipment officer to maintain boats properly (promptly mending or disposing of any which are leaking)Issue kayaks with bulkheads or air bags and skegs to any novicesBuoyancy aids to be offered by trip leader from club supplies and BA’s to be worn correctly by all on/near the river Any novices paddling kayaks to be issued with nylon spraydecks, rather than neopreneAny novices paddling kayaks to be shown by coach how to fit spraydecks correctly to boat (release loop showing)Coach to explain to any novices how to exit the boat if they capsize.Trip leader to advise all participants to remain with the rest of the groupCoach to explain to any novices how to kayak/canoe properlyAt least two people in each group must be trained in rescues – one allocated towards the front of group & other at the rearTrip leader to warn participants to steer clear of tree branches, particularly at high water.First person to get on the water to be someone trained in rescue techniquesLast person off the water to be someone trained in rescue techniquesTrip leader must not allow participation by any person who is drunk or has taken drugs.Charged up mobile phone/s to be carried in a waterproof pack by the trip leader and others in the group |
| Extremely cold or stormy weather | Participants may suffer hypothermia | Equipment officer to maintain boats properly (promptly mending or disposing of any which are leaking)Trip leader to cancel event if weather & water exceptionally cold or stormyTrip leader to fix length of trip appropriatelyTrip leader to advise participants on suitable clothing & encourage them to bring spare warm clothing in a dry bag.Trip leader to bring a group shelter if paddling on remote stretches of the riverCharged up mobile phone/s to be carried in a waterproof pack by the trip leader and others in the groupTrip leader to monitor participants and if necessary seek cover indoorsHot drinks to be available at venue |
| Occurrence of pre-existing serious medical condition | Paddlers may be taken ill while paddling, potentially causing them to fall in the water | Trip leader to ask all participants to let them know of any serious medical condition which may have an impact on participation in physical activity, eg heart condition, epilepsyRescue trained paddlers to bring short tow line or sling with karabiner to assist struggling or unconscious paddler to the river bankCharged up mobile phone/s to be carried in a waterproof pack by the trip leader and others in the group Trip leader to advise participants to remain with the group and group leader to issue reminder if necessary |
| Other boats (eg motorboats or rowing boats) | Participant’s boat suffers a collision | Trip leader to issue head torches if participants likely to be paddling at nightEquipment officer to make sure head torches are working correctly with charged batteriesCoach to explain to any novices how to kayak/canoe correctly (effective forwards paddling, steering, stopping, turning, reversing etc)Trip leader to warn participants to avoid hanging around near bridges or other places where you cannot easily be seen by other river usersTrip leader to advise participants to remain with the groupTrip leader to warn participants of the hazards that moving and moored boats create and asked everyone to remain alert while paddlingTrip leader to make sure that everyone knows each other’s names, so warnings can be given if a collision is imminentTrip leader to explain to the group the warnings understood by rowers (“take a look”, “hold it up”, “hold it up hard”)Trip leader to direct participants to paddle on correct side of river, crossing where necessary Trip leader and participants to keep constant watch for other boatsTrip leader must not allow participation by any person who is drunk or has taken drugs. |
| Sewage, urine or other contaminants in water | Participants may contract disease if splashed or soaked, eg weil’s disease  | Trip leader to ensure that all participants are aware of the risk of waterborne disease and the general signs and symptoms of weil’s disease.Trip leader to encourage all participants to cover any cuts & wash their hands as soon as possible after the activity. Trip leader to encourage participants to take a shower promptly following paddling |
| Exposure to sunlight or excessively hot weather | Participants may suffer hyperthermia or sunburn | Trip leader to advise participants to bring sun-screen and a bottle of water Trip leader to advise participants to wear suitable clothing, eg a sunhat Trip leader to fix length of trip appropriatelyAt appropriate intervals trip leader to direct participants to stop to take a break and seek shade and refreshment |
| Boats stored on racking | Participants may fall and injure themselves while removing boats from the racking or returning them | Equipment officer to check racking regularly to ensure it is safe.Equipment officer to check regularly motion sensitive lighting that has been installed alongside the rackingTrip leader and assistant to direct group to work together to unload boats from racking and return them after the paddling activity has finishedTrip leader to ensure adequate time is allowed for this (so not rushed).Participants to keep racking area clear of clutter which can be a tripping hazardTrip leader and assistant to instruct participants in safe manual handling of boatsTrip leader to direct participants to work together to move boats to waterside (‘doubling up’)Trip leader must not allow participation by any person who is drunk or has taken drugs. |
| Shallow water | Participants paddling on it may injure their heads if they capsize | Coach to explain to any novices how to kayak/canoeAt least one trained first aider to have first aid kit in boatHelmets to be available to anyone trying activities where risk of head injury significantly increasedTrip leader must not allow participation by any person who is drunk or has taken drugs. |
| Vigorous exercise | Participant may become exhausted or strain muscles or pull tendons | Where appropriate, club secretary to check tide timetable & advise novices on which weeks are likely to have more challenging conditionsClub secretary to advertise weekend trips in such a way as to make clear the difficulty levelTrip leader to fix length of trip appropriately, taking account of fitness and skill level of participantsTrip leader to bring old towline to attach to back of boat to stop any novices from spinning if they don’t have a skegTrip leader to direct participants to take rests in eddies as requiredTrip leader to allow participants to take regular rests and encourage people to eat or drink something (avoiding excessive alcohol)If necessary, trip leader to cut trip short before novices or paddlers with low fitness levels become exhausted  |
| Sharp objects on river bed/bank, eg broken glass, nails and screws | Participant may cut their feet or hands | Trip leader to warn participants to take care when walking around on riverbank or touching the groundTrip leader to check participants’ footwear for suitability (eg no flip flops) Equipment officer to check that club first aid kit is available for use at shedAt least one trained first aider to have first aid kit in boat |
| Hard plastic paddles | Participants may be hit by another participant’s paddle, eg in the face | Trip leader to make participants aware of risk before playing gamesEquipment officer to check that club first aid kit is available for us at shedAt least one group leader to have first aid kit in boatTrip leader must not allow participation by any person who is drunk or has taken drugs. |
| Weir | Participants may become trapped in debris or metalwork in the weir or stoppers leading to drowning | Trip leader to warn participants not to paddle close to any weirs on the routeTrip leader to direct participants to portage to avoid the weir, taking particular care when getting off the riverRescue trained paddlers to bring throw lines to perform a rescue if necessary |
| Wildlife, eg rats and swans | Participants may be bitten or struck leading to injury | Trip leader to advise participants to allow adequate space to wildlife so they do not feel threatenedAt least one trained first aider to have first aid kit in boat |