



Trip Leader Guidance

A qualified coach is a requirement on DCKC Club trips with junior members (under 18). Children under 10 years must be accompanied by their guardian.

Where trips are run for adult and senior members only the person in charge should have appropriate experience and at least one member on the trip should have an appropriate First Aid qualification and have attended the Foundation Safety and Rescue course. For more advanced sea trips at least one trip member should have previous advanced sea trip expertise.

It is the responsibility of DCKC Executive Committee in conjunction with a Senior Coach to determine who has the appropriate experience to lead a Club trip.

The Trip Leader:-

- **Is responsible for planning the trip with the safety of the group as the topmost priority.** They will appoint one or more experienced members of the group as his/her assistant.
- **Will ensure they are familiar with the capabilities, qualifications and experience of those taking part** to ensure that there is no mismatch between the planned trip and the capabilities of the group, taking into particular account the weakest member of the group. You can assess the potential person's skills and experience by enquiring about other trips they have done, their level of British Canoeing qualification or information from a more experienced paddler who can vouch for their skills. If you don't want someone who is too inexperienced you need to tell the person and signpost them to other club coaches who are happy to work with the person to improve their skills or you should suggest other events of a more appropriate standard.
- **Will be in a possession of a current weather forecast** for the relevant area and ensure the group carry appropriate safety equipment.
- **Will ensure that the group is in possession of the appropriate safety kit for the proposed activity.** Lists of suggested equipment can be found overleaf. Check what people are carrying.
- **Will check all kayaks, canoes, sea kayaks, paddleboards or other equipment are fitted out in accordance with British Canoeing recommendations and all group members are suitably clothed** with windproof clothing and wear buoyancy aids or lifejackets. You also need to check that people fit their boats. Checks at the put-in can save lots of hassle later in the day.
- **Ensures the trip admin is completed.** Use the Club Trip form to record names, numbers, and collect the appropriate fees. Collect the emergency contact cards at the beginning of the trip and returns them to the participants at the end. (If participant is not in possession of an emergency contact card record the details required on the trip form)
- **Decide trip numbers** – how many people are you happy to have on this trip. How many people you consider to be competent "helpers"/assistants. Control Numbers and feel free to say no to people without enough experience.
- **Will comply with precautions to avoid the spread of covid-19. These can be summarised as follows:**



1. Social distancing – please follow government guidelines. At present advice suggests staying at least 2 metres away from other people.
2. This may cause issues when taking equipment from the container – only one person to access this at a time at present.
3. All equipment should be cleaned after use. Wipes should be provided for this purpose
4. Please carry and use hand sanitiser and a face covering if the 2m rule has to be broken for e.g. a rescue
5. Consider alternative methods of rescue and getting people back into boats that avoid breaking the 2m rule.
6. Please see the documents, *Coaches and Trip Leaders Guidance – COVID-19* and *Club Member Information – COVID-19*, which can be found on the club website.



Some Useful Advice on Running Trips

Use a guidebook to choose a location and have a contingency plan e.g. a sheltered loch or an easier river.

Do a trip risk assessment - identify hazards evaluate risks and identify precautions, e.g. safe get out places. Location choice and weather awareness are at the heart of many problems, decision making once things go astray can be more difficult to bring back under control. Sea paddlers should always compromise on location to suit the Weather, Tides, Tidal races and Currents. Ask yourself, are you happy performing a rescue in this sea state... If not, then make choices to not face that situation (e.g. change plans etc). River paddlers should make themselves aware of grades hazards and portage routes. Everyone should avoid darkness, cold, fatigue etc.



Manual handling is a risk, keep an eye on people and advise as required... e.g. double up when carrying boats, slippery/rocky launch/landing areas. It's hard to paddle with a sprained wrist or ankle!

Communication

Set a deadline for getting in touch to book onto a trip. Ensure everyone has understood where to meet, where we are going etc). Everyone should know the plan, Start/finish times, Travel Time, Trip length, Cars/roof racks, where you are, where you are going, who has the car keys, any escape route thoughts, it could be the trip leader that has a funny turn or injury.

Before setting out on the water ensure that a briefing takes place and that members are aware of the proposed route and potential escape routes. Consider the use of a mnemonic such as SHEAR to provide a briefing structure.

- Signals
- Health
- Equipment
- Ability
- Rescue

Whilst on the water consider your leadership in light of the principles contained in CLAP

- Communication
- Line of sight
- Avoidance (or Anticipation)
- Position of maximum usefulness

Check List:- Make sure you and your group have all the appropriate kit before leaving, e.g. "stand by your boat"... "do you have" and maybe take spares of a full set of kit. Within the group do you have all the necessary safety equipment?.

Sea paddlers:

- Maps, charts or GPS (spare batteries)
- Tow Lines,
- Spare Paddles,
- Hand Pump,
- VHF Radio,
- Mobile Phone (charged),
- Flares,
- Boat Repair kit.
- Emergency Shelter.
- First Aid.
- Food and Drinks.

River paddlers

- Maps or GPS (spare batteries)
- Throwlines
- Spare split paddles



- Mobile phone(charged)
- Boat repair kit
- Emergency Shelter
- First Aid
- Food and drinks

Keep on top of faff... move things along, especially on water and at lunch times and breaks to ensure that you are off the water to avoid darkness, cold etc.

Keep the group as one contained group, or add extra controls to avoid individual “excursions”. If you know someone is prone to disappearing then give them absolute instructions... e.g. **YOU MUST NOT GO MORE THAN 100 METRES FROM ME!**

Consider adopting a buddy system – you could avoid solo paddlers by making people paddle in pairs (they can keep an eye on each other and attract attention).

Remember to collect Emergency Contact cards at the beginning and return them at the end.

Extra Directions for Sea Paddlers

Except in sheltered bays in-land lochs and estuaries, the trip leader should, before setting out, inform the Coastguard of the trip and provide the information recommended in the BCU/Coastguard pamphlet entitled: Advice for Sea Kayaking and Canoeing.

River Specific Advice

Use the guidebook to choose a location. Use wheresthewater.info to double check river levels if needed. Maybe start with rivers you are familiar with. Websites (www.ukriverguidebook.co.uk) and the river advisor (SCA) can give current information such as fallen tree, building works etc.

On the river, **do not commit yourself to paddling somewhere you haven't seen** (i.e. somewhere that you have checked for transient and permanent hazards such as trees, fences and other hazards) - scout from river or bank as needed. Some people say always have 2 eddies you can make in front of you.

Normally people lead from front and choose how to run a rapid... one at a time, large group etc, using signals as agreed.

Communication skills on the river are likely to be more dictatorial to begin with, “you will do this”. It is worthwhile to **check understanding** from the recipient as on rivers our minds are not always on what we are hearing, but rather thinking or looking around.

The mnemonic **CLAP Communication / Line of Sight / Anticipation / Position of Maximum Usefulness** is a good guide on river paddling

Know some safety / rescue options The FS&RT one day course is a good start but for rivers you should complete the White Water Safety and Rescue course or the Advanced White Water Safety and Rescue Course. It is worth checking the list of rescue options covered on these courses. Don't forget you need to practice your rescue skills and its always worthwhile to do some reading.

Remember the priorities, Self - Team - Victim - Equipment - This principle for prioritisation in the rescue situation is useful in helping rescuers to remember that their first priority is to themselves, then to their team, then the victim and lastly to equipment. Encourage people to self-rescue if appropriate.



Shout-Reach-Throw-Row-Go (S-R-T-R-G) This principle encourages rescuers to consider the risk to themselves when deciding on what strategy to use when undertaking a rescue. Options : Shout instructions to encourage self rescue / Paddle reach / Throwline rescues / Boat based rescues / Live bait rescue

Some Canoe Specific Thoughts

Painters are the ropes at an end of a canoe. If they are loose when driving they could be run over by a wheel and destroy a boat / roof rack... just a thought!

If swimming with a canoe in a river then be upstream. Being pinned between a canoe and rock is called a "bear trap"- not a good place to be. Make sure saws are carried and participants are briefed as avoidance is better than cure!

Some people recommend **taking a saw** to cut through the boat or seat if needed.

The other major risk is entrapment... if a boat is about to get pinned or broached on a rock then get your feet out from underneath your seat or kneeling thwart immediately (as leader may be worth briefing your paddlers on this).

Pins and broaches are more serious and harder to remove boat in a canoe than a kayak, so make sure your any of your paddlers who normally paddle a kayak know to keep the canoe pointing downstream when amongst rocks and that if the boat does broach you have sufficient knowledge of rope/pulley systems to recover the boat.