



## Operational and Safety Procedures Policy

Reviewed 29-12-2016 by P.Amey

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This document sets out **Southampton Canoe Club's Safety Policy Statement and Club Operating Procedures**. The two documents have been combined as their intentions are interrelated and should be read together.

In conjunction with the Club Risk Assessments and other documents as noted, this active document shall be a record of recognised risks associated with the Activities associated with Southampton Canoe Club and its members, coaches and volunteers.

### **2.0 GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

Southampton Canoe Club shall provide its members, coaches and volunteers with:

- A safe and healthy environment
- Safe equipment and operations
- Health and safety information, training and supervision

All members, coaches and volunteers have a responsibility to co-operate and develop a general awareness of safety in the Club and to report known safety issues to the Club Chair or relevant committee member.

The Committee shall report to the Club Chair and the following committee members have specific responsibilities with regard to safety:-

- **The Head Coach** shall be responsible for ensuring that all Coaches are aware of their individual responsibilities in respect of advising participants on Health and Safety matters both when on the land and water
- **The Chairman and Club Secretary** shall be responsible for:-
  - ensuring that a well stocked first aid box is maintained at the Centre
  - displaying all Health and Safety information at the club premises.
- **The Quarter Master** shall be responsible for ensuring that boats and equipment are kept in a good state of repair and are both safe to use and fit for purpose.
- The Changing rooms, user rooms, halls and kitchens at Woodmill Activity Centre are managed by **Active Nation** only, however, those members of the Club who are charged at any time in using these facilities shall ensure that they are safe and fit for purpose before so doing.

- **The Secretary** will be responsible for arranging bookings for use of these facilities and Coaches will ensure that the AREAS used by Southampton Canoe Club are kept clean and tidy by all members. Any Health and Safety concerns in relation to the use of rooms shall be raised **to Active Nation** via the Secretary / Vice Chair.
- **The Child Protection/ Welfare Officer/s** shall be responsible for advising Coaches on all relevant safeguarding issues and for making his/herself known and available to all junior members.

### 3.0 ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 3.1 Incidents

As a club we have a responsibility to risk assess all activities that we undertake either in a formal written or an informal process. Part of the risk assessment being an active document is the reporting of incidents to allow the continual monitoring of the way that we do things. The following actions shall be undertaken during and after the incident.

- Deal with the situation, apply necessary first aid and give appropriate advice.
  - If a junior, inform the parent at earliest opportunity of accident and treatment given.
  - If a head injury, encourage the casualty to attend nearest A&E
  - If an open wound is exposed to river water then encourage the individual to seek a medical opinion
- Witnesses are to fill out the **BCU Incident Reporting form**. The reporting file is kept in the cage for everyone's use. **If a near miss** - please advise the Club chairperson; **if an incident**, then forward to BCU and club chair
- Chair will review incidents and if necessary update policies and/or risk assessments as appropriate
- Forms will be kept on record for 6 years within the club.
- In the case of a serious accident make no comment to the press and refer them to the BCU.

#### 3.2 First Aid

- A first aid box is located within the Kitchen at the Centre.
- The First Aid Officer/Secretary is responsible for maintaining the first aid box, which should be checked on the **first weekend of each month**.
- All Coaches who actively participate on Saturday mornings are first aiders.

#### 3.3 Emergency Procedures

- In the case of a fire, follow the procedures set out at the Centre.
- The location and maintenance of fire extinguishers is the responsibility of Active Nation.

#### 3.4 Safety training details or specialist training -

- We have trained coaches in accordance with BCU guidelines, whose responsibility is to provide safe enjoyable coaching.

### **3.5 Advice for non-members/visitors**

- Non-members or visitors will not be permitted within the changing rooms **unless** they are attending their own child.
- If you are not the usual person picking up a child - please make yourself known to the Coach on dropping off the child at the centre.
- Children will not be permitted to leave the centre without the knowledge or permission of the Coach.

### **3.6 Adult and Junior Codes of Conduct -**

- are available from the Club website.

## **4.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR ENSURING SAFETY AND HEALTH OF MEMBERS WHO ARE PARTAKING IN ACTIVITIES ON THE WATER**

### **4.1 Pre-amble**

At the time of writing, Southampton Canoe Club conducts training on the tidal stretches of the River Itchen and focuses its efforts towards flat water marathon and sprint paddling.

Club members have expressed an interest in developing beyond our current river-based activities and the following guidance attempts to accommodate this for the future.

BCU guidance doesn't cover this specific situation and therefore requires a degree of interpretation. The following sets out the basis of this interpretation of the BCU Environmental Definitions:

- The River Itchen is defined as the sections river upstream from Weston Point Jetty. This area is considered '**Sheltered Tidal Water**' in favourable weather conditions, as there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore and easy landing throughout.
- Below Weston Point Jetty is Southampton Water, defined as a tidal estuary and considered '**Moderate Tidal Waters/Sea**'.
- Standard Club coaching/training sessions may be defined by a combination of any two of the following points:
  - Using Club Boats
  - Organised by club coaches for junior members (excluding family) at any time and for adult members within the published coaching timetable
  - Operating on the River Itchen

## **4.2 The Club differentiates between coaching and training sessions.**

**A coaching session** - is defined as that in which the aim of the session is predominantly skills-based.

**A training session** - is a fitness-based session where all the paddlers on the water are capable of looking after themselves within that session. All junior specific sessions are coaching based as the acquisition of skill is fundamental to their continued development in the sport.

**4.3 The Club Risk Assessment** - is applicable to all Standard Club coaching/training sessions and the following operational procedures are derived from that document. It is expected that all club coaches will respect the framework that this document lays out and stay within the boundaries of the Club Risk Assessment.

### **4.3.1 Standard Club Coaching Sessions (on the River Itchen)**

- **Guidance for coaching beginner sessions** - is provided in a separate document
- Everyone engaged with a junior coaching session on the water shall wear a buoyancy aid and will be able to swim 50m in canoeing clothing (including the Buoyancy aid)
- The teaching progression for starting juniors off within Southampton Canoe club will follow the teaching progression laid out within the BCU Paddlepower coaches' guide.
- Ratios during coaching sessions shall be a maximum 1 BCU coach to 8 Paddlers during the beginning stages of the paddler's development. Paddlers above Paddlepower Discover (BCU 2 Star) level may engage with fitness training sessions if suited to their personal development in line with Long Term Paddler Development but the Paddler must be ready for this both, as a person, as well as an athlete.
- It is recognised that deeper water paddling conditions downstream of Northam Bridge can be more favourable than further upstream; however, access to the bank is limited in this area (especially downstream of Northam Bridge) and as such, the ability of an entire group must be considered more carefully before coaching beyond this point. It is sometimes appropriate to coach in variable conditions and as such a Level 2 coach would be appropriate to coach a session downstream of Northam Bridge.
- The area of water between the railway bridge down river to Priory Hard and beyond is quite exposed, which makes it important to consider the paddling conditions before paddling beyond the railway bridge. For guidance, white tipped waves would be a strong indication that conditions may not be suitable for some paddlers in unstable racing craft.
- It is noted that, in windy conditions, the most sheltered area for beginners will be from the Woodmill entry point down river to the first red post and no further. Moving beyond this point on the river Coaches shall take heed of individual capabilities and operate to the weakest paddler's abilities at all times.

- Coaches shall promote safe manual handling methods and the practise of travelling in groups from the Club to the water access, particularly for juniors, who may need assistance

#### **4.3.2 Standard Club Training Sessions (on the River Itchen)**

Southampton Canoe club recognises that people's paddling experience and understanding of their own and other paddlers' limitations counts as much as having a paper qualification when leading sessions. To this end, there is a **session leader system in place**, which is a fitness-based session where all the paddlers on the water are capable of looking after themselves within that session.

**Potential Session Leaders** - shall be nominated by the Head Coach and may be asked to demonstrate their knowledge of the river, water conditions, group management, rescue skills and their own limitation, before being employed in this role.

The role of a Session Leader is **NOT** that of a coach and paddlers participating in lead sessions must be able to handle themselves in the conditions, be able to empty a boat and understand that it is not a coached session. These sessions are not suitable for beginners and, speed aside, an appropriate level of ability would be BCU 2 star and confident in their craft.

- Junior members must be accompanied by a coach as described in the Club's rules for junior members below
- The group paddles as a unit and whilst different leaders may lead groups of different ability the expectation is that all paddlers will stay within the limits set by the session leader
- During training sessions, each paddler is responsible for their own safety as well as the safety of others on the water
- It is recognised that paddling conditions downstream of Northam Bridge can be more favourable than further upstream; however, access to the bank is limited in this area (particularly downstream of Itchen Bridge) and as such, the ability of the entire group must be considered more carefully before leading beyond this point. For guidance, a Level 2 coaching ability would be appropriate to lead a session downstream of Northam Bridge
- The water beside Priory Hard can be quite exposed, which makes it easier to consider the paddling conditions before getting on the water. For guidance, white tipped waves would be a strong indication that conditions may not be suitable for some paddlers in unstable racing craft, although a K2 pairing may be suitable
- The dedicated Devizes to Westminster training sessions are provided to develop fitness and boat confidence beyond the paddlers' initial coaching sessions and as such, are considered as Training Sessions
- All members should promote the practise of travelling in groups from the Club to the water access.

#### 4.4 Races and Regattas

Coaches are inherently responsible for preparing and advising their students with regard to racing. However, safety during a race or regatta is the responsibility of the race organiser.

#### 4.5 Club Coaching/Training Sessions Beyond the River Itchen

Any Club coaching/training sessions taking paddlers outside The River Itchen will be operating outside the scope of the Club Risk Assessment and therefore WILL require a specific risk assessment to be issued to the Head Coach for the record at least two weeks before the planned trip. Several pre-prepared risk assessments are being written for sheltered river locations that are visited more regularly:

- Hamble River
- Kennet and Avon Canal

For Club trips undertaken in '**Moderate Tidal Waters/Sea**', the Specific Risk Assessment should identify the following:

- The leader shall be qualified to BCU 4 star leadership level
- All paddlers shall be boat confident and at a level of ability equivalent to 3 star in their craft, with experience of deep water rescues
- All boats should contain water-tight bulkheads to ensure the craft is positively buoyant. If airbags are used, these should be fixed into the boat and it is recommended that the boat's ability to float when swamped is tested prior to the trip
- If unstable racing boats (marathon or similar) are to be used, consider limiting the trip conditions up to or below Sea State 2
- Neoprene spray decks for all paddlers
- At least one hand pump should be carried by the party
- Spare clothes (cag, pogies, hat and thermals)
- Always run with the tide
- Provide course, timings and identify all decision points for each paddler and at least one land-based support member
- Consider taking a spare paddle, if practicable
- Consider arranging motorised boat support if planning to operate more than 100m from the coast
- HF Radio required
- At the time of writing, the **Club does not recognise such trips as coaching trips** and, as such, **junior members would not be permitted** without a change of policy

## **5.0 CLUB RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **5.1 Junior (under 18) rules and regulations**

#### **On Land:**

- **PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER**
- Do not run or play on the slipway / landing stage as it is often slippery underfoot
- Respect other users of the Activity Centre and slipway at all times
- Do not climb on any of the railings at the centre.
- Please respect, listen to and obey all instructions of the Coaches once you are under their charge.
- Wear suitable shoes at all times – these must be a tight fit, have a rubber sole and cover the entire foot

#### **On The Water:**

- Buoyancy aids are compulsory during all sessions due to tidal water
- Only get on the water once your coach is on.
- **Land-based supervision only is not sufficient at our Centre (BCU guidance)**
- All Junior club training sessions shall comprise a minimum of three paddlers (BCU guidance), including at least one recognised coach
- Leave the water with your coach, as a group and if you need to leave a session early agree this with your coach
- Abide by the rules of the river (keep together and keep to the right of other craft)
- You must wear clothing deemed suitable by your coach for the weather conditions. Without this, you will not be able to paddle.
- Only enter or exit the water at the locations where you are instructed to do so by your Coach.

#### ***Additional Rules for Winter Months***

- **PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER**
- During winter months in particular, you will need to paddle craft suitable for your skill level and the weather conditions, as determined by your coach for that session
- Selected junior members may attend evening sessions in any combination of k1 or k2 if accompanied by a coach confirmed prior to the session (maximum 3 junior to each coach)
- All members must wear lights visible fore and aft during evening training sessions. Wearing a whistle tied to your buoyancy aid is strongly recommended

## 5.2 Adult (over 18) rules and regulations

### On Land:

- **PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER**
- Do not run on the slipway / landing stage as it is often slippery underfoot
- Respect other users of the Activity Centre and slipway at all times
- Do not climb on any of the railings at the centre.
- Please respect, listen to and obey all instructions of the Coaches once you are under their charge.
- Wear suitable shoes at all times – these must be a tight fit, have a rubber sole and cover the entire foot

### On The Water:

- Buoyancy aids are compulsory during Saturday sessions and recommended for all training and coaching sessions
- Please do not get on the water without a coach or session leader.  
**Land-based supervision only is not sufficient at our Centre (BCU guidance)**
- All club training sessions shall comprise a minimum of three paddlers (BCU guidance), including at least one recognised coach or session leader
- Leave the water with your coach or session leader, as a group and if you need to leave a session early then inform your coach or session leader
- Stick to the rules of the river (keep together and keep right).
- Only enter or exit the water at the locations where you are instructed to do so by your Coach./ Session Leader.

### Additional Rules for Winter Paddling:

- **PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER**
- All members are to wear buoyancy aids during all training sessions
- All members must wear suitable clothing for the weather conditions
- All members should paddle craft suitable for their skill level and the weather conditions
- All members must wear lights visible fore and aft during evening training sessions. Wearing a whistle tied to your buoyancy aid is strongly recommended.
- Selected junior members may attend evening sessions in any combination of k1 or k2 if accompanied by a coach confirmed prior to the session (maximum 3 junior to each coach).
- The buddy system should be adopted for all evening sessions in order to best ensure all paddlers complete each effort and leave the water safely

## **6.0 Equipment:**

- Boats and equipment are to be booked out for races through the Vice Chair.
- Any damage is to be reported to the Vice Chair immediately
- No repairs or modifications (including administering tape) should be undertaken on club equipment without consent from the Vice Chair
- All borrowed equipment must be returned to the club before the next training session unless agreed with the Vice Chair
- Always return your boats to the container lockup after each session

## **7.0 Disciplinary Action/s**

If a conversation is deemed insufficient, the club shall generally operate with a three-strikes-and-you're-out response in addressing bad behaviour, infringement of the rules and operational procedures set out above or infringement of the Rules of Conduct. In such cases, the individual, parent or guardian shall be informed of each strike in writing from the Club Chair. However, it is recognised that, in some instances, it may be necessary to ban a member at the first infringement for the safety of club members or in the best interest of the Club's reputation.

All potential infringements should be brought to the Committee's specific attention in writing and any resulting action shall be considered with due care and attention.

## **8.0 Use of the Premises operated by Active Nation**

- Access to the Kitchen is limited to adults as confirmed by the Secretary
- Times of Use of the changing rooms on Saturday mornings is by agreement with Active Nation. **SOU Members are permitted to use the changing rooms between 08.20 to 08.50am - 10.00 and 10.30am - 11.30 and 12.00 - 13.00 and 13.30 each Saturday.**
- If you return off the water earlier than or between any of these times, please be aware that other child groups may be using the facilities and for this reason Active Nation withhold the right to prevent our use of the facilities outside these times.
- Notwithstanding this - if there is an urgent need to use the facilities to warm up a person after falling into very cold water, the Disabled Changing room and/or changing rooms in the Main Woodmill building are available for our use.
- Please ensure you keep all your belongings together and clear of the changing rooms when you are not using the changing rooms. **The Cage is available for your use to store your belongings securely between uses of the changing rooms.**
- All club equipment is to be logged and routinely checked for safety and all results recorded by the Secretary. Any damaged or otherwise unsuitable equipment should be clearly labelled as such and removed from service until repaired or disposed of.

## 9.0 Keys

- **Who opens up ?** - For evening and weekend training / coaching sessions Steve Willis and/or Damon or Ralph are generally the earliest to attend.
- **Who locks up ?**- Any Coach with a Key can lock up
- **Where are keys kept ?** - Coaches keep keys on their person.
- **Who has keys ?** -
- Phil Amey, Steve Willis, Damon Grimsey, Steve Rance and Ralph Baker are designated key-holders.

## 10.0 Equipment

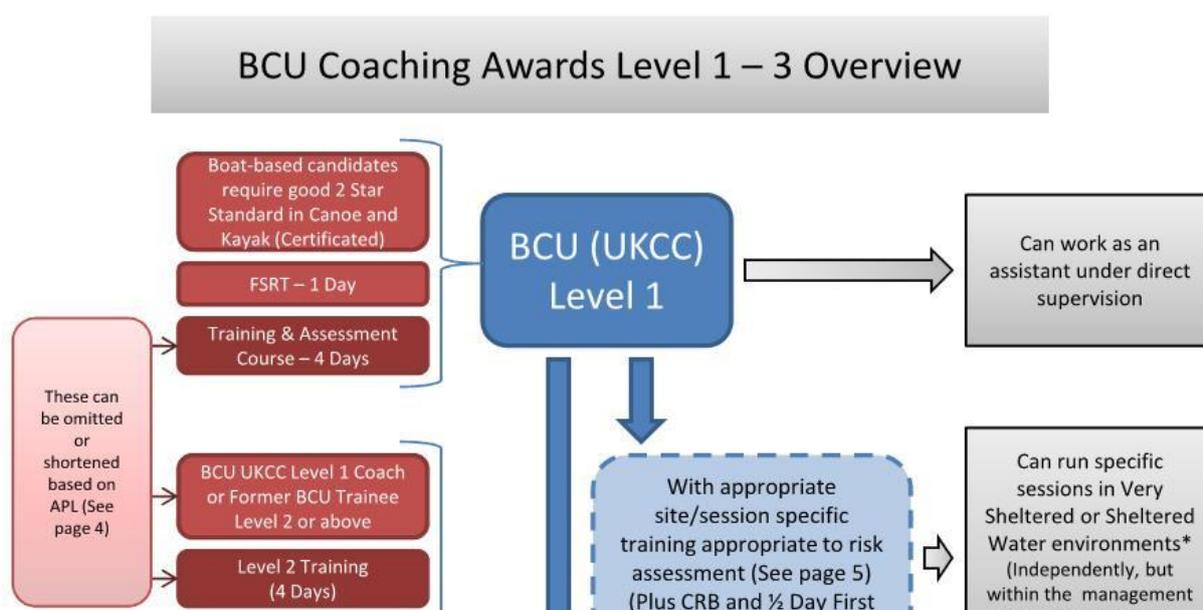
- **Who can use club equipment and when ?**- All Club equipment can be used by **all Full Members free of additional charge for the first year only** and can be used at the Club at Coaching and Training sessions and by arrangement at no extra charge for Races. NOTE - After the first year of membership a levy will be applied to all members fees who continue to use club equipment. Terms and conditions apply.  
**Associate Members** are able to use Club Kit upon payment of a Club Levy - but always by arrangement.
- **Can club equipment be taken off site?** - Only by arrangement with the Vice Chair / Quartermaster.
- **How are faults reported and recorded?** - Report immediately to any Coach who will in turn advise the Vice Chair / Quartermaster

## 11.0 Emergency Procedures

- **Fire procedures** - See above
- In the event of a serious incident what instructions are there with respect to dealing with the media - **Club coaches must not discuss any event with the press or admit liability to any party.**
- **Health declaration for course participants and new members** - All participants have signed to say that they are fit to undertake the activities we provide. If for any reason a persons fitness is below normal he/she must make this information available to the attending Coach before they go onto the water. The Coach has the responsibility to safe-guard all in his care and has the right to refuse access to the session if he deems it is in both your own and the groups interest.
- **Emergency contact details** - The Club keeps a spreadsheet of all members contact details in case of emergency.

## 12.0 Club Advisories

- Coaches and helpers are to follow BCU guidelines
  - Policy regarding student's swimming ability - all participants must be able to swim 25m at least in clothing.
  - Advice to students regarding valuables and security - Keep your belongings secure with your kit, try not to bring expensive electronic items with you, leave them at home.
  - Safety briefing (car park, road, slipway, debris underfoot etc.) - A safety briefing will be held at the start of every session.
  - Preparation of equipment - Make sure you check your kit and boat and set them up appropriately before you get on the water
  - Personal safety kit (mobile, first aid etc.) - Make sure your Coach checks that your Buoyancy Aid is fitted correctly.
  - Coaches to ensure they've read and understood Club Safety Policy and Emergency Procedures
  - Coaches to check students for medical conditions and special needs (left handed?)
  - Who does the coach report to if there are problems during course? E.g. disciplinary - to the Club Welfare Officer in the first instance.
  - System for feedback? - Members can comment directly to Coaches or to the Chairman by email if they have any issues to raise.
  - Logbooks, awards etc. offered to participants (and how these are recorded) - The Junior Head Coach keeps a record of achievements for all young paddlers and will make awards when appropriate to do so.
  - Operating areas - as defined in the risk assessments
  - Clothing - as advised by the Coach and appropriate to conditions.
- Kitchen
    - Who can serve food? - Only persons holding a Food Hygiene certificate.
    - Procedures with regard to electrical appliances - There are no appliances within the Kitchen which require specialist knowledge for a person to operate.





# BCU Environmental Definitions

## **Very Sheltered Water**

Quiet canals with easy bankside access and egress; small lakes, which are not large enough, and do not have difficult landing areas for problems to occur if there is a sudden change in conditions; specified sites on gentle, slow moving rivers. The definition implies weather conditions which are not in themselves likely to cause problems. Care must be exercised when water temperatures are low.

## **Sheltered Water**

Flat water rivers, faster flowing, but not involving the shooting of, or playing on weirs or running rapids. Discretion and commonsense must apply when considering the use of lakes/lochs. To operate further than 200 metres from shore on a large lake can be a serious undertaking. To paddle in offshore breezes on large lakes requires the same degree of caution as for the sea. Water temperature (especially in Scottish lochs) must always be a consideration. Suitable lagoons or sections of sheltered bays of larger lakes can sometimes be designated "Sheltered" or even "Very Sheltered" water by careful and sensible selection. The definition implies normal conditions. Care must be exercised when water temperatures are low.

## **Sheltered Tidal Water**

Small enclosed bays, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore; enclosed harbours, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore; defined beaches (a short section of beach with easy landing throughout, no tide races or overfalls beyond the beach), in conditions in which swimmers and beach craft could be happily operating, winds not above force 3 (force 2 if offshore when greatest of caution must be exercised); the upper reaches of some suitable, slow moving estuaries during neap tides. In all cases the wind and weather conditions must be favourable.

## **Moderate Water – Inland Water**

Large areas of open water which exceed the sheltered water definition, that are no more than 500m off shore and in wind strengths that do not exceed force 4.

## **Moderate Water – White Water**

Grade 2 white water or equivalent weirs.  
(This is extended to Grade 2(3) when using whitewater spec Kayaks).

## **Moderate Water – Tidal / Sea**

Moderate Tidal Water / Sea – The definition involves: A stretch of coastline or estuary in close proximity to the shore, with available landings at every 1-2 miles / 1 hour and areas where it is not easy to land. Up to a maximum of 2 knots tide but not involving, tidal races, or overfalls, winds not above force 4 beaufort sea state 4 (if offshore the greatest of caution must be exercised), or the upper reaches of some estuaries; launching and landing through moderate surf.

## **Moderate Water – Surf**

Beaches that are free of significant hazards (strong rips or undertow, tidal streams, rocks or groynes). An area of beach must be marked out to contain the group and prevent any loss of communication. The area selected must not interfere with other beach users – swimmers and surfers in particular; small to moderate waves – 3 feet maximum.

Measurement of surf; The "surfers" measurement is used throughout both this document and the BCU awards in surf. This is also used by surf forecasts obtained from telephone surf lines, the internet or wave buoys. It is in feet and refers to the ride-able mid section of the wave, not the peak to trough height.