



Trips Guidelines for Prospective Paddlers

Trips organised by the Club are intended to be enjoyable social events as well as providing good canoeing. It is hoped that organisers, Coaches and participants will have a good time. Safety is of paramount importance to the Club so it is necessary for trips to be conducted within a framework of guidelines to minimise the risk associated with canoeing. But remember.....

- Canoeing & Kayaking are 'Assumed risk sport' that may carry attendant risks. Participants should be aware and accept these risks, and be responsible for their own action and involvement.
- When participating in a trip you must recognise this and, being guided by more experienced members of the group, **assume responsibility for your own safety** and of any junior members in your charge.
- If you have any doubts at all about the suitability of this trip for you, you should speak to the trip leader or to other club Coaches for advice.
- The group leader will do all he or she can to ensure that no harm comes to anyone but the safety of all members of the group will be enhanced by everyone observing the following guidelines:

Participants will:

- Be able to swim confidently in canoeing clothing.
- Have knowledge about canoeing clothing, weather conditions, personal and canoe buoyancy, capsize procedures and group safety.
- Ensure that they are familiar with the conditions likely to be encountered on the trip and, after discussion with the trip leader, be satisfied that they can cope with them.
- Follow the instructions of the organiser and/or Coaches or of any other nominated leader.
- Not act recklessly or negligently or in any way which might jeopardise personal safety or the safety of others.
- Ensure that equipment used for the trip is suitable for the conditions to be encountered and properly maintained. This applies whether the equipment used is owned or borrowed.
- When requested by the leader, carry in their boat in waterproof containers, basic survival equipment for a day's paddling, which will include;- spare clothing,
- Provide own food, drinks, towels and dry warm clothing at the end of the trip
- Observe the BRITISH CANOEING canoeists code and the conditions of access to waters in force during the trip.

Leaders will:

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety group to the extent that they are able.
- Be a qualified coach at an appropriate level to the planned trip or ensure that a suitably qualified coach is on the trip.
- Lead trips only on water with which they are familiar or on other simple waters where the safety of the group can be maintained.
- Accept as a participant only those paddlers who are considered sufficiently skilled to cope with the conditions likely to be encountered. The decision to paddle will be reviewed for each participant in the light of conditions prevailing at the commencement of paddling.
- Guide the group in such a way as to identify river or other dangers and decide how these should be tackled.

- Ensure that participants have all the necessary equipment and that it is suitable for the conditions likely to be encountered.

Conditions

The grades and paddler standards described below are indicative and for guidance only. They are also subject to continual review and revision.

It is NOT a requirement that individuals hold the BRITISH CANOEING Star Award certificate indicated, this is a general indication of the level of proficiency. It is intended to help individuals progress their paddling and identify suitable trips / sessions that they can attend

There are, however, no hard and fast rules as everyone progresses at different rates. Neither is there a fixed progression where the next level is reached when a particular trip is completed. The jump in skill level is more marked between the higher levels and most paddlers will need to do several trips at a certain level to demonstrate that they are confident and competent before moving up. Your level of paddle fitness is another important factor to consider.

Please contact a coach, responsible person or trip leader to discuss the trip's suitability for you. There will be people who want to push their paddling skills on by trying a level above where they have been before and this is fine as long as the trip / session leader is happy with this. Please to confirm your place with the trip/session leader.

Remember on the day the trip/session leader has final say on how things are run and who gets to paddle.

Indicative Proficiency	Description
1* and above (+ you must have done a capsize drill before with use of spray deck)	Generally more relaxed trips including sheltered tidal areas and flat water touring trips.
2* - 3*	Generally coastal paddles not more than ½ mile (c.800 metres) from the shore -potentially some slightly choppy seas, wind below force 4, tide approx 2 knots max. Plenty of opportunity for landing and resting. You are not required to be able to roll or self-rescue. These trips will not involve open crossings. Any particular additional prerequisites will be specified.
Confident 3* and above	More testing/advanced conditions or longer paddles where paddle fitness is extremely important. May involve short open crossings. Longer gaps between landing opportunities (more committing paddles) with the potential for more difficult landings and some moderate surf. Potentially some choppy seas, wind up to force 4, tide approx 2 knots max. Should be capable of peer/group rescue. Should be developing rolling skills.
4* or aspirant 4* paddlers and above	These trips are for experienced paddlers who are capable of looking after themselves in fairly testing conditions. These trips may well extend beyond the technical 4* remit. You would be expected to be able to roll in 'moderate' seas (1 - 2.5M waves) and be able to perform a self-rescue if required. Clapotic waves, tide races and overfalls may be encountered on some trips.