

Bideford Canoe Club Risk Assessment: Pool Sessions

Canoeing is 'an assumed risk', 'water contact' activity however serious accidents are very rare. More people drown whilst cycling than canoeing. Accidents can be avoided by a combination of training, based on the accepted code of technique and safety; and experience gathered over a number of years, where techniques are acquired and practiced under the shadow of a leader.

Accidents can be placed in three broad categories:

- Lack of knowledge – as the saying goes 'fore-warned is fore-armed'. You can never know enough.
- Over-estimation of ability – common with inexperienced canoeists.
- Carelessness – may affect both novice and expert. Ensure you have sound knowledge of the skills, techniques and equipment you are using by undertaking adequate training and practise.

Significant hazards	Persons at risk	Severity 1-5	Likelihood 1-5	Rating	Controls/Actions required
Risk of drowning as associated with water sports	All	5	2	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A "responsible club member" to supervise the pool at all times • Absolute beginners to be given one-on-one attention • Confirm that new participants can swim before they enter the pool • At least one adult trained in CPR to be present at all times
Entrapment in boat/on ski	All, but especially beginners	5	2	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults to help juniors/beginners to select a kayak at the start of a session and to confirm that they are confident getting in and out of their boat • Beginners to perform a capsize drill – once they are sufficiently confident – before they are allowed more freedom in the pool (i.e. they no longer require one-on-one attention) • Anyone using an unfamiliar surf-ski should be encouraged to check how the lap-belt works before capsizing
Collision with other paddlers	All	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Responsible club member" to make a "dynamic" decision about how many boats and what activities are permissible within the pool during any given session • During busy sessions, participants should

					be made aware of this risk and encouraged to moderate behaviour accordingly
Banging head or other body parts on poolside or other boats	All, especially playboaters	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Responsible club member" to make a "dynamic" decision about how many boats and what activities are permissible within the pool during any given session • If there are lots of play boaters in the pool, then "responsible club member" to have a conversation about the safest way for the session to continue – may consider dividing the pool in half or putting a time limit on one particular activity • Where ever possible, play boat type tricks should be practiced towards the middle of the pool
Collisions between paddlers and swimmers	Anyone swimming	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Responsible club member" to exercise common sense whilst supervising pool and to ensure that any situations in which a kayaker is out of their boat is dealt with quickly • Swimming, i.e. doing lengths, is not allowed • Anyone coaching in the water should be made aware of the need to have their "wits about them" in order to avoid a potential collision • No one allowed to swim/coach from the water during any activity where kayaks are at speed
Slippery pool side	All	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Responsible club member" to make all members aware of acceptable behaviour and to ensure that they comply • Horse-play and high jinks such as pushing and shoving should be discouraged • No running within the swimming pool building
Moving and handling boats	All	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pool users encouraged to carry boats in pairs

SEVERITY: 1 – minor injury; 2 – injury needing medical attention; 3 - injury needing 5 days off work/school; 4 - Serious injury/long term sickness; 5 – fatality.

LIKELIHOOD: 1 – impossible; 2 – unlikely; 3 – even chance; - 4 – likely; 5 – certain.

A “responsible club member” is considered to be either a member of the club committee or a long-term member of the club who has either coaching qualifications or a 4 Star proficiency award.