

BSCC Safety Policy

Approval date: 11 April 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

Almost any sport, and certainly any water sport, involves some risk. In order to ensure that all members of Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club (BSCC) and affiliated paddlers can enjoy paddling in safety, it is necessary for the club to have a Safety Plan

All members and visitors to BSCC shall comply with the requirements of the Safety Policy and other associated documents which may be in force at the time (as notified by the BSCC committee).

Most of the rules and advice contained in this document are based on simple common sense, so with the help of BSCC members it should largely enforce itself. If you see any incident which you feel may lead to an accident or injuries, then SAY SOMETHING, do not assume someone else will deal with it. Any serious incidents or breaches of the plan should be reported to a committee member.

2. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

This Plan will be reviewed annually directly after the AGM to ensure that details are correct. In particular where the document refers to specific documents or policies and refers by name to club personnel.

Key dates

March	Buoyancy Aids safety check
April	General Risk Assessment review
August	Equipment safety checked
August	Canoe trailer service (alternate years)

3. ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Reporting and recording accidents and incidents/near misses

It is a requirement that any accidents or incidents are recorded in the incident book and the appropriate form(s) completed:

- British Canoeing (BC) Incident Report Form
- BC Report Form G4 for child protection incidents
- CRT Visitor Incident Report Form

The forms can be found in the open cupboard at the back of the main club room along with the incident book, and completed forms must be handed to the club secretary for onward processing. Entries in the incident book must NOT contain any personal details which compromise the privacy of an individual involved (*e.g* their name or medical details). These go on the forms which are to be handed confidentially to the secretary and kept securely.

In the event of a serious incident, no club official or coach should speak to the media until advice has been taken from British Canoeing.

BSCC Incident Book

Any club member may make an entry in the Incident Book, but should **inform a committee member as soon as possible** that they have done so.

In the Incident Book, please log:

- The date of the report
- The nature of the incident
- Which form(s) have been completed
- Who completed them
- To whom the form(s) were handed and the date.

An entry in the incident book **MUST** be made as soon as possible whenever an incident occurs which could give rise to an insurance claim and a British Canoeing (BC) Incident Report Form (or BC Report Form G4 for child protection incidents) must also be completed.¹

This applies to:

- A fatal accident
- An injury involving either referral to or actual hospital treatment
- Any allegations of libel/slander
- Any allegations of professional negligence (i.e. arising out of tuition, coaching or advice given)
- Any circumstance involving damage to third party property
- Any investigation under any child protection legislation

If an incident occurs on Canal & River Trust (CRT) property e.g. the waterway, towpath or lock and involves third parties not associated with the club (e.g. other river users or the general public), a CRT Visitor Incident Report Form also needs to be completed. BSCC's insurance is held through the British Canoeing (BC), and it is anticipated that in many instances it will be most appropriate to take advice from BC before contacting CRT.

Completed BC/CRT incident forms to be handed to the Club Secretary or other committee member. The Secretary will keep a copy of the form for three years and will forward the form as necessary to the appropriate body.

In the event of a Child Protection issue arising, the Club Welfare officer or Secondary Welfare Officer should be contacted as soon as possible. If (s)he is not available, a quick reference action checklist and a list of BC and other external contact phone numbers can be found in the reference folder at the clubhouse.

BSCC Obligations Under RIDDOR

RIDDOR is the legislation which requires the reporting of accidents at work. A sports club is viewed as a "workplace" even when no one is getting paid. Under some circumstances, incidents occurring to members of the public on club property would be reportable. The criteria for what is a reportable incident changed in 2013. Being taken ill at a work premises or sustaining an injury from the normal pursuit of sport are now not generally reportable, but could be if negligence, a defect in the property or faulty equipment was in any way involved.

¹ From BCU Health and Safety Policy: "all those involved in Sport are now required to report (to their Insurance Brokers) every incident, particularly those involving a personal injury, which could give rise to a subsequent claim ... we would encourage clubs ... to note in detail instances of injury to students .. we would further encourage information of this nature, on the said forms, to be forwarded to the BCU Coaching Office ..."

Any incident serious enough to require immediate medical treatment should be reviewed against the description on the RIDDOR site and, if in doubt about whether a RIDDOR report is necessary, guidance can be obtained from the BC's insurers over the phone.

Reporting can now be done easily online at www.riddor.gov.uk.

BSCC Near Miss Book

Any club member may make an entry in the Near-Miss Book.

British Canoeing recommends the recording of Near Misses to facilitate the assessment of risk from possible hazards which have not yet caused accidents, and recommends that the record should be "non-formal, non-judgemental and perhaps anonymous".

If the Near Miss involves other river users or Canal & River Trust property, it may be appropriate to complete a CRT Visitor Incident Report Form (can be found in the box with the Near Miss Book), in which case please hand the completed form to a Committee Member.

In the Near Miss Book, please report:

- The date of the near miss
- Details of the near miss
- Also, if applicable, the date and committee member to whom a CRT form was handed

First aid box

The First Aid box is located on the shelf at the back of the main clubroom.

The Safety Officer will ensure that all items are serviceable and present in sufficient quantity.

The first aid box is fitted with a tamper seal so that it is possible to tell whether it has been opened. The Safety Officer will check the box regularly to ensure that if it has been opened it is restocked and re-sealed.

Members are also asked to inform the Safety Officer if any items have been used so that the first aid box can be restocked as soon as possible.

Qualified first-aid personnel

A number of Club Members will have attended an approved first aid course in the past 3 years and have up to date first aid certificates. A full list of certified first aiders will be maintained at the club next to the first aid box.

Fire procedures & Extinguishers

The Safety Officer will ensure that the club's Fire Safety Risk Assessment is reviewed annually.

A suitable fire assembly point will be determined and a diagram showing its location will be on display in the clubhouse.

The Safety Officer will ensure that sufficient Fire Extinguishers of the correct type are provided in suitable locations. A maintenance schedule is on display next to the extinguishers, and the Safety Officer will ensure that these are maintained as required.

The actions to be taken in the event of a fire are described in the BSCC Accident and Emergency Action Plan.

COSHH

COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations) is the law that requires commercial businesses including clubs and societies with premises, to control substances or materials that are hazardous to health.

The aim of the BSCC COSHH policy is to prevent or reduce members and guests' exposure to hazardous substances by only procuring retail products for cleaning or maintenance purposes, which will only be used or dispensed from the original labelled container. It is essential that anyone using a chemical-based compound familiarises themselves with the user instructions and restriction on the back of the product packaging.

The Safety Officer will carry out monthly inspections of the premises and remove any non-compliant hazardous materials.

Risk Assessments

The club does not hold any formal safety training. However all members and guests are reminded of their need to behave safely both in the club and on the water at each session. New members joining the club, and guests, are given handling and lifting instruction to minimise the risk of musculoskeletal injury when moving and lifting boats.

A Committee Member will be nominated as Safety Officer. The Safety Officer will attend British Canoeing Event Safety Training at the earliest opportunity after appointment. The Safety Officer will ensure that the club's general Risk Assessment is reviewed annually and procedures followed. They will also work with the Race Organiser and Organising Committee to draw up Risk Assessments and Safety Plans for all special activities undertaken at the club, such as races hosted by the club, and ensure that safe procedures are followed.

4. ENSURING SAFETY AND HEALTH

In-house rules and regulations

Clubhouse

- Members (or the parents/guardians of Junior Members) must ensure that their emergency contact number held at the Club House is kept up to date. Parents/guardians of Junior Members who leave the Club while the Junior is paddling must ensure that their contact number for the day (if different from the emergency contact number on file) is left with the child's coach or a committee member at the clubhouse.

Paddling

- All independent paddlers must log their name & departure time in the Booking In Calendar on FaceBook Messenger prior to getting on the water (unless paddling with one of the main Sunday coaching groups). Ideally, direction of travel should also be included.
- All Members and Guests are strongly advised to wear Personal Flotation Devices at all times, and not go on the river in groups of less than three or after dusk, in accordance with the club Buoyancy Aid Policy.
- New members/guests will be given instruction towards eventually enabling them to be able to select and fit their own PFD.
- Members must be assessed as competent, by Club Coaches, before being allowed to use Club equipment unsupervised.
- Paddlers must not enter locks which are in use by powered craft.
- Guests/visitors must complete a consent form or be signed in to the Visitors book by a senior member before getting on the water.
- Guests must be supervised by a senior club member at all times

Paddling at night

- Members are strongly advised not to paddle alone after dusk
- Wearing a PFD is recommended for all
- When paddling after dusk members are advised to wear light coloured reflective clothing and to equip their boat or person with lighting so that they can be seen.

Gym Equipment

- No juniors are allowed to use the club gym equipment unless supervised by a suitably qualified adult
- All weights must be returned to the rack when finished with
- Use of the paddle machines must be supervised to prevent accidental injury to persons walking too close to the machines whilst in use.
- Members use the gym equipment at their own risk and are advised to seek guidance before commencing any exercise routine using the equipment.

Members' Contact/Safety Information

Guest participating in taster sessions will be asked to complete a form asking whether they can swim 50m in canoe clothing and whether they have any medical conditions which could affect their safety on the water. If they indicate on the form that they have safety-related issues, the information from the form will be transmitted to the person leading their session before they get on the water.

All new members will also be asked to complete a form asking whether they can swim 50m in canoe clothing and whether they have any medical conditions which could affect their safety on the water. Additionally they will be asked to supply an emergency contact number as well as their regular home/mobile telephone number. This information will be recorded by the Secretary and will be verified each year during re-subscription.

An up-to-date printout of members' phone numbers and medical notes will be kept in the red box on the wall in the boathouse for reference in an emergency. All those coaching at the club will be issued with a printed list of those members to whom special safety issues apply, and this list will be reissued whenever a new member with such issues joins the club. The club will not attempt to record detailed medical information about any member, but the paddlers themselves (or their parents/guardians in the case of juniors) will be asked to inform the coaches of any helpful or relevant information.

If a junior paddler is asthmatic and requires an inhaler, this must be placed in a dry bag and given for safe keeping to their paddling parent / coach / adult assistant. If other medication needs to be carried on the water (for the use of junior or senior paddlers), this must be discussed in advance with a club official and an appropriate arrangement agreed.

Areas where care should be taken

The River Stort is a quiet stretch of water but traffic does increase in the spring and summer months with narrow boats using the navigation. All paddlers should be constantly aware of other river users and ensure that they adhere to the rules of the river.

The tow path along the river is a public right of way and care should be taken not to block the path.

On-water safety

Boats and paddles

All club boats and paddles will be checked to ensure that they are safe and river worthy on an annual basis every August. Any equipment found to be unfit at any time will be withdrawn from service and the problem will be noted in the club damage book, stored in the open cupboard.

Before getting onto the water the supervising coach will check to ensure that the boat and paddles being used are suitable for the individual. Factors to be taken into account are age, size and experience.

Buoyancy aids

All club buoyancy aids will be checked every year as schedule on p1, to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Checking will take the form of a visual inspection of the state of the stitching, material and fastenings, and a visual/manual inspection of the foam for signs of deterioration. Any that do not meet requirements will be withdrawn immediately. Each club buoyancy aid will be marked with a unique number and the committee will maintain a log in which date of purchase, date of last inspection will be recorded and filed in the Members' Reference File in the clubhouse.

Coaching

When leaders are taking out a group of paddlers they will limit the size of the group according to the paddlers' ability, the water/weather conditions and the British Canoeing guidelines on coach:paddler ratio.

Water-borne disease/pollution

All new members will be made aware of the potential for disease-causing organisms and pollutants to be present in UK rivers, and in particular the risk of Weils disease (Leptospirosis). The need for general hygiene after paddling will be emphasised.

All paddlers should ensure that:

- Any open wounds are covered by a waterproof dressing
- Appropriate footwear is worn to minimise risk of injury and infection.
- Hands are washed before eating
- They shower as soon as possible once off the water

Safe stacking, lifting and storage of equipment

All boats must be returned to the boat house when finished with. If you are in any doubt about your ability to transport a boat or return it to its designated slot – get help! Handling and lifting injuries are the most common canoeist injuries and avoid lifting anything you are unsure about.

Storage

Storage at the club is limited, it is not made better when equipment that has a home is not returned or left where it should not be. Ensure that paddles, buoyancy aids, weights and kitchen equipment are returned, neatly, where they came from.

Use of any machinery, tools, or dangerous substances

Canoe Trailer

The trailer should be visually inspected by the person who intends to tow it prior to and after each use. If any requirement for maintenance is noted this must be brought to the attention of the management committee at the earliest opportunity for immediate action. The management committee will arrange for a routine certified service to be carried out at least every 2 years by a qualified mechanic.

Canoe repairs

In repairing fibreglass boats a number of potentially dangerous chemicals are used. These must be kept in a safe condition and locked away whilst not in use. It is the responsibility of anyone carrying out repairs to ensure that materials are kept safely.

5. Safety at Away Events

The club encourages members to attend away events where these are being run by British Canoeing, by BC-affiliated clubs or by similar reputable organisations with high standards of safety.

Where juniors are attending an event without the presence of an adult family member or guardian, a BC consent form should be completed and deposited with the Secretary. A single consent form for away races may be completed at the start of the subscription year to cover a 12-month period.

Juniors travelling back from a race are expected to return with the same party they travelled out with unless explicitly stated.

At away events, the Race Team Leader (or their nominated representative) is responsible for

- Ensuring that parents/guardians have the mobile phone no on which they can be contacted on the day (published on the club event list)
- Ensuring that copies of consent forms or family contact details are carried for each unaccompanied junior present.
- Carrying a first aid kit for the use of the members.
- Reporting any accidents/incidents to the race organisers.
- Attending the race briefing and reviewing the Risk Assessment provided by the organisers, and raising any concerns about the suitability of the event for their team members under the prevailing conditions