

# Tayside Sea Kayak Club

## Standard Operating Procedures: for risk management

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– in part based on DCKC document with permission

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### Abbreviations

- TSKC Tayside Sea Kayak Club
- BC British Canoeing
- ICE In Case of Emergency
- \* SCA Scottish Canoe Association
- \* SOP Standard Operating Procedures

## 1. Introduction

The aim of Tayside Sea Kayak Club's (TSKC) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is to uphold member safety and promote best practice. They do not replace dynamic risk assessment whilst the activity is taking place.

This SOP is the TSKC guide on how we run our activities for TSKC members. Risk assessments should be in place for the Club's activities, in compliance with insurance requirements as expressed by British Canoeing (BC) and Scottish Canoe Association (SCA), our National Governing Body. In some cases, a generic risk assessment can cover a number of events. Appendix 9 in this document is risk assessment for Tuesday evening paddles. Appendix 10 is a generic risk assessment for a Club Trip, which can be added to where appropriate.

The Club has a Health and Safety Policy.

This SOP should be published for all members to access.

## 2. Insurance

2.1 The club operation is protected by third party Liability Insurance provided by the SCA. For more detailed information on policy conditions refer to:

<https://www.canoescotland.org/resources/general-insurance>

2.2 TSKC members who are on TSKC club activities are covered by TSKC's Liability Insurance.

2.3 Individual (not associate) SCA members have public liability insurance for a wider range of paddling than just TSKC organised trips.

## 3. Definition and Scope of Activities

3.1 Activities associated with paddlesports which use a range of equipment to enable participation on swimming pools; rivers; lochs; estuaries; or on open sea.

3.2 Locations are water based and accessed via poolside; jetties; slipways; riverbanks; or shores. Specific sites are noted below and individual SOP are noted for these sites:

- Pool (**Appendix 2**)
- Tay Estuary from Broughty Ferry (**Appendix 3**)

3.3 Main activities covered are:

- Sea kayaking
- Touring (inland lochs)
- Pool coaching
- Other canoeing activities which may include but not limited to canoeing, surfing, and canoe polo.

3.4 Additional club activities may also include ceilidhs, social evenings, video nights, committee meetings, and other meetings.

## 4. Context

4.1 BC/SCA acknowledge the most effective coaching is self-directed and where sufficient stretch/challenge is provided to enable discovery and reflection. It is therefore difficult to set clear operating guidelines which ensure member safety in all circumstances.

4.2 This SOP is not designed to remove all risks associated with activities. The SOP adopts control measures to reduce the level of risk associated with paddle-sport activities to an acceptable level and provides general operating procedures.

4.3 A group of experienced paddlers approved by the Committee is responsible for endorsing appropriately experienced and/or qualified individuals who will assume the role of Group Leader or Coach. For the purpose of this SOP “Leader” will refer to both roles. The Club Committee will publish a list of those it regards as competent to lead groups of paddlers. The current list is included in this document as **Appendix 5**.

4.4 The Club Committee is responsible for ensuring nominated Leader(s) are aware of the SOP and supported to ensure sufficiently safe practices at all times.

4.5 Nominated Leader(s) are responsible for conducting dynamic risk assessment during any given activity. It also remains the responsibility of the Leader to take into account National Governing Body requirements, aligned to level or accreditation (refer to **Appendix 1** which links to BC/SCA information).

4.6 Members on paddles are expected to follow the guidelines set by the Leader, and, within their skillset, to contribute to the safe paddling of the group. Good participants are as important as good leaders.

## 5. Risk Control

5.1 The Standard Operating Procedures should be followed to reduce risks to an acceptable level and maximise the safety of club members. Leaders should make available to paddlers, usually on Spond, a written risk assessment.

5.2 The Leader must be experienced in relevant rescue techniques and capable of performing these under the conditions of the activity.

5.3 Wherever reasonable, at least one member of the group should be a qualified First Aider. This does not necessarily have to be the Coach/Group Leader.

5.4 All club members are responsible for their own and others' safety during the activity. A safety briefing should be provided before going on the water. Attention should be paid to hazard warnings and safety information.

5.5 The Committee will undertake at least an annual review of standard operating procedures and associated risk assessments. Hazards identified in Risk Assessments will be reduced to a reasonable foreseeable standard.

5.6 The Leader will carry out ongoing Dynamic Risk Assessment during activities. Given the environment and changeable nature of kayaking and canoeing, Dynamic Risk Assessment is not normally documented.

5.7 Part of risk management is paddlers knowing the expected difficulty of the trip. The Club uses the same sort of Grade A, B, C descriptions that are used in the Pesda Press kayak guide books and elsewhere. The Club's expectations of paddlers on these trips is also shown in the statements below.

**Grade A:** Up to 20 km in distance. Easy landings with escape routes. Sheltered from extremes of weather and swell. No tidal races, overfalls, or open crossings.

Experience of applicant – novice and above. It is expected that basic equipment for comfort and safety of paddler is carried i.e. clothing to keep warm on the water, spare clothing, food and drink, map and compass, means of summoning assistance (at least one of mobile phone, VHF radio PLB), whistle, pump, and towline. Expect paddler to be proficient in Deep Water Rescue (DWR) in calm conditions. You are expected to respect the Leader's Instructions at all times for the safety of paddler and group.

**Grade B:** Up to 30 km in distance. Some awkward landings and sections of coastline with no escape routes. Tidal currents, tidal races, overfalls, open crossings, ocean swell and surf maybe be encountered. Exposure to weather and more serious sea state.

Experience of applicant – Paddler knows their ability to paddle against winds of F3/4 over a distance. The will have looked up weather & swell forecast for trip and have some judgment of ability for trip after discussion with trip leader if needed. Paddler can look up

tidal information and judge how this will affect timing of trip etc. Equipment i.e. spare clothing, food and drink, map and compass, means of summoning assistance (at least one of mobile phone, VHF radio, PLB), whistle, pump, towline, short tow. It is expected that paddlers regularly go out and have the experience to assist leader with DWR, towing, and other incident management .

**Grade C:** Trips with difficult landings and no escape routes for long sections, fast tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, extended crossings, exposed to ocean swell, surf landings and launchings, exposed to weather and sea state. May need good conditions for trip to proceed and meticulous planning and preparation. You will (preferably) have been out with us before.

## 6. Members

6.1 TSKC has only adults in its membership.

6.2 Adult members accept that kayaking and canoeing are assumed-risk water sports which can be hazardous.

6.3 Adult members acknowledge Liability Statement and agree to abide by Club rules and guidelines. The Club Constitution states “All members and other persons who attend Club tours or meetings do so at their own risk, and neither the Club nor its officers can accept liability for any loss or injury of any kind sustained at headquarters or on a Club tour or meet.”

6.4 During club activities members are responsible for their own actions, involvement, and for ensuring personal skills/experience commensurate to the environment in which they are active. Individual members are responsible for their own personal safety and condition of the equipment being used.

6.5 No other club member will accept liability for loss or injury to person/possessions.

6.6 Members are responsible for disclosure of medical conditions and/or disabilities. It is also the individual’s responsibility to make a Leader aware of medical conditions/disabilities prior to the activity.

6.7 Members should be competent swimming in deep water while wearing appropriate safety equipment

## 7. Environmental Considerations

7.1 TSKC has a responsibility to ensure that water is protected from contamination. The Leader should aim to ensure minimal environmental impact.

7.2 The Leader should be aware of the dangers to the group associated with polluted water.

7.3 Precautions should be taken to avoid the spread of invasive species and to protect the biodiversity of different marine, loch and river environments. Please see the SCA and BC material at

<https://www.canoescotland.org/access-and-environment/protecting-our-environment#gsc.tab=0>

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/uploads/documents/You-Your-Canoe-and-the-Marine-Environment.pdf>

To avoid the transfer of non-native species paddlers should:

- Check boat, equipment and clothing for living organisms
- Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothes thoroughly
- Dry all equipment and clothing
- Above all, make sure that you don't carry water with you from one environment to another.

To reduce disturbance to wildlife the suggestions in the above leaflets should be followed. These include aiming for the following

- minimise disturbance to basking seals
- not paddling towards groups of dolphins or whales in a manner they may find threatening
- not disturbing nesting sea birds.

## 8. Weather and Temperature

### 8.1 Activities

8.1.1 Hypothermia is a possibility at any time of the year. All paddlers should ensure that they wear appropriate kit to reduce the risk of becoming hypothermic. Deep water rescues should be practiced to aid getting swimmers back into their boats in a short time.

8.1.2 The Leader is responsible for carrying relevant safety equipment, determined by environmental conditions. At least some others in a group should have some safety equipment with them. See section 14 and Appendix 4.

### 8.2 Weather

8.2.1 The Leader should be fully prepared and able to anticipate environmental conditions. Experienced group members should also be checking forecasts and tide forecasts. Weather forecasts should be checked prior to activities and be relevant to both venue and activity:

**Inland Water:** regional forecast, temperature, water levels.

**Coastal Water:** regional forecast with consideration to tidal flow, tide levels, swell, wind, and temperature.

8.2.2 For Sea Trips particular attention should be paid to obtaining Marine Weather Forecasts for the relevant area and the group should carry means of attracting attention (e.g. Flares, VHF radio, mobile phone, PLB, torch/light/laser/beacon).

## 9. First Aid

9.1 In line with Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations key points to address include:

- Access to first aid materials
- Access to individuals trained in first aid support

9.2 Recognised First Aiders must hold (*or have held*) a nationally recognised qualification (minimum of 16 hours training). It is the responsibility of the Committee to check individual qualifications/course attendance (see 5.3).

9.3 TSKC define club First Aiders as members as anyone who has undertaken first aid training at any point.

9.4 TSKC encourage recognised First Aiders to attend courses, review guidance and first aid manuals, and maintain first aid kits.

## 10. Incident / Accident Recording

10.1 In order to enable continuous review and risk evaluation, all near misses and accidents should be recorded and regularly reported to the Committee as and when they occur. A register of these incidents must be kept. The Committee are responsible for periodic review of identified risks and for directing appropriate action to reduce future risks.

10.2 It is the responsibility of the Committee to ensure that all Leaders are aware of the importance of recording this information and actively encouraged to provide information.

10.3 Leaders are responsible for applying judgement around what constitutes a near miss or accident. If there is an incident where an injury was sustained, or a situation occurred where the Leader believes the Committee should discuss to minimise the risk of future reoccurrence, it should be reported. Incident and near misses should be reported to the TSKC Secretary in writing.

## 11. Leader - Group Ratio

11.1 The coaching and trip environment can cover a wide range of situations and the appropriate ratio will vary dependent upon situation, the make-up of the group, and the Leader and any assistants in the group. Therefore whilst BC/SCA recommendations are used as a guide the ratio may vary where there are sufficient experienced paddlers within the group (Appendix 1 links to BC/SCA information).

11.2 Members requiring increased supervision or who possess disabilities should also be considered when assessing appropriate ratios.

11.7 Level 1 Coach, Paddlesport Instructor, Paddlesport Leader or Assistant may provide additional support to the designated Leader but the actual experience and knowledge of the Level 1 Coach/Assistant must be taken into account, as qualified Level 1 Coaches and Paddlesport Leaders or Paddlesport Instructors may have limited experience and knowledge.



## 12.Roles

### 12.1 Coaches and Group Leaders (Leaders)

12.1.1 The aspiration is that Leader(s) hold a recognised BC/SCA accreditation, relevant to environment and discipline, however, this is not a requirement. BC/SCA and the Club also recognise competency-based Leaders who are in-house trained.

12.1.2 TSKC committee recognise the cost and time required for moderate water/advanced water qualifications which can be prohibitive for many club coaches and leaders. An alternative to enable a coach or leader to perform in a moderate water/advanced water environment within a club may include relevant qualifications coupled with formal or in-house training (*also referenced in 4.3*)

12.1.3 Aligned to SCA guidelines, TSKC is responsible for ensuring people leading activities are competent. Accreditation of in-house Leaders rests with TSKC's Committee, which is advised on this by a group of experienced paddlers.

12.1.4 A duty of care rests with the Leader - individuals accepting this responsibility must be comfortable with the conditions they are operating within and be prepared to exercise the safety controls demanded by the environment/activity. Due to the variable nature of typical activities, dynamic risk assessment will form a part of the group leader's risk management process (*also referenced in 5.6*)

12.1.5 There may be occasions where circumstances prevent safe conduct or continuation of activities. This may be a result of bad weather, inadequately equipped members, faulty equipment, illness or injury. In these circumstances the designated Leader should decide upon the appropriate course of action, for example not getting onto the water, or returning to the launch point earlier than planned. It is the responsibility of all group members to co-operate fully with the Leader's decision.

### 12.2 Assistants

12.2.1 Assistant(s) may be deployed under the supervision of a more experienced Leader. However, the group safety remains the responsibility of the more senior Leader.

12.2.2 The Leader should be aware of the assistant(s) capabilities and must ensure the situations they are placed in do not exceed this capability.

12.2.3 The Assistant(s) are responsible for following the direction provided by the Leader and for seeking advice/guidance when required.

## 13. Paddlesport

### 13.1 Safety Documents

13.1.1 For all Club activities and peer paddling, participants should carry a contact card (**ICE card**) in their buoyancy aid. TSKC has a standard template (**Appendix 6**), though similar templates may be used. The card should contain the name of the paddler, relevant medical information, and emergency contact details.

13.1.2 The Leader should complete a Trip Float Plan (**Appendix 7**) for any Club Trip or activity (with the exception of evening Club sessions at Broughty Ferry which are covered in **Appendix 3**). The Leader should carry the Trip Float Plan and provide a copy to the designated Shore Contact (see 13.2.11).

13.1.3 On confirmation of participation in a Club Trip, each paddler should send a completed Paddler Information Form (**Appendix 8**) to the Leader, for inclusion of their key information in the Trip Float Plan. (We hope to remove the need for this in 2024 if we can link properly to information provided in the membership form).

13.1.4 The Leader should complete a Written Risk Assessment, and make that available to Club members via Spond. Where there are no additional risks then it may be ok to use the generic risk assessment as in this document.

### 13.2 Club Activities

13.2.1 The Leader is responsible for the planning and preparation of activities associated with Club Trips, though may encourage others to participate in this.

13.2.2 When planning a Club trip consideration should be given to group composition (age/ability), numbers, health conditions, level of fitness, extent of leader experience, environmental conditions, level of risk etc.

13.2.3 The Leader should pay particular attention to the weakest members of the group and be aware of individual needs (eg medical conditions).

13.2.4 The Leader must be aware of weather forecasts and have planned the trip for the given conditions, including get-out points and safety equipment.

13.2.5 Where appropriate the Leader should inform the Coast Guard before setting out on a trip. This may not be needed in sheltered bays and estuaries.

13.2.6 The Leader should ensure at least one other member of the group is aware of the journey plans and get-out points, in the event the group is split or the Leader is injured. Normally everyone in the group should know the outline plan of the trip.

13.2.7 The Leader should ensure the group is properly briefed, in advance, of meeting arrangements and personal equipment.

13.2.8 The Leader should provide an appropriate group briefing before going on water and ensure the group is clear on who is providing direction, and who can provide first aid support. The use of communication signals (paddle signs, whistle, etc) should be covered before launching.

13.2.9 Group members are responsible for both their own safety and that of other group members.

13.2.10 The Leader is responsible for ensuring the group has a suitable means of calling for assistance in a rescue situation.

13.2.11 The Leader should ensure a person outside of the group (Shore Contact) is made aware of the journey plan to ensure that an alert is raised in the event of a serious incident. The Shore Contact should be provided with a copy of the **Trip Float Plan**, and notified when the group returns.

13.2.12 For trips it is recommended that a suitably experienced member be the Leader on the group journey to read the water, direct the group, and set pace. The Leader should aim to follow CLAP principals - Communication, Line of Sight, Anticipation & Positioning.

13.2.13 Club paddling activities include Tuesday evening paddles and training from Broughty Ferry, paddles led by authorised Leaders and promoted through the Spond website, and training sessions led by authorised Leaders. The Club may also organise coaching sessions led by professional coaches, and while Club guidance may remain appropriate, these sessions are normally the responsibility of the professional coach.

13.2.14 Appendix 5 of this document lists Club Members who are authorised Leaders of Club activities on the water.

### **13.3 Peer Paddling**

#### 13.3.1 Peer group paddling definition

Peer group paddling is very distinct from a TSKC Paddle. On a peer paddle, nobody takes overall responsibility for the safety or wellbeing of the group. This means:

- There may be no designated leader, assumed or otherwise, although a peer paddle trip “organiser” may co-ordinate the logistics. The role of the organiser is to co-ordinate the trip to help get everyone in the right place at the right time; suggest the route and so on.

- Organisers have no more authority over the group, or responsibility for the group than any other participant. Everyone takes full responsibility for themselves, their safety and their kit whilst behaving in a responsible way that does not put any other member of the group at risk.
- Group members are expected to look after each other, whilst staying within their own limitations.
- There is no onus on anyone to support anyone else if they do not feel confident doing so in any given situation.

### 13.3.2 Advertising a Peer Paddle

When advertising a peer paddle the organiser will include the following text (or similar) near the top of the trip advert to ensure folks understand it is a peer paddle:

“This is a peer paddle (please refer to the Peer Paddle Definition contained within the TSKC Standard Operating Procedures) and use it to guide your decision about joining this trip”

### 13.3.3 Insurance

On a peer paddle you are not covered by the Club’s insurance. If you want to take part in peer paddles, not organised by the club, you are advised to consider purchasing insurance provided by the Scottish Canoe Association, or equivalent.

### 13.3.4 Considerations

It is everyone’s responsibility to ensure they have considered all relevant factors for themselves, and not rely on others to do this for them. It is generally advised that people below the Sea Kayak Award, the old 3 Star award, or equivalent level do not join peer paddles as they are unlikely to have the skills to look after themselves on the water. Those with minimum skills levels must not assume the trip is suitable for them. The trip organiser cannot decide for others if the trip is suitable for them. If you are unsure about joining a peer paddle, don’t do it. Wait until a similar club organised paddle comes along and if you were comfortable, then go ahead and join a peer paddle.

## 14 Equipment

### 14.1 Personal Equipment

14.1.1 Members participating in any water-based activity must have the appropriate personal equipment to participate in the activity safely, either hired/borrowed from the Club or provided by themselves. This includes suitable clothing and protection on the

water, a BA, a whistle, and any necessary food and drink, and for all but novices a towline of at least 15 m and a knife (please see also Appendix 4).

14.1.2 Members must be adequately equipped for both the activity and the environmental conditions; this is an individual responsibility.

14.1.3 In bright sunshine sunglasses, sun cream, and drinking-water are advisable; in cold/wet conditions a hat, thermals, and gloves are advisable.

14.1.4 Responsibility rests with the Leader to ensure less experienced members are aware of the personal equipment requirements.

14.1.4 The Leader is responsible for ensuring the group, as a whole, is prepared for every reasonable eventuality.

14.1.5 Personal equipment is the responsibility of individual members but the Leader must be satisfied that any equipment used is in a safe condition and appropriate for the activity. The Leader reserves the right to decline participation if they believe safety is compromised.

## **14.2 Club Equipment**

14.2.1 The Club Equipment Officer is responsible for ensuring equipment is regularly checked and fit for purpose.

14.2.2 The Leader or session organiser issuing Club equipment should ensure it is suitable for use, fitted correctly, and appropriate for the activity being undertaken.

14.2.3 When using Club equipment members must ensure that:

- Equipment is checked before departing and on return, to ensure it remains in working order
- If repairs are required then the Club Equipment Officer is notified
- Club equipment is correctly sized/fitted and used appropriately
- Guidance is given on appropriate lifting & carrying techniques

14.2.4 Members must ensure crafts used on moving or deep water have adequate buoyancy to remain floating in the event of capsize, and be capable of being towed.

14.2.5 The Club provides access to the following equipment:

- Wetsuit
- Cag
- Buoyancy aid
- Paddle

- Boat
- Tow line
- Helmet
- Paddle float
- First aid kit
- Group shelter
- PLB
- VHF marine radio
- Electronic distress light

14.2.6 Discretion lies with members, and Leaders may require their use, but it is recommended helmets are worn in “rock gardens”, when paddling close to cliffs and in caves, during surf sessions, and in exposed/difficult shore landings.

### **14.3 Group Safety Equipment**

14.3.1 The Leader is responsible for ensuring they carry equipment to ensure the group’s safety for a risk event. Experienced paddlers should also carry appropriate safety equipment.

14.3.2 The Leader will have access to Club equipment but it is the Leader’s responsibility to ensure the equipment is in good working order before use.

Consideration should be given to the following equipment being available in the group, bearing in mind the type of paddle:

- Tow line (at least 15 m) waist or boat mounted, and knife
- Watch
- Map/Compass
- Torch
- Means of communication
- First Aid supplies
- Hot drink (or means of making one)
- Group Shelter
- Knife
- Paddle float
- Repair kit
- Spare Paddle
- VHF Marine Radio
- PLB

## APPENDIX 1 - LEADERS AND COACHES AND NUMBERS

BC Guidance on numbers is at

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/uploads/documents/British-Canoeing-Environmental-Definitions-Deployment-Guidance-for-Instructors-Coaches-Leaders-Apr18-v1-1.pdf>

## **APPENDIX 2 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR THE POOL**

### **1. Pool Safety**

- 1.1 No person apart from those coaching or participating in an organised activity will swim in the pool whilst the activity is taking place
- 1.2 Supervision must be maintained at all times when using the pool – there must be at least one person (eg a pool attendant) acting as safety provision whilst members are using the pool.
- 1.3 No seal launching into the pool.
- 1.4 Any boats being brought into the pools should have been thoroughly cleaned.

### **2. Discipline**

- 2.1 Committee members at pool session have the final say in matters of discipline.

### **3. Environment**

- 3.1 Care should be taken at all times to ensure cleanliness of equipment used in the pool.
- 3.2 Activities are organised to prevent any possible damage to the pool.



## APPENDIX 3 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR PADDLING FROM THE BROUGHTY FERRY CLUBHOUSE

The Firth of Tay is relatively sheltered from swell due to the “bar”, but it remains a sizeable area of water and has significant hazards, including tidal streams. The Tay can have unexpected squalls which paddlers should be aware of and keep a look out for.

The most hazardous place in the vicinity of the launch point is the part of the lifeboat pier that has wooden boards down to the water. This is known as a “strainer” and the tidal movement can trap paddlers against the wood. This must be carefully avoided.

There are significant tidal streams, including around the Broughty Ferry Castle point. On the outgoing tide paddlers caught in the stream will drift towards the open sea, but paddling towards the shore should allow them to escape into relatively quiet water. On an incoming flow paddlers can readily paddle to the North and get into quiet water on the other side of the harbour. If a member capsizes in this fast-flowing water an experienced paddler in the group should assist. Depending on the conditions this may be a deep-water rescue followed by a tow out of the main current, or it may be a short tow of the swimmer and boat out of the main stream followed by a deep water rescue. Leaders should ensure that paddlers are aware of the possibility of paddling North to relative safety at points to the East of the Clubhouse beach and to the West of the harbour (as far as the Stannergate).

Members should be aware of the large rock off the Castle Point, which at certain stages of the tide can produce significant turbulence. With appropriate supervision the Castle Rock is an ideal location to practice in the tidal stream and eddies and offers a safe run out in the event of capsize.

There are limited or no landing points on the North shore between the Stannergate and the V&A.

There may be other marine traffic in the area, including commercial shipping and pleasure craft. Members must keep a good look-out for other traffic, and should normally aim to cross the shipping lane reasonably promptly and otherwise paddle outside the shipping lanes. When crossing the shipping lane the group should be relatively compact. Paddlers should observe the stipulated exclusion zones around commercial craft including oil rigs.

Club evening sessions from Broughty Ferry will normally have a session organiser and one or more leaders on the sea. In some cases the session organiser may also be a sea leader.

The session organiser takes bookings for the evening, including for hire of club boats. The session organiser arranges for the Club House to be unlocked and secured, and can assist in the organisation of provision of Club kit to members. The session organiser in conjunction

with the nominated sea leader aims to ensure that there is a match between the number of sea leaders and the number of participants who book in for a given evening.

The Leader of the activity will have the ultimate authority to call off the paddle or amend the activity or those participating in it. This will normally be done in discussion with other experienced members present if done at the event. For beginners and inexperienced paddlers it would not be suitable for them to paddle in conditions where the wind gusts above Beaufort force 4.

The leaders on the water may lead groups of paddlers a) on short trips, which may include specific training opportunities, and b) in training sessions on the estuary. The people who may lead on the sea are determined by the Committee. The number of participants in a group needs to be sufficiently low to maintain acceptable safety levels.

Club guidance is that for evening paddles where it is expected that the paddle will complete in daylight, the ratio between general paddlers and leader-standard paddlers will normally be up to of the order of 6 to 1. Where there are many experienced paddlers in the group it may be possible safely to increase this ratio.

For evening paddles that may reasonably be foreseen to finish in darkness the ratio should normally be reduced.

If there is a reasonably foreseeable chance of the paddle still happening after dark, all members must have a waterproof light source with them to make it easier for other traffic to see them (eg light-stick and/or waterproof torch, not strobe). The leader and at least one other person must have a waterproof torch. There must be a clear communication protocol agreed to ensure that all members of the group are accounted for in the darkness, likely including “buddying up”.

