

Tayside Sea Kayak Club

**Standard Operating
Procedure – 14.01.26**



Standard Operating Procedure

DATE APPROVED: 14.01.26

1. Club Details

Club Premises Address: (not for postal deliveries) – Broughty Castle Barracks, Castle Approach,
Broughty Ferry, Dundee, DD5 2TF

Club Postal Address: c/o Caroline Mackie, 57 Taypark Road, Luncarty, Perth, PH1 3FE

Email address: secretary@taysideseakayakclub.com

Committee Roles 2025-26:

President: Bruce Sinclair

Secretary: Caroline Mackie

Treasurer: Catherine Botting

Safety Officer: Scott Martin

Safeguarding Officer: Emily Hamilton Peach

Club Discipline(s): Sea Kayaking and associated activities

Type(s) of Club Activities: formal coaching and leading on the sea and lochs, pool sessions that may be formally coached or led or collaborative club activities, social activities.

2. Risk Assessments

Paddle Scotland instructions This must show your club has risk assessments in place for the activities it delivers, its facilities and where required for a specific venue, person or group of people such as young people, or someone with a specific medical condition such as epilepsy or a pacemaker. • Include where risk assessments are stored and how they can be accessed • How often are risk assessments reviewed and updated? • Who is responsible for updating the risk assessments?

The Club's risk assessments are available to all members on Spond TSKC Hub - Files and/or on the Spond event to which they relate.

The intention is that risk assessments that are in use should be considered at least annually by the Club Committee, including the Club's Safety Officer.

Many of the Club's paddles are covered by the Club's generic risk assessment for paddles. The generic risk assessment may be added to for some paddles by the paddle leader.

There is a specific risk assessment for paddles (including training sessions) leaving from near the Club's Boatshed.

There are specific risk assessments for use of the Boatshed, and for Pool Sessions.

Leaders and paddlers should also carry out dynamic risk assessments on the beach and on the water.

3. Activity-specific Operating Procedures

Leader approval.

On paddles, including training sessions, that are classed as formally led and/or coached, there will be a qualified BCAB Sea Kayak Leader leading each group. For tidal waters the tidal version of the BCAB award is needed. For non-tidal water the non-tidal version may be used. (For very sheltered or sheltered water the Paddlesport Instructor or Paddlesport Leader award are alternative qualifications.) For more demanding conditions the BCAB Advanced Leader Award is required.

An alternative for the BCAB Sea Kayak Leader is the BC Four-Star award, and for the BCAB Advanced Leader the BC Five-Star award. As well as the BCAB qualification, the leader must also be aware of the Club's Safety Framework (including Standard Operating Procedures and risk assessment arrangements) and be currently paddle- and leading-fit. Thus an additional approval step is that the person be agreed by the Club Committee to lead.

Until the end of 2026 the club is permitted to authorise a member to lead where the committee judges that that person has sufficient expertise to do so.

Where the Club or participants pay a professional coach to run a session, the session is run under the organisation and risk assessment and approvals of that person.

Leaders and paddlers

Leaders and paddlers should be aware of the contents of the Club's Standard Operating Procedures

People 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.

Club members are responsible for their own and others' safety during an activity. A safety briefing should be provided before going on the water.

Adult members, and junior members and their carers, must accept that kayaking and canoeing are assumed-risk water sports which can be hazardous.

Adult members and junior members and their carers must acknowledge the Club's Liability Statement and agree to abide by Club rules and guidelines. The Club Constitution states *"All members and other persons who attend Club trips or meetings do so at their own risk, recognising that kayaking is a potentially hazardous activity."*

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.

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

Members are responsible for disclosure of medical conditions and/or disabilities relevant to club activities. When registering for annual membership, members must complete or review all required fields in Spond, including emergency contacts and any relevant medical information, and confirm that these details are up to date. If any information changes during the membership year, members must update their Spond profile before taking part in any club event. This is the source of information that leaders are expected to have access to in case of an emergency. It is also the individual's responsibility to make a leader aware of relevant medical conditions/disabilities prior to the activity.

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

Activities involving junior members

The Club has a Safeguarding Policy (Spond Files) and a Safeguarding Officer.

Leaders should state on Spond whether an activity is to be open to junior members or not – this is their choice subject to the provisions below having been put in place if junior members may be involved.

Leaders of paddles including junior members must have passed a PVG check for the Club and have undertaken the “Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport” training (this is more than the short online course on child protection that all leaders must complete).

For overnight trips and attending certain external events a nominated chaperone is required; this need not be the group leader. The chaperone also needs to have completed relevant training in safeguarding and code of conduct.

Adult and junior members must be able to access separate changing facilities.

Leader to paddler ratio.

The Club aims to follow the [guidance of the BCAB](#), so for sheltered water 1:8, for moderate water on the sea 1:6, and for advanced water on the sea 1:4, subject to the comments below.

The [BCAB document](#) notes that these “*Ratios are given as suggestions in this document and refer to newly qualified and less experienced instructors, coaches and leaders.*”. As such, experienced instructors, coaches, and leaders may have slightly larger ratios if the risk assessment judges that this is appropriate.

The [Paddle Scotland Standards for Deployment \(September 2025 version\)](#) states that “*A risk assessment taking into consideration the assistants knowledge and skills, the individuals on the session as well as the environment to consider whether the recommended ratios within the environmental definitions document can be increased by the use of an assistant.*” A suitably experienced and/or qualified assistant, along with a suitable risk assessment, may allow a leader to take a slightly larger group.

What are the competency requirements for someone to be an assistant leader?

“A current BCAB coach or leader can make an informed decision and professional judgement in using an assistant on sessions or journeys. Someone that has completed a formal BCAB training course (coach discipline specific training or leadership training) would be deemed as appropriate to support such activity. The qualified coach/leader would have overall responsibility and maintain line of sight during the session/journey.” ([Paddle Scotland Standards for Deployment autumn 2025](#)).

Also, any member who holds the BCAB Sea Kayak Leader award or above, or BC Four-Star award and above, would normally be regarded as competent to be an assistant leader.

Briefings

As part of being briefed, paddlers are required to read and consider the float plan and risk assessment before attending a paddle. The float plan includes location, start time, likely finish time, leader or organiser contact details, and other relevant information such as communication signals on the water (speech, whistle, paddle, radio), how the group is expected to keep together, and what to do in the event of a capsized or similar issue. The Club has a template for the float plan that leaders are asked to populate for

their paddle. The risk assessment covers likely risks and actions to be taken to keep the risk of significant injury to be low. The amount of briefing needed in person before launching onto the water will depend particularly on the experience of the least experienced paddler in the group, as well as the nature of the paddling expected. The on-shore briefing would normally include an introduction of paddlers to each other, an update on the paddling plans for the session (or cancellation) given the conditions seen and expected, the VHF working channel for the paddle, and the availability of rescue equipment amongst group members. We ask paddlers to pass on any additional relevant information to the leader before the paddle starts.

Collaborative Club Activity (CCA)

Currently the only CCA permitted by the Club is practice in pool sessions organised by the Club. A person in the role of a lifeguard must be present, members taking part in this CCA must be experienced kayakers, and there must be a minimum of two kayakers in the pool area.

Is it sufficiently safe to paddle?

For formally led paddles and coaching the leader and/or coach will use their expertise and experience, along with [Paddle Scotland Standards for Deployment](#) and [BCAB guidance](#) and the risk assessment for the paddle, to determine whether or not the paddle will go ahead, or sometimes which members can take part in the paddle.

Collaborative club activity is currently only in pool sessions, and as long as the pool is operational it is likely to be safe to go ahead as long as there are at least two kayakers and a person in the role of lifeguard present.

What are the competency requirements of people on paddles?

For formally led paddles the final decision rests with the leader of the paddle. The following guidance is provided for formally led paddles.

The Club uses some of the same type of grading of paddles as is seen in the Pesda Press kayak guidebooks and elsewhere.

Progression Paddles These will be short and in relatively sheltered water.

These paddles are aimed at relative beginners.

There will be small groups of paddlers with one or more leader or coach, possibly with assistants on the water as well.

For new members progressing from pool sessions a judgement will be made at the pool session on the suitability of the paddler for moving on to progression paddles. New members joining by other routes are required to state their prior experience and to show competence on the water in a trial session. Leaders of progression paddles can advise participants about their suitability for taking part in Grade A paddles after this.

Led Grade A Paddles: Up to 20 km. Relatively easy landings with escape routes easily available. Trips offer relative shelter from extreme conditions and ocean swell. Some tidal movement may be found, but easy to predict with no major tidal races or overfalls.

Competency requirement – novice and above. Paddlers need to be able to paddle up to and beyond the expected distance, and be proficient in deep water rescue techniques in the conditions expected both as rescuer and casualty. Several in the group should be able to tow a casualty. Those with the BCAB Sea Kayak Award should be well qualified for this, but members who do not yet have this qualification can often be included in formally-led grade A paddles. Paddlers should be sufficiently aware of safety and competency issues that they can, at least, flag up to the leader any concerns that they may have. Paddlers must be prepared to follow the instructions of the leader.

Led Grade B Paddles: Up to 30 km. Some awkward landings, and sections of coastline with no escape routes, should be expected. Tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, crossings, ocean swell and surf may be found on these trips. They will also be exposed to the weather and associated conditions.

Competency requirement – Paddlers know that they are able to paddle against winds of up to Beaufort force 4 (18 mph) over a distance. They are paddle-fit from frequent paddling, and they have the experience to assist the leader with deep water rescues, towing, and other incident management in the conditions expected.

Before joining a Grade B paddle with the Club, the paddler should have completed three grade A (or above) paddles in the last twelve months feeling reasonably comfortable. Grade B paddles should be suitable for experienced paddlers, such as those with the BCAB Sea Kayak Award or higher.

Paddlers will have looked up weather & swell forecast for the trip and have some judgment of their ability for the trip, after discussion with trip leader if needed. Paddlers can look up tidal information and judge how this will affect timing of trip etc. Paddlers must be prepared to follow the instructions of the leader.

Led Grade C Paddles: These trips may have difficult landings and may have no escape routes for long sections of the trip. Fast tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, extended crossings, ocean swell and surf may be found on these trips. They will be very exposed to the weather and sea state, therefore require detailed planning and paddlers competent in rough water conditions. The journey may require good conditions for the trip to be viable.

Competency requirements – These paddles should be restricted to relatively experienced and capable paddlers, who have the expertise to deal with the conditions under the guidance of the leader. Someone who would currently be able to pass the Coastal Sea Kayak Award may be appropriate for some Grade C paddles. A higher level of competence than that may be needed for more challenging Grade C paddles.

Paddlers will have been out (ideally with us) on a number of grade B (or above) paddles successfully in the last twelve months. Paddlers must be prepared to follow the instructions of the leader.

What kit should be carried on different grades of paddles?

Progression Paddles will have a leader and possibly assistants carrying appropriate safety and communication kit. Paddlers should have suitable clothing to keep warm on (and safe in) the water. Buoyancy Aids must be worn, and should have a whistle available in them. It is recommended that spare clothing should be carried in a drybag, and a drink and snack be carried.

Grade A Paddles. It is expected that basic equipment for comfort and safety of paddler is carried. This includes clothing to keep warm on (and safe in) the water, spare clothing, including a layer to put on during lunch breaks (e.g. poncho or storm cag), food and drink. Buoyancy Aids must be worn. Paddlers should have a means of summoning assistance (at least one of mobile phone, VHF marine radio, PLB), and a whistle. Paddlers are encouraged to have available a pump and towline, and it is a requirement that several members of the group would have such kit with them and ready to use. Within the group there should be a first aid kit, spare paddles, and an emergency shelter.

Grade B paddles. As grade A, but now a pump, towline, and spare paddles should normally be carried by all participants.

Grade C paddles. As grade B.

Environmental factors

The Club has a responsibility to ensure that water is protected from contamination. The Leader should aim to ensure minimal environmental impact. The Leader should be aware of the dangers to the group associated with polluted water.

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 Paddle Scotland [Paddling and our Environment guide](#) and [Paddle UK Keep it Clean guide](#).

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 fresh-water environment to another.

To reduce disturbance to wildlife the suggestions in the above documents 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.

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.

Hyperthermia is a possibility in very warm weather, and paddlers should be aware of the risks of getting too hot on a hot summer's day in a drysuit or wetsuit.

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.

The Leader should be 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:

For Sea Trips particular attention should be paid to obtaining Weather Forecasts and tidal flow 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).

4. Equipment Maintenance and Checks

Paddle Scotland requires - In this section include things like: Where equipment is stored. Who can access equipment and on what basis. How equipment is signed in / out and tracked. How often equipment is checked and by who. How equipment that is no longer serviceable is reported to the club committee. How equipment that is no longer serviceable is removed and destroyed. How equipment checks are recorded. Evidence of annual Buoyancy Aid checking. How the club ensures members' personal PPE is suitable for use

Club boats and kit are stored at the Broughty Ferry boatshed. These are available for hire by Club members. Their main intended use is on Club Paddles. They may be hired for use by members for other paddling, but in such cases members should be aware that the Club has no responsibility for the boat and kit and the way it is used; that responsibility is all with the member, including checking that any boat is seaworthy and that any buoyancy aids are fit for purpose.

For Club paddles members should ask to book a boat on the activity on Spond ("event" in words used in Spond).

The Club Equipment Officer checks on at least an annual basis that boats and kit are fit for purpose. Beginners are assisted in checking boats and kits by coaches or leaders before they are taken onto the water. More experienced members are expected to check any Club boat and kit that they use before they take it on the water. If a problem is found with kit, this should be reported to the equipment officer, and an "out of service" label fixed to the boat or item. Members are advised to do similar checks on their own boat and kit.

Boats and kit that are not in service will be marked as such. Buoyancy aids that are found or confirmed by the equipment officer or delegate to be beyond safe use will be cut into pieces and binned, and must not be passed on or sold to anyone.

The equipment officer keeps a record of equipment checks, and reports this to the committee on at least an annual basis. This includes the annual testing of buoyancy aids.

The Club asks members to ensure that their own PPE is fit for purpose. Members may use the Club system for testing the buoyancy of buoyancy aids. Leaders or coaches who have concern about any kit being used by a member on a paddle that they are leading or coaching are authorised to decline to have a member with that kit in their group.

5. First Aid Provision

Paddle Scotland requirements - What first aid provision is in place? When must a first aider be present? When is a first aid kit carried and when is this checked?

All leaders and coaches must have a current first aid qualification, and have a first aid kit with them on the water. All Club members are encouraged to take first aid training. A first aid kit for use in the boathouse and nearby is hanging in the boathouse. Club first aid kits are available for loan to members. The Club first aid kits are checked by the Club equipment officer on at least an annual basis. Members are asked to notify the Equipment Officer if they use items from one of the Club first aid kits.

A formally led paddle will have a qualified leader on the paddle, and said leader must have a current first aid qualification. (If the Club in the future permits collaborative club activity on the sea, then it will be required that at least one member of the group has a current relevant first aid qualification, and carries a first aid kit with them on the water.)

6. Communication

Paddle Scotland requirements - How do club members communicate with each other? How are club paddles and competency requirements communicated to the membership? Does the club use SPOND or something else?

The primary online communication mechanism for the Club is Spond. Members may access relevant files on Spond. Members may communicate with each other by messages on Spond, or by a post to all members or a subgroup.

Club paddles are communicated on Spond, and this is also the place where members can express interest in joining the activity. For paddles this is usually where the float plan will be posted.

Club members are encouraged to speak with each other during Club activities. VHF radio communication is sometimes used on paddles

Competency requirements are noted in our Standard Operating Procedures, and paddles will be labelled as Progression Paddle or Grade A or B or C Paddle. Leaders and coaches may add additional competency requirements in the notification of an activity.

7. New Member Procedures

Paddle Scotland requirements - How are new members introduced and inducted into the club? How is the competency of new members checked?

New members who join the Club as beginners through pool sessions and introductory on the water training will have their competency developed and assessed by the people leading their training sessions. This information will be made available to relevant leaders in the Club. In due course, these new paddlers may also take BCAB awards.

New members who join the Club stating that they have relevant paddling experience may have their competency checked in at least two of the following ways:-

- Confirmation from the Paddle Scotland database of a reasonably recent and appropriate BCAB qualification.
- Assessment on the water by one of the Club's leaders.
- For experienced paddlers, a self-assessment of relevant skills and experience.

8. Medicals, Shore Contact and ICE Cards

Paddle Scotland requirements - in this section should cover: How a shore contact will be set up before club trips and how this will support safety on club trip. How medical information is shared with leaders and coaches. Implementation of ICE cards for members paddling and where paddlers keep these cards

Formally led paddles must have a float plan that includes details of the shore contact person. The Club provides guidance for the shore contact person and leaders in a document in Spond Files.

Leaders and coaches may access relevant medical and other information about paddlers on the Spond participants list. Participants are responsible for updating the leader or coach where appropriate. Members are responsible for updating their medical and other details on Spond.

All members are required to have an ICE (In Case of Emergency) laminated card in a pocket of their buoyancy aid. The Club has a suggested template on Spond Files.

9. Use of Club Premises

Paddle Scotland requirements - Who can use the facilities and when. Any limitations on when the facility can and cannot be accessed

The Club leases rooms in the Broughty Ferry Castle Barracks from Historic Environment Scotland. Spond Files has a risk assessment for our use of this building.

When the building is occupied both external doors should be unlocked. When the last person leaves, both doors should be locked, as should the padlock on the compound's gate.

Leaders, coaches, committee members, and those renting a boat space in the boat shed have keys to access the boatshed at any time. Our lease notes Tuesday evenings as our main activity time, with use also at weekends. In practice, as long as we are not getting in the way of other users of the building and yard it seems that use of the boatshed and yard at other times is usually possible. The boatshed may be used by all members attending a Tuesday evening session, or other sessions based from the boatshed. Members picking up hire boats from the boatshed are asked to contact a relevant key holder to try to arrange an appropriate way and time to access the boatshed. All users of the boatshed are asked to read the risk assessment for use of the boatshed, and to follow the fire safety and other guidance posted in the boatshed.

Members should be aware that there is a first aid kit in the boatshed, and that there are fire extinguishers and a fire blanket there.

Members may apply to hire a space for a kayak in the boatshed for an annual fee. Kayak storage space in the Club store is limited. If you wish to store a kayak there initially, please contact the Club's Equipment Officer. The Club insurance policy does not cover members' kayaks or equipment stored on Club premises. Members who wish to store their personal equipment on Club property should obtain their own insurance coverage to protect against loss, damage, or theft.

10. Non-members and Visitors

Paddle Scotland requirements - What are the clubs' policies regarding non-members or visitors in the changing room facilities? There must be assurance that children will not be permitted to leave the centre without the knowledge or permission of the coach. Any new person(s) picking up a child should make themselves known to the coach on arrival of dropping off the child at the centre

In line with Paddle Scotland guidance, potential new members may attend a few paddles before joining, and that may include use of the changing and toilet facilities in the boatshed.

Visitors are not generally permitted in the boatshed, but access will be provided for relevant people inspecting or carrying out work on the building, for external coaches, and for other reasonable purposes.

The Club has no under-16s in its membership.

11. Emergency and 'Late Back' Procedures

Paddle Scotland requirements - A clear procedure about what happens in the event of an incident on a club trip. A process for what happens if a group is late back from a paddle. The following is copied from our document that gives guidance to shore contacts.

If shore contact does not hear from the group within one hour of expected end time:

1. Shore contact will try to contact the leader
2. Shore contact will try contacting (some) other group members
3. Shore contact will dial 999 for Coastguard
 - a. Explain that you are shore contact for a group of kayakers that has not reported their safe return as expected
 - b. Coastguard will ask for further information – you can suggest emailing a copy of the Trip Float Plan
 - c. NB – if Coastguard calls back, their number will appear “unknown”
4. If leader calls to say all is well with the group, phone 999 again to update Coastguard

12. Incident reporting

All incidents that result in a paddler having a significant injury, and all incidents that result in an inpatient or outpatient visit to a hospital, must be reported to the Club Safety Officer, Secretary, and President. Near misses are also asked to be reported to the same people, as there will often be learning points from these too. An Incident Report Form is available on Spond Files.

A relevant person should check in with any casualties and others involved after the event – next day and/or beyond: e.g. How are they? How are they feeling about the incident? Other reflections / suggestions? Consider debrief with some or all group members. Some other club official could take this on, not necessarily the Trip Leader, who should also have opportunity for their own debrief / reflections.

The Club Safety Officer will communicate with the leader of the group that had the incident, and will update the leader at relevant times about the process of reporting to the Club Committee and to Paddle Scotland and any responses from those bodies.

The Club Safety Officer will advise the committee of reported incidents of near misses. They will communicate learning points with Club members, especially leaders and coaches.

A capsized and safe rescue is not normally regarded as an incident or a near miss.

It is normally the Club Safety Officer who reports incidents to Paddle Scotland at <https://www.paddlescotland.org.uk/report-a-paddling-incident>

13. Club Policies, and Club Safety Framework

The Club has a Constitution, and a set of policies including on Health and Safety, Data Protection, and Code of Conduct. These policies, and a summary noting them all are available on the Club's Spond file store, folder titled "Constitution and Policies".

The Club aims to run paddles in line with Paddle Scotland "Standards for Deployment". This includes having a Club Safety Framework, which Paddle Scotland has defined as:-

"A paddlesport club safety framework is a structured approach or set of guidelines designed to ensure the safety of participants engaged in the clubs' activities. It encompasses various components aimed at managing risks, promoting safe practices, and responding effectively to emergencies. Key Club safety framework may include:

- RiskAssessment: Identifying potential hazards associated with the activities, such as water conditions, weather, equipment, and participant experience levels.
- Safety Policies and Procedures: Establishing clear rules, guidelines, and protocols for safe participation in paddlesport activities. This may include, for example guidance/rules relating to: equipment use, participant conduct, communication procedures, emergency response, and/or prerequisite skills, experience and/or training required of participants taking part
- Supervision: Identifying the qualifications/experience/training required of those coaching, leading, instructing or supervising the session, identifying suitable group size and staffing ratios
- Equipment Maintenance and Inspection: Ensuring that equipment, including boats, paddles, personal flotation devices (PFDs), and safety gear, is properly maintained and regularly inspected for wear and tear.
- Emergency Procedures: Procedures for responding to emergencies, such as capsizes, injuries, or incidents requiring search and rescue operations..
- First Aid provision
- Safeguarding policies
- Communication and Reporting: Having channels of communication for sharing safety information, such as trip plans, weather updates, and safety alerts. Encouraging participants to report safety concerns or incidents to club officials for review and follow-up.
- Requirements for a 'Float Plan': This outlines the details of a paddling trip..For example, the planned route, estimated time of departure and return, contact information for the paddlers, descriptions of the paddlers and their equipment, and any other relevant details about the trip. Float plans provide essential information to rescue personnel in case of an emergency or if paddlers fail to return as scheduled.

Overall, a paddlesport club safety framework aims to create a culture of safety within the club or organisation, where all participants understand their responsibilities for maintaining a safe paddling environment and are empowered to contribute to the overall safety of the group."