

Risk Assessment – Paddlesports - SUP - (Sheltered Water)



Reviewed Date	03/03/2026	
Next Review Date	03/03/2027	
Risk Assessment completed by	Mel Wycherley	
Internally reviewed by	Alex Mortimer	
Reviewed by Technical Experts (Name & Date)	Darren Joy	30/032026

General Information	This risk assessment concerns the use of paddle boards which is distinct from Jumbo Paddle Boards which has its own risk assessments and operating procedures.
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Instructor Competency	<p>All instructors need to be current members and have a valid in date 1st Aid and Safeguarding awards</p> <p>To <u>Lead</u> -Moderate water leader in a coastal environment with a SUP personal performance award and be an active Paddle Safer Award Provider. T/A Statement of Competence Completion of <u>Team Skills</u> by instructor & manager as per activity cloud.</p> <p>- or -</p> <p>Paddle UK Paddlesport Leader or above (I.e. Coach Award) with a SUP personal performance award or equivalent and be an active Paddle Safer Award Provider. The key element here is that instructors have been assessed leading in 'sheltered water' and not 'very sheltered water' (as per Paddlesport Instructor).</p> <p>T/A Statement of Competence Completion of <u>Team Skills</u> by instructor & manager as per activity cloud.</p> <p>To <u>Assist</u> - Paddle UK Paddlesport Instructor, with a SUP personal performance award or equivalent. T/A Statement of Competence</p>
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	Completion of <u>Team Skills</u> by instructor & manager as per activity cloud.
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Ratios & Remits	<p>1:8 maximum</p> <p>Land & Wave typically operates from Swanage Beach, Sandbanks Beaches and Sandbanks harbour side. These locations have sheltered water when wind and wave factors are favourable. In the ‘wrong’ conditions these sites are not ‘sheltered water’ and activities would need to be cancelled or moved by the Day Manager.</p> <p>Sheltered Water where the paddlers are no more than 200 metres offshore and the wind strength does not exceed Beaufort force 3, (consistent speed not the gusting speed). Participants must be able to make consistent progress against any wind and therefore group ability is also to be factored in.</p> <p>SUP’s used for tethered games and relay races can be used in stronger winds as long as the instructor holding the SUP can maintain their footing to hold the SUP in a defined area.</p> <p>Site specific risk assessments may apply specific criteria to a site.</p>
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Identified Hazards	Who is at risk?	Example Causes	Control Measures
Drowning & Being Blown Offshore	Instructors & Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking part without a buoyancy aid or the swimming ability to cope. - Being blown out to sea in sea conditions beyond personal ability. - Falling from a board, banging their head and lying face down in the water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Day manager and instructor to check sea and environmental conditions prior to the activity. Lead instructor on the water to dynamically assess conditions and end the session if required. - Effective safety briefing, as per SOP. - If instructors recognise a lack of water confidence from an individual early in the session they are to communicate this with other instructors and keep a closer watch on the individual. - Correctly fitting buoyancy aids to be worn

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			<p>at all times and checked at the beginning of session by an instructor and on-goingly monitored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead & Assistant instructors to understand and be familiar with our operational procedures in relation to wind speed and the specific dangers of offshore winds. - EAP's to be developed which clearly identifies how to deal with off-shore winds and not being able to return to shore, for a specific reason. - Instructors must keep the group within line of sight and regularly scan the water for participants in danger. - Instructors to hold a first aid qualification which focuses on what to do in the event of a suspected drowning. - A mobile phone is available to contact the emergency services. - A time off the water is provided to the day manager and checked in. - If the wind direction is offshore the Instructor is to keep the group close to shore while checking the groups ability, and if the group is less able the instructor is to keep the group close to shore and well within the wind shadow area.
<p>Personal Injury</p>	<p>Instructors & Participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being hit in the face with a paddle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instructor to provide health and safety briefing(s) to prevent injuries, including

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<p>E.g. Slips, Cuts, Head Injuries, strained backs</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water confidence games which bring people into close contact with others. - Lifting and carrying boards longer distances, without advice and guidance could lead to back injuries - Falling from the board in shallower water. - Lack of briefing and instruction to allow participants to develop standing skills in a controlled environment. - Impact with members of the public on beaches - i.e. leaving boards and paddles in walkways. - Lack of footwear leading to foot cuts and stings. 	<p>manual handling. See SOP for full details of operational procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helmets at the discretion of the instructor. - Instructor to on-going monitor and instruct the session to proactively prevent people from coming to harm. For example, this may include choosing a specific environment to play a specific game. - Instructor to hold first aid qualification and have a first aid kit in close proximity. - When entering and exiting the surf, participants are to be advised to keep themselves on the seaward side and their SUP on the beach side. - As groups launch and land, instructors are to advise participants to be on their knees in water that is less than chest depth. - Footwear such as wetsuit boots are advised. Cuts to feet and weaver fish stings are a possibility. - Do not leave equipment in public places which present a trip and slip hazard. - Instructor to teach participants to carry boards using effective manual handling techniques. - All Participants must have suitable footwear for the activity. - Sessions with novices to follow a systematic process - prone, kneeling, standing.
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<p>Difficulty controlling body temperature</p>	<p>Instructors & Participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paddleboarding during the colder, winter months. - Lacking personal protective equipment. - Poor preparation from participants - I.e. missing breakfast. - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wetsuits are recommended. During very warm summer months participants may prefer not to use a wetsuit. In this case, careful monitoring of body temperature is required. - Appropriate group safety equipment to be carried. The SOP provides further detail. The exact equipment must be based on a sound consideration of the journey, environment and participants. - Use of 5mm wetsuits during the months with colder sea temperatures is recommended. - Adjusting routes and time on the water based on weather conditions.
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This risk assessment in no way negates the need for continual dynamic risk assessment on session.

You must report incidents or near misses using company procedures.

If you have any concerns or questions about the risk assessment speak to your manager.

Emergency Action Plan

Remember;

Self – Team – Casualty – Equipment

1. Make sure you are safe

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2. Make sure the group are safe
3. Make sure the individual(s) concerned are safe
4. Rescue the individual(s)
5. Call/send for assistance (as required)
6. Remove all to a safe place
 - a. Where possible move the casualty and group up an exit route via the safest route to a safe place or vehicle.
 - b. Water Based rescue. If the casualty is unable to exit, call for a rescue. When the services arrive, follow their direction.
 - c. Land Based rescue. If the casualty cannot move, make them safe and await rescue services help. Where possible, move the group away from the venue to a safe place to allow an unhindered rescue to take place. If the assistant knows the exit, they may lead the group out at the lead instructor's discretion and make the group safe.
7. Diagnose the extent of the injury and effect first aid in line with your training.
8. Take further action as appropriate.
9. Inform Day Manager, ensuring all appropriate documentation is completed at the earliest possible opportunity.

If required, call the emergency services on 999. If no signal exists, move to a new location, perhaps on higher ground. Ensure you have discussed your plans with your colleague and also the additional risk you are being exposed to yourself.

Instructors are to have knowledge of the nearest hospital (A&E or small injuries unit to where they are operating).