

PHOENIX CANOE CLUB & OUTDOOR CENTRE – RISK ASSESSMENT FORM – GENERAL WATERSPORTS ON FLAT WATER
ASSESSMENT BY PHIL ATKINSON, CENTRE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR – REVIEWED MARCH 2025

Hazard / Risk	Priority	Action / Risk Control	By whom
Water			
Drowning	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid staff available at all times during opening hours • All participants are supervised (maximum ratio as SOP's) at all times whilst involved in water sports, i.e. on land, and whilst on the water. • Participants are briefed about the risks and, where appropriate, given de-limited areas (safe areas, no-go areas, etc.) • All participants, observers and support staff wear buoyancy aids at all times whilst beyond the slipway • All participants are fully briefed on "capsize drills" 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users and others.
Bacterial contamination leading to irritation of the digestive tract	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing provided by the instructor on the importance of washing hands after the activity, before eating, drinking, etc. • Any cuts/grazes should be washed in clean water and covered where appropriate. 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Algae contamination leading to irritation of the skin and digestive tract and poisoning	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are advised to wash soon after the activity and to shower if they have fallen into the water. 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Separation from group	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors to count heads regularly • Participants to be briefed on effect of wind, avoidance of overhanging trees and bushes and keeping with their group 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Launching / retrieving boats	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief participants not to walk on the slipway below the waterline as the concrete is slippery • Coach to ensure that boats are properly emptied before being carried back to the sheds. 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Collisions			
Collision with rafts, sailing dinghies, windsurfers, kayaks, canoes or the bottom. Participants injured	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group well briefed prior to launching raft on what to do if the craft capsizes • All crafts are accompanied by support boat (canoe/kayak or powerboat) and observed by an instructor (max ratio as SOP's). 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors carry knife capable of cutting any ropes in the event of an emergency. • Instructors check the reservoir beforehand to ensure there are no obstructions. • Users instructed to work together to minimize collision impacts. 	
Injuries caused by paddle use / booms / raft poles	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing provided on the dangers of paddles, booms, raft poles • All users should demonstrate correct technique and safe handling of equipment. 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Equipment			
Equipment checks	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors to check all equipment in use is serviceable for the activity. Participants should be encouraged to check their own equipment to instil a “safety ethos” • All faulty equipment is to be removed from use, identified with a tag and logged into the equipment book • Improvised rafts should be checked by the staff in charge of the activity before launching on water and any necessary adjustments made. • Instructors to ensure that all craft allocated to participants is sized appropriately and adjusted for a good fit. 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Weather Conditions			
Participant protection from prevailing weather and general water conditions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors to ensure that all groups are properly kitted out for the prevailing weather conditions from a range of appropriately sized protective clothing including cagoules, wetsuits, over-trousers. • Instructors to ensure that all participants are wearing appropriate footwear to keep their feet safe from underwater sharps in the event of a capsize. Use of Centre spare shoes to be considered if the participant doesn’t have spare shoes. • Instructor to check if participants own activity clothing is suitable for the conditions and provide Centre alternatives if needed. 	

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Lightning can cause severe injuries	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All water activities cancelled or halted during severe weather conditions which include lightning. Participants to be kept indoors during lightning or heavy rain storms. 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Injury or ill health caused due to exposure to severe weather conditions	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors are to ensure appropriate clothing is worn and that participants are able to change soon after becoming wet/cold. 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Hot weather Hyperthermia/sunburn	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water users advised to take precautions against over-heating/sun. Course users advised to avoid dehydration. A source of cool, clean and potable water in sufficient quantities is provided Staff to advise use of suitable sun protection 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Cold weather Hypothermia	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are to wear clothing or wetsuits appropriate for the prevailing conditions. Mobile phones/radios are to be carried by all instructors Main building is a short distance away from the location All participants should have a dry change of clothing and spare footwear. 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Illness From Existing Medical Conditions			
Users unable to take/access their emergency medication resulting in possible life threatening illness	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical questions asked prior to activity Users unable to take/access their emergency medication resulting in possible life threatening illness to remain on land. Trained first aiders on site at all times 	Staff, volunteers, participants
On land			
Vehicles	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all vehicles on site are driven slowly in the compound area and are aware of Centre Users especially when reversing. Ensure vehicles are parked neatly and away from the activity areas with their engines off. 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Public access	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief all youth participants on “stranger danger” Brief all participants on dogs and dog walkers in area Ensure buildings and valuables are locked when not occupied 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Uneven ground / sharps	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief all participants on uneven ground, high steps, nettles, brambles. 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain slipway and pontoons to avoid trip and slip hazards 	
Fire	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all participants are aware of fire drill, emergency exits and Emergency Assembly Point. • Ensure all fire alarms, detectors and extinguishers are checked and in good working order 	Staff, volunteers, participants
Separation from group	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors to count heads at regular intervals • Brief participants on keeping together and with instructor 	Staff, Volunteers, reservoir users.
Catering	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all participants are aware of the need to wash hands before eating or drinking • Staff to ensure all food preparation surfaces are kept clean and tidy and fridge / cupboards are clean and stocked with food and drink within its “eat by” date 	Staff, volunteers, participants