

PHOENIX CANOE CLUB & OUTDOOR CENTRE – RISK ASSESSMENT FORM – OFF-SITE RIVER TRIPS
 GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT BY PHIL ATKINSON, CENTRE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR – REVIEWED MARCH 2025

Hazard / Risk	Priority	Action / Risk Control	By whom
Water			
Capsizing / Drowning	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group well briefed prior to launching on what to do if the craft capsizes • Coach to be first on the water and last off to maintain safety • Instructors to maintain First Aid qualifications suitable for the activity and to carry a First Aid kit • All participants are supervised (maximum ratio as SOP's) at all times whilst involved in kayaking / canoeing, i.e. on land, and whilst on the water. • Ensure all participants are at a suitable level of competence for the conditions / grades to be encountered • Participants are briefed about the risks and, where appropriate, given de-limited areas (safe areas, no-go areas, etc.) • All participants and instructors wear buoyancy aids and canoe helmets at all times whilst on or close to the edge of the water • All participants are fully briefed on "capsize drills" • Instructors carry a throw line, sharp serrated edged knife, first aid kit, bivvy bag, split paddles and strop, tape or sling and are experienced and trained to use them • Instructors to carry mobile phone in waterproof bag with sufficient credit for emergency use. 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.
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, river 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, river users.

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Separation from group	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors to count heads regularly Participants to be briefed on effect of wind, currents, avoidance of overhanging trees and bushes and keeping with their group 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.
Collisions			
Collision with other river craft, sailing dinghies, windsurfers, kayaks, canoes or the river bottom. Participants injured	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All craft are accompanied by support boat (canoe/kayak) and observed by an instructor (max ratio as SOP's). Instructors carry knife capable of cutting any ropes in the event of an emergency. Instructors check the river levels and weather forecast beforehand and check where possible UK Rivers Guide Book, River App and local information to ensure passage is clear. Users instructed to work together to minimize collision impacts and what to do in the vicinity of powered craft, locks and weirs. 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.
Injuries caused by equipment	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing provided on the dangers of paddles. All participants to wear well-fitting canoe helmet on all river trips All users should demonstrate correct technique and safe handling of equipment. 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.
Collision with objects	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief participants how to avoid collisions, “read” the water features to choose a safe passage, avoid strainers, boulders, undercuts, weirs and drops. Brief participants how and when to swim “defensively” and “aggressively” to self-rescue 	Staff, Volunteers, river 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 and others 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 Ensure all participants are properly dressed for the activity, prevailing weather conditions, grade of water etc. and a stock of spare clothing is carried. 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all equipment and PPE is rinsed in clean water before moving to another water course to avoid contamination by non-native species. 	
Weather Conditions			
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 and participants moved to a place of safety 	Staff, Volunteers, river 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, river 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, river 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 • Back-up vehicle is a short distance away from the location • All participants should have a dry change of clothing and spare footwear. 	Staff, Volunteers, river 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 • Trained first aiders on site at all times 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.
On land			
Vehicles	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all vehicles and trailers are packed safely and all loose equipment is secured firmly to the roof rack or trailer. • Ensure all passengers have their own individual seat with seat belt and that any internal luggage does not pose a danger or block emergency exits. 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief participants on dangers of un-loading vehicles and trailers near other vehicles and roads. Refer to Generic Risk Assessment for Minibus Travel Off-Site 	
Public access	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief all youth participants on “stranger danger” 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.
Uneven ground / sharps	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief all participants on uneven ground, high steps, nettles, barbed wire, steep banks, high banks etc. 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.
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, river users.
Catering	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all participants are aware of the need to wash hands before eating or drinking Ensure all participants have sufficient food and drink for the river journey and instructors should carry spare food and water 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.
Accommodation	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the trip includes overnight accommodation, all participants to be briefed on accommodation boundaries, areas and safety rules Participants to be allocated sleeping spaces restricted to their gender and age group, where possible Young people to be supervised by adults (with Enhanced DBS) in any domestic activities such as food preparation and cooking Trip leaders to ensure a zero tolerance to alcohol, smoking and drugs for young people under 18 	Staff, Volunteers, river users.

Risk Assessment to be updated with Dynamic Risk Assessment by Coach(s) to meet the current needs of the activity. Management to be advised of any deficiencies or amendments to be made to this Risk Assessment.