

**WRAYSBURY SKIFF AND PUNTING CLUB
DRAGONBOAT AND WAKA AMA SECTION**

SAFETY PLAN

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Because of the size and design of the dragon boat, and the water conditions in which paddling takes place, that is placid water, dragon boating is inherently safe and a capsizing especially in such conditions, unless the crew is at fault, is a rarity.

The outrigger canoe is designed primarily for use on the sea. It is used in open sea crossings, waves and surf. For the outrigger to train in conditions that they may race in it is therefore necessary to experience these conditions. The canoe can be righted in the event of a huli (capsize).

This safety plan details how we manage water safety. The plan relates to normal training sessions from the club base at Wraysbury. Risk assessment of other locations that the club may operate from must be undertaken by the crew captain, steerer or coach using the Offsite Safety Plan.

The Club Generic Risk Assessment (page 4) takes account of a range of risks and measures taken to minimize them. In addition to the Club Generic Risk Assessment, a Dynamic Risk Assessment must be undertaken for each session at which time there are five factors to consider.

1. River flow and tide times
2. Temperature of water
3. Weather conditions
4. Visibility
5. Experience and fitness of the crew

River Flow

High stream (Red/Yellow stream warnings)

The Environment Agency has a 'blanket' recommendation that all unpowered craft should not navigate the river in Red *and* Yellow stream warning conditions. These warnings take no account of experience, type of boat, etc. There is also a wide range in conditions between 'low red' and very high flows. It is common practice for rowing and canoeing activities to carry on during yellow conditions, and low red conditions. Medium and high red flows simulate the tidal conditions experienced in outrigger races on open water and are suitable training conditions for experienced and fit paddlers (see definition of an Experienced Paddler - Appendix 3).

As part of their training helms and steerers are made aware of the hazards of manoeuvring near obstructions such as bridges, large moored boats, etc. and of the dangers near open weirs. The Club will use its experience of conditions when

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conducting a dynamic risk assessment of the flow in these conditions. This must include in high flows visually assessing the river.

The Club has found that 'low to medium red' conditions - produce conditions that a reasonably experienced *Dragon boat/Outrigger* crew would be comfortable with. As measured by the EA flow station at Windsor Park, this would be 160m³/s or below in daylight and 130m³/s when dark. In these conditions and in the dark, the dragon boat/outrigger should go no further downstream than WSPC, and no further upstream than Old Windsor Lock. The dragon boat should only be helmed by a person holding a BDA helming qualification or a paddler with a minimum of three years experience helming and only current Level 3 steerers should take the outrigger out in these conditions. In strong red flow it is recommended that there is a full crew of 6 paddlers in the outrigger and in the dragon boat, a minimum of 16 paddlers.

Very experienced and strong crews may take the dragon boat/outrigger out in higher flow after a full dynamic risk assessment by two experienced helms/steerers taking account of the five safety factors and in consultation with the WSPC committee. In these conditions a spare paddle should be taken in the event of breakage or loss.

Temperature of the Water

Winter river temperatures would reduce the speed at which a crew could manage a capsize. It is not practical for the Club to measure the water temperature – however, a guide would be that when it is below 15° then this would be an important consideration. This combined with high flow would present a much higher risk factor in the event of a capsize. In these conditions the boat should stay nearer to the club so that it is not far to paddle back if necessary – recommended no further than Old Windsor Lock.

Weather Conditions

Cold air temperature and strong wind combined with any of the other factor will increase the risk. Strong winds will affect the ability of the steerer to control the boat and care should be taken for falling branches and wind-blown debris. In strong winds any paddling should be undertaken closer to the club and the crew briefed on ama watch in the outrigger. In winds above Force 6 (30mph or 27 knots) the boat should not go out. Consideration should be also be given to the strength of the gusts and the direction of the wind.

In very hot conditions the crew should be reminded of heat stroke – using sun screens and taking with them plenty of fluid.

Where lightning is forecast paddlers should consider adjusting session to stay close to the club and adhere to the 30/30 rule proposed by RoSPA. If the flash to bang is 30 seconds in length or less you should not go out and move to inside a building or vehicle. If you are already on the water then you should get off the water immediately and seek suitable shelter – eg a building, under a bridge arch. You should stay in the shelter until 30 minutes has passed from the last clap of thunder. See Lightning forecast website link under Checking Conditions.

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Visibility

When paddling in the dark the boat should have a light facing forward and back. This can be mounted on the iaku's or the bow and stern. The strokes and helm/steerer should maintain a careful watch for other water users who may not have lights or have a clear vision – and should not assume that the dragon boat/outrigger has been seen. Clear verbal warnings should be given to other water users and should be acknowledged by the steerer.

Fog – when visibility is reduced so that the opposite bank cannot be seen then dragon boat/outrigger should not go out. Be aware that visibility may be decreased in areas alongside open space.

Experience and Ability of the Crew

The crew should have received instruction in capsize drill and receive a safety briefing. An experienced crew will be better able to cope with higher risk conditions from any of the five factors listed above. The helm/steerer should make an assessment of the condition of the crew and their ability to undertake difficult conditions. Paddlers should take responsibility for their own safety and notify the coach or steer person if there is any reason that they may not be 100% fit to paddle.

Personal Safety

Buoyancy Aids (PFD) - Coach/steerer should always carry out risk assessments before going afloat, and advise crew members regarding the need for PFDs. This will be based on the five factors listed above. Buoyancy aids should be appropriately fitted to the paddler – the condition of the buoyancy aid is the responsibility of the paddler. Consideration should be given to very cold water temperatures and the risk of sudden emersion drowning as part of the risk assessment in the event of a capsize.

PFD's should always be used in darkness and the winter months.

Clothing – the paddlers should be advised of suitable clothing for outrigger paddling for both hot and cold weather conditions. It is the paddler's responsibility to dress appropriately for conditions. Paddlers are also requested to wear individual lights on their person when paddling in the dark to help identification in the water should the boat huli.

Swimming Ability – all newcomers to dragon boating/outriggering should be asked to confirm their swimming ability and confidence in being in the water.

Medical conditions - Members are asked to declare medical conditions to the Club on joining (via the membership form). This information is maintained by the Club in compliance with GDPR and, where relevant, shared with the Club Captain/Coach. It is the paddler's responsibility to notify the session organizer of any health or physical conditions which may impact on their ability to paddle. Newcomers who have not yet joined will be asked verbally by the coach to declare any conditions that they should be aware of. This will be done in confidence.

Capsize Drill

Capsize of an outrigger is a normal occurrence and is not in itself of high risk. The risk would increase according to the Five Factors listed above and should be taken

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into consideration by the steerer at the start of the session. The capsize or swamping of a dragon boat is a rarity but before every outing the helm should remind the crew of what to do in the event of a capsize or swamping occurring.

New participants will be given a safety briefing including instruction in the capsize drill theory (including the numbering-off “buddy” system). The club will aim to provide an opportunity to practice capsize drill in a safe controlled environment in appropriate conditions. The dragon boat/outrigger must always carry a bucket to assist bailing of the boat in the event of a capsize or swamping.

Equipment and Maintenance

- The Club will follow the WSPC’s policies on the provision and maintenance of First Aid boxes.
- Accidents and near misses will be recorded in the WSPC Accident book and reported where relevant.
- Helms/Steerers are responsible for ensuring equipment is fit for use prior to each outing
- Helms/Steerers should ensure that safety or spare equipment is carried in the boat according to conditions. In high flow huli lines should be fitted, plus a mobile phone and spare paddle must always be carried.

EMERGENCIES

In the event of an emergency during an outing the steerer should dial 999 for help.

PADDLING OFFSITE (see Offsite Safety Plan)

When a crew attends another venue or race the crew captain will be responsible for undertaking a risk assessment of that venue and checking with appropriate authorities/information on the likely conditions relating to tides, flow, conditions and weather. They should then make appropriate recommendations to the crew with respect to equipment, clothing and safety.

CHECKING CONDITIONS

The following websites provide information on flow, river and weather conditions:

- Environment Agency: <http://riverconditions.environment-agency.gov.uk/> .
- Gauge Map: <http://www.gaugemap.co.uk/#!Map/Summary/7535/2828>
- Conditions can be checked at Old Windsor Lock through the EA website <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/station/7172> .
- Weather conditions can be updated through the BBC website - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/2633443>
- Lightning forecast:
http://www.lightningmaps.org/blitzortung/europe/index.php?bo_page=map&bo_show_map=uk.

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APPENDICES

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR OUTINGS BASED FROM THE CLUB

<u>What Hazard</u>	1. Stationary obstacles - bridges, Islands, moored boats etc.
Who is at risk	Boat and crew
How Often	Every outing
How Likely	Highly unlikely providing experienced helm/steerer in charge
Consequences	(i) Possible pinning of boat (ii) Boat is damaged or breaks up (iii) Crew in water
Existing precautions	Use of capable helm/steers person
Risk Level	Harmful + Highly unlikely = Moderate risk. Take following actions
ACTION	i) Helm/Steerer to be of an agreed standard. (See Appendix) ii) Test needed to be set up to assess new/existing helm/steerer. iii) Boat to carry a charged mobile phone to alert if in pinned situation
<u>What Hazard</u>	2. Moving obstacles - other river users, large driftwood etc.
Who is at risk	Boat and crew
How often	Every outing
How Likely	Highly unlikely
Consequences	(i) Boat is damaged or breaks up (ii) Crew member injured (iii) Crew in water
Existing precautions	(i) Use of lights on boat (ii) Look out and verbal warnings and paddle signal from paddlers 1 & 2. (iii) Know and follow the rules for navigation of the river
Risk Level	Extremely harmful + highly unlikely = moderate risk. Take following actions
ACTION	Brighter lights to be purchased and stored at club for use. Helm/Steerer to acknowledge verbal warnings.
<u>What Hazard</u>	3. Boat jamming or going over Bell Weir
Who at risk	Boat and Crew
How Often	Every outing

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How Likely	Very unlikely if existing precautions maintained
Consequences	Boat and crew go over weir
Existing precautions	(i) Boat turns well above the weir
Risk Level	Extremely harmful + Highly unlikely = Moderate risk. Take the following action.
ACTION	Boat never to go below WSPC in red flow conditions.
What Hazard	4. Boat Capsize
Who at risk	Boat and crew
How often	Every outing
How Likely	Unlikely
Consequences	Crew in water – possible drowning or hypothermia Injury during capsize
Existing precautions	(i) Bucket for bailing tied into boat. (ii) Crew drill for re-righting boat (iii) Crew briefed for ama watch in the outrigger prior to outing (iv) Paddlers briefed on use of small boats and capsize (huli) procedures
Risk Level	Harmful + Highly unlikely = Moderate risk. Take following actions
ACTION	(i) Capsize drill to be run through at regular intervals and before outings in red flow (ii) All crew members to know their jobs. (iii) Appoint "ama lookout" for each outrigger outing. (iv) No wellies to be worn in the boats. (v) Paddlers to wear individual light when paddling in darkness. (vi) Small boats should stay closer to the club in challenging conditions. (vii) After a capsize it is advised to return to the club to warm up
What Hazard	5. Hypothermia
Who at risk	Crew
How often	Every outing
How Likely	Highly unlikely summer. Unlikely winter
Consequences	Crew member hypothermic
Existing precautions	Crew advised to wear clothing suitable to the conditions

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Risk Level	Extremely harmful + Highly unlikely = Moderate risk. Take the following actions.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Paddlers to be advised to be adequately clothed, in thermals, waterproofs etc. (ii) In very windy or wet conditions the boat must stay within 5 minutes from the club. (iii) Boats to carry safety box/bag including a foil blanket.
What Hazard	6. Injury after collision but boat still upright
Who at risk	Crew
How often	Every outing
How likely	Highly unlikely
Consequences	Injured crew member – needing medical attention
Existing precautions	Mobile phone carried in boat
Risk Level	Harmful + highly unlikely = tolerable risk
ACTION	Paddler/helm to check boat and paddlers on return and report incident.

RISK ASSESSMENT OF OTHER FACTORS

What Risk	7. Manual Handling Injury
Who at risk	Crew and any helpers
How Often	Every outing
How Likely	Unlikely
Consequences	Injured crew member
Existing precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Paddlers given instruction in lifting the boat in and out of the water. Crew reminded at each outing. (ii) Trolley used to launch big boats (iii) Sufficient numbers used to move boat
Risk Level	Harmful + unlikely = tolerable risk
ACTION	None
What Risk	8. Water borne illness. – Weil’s disease / Leptospirosis. Gastro-intestinal illness
Who at risk	Club members – all people in contact with the river bank and water
How Often	Leptospirosis: every outing. Gastro-intestinal illness: After heavy rain fall or flooding

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How Likely	Unlikely
Consequences	Crew member develops illness hours/days after the outing
Existing Precautions	Paddlers reminded to wash hands and shower after paddling
Risk Level	Harmful + unlikely = tolerable risk
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Cuts and abrasions to be covered with a waterproof dressing. (ii) Shower after contact with water. (iii) Wash hands before eating or drinking (iv) Make paddlers aware that if flu like symptoms develop after water activities then they should contact their doctor and advise them that they have been canoeing (v) Following capsize paddlers should inform family/friends as a precaution should symptoms develop.

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APPENDICE 2

COMPETENT STEER PERSONS

There is no official qualification for steering an outrigger canoe in the UK. Paddlers will generally learn through experience supported by a Level 3 steer persons. As the steerer progresses through the levels they will be assessed on competence in steering the boat and safety. The assessment of a steer person will be undertaken by a current Level 3 steerer. If a paddler does not steer for 2 years or more, then on return to paddling the club will check their current ability and provide support if required to ensure their knowledge and skills are current.

Steer persons will be classified as:

1. Trainee steerer
2. Steerer - Level 1
3. Steerer – Level 2
4. Steerer - Level 3 – Inland
5. Steerer – Level 3 - Sea

1. Trainee Steerer

These paddlers should only steer when a Level 2 or 3 steerer is in the boat to support their training and take over control if required. In these occasions the Level 2 or Level 3 Steerer is responsible for the crew and safety.

2. Steerer – Level 1

These have been assessed and are able to take the crew out in low flow (no river warnings) and daylight conditions. Level 1 steerers may steer in the dark with a Level 2 or 3 helm, or very experienced paddler at seat 5. The club safety officer to agree the latter.

3. Steerer – Level 2

These have been assessed and have sufficient experience to take the crew out in medium flow (yellow flow conditions) and darkness.

4. Steerer – Level 3 Inland

These are our most experienced inland steer persons who can take the boat out when the river is on red and in the dark.

Steerers who are not yet Level 3 can gain experience in red conditions when an experienced L3 steerer remains responsible for the boat from seat 5.

5. Steerer - Level 3 Sea

These are very experienced paddlers with considerable knowledge and experience of the sea and all the elements that affect it. They will understand all the aspects that are required to take a crew out and return safely.

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APPENDICE 3

GUIDANCE FOR USING CLUB SMALL BOATS

This guidance applies to the club small boats – O1, OC1, OC2, and V1 outside of club sessions.

It is essential that a dynamic risk assessment is undertaken before going out in the boats, taking into account the five safety factors listed in the club Safety Plan, giving extra consideration to the fact that the paddler is very exposed to the elements in the O1, OC1, OC2 and V1.

We shall respect and look after all our boats, however the small boats are more prone to damage and care should be taken when lifting off racking, rigging and launching/landing. Any damage must be notified asap to a Committee member so that we can instigate any repairs and if necessary take the boat out of action if there is a safety concern.

NO WARNING BOARDS		
	DAYLIGHT	DARK
OC1 V1 O1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must wear buoyancy aid in Winter Period** 2. Must have done O1/OC1/OC2 Induction. 3. Must have paddled in dragon boat or OC6 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must wear buoyancy aid in Winter period** 2. Must previously have been out in daylight 3. Must be accompanied by another boat of similar speed
OC2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must wear buoyancy aid in winter period** 2. Must have done OC1/OC2 Induction. 3. Must have paddled in dragon boat or OC6 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must wear buoyancy aid in winter period** 2. Both must previously have paddled in daylight.

** Winter period is defined as third weekend in October to 31st March (usually corresponding with British Winter Time)

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RED BOARDS (up to 160m ³ /s)		
	DAYLIGHT	DARK
OC1 V1 O1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experienced paddlers only* 2. Must wear buoyancy aid 3. Paddle between the club and Old Windsor Lock 	No
OC2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experienced paddlers only* 2. Must wear buoyancy aid 3. Paddle between the club and Old Windsor Lock 	No

YELLOW BOARDS		
	DAYLIGHT	DARK
OC1 V1 O1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must wear buoyancy aid in the winter period** 2. Paddler must have been out previously for at least 5 sessions in the O1 or OC1 3. Must be accompanied by another boat of similar speed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must wear buoyancy aid 2. Experienced paddlers only* 3. Must be accompanied by another boat of similar speed
OC2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must wear buoyancy aid 2. At least one paddler must have been out previously for 5 sessions in OC1/OC2 3. Must be accompanied by another boat of similar speed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Must wear buoyancy aid 2. At least one experienced paddler*. 2nd paddler to have previously been out in daylight. 3. Must be accompanied by another boat of similar speed

An experienced paddler is any paddler with a minimum of two years regular paddling in either an O1, OC1 or V1.