



Safety Policy & Kayaking Guidelines

“Safety should be a positive, not a negative, concept”

Declaration

Phoenix Kayak Club advises participants that kayaking/canoeing is undertaken in a dynamic water based environment that by its very nature, presents a risk of injury to its participants.

Statement of Intent

Phoenix Kayak Club attempts to reduce participants risk through the provision of training, utilising member's experience and knowledge, implementing Canoeing Ireland guidelines and other measures where appropriate. All club activities operate under the stewardship of Canoeing Ireland certified member instructors, who have the authority to cancel events if safety should be a concern.

This safety policy is prepared in good faith and applies to all official organised activities of Phoenix Kayak Club (PKC). Participation in club activities is available to all paid up members of the Kayak Club, failure to comply with club rules and safety policy/instructions will result in appropriate sanction by the Committee of PKC against the person or persons responsible as set forth in the club's constitution.

Disclosure

Club member instructors are not professionals and all participants are reminded that kayaking is an *Assumed Risk Water Contact Sport* that may carry attendant risk. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks, and be responsible for their own action and involvement. Primary responsibility for participant's health and safety remains with themselves, full disclosure of any health or other factor that may impact on your ability to partake in a kayaking event must be declared to the organising instructor prior to the event.



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General Safety Guidelines – Clubsite

Specific risks vary according to activity and location, use of the club-site exposes persons to (but not limited to) the following risks:

- Vehicular and pedestrian access/egress from the site and the adjacent Lee Road (R846), and movements within the car park and building.
- Personal injury from falling equipment whilst removing from storage, and injury from movement of equipment on site.
- Slips and trips on wet and uneven ground.
- Burn injury from the Burco hot water boiler and hygiene chemicals.
- Injury or death from the adjacent river bank/pontoon to the River Lee.

General Safety Guidelines – Personal Wellbeing

Further to the following, consult the club Information Booklet and Parental Information Leaflet for more information:

- The club's policy on Bullying is simple – it will **NOT** be tolerated in any shape or form, direct face-to-face or in-direct through group or social media. Aggressors will face immediate sanction and possible expulsion from the club. If you feel you are being bullied contact the Child Protection Officers, individual Committee Members or an adult you trust.
- Be cautious of personal hygiene whilst kayaking. Always carry and use anti-bacterial gel before eating in the outdoors. Clean and disinfect wetsuits and other clothing regularly to avoid infection.

General Safety Guidelines – Kayaking at the Clubsite

Kayaking can expose persons to (but not limited to) the following risks:

- The River Lee adjacent to the club-site is a deep watercourse fed by Inniscarra dam, minor rivers, streams and land run-off. Weather events or dam operations may create strong currents capable of overwhelming swimmers and inexperienced paddlers.
- Snag and drowning hazard exists from trees on both sides of the river bank.
- Downstream from the club the weir and sluice are excellent training grounds but can pose a significant danger from debris or re-circulating currents trapping craft or persons during/after strong currents or high water level events.



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General Safety Guidelines – Kayaking

In all circumstances the following rules must be observed by club members:

- The Lead Instructor has the final and binding decision on individual paddler participation on a trip/event, and whether it is safe to proceed with that trip or event.
- A properly fitted and operational helmet and buoyancy aid must be worn at all times when kayaking, accessing the pontoon or working adjacent to water.
- A properly fitting helmet must be worn at all times when involved in moving water, surf or activity which may result in head contact, e.g. Canoe Polo.
- Any person with a pre-existing medical condition or those requiring medication must inform the Lead Instructor / Event Organiser of the condition, method of treatment or location of medication at least 30 minutes prior to the trip/events commencement.
- Never kayak in a group of less than three, “Less than three should never be”. Inexperienced paddlers must not venture onto water without an instructor present.
- Paddlers should not attempt rivers, rapids or surf far enough beyond their ability to pose a risk to their or others health. And while every paddler within a group must support one another, each individual paddler must accept that it is their own decision to participate in all trips or any segment of a trip.
- It is the responsibility of each individual paddler to voice any questions or concerns they may have to the trip leader who shall determine the appropriate action.
- The use of alcohol or any other mind-altering drugs before or during a canoeing session is not permitted. It dulls reflexes, reduces decision-making ability, and may interfere with important survival reflexes.
- Persons under the age of eighteen may be asked to complete a parental consent form to participate on certain trips/club events.

General Safety Guidelines – Equipment

- A log shall be kept of the clubs equipment. The Equipment Officer will oversee a full audit of all equipment, to be performed at least annually before the start of the summer training season. Any equipment failing the clubs standards will be withdrawn from use. Faulty equipment may be repaired or replaced where appropriate.



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General Safety Guidelines – Kayak Transportation

Familiarity may cause risks to be overlooked, consider the following:

- Always ensure kayaks are securely tied down both front and rear, cam buckles or other friction closures should be tied off to prevent opening from motion whilst in transit.
- Whilst using the club trailer it is the towing drivers responsibility to ensure the trailer is roadworthy and the load is secured. Always check; road signalling lights, safety chain is secure, wheel nuts are tight and tyres are at correct pressure before use.
- Take extra care at kayaking get-on and get-off locations to protect yourself and others from road traffic especially when moving kayak equipment.
- Park in a considerate and safe manner to prevent injury and disruption to local residents and other road users.

General Safety Guidelines – Environment

Kayakers have a vested interest in protecting the environment, please adhere to the following minimum guidelines:

- Check to ensure your launching or landing locations are permitted, access to some areas may be prohibited due to protection orders. Choose entry and exit points to watercourses to avoid erosion of adjacent ground. Never damage flora and fauna to aid access, find another location! Always close gates opened for access.
- Please do not disrupt wildlife, in particular make yourself aware of breeding seasons where your existence may severely impact wildlife, frightened seals can crush cubs trying to 'escape' to the safety of water. More information can be found at the National Parks & Wildlife service website; www.npws.ie
- Don't impose a burden on the environment with your presence, always take your rubbish home with you. www.leavenotraceireland.org
- Always clean your boat and equipment when moving between watercourses, micro-organisms can be transferred from one location to another by your kayak's hull. Invasive species can alter the delicate balance of ecosystems such as lakes and rivers, leading to habitat change, species extinction or negative economic effects.
- Cleaning your boat prior to using some waterways is mandatory, in some circumstances you may be subject to examination and a potential fine.