



Norwich Canoe Club:

Parameters for anyone that wishes to paddle outside of club organised sessions.

Policy for members aged over 18 years of age.

It is understood by Norwich Canoe Club that from time to time members may wish to paddle outside of a club organised session on their own or at night. Overall the club does not recommend or support this but does not wish to prohibit or unreasonably obstruct any of its members in their paddling activities.

Indeed the club recognises that night or lone paddling may be necessary when training for specific events such as the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race.

Therefore paddlers taking to the water outside of a club session or members wishing to paddle on their own or at night must take note of the following:

Every member is to make an assessment of their ability, which must involve consulting a senior coach (a level 3 or Racing Coach coach) or 2 x level 2 or Coach Award coaches (together for discussion not individually) with no exceptions.

EVERY MEMBER IS TO LOG THEIR ON-THE-WATER ACTIVITY ON THE BLACKBOARD AND REMOVE IT ONCE THEY HAVE RETURNED.

The above is not a statement of guidance but a statement of compliance: no member can assume they are outside the parameters or that they don't need to consult.

Once an assessment has been made on an individual member then the following applies.

There is a culture of continuing assessment and reassessment in the club.

EVERY MEMBER NEEDS TO QUESTION THEMSELVES.

Everyone's circumstances change from time to time. **YOU NEED TO MAKE CHANGES BEFORE THERE IS A PROBLEM AND IT'S TOO LATE.** This can impact everybody else. If in doubt, ask and discuss the situation.

Dynamic assessment: This is an essential part of paddling and is done every time we paddle, run, etc. Coaches do this continually for club sessions, and all paddlers should too. Dynamic assessment is to assess the conditions on the day and time of paddling (e.g. shall I wear shoes, put sun cream on, take a light, do I need two thermals, have I set my GPS watch, or shall I do gym instead as the weather is too bad). Dynamic assessment is much more apparent during the winter.

Any resulting decision NEED NOT BE JUST YOUR DECISION. CONSULT SOMEONE ELSE.

See the list of some things to think about at the end of this document. Paddling outside club-organised sessions requires AUTHORISATION in the first instance from a Level 3 race coach or the clubs Director of coaching. A list will be kept of those with standing authorisation to paddle outside of club sessions and this will be circulated to all club coaches regardless of their level of qualification and also to the committee for information.

Please remember that although authorisation to paddle outside of club sessions may have been given this does not mean that you should do so. Members need to understand that should they decide to paddle outside of a club session they do so at their own risk. .

Once authorised by a senior coach, the authorisation may have restrictions attached (e.g. no lone paddling, must be with an adult with greater experience). The authorisation and restriction will be semi-permanent, meaning the authorisation can be withdrawn, authorisation doesn't have to be repeated for each visit to the club.

Authorisations for lone paddling must be logged by the senior coach for each individual.

Paddling in groups of 3 or more members: Permitted for members following authorisation by a senior coach.

Norwich Canoe Club will if it deems necessary appoint a group leader that does not hold an official qualification and may do this for some groups paddling outside normal club sessions.

The members should make their own dynamic assessment before each paddle and when necessary (when you are in the slightest doubt about conditions or individual abilities in those conditions) consult someone else.

Every individual will be paddling at their own risk and responsible for themselves.

N.B. it is generally deemed safer to paddle K2 rather than 2 x K1s, but this depends on the individuals and the kayaks, so consult with a coach or some other experienced person.

Must make their own dynamic assessment before and during each session and when necessary ask for advice.

Make it known that you are going paddling: log your paddle on the blackboard at the club (who you are, where you are going, when you left). Use a method of communication, (take a phone, or tracking device to record the activity) use an app such as "life360" which is a personal location device which can be activated during your paddle session, and let someone know to check your status, OR report to a designated person directly or by text or phone when you get back.

Night paddling: Permitted under authorisation as listed above and following guidelines below.

For some events, such as DW (especially a solo k2), night paddling is essential.

Night-time paddling can be more hazardous in some respects than daytime paddling but is not necessarily the most challenging paddling, some day-time paddling can be much more hazardous.

At night there are often additional things to consider in your dynamic assessment. You need to:

Always use lights, a white light facing forward high up (head torch or on your paddle) bright or flashing lights are inconsiderate to others in your group.

An additional light can be facing to the rear.

Wear a buoyancy aid regardless of marathon division ranking.

Other things to consider in your dynamic assessment and before paddling.

Buoyancy aid? It is compulsory for all authorised members to wear a buoyancy aid when paddling at night. At other times, consider wearing one as part of your dynamic assessment.

Small Loops? Stay local rather than paddling miles from the club to get enough miles in. Staying local means an area where a road is accessible from the river, this is between the concrete block and riverside, although some of the areas are more difficult to get out of the river. This is known as small loops.

Make adjustments to the session? (shorter or longer efforts or time you are out)

Are you a competent adult? This is not your divisional status, but based on your experience, knowledge and abilities.

What are the conditions? How strong is the wind? The current? The prospect of rain/hail/thunder?

Should we use Crew boat instead of K1s?

Take safety equipment: Phone, safety bag (there are several made up safety bags in the club).

Do I need to take a drink or food?

Am I wearing enough/too much? Can I take spares?

Who knows I/we are paddling and who will know when we get back?

Policy Review Date	March 2024
Policy Owner	Chair
Policy Reviewed by	Sarah Walker – Chair NCC
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Policy Ratification Date	April 2024 Committee Meeting
Next Policy Review Date	March 2027 or before if material changes via Paddle UK or Norwich Canoe Club Changes to policy or conditions.