

Shetland Islands Council
Outdoor Education Generic Risk Assessments

Water Sport: Open Canoeing		Risk to: Instructor/ Group Members
Hazard	Risk	Control measures
1. Lifting and moving canoes.	Manual handling injury	Instructors are trained within the NGB coaching scheme on correct lifting and handling. Group members are briefed by instructor and are supervised.
2. Access to/ egress from water.	Slips and falls. Capsize. Group separation by wind tide or current.	Instructors are trained to NGB standards in group management and control. Instructors check access and egress points. Instructors brief groups on safe and appropriate access and egress. Instructors define a safe operational area and group members are briefed to stay within it.
3. Water activity.	Entrapment. Collisions. Biological infections. Water Level/state. Immersion.	Instructors are trained to NGB standards in group management and instructional techniques appropriate to the level of activity. Instructors choose a suitable venue taking into account the nature of the activity, the ability level of the group, water, weather conditions and the equipment available. Group members wear or carry clothing appropriate for the specific activity and venue. Group members wear a buoyancy aid, which meets the appropriate specifications. Helmets meeting the appropriate specifications may be worn depending on the location and nature of the activity. Group members are briefed on hazards specific to the craft and area of water being used and are instructed in the skills and techniques needed to deal with them. The instructor and group carry safety and rescue equipment appropriate to the specific activity and venue.
4. Equipment.	Unsuitability. Damaged. Failure. Wrongly fitted.	All equipment meets current specifications and/or acceptable standards where applicable and is suitable for the intended use. Equipment is regularly maintained, serviced and where required tested to current specifications. Instructors carry a repair kit suitable for the activity Instructors visually check equipment at time of issue. If group members are using their own equipment the instructor will ensure it is suitable for the expected conditions and nature of the activity. Instructors make a final check of equipment prior to the activity starting ensuring that buoyancy aids and helmets are correctly fitted/fastened, boats are properly fitted out and equipment carried is properly secured. Instructors must be suitably equipped for rapid immersion in emergency situations.
5. Weather/Water conditions	Possible increase in the level of risk. Cold. Hypothermia. Wind. Sunburn.	Instructors obtain information on weather, water levels and other relevant factors and make an assessment of local conditions prior to any activity taking place. Instructors will modify or curtail the activity if prevailing conditions are inappropriate for the group are planned activity. Instructors will ensure that each member of the group is appropriately clothed, carries sufficient food and that additional food clothing and equipment is available to suit the expected conditions and nature of the activity. Instructors are trained in First Aid to the level required by the NGB or SIC.
6. Swamping of rafted open canoes	Craft becomes unmanageable	To raft open canoes with a single central spar that allows movement between the two hulls thereby preventing the likelihood of swamping. Attention paid to overloading and trim Because of the unique nature of the Shetland Isles venues can always be chosen where the risk of swamping is minimal.