

POLICY DOCUMENT – Health and Safety

The Wearing of Buoyancy Aids during Club Water Based Activity

“The starting point is that whilst engaged in Club water based activity all participants must wear a buoyancy aid. *This is a simple, commonsense safety measure for all paddlers.*

In recognition of personal performance and experience there will be exceptions:

COMPETITION (sheltered water)

Marathon Training:

1. Those who have been or are currently ranked in divisions 1 or 2

Or

2. *Competent to the standard of 2 star in their marathon racing craft and*
3. *Have completed the BCU FSRT module including rescues from a racing craft*

And

4. Have at least two years experience

- 5. Including at least 4 different environments**

- 6. At least 3 of which must be different sheltered water river environments in addition to home waters.**

Paddlers and Coaches are reminded that,

“The starting point is that whilst engaged in Club water based activity all participants must wear a buoyancy aid”.

Exceptions for paddlers who clearly meet the criteria are subject to recommendation by two members of the Coaching Team (Level 2 or higher) to the Management Team for agreement.

Sprint Training:

1. Those who have been or are currently ranked in division A, excluding Lightning division A.

Or

2. *Competent to the standard of 2 star in their sprint racing craft and*
3. *Have completed the BCU FSRT module including rescues from a racing craft*

And

4. Have at least two years experience

- 5. Including at least 4 regattas at NWSC (or similar)**

- 6. Engaged in ‘coach-led’ group training in 3 sheltered water environments in addition to home waters.**

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ADVENTURE (sheltered water)

Canal, Lake, River:

1. Those who have achieved a personal performance award at 3 star (CCK, OC)

Or

2. *Competent to the standard of 2 star in their preferred craft and*
3. *Have completed the BCU FSRT module including rescues from their preferred craft*

And

4. Have at least two years experience
5. **Including at least 4 different environments**
6. **At least 3 of which must be different sheltered water river environments in addition to home waters.**

Paddlers and Coaches are reminded that,
"The starting point is that whilst engaged in Club water based activity all participants must wear a buoyancy aid".

Exceptions within the Adventure and Recreation strands will be rare. On such occasions they will be by agreement with the session Coach and/or in the case of adults by agreement amongst the group as a whole under calm, warm, weather and water conditions. There will typically be never less than three competent and experienced paddlers in close proximity to each other.

RECREATION (sheltered water)

Canal, Lake, River:

1. Those who have achieved a personal performance award at 3 star (OCK, OC)

Or

2. *Competent to the standard of 2 star in their preferred craft and*
3. *Have completed the BCU FSRT module including rescues from their preferred craft*

And

4. Have at least two years experience
5. **Including at least 4 different environments**
6. **At least 3 of which must be different sheltered water river environments in addition to home waters.**

Paddlers and Coaches are reminded that,
"The starting point is that whilst engaged in Club water based activity all participants must wear a buoyancy aid".

Exceptions within the Adventure and Recreation strands will be rare. On such occasions they will be by agreement with the session Coach and/or in the case of adults by agreement amongst the group as a whole under calm, warm, weather and water conditions. There will typically be never less than three competent and experienced paddlers in close proximity to each other.

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Personal Performance Awards (Star) and Swimming Ability

Commonsense suggests that those engaged in watersport should be able to swim. However, under carefully supervised circumstances it can be recognised as desirable but not essential. Such circumstances would consider all the factors involved, such as previous experience, craft to be used, the activity planned, weather conditions, water conditions, qualifications and experience of those responsible for the session. Clearly a key element of a risk assessment is the wearing of a Buoyancy Aid. In the early stages of engagement in paddlesport when there is significant support for the paddler water confidence is likely to be far more important than swimming ability. In many circumstances support paddlers will want the person in the water to stay with their boat rather than swimming off to the bank or another boat. As the level of competence and confidence increases and the level of support is likely to decrease the importance of confidence in the water and the ability to swim needs to increase as the paddler may well find support more distant.

For the purposes of this policy aligning with the requirements of the Two Star Personal Performance Award would seem to be the most appropriate.

Paddlesport Start:

“Students should be able to swim. This is desirable but not essential”

One Star:

“Candidates must be water confident and ideally should be able to swim. This is desirable but not essential.”

Two Star:

“Candidates must be able to swim 25 metres wearing a Buoyancy Aid”.

Three Star WW:

“Able to swim”

Three Star OC:

“It is recommended that the candidate holds the BCU 2 Star Award”

Three Star Touring:

“Two Star standard is the appropriate level of performance for paddlers to begin working towards the Three Star”.

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