





Water Activities Generic Risk Assessment – Patshull Activity Centre

To use this risk assessment:









- 1) Read the Generic risk assessment, THEN
- 2) Read the Element specific risk assessment for the activity

	Systematic Controls – these are processes or management actions. They happen outside of the instructed session time.
	What to say – these are instructions or information that the instructor leading the session has to give to the participants.
	What to do – these are actions that the instructor leading the session has to take either before or during the session.
	What to check – these are the key things the instructor leading the session must confirm – they can be either physical things or participant understanding.

Severity Factor & Remaining Risk Assessment











The following descriptors are used in each risk assessment. Note that a **MEDIUM** residual risk is used to show that a hazard requires dynamic risk assessment and deliberate management within the session by the instructor.

Level	Severity Description	Residual Risk Description
Low	Minor injury requiring no treatment, or simple first aid.	Control measures have reduced the severity and/or likelihood to minimal levels.
Medium	Injury would require the participant to stop doing the activity; medical treatment is beyond the skills of a basic first aider.	Control measures have reduced severity and/or likelihood to an adequate level but hazard still requires dynamic risk assessment and conscious consideration.
High	Injury would require expert medical attention and/or be fatal.	Control measures haven't reduced severity or likelihood to an acceptable level.

Hazardous Event	Who may be harmed?	Foreseeable Severity	Control Measures in Place ( Systematic controls  What to say  What to do  What to check)		Residual Risk
Cold Water Immersion/shock	Participants	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recognised that immersion may occur during some activities. In general, activities will be managed to prevent immersion in water <10°C. Clear information on clothing requirements given to groups Prior to arrival 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give the group clear instructions and boundaries about the activity to minimise the likelihood of them falling in cold water. Tell the group what to do in case of immersion - lie back, float, control breathing 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If someone falls in the water use trained rescue procedures to recover them as quickly as possible, be prepared to treat for hypothermia. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a check of participants clothing at the beginning of the session to ensure they are dressed in suitable clothing. This includes the ambient weather conditions. 	















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Injury from capsize or Immersion (see separate section on cold water shock)	Participants	High		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly checks of activity equipment are completed by people qualified to instruct the activity to identify any defects or developing hazards. Buoyancy aids are to be worn by all participants and instructors. Helmets must be worn. Activity Instructors will carry a knife. 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell participants how to fit equipment using demonstrations where appropriate. Give instructions for what to do if capsizing -e.g. don't panic, stay with your raft or swim to the shore, and brief for cold water shock. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that closed toe shoes are worn to protect feet if falling in Complete a pre-use (daily) check of all equipment. Check that all equipment (including buoyancy aids) are correctly fitted to every participant. 	
Drowning	Participants	High		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly checks of activity equipment are completed by people qualified to instruct the activity to identify any defects or developing hazards. Buoyancy aids are to be worn by all participants and instructors. Instructors to have correct training and qualifications/assessments of competency to make dynamic decisions and be able to rescue participants in a variety of situation. 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete regular head counts and maintain good supervision (CLAP) of participants. Complete a pre-use (daily) check of all equipment. Check that all equipment (including buoyancy aids) are correctly fitted to participants. 	
Inexperience of staff supervision/coaching	Participants	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff running the session to hold a relevant internal training with sign off from a competent person, and stay within remit Staff will receive site specific training for the environment within which they operate 	Low















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Injuries or accidents from poor behaviour, or novice participants taking part in adventurous activities.	Participants	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable session ratios are detailed in the activity APS and are normally a ratio of 1:12 with a minimum of 2 qualified staff members in the water operating area. Clear responsibilities are outlined in the terms and conditions to ensure accompanying adults understand that they are responsible for supervising the group's behaviour. 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give an activity safety briefing to help orientate guests and identify any specific hazards and safety rules they must follow. Set boundaries for operating areas in the safety briefing. Maintain line of sight of all participants while operating in the water. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose the operating area based on guest needs and environmental conditions. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that rules (including boundaries) were understood, and are followed. Ask visiting staff to provide extra supervision of behaviour if appropriate. 	
Pre-existing health issues including personal injury or illness	Participant	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All groups are required to provide information about significant medical requirements during the booking process. The duty manager will ensure that instructors have access to this information 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss health risks with the group leader at the start of the session. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that any existing cuts are covered up with waterproof plasters. Carry out a warm up activity at the start of active sessions, repeated if needed. Vary activities if appropriate to avoid excessive strain. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that accompanying adults have any essential medication accessible (e.g.asthma inhalers, auto-injectors for allergies) 	


















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Injury sustained during participation in the activity	Participants	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All instructors hold a minimum of First Response training (or higher if required by their NGB qualification) and can deal with minor and emergency first aid scenarios. The Duty Manager holds a full first aid at work qualification. A large capacity "reactive" first aid kit is available at reception. The centre has a "significant injury plan" if needed to ensure emergency services can get to injured parties quickly 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the injury cannot be managed with a first aid kit then tell the duty warden, if you think a ambulance is needed tell them there is a significant injury 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the SHIFT safety procedure in any emergency: S - Stop and get everyone safe. Use other adults to help you. H - Help, get assistance from other staff (radio, phone, or in person message) I/F - Deal with the incident or first aid. If you were trained on specific procedures for that activity then use them (e.g. Orienteering, Tunnel Trail) T - Tell someone, afterwards report the incident and review learning. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that you have access to a first aid kit, and a means of communication (e.g. radio, phone) at all times. 	
Injury caused by failure of an item of equipment/ the base/ or the surroundings	Participants	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly checks of activity equipment are completed by people qualified to instruct the activity to identify any defects or developing hazards . 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief the group on any specific hazards identified from your daily check. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow any specific instructions for equipment- these are detailed in the manufacturer's instructions, or when you were trained. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to use each day check the venue and equipment for hazards, and record a daily check. If the venue/equipment cannot be made safe do not run the session. Carry out visual checks of equipment and the area throughout the session. 	













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Injury from misuse of equipment	Participants	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief the group about what must and must not be done on the activity and with the equipment. Use demonstrations where appropriate and check understanding. 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose equipment suitable for the group and conditions if you have options. Plan ahead but also be ready to dynamically change the plan. Stay vigilant for developing hazards as the session progresses. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and manage group behaviour and use of equipment throughout- if appropriate use accompanying adults to help check instructions are followed. Be especially vigilant when participants are inexperienced, tired or cold. 	
Injury from handling or moving of activity equipment	Participants	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities are designed so that any items to be moved are only as part of the session content, e.g. moving logs for raft build. Unnecessary lifting is avoided. 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give clear rules given about what can be used or moved, and how to do this safely Use simple rules e.g. Work as a team, plan the move, Use your legs to lift, keep your head up, natural back position, walk don't run". 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that movement of items has a suitable number of people based on the capabilities of those carrying equipment- e.g. a raft might require 6 children. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that participants have understood the rules for lifting. 	
Injury from the collapse of elements built by participants (e.g. rafts)	Participants	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities take place in sheltered water where it is easy to rescue participants 	Medium
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warn participants that structures need testing before they can be used. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach the group correct building techniques, such as correct knots or lashings. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform a visual and tactile inspection before use. E.g. look at and shake a raft. 	









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Injury from unsupervised use of equipment	Anyone in vicinity	High		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal equipment, water craft and ropes for lashings to be locked/secured when unsupervised. 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible remove equipment or make inaccessible when you leave a venue 	
Injury caused from environmental/ weather conditions	Participants	Low		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The duty manager will check the weather forecast prior to the day's activities and pass on relevant information to each instructor. If extreme weather is forecast then the Duty Manager must use the centres Inclement Weather Plan to make alternative arrangements for safety. 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make participants aware of the effects of the weather - be particularly mindful of wind speed, direction and wind chill. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be ready to dynamically change or adapt the activity if the environmental condition compromise the safety, or learning of the group. Follow the 30:30 rule; if the gap between thunder and lightning (flash to bang) is under 30 seconds go to safety for 30 minutes. Restart with each new lightening. 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check everyone has suitable clothing during the activity and provide kit where possible, including suitable outer layers. Be vigilant for signs of foreseeable conditions related to the weather conditions (e.g. hypothermia, dehydration) and take appropriate action. 	



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Clients with additional abilities or needs	Individuals with additional needs	Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groups must share information prior to arrival using the inclusion pro-form a. This should be reviewed by the relevant supervisor/manager and any specific adaptations determined with an individual risk assessment. Instructors should be informed about additional needs or adaptations by supervisors. Additional support should be given if necessary to manage safety. 	Low
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check what adaptations need to be made with your supervisor/manager. Additional adults can be used for extra supervision or specialist competence. Consult accompanying adults for advice during the activity 	



Revision History		
Date	Author/Reviewer	Notes
19/04/2024	Richard Shackleton	Initial Version
03/07/2025	Nick Barry – Activity Instructor Water Activities	Rewrite in new format



