

## 4 Equipment Policy

Routine checks will help to identify defective equipment but may not pick up on recently damaged items. Conversely, checking items when they are drawn for use and checking them again when they are returned is frequently not thorough. Similarly, defective items noticed and/or isolated during the session can easily get mixed in again with club equipment.

To prevent defective items from inadvertently creeping back into the system all equipment will be immediately removed by Equipment officer

As part of good practice from a safety point of view and as part of regular inventory checks to see what's missing the Equipment Committee/Officer will Pre-plan checks at least every quarter and carry out routine maintenance

Routine checks and maintenance are carried out on key equipment by the Equipment Committee/Officer and records of these are maintained. Equipment is also checked when it is taken out and again when it is returned. Items for repair or disposal are isolated

Keeping records of all usage is useful can be useful however, it is doubtful whether the effort involved is worth the marginal return in safety terms. The club management committee has found that the time is better spent checking for damage more frequently and more thoroughly.

All Club equipment shall be suitably marked preferably permanent, so that can be identified against the Equipment Register/log which is prepared for audit purposes and insurance.

All Club PFDs will be recorded in the Equipment registers as to date purchased, supplier, type, colour, size, Serial number/Bath and the Newton weight.

All Club equipment shall be inspected for wear and tear, damage and condition at least once each year. The date of the last inspection shall be recorded on the master Equipment Register list.

If you see or use any Club kit which needs attention or repair please note it in the Equipment Repair Log/Book and advise a member of the Management Committee. If you think that any item is dangerous please ensure that the person running that session is aware and can remove the item so it cannot be used.

Either the Group leader/coach in charge of the session or the user shall record any defects the Equipment Repair Log/Book

Any defective equipment shall be marked, for example with brightly coloured tape, so that it is not used. Any dangerous equipment will be physically removed from use

The equipment officer shall ensure that equipment recorded as defective is not used until it is repaired or disposed off. Equipment that is not repairable shall be made unusable, for example by cutting in half, before disposal.

## 4.1 Buoyancy Aids. Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

### General

All participants must wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid that conforms to current CE/EN/ISO standards and is appropriate to the requirements of the activity, the personal proficiency of the participants and level of training being undertaken.

The fitting of which should be checked with instruction on application and use given by experience paddlers

A visual inspection must occur at each issue.

All participants in Canoe Polo PFDs wearing is Mandatory and should be of suitable type providing the necessary protection

All Club PFDs will be recorded in the Equipment register as to date purchased by, supplier, type, colour, size, Serial number/Batch No and the Newton weight.

### Buoyancy Aid testing and Legislation

The following section is based upon the British Canoe Union 'Notes for Guidance Concerning the Implementation of the EC Directives on Personal Protective Equipment.

The EU Directive on Personal Protective Equipment 89/656/EEC concerns itself with the responsibility of employers to provide, maintain etc Personal Protective Equipment for use by their employees while at work. This has implications for all Providers with respect to the working conditions of their employees. In effect equipment issued to protect the worker from any hazard such as cold or drowning, the equipment issued must comply with the EC Standard (CEN) provided one has been agreed. The main effect of this legislation is on equipment such as buoyancy aids. Buoyancy aids cannot be sold or manufactured for sale in the EU if they do not comply to CEN standards-where these have been agreed. The standard for buoyancy aids which affects most providers of adventure Watersports concerns: • 50 N Buoyancy Aids. *"Intended for use in sheltered waters when help is close at hand and the user is a swimmer, in circumstances where more bulky or buoyant devices would impair the users' activity or actually endanger him"*.

#### CE and ISO standards explained

The CE and ISO standards use Newtons as the form of measurement. The N symbol equates to the minimum number of Newton's for the average adult. A Newton is a measurement of force, and can be determined by applying a measured load. In effect a 50N buoyancy aid will support a lead weight of 5.5 kg. This minimum stated buoyancy should be available in the device for the duration of its reasonable life.

#### Why test

Frequency of use, abuse, and conditions of use and storage will all affect the buoyancy of the equipment over the course of its life. Surveys indicate that average life expectancy for a buoyancy aid that has not been abused, is between 3-5 years – the shorter term applying to frequent multi use. It is recommended that buoyancy aids be checked to ensure that sufficient buoyancy remains.

It is very important to note that due to the varying density of metals, different dry weights are required for different metals.

#### Annual Checks

All Personal Flotation Devices will be checked annually for signs of wear and tear/fitness for purpose particularly to stitching and zips. The results will be logged and be available for inspection.

A selection of Club Buoyancy Aids will be weight test each year and depending upon the results/age a large sample will be tested.

#### Weight Test

The method of testing requires the following:

- The tying of an appropriate metal weight to the buoyancy aid.
- The placing of buoyancy aid and weight in a sufficiently deep tank of water.
- The removal of air and other extraneous buoyancy from the buoyancy Aid.

If the buoyancy aid continues to float on the surface, it meets the required buoyancy. If it fails to float it needs replacing.

**Weights for Buoyancy Aid Testing – 50N Standard**

Minimum buoyancy	Lead weight	Iron or steel weight	Cast iron weight
70N	TBA	TBA	TBA
50N	5.5kg	5.7kg	5.8kg
45N	4.9kg	5.2kg	5.2kg
40N	4.4kg	4.6kg	4.6kg
35N	3.8kg	4.0kg	4.1kg
The Weights in testing are not calibrated specifically but have been manufactured by club members using general scales			

**4.2 Canoes and Kayaks.****General**

Use of craft must conform to manufacturer's guidelines for use and current BCU guidelines on buoyancy, footrests and end loops and toggles.

Canoe Polo boats should conform to current ICF Canoe Polo rules and the UK interpretation

Maximum buoyancy should be fitted where craft are used on open water or rivers.

A visual inspection must occur at each issue.

All club members are briefed on correct manual handling techniques regarding the lifting and carrying of canoes.

The fact that an examination has taken place does not absolve the Group leader/coach in charge of the activity from ensuring that the craft and equipment are in good condition and suitable to be used in the area of the activity concerned on each occasion of use.

**Annual inspection**

All Club craft will have an annual check which will be logged in the Equipment Register/Log and be available for inspection.

**Qualifications of a Equipment Officer (Inspector)**

Different Inspectors can be used for the various types of craft depending on their skills and experience. All Inspectors must be able to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the boats they are expected to inspect, and must inspect within these limits. Inspectors should ideally have at least three years experience in the boat concerned.

**So what is an Inspector looking for?**

Basically, the overall soundness of the hull, condition of associated equipment and correct fitments, to ensure that a person would not be placed in any danger when using them. A small hole or split, taped over may solve an immediate problem during a trip or session, but would not be acceptable as part of an inspection and may be removed in order to complete an examination. Rough edges or damaged wood creating splinters, frayed ropes, delimitation of ply, sharp glass fibres or gel coat blips, rusted fittings, insecure fixings and illegal foot rests are not acceptable.

**Examinations**

The clubs normal operating procedures of visual inspection of boats will mean that the following methods of testing are to help do a more detailed examination if so required

Any canoes using Air Bags, will need these to be inflated at least half an hour before these tests are taken.

**Examination of Canoes**

All tests (a to c) should be completed at the discretion of the Boat Inspector.

**K – Applies to Kayaks Only****OC – Applies to Open Canoes Only**

(a) Saturation Test – Boat to be completely swamped to ensure buoyancy is sufficient to keep it floating at the surface. Buoyancy must remain in place throughout with only minimal movement.

(b) Internal Inspection – Buoyancy must be secure and not hinder exit from the craft. Foam buoyancy must be inspected for signs of deterioration. Where buoyancy bags are fitted these must be inflated a minimum of thirty minutes to test their integrity. All internal surfaces must be free from sharp edges and splinters.

**K:** There must be nothing within the cockpit area which prevents an easy exit from the craft in the event of a capsize. Seats (where present) must be secure and free from cracks and splinters. Footrests (where present) must not be able to entrapped a foot. Where a foot can pass beyond a footrest, a “fail safe” release system should be in place.

**OC:** Seats and thwarts must be secure and free from cracks and splinters, and must be at a height which will allow a kneeling paddler to remove their feet without hindrance.

Any internal fittings not mentioned above must be in good condition and must not hinder a capsized paddler exiting their upturned craft.

(c) External Inspection – Hull to be inspected to ensure there are no cracks and splinters. Where doubts as to the integrity of the hull exist, the craft should be subjected to a Water Leak Test to ensure that no holes are present. This involves pouring a minimum of four litres of water into the boat, and then tilting the craft on its sides and ends to see if any water escapes. Any repairs which have been made to the craft should not adversely affect its structural integrity. End loops or grabs must be fitted at both the bow and the stern of the craft. It is recommended that they are not big enough for a paddler to get their entire hand through which could potentially cause entrapment.

**K:** The cockpit rim must be free from any splinters and sharp edges which could cause damage to spraydecks, buoyancy aids and clothing. Decklines are only recommended where boats are being used on the sea or open water or for the purpose of touring. Where these are fitted they must be secure and tight to the main deck so as to cause minimal risk of entanglement to a paddler who has exited their capsized craft.

**OC:** If a painter is fitted it should ideally consist of a minimum of 3 metres of 10mm diameter floating rope and should adhere to a “clean line” principle i.e. no knots along its length.

Water Leak Test – This is to establish whether the boat lets water in and can be simply done, by pouring at least four litres of water into the boat, laying it on each side and on each end, to see if any comes out.

### 4.3 Helmets and Footwear

#### General

Helmets are for protection from objects above the water e.g. trees, below the water in the event of a capsize e.g. rocks, for protection from slipping on the sides of the water, for personal protection e.g. during rescues, games.

Appropriate canoe/kayak Helmets conforming to current CE/ISO standards must be worn for all canoeing activities on moving river waters, for surfing activities and journeys in rough open water close to rocky shores.

They should be strong and lightweight, Cover the head to protect back of head, forehead and temple and have enough buoyancy to float. Be comfortable but not able to move around on the head, with a strap/buckle to hold it securely on head. Have a lining to protect from impacts and to provide a separation distance between head and shell in case of puncture of the helmet.

If participating at Canoe Polo Helmets are Mandatory

Helmets must be inspected regularly for wear/damage and results recorded in Equipment Register/Log. Manufacturers recommended lifespan will be adhered to.

Where helmets predate this legislation their use may be continued to the end of their natural life or the

At all times participants should wear suitable footwear to prevent injury to the feet.

#### **4.4 Other Equipment – Paddles/Spraydecks**

Spray decks can be made of nylon or neoprene and are used to keep water out of the kayak. Neoprene decks are harder to remove so should only be used by more experienced paddlers. All spray-decks should have a good strap for removing the deck

Paddles should be free of sharp edges, cracks and shafts not be bent which may lead to failure during use.

Paddles/Spraydecks and other equipment must be inspected regularly for wear/damage and results recorded in Equipment Register/Log.

A visual inspection must occur at each issue.

#### **4.5 Clothing**

At all times participants' must be clothed appropriate to the weather conditions, water temperature, ability and location of the canoeing activity taken. Where possible it is recommended that wet or dry suits be worn in addition or in place of waterproofs particularly if frequent immersion takes place between October and April be used at appropriate times. Appropriate head covering should be available to suit conditions

#### **4.6 Access to Store Room**

There was a rebuild of the canoe store racking (Spring 2006) to comply with manual handling guidelines (HASAW74 et al) this has resulted in reduced but acceptable access to the canoe store. Club members will be briefed and instructed in the most practical method of accessing and handling the canoes by a qualified Manual Handling Instructor to minimise potential risk of injury.

Casual public (come and try it) participants will not be permitted access to the canoe store.

All boats and associated equipment for a particular session will be taken out of clubhouse by a senior paddler. This is a requirement under our risk assessment for current Manual Handling Regulations

No Youth members should enter the Club Store unless supervised.

No Equipment should be removed off site without the necessary procedure being followed.

The only Authorised access to the Club Store is by Approved Committee Members and by Lido staff as required. The Lido has been instructed that only Committee Members have access to the Club Store room outside of Club nights. This is to ensure the safe keeping of club equipment

#### **4.7 Issue/Booking Out of Club Equipment from Store Room**

Club Courses take precedent when issuing of Equipment before other Participants

The Participants shall visually inspect all Club equipment before use. If the Participants does not have sufficient experience, either the coach running the session or equipment officer shall assist them.

Participants and Visitors will be brief in on how and when lifting any heavy items.

#### **4.8 Club Trips**

All Equipment required for club trips should be pre-booked out with Equipment Committee, hire form completed and deposit paid.

Equipment should be collected on a Club night at Lido or pre-arranged collection with Club Management Committee member

#### **4.9 Liability of Members using Club Equipment**

Members hiring or borrowing Club equipment shall exercise due care to avoid loss or damage. Members hiring or borrowing Club equipment shall be liable for making good any damage or loss beyond fair wear and tear. The Equipment Officer shall agree any liability for loss or damage with the Member. In the event that agreement is not possible the matter shall be referred to the Committee.

Members hiring or borrowing club equipment shall prove to the issuing officer that adequate security devices such as cable locks will be used whenever the equipment is unattended in line with the Club's current insurance policy

#### **4.10 Returning Equipment**

##### **Canoes/Kayaks**

At end of club night all boats should be empty of water by use of sponges provided and returned to entrance to club house.

##### **Paddles**

Placed in appropriate marked wheelie bin

##### **PFDs**

All Club PFDs should be zipped up and hung up on the Clothes rail in the appropriate space for its size Junior, Youth, Adult, XL

All equipment will then be placed back into Store Room by Senior paddlers,

#### **4.11 Disclaimer on Paddlers providing their own Equipment**

##### **4.11.1 Group leaders and Coaches**

The Club Management Committee has given careful thought as to allowing Group Leaders/Coaches /Participants supply their own equipment and in particular when leading activities. The danger is that the equipment may suffer unregulated abuse at times which is not under the clubs control or that is 'sub-standard' equipment with no history of use or maintenance

Therefore all group leaders/Coaches may only use items of personal equipment (boat, paddle, harness, buoyancy aid etc.) and critical safety equipment' which conforms to current best practice. These may be subject to 'spot-checks'

##### **4.11.2 Equipment provided by Participants**

There are three potential problem areas here:

- due to poor communications, participants may not be clear what they have to supply, and what will be provided.
- participants simply may not have adequate clothing and equipment for the activities, and when asked to provide it may bring sub-standard items.
- participants turn up proudly displaying some piece of apparently 'hi-tech' equipment that they want to use, but which may be inappropriate.

Therefore a clear, written statement, with precise details of the sort of equipment which participants will need is sent out well in advance in course and trip instructions.

If participants are inadequately equipped, the club has a limited supply of essential items which are available and other Senior paddlers may have spare equipment which can be used, The Group Leaders/Coaches are only allowed to authorise the use of personal equipment that is known to them to be effective.

Group Leaders/Coaches are responsible for refusing to take anyone who seems to be inadequately equipped or clothed.