

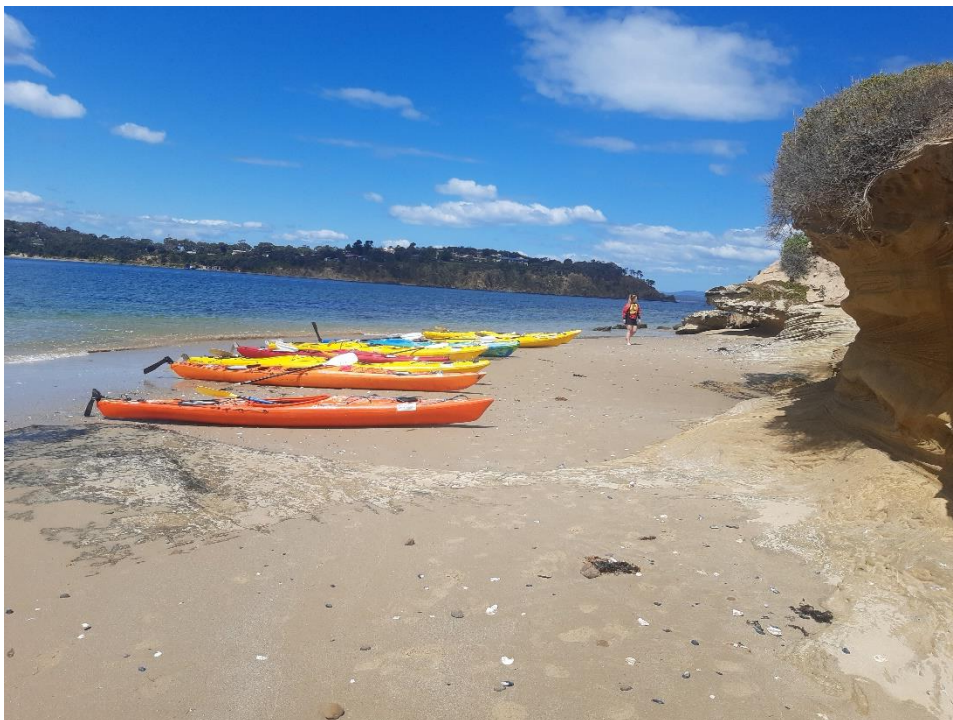


**KAYAKING**

**Standard Operating Procedure**

**and**

**Risk Management Plans**



Revised June 2021

Revised Aug 2023

## **OVERVIEW**

Kayaking is an activity that introduces participants to water safety, paddle craft safety and develops paddling skills and teamwork.

## **OUTCOMES**

For participants to learn basic paddling strokes, water safety, control of paddle craft and to be able to work effectively together to manoeuvre and direct their boat.

## **PRE-REQUISITES FOR INSTRUCTORS**

Minimum of flat water kayak instructor certification.

Level 2 first Aid

Helpful for instructor to hold lifesaving qualification but not necessary.

Helpful if they are able to tow a trailer

## **LOCATION**

Red Ochre, Tiger Head or Okines beaches in Dodges Ferry, The Carlton River or other locations as detailed in route plans for trips.

## **PRIOR TO COMMENCING**

All equipment should be well maintained and any repairs carried out prior to sessions.

Weather, wind and tides should be checked to ensure that the planned activity is able to go ahead in the chosen location or if conditions change or are not favourable alternative locations or cancellation should be considered.

Equipment should be transported to the site where the session is being conducted and laid out for ease of fitting.

Boats should be removed from the trailer and placed near the water.

Each boat will require 2 paddles, 1 hand bilge pump.

Instructors boat should carry, 1 spare paddle, first aid kit, throw line, hand bilge pump, radio, whistle.

Each participant will require 1 PFD, 1 spray jacket, 1 wetsuit and 1 spray deck (if desired),

If conducting a splash session you may require items such as floating markers, balls, goal markers etc.

Participants will need to be transported, either on foot or via vehicle to the designated activity site.

## **INITIAL INTRODUCTION AND PARTICIPANT BRIEFING**

Welcome participants and explain what the session will involve (ie. Trip from point A to B or splash session in a set location.)

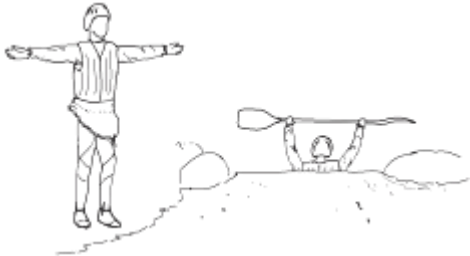
Each participant should be fitted with a spray jacket, PFD and spray deck if desired.. The PFD fit for each participant must be checked by the instructor or assistant prior to commencing the activity.

Before entering the water

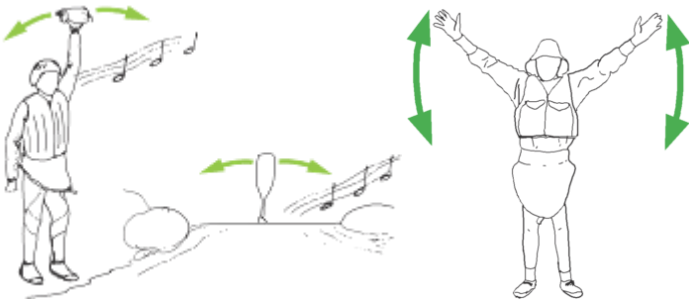
Outline hazards and basic water safety protocols.

Look for hazards under the water, if you are capsized float with your boat until help gets to you.

**Teach the basic kayaking signals**



**STOP- paddle lifted horizontally above head or arms out wide**



**HELP- waving paddle or raised fist side to side or both arms up and down**



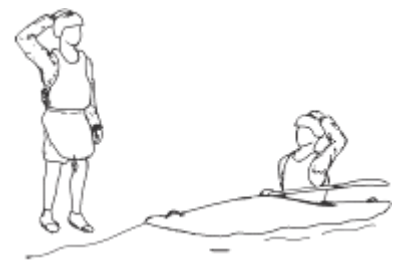
**GO RIGHT or GO LEFT - paddlers should move in the direction indicated by a diagonally raised paddle or arm**



**COME TO ME - gather around instructor**



**REVERSE- paddle backwards**



**OK - signal to ask and show if you are ok**

Whistle signals 1 blast – STOP AND LOOK to the instructor for directions

3 blasts – EMERGENCY. Stop and await instructions.

## Dry Land Practice

Give each participant a paddle and show them how to correctly hold it with the right hand on the control grip and the concave side of the paddle facing back toward them.

Have them practice the wrist rotation to achieve a basic forward stroke and reverse stroke, rotating the paddle as they switch from left to right and back again. Talk about the CATCH – POWER- RELEASE phases of the strokes



Once the participants have been briefed have them move to the boats and select a partner to paddle with.

Participants will need to sit in the boats and adjust the foot rests to the right distance before they launch.

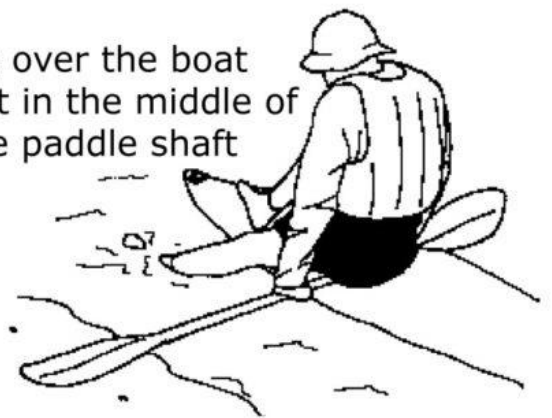
Demonstrate how to fit the spray deck and how to remove it in the case of capsizing.

## **SPECIFIC ACTIVITY SAFETY AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Demonstrate how to enter and launch the boats and have participants climb in and fit their spray decks (if in use).



Sit over the boat  
not in the middle of  
the paddle shaft



Drive face **up**

Once all the participants are on the water have them practice the forward and reverse strokes, coordinating with their partner to move the boats back and forward.

Teach them the low brace and have them practice it by splashing water forwards with the back of their paddle. Elbows up, hands down and slap the back of the paddle on the surface of the water in a forward motion.



Next teach them the sweep stroke and draw stroke so they can more effectively turn and manoeuvre their boats



When using rudders on trips the rear paddler is the one with the rudder controls. Pressing with the right foot turns brings the nose to the right and left foot will bring the nose to the left.

## **SPLASH SESSIONS**

These sessions happen in one location and may include a number of skill developing drills and games. Splash decks may be used or you may choose not to use them in these sessions.

Games that can be played are

Relay races

Keeping off style ball games

Drills including slalom courses, set manoeuvres in sequence, speed races etc.

In warmer weather capsizing practice, boat swapping and rescues may be included in these sessions.

## **TRIPS**

In a trip participants will typically be travelling from point A to B or be paddling a distance circuit.

Skills still need to be established at the beginning of these sessions but the focus is on getting the group moving along the route. In the case of a trip, a trip plan will need to be written up.

## **DEBRIEF**

### **Themes: Trust & Perseverance**

Discuss with the participants how they felt in the boats, whether it was hard or easy to trust their partners and whether they felt more confident by the end of the session.

Point out that unless you work together the boats can not be directed effectively so we are far stronger when we work as a team.

To get anywhere you need to be consistent, continuous and correct your course

Even though you get tired, when you work together and persist you can make it to your destination

<sup>3</sup> We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. <sup>4</sup> And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation – Romans 5:3-4

## **PACK UP**

At the conclusion of a session all equipment needs to be collected from the participants and checked for wear or damage.

If there is another session happening that day lay out equipment ready for the new participants.

Boats will need to be emptied or bailed if any water is inside.

If there are no more sessions all equipment will need to be packed back into the trailer and transported back to camp.

All equipment that was used will need to be washed thoroughly in fresh water and hung till dry before storing.

## **INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Research likely hazards

Confirm group experience/capabilities (where possible)

Ensure a full briefing of participants is clearly carried out and understood

Submit trip plans to Management prior to sessions/trips, so the campsite is aware of your location.

Check environmental conditions (i.e. river levels, weather reports, weather forecast)

Ensure that all group equipment is stored correctly

Confirm head count before departure and throughout trip

Be alert for physical and psychological condition of the group

Control the pace of the group

Rest group if necessary

Ensure, to the best of their ability, that participants do not get into situations beyond their capabilities

Designate responsibility to other leaders and assistants.

Confirm headcount after trip

Check all equipment on return.

Before commencing the trip, it is the Leader's responsibility to ensure that each party member has the knowledge, ability, skill and equipment to participate safely.

Provide First Aid if required.

Provide transport for the equipment to and from the launch/ pull out site.

## ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF RISK

Once risks are identified, they are evaluated on a 2 dimensional matrix using a qualitative rating of the likelihood of the event occurring and the scale of the possible consequences. When risks have been identified, they are analysed by combining the consequences and likelihood to produce a level of risk. This form of evaluation provides a good graphical representation of how serious the risk is or where it lies within a group of risks. The risk analysis provides information critical to determining what risks need to be treated and what risks are accepted.

The following matrices have been utilised for the assessment process;

**Table 1. Primary Risk Category. (the primary risk is the most immediate or likely risk).** Risks may technically fall under several categories eg. A student who has their leg trapped under a falling mast on a sailboard may suffer a physical injury (primary Risk), such as a broken leg, however there may be legal action at some point in the future (secondary risk).

Primary Risk Category	Brief Risk Description
Physical	Injury risk to person - including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Participants</li> <li>➤ Instructors</li> <li>➤ Community members</li> </ul>
Property and Equipment	Damage risk to campsite property/equipment.
Environmental	Includes risk factors that may impact upon the activity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Climatic eg. Thunder and lightening, strong winds.</li> <li>➤ Marine eg. Tidal or current flow.</li> <li>➤ terrain</li> </ul>
Medical and Disease	Includes risk factors associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Pre-existing medical condition eg. Epilepsy, asthma.</li> <li>➤ Loss of required medication eg. Asthma inhaler.</li> <li>➤ Disease transmission. From person or environment eg. Influenza.</li> </ul>
Psychological	Risk associated with trauma or fear/stress.
Legal, Moral and Ethical	Risk associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Legal action and/or litigation.</li> <li>➤ Breach of legal obligations.</li> <li>➤ Damage to DECS reputation.</li> <li>➤ Criminal activity.</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Likelihood Matrix**

Level	Descriptor	More Detail
A	Almost certain	Will occur. Expect frequent/regular occurrences.
B	Likely	The event will probably occur more than once
C	Possible	The event might occur at some time
D	Unlikely	The event is not expected to occur
E	Rare	The event may occur only in highly exceptional circumstances

**Table 3: Consequence Matrix** – relate to the *most probable* outcome.

Eg. A fall from a windsurfer is most likely to result in **no or minimal injury and therefore be rated as 1-2 ie. insignificant/minor.**

Level	Descriptor	More Detail	Injuries	Potential Operational Impact
1	Insignificant	Low Impact, no injuries/damage, low profile.	None	Student still able to participate.  Little impact <30min
2	Minor	Minor Injuries/damage sustained.  Low impact, possible public embarrassment.	First Aid Treatment	Student able to participate after treatment. Low impact <30min
3	Moderate	Significant injuries/damage sustained. Public embarrassment possible.	Medical Assistance Required	Student unable to continue with activity. Instructor impact whilst treatment given.
4	Major	Extensive injuries/damage sustained. Loss of instructional capabilities, public embarrassment, 3 <sup>rd</sup> party action, high news impact	Extensive Injuries. Medical Treatment	Loss of instructor/s whilst treatment/medical aid given. Extended rehabilitation of injury/damage repair.
5	Catastrophic	Public embarrassment, 3 <sup>rd</sup> party action, high news and media impact.	Deaths	Loss of instructor/s, closure of centre whilst investigation conducted.



Table 4: Level of Risk – consideration of both likelihood and consequence.

		Consequence				
		1	2	3	4	5
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Likelihood	A Almost Certain	High	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
	B Likely	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	C Possible	Low	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
	D Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
	E Rare	Low	Low	Low	High	High

**Important Note:** Following the identification and implementation of risk management control measures it is assumed that all Risk Descriptions will be reconsidered as having a “low risk” factor. If the re-assessed level of risk remains at “Extreme” or “High” following implementation of control measures serious consideration should be given to not proceeding with this activity. Risk vs Reward for this specific activity should be carefully considered!!

Table 5. Risk Priority – an indication of how quickly/frequently an identified risk needs to be addressed and/or monitored.

Rating	Description
Low	Low priority.
Medium	Medium priority.
High	High Priority. Requires immediate action to redress risk. Additionally, risk should be closely monitored to ensure management strategies to reduce risk are effective.

**Important note:** The assessment and identification of Risk Priority should not be solely based upon the likelihood or frequency of an event occurring, but more a consideration of a number of factors, including: *frequency, likelihood, consequences (particularly the possibility of serious personal injury or death) and risk of litigation or legal exposure!* A student competing in a bicycle tour event on a controlled public road is very unlikely to be involved in a collision with a motor vehicle, however the consequences may well be most serious, with the possibility of a serious injury and possible legal exposure. Therefore a Risk Priority rating of **High** should be applied, with appropriate risk management.

## Table 4 : Risk Register/Risk Management

Function/Activity:

**KAYAKING**

Compiled by:.....

**Activity Description:** Kayaking can be conducted in a selected fixed location or can be undertaken as a trip between two preselected points. Water and boating safety and skills should be taught and participants encouraged to improve their abilities.

**General Safety consideration.** Weather and environmental factors should be monitored and checked prior to commencement. Safety equipment such as PFDs hats and sunscreen should be worn. Appropriate footwear must be worn for kayaking activities.

Primary Risk Category (Refer Table 1.)	Risk description. What and how can it happen	Likelihood (Refer Table 2)	Consequence (Refer Table 3)	Level of Risk (Refer Table 4)	Management. Including existing Control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk. <b>Note:</b> Once the risk management measures listed below are followed all risks described in column 2 will be reconsidered as "Low Level of Risk".	Priority
<b>1. Physical</b>	Muscle strain or injury when loading and unloading kayaks.	<b>C</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 man lift for all boats when lifting onto and off the trailer or vehicle.</li> <li>• All equipment should be securely fastened to the trailer to prevent items falling or slipping.</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>
<b>2. Physical</b>	Slippery/uneven surfaces	<b>C</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor to visually check that all clients have footwear when not in the boats and that any laces are tied up.</li> <li>• Clients are briefed on safety issues relevant to moving around the bank/shore pertinent to the area.</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>
<b>3. Environmental</b>	Obstacles in the water	<b>C</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients under constant direct supervision by staff</li> <li>• All Games will be played where water is deeper than 1m or a paddle length.</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>
<b>4. Property and equipment</b>	Equipment failure/ incorrectly worn PFD	<b>C</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of new and checked equipment as per manufacturers requirements. Start-up checks</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>

					and in-service checks. Instructors to check if PFD is worn correctly at all times	
5. Physical	Exposure related injuries: Sunburn, Hypo- /Hyperthermia , Dehydration	C	3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear and recommend clothing appropriate to the local environment. Be sun smart, provide sun lotion. Provide water or advice to bring sufficient water.</li> </ul>	High
6. Physical	Drowning	E	5	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure PFDs are correctly worn at all times. Conduct activity according to participants' skill level. Instructors capable of performing deep water rescue and First Aid, including resuscitation</li> </ul>	High
7. Property and equipment	Collision with other kayaks	B	2	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants instructed on how to steer the kayak and how to paddle correctly. Advised to let others know if they might collide with their kayak and to try to avoid such instances</li> </ul>	High
8. Property and equipment	Collision with motorized craft	E	5	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep the group together and advise how to behave in case a motorized craft passes by. Participants briefed on capsize procedure</li> </ul>	High
9. Environmental	Adverse weather conditions	C	3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check weather conditions before commencing the activity. Depending on the conditions the activity might have to be ceased and the participants taken to a shelter</li> </ul>	High
10. Environmental	Wild animals, jellyfish	C	3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check area before commencing activity and make participants aware of possible encounters. Check local information about recent jellyfish encounters. Make sure participants wear appropriate clothing</li> </ul>	High
11. Physical	Wandering participants	D	4	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish clear safety zones. Instructors to be aware of participant locations at all times.</li> <li>Keep the group together once in the water.</li> <li>Have one instructor leading the group and another one following</li> </ul>	High