



Health & Safety Memo

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Subject: On The Water Safety

**To Whom: All Coaching Staff.
cc. All Members.**

It has been brought to my attention that some parents/guardians are concerned about the safety of their children on the water during the winter. The concern is understandable but I am confident we have the correct procedures in place to ensure safety.

However I would like to take this opportunity to remind all staff of the thought, which should be given to safety at all times, remember it is always 'safety first'! Below I have summarised some of the things, which should be considered and some hopefully helpful reminders:

- **What is the weather like?** – Everybody likes to paddle and ultimately that is what everybody comes to the club for, but the weather could be sufficiently bad as to make paddling on the water or even walking to the water unsafe. If a group has been on the water prior to you ask them about the conditions.

Do not be afraid to concede if the weather is too bad to go on the water, you can always run a gym session, or maybe go for a run!

- **Where should we paddle?** – We are lucky in that we have two broads and a river, which gives us lots of scope for paddling, however if somebody falls in, in the middle of the large broad it can take some time to get them out. Generally the river offers the best opportunity to get to the bank quicker.

Think about where offers the safest environment for paddling!

- **What is the session?** – The training program can usually be followed and there are courses and areas, which are generally used for specific sessions. However the weather may dictate that the course, which is usually used, is not as safe as another course may be. Also it may be wiser to stay closer to the club on certain days.

Do not be afraid to adapt or change a training session subject to the weather conditions!

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- **Who is in my group?** – Do not overlook the ability of the paddlers you are responsible for, think if they are able to paddle in the weather conditions or paddle the length of the specified course. Think about crew boats, as they can sometimes be a good way of accommodating mixed ability paddlers.

Do not be afraid to adapt a training session subject to the ability of paddlers!

- **General Safety** - Ensure all paddlers know what the session involves, where the start is and what the course is before they get on the water. Don't forget buoyancy aids and whistles and ensure everybody is appropriately dressed.

Take a throw line with you and or ask a parent/guardian to take one with them if they are going to watch from the bank. A rucksack will be kept next to the first aid box and this will contain rope, a small weight to aid throwing, a throw line, change of clothing and a first aid kit. The rucksack could be taken by a parent/guardian if they are going to watch from the bank and used in any emergency.

Some parents/guardians or other members may even feel you are being over cautious. However do not be afraid to act in the best interests of safety and if you want a second opinion ask myself, the Chairman or Head Coach.

The intension of this memo is not to tell you anything you know already but to remind you to think safety first.

Dean Grady
Health and Safety Officer
Norwich Canoe Club

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