

PADDLENSW INC.

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment Guidelines

Introduction

Every activity we undertake has inherent risk, and part of our early learning experience is to define the limit of risk we as individuals are prepared to take. The more experienced we become, the better we are at anticipating and recognising potential risk situations, and having the means to deal with them.

This risk assessment guideline is designed to assist the Event Organiser/Chief Official to anticipate the risks faced by all persons involved in their event or activity, and to address those risks with appropriate responses.

Risk is not just limited to participants actually in an event; every person, whether participant, organiser or volunteer, has a risk associated with their involvement. Risks to personal safety commence from the time they begin their preparations for the event, such as hitching the safety boat trailer to their car, to the time they have safely concluded their activities and parked the trailer back in their garage.

There are risks involved in the preparations and movement of persons prior to the start, risks associated with actually participating in the event, and those that follow the conclusion of the event.

The level of risk has been ranked in order 1 – 5, with 1 being ‘inconvenience’, through to 5 being ‘seriously life-threatening’. A risk will have a rating of 5 if there is any likelihood that a person’s life may be in danger in any way. These high-level risks should certainly be addressed in detail.

Read the sample risk assessment, and use it as a starting point for your own unique risk assessment for your event. You will have risks no other event has, because your event or activity takes place at a different time and place to others.

Please do not just present this document untouched as your risk assessment…it will not be accepted by PaddleNSW as it is. Add, modify, and think about your event safety, especially the possible hazards. This document is presented in a form that will permit you to easily make the necessary changes.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Event Title |  | | |
| Date |  | Location |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. ITEM NO. / DETAIL | 1. HAZARD | 1. CONSEQUENCE | 1. RATING   1 = low to  5 = high | 1. CONTROL MEASURE |
| PRE-EVENT |  | | | |
| Participant |  | | | |
| Medical conditions | Competitor is not fit to participate in the event | Competitor may suffer serious medical trauma | 5 | Competitor must indicate current medical status and indicate fitness to participate in the event when they register |
| Paddling skill level | Paddler will not be able to complete all or part of the event | Competitor may place others at risk if they become unable to cope with conditions | 4 | Competitor must be made aware of conditions they may meet on the course, so they may make a judgement to their ability to participate |
| Fitness Level | Paddler may not have the fitness level to complete the distance | Paddler may need assistance from safety craft during the event | 3 | A safety craft used to assist a tired paddler may be distracted from attending an emergency situation |
| Participant Details | Incomplete or inaccurate information may be submitted by participant | Emergency contact details, fitness to participate, etc may not be known | 3 | On-line registration with compulsory fields can prevent incomplete registration. Accurate information. |
| Knowledge of Procedures | Participant may not be aware of correct procedures for event | Paddler may become lost, injured, a danger to others | 4 | Compulsory attendance at race briefing and comprehensive published event guidelines |
| Course | | | | |
| Course Set-up | Course is not set up to take all dangers into account | Participant may be exposed to unnecessary or unforeseen dangers | 4 | An appraisal of all foreseeable problems associated with course layout should be undertaken prior to finalising the course design |
| Safety Craft | Safety craft are inadequate in numbers or suitability for the task | Craft unable to be used for the intended purpose, and not able to effect a rescue | 3 | Safety craft should be fully assessed for suitability and condition prior to event. IRB craft are generally more suitable for rescue purposes |
| Parking | Vehicles carrying paddlecraft present an increased danger to other vehicles | Length of paddlecraft may create difficulties for other vehicles as they pass close by | 1 | Ensure the parking area has sufficient room to manoeuvre with longer loads |
| Competitor access to venue | Danger to participants while moving from vehicle to event location | Participants moving paddlecraft across roadways present a substantial obstacle, and often cannot see all dangers | 5 | Adequate venue management will include measures to ensure participant safety especially in traversing public roadways. |
| Injury to spectator | Spectator is injured by boat or paddler in any of a number of circumstances | Spectators may face injury from boats on the water, or as they are passing by while being carried (portage) | 3 | Ensure event perimeter is adequately signposted, and that portage or participant areas on land are adequately isolated from spectators. |
| Registration set-up | Structures are unsuitable for the intended use | Structures may not be suitable if weather conditions change, leading to collapse | 2 | Suitable structures to be specified, adequately weighted / pegged if likelihood of high wind / precipitation. |
| event | | | | |
| Participant | | | | |
| Sun Protection | Over exposure to sun | Sunburn | 4 | Sunscreen to be provided at clearly marked locations. Reminders made at regular intervals during the course of event, and at event briefing. |
| Exposure to heat | Heatstroke / medical risk | Possible life–threatening situation if not recognised and treated accordingly | 5 | Access to emergency services to be provided. Shade / method of cooling (ice packs) to be available. Schedule event timing accordingly. |
| Exposure to cold | Hypothermia | Participant / spectator or official may suffer problems associated with hypothermia | 5 | Specify space blankets where necessary. Have shelter available for those in constant exposure to cold. |
| Exhaustion | Exhaustion | Exhausted participant can become disoriented and lose balance / make dangerous decisions | 4 | Participants should have the opportunity to withdraw / rest during the event if the duration or difficulty requires. |
| Dehydration | Dehydration | Participant | 3 | Events over one hour duration usually require intake of fluids. Facility for this possibility should be incorporated in participant briefing. |
| Boats | Craft | Craft is not in a safe / seaworthy condition to complete the event, and may not provide the secondary buoyancy required in an emergency | 3 | Scrutineers will be used to verify craft are suitable and safe for the event. Check on buoyancy, sharp edges and hull integrity. |
| Communications with competitors (emergency egress) | An emergency on the water requires immediate egress | Unforeseen situations such as motorboat accident, lightning, etc may require all participants to exit the water rapidly. | 5 | A method of communicating this situation must be stated at the competitor briefing, e.g., a red flag from a passing safety boat and a loudhailer. |
| Participant access to course | Where can participants exit the course in an emergency? | Participants must be able to leave the water if instructed | 4 | All egress points should be checked for suitability and access to emergency services, and noted on event planner. |
| Course | | | | |
| Obstructions to course | The course is impassable | If the course is blocked and there are flows present, a dangerous situation may result in entrapment. | 4 | Course will be checked one hour prior to event taking place if there is any possibility of obstruction to course. Any known hazards will be identified and clearly marked |
| Other craft on course | Powerboats, skiers, fishing boats, sailing craft | A participant in an event may not be aware of other craft on the course, and be involved in a collision. | 5 | All users of the waterway will be notified of the event by signage at all access points to the waterway. Event safety craft will inform passing boat drivers. |
| Emergency access to course | Access to the course by medical staff | There must be adequate and timely access to the waterway for event safety and emergency personnel. These access points must be checked and clear for access | 4 | All access points and lines of communication are checked and known to all safety personnel. |
| Change in water conditions (tides, flow) | King tide or high water flow | Heavy rainfall may create unsafe conditions for the event | 3 | maximum or minimum water height for the event should be pre-determined |
| Water quality (pollution and stormwater) | Water quality, effluent | Stormwater and effluent may create unsafe conditions where participants may suffer immersion after capsize | 3 | Water quality will be checked with authorities in the event of heavy rainfall or other possible contamination present |
| Communications on the course (safety officials) | Communications with safety craft are paramount | A trauma may not be attended to in a timely manner if communication pathways are unclear / complex / non-existent | 5 | The event will use a fully functional radio system with a completely separate backup mobile phone system. All channels / phone numbers will be known to all safety personnel |
| pOST EVENT | | | | |
| Participant | | | | |
| Participant completion of event | Participant is not accounted for at completion of event | A participant may have suffered a trauma and not be in a position to notify anyone | 5 | All participants will be checked off at the conclusion of the event, and during the event at the conclusion of the first lap. |
| Participant egress from event course | Participant safety when leaving the water | Participants are often dizzy and find it difficult to stand after a long period of exertion | 2 | Assistance at the finish will be available to help participants from their craft |
| Participant movement of craft to vehicles | Participants crossing roadways with long paddlecraft | Weary participants are likely to be less attentive when crossing roadways to their vehicles | 4 | There will be sufficient off-road parking available so participants will not be required to cross the roadway. A craft pick-up point will be established near the finish exit point. |
| Course | | | | |
| Safety & officials accounted for | Ensure all safety craft are accounted for | Powered vessels can suffer engine problems | 2 | Ensure all craft are accounted for and maintain radio contact until the event has concluded |
| Venue appropriately cleaned | Venue must be left as found or better | Rubbish left by event organisers can pose a hazard to following users | 1 | The event organiser will ensure the venue is adequately cleaned after the event |
| Results and media published | Post results rapidly | Inaccurate or absent results will create disappointment amongst participants | 1 | Accurate and timely results will ensure that participants are rewarded for their efforts |