

# WHS RISK ASSESSMENT KAYAKING

Workplace Health and Safety  
SA GOVERNMENT

## WHS General Risk Assessment template

Site name and ID No	Port Noarlunga Aquatic Centre			
Title, description and location of activity	<p><b>Activity Description</b></p> <p>Canoeing/Kayaking instruction is conducted at Port Noarlunga on the Onkaparinga river or in the Spencer gulf in the semi protected waters of Port Noarlunga.</p> <p>Students receive instruction commensurate with program length and student age/maturity with an emphasis on water safety. Instruction includes the following topics.</p> <p>Personal equipment: PFD/ footwear/hat selection. Weather/wind and water conditions and direction and how this effects the safety of the activity.</p> <p>Equipment: paddle and craft, parts, and their role. Rescue and capsize techniques/procedure and safety. Launching, starting and landing. Basic strokes: forward/reverse, sweep and emergency stop.</p> <p><b>General Safety consideration</b></p> <p>A powered rescue craft will be accessible when kayaking on the sea. Known hazards will be identified to all participants.</p> <p>Students will be required to wear footwear, buoyancy-PFD, hat, sunscreen and preferably a shirt.</p> <p>A knowledge and understanding by instructional staff of local water conditions (such as tidal variations, current flow), and climatic conditions (such as strong offshore winds).</p> <p>A knowledge and awareness by instructional staff of additional local hazards such as general community watercraft activity, the presence of marine hazards and under water and fixed structures.</p> <p>All instructional staff and students will be aware of the centre's emergency procedure and protocols.</p> <p>All student participants will have completed a detailed medical form to be considered and checked by instructional staff prior to the commencement of any activity. All student participants with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma) will always carry or have available their medication.</p> <p>Instructing staff and participating students must be clearly and easily identifiable.</p>			
Risk Assessment done by:	Name	Position	Date of Assessment	Review Due (3 years)
	Andrew Hancock	Instructor in Charge	February 2021	February 2024
	Elizabeth Ellinger	Senior Instructor		

<b>Hazard identification</b> (What is the issue of concern?)	<b>Risk Controls</b> (What are you doing to eliminate or reduce the risk?)	<b>Risk</b> (With all controls in place)
1. Student suffers from a medical condition, (pre-existing e.g. Asthma attack or developed e.g. Nausea, sea sickness) whilst conducting an activity on the water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No student is permitted to be involved in an activity unless a medical form has been completed and sighted by centre staff.</li> <li>• All instructional staff aware of the location of completed medical forms for their group/school.</li> <li>• Medication for pre-existing conditions is carried with/by the student in a water-proof container.</li> <li>• Instructional staff carry (or have ready access to) a suitably equipped first aid kit, including spare asthma inhaler.</li> <li>• Students with known medical conditions are more closely monitored by both Aquatics Centre staff and supervising school staff. Students diagnosed with Epilepsy must have 1:1 supervision.</li> <li>• Appropriate first aid is sought as a matter of priority once a medical emergency has been identified. Rescue craft used if a rapid transfer is required.</li> <li>• Where an activity is conducted some distance from the main centre, 2-way radio/mobile telephone contact will be maintained with the aquatics centre/I/C or nominee).</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
2. Accident/injury on walk to and from river (when needing to access by road).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group kept together and under control.</li> <li>• Instructor goes to middle of road and instructs students on when to cross.</li> <li>• Everyone walking on the footpath.</li> <li>• Remind students to be alert in the car park.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
3. Snake bite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any snake sighting is reported and noted on the white board.</li> <li>• Instructors keep sharp look out.</li> <li>• Kayaks launched into clear water.</li> <li>• First aid kit and phone available.</li> <li>• If bite suspected ambulance will be called and instructors will apply first aid principles.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
4. Damage to equipment through incorrect use. Poor/inappropriate student behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct use of all equipment is demonstrated and reinforced through supervision. Correct fit of all personal equipment (e.g. wetsuits) to avoid “over stretching” or damage.</li> <li>• Student behaviour expectations and consequences are clearly established prior to the commencement of the activity and reinforced throughout instruction. Poor or unsafe student behaviour – student returned to shore for a period as determined by the instructor. Referral to school supervising teacher if required for further discipline.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
5. Injury whilst carrying Canoe/kayak to/from the water or damage to canoe/kayak through being dropped.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruct students to carry craft to/from the water in pairs.</li> <li>• Instruct students on safe lifting – straight back, bent knees.</li> <li>• Use trailers to transport craft to/from the water if significant distance is required.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>

<b>Hazard identification</b> (What is the issue of concern?)	<b>Risk Controls</b> (What are you doing to eliminate or reduce the risk?)	<b>Risk</b> (With all controls in place)
6. Injury as a result of impact from another person's paddle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate instructions on how to carry paddle (upright).</li> <li>• Create and encourage sufficient space between paddlers to reduce the likelihood of impact from another paddler.</li> <li>• Instructions on how to break free from a raft (ends first using hands).</li> <li>• Remind students before playing games of the dangers of close proximity to other paddles.</li> <li>• Correct instruction on how to return paddle to rack.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
7. Torso injury because of collision/impact with bow/stern of other craft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collisions avoided at all costs.</li> <li>• Emergency stop procedure emphasised and practiced in early instruction.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
8. Hypothermia/Hyperthermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional staff to be aware of weather forecast for the day and plan accordingly.</li> <li>• Students to dress appropriate to the conditions and season. Cold Conditions: Wetsuits preferable, regular breaks to warm up. Hot conditions: students to wear long sleeved shirts, hats and sunscreen applied at regular intervals. Regular hydration breaks.</li> <li>• In cold conditions capsize practice/drills and assessment be conducted just prior to a break e.g. lunch, end of the day to enable students to warm-up immediately following.</li> <li>• Condition of all students be closely monitored, and early/first signs of hypo/hyperthermia be recognised and promptly treated</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
9. Student suffers from dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are encouraged to drink water before starting session especially on hot days.</li> <li>• Drinking water carried to lesson area if possible.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
10. Paddler suffers sunburn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students briefed at the commencement of the session re. being sun smart.</li> <li>• Sunscreen be made available the school, with regular breaks provided to reapply.</li> <li>• Students to wear hats (preferably broad brimmed) and either a wetsuit or shirt (preferably long sleeved) and shorts.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
11. Paddler suffers exhaustion/fatigue/soft tissue injury e.g. muscle strain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All instructional staff to continuously monitor students and be alert for students showing signs of fatigue or minor injury.</li> <li>• Affected student to be promptly treated and/or returned to shore for further treatment.</li> <li>• Accompanying on water staff carry a towline to assist/tow an injured paddler back to shore.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>

<b>Hazard identification</b> (What is the issue of concern?)	<b>Risk Controls</b> (What are you doing to eliminate or reduce the risk?)	<b>Risk</b> (With all controls in place)
12 Injury sustained by student from objects above the water such as cuts, abrasions, crushes with fixed objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazardous fixtures identified (rocks, partially submerged pieces of wood, jetty pylons) and students instructed to remain clear.</li> <li>• Students instructed to keep hands clear of craft gunwales when “rafting up”.</li> <li>• Minor cuts and abrasions from contact with objects be treated promptly to reduce the likelihood of infection.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
13. Injury to student from underwater object such buried fishing hook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students to wear footwear at all times.</li> <li>• Areas which are used by fisherman clearly identified and avoided where possible.</li> <li>• Any injuries are treated promptly to reduce the likelihood of infection</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
14. Paddler capsizes. Including entrapment in/under craft, and shallow water capsize.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Craft used are in safe/good condition and suitable for the activity with positive buoyancy in the event of a capsize. Kayak cockpits must be of a size suited to the individual paddler and be clear of attachments to enable an easy exit and prevent entrapment. Bow and stern toggles fitted to assist in a capsize/rescue.</li> <li>• Explain and practice under controlled conditions the correct technique to exit the craft when capsizing, including tab release if a “spray deck” is used.</li> <li>• Ensure close supervision and recognition of a student in difficulty with quick movement of instructors to assist student in difficulty</li> <li>• Other paddlers have a clearly defined role in the event of a capsize emergency e.g. If not assisting, then “raft up” or move to shore</li> <li>• Shallow water capsizes identified as potentially dangerous due to the risk of head/neck injury, caution when in shallow water.</li> <li>• Beginner paddlers should not be fitted with “spray decks/skirts”. Students must only use spray decks after direct tuition, practice, and close supervision of their capacity to exit the craft. Spray decks are fitted with release tapes or toggles.</li> <li>• Where a capsize is required for the student’s course requirement, they do so downstream of the Southport bridge and if possible, on an incoming tide.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
15 Paddler runs off.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors conduct regular checks and head counts.</li> <li>• Students aware of procedure in the event of an emergency.</li> <li>• Where possible groups paddle in the same area so other instructors are nearby to assist.</li> <li>• Students likely to disappear have been identified by the school and extra support put in place.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>

<b>Hazard identification</b> (What is the issue of concern?)	<b>Risk Controls</b> (What are you doing to eliminate or reduce the risk?)	<b>Risk (With all controls in place)</b>
16 Storm/wind squall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional staff to be aware of daily forecast and the likelihood or probability of such an event and modify/cancel on-water activities if necessary.</li> <li>• If necessary, some students on the water with remainder of the class on the bank.</li> <li>• Paddlers kept close to shore.</li> <li>• All instructors to carry tow rope.</li> <li>• At the first sign of rapidly deteriorating weather instructors seek immediate access to appropriate shelter for their group. (This may not necessarily be back at PNA base).</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
17. Thunderstorm/Lightening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors to monitor weather forecasts for thunderstorm/lightning and remain vigilant for rapidly deteriorating weather/approaching storms.</li> <li>• If thunder becomes easily audible, paddlers to be removed from the water and everyone to proceed to dry ground.</li> <li>• If anyone's hair stands on end or buzzing heard from nearby rocks and fences, everyone to move to a new position immediately.</li> <li>• If in the open away from shelter, everyone to crouch down, preferably in a hollow with feet together, and remove any metal objects from the head and body. Individuals should not lie down but avoid being the highest object in the vicinity.</li> <li>• Telephone use should be avoided where possible because the telephone system can become highly charged. If an emergency call is necessary, it must be brief</li> <li>• Storms generally pass within ten minutes. If thunder is no longer easily audible, instructors will check the sky in the direction that the storm approached from noting that there could be a second front), If sky clear students return to kayaking</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
18. Specific to a competitive activity e.g. "tag or chasey games".  Note: These activities present additional risks or increases/magnifies existing risk due to a potential for altered student focus and additional/higher speeds.  Greater risk of: Fatigue/exhaustion/stress, collision with other paddler, impact from other competitors paddle, capsize, equipment damage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pre-game briefing is conducted with all students to reaffirm potential risks and hazards, (in particular capsize) and game rules.</li> <li>• All games conducted where possible in water greater than marginal (waist) depth. If this is not possible students reminded as to the location of shallow water.</li> <li>• Games are reserved for students who have mastered the basics of directional control and emergency stopping and not conducted until their skill level has been sufficiently developed.</li> <li>• "Spray decks" only be used by students who have practiced and are confident in capsize and exiting under controlled conditions.</li> <li>• Instructors must closely supervise and referee the game and be prepared to modify/change the rules to minimise risk.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>

<b>Hazard identification</b> (What is the issue of concern?)	<b>Risk Controls</b> (What are you doing to eliminate or reduce the risk?)	<b>Risk</b> (With all controls in place)
<p>19. Specific to an extended or distance paddle. (Particularly if conducted a significant distance from the PNA base).</p> <p>This activity presents additional risks or increases/magnifies existing risk.</p> <p>Greater risk of: Fatigue/exhaustion/stress, dehydration, sunburn/hyperthermia, effect from weather extremes, medical emergency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At PNA extended paddle only undertaken as a SACE requirement.</li> <li>• In addition to the recognition and response planning for identified risk a clearly considered method of reliable communication is established e.g. 2-way radio and/or mobile phone (waterproofed).</li> <li>• Instructional staff carry (or have ready access to) a suitably equipped first aid kit, (including spare asthma inhaler) and towline.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
<p>20. Injury from rescue craft when paddling on ocean</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure craft remains a safe distance from students in the water, unless executing rescue.</li> <li>• Motor should have protective guard around propeller.</li> <li>• Ensure students are aware of hazards around the rescue craft. Rescue craft to approach students requiring assistance at slow speed.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
<p>21. Loss of group control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class ratio kept within guidelines.</li> <li>• Students provided with immediate feedback, support and encouragement.</li> <li>• Instructor attempt to ensure all group members are experiencing some success and enjoyment.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
<p>22. Water contamination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice is sought from appropriate authorities re. safety. E.g. SA Water, Onkaparinga council.</li> <li>• If level of contamination is high/dangerous, then kayaking is cancelled.</li> <li>• If low levels of contamination, students warned to avoid unnecessary falling, or swallowing of any water (if capsizes occurs).</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
<p>23. Rapid deterioration in weather conditions,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor-In-Charge to monitor weather during the day and inform instructors if sessions need to be cancelled or seriously modified.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
<p>24. Danger from unknown member of the public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If using public/community change rooms or toilets primary age students using the toilet must be accompanied by a teacher/instructor or with a "buddy" for secondary aged students.</li> <li>• Staff to remain vigilant for people loitering, particularly around public/community change rooms/toilets, and if appropriate contact police or Centre I/C for assistance.</li> <li>• Photographs of students only taken if permission from parents obtained.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>

<b>Hazard identification</b> (What is the issue of concern?)	<b>Risk Controls</b> (What are you doing to eliminate or reduce the risk?)	<b>Risk</b> (With all controls in place)
25. Theft of student/staff personal items whilst kayaking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students encouraged to leave valuable items at home or back at the aquatics centre.</li> <li>Items such as towels, shoes, sunglasses should be left in a central location on the beach where onshore instructors can monitor them.</li> </ul>	Medium
26. Instructor fatigue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent rotation of instructors with roles varied. E.g. 1 instructor to delivery safety briefing, 1 on the water coaching with roles reversed for each session.</li> <li>Instructors encouraged to develop an effective method of hand signals to communicate with students from the beach to avoid excessive use of their voice.</li> </ul>	Medium
27. Transmission of disease due to shared use of wetsuits. E.g. Skin infections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students allocated a wetsuit to use for the session/day.</li> <li>All aquatics centres have a cleaning procedure that is rigorously followed (with supervision from instructors to ensure compliance).</li> </ul>	Medium
28 Problems arising from intoxication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure department's no alcohol and drug policy is enforced.</li> <li>Exclude anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs.</li> </ul>	Medium
29. Students unable to hear instructions/commands due to wind direction or distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students briefed in the initial safety address regarding appropriate signalling method prior to entering the water. This will include the use of a whistle, or arm signals/visual commands. An emergency evacuation procedure and signal will also be established at the safety address.</li> <li>Students encouraged to look to the instructor regularly and to be within "co-wee" at all times</li> </ul>	Medium
30. Danger from Marine Creatures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If jellyfish are present in large numbers students should be removed from the river. If small numbers, monitor students for signs of stings and treat if required. Wet sui boots should be encouraged when kayaking to stop stings when getting in and out of a boat</li> </ul>	Medium
31. Transmission of COVID-19 through use of kayaking equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cleaning process for kayaks, paddles, lifejackets and boots is rigorously followed before re-use of equipment by another student</li> <li>Social distancing between instructors and students wherever possible</li> <li>Hand sanitiser used by instructors before and after providing assistance wherever possible</li> <li>Strict instruction on non-sharing of equipment.</li> <li>Instructors to ensure equipment fits prior to getting on the water.</li> <li>After use each student to wash each piece of equipment they have used in the appropriate manner and this is to be supervised by the instructor.</li> </ul>	High



## Risk management – What you need to do!

**Step 1:** Have a look at [WHS safety management](#) intranet and see if there are any activity hazards that are not already covered.

**Step 2:** Identify controls for your remaining hazards. Use the hierarchy of control chart to help select controls that provide the highest level of protection to employees.



**Step 3:** Assess the level of risk for the remaining hazards with all controls in place.

WHS Risk Assessment Matrix		Consequences				
		First aid, Personal support or counselling.	Medical or dental treatment.	Hospital emergency department (Out-patient)	Admitted to Hospital (In-patient)	Death, permanent disabling injury
Likelihood	<b>Certain:</b> to occur at some stage	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	<b>Likely:</b> to occur	Low	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	<b>Possible:</b> could reasonably occur	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	<b>Unlikely:</b> to occur	Low	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
	<b>Rare:</b> not expected to occur	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High

**Step 4:** Check the assessed risk level and undertake the associated action.

<b>Extreme</b>	<b>Do not undertake the activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact the Work Health and Safety team on <a href="mailto:Education.WHS@sa.gov.au">Education.WHS@sa.gov.au</a> or on 8226 1440 for guidance on risk reduction</li> <li>Consult with workgroup Health and Safety Representative where available</li> </ul>
<b>High</b>	<b>Reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Escalate to site leader and/or local safety/ management committee for review</li> <li>Consult with workgroup Health and Safety Representative and affected parties</li> <li>Review department <a href="#">WHS safety management</a> intranet for control requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Medium</b>	<b>Activity may be undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider ways to further reduce the risk and review the department <a href="#">WHS safety management</a> intranet</li> <li>Consult with workgroup Health and Safety Representative or affected parties</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	<b>Activity may be undertaken safely</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the activity and controls to ensure the risk remains low</li> </ul>