

# WHS RISK ASSESSMENT STAND UP PADDLEBOARDING

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>  Stand up Paddleboarding instruction is conducted Noarlunga on the Onkaparinga river or in the Spencer gulf in the semi protected waters of Port Noarlunga.  Students receive instruction commensurate with program length and student age/maturity with an emphasis on water safety. Instruction includes the following topics.  Relating to safety: Safe surf site selection; entry and exit points; consideration of weather/wind and wave conditions and height; presence of rips and undertows, prevalence of marine hazards e.g. Sharks, sting rays, jelly fish. Student learn how to quickly returning to knee position to keep themselves safe.  Personal equipment: Wet suits, boards - different construction material, shape and length, role of leg-rope/wrist leash, correct board selection based upon height, weight, and experience  Skills: carrying the board, safe entry and exit, transition from prone/kneeling to standing. Paddling skills including paddling forward in a straight line and turning the board. Safe dismounting, leg rope release drill. .</p> <p><b>General Safety consideration</b>  Instructors will have rescue equipment available at all times .  Departmental sunsmart policy is clearly explained.  Known hazards such as rips, undertows and shallow sandbars will be identified to all participants.  Students will be required to wear wetsuits for warmth, buoyancy, and protection. (Rashie vests and board shorts may be worn when conditions are appropriate).  A knowledge and understanding by instructional staff of local water conditions (such as tidal variations) and climatic conditions (such as strong offshore winds). A knowledge and awareness by instructional staff of additional local hazards such as general community use/public surfers, the potential for marine creature hazards and under water structures such as reefs and sandbars.  All instructional staff and students will be aware of the centre's emergency procedure and protocols.  All student participants will have completed a detailed medical form to be considered and checked by instructors 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 (carried in a water-proof container).  All centres will always have available a well-equipped first aid kit. Instructors and participating students must be clearly and easily identifiable. As this activity is often conducted some distance from the PNA base an effective method of communication should be carried by instructors e.g. 2-way radio or mobile phone.</p>			
Risk Assessment done by:	Name	Position	Date of Assessment	Review Due (3 years)
	Andrew Hancock	Instructor in Charge	November 2020	November 2023
	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>• 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>

<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)
5. Injury whilst carrying board to/from the water. or damage to board through being dropped.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruct students to carry boards to/from the water in pairs.</li> <li>• Instruct students on safe lifting – straight back, bent knees.</li> <li>• Trailers used to transport boards to the water if significant distance required.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
6. Injury from own board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad, stable, inflatable (soft) “start boards” are utilized to reduce the frequency of falls and of any injury from falling.</li> <li>• All students are instructed on the safe carrying and board handling techniques.</li> <li>• Students instructed on the safe way to fall when unbalanced (i.e. fall away from the board).</li> <li>• Students informed that if they fall to keep on the opposite side to the direction of flow so they cannot be trapped between a board and an obstacle.</li> <li>• Students board handling monitored through the session</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
7. Injury from falling from SUP into shallow water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student instructed on the most appropriate, safest method of falling off the board. (Step of or fall flat. Students told never to dive/enter headfirst- even in deep water.</li> <li>• Students Instructed in safe dismount practice.</li> <li>• Students advised about hazards from holes.</li> <li>• Broad, stable “start boards” are utilized to reduce the frequency of falls.</li> <li>• Shallow water areas are clearly identified to all participants.</li> <li>• Students are reminded on a regular basis or at the commencement of each session about shallow water.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
8. Injury caused by impact from another board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable lesson area selected with appropriate briefing of participants.</li> <li>• Create sufficient space between paddlers to reduce the likelihood of collisions.</li> <li>• Use of lightweight soft boards.</li> <li>• Use of appropriate length leg ropes.</li> <li>• Instruct students on how to protect themselves from recoiling boards. Instruct students on “crash position” covering their head and face upon surfacing if they end up in the water</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
9. Student swallows water causing panic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors closely monitored to identify students “in difficulty”.</li> <li>• Student in distress assisted from the water, calmed, and reassured and allow to recover on shore.</li> <li>• Student closely monitored for signs of difficulty breathing or evidence that water may have entered the lungs. If suspected urgent medical support required.</li> <li>• If fully recovered and no suspicion of water entering the lungs, student encouraged to return to activity under close supervision to overcome panic.</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)
10. Student suffers sunburn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students briefed at the commencement of the session re. being sunsmart.</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>	Medium
11. 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>Condition of all students be closely monitored, and early/first signs of hypo/hyperthermia be recognised and promptly treated.</li> </ul>	Medium
12. 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>	Medium
13. Student suffers or is affected by exhaustion/fatigue/soft tissue injury e.g. Muscle strain or cramp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All instructional staff to continuously monitor students and be alert for students showing signs of fatigue, minor injury, or cramp.</li> <li>Instructors create frequent rest/recovery breaks commensurate with the age/skill level of the group.</li> <li>Students instructed as to the most appropriate method of signalling for assistance if required.</li> <li>A rescue board is positioned on the beach (or with instructor on the water) to enable instructors to assist a student in difficulty. Affected student to be promptly returned to shore for rest/recovery and/or further treatment.</li> </ul>	Medium
14 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>Minor cuts and abrasions from contact with objects be treated promptly to reduce the likelihood of infection.</li> </ul>	Medium
15. Injury to student from underwater object such buried fishing hook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students to wear footwear when at the river.</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>	Medium

<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)
16. Collision with other watercraft such as community participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are made aware of protocols and procedures when paddling on the ocean. (Self-rescue or signal for rescue craft assistance) or if they encounter a recreational craft, “give way/right of way” rules.</li> <li>Ensure students are aware of hazards around powered craft or kite surfers.</li> <li>Move to a different area if jet skis, power boats or kite surfers are in the lesson area</li> <li>Instructional staff act proactively to foresee hazards of this nature and use instruction and/or rescue craft to prevent collisions.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
17. Entanglement /injury with object floating in water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SUP zone inspected prior to lesson and location changed if necessary</li> <li>Evacuation procedure initiated if major obstacle identified in area</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
18. Individual or group unable to return to shore due to wind direction or a rip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student instructed on how to paddle when lying prone to affect a self-rescue.</li> <li>IRB drivers informed of potential for problems with wind conditions and asked to monitor the situation.</li> <li>Number of students allowed to paddle restricted by weather conditions</li> <li>Rescue craft available to assist in returning student to shore or safe area.</li> <li>Students briefed prior to entering the water as to how to identify a rip and the safest response to this situation..</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
19. Student hit by board in shore break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students informed on how to keep clear of the board by staying on the seaward side of it.</li> <li>Students closely supervised in small shore break</li> <li>Activity abandoned when instructor judges the shore break too big</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
20 Student gets into trouble in the water after breaking a leg rope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment kept in excellent condition.</li> <li>Participants to wear flotation when performing this activity.</li> <li>Instructors on the alert for students becoming separated from their board.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
21 Students unable to hear instructions/commands due to wind direction, sound of the sea 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 after each wave to receive feedback relating to either performance or safety.</li> <li>When working with a 2-instructor group - 1 instructor should be out in the water with an appropriate board to facilitate a rescue and assist with instruction and on-water communication. The second instructor should be on the beach or in the water as appropriate.</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)
22. Student suffers rash from board contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students required to wear wet suits or rashie and board shorts</li> </ul>	Medium
23. Student suffers injury from member of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency procedures known by instructors to keep everyone safe.</li> <li>Jet skis, surf skis – if general if the public are engaged in these activities this site should not be used.</li> <li>Public surfers. Wherever possible student groups should be kept separate from public surfers. If possible, negotiate politely with public surfers to ensure area is exclusive to students. If this is not possible, consider alternative site.</li> </ul>	Medium
24 Student goes missing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructors conduct regular checks and head counts.</li> <li>Students likely to disappear have been identified by the school and extra support put in place.</li> </ul>	Medium
25. 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, students 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 may return to their activity.</li> </ul>	Medium

<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)
26. Danger from marine creatures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Centres should have a carefully considered and documented shark sighting protocol that is known and reviewed by all instructional staff.</li> <li>• Instructors to remain vigilant for marine creature hazards and evacuate students from the sea at the first sign of danger. (If a possible shark sighting occurs it may well be appropriate to avoid using the word “shark” to prevent student panic unless a positive/confirmed sighting has been made and danger is extremely close. Dolphin sightings are common along our coast. Students should not re-enter the water until instructors have declared the beach to be safe. If a confirmed sighting of a large shark activity for the day will be cancelled.</li> <li>• All students and staff are aware of the Emergency evacuation signal (whistle/hand signals) and the procedure to exit the water (including assembly/meeting point) as quickly and safely as possible.</li> <li>• If jellyfish are present in large numbers students should be removed from the water. If small numbers, monitor students for signs of stings and treat accordingly. Wet suits should be mandatory for all forms of surfing to help reduce stings.</li> <li>• If a stingray is observed in the area (or immediately adjacent) students should be removed from the water until it has moved away.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
27 Loss of group control.	<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>
28. Water contamination.	<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 stand up paddleboarding is cancelled.</li> <li>• If low levels of contamination, students warned to avoid unnecessary falling, or swallowing of any water (if fall occurs).</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>
29. Rapid deterioration in weather conditions,	<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>
30. Danger from unknown member of the public.	<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)
31. Theft of student/staff personal items whilst stand up paddling.	<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>	<b>Medium</b>
32. 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>	<b>Medium</b>
33. 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>	<b>Medium</b>
34 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>	<b>Medium</b>
35. Transmission of COVID-19 through use of stand up paddle-boarding equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cleaning process for boards, 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>	<b>High</b>

## 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>