

Wokingham Canoe Club Paddler Competency Form (Sheltered water conditions)

Why have a WCC competent paddler?

We need a mechanism of determining which paddlers in the club have reached a basic skill level to join in with club activities without active support from the club coaches and leaders

WCC Competent paddlers are able to join a club session as a group member not requiring coaching or support from coaches to be safe on a session

Competent paddlers are able to join flat water club trips (subject to vetting by the trip leader e.g. for stamina)

Competent paddlers have earned the right to request to borrow club kit (subject to the usual checks by the Bosun about deployment environment etc.)

Are deemed capable of joining a group of peer to peer paddlers subject to the agreement of the peer group for the conditions to be paddled.

Minimum Competencies

- Understands how to set up own boat
- Able to control their boat with basic manoeuvres (forward, backward, stop, sideways)
- Enter and exit own boat unassisted (launching / landing)
- Able to perform a safe wet exit
- Able to self rescue appropriate to the river environment and boat paddled (e.g. swim to shore with boat)
- Able to assist another paddler in a rescue appropriate to the river environment - Understands the options open to the rescuee and how to perform the task
- Understands how to read river conditions and understands when it is safe/unsafe to launch
- Are aware of the risks and mitigating safety measure around Locks and weirs (portage, avoid, hold chains, avoid recirculation areas etc.
- Over 18 years of age

Environment and deployment

Able to join a club session as group member not requiring coaching to control their craft, in all conditions deemed safe for a club session.

Eligible to request to join a flat water club trip (subject to vetting by the trip leader, e.g. for stamina, conditions, personal equipment)

Eligible to request to borrow club equipment outside of a club session (subject to agreement by a the bosun)

Can join peer to peer paddle groups subject to the agreement of the peers in the group and for the conditions being paddled.

Criteria for Competent paddler status

Not formally assessed

Paddler to self-assess based on a list of competencies – Paddler signs a list sheet with list of competencies and emails to club contact us email address to be logged on a Googlesheet???

No min or max number of sessions (for novices this could take 5-20 club sessions to achieve as an example), it is competency based.

Recorded on an excel sheet on the Google drive? Possibly as an agenda item in committee meetings

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Exclusions

Competent paddler designation is granted on a per boat type basis. i.e. being deemed a competent paddler in an open canoe does not make you a competent paddler in a K1.

Competent paddler designation does not mean that a paddler is capable of paddling in conditions more severe than sheltered, flat water (such as moderate/moving water, tidal and coastal, white water.) Capability at that level needs to be determined and demonstrated to the relevant coaching and leading members of the club.

Competent sheltered water only

These criteria are based on recreational paddling, but can be applied to racing boats too.

Notes:

Some paddlers may need to attend Paddle UK (formally British Canoeing) formal training courses to reach the required standards, such as a safety and rescue course, personal performance award (e.g. paddle explore award).

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Members are encouraged to obtain skills to help to enjoy their time on the water, as well as keeping themselves and others safe. The skills listed here are also used to enable members to attend trips, longer sessions and to borrow club kit.

1. Personal Safety & Competence

- I understand how to set up own craft
- I am able to control my craft with basic manoeuvres (forward, backward, stop, sideways)
- I am able to enter and exit my own craft unassisted (launching / landing)
- I am able to perform a safe wet exit of my craft
- I am able to self rescue appropriate to the river environment and craft paddled (e.g. swim to shore with boat)
- Able to assist another paddler in a rescue appropriate to the river environment – I understand the options open to the rescuee and how to perform the task
- I understand how to read river conditions and understand when it is safe/unsafe to launch
- I am aware of the risks and mitigating safety measure around Locks and weirs, e.g. portage, avoid, hold chains, avoid recirculation areas etc.
- I am sufficiently fit and medically able to participate in paddling activities without undue risk to myself or others.
- I am able to swim more than 25m in clothing as part of a self rescue

2. Water Safety & Awareness

- I understand and can assess weather and water conditions to determine safe paddling conditions.
- I am familiar with local navigation rules, rights of way, and potential hazards in the areas where I may paddle.
- I can recognize and respond appropriately to emergency situations, including signalling for help if required.

3. Equipment Knowledge & Use

- I can properly fit and understand the need to wear a personal flotation device (PFD) in line with the club rules
- I understand the importance of appropriate clothing, equipment, and safety kit for paddling in various conditions.
- I know how to check and maintain my craft and paddling equipment to ensure they are in safe working condition.

4. Environmental & Ethical Responsibility

- I will respect the natural environment, wildlife, and other water users by following Leave No Trace principles.
- I will adhere to all relevant local regulations, restrictions, and best practices for responsible paddling.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I am responsible for my safety and decisions while paddling. I accept that failure to adhere to these competencies may increase risks to myself and others. I understand that this self-certification does not replace professional training, and I will continue to develop my skills where necessary.

Paddler Name: _____

Paddler Signature: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (if paddler under 18): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian (if under 18): _____

Date: _____

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