

Isle of Wight Sea Kayaking – Safety Policy

This safety policy document is to be used in conjunction with the IWSK ‘Coaching Qualification Remits, Risk Assessment and Operating Procedures for Paddlesport Activities’ document.

Introduction –

Isle of Wight Sea Kayaking runs courses year round for approximately 1000 people per year. All of the IWSK staff accepts client welfare and safety to be of paramount importance. IWSK is recognized and approved by the AALS to deliver activities that are within its scope. Details available from the AALS on 02920 755715 quoting reference number L6477.

Activity management –

The management of all activities is undertaken by IWSK Director Owen Burson a highly qualified and experienced BCU Coach and Coach Trainer. In his absence Director Mitch Furnell will ensure the availability of a suitably qualified person to make the required operational decisions regarding staff deployment.

Staff qualifications –

All staff will hold appropriate NGB qualifications backed up by relevant experience in the environment that they are operating.

Policy and procedural review –

IWSK operate with a pro-active approach to risk management. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, updating information in accordance with changing environments, our own reflective practise and new best practice as defined by the relevant NGB.

Information dissemination to staff –

All are asked to sign and date the “IWSK staff information dissemination document” to confirm their updated knowledge of IWSK policies and procedures. This is done after each review of any documentation.

Equipment –

IWSK aims to ensure that equipment is in the best possible state. This is achieved by having a regular turnover of equipment and frequent maintenance sessions. IWSK staff members are asked to repair any damaged equipment on the day or to relay information of the action needed to Owen at the first available opportunity. All equipment (boats, BA’s, thigh straps est.) is washed down regularly; this is coordinated by Owen or Mitch with individual staff, with the frequency depending on use, but usually once per day.

Equipment is checked via ongoing use by a small team of competent, qualified and vigilant staff, before, during and after use, with any faulty equipment being removed and repaired or replaced.

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Venues –

While the nature of IWSK staff employment is part time staff/freelance, the staff are very well qualified and hold a high level of currency of knowledge regarding the areas they utilise – where this is not the case Owen will ensure that the staff member has sufficient knowledge and experience to undertake the activity in the chosen location – this achieved via staff meeting, phone contact or induction by an appropriately experienced person.

All staff will leave details on the “group destination” board that is located at the IWSK base in Freshwater Bay. Information left includes group numbers, phone number, active VHF channel and route.

Insurance –

IWSK hold appropriate Insurance with Leisure Insure – Commercial Combined Policy No.FURNMI/SPO/K0700601.

Consent and medical forms –

As a part of IWSK booking procedures, contact details, activity experience, next of kin and medical details are recorded. Participants are requested on this form to inform their coach of any details that change between their booking and the date of the course. Staff members are aware of their responsibility to check changes of medical details before commencement of activity and to satisfy themselves that participants are fit to undertake the planned program.

Transport –

IWSK operate 2 VW Transporter vehicles and two kayak trailers. These vehicles hold commercial insurance for carrying clients. Currently only Mitch and Owen are insured to drive the vehicles; staff are reminded that the towing of trailers on their own vehicles is at their own risk and liability is via their own insurance. The vehicles are kept legal and inspected as appropriate – they undergo a road worthiness check / test drive each day by the driver before clients are boarded.

Last updated: 13/11/10 by Owen Burson and Mitch Furnell

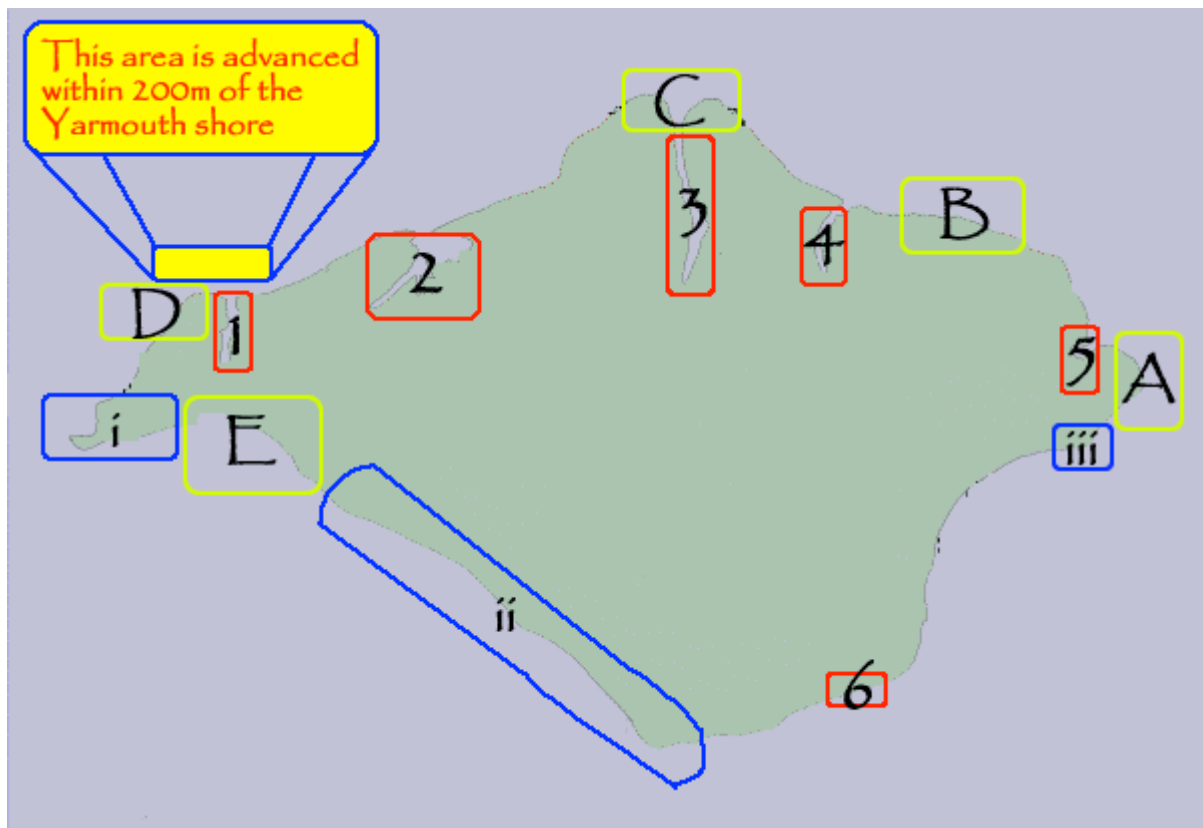
Coaching Qualification Remits, Risk Assessment and General Operating Procedures for Island based paddlesport activities

Last reviewed 09/10

For the purpose of this document no differentiation is made between coaching and leadership activities; this is a deployment consideration for the coach in charge on the day

- All staff will hold a minimum of an 8 hour 1st Aid award and if appropriate to the client group will have been CRB checked.
- Original copies of staff technical qualifications and/or BCU membership card, 1st Aid and CRB (or self disclosure while awaiting CRB) will be checked by IWSK and may be held on file.
- All staff will operate within their operational remit; unless a suitably qualified person has authorised to the contrary, in which case a log entry will be kept on file with IWSK in that persons file.
- Any members of staff operating for IWSK or one of its employing agents will have read appropriate documents, and will have signed to state understanding of such documents in the presence of IWSK senior staff.
- All staff members are required to attend and engage in the morning staff meeting/briefing that will be led by a senior coach; trip planning and authorisation will take place in this meeting.
- During trips, booking and medical forms will be available to all staff in the IWSK office; medical forms will be issued to the trips lead coach at the morning meeting. It is the responsibility of the coach in charge to ensure all group medical details are up to date.
- If an IWSK employed coach is sub-contracting to another organisation, the coach will ensure access to medical forms prior to meeting clients.
- If an IWSK employed coach is working on a sub-contracting basis to another organisation; the coach will be bound by IWSK's operating procedures, not the other organisations.
- If an IWSK employed coach is working on a sub-contracting basis they are expected to attend the other organisations staff meetings as requested and conform to any centre/land based site specific risk assessment/operating procedures the organisation may have. Management of the staff member while off the water is the direct responsibility of the other organisation. The management of the employing authority is responsible for ensuring any centre/land based site specific risk assessment/operating procedures the organisation may have are communicated to the coach involved.
- If an IWSK employed coach is working on a sub-contracting basis the management of the activity on the water is the responsibility of IWSK; IWSK will take an active role in validating any operational decisions made by the other organisation if required or requested by either party.

Authorisation for coaches / leaders to work outside of their remit (e.g. trainees) can only be given by Owen Burson; this will be done on a day to day basis, taking into account the individual leader's skill, training and experience of the location they are leading into.



Note: Over 2NM or 1 hour offshore = Advanced Sea

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Sheltered Tidal Water

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BCU definition of Sheltered Tidal Water/Sea

Small enclosed bays, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore; enclosed harbors, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore; defined beaches (a short section of beach with easy landing throughout, no tide races or overfalls beyond the beach), in conditions in which swimmers and beach craft could be happily operating winds not above force 3 (force 2 if offshore when greatest of caution must be exercised); the upper reaches of some suitable, slow moving estuaries during Neap tides.

In all cases the wind and weather conditions must be favorable.

Qualification required:

L2 Coach + 4 leader award training or site specific training*

- Area 1:** The River Yar and Yarmouth Harbour are accessible at all states of the tide and offer little hazards other than sometimes heavy traffic in the harbour itself. High winds often impede progress although shelter can be found in all but the strongest of winds; access and egress can be made at the southerly end of the river at around 4 hours either side of high water on springs.
- Area 2:** Deep mud can be a problem if outside of the optimum 2 hours either side of high water. A get out/in is possible in all but the lowest of tides at Shalfleet Quay. There is a great deal of wildlife in the creek and the utmost of respect shown as it is a SSSI amongst other things. Shelter is usually to be found in all wind directions.
- Area 3:** The use of the medina should not be underestimated; it is hugely busy and on the ebb is subject to very swift flows. Extreme care must be taken when crossing channels and a very pro-active approach to group control must be taken with respect paid to potential pin hazards of boats, buoys and jetties. 100m upstream (south) of the chain ferry is the limit for a L2 + 4* trained/site specific person.
- Area 4:** Wootton Creek is a safe and sheltered area, which holds little additional site specific risk when above the spit.
- Area 5:** Bembridge harbour is a safe and sheltered area, which holds little additional site specific risk above the spit.
- Area 6:** Ventnor harbour can be used three hours either side of spring high water; it is a small but sheltered area that is an active fishing port and often space is at a premium. In easterly winds the entrance is open to the swells and the harbour can become quite lumpy, although no danger exists from this.

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Moderate Sea

- Areas not marked and

BCU definition of Moderate Tidal Water/Sea

The definition involves: A stretch of coastline or estuary in close proximity to the shore, with available landings at every 1-2 miles / 1 hour and areas where it is not easy to land. Up to a maximum of 2 knots tide but not involving, tidal races, or overfalls, winds not above force 4 beaufort sea state 4 (if offshore the greatest of caution must be exercised), or the upper reaches of some estuaries; launching and landing through moderate surf.

Qualification required:

L3 Coach + experience

MW endorsed L2 coach

4 leader award*

L3/4 trainee + authorisation*

The Island has significant hazards; including boat traffic, dumping beaches, offshore winds, inshore tidal flows and counter direction tidal flows (eddies). These are all considerations when planning trips.

Note A: Foreland has a wind over tide situation when a significant patch of rough water is created on the ebb tide with a F3 or above S, SE or SW wind. Care should be taken if travelling from foreland to Whitecliff on the ebb as the water disappears very quickly; this could force a very long detour out around the ledge on the return journey, exposing the group to higher winds, greater distance and rougher water.

Note B: This is a very busy area, with car ferries, high speed cats and hovercraft in action; it is also a large area of very shallow water.

Note C: Cowes harbour sees significant traffic – the utmost of caution must be taken when operating in this area. The stupidity and ignorance of leisure boat operators should not be underestimated; Group control, communication and emergency action briefings should be foremost in your thoughts.

Note D: The area around Fort Albert and Colwell sees significant tidal flows and clapotis, this may be impassable to a novice group during spring tides with wind opposing; strong eddies are also encountered here.

Note E: The Freshwater / Compton Bay area has many hazards; shallow reefs, steep beaches and exposure to S and SW swells. The caves should be evaluated carefully before committing a group to any danger and only attempted in the slightest of swells. The difficulty of returning from Watkin Beach in an easterly wind should not be underestimated. The passing of the westerly end of Watkin beach is not permitted unless swell is nonexistent and a clear westerly wind trend is in existence; in these circumstances no further than the obvious black table-like rock. No further SE than Brook Chine.

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Advanced Sea

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BCU definition of Advanced Tidal Water/Sea

Any journey on the sea where tidal races, overfalls or open crossings may be encountered, which cannot be avoided; Sections of coastline where landings may not be possible or difficult; difficult sea states and /or stronger winds (force 4 or above), launching and landing through moderate surf.

Qualification required:

L4 Coach

*5*leader award*

L3 Coach/4 leader + 5* trained + authorisation*

- i, Needles headland has the significant hazards of no landing zones, strong tidal flows and is exposed to swell; conditions are prone to change rapidly – defined as the area between the west end of Watkin beach around to 400 from Alum Bay.
- ii, Although this area has a relatively simple coastline it includes the big tidal race of St Catherine's point. All parts of this section have significant landing difficulties; in all but the smallest of S and SW swells a powerful dumping beach is created due to its very steep nature, once landed the only possibility for egress (with boats) is with roped assistance – defined as the area between Brook Chine and Reeth Bay
- iii, A strong tidal flow, tide race **and** overfall is found in this very small area at most states of the tide as well as exposure to no landing zones – defined as the area between the southerly end of Whitecliff Bay to the Northerly end of Yaverland Beach

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IWSK activity away from the Island

Level 3 Coaches:

Coaches will file a trip plan, risk assessment and itinerary with Owen for approval, with any adaption to the plan informed immediately. Contact will be made with IWSK every day to gain a weather forecast and to confirm the day's activity. The coach will ensure that the phone number of the regions coastguard and local police HQ is part of information left.

Level 4 Coaches:

Coaches will file a trip plan and itinerary with IWSK, ideally this will be discussed with Owen, but this will not be deemed essential as the L4 coach has sufficient knowledge and judgement to operate in new areas conducting dynamic risk assessments on the hoof. The coach will ensure that the phone number of the regions coastguard and local police HQ is part of information left.

As a part of the risk management process this information must be produced by the coach/leader in charge on the water. No standardised form is produced for this purpose, nor will it be, it is the responsibility of the coach to produce all the required information, again, this is a part of the risk management process and is useful as a training exercise.

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IWSK Staff Responsibilities

- All staff must ensure they are appropriately equipped for the activity they are undertaking: This includes both personal and group equipment. Those working as a coach and being paid accordingly are expected to provide their own equipment; while IWSK hold stocks of leader equipment, this is primarily for leadership and coach training courses and should not be relied upon as it may be in use. Any member of freelance staff is able to buy coach/leader equipment at cost; this includes amongst other things VHF radios, dry bags, first aid kits, tow lines and group shelters. A staff discount is available to all freelance staff for other personal equipment.
- Please ensure that you meet clients in a state of dress that conveys an air of professionalism. Kitting up may be appropriate before clients arrive; where this is not the case changing must be undertaken with professionalism, speed and with thought given, if appropriate, to child protection regulations.
- Equipment must be left in a way that you would wish to find it. All kit should be clean and turned the right way out, hung in the appropriate place and every attempt made to dry it by using the dehumidifier and heater if needed.
- Check boats. These checks and repairs to be done at the end of each day without fail. A coach should not have to spend the morning repairing boats when they should be preparing for the day's activities.
 - Foot rests must move and be free of sand (washed and brought forward)
 - Skags (if fitted) must be in a working order (repair if needed)
 - Clean and washed down (seaweed and sand removed)
 - Intact hatch covers
 - Check hull and deck integrity

The golden rule is to leave the boats in the order you would wish to find them in. One of the many reasons our clients come to us (and come back) is our reputation for high quality equipment – please help us to keep it that way.

- The loading of trailers will be with manual handling protocols adhered to; this is for your safety and as a good example to our clients.
- You must ensure that you have a VHF or Mobile as appropriate with power and in credit if required. Any member of staff not complying is in breach of our operating procedures.

IWSK Staff Responsibilities

- Boat orientation for sea kayak trailer – HULL TO HULL and BOW to the FRONT– all boats need to be secured firmly with straps that are in good order and with the loose end tied back as a double security by placing one long one over the horizontal bar then both ends over two boats or one short strap around the upright bar. Simple and secure, not straps everywhere – the trailer is an advert.
- You are reminded that the towing of trailers on your own vehicles is at your own risk and liability is via your own insurance. If this causes any difficulties please ensure you ask in good time for a drop off or pick. Mitch will ensure this takes place.
- Any equipment that is broken and irreparable on the day (e.g. not a simple repair) must be informed to Owen at the earliest opportunity.
- As a part of IWSK booking procedures, contact details, activity experience, next of kin and medical details are recorded. You will be emailed a copy of this before your course, or if you prefer you can pick these up on the day. In the case of a late booking you will be asked to ensure that the client fills one of these forms out before activity commencement.
- Participants are requested on this form to inform their coach of any details that change between their booking and the date of the course. It is your responsibility to check changes of medical details before commencement of activity and to satisfy yourself that participants are fit to undertake the planned program.

Isle of Wight Sea Kayaking Operating Procedures

Coasteering

Staffing:

All staff will be selected on their suitability to lead and to act as a second by Owen on an individual basis, as no set qualifications exist for coasteering. The selection will be based on experience of the sea environment, swimming ability and ability to cope personally and to rescue in unexpectedly large conditions. This decision will be based purely on Owen's experience of the person concerned having spent time with them in the water. Qualifications such as the BCU 4* sea leader award will be considered as an essential starting point as a gauge of competence. Staff must attend the IWSK staff training day every year

Preparation:

- Check the tide height and swell. This must be acceptable for the group. The judgement of suitability is based on the person in charge's knowledge of the route.
- Solent coastguard will be informed of a coasteering activity by IWSK
- Call SCG and give them the following details by phone on -
 - IWSK ~ Sea Kayak rescue activity based around the cliffs of Freshwater Bay
 - Numbers involved
 - Base contact number ~ IWSK on 07769680174 or Owen on 07795264648
 - Time on the water and time off
- Get the appropriate group equipment ready and put a SOT over on the beach if appropriate.

Meeting the group:

Greet the group in positive, lighthearted but professional manner.

Ensure that group booking and medical details have completed and payment has been taken

Reinforce the need for any medical information to be given prior to the activity.

Kit the group up in wetsuits, BA, cag's and helmets, and ensure good footwear.

Briefing:

- Make sure Shoes, BA's and Helmet are done up at all times
- What are the conditions going to be like
- Watch out for rocks under the water that you can't see
- Don't grab onto others if you fall
- Barnacles grippy, sea weed slippery
- When climbing, if you fall, step back into water, rather than clinging onto rocks to avoid slicing your hands
- There's always an alternative route, so no pressure.
- Don't jump unless we have checked it out first.

Isle of Wight Sea Kayaking Operating Procedures

Leadership:

Leadership whilst coasteering requires that the group work together to support each other; they should be aware of the person in front and behind and be prepared to offer them a hand or let them know of slippery areas.

We will work on a 2:8 ratio, up to a maximum of 16 people coasteering due to space restrictions on the route. Two members of staff will always coasteer for leadership and rescue reasons.

Emergency Procedures:

Staff carry small first aid kits that can be used on or in the water to deal with minor incidents.

Major incidents will be dealt with on an individual basis. Normal protocol would be to leave one member of staff with the group and the injured person and for the other member of staff to head back to the life boat station and to use the emergency phone to call the emergency services. Then returning to the accident scene to assist. All the freshwater lifeboat coxswains are aware of the route that is used whilst coasteering and in most cases will be able to respond to the scene within ten minutes.

It may be appropriate to swim the injured party back to the beach and deal with the incident there.

All staff will be involved in the main coasteering training event, that includes scenario based training; this takes place at the start of the season and staff will be involved in ad-hoc training that takes place throughout the summer season.

RISK ASSESSMENT

WRITTEN BY: - Owen Burson

Assessment of: - Coasteering

Date of Assessment: 16/3/10

What are the Hazards?	To Who?	What is the Control?	Further action?	Review date?
Drowning	Students Leaders	Participants will wear BA and Wetsuits at all times		
Head injury	Students Leaders	All participants will wear well fitting helmets		
Slips and trips	Students Leaders	Leaders will ensure that all are aware of slippery areas, and will encourage a supportive atmosphere		
Getting trapped by big water ~ cut off	Students Leaders	Leaders will ensure that a swell and weather forecast has been looked at before session.		
Falls and jumping into shallow water	Students Leaders	Leaders will ensure that all participants are briefed to avoid shallow water. Leaders will brief jumps well		
Getting washed against a wall in big swell	Students	Leaders will brief the feet up~push off technique of protection.		
Exhaustion	Students	If conditions are not flat, then a SOT will be placed on the beach or paddled by a member of staff if appropriate.		

To be used in conduction with: