

The use of sea kayaks on rivers.

Context

In the winter months several club trips have taken place where sea kayaks have been used in a river environment (grade 1 or 2).

The club has a growing number of members who are interested in sea kayaking and these trips have been offered to allow people to develop their moving water skills.

Generally, venues have been selected which have locations which have a suitable location to practice and learn these skills before the trip continues down the river as part of a journey.

The danger when using sea kayaks which are fitted with deck lines in this environment is the risk of entanglement and possible entrapment. Although the risk may be low, the consequences of a difficult situation are high, particularly with novices who may not be familiar with moving water, in a river environment.

Ideally this training and skills development should take place in the environment in which it fits, on the sea, or estuary, Locations around Peil island are good options. Kit carried and rescues if required can then be used in the correct context.

Recommendations for Club Leaders

1. Leaders should carefully consider the risk of entanglement when choosing river locations.
2. All participants should be briefed about this additional hazard if they are in a sea boat with deck lines.
3. The ability to perform a rescue and the hazards downstream from the training site should be considered as rescues may take longer than in a river boat.
4. All individuals should carry an accessible knife and know what to do in the event of an incident.
5. All other risk assessments and club safety policies should be followed in line with any river or sea trip.

Risks can be further reduced by:

1. Removing deck lines if possible.
2. Electing an environment with no tree hazard or rocky rapid.
3. Increasing the ratio of experienced paddlers to novices.

Can I thank trip leaders and organizers for giving up their time to run trips. If anybody wants to discuss this issue, then do please get in touch either by email or phone.

Rob Gregory LCC Safety Officer.

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