

Date of risk assessment: 26 May 2025¹

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
<p><i>The assessments in the first section below are generic. They apply throughout Paddlesport and all the associated environments.</i></p>						
The unknown unknowns	Anybody: Any way.	Whilst every effort is made to ensure the safety of all water users and onlookers, including coaches, assistants, paddlers, children and guardians, it is not possible to write an assessment for every eventuality and potential risk. These are simply considered the “unknown unknowns”. At <u>all</u> times coaches, instructors and assistants must be making dynamic risk assessments to protect themselves and the group. In some instances, it is necessary to accept some level of risk to prevent a greater potential for problem, this may only affect one person, part of a group, the whole group in a specific, part or total locality. We highlight that watersports are an assumed risk activity, therefore any risk assessment, written or dynamic needs to account for this and reduce any risk as far as reasonably practical to do so. In all instances coaches will follow the Self, Group, Individual then Equipment hierarchy for rescue scenarios as it is considered	Dynamic risk assessment and ongoing observation of the sites. Be prepared to move location, cancel sessions or remove individuals from the group if the risk and likelihood of injury becomes significant.	Coach, instructor, assistants	Always	Ongoing

¹ Signed off by DH and NcG for SCC. To be kept under dynamic review before and during event
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		best practice in all environments.				
Water	Any person in or on the water, including those on the bank that may fall in: Drowning (separate risks and controls listed below for other water-based risks)	<p>All participants wear correctly fitted buoyancy aids that conform to current standards.</p> <p>Coaches to check before participant goes afloat and monitor throughout session.</p> <p>Capsize drill explained to reduce possibility of participants not making clean exit from upturned craft – “dry” capsize demonstrated on land before. Coaches must be satisfied that all canoeists have the knowledge to perform a capsize drill.</p> <p>Paddlers to be made aware of self-rescue i.e. “it’s shallow so just stand up” or “swim to the side”.</p> <p>The coach is responsible for determining if the participant can swim 25 meters in light clothing, if not the coach will need to risk assess on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Discipline of the group should be such that individuals do not get spread out and away from the coach, where participants are out of sight due to the coach’s position, the dynamic risk assessment will determine what, if any, control measures are required. The CLAP principle used here.</p> <p>Local risk assessment will be carried out for sites where BCU definitions are open to varied interpretation.</p> <p>Coaching numbers are to follow Paddle UK best practice ratio’s which may</p>	<p>Dynamic risk assessment and ongoing observation of the sites. Be prepared to move location if the risk and likelihood of injury becomes significant.</p> <p>Understand CLAP:</p> <p>C = Communication</p> <p>L = Line of sight</p> <p>A = Avoidance (is better than cure)</p> <p>P = Position of maximum usefulness.</p>	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing

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		differ subject to environment and experience.				
Slips, trips and falls	<p>Participants, coaches, spectators:</p> <p>Falling over on slippery surfaces. This may be grass, concrete, muddy banks, mats etc. Surfaces are more likely to become slippery when wet and/or muddy. It could also include falling over each other or equipment, boats, paddles, kit etc.</p> <p>Falling could lead to muscle injury, sprains and strains. It could also lead to cuts and grazes on hands and legs. A significant trip could cause a head injury.</p>	<p>Areas of particular risk will be identified to those at risk.</p> <p>Coaches & participants should wear helmets and buoyancy aids on the bank as dictated by site specific risk assessment or by the coaches' dynamic risk assessment. For Friars Meadow, helmets not likely to be needed unless e.g. jumping onto paddleboards from the bank.</p> <p>Equipment should be left tidy and trip hazards marked or moved wherever possible before, during or after the session.</p>	Dynamic risk assessment and ongoing observation of the sites. Be prepared to move location if the risk and likelihood of injury becomes significant.	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing
Uneven surfaces, hidden holes or hazards.	As with slips, trips and falls.	Generally, as per slips, trips and falls. A walk over the training area prior to the session is required to identify and mark any problem or risk areas.	As for slips, trips and falls.	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing
Lifting and manual handling hazards.	<p>Everybody:</p> <p>Potential for a large range of injury including general muscle soreness, trapping fingers, cuts and scrapes, lifting injury, joint injury (i.e. lower back pain)</p>	<p>Group to be appropriately briefed and observe demonstration of good lifting and carrying techniques before any activity commences.</p> <p>More than one person to lift / carry each boat, ideally a minimum of 2 per kayak/canoe where practical.</p> <p>Appropriately trained / experienced coach to</p>	<p>Ongoing observation and regular manual handling updates for all coaches.</p> <p>It should be noted that many users will have their own kayaks, canoes and</p>	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing

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		<p>supervise the loading / unloading of boats to / from storage racks or trailers.</p> <p>Always follow principles for safe and effective manual handling.</p> <p>Be aware that water filled craft are much heavier than empty ones.</p> <p>Avoid unnecessary twisting and lifting wherever possible.</p>	<p>equipment. They are likely to have their own solo way of moving kit and are happy with their method. If a coach notes a more effective method of moving the boat, discuss with the individual.</p>			
Injury (as a result of other hazards)	Everybody: Injury can be minor or major requiring mild sympathy to ambulance extraction.	<p>A first aider will be required on site at all times and must always make himself or herself available if required without delay. A first aid kit will always be available and will always be fully stocked and up to date, this will be easily accessible to the first aider. For more major injuries the session will need to be stopped, and an ambulance called. All injuries will be recorded on an accident form.</p>	<p>Any accidents must be reported via the Paddle UK online incident report.</p> <p>Any major accidents requiring 999 or hospital attention will require an internal accident investigation to be carried out to prevent the same accident from happening again if applicable. RIDDOR reports must be submitted if applicable.</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other users	Everybody: Risks include unintentional collisions leading to injury. Other users may be swimming, rowing, sailing, playing sports, taking a class, practicing or socializing so people or equipment may stray into the area, leading to injury or confusion.	<p>The coach will always be aware of the total surroundings. If there is a risk of harm the working area should be relocated, or onlookers asked to move. Good communication all round is key to a successful session.</p>	<p>Remain continually observant. Stop sessions or class if necessary.</p>	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing

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	Fishermen may also be using the same facilities as we are using to paddle.	Always be aware and courteous to all other users.				
Children	Everybody: Children are potentially less likely to be aware of all the hazards. They are potentially less likely to follow the full instructions and are prone to over excitement and showing off in some cases (note that this occurs with many adults too!). This can lead to sudden changes of direction, speed and being in the wrong place at the wrong time. There is a risk of slips, trips, falls and collisions as well as capsizing when on the water.	Coaches always need to pay particular attention to children during the safety brief and when on the water. They must be made aware of all the dangers on the course and told what is and isn't acceptable.	Continual observation and reminders as required.	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing
Capsize	<p>Rescuer, assistants, participant:</p> <p>Entrapments:</p> <p>Caught in craft</p> <p>Pinned against something</p> <p>Trapped underwater</p> <p>Tangled in rope</p> <p>Tangled in weeds</p> <p>Unable to find surface</p> <p>Panic</p> <p>Cold water shock.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors must be satisfied that all participants have the knowledge to perform a capsize drill or are closely supervised (e.g. for taster sessions). Course / training will be organised to ensure paddlers are directed away from known obstacles. Local and dynamic risk assessment will be carried out for sites where Paddle UK definitions are open to varied interpretation. Discipline of the group should be such that canoeists do not get 	Coaches must carry out regular rescue drills to maintain their own standards at all times. Coaches are expected to keep up to date with current best practice for all rescue scenarios.	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing

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	<p>Hitting head:</p> <p>Head injury</p> <p>Cuts</p> <p>Broken bones / nose</p> <p>Confusion</p> <p>Unconsciousness.</p>	<p>spread out, away from the coach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On moving or shallow water, or during games, helmets must be worn. When hired or borrowed equipment is being used it must be thoroughly checked before use. If necessary, a session will be cancelled rather than using defective equipment. 				
Heat / Sun	<p>Everybody:</p> <p>Dehydration, heatstroke, hyperthermia, sunburn, death.</p>	<p>When it is very hot the body will sweat excessively, therefore it is essential to drink regularly during exercise. Appropriate clothing is required.</p> <p>Coaches should check that sun protection is being used, hats/helmets are worn and that there is plenty of drinking water/rehydrating fluid available for all paddlers.</p>	Coaches will need to remain vigilant of all participants and carry out dynamic risk assessment of how environmental factors may change the course of the session.	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing
<p>Cold / Wind / Rain</p> <p>Falling into water and getting cold</p>	<p>Everybody:</p> <p>Shivering, loss of sensation, hypothermia.</p> <p>Air and water temperatures may not correspond to each other at any stage throughout the year, therefore coaches need to be aware of the signs of hypothermia as follows.</p>	<p>Most important step is to avoid immersion and exposure to the elements.</p> <p>When it is cold it will take longer to get warmed up, mobility and warm-up sessions will therefore need to be more gradual and longer to allow the body to get ready for exercise.</p> <p>The discipline of the group should be such that paddlers do not get spread</p>	Coaches to be dynamically assessing the session at all times. Regularly check with participants how they are feeling and adjust the session accordingly.	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing

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	<p>Mild hypothermia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shivering • Dizziness • Hunger • Nausea • Faster breathing • Trouble speaking • Slight confusion • Lack of coordination • Fatigue • Increased heart rate <p>Moderate to severe hypothermia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shivering, although as hypothermia worsens, shivering stops • Clumsiness or lack of coordination • Slurred speech or mumbling • Confusion and poor decision-making, such as trying to remove warm clothes • Drowsiness or very low energy • Lack of concern about one's condition • Progressive loss of consciousness • Weak pulse • Slow, shallow breathing • Death 	<p>out, away from the coach. Additional get-out points may be required.</p> <p>Participants are appropriately clothed for the prevailing conditions, this could mean wetsuits, dry suits, cags, waterproofs, base layers etc. A change of clothes must be available, and the coach should have additional warm layers available if the session is away from immediate assistance.</p> <p>Time on the water is limited (according to the group and water temp) and session will finish if individuals start to show signs of cold or fatigue</p> <p>Hot drinks, spare warm clothes, and adequate shelter are available if appropriate for the session.</p> <p>Emergency telephone / arrangements in place</p> <p>Weather forecast kept under review in case appropriate to postpone or shorten event</p>				
Equipment - generally	<p>Participants and coaches:</p> <p>Equipment can be cold, slippery, heavy, unwieldy and dirty or can break. This can lead to slips,</p>	<p>Check all equipment prior to use. Monitor equipment during use. Inspect all equipment at the end of use or when packing away. Replace any equipment that</p>	<p>Equipment log is in place and maintained, and a progressive maintenance program is undertaken.</p>	<p>Coach, instructor, assistants</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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	trips and falls or other similar impact injury.	is broken or could break imminently. When hired or borrowed equipment is being used it must be thoroughly checked before use. If necessary, a session will be cancelled rather than using defective equipment.				
Physical exercise	Session participants are exposed to the risk of muscle soreness, injury, fatigue or more serious physical injury. All efforts will be made to ensure that the session is safe, well planned, and adapted to suit the individual paddlers and group.	The aim of the coach will be to ensure that all sessions are designed to accommodate everybody in the session/group. Each stage of every session should have progressions and regressions to enable adaptations to meet the needs of the individual. In all cases participants will need to fill out a waiver form prior to taking part in their first session. Participants may typically be sore for around two days after the session as this is delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) and is what we could expect to achieve from the session. This is, in itself, not a risk	Review of sessions, feedback from participants, observers and other coaches. Sessions will be modified based on that feedback.	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing
Individual becomes separated from rest of group	Coach, participant, group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants re-group at appropriate intervals and wait for everyone to be accounted for before continuing. Coaches maintain awareness of all participants' locations at all times In large groups participants may be asked to use the "buddy" system and briefed regarding procedure if they 	Ongoing awareness and communication between coach and group members.	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing

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		<p>become separated from rest of group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach to use Self, Group, Individual then Equipment protocols. 				
Unclean/polluted water	<p>All water users:</p> <p>Infection / illness e.g. Leptospirosis commonly referred to as "Weil's disease"</p> <p>Blue Green Algae.</p> <p>Other water-borne infections.</p> <p>Sewage/pollution spills leading to potential:</p> <p>Stomach upsets</p> <p>Skin, eye, ear infections</p> <p>Sore throat</p> <p>Chest infections</p> <p>Hepatitis</p> <p>E Coli</p> <p>Many other problems.</p>	<p>The coach will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paddlers have information available on water born risks such as leptospirosis prior to paddling. Areas of stagnant water are avoided. Reasonable steps are taken to check the cleanliness of the water (clarity, dead animals upstream, signs of litter and sewage/pollution, not used by livestock) before allowing activity to take place. Unless the water is tested and known to be clean, swimmers are advised to keep their heads above water and not to drink/swallow water if possible. Participants will cover cuts and wounds with waterproof plasters. <p>Participants will wash their hands and any cuts / wounds with soap and clean water afterwards and before eating.</p> <p>Any flu-like symptoms to be reported immediately to GP.</p>	<p>Become aware of any hazards that may be in the water based on local knowledge and news reports.</p> <p>Monitor Environment Agency reports for incidents prior to paddling and react accordingly. Also keep an eye on social media platforms such as Facebook for other incidents locally that may impact conditions.</p> <p>Advise the necessary authority should anything arise during or after the session. Notify group paddlers, if necessary, for example Norovirus outbreak or cases of Weils.</p>	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing
Food poisoning	All participants	Remind participants of the need to practice good hygiene and use hand sanitizer before eating, especially if following contact with water.	Maintain vigilance esp of children and provide reminders	Coach, instructor, assistants	Always	Ongoing

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Unknown medical conditions.	Everybody: Anything.	The list of possibilities is endless. However, there will always be a first aider on site with a current first aid qualification. A first aid kit will always be available and will always be fully stocked and up to date. For more major injuries the class will need to be stopped, and an ambulance called. All injuries will be recorded on the Paddle UK online incident form.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Litter	Everybody: General additional risks of contact with litter. Riverbanks are also a common place to see discarded needles and drug paraphernalia. Sharps injuries are extremely serious and carry significant risk.	Remove any litter that is safe to remove to bins on site. For any sharps the area will be cordoned off and the authorities notified. The session will be moved to a safe location. In the event of a needle stick injury the NHS choices website recommends: "If you pierce or puncture your skin with a used needle, follow this first aid advice immediately: encourage the wound to bleed, ideally by holding it under running water wash the wound using running water and plenty of soap don't scrub the wound while you're washing it don't suck the wound dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing You should also seek urgent medical advice - go	Coach to take a good look around the area where the session will be held. Ongoing observation will be required as litter may float into the session area or be blown by wind. Make paddlers aware of any areas to avoid. Note that this will also apply to any animal feces (such as dog, fox, badger, cow poo).	Coach, instructor, assistants	Ongoing	Ongoing.

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		to the nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department."				
Swans	<p>Everybody:</p> <p>Angry swans hissing, flapping and attacking water users. Injury associated with panic and potential animal attack. Could cause capsize or hysteria on the water.</p>	<p>Never approach any swans or their young in their natural environment; ensure a wide berth when paddling past the swans/nest. Coaches to be aware that some participants may not be aware of any risk near swans. Do not spread panic but treat swan with respect.</p>	<p>Swans may be more aggressive at certain times of the year and in certain locations, just be aware.</p>	<p>Coach, instruct or, assistants</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing.
Dogs	<p>Everybody:</p> <p>Bank based or in the water. Over excited dogs that are out of control can be a hazard from being a trip hazard, to licking, jumping, biting or barking and being distracting.</p>	<p>Dogs should generally always be under control by their owners, this may mean on their lead; however, an out-of-control dog can appear from anywhere. In this case it will be necessary to try to get the owner to control the dog. If no owner is around, then cease all activity to let the dog calm down and become less of a risk.</p>	<p>Ongoing observation</p>	<p>Coach, instruct or, assistants</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing
Wildlife	<p>Everybody:</p> <p>Any wildlife from Cows to ticks. We would regularly expect to encounter wildlife on the bank such as cattle and sheep. In the air/trees we may see birds such as gulls, cormorants and kingfishers, bees, wasps and flies. At dusk we may see bats, midges and mosquitos. In the water we could see fish, eels</p>	<p>Be aware of all wildlife and try not to disturb their environment too much. If any insect repellants are used, they need to be environmentally safe and not cause harm to others. DEET should be avoided on the water as it is harmful.</p> <p>Any users that are at risk of allergy or adverse reactions, i.e. from bee sting should make coaches aware and carry their own medication</p>	<p>Ongoing observation and awareness.</p>	<p>Coach, instruct or, assistants</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing

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	<p>and insect life. Swimming we may see otters, rats, voles, snakes and other associated creatures such as frogs.</p> <p>Bites, stings, scratches, itching, poison, venom, claws, bacterial risk etc.</p>	<p>as needed in an accessible place.</p> <p>First aid measure should be taken for any encounter as required.</p>				
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<p><i>The assessment below is site, activity and group specific.</i></p> <p>Picnic and Paddle with SteelBones 8 June 2025 at Friars' Meadow.</p>						
<p>ASSESSMENT LOCATION: The river at Friars Meadow</p> <p>SCC organizer to be appointed to take charge of the event and make sure appropriate briefings and dynamic risk assessment carried out and generally to supervise the event. NB that consent forms needed for all non-SCC members going on the water.</p>						
What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Participation	<p>Participants, coaches, rescuers. Risk of drowning or other injury</p> <p>Paddlesport is a high-risk activity. The proposed challenge, due to its nature, creates elevated risks which must be mitigated. It is ESSENTIAL that all participants going onto the water have completed a consent to paddle form and been assessed by one of the coaching team so that they are provided with adequate support. In the case of SCC members,, participants likely to need minimal support, but for SteelBones participants, esp amputees, support of varying levels will be needed...</p>	<p>Unlike many paddle sessions the coaching team regularly undertake, the group may contain elevated numbers of participants with physical disabilities. Although this is not a barrier to the enjoyment of Paddlesport, it does require the coaching team to deploy additional measures to ensure the safety of all involved. Coaching ratios will be adjusted accordingly to ensure safety throughout. It is therefore essential coaches are aware of the ability level of all taking part so this can be properly planned for.</p> <p>Some of the SteelBones participants will have participated in the challenge last year and therefore have some skills and experience, but unless they have kept</p>	<p>Before going on the water coaching team to consider in consultation with participants if participation/continued participation is appropriate and what support is needed.</p>	Coaching team/steel bones organiser	Ongoing	

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		up their interest, this may lead to overconfidence				
Equipment	Participants/coaches/rescuers. Risk of drowning or injury Given needs of participants, extra care given to group safety equipment	Group to have whistle, throw line, strap to tow, First aid kit, mobiles, group shelter, spare clothing	NA			
Ratios	Participants/coaches/rescuers Risk of drowning or injury	Dynamically assesses, based on numbers, that at all times there is sufficient coach/helper cover on the water. Suggested organization is minimum of 2 coaches/helpers per SteelBones participant on the water.	Need to consider if have enough helpers and to make sure more experienced helpers are spread around the groups.	Coaching team	Shortly before the event confirm which helpers and participants are attending	
Additional medical needs	It is ESSENTIAL that all participants give details of medical needs to the coaching team before going on the water	Consent forms to be filled in by participants	coaching team are made aware of required information	Organiser on the day	On the day	
Entrapment	The risk of entrapment has been covered already in this document, however, for any participant planning to wear a prosthetic limb whilst on the water there is a significantly elevated risk of entrapment in the event of a capsized.	It has been recommended that all prosthesis, where possible, are removed whilst paddling and stored in a dry bag. Any participants retaining the use of their prosthesis whilst on the water will require the coaching team to deploy additional safety measures. FSRT and PSRT covers the rescue of entrapped paddlers in open boats as part of the syllabus. Any instructor or coach has been assessed for this rescue skill as part of their coaching assessment. At least one instructor or coach will be	The coaching team to be made aware which individuals plan to wear prosthesis whilst paddling	Participants/Organiser	On the day	

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		assigned to any craft containing a participant using prosthesis whilst on the water				
Buoyancy Aid/Personal flotation device	Participants, coaches, rescuers. Risk of drowning	For most paddlers normal 50N BA rules will be applied. Consideration has been given to those with prostheses. The conclusion based on advice is that for those taking prostheses off or who are confident they will float with prostheses on, regular 50N are suitable subject to taking extra care with fit. For certain participants who do not meet that test, discussion with the participants on the day will be needed.	Advise those with prostheses best practice is to remove before getting on the water. Noted in consent form Coaching team to be made aware that in the event of capsize, flotation devices may not behave as normally expected so care needs to be given to keeping participants airways out of the water (eg those participants wearing lifejackets (rather than BAs) may end up floating face down and need to be "righted")	Coaches/helper/organisers	Before paddle commences make sure risk is made clear to participants. Coaches to check BA are in use at all times by observation	
Food Safety	All SCC team and participants	See notes above in generic section re need for practicing good hygiene	Dynamic risk assessment and reminder to participants	SCC Organiser	ongoing	
Sunburn	All SCC team and participants	See notes above in generic section re need for sunscreen etc	Dynamic risk assessment and reminder to participants	SCC Organiser	ongoing	
Put in at Friars Meadow	Participants, coaches, rescuers. Risk of drowning, risk of injury in collision, injury carrying boats.	Safe practice in carrying boats to be observed. At the put in at least two coach/helper to get on the water first and two to remain on bank to assist with	Ongoing observation and awareness	Coaches/assistants	ongoing	Ongoing dynamic observation

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		launch until whole of each group has launched. Each group to be kept together until all on the water and ready to proceed.				rvation
River Sudbury to Cornard	Participants, coaches, rescuers. Risk of drowning, risk of injury in collision. Risk of collision with RST boats and, on the stretch from Sudbury to Cornard, fast moving rowing sculls	Briefing to participants to follow instructions and keep river right. Each group of participants to include at least two coaches/helpers at front and back who will keep a lookout	Ongoing observation and awareness.	Coaches/assistant s	ongoing	Ong oing dyna mic obse rvation
Boats not to proceed over Cornard Weir or upstre ad beyond Ballingdon Bridge	Participants	Instructions to Participants and SCC team	Ongoing observation and awareness	Coaches/assistant s	Ongoing	Ong oing dyna mic obse rvation

Signed DH and NMCG

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