

INVERNESS CANOE CLUB PADDLE SPORTS RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Introduction

This Risk Assessment and management guidance is provided to inform **all** those paddling with Inverness Canoe Club (“ICC”). It is based upon British Canoe (BC) Paddlesafer v3 <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/uploads/documents/Paddlesafer-V3.pdf>. which is used by Scottish Canoe Association (SCA) <https://www.canoescotland.org/resources/safety#gsc.tab=0>

This is a comprehensive document as the aim is to bring together risk assessment and management in to one cohesive process that supports a culture of safety and shared responsibility across the club. Everyone has a responsibility for their own safety to ensure their actions both on and off the water do not put themselves and others at risk. All paddlers use their skills, knowledge and experience to protect those they are paddling with from foreseeable harm. In the event of an incident, and under the direction of the leader or coach, all paddlers should render assistance according to their skills and abilities.

The Club wants everyone to have fun on the water and to do so as safely as possible, however paddle sport is a risk activity. The aim of the Club’s procedures is therefore to i) to manage risk appropriately, rather than the completely eliminate all risk ii) maximise safety and iii) ensure paddlers are alert to the consequences of foreseeable risks.

Given all in the club are volunteers a pragmatic approach is sought to comply with Paddlesafer3. The key risk assessments work together; generic risk assessment (core for all paddlers), supplementary activity risk assessment (for activity organisers, Coaches/Leaders for specific risks not covered in the generic risk assessment) and the dynamic risk assessment undertaken on the day. Finally incident/near miss safety & injury prevention, management and reporting.

Risk Assessment and Management Procedures

These procedures are designed to provide a practical and manageable framework to risk assessment. **General risk control measures:** All Coaches/Leaders will:

- hold the appropriate BC/SCA coach/leader qualification (or equivalent) and current first aid recorded with the SCA (or equivalent body).
- have experience of and be comfortable on grades of water and conditions, group size within their qualification competence
- follow SCA/ICC Risk Assessment and Management Processes
- follow the BC Environmental Definitions and Deployer Guidance: <https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/guidance-documents/> that provides guidance on ratios and standard definitions of conditions. Usually 1:6, exceptions as required.

The following are ICC rules to which there are no exceptions:

1. Alcohol or recreational drugs will not be consumed before or during paddling in accord with the SCA Coaching Code of Conduct.
2. The process of risk assessment covers all ICC water-based club activity including activity that is on-shore and close to the water.
3. Paddling with the club shall not normally take place in group sizes of less than three. The exceptions being 1-1 coaching, unavoidable circumstances (such as in the event of an incident where a group may need to split).
4. Paddlers will wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the paddlesport being practiced. It should fit and be used in a way that meets manufacture's guidance. Helmets should be worn if the conditions merit this. The coach/leader will determine what equipment is appropriate, if the ICC Board has not issued other guidance.
5. All participants will abide by the instructions and decisions of the activity leader/coach. If a Coach/Leader requires advice on any aspect of a proposed or planned trip, support is available from the Club's Discipline Specific Lead. The ICC Board will support the decision of a Coach/Leader to cancel, abandon, or change the location of an activity for safety reasons. Club trips are entered on the Club's Event Calendar by authorised individuals.

ICC risk management process

1. **Generic Risk Assessment:** All Paddlers will be familiar with this generic risk assessment; this assessment covers all key risks associated with club paddling activities and venues: see appendix 1
2. **Supplementary Activity Specific Risk Assessment:** This is completed by the Activity Organiser and Coach/Leader if there are risks additional to the generic risk assessment or a more detailed scope for an event is required: see appendix 2.
 - a. For non-coach led club activities this is completed by the activity organiser and the most experienced paddler participating in the activity.
 - b. The risk assessment can be sent out to paddlers as part of the pre-activity planning to enable all paddlers to self-assess their competence for the activity and ensure all paddlers have a role in activity risk awareness. This will be reviewed on the day as part of the pre-paddle briefing to accommodate changes in conditions e.g. weather.
3. **Incident Management Preparation:** Coaches/Leaders/Activity Organisers will be cognisant of:
 - a) Incident Response Plan Checklist <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/uploads/documents/3-Major-Incident-Response-Plan-Checklist.pdf>
 - b) Developing an Emergency Response Plan <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/uploads/documents/3-Developing-and-Emergency-Response-Plan.pdf>
 - c) Emergency Response Card: to be available for an activity <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/uploads/documents/3-Emergency-Response-Card-template.pdf>
4. **Pre-paddle Briefing:** A pre-launch briefing should be given by the Coach/Leader/Activity Organiser that includes: a review of applicable areas in the generic risk assessment, additional activity specific risk assessment if required (hazards, safety, kit check, group roles, signals, emergency action, any participant relevant current medical history, water confidence, participants personal details, aspirations of participants for the activity), identification of 'incident lead' (see 'Emergency' below) for the activity/trip. A useful mnemonic for what to include in a briefing is: MY ABCDE

Me (about the Coach or Leader)

You (names of the group and experience, if not generally known, aspirations)

Area (the route, any hazards, weather)

Boats (and equipment carried: who has the group shelter, First Aid kit, flares, tow ropes, etc.)

Communication (VHF channel to be used, any signals needed, light sticks, etc.)

Doctor (paddlers to inform Lead in confidence if there are any relevant medical issues, or if not at their usual ability; has anybody got any professional medical skills, etc.)

Emergency Incident Lead identified to Lead and guide incident management. If conditions merit it, abandoning a trip for safety reasons is always an option, regardless of distance travelled.

For non-coach led activities the above briefing is discussed by the group. The paddler with the most experience is identified as an incident lead, preferably as part of the activity planning and then confirmed at the pre-paddle briefing. Paddlers recognise that this individual will move into the role should an incident occur.

5. Dynamic Risk Assessment

A dynamic risk assessment undertaken by the Coach/Leader/Organiser is a critical part of risk management and is maintained throughout the trip, monitoring variable hazards, such as changing weather, water levels, ability and morale of the group, etc. While this is not a group exercise, it can be helpful to share (and evidence) any changed assessments with other coaches/ leaders, or the group as a whole. The mnemonic CLAP is a very helpful framework for conducting dynamic risk assessments:

C - Communication. Is there a system in place for frequent communication with the people I am responsible for? If people are out of range of my voice, how do I communicate with them (VHF radio, whistle, use of signals, etc.) Over dependence on radios is a particular risk, as it may lead to the group becoming extended and overly reliant on this equipment, which then may fail or be unusable due to conditions. A radio check needs to be conducted with some distance between users.

L - Line of Sight. Can I see all the people I am responsible for? If they go out of sight, what arrangements have I made to ensure they are being looked after (e.g. move an assisting parent to watch that section).

A - Avoid the problem. Have I created a scenario where those on the water are naturally moving away from potential hazards?

P - Position of maximum usefulness. Where am I positioned in relation to those, I am responsible for and the identified Site-Specific hazards? Are the more experienced paddlers in a position to be able to assist those who might require help?

6. Incident / Near-Miss Safety & Injury Reporting

Incident / Near-miss reporting for incidents that could result in harm or injury or where learning shared from the incident will benefit paddler safety. SCA examples for reporting: collision, hitting obstacles, capsize, entrapment, slips/trips, musculoskeletal injury, pre-existing medical, equipment failure, non-adherence to navigation/access code see appendix 3.

Report to be completed by Incident Lead within 48hrs and escalated for Board review, with a learning and implementation plan shared prior to next trip/activity with coaches/leaders. The form can be downloaded from BC at

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/uploads/documents/British-Canoeing-Incident-Report-Form-March-v1.docx>

7. Review Measures

Review of measures and assessments is undertaken after an incident / key learning or annually to ensure the assessments are kept up to date: see appendix 4.

APPENDIX 1: GENERIC PADDLE SPORTS RISK ASSESSMENT

HAZARD	WHO MIGHT BE HARMED?	HOW MAY THE RISK BE ADEQUATELY CONTROLLED?	WHAT FURTHER ACTION MAY BE REQUIRED?	Review comments / review date
Weather, Temperature, Wind, Visibility	Paddlers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Route planning takes into account recent weather forecasts, tidal/flow/river levels, abilities/ fitness of all members of the group, ratio of leaders/coaches to paddlers 2. Individuals aware of their own competence 3. Anticipated conditions, required skills, kit and clothing explained as part of pre-launch briefing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Spare dry clothing: all paddlers b. Coach/Leaders: spare clothing, hot drinks, high energy foods, etc. 4. Coach/Leaders continually monitor participants for signs of hypothermia, sun stroke, exhaustion 5. Coach/Leader satisfied all paddlers can perform a capsize drill and re-enter their boats, with assistance, on the water or swim their boat and paddle to the shore. New members undergo training and are deemed competent before participating in club activities 6. Contact should be maintained within the group at all times 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All club activities comply with the generic risk assessment. Activity specific risk assessment is completed by the organiser and leader if there are additional risks <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Coaches/Leaders/Activity Organisers identify environmental water risk when advertising events: very sheltered (A), sheltered(A), moderate (B, WW2(3)), advanced (B, WW Canoe 3(4) kayak 4(5) b) Coach/Leader: participant ratios comply with 'BC Deployer Guidance 2. Paddlers all familiar with generic risk assessment. If an activity specific risk assessment has been required, this is sent to paddlers in advance of the activity 3. Pre-launch briefing as part of risk assessment 4. Coach/Leader dynamic risk assessment of weather conditions and regularly monitors paddlers condition. 	Standard process for activity risk assessment Leaders/Coaches: test of change, evaluate.

Water Flow & Tide	Paddlers	Route planning takes into account recent weather forecasts, tidal flow/river levels and abilities/ fitness of all members of the group Anticipated conditions explained as part of the pre-launch briefing Paddlers aware of their own competence.	Route planning risk assessment Standard prelaunch briefing. Leader dynamic risk assessment of water conditions and paddlers ability and energy level.	
Moving and Handling	Paddlers	Safe moving and handling is included in beginners/new members induction. Regular moving and handling awareness for ICC members in manoeuvring boats. Paddlers individually risk assessment. Club equipment is stored to enable ease of access	Standard Process for induction for beginners/new start members. Manual handling guidance and safety training provided to competent paddlers throughout the season e.g. safe moving boats, personal risk assessment.	
Other Water Users	Paddlers On shore support On shore support	Paddlers are aware of other water users in harbours, rivers, locks and canal systems. Where appropriate briefing will include awareness of other water users and relevant rights and responsibilities set out in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Act considerately and in a non-confrontational manner, both on and off the water. Leaders should be aware of the potential dangers within the particular environment the group is paddling in.	Paddler etiquette guidance sea, surf and river. Trip Organiser/Leader activity specific risk assessment of local risks. Paddler etiquette in pre-launch briefing for activity Leader dynamic risk assessment.	
Pollution, Water Quality, Infection from Waterborne Diseases e.g. Weil's disease	Paddlers	Water quality assessed visually prior to session: blue green algae. Made aware of flotsam. All cuts and abrasions to be covered. Hands should be washed before eating food. Advised to bathe soon after immersion.	Onsite risk assessment. Avoid intentional capsizes in poor conditions.	

Weirs and Manmade Features	Paddlers Coaches	<p>Helmets to be worn when paddling in associated rough water.</p> <p>Man-made features are given particular attention due to possibility of recirculating currents and hidden hazards. Consider avoidance if doubts over safety.</p>	Coach/Leader risk Ax. Appropriate skill and awareness training.	
Overhanging Trees or Strainers (Sieves) Submerged, Stoppers	Paddlers Coaches	<p>Briefing and information ensures paddlers are aware to negotiate around trees, both overhanging and floating. Advised as to correct action in event of entanglement. Carry appropriate rescue equipment. Operate line of sight paddling and do not paddle without inspection of lines. Consider options to change path or avoid hazards, Paddlers encouraged to undertake WWSR training and carry the appropriate rescue</p>	<p>Coach dynamic risk assessment. Paddler skills development and competence. Rescue equipment: throwline length 15- 25m, min diameter 8 mm, 3-5m length of climber's tape, whistle, river knife, Two large HMS screw gate karabiners. Buoyancy aid with quick release chest harness. In addition: pig rig, prusik, collapsible saw and duct tape.</p>	

<p>Capsize Entrapment Drowning</p>	<p>Paddlers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wearing of buoyancy aid 2. Buoyancy aids are maintained in line with Paddlesafe guidance 3. ICC equipment is maintained and compliant with Paddlesafe and manufactures guidance. Paddlers are responsible for ensuring their equipment is compliant. 4. Coaches/Leaders are satisfied that all paddlers have the knowledge to perform a capsize drill and be able to re-enter their boats, with assistance, on the water. New members participate in training and are deemed competent before participating in club activities 5. Relevant supervision for novices and participants on ICC activities 6. Coaches/Leaders hold the appropriate SCA/BC Coaching Awards or equivalent 7. More than one means of summoning assistance carried within the group, appropriate safety equipment accessible within the group 8. Group discipline should be maintained at all times 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supervisors to ensure buoyancy aid correctly fitted. 2. ICC and Personal Buoyancy aids tested annually and recorded in safety management data base 3. Record of annual checks on equipment. 4. Induction sessions for beginners and new members <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Regular water safety training available to club members throughout the season including capsize drills in righting an unconscious paddler 5. Coach/Leader activity specific risk assessment standard process <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Coach/Leader dynamic risk assessment b) Site-specific risk assessments for locations used regularly by ICC using BC environmental definition 6. Annual audit of Coaches/Leaders qualifications via SCA by Lead Coach <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Development plan for Coaches and Leaders. 7. Group paddling protocol 	<p>Safety Management data base of equipment checking required</p> <p>Standard induction process</p> <p>Calendars include regular water safety sessions</p>
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<p>Trauma: Head injury Musculoskeletal injuries, slips, falls, Past Medical History</p>	<p>Paddlers, Parents Leaders & others</p>	<p>Coaches ensure paddlers use an efficient paddling technique, appropriate paddle. ICC sessions include dynamic warm up. Present Medical History declared in briefing. Appropriate footwear to be worn. Where conditions require it, helmets should be worn. Risk assessment of landing stages, areas of particular risk identified and avoided. Equipment is maintained and stored to enable safe moving & handling.</p>	<p>Introduction, ongoing training. Standard process for activity pre brief. Activity risk assessment Leader activity risk assessment. Leader dynamic risk assessment. Risk assessment of frequently used sites. Appropriate checks on storage facilities</p>	
<p>Medical Emergency: anaphylaxis, heart attack, asthma, stroke, Medical History</p>	<p>Paddlers</p>	<p>Coaches/Leaders are aware of relevant illnesses/disability. Paddlers should ensure that appropriate medicines (e.g. inhaler, EpiPen, etc.) are easily available at all times and that they Leader/other participants aware of its location. Paddling is an accessible activity. Coaches/Leaders will adapt/modify the activity where possible in collaboration with the person.</p>	<p>Pre trip briefing standard process. Coaches/Leaders and Non-coach led paddlers aware of Emergency Response Plan</p>	

Lone Paddling	Lone Paddlers	<p>Lone paddling is practiced. It significantly increases risk compared to paddling in a group. Lone paddling is the individual's responsibility.</p> <p>Lone paddling generally should not form part of ICC activities. An exception maybe when a coach or leader may need to separate themselves from a group for incident-management reasons (for example rescue of a paddler that has become separated from the group). NB. Solitary practice with bankside support does not constitute lone paddling.</p>		
Night Paddling	Paddlers	Paddlers aware of guidance around night paddling: small groups, adequate lighting, risk assessed conditions and participants		
Faulty Equipment	Paddlers	<p>ICC maintain club equipment in good working order</p> <p>Individuals maintain their own equipment in good working order</p>	ICC annual checks of boats, SUP's PFD's, helmets, trailers as per Paddlesafe and manufactures guidance.	

APPENDIX 2:



Activity Specific Risk Assessment



Location of Activity:

Date of Activity:

Brief Description of Activity:

Name of Organiser:

Contact No:

Emergency contact:

Name of Leader / Coach:

Contact No:

Signed:

1. All attendees are following BC Paddlesaver V3 guidance and Inverness Canoe Club generic risk assessment 2020.
2. Additional specific risks are captured in the activity risk assessment below completed by the Activity Organiser and Leader.
3. Key hazards: A main part of this Assessment is to identify the key hazards and to take into account prevailing and forecast conditions along with the capability and skills of the group.
4. An on-going Dynamic risk assessment will be done on the day by the Coach / Leader to ensure the safety of all and the preservation of life.

Please review which items are applicable, add any others that are relevant and fill in suitable control measures.	Yes / No	Detail/Control measure / comments / further info
CONDITIONS		
Weather - wind, conditions, temperature, exposure rain fall?		
Sea state – swell, frequency, historical conditions?		
Tides – tide times HW / LW, heights, times of races?		
River levels / in flood / grading suitable/ access/ construction work/changes/ reported hazards?		
KEY HAZARDS		

Include tidal races, river features, rapids, weirs, exposed coasts, offshore over-falls, any expected changes to conditions etc.		
PLANNING		
Is the trip suitable for all those attending?		
Are extra safety measures required for trainees, young persons or inexperienced paddlers? Buddy systems needed?		
Trip planning reviewed and prepared?		
Coach / leaders within remit for trip?		
Numbers of coaches / leaders sufficient for attendees 1/12, 1/6, 1/4 ratio?		
Safe start point – suitable parking, unrestricted access?		
Safe exit point – suitable parking, unrestricted access?		
Emergency get out points and safe havens identified?		
Does the coastguard need informed?		
Does a landowner or body need to be contacted for parking or special access arrangements?		
EQUIPMENT		
Club equipment available for Activity – Trailers, Boats, PPE?		
PPE – Participants properly equipped – BA, Clothing est.?		
Rescue/safety equipment – e.g. VHF, PLB, GPS, first aid, group shelter, repair kit, spare clothing, food / water? (as appropriate.)		
COVID 19		

Does this activity comply with GOV / SCA COVID19 guidance?		
Have participants been reminded of social distant paddling?		
GENERAL		
Has the Risk assessment been discussed and/or sent to all attendees prior to activity?		
Pre – start shore side briefing with all attendees?		
All attendees are fit to undertake the trip/event?		
Any medical issues brought to lead coach / leader?		
Paddler’s cards issued?		
OTHER		

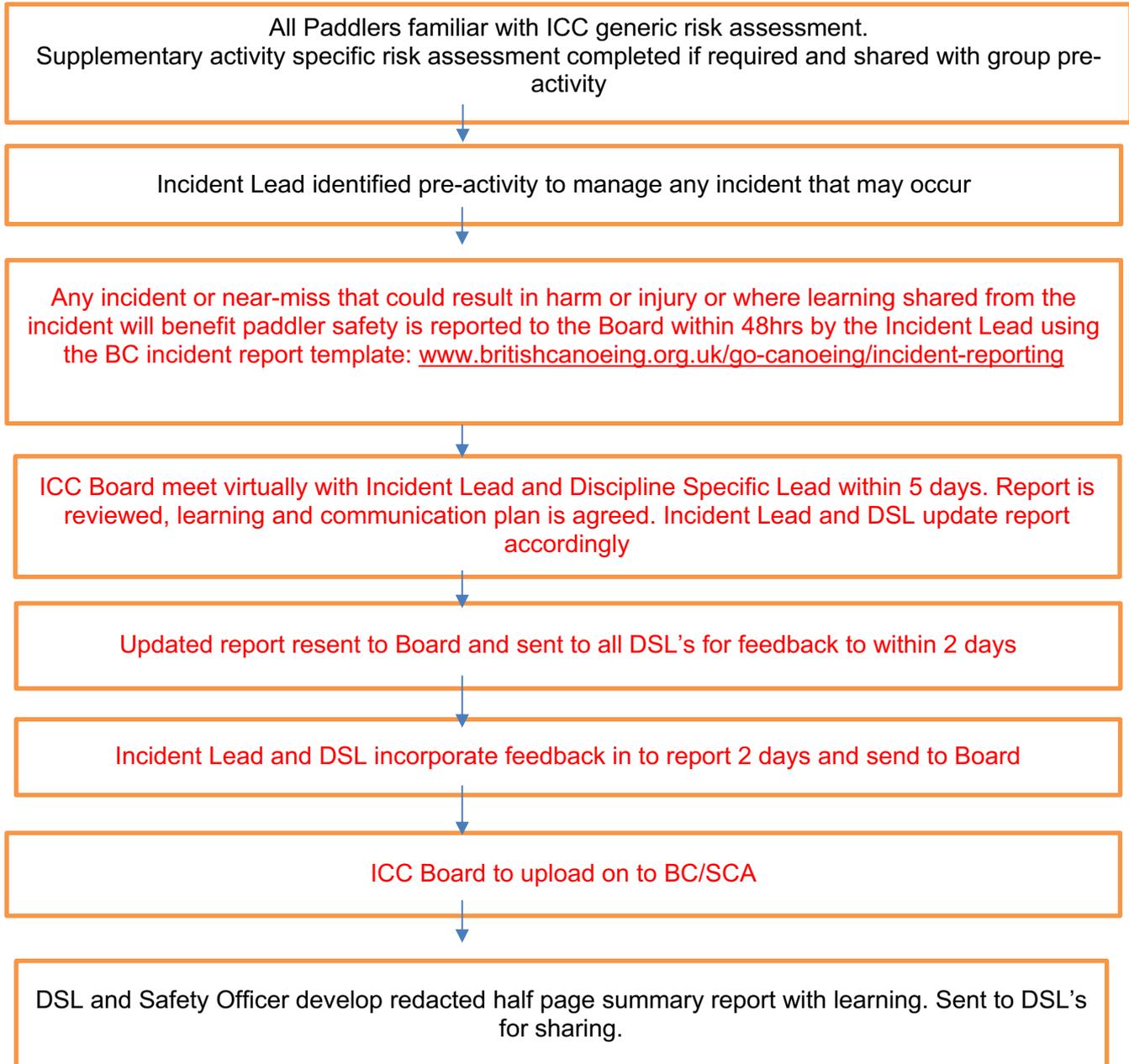
APPENDIX 3:

INVERNESS CANOE CLUB PROCESS FOR SAFETY & INJURY INCIDENT/NEAR MISS REPORTING, REVIEW AND SHARING OF LEARNING

SCA examples for reporting: collision, hitting obstacles, capsizes, entrapment, slips/trips,
musculoskeletal injury,

pre-existing medical, equipment failure, non-adherence to navigation/access code...

Processes marked as red are confidential



Significant incident/near miss learning should ideally be shared prior to the next activity/trip to avoid recurrence of safety or injury risk.

APPENDIX 4: REVIEW RECORD

Risk Assessment Review Process			
Activity	Responsible	Source	Date
Develop ICC Risk Assessment Process to comply with BC/SCA guidance	Safety Officer: Amanda Trafford Discipline Lead: Euan Avery	2017 ICC RA, BC/SCA paddlesaferv3. Prior experience	May 2020
Review and inform RA development	ICC Board & Discipline Specific Leads (DSL)	Comments incorporated	June -July 2020
Ongoing review in response to new guidance, incident learning	Safety Officer DSL ICC Board	SCA/BC guidance, ICC Incident reporting	Ongoing
Annual Review RA process	Safety Officer DSL Report to ICC Board	SCA/BC guidance, ICC Incident reporting	July 2021