

# Inverness Canoe Club Trips Policy March 2021

The rationale behind this policy is to ensure that Inverness Canoe Club (ICC) Trips operate within British Canoeing (BC) & Scottish Canoe Association (SCA) guidance. From a safety perspective BC/SCA are moving toward *all* Club Trips being led by Qualified Leaders (or Leader in training with a mentor) operating within their Terms of Reference. Consequently, ICC is adopting this approach.

Having Club Trips led by a Qualified Leader respects the governance of the BC/SCA awards and ensures club members can enjoy paddling safely. In addition, as a Club our philosophy is that everyone has a role to play in keeping themselves and others safe.

This policy clarifies the process for ICC Led Trips, Coached Events and differentiates Club Events from Private Paddles (peer paddles) which are out with the remit of the ICC & SCA.

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## 1. Introduction

ICC is comprised of a group of like-minded individuals who have come together to enjoy the varied water environments of Scotland.

There are two distinct types of club event:

- A Led 'Club Trip'
- A Coach Led Event

Events open to ICC club members take place in a variety of environments and are graded according to the environment conditions and the paddlers skills required. ICC Paddle sports activities carry an element of risk. ICC actively manage this risk to provide a safe enjoyable trip. All ICC events comply with ICC Paddle Sports Risk Assessment and Management which can be found at <https://www.invernesscc.org.uk/index.php/join-the-club/downloads/category/15-club-policies>

Club Led Trips and Coached Sessions are advertised and booked using WebCollect which has a clear description of environmental conditions and the required paddling skills to enable participants/ parents/ guardians to give informed consent to participate in paddle sports activities. A description of the personal performance awards for the environments described can be found on the British Canoeing at <https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/new-personal-performance-awards/>

Trip Leaders and Coaches are familiar with participants on their Trips and Coached Sessions. If required they will contact members to ensure their paddling ability and objectives are aligned with the planned Trip or Coached Session. If these are not

compatible they may refuse participation; however they will explain their decision and recommend a clear development pathway for the participant to be included on future trips. The decision rests with the Trip Leader or Coach as part of their risk assessment.

## 2. Event Types

a) **Led Club Trips** follow the process outlined below:

- Discipline specific planning meetings are held annually to develop a programme for the forthcoming year. Trips are coordinated by the Discipline Specific Lead (DSL). Additional Trips are added as demand and Leader capacity allows.
- The minimum number of paddlers on a led club trip is 3 including the Leader.
- Trip Leaders have a current BC leadership qualification (or recognised certification from another country) and are governed by BC/SCA processes.
- ICC encourages paddlers to develop their leadership skills and to attain suitable qualifications. The Trip Leaders Sub-group comprised of experts within the Club: Vice Chair, Discipline Specific Leads (DSL) and nominated advanced paddlers proactively develops Leaders.
- The DSL brings people together as part of a leadership development programme.
  - Aspirant leaders registered and working towards a leadership qualification within the next 2-3 years can lead a trip to gain experience with their mentor. The Trips Sub-group in collaboration with the mentor will approve Aspirant Leaders to a level of Trip grading.
- The expertise in the Trip Leaders Sub Group reviews incidents that may occur in collaboration with the Safety Officer and ensures any learning informs future Trips.
- The Trip Sub-group reports progress and learning to the Board via the Vice Chair.
- Sizes of ICC Led Trips can vary. The Trip Leader ensures there is adequate Leadership for the Trip cohort and environment, if necessary identifying additional support from Qualified Leaders or Trainee Leaders.
- An integral part of Trip Leadership is the dynamic risk assessment. For this to happen the Trip Leader needs to be *with* the group.
- All Paddlers have an individual responsibility to paddle within their current standards and experience.
- If a Leader is not able to be present, the “Club Trip” is cancelled and members are made aware. If paddlers choose to go ahead without the Leader this becomes a “Private Paddle” out with the remit of the Club.
- *Leave No Trace*: Inverness Canoe Club trips should be operated using the ‘Leave no Trace’ principles. For more information on Leave No Trace please visit <https://Int.org>

b) **Coached Events:**

- These may include: indoor pool sessions; very sheltered water environment such as a pond or lochan (taken by Level 1 coaches / Paddlesport Instructors); or fully Coached sessions on sheltered, moderate or advanced water.
- ICC endorses BC coaching qualifications.
- ICC encourages paddlers to develop their Coaching skills to attain suitable qualifications. The Lead Coach brings people together as part of a proactive Coaching development programme.

- Coaches operate within the Environment Condition guidance and at ratio's as defined by the level of their award from UKCC/BC: [British Canoeing Environmental Definitions & Deployment Guidance for Instructors, Coaches & Leaders](#).
- Trainee Coaches that do not have a leadership qualification will have a qualified Coach/Leader with them to ensure the session is in within remit. Preferably this is their mentor to provide developmental feedback.
- Coached session may be on a 1:1 basis. All Paddlers have an individual responsibility to be aware of their current standards and experience.
- Coaches may take learners on a 'journey' e.g. to apply skills. This is a Coached session and has a different purpose to a Led Club Trip.
- If a Coach is not present, the Coached session is cancelled and participants are made aware. If participants decide to go ahead without the Coach this becomes a "Private Paddle" out with the remit of ICC

**c) Private Paddling:** Members may use the club as a forum to advertise opportunities for people to go on private trips together. These do not come under ICC. When organising private paddling please follow the guidelines below:

- All adverts should be headed with the term 'Private Paddle'.
- The person organising the trip shall be referred to as the trip 'Organiser'.
- The decision whether to participate in a private paddle remains at all times with the individual or parent/guardian with informed consent.
- Not all attendees may be ICC members.
- ICC suggest it is good practice to have a nominated leader on the trip. The highest qualified person on the trip is the person who will principally be held responsible for the trip.
- Private paddling will not necessarily have a person in attendance with suitable rescue and first aid certificates. ICC suggest it is good practice to have at least 1 paddler with an appropriate first aid and rescue qualification for the grading.
- ICC suggests that it is good practice to adhere to the BC & ICC Child Protection Policy at all times
- ICC suggest it is good practice to adhere to the 'Leave No Trace' principles and reduce carbon footprint where possible reducing the impact on communities
- Private paddling will not be covered by the ICC/SCA Public Liability insurance. Paddlers are advised to be individual members of SCA where they will get individual insurance.
- If paddlers would like any clarification on this, please speak to the DSL

### **3. ICC Trip Description: Kayak, Canoe and SUP**

ICC Led Club Trips are publicised with one of the following water levels:

Very Sheltered, Sheltered, Moderate and Advanced, details can be found at: [British Canoeing Environmental Definitions Deployment Guidance for Instructors, Coaches & Leaders](#), or Grade A, Grade B or Grade C (as per the Pesda Press Sea Kayak Guides). Paddler skills: Beginner, Improver, Intermediate, Advanced.

ICC does its best to adhere to the levels in the Trip description however adjustments may occur for a variety of reasons e.g. environmental changes. As such, Trips cannot

be guaranteed to run as advertised. We will endeavour to provide a suitable alternative, postpone or cancel to ensure we meet the group's needs.

**a) ICC River Trips/ Description:** Information on river grades can be found in many forms on line e.g. the British Canoeing [Go Paddling](#) website, or The Scottish Whitewater Guidebook

**i) Beginner River: Grade 1 – 2 trips e.g. River Ness, Oich etc.** As paddlers progress from flatwater to grade 1-2 water (up to small rapids with regular waves) the skills that are required are [Personal Performance Explore](#) award level competence.

**ii) Improver River: Grade 2 /3 e.g. Middle Findhorn, Lochy.** As paddlers progress from grade 1-2 to Grade 2-3 water (where most rapids will have irregular waves and hazards that need avoiding) the skills that are required are [Personal Performance White Water Award](#) or [Canoe Award](#) level.

**iii) Intermediate River (Grade 3/4) e.g. Upper Findhorn, Upper Roy, Spean Gorge.** As paddlers progress from grade 2-3 to Grade 3-4 water (where there are large rapids that require careful manoeuvring) the skills that are required to hold a [Personal Performance Progressive White-Water Award](#) or [Progressive Canoe Award](#) or be competent at the skills within that Award:

**iv) Advanced - River (Grade 4 and above) e.g. Etive, Findhorn, Moriston, Roy.** An Advanced White-Water Paddler will have extensive experience of white-water rivers i.e. a wide variety of rivers with different flows, volumes and gradients. The skills required are [Personal Performance Advanced White-Water Award](#) or [Advanced Canoe Award](#) level.

**b) ICC Sea Kayak Trip Description:** Because winds, tides and swell can affect sea conditions the example venues can change and become a grade or two harder.

**i) Very sheltered waters are suitable for beginners to learn basic paddling technique e.g. Caledonian Canal at Muirton Basin, Loch Achilty.**

**ii) Grade A: These can generally be defined as “sheltered waters” and suitable for all paddlers from *beginner* upwards e.g. Rosemarkie or Arisaig Islands** Relatively easy landing with escape routes easily available. Offering relative shelter from extreme conditions and ocean swell. Some tidal movement may be found, but easy to predict but no major tidal races or overfalls

**iii) Grade B “moderate water”. These paddles would be suitable for paddlers from *improver* upwards e.g. Tarbat Ness (Portmahomack to Rockfield) or Handa Island.** Some awkward landings, and sections of coastline with no escape routes, should be expected. Tidal movements, tidal races, overfalls, crossings, ocean swell and surf may be found on these trips. They will be exposed to weather and associated conditions.

**iv) Grade C: These trips will be “advanced waters”. Paddlers on these trips should be experienced and have been at or above Sea Kayak Award (3-star) level for some time (upper *intermediate* and *advanced*) e.g. Cape Wrath or John**

**O'Groats to Stroma.** These trips will have difficult landings and will have no escape routes for long sections of the trip. Fast tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, extended crossings, ocean swell and surf may be found on these trips. They will be very exposed to weather and sea state.

#### **4. Children and Young People:**

ICC deliver a range of paddle sports for children, young people and their families. The aim is to develop young people into independent paddlers and young coaches through a person-centred approach.

Coaches and Leaders working with Children / vulnerable persons are required to hold an ICC PVG and a current safeguarding certificate (renewed every 3 years)

A Trip Leader who has their own child paddling in the group must have a second Qualified Leader on the water at the same time.

Junior members attending club trips must have the approval of their parent/guardian and have completed the consent form.

ICC follows the Club and SCA safe guarding and child protection policy which can be found at [Inverness Canoe Club - Child Protection \(invernesscc.org.uk\)](http://invernesscc.org.uk) and at [www.canoescotland.org](http://www.canoescotland.org)

**ICC Trips Policy Developed by:** Ali Duff (Vice Chair), Amanda Trafford (Safety Officer), Euan Avery (Sea Kayak Discipline Lead), Malcolm Wield (Open Boat Discipline Lead), Jim Miller (White Water Discipline Lead), Roger Holmes (SCA), Willie Macleod (in-coming Open Boat Discipline Lead).

The policy as a live document will be reviewed as changes are required and/or routinely annually.