

SSRKC RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Kayaking by its very nature has inherent risks. These include but are not limited to visibility from another vessel, the impact of weather conditions such as wind, current, tidal flow, waves and exposure to the elements.

The table below sets out some common risks associated with kayaking and mitigation strategies the SSRKC has in place to assist in managing these risks. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list but is aimed to assist paddlers in their self assessment, decision making and planning relating to a club outing.

It is usual for members to monitor each other's safety but no individual paddler is responsible for the safety of another paddler. It is always an individual's decision whether they paddle or not.

| Risk Identification | Description | Likelihood High/med/low | Impact High/med/low | Mitigation factors/strategies |
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| Rough water conditions | Wind and current either on their own or in combination can cause difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions. Wind strength is not always predictable. Even though the weather forecast may predict certain wind strength, wind gusts up to 40% above that forecast may occur. Wind against current can produce a short sharp chop making paddling and kayak control difficult | medium | medium | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinator and members research weather forecast prior to group briefing 2. Group briefing/discussion before the commencement of the paddle 3. Cancellation of the paddle or nomination of an alternate venue if extreme conditions are forecast. 4. Before paddling remind participants of the need to assess their ability to be able to paddle in the prevailing conditions 5. Members encouraged to ask for support if anxious in unpredicted weather changes.. 6. Paddle in close proximity to other paddlers. 7. Incorporate the buddy system when required 8. Increase the number of Tail End Charlies as required 9. Encourage members to improve their skills development by attending club safety days |

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| | | | | <p>and undertaking further training with qualified instructors.</p> <p>10.Trips in open waters will not commence when strong wind warnings have been issued by BOM</p> |
| Potential drowning | Occurrences like capsize, fatigue, exhaustion, illness, inexperience, group spread, unfamiliarity with your equipment, anxiety, can all be factors that contribute to potential drowning. | low | high | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants wear an approved and correctly fitted PFD relative to the waters being paddled. 2. Participants able to swim with PFD and clothing on. 3. Remind members of their obligation to attend safety days where instruction and practice in exit and re-entry of kayak is conducted. 4. Managing fatigue (See Fatigue/Exhaustion) 5. Cancellation or alternate paddle venue if rough weather forecast 6. Self assessment of own capabilities in the prevailing conditions 7. Avoid group spread – see group spread |
| Capsize | Occurrences that can lead to capsize include fatigue, illness getting used to a new kayak, sudden weather change, an unexpected wave and using a sail. | medium | low | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants to wear an approved PFD . 2. Monitor weather forecast before departing and watch for weather changes 3. Cancel or reschedule paddle venue 4. Members encouraged to practice at self and assisted rescues 5. Avoid group spread to ensure prompt assistance is available – see group spread. |
| Group spread | Safety is increased when group cohesion is maintained. Instances that can affect group spread include, individual lack of | medium | low | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants to monitor group spread and signal/call for assistance if needed 2. Lead paddler and tail end Charlie nominated at briefing |

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| | awareness,, rough conditions, wind, current, fatigue and individual :doing”their own thing.. | | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Participants encouraged to paddle between the lead paddler and tail end Charlie 4. Each participant to carry a whistle for signalling 5. Regular stops to rest and regroup 6. In difficult conditions (lake crossings and open waterways) regroup often, appoint extra tail end Charlies and implement buddy up system if needed 7. Large groups - appoint extra tail end Charlies 8. Break into sub-groups if necessary. |
| Sunburn/ heat exhaustion | Exposure to sun can not only lead to sunburn but hot days and long paddles against wind and current can lead to the more serious effects of heat exposure/ exhaustion. | low | medium | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants advised to carry adequate water, food and sunscreen 2. Provide regular rest stops 3. Participants advised to wear appropriate clothing 4. Inform other paddlers if you are starting to have difficulties |
| Medical condition | Paddling can be demanding at times and some trips can be in isolated areas where medical assistance may be delayed. It may also not be possible to find an immediate suitable landing point and support on the water.. | low | medium | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each paddler to self assess their medical situation and physical ability to paddle the venue distance in the prevailing conditions 2. The group carries tow ropes to assist in a rescue if required 3. Appropriate safety equipment is carried to get emergency assistance if needed e.g. radio, mobile phone, EPIRB 4. Each participant is responsible for carrying their own medication that may be required 5. Inform coordinator of any of any current medical issues 6. Alert other paddlers if starting to feel unwell |

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| Fatigue | Long paddles in challenging weather can impact on one's well being especially paddling against the wind/tide Returning to paddling after a break can also be physically demanding.. | medium | low | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide regular rest stops 2. Participant encouraged to advise other paddlers early if they feel fatigued or are having difficulties 3. Group carries tow ropes to assist fatigued paddlers if needed 4. Encourage group openness in the club so members feel comfortable to ask for assistance and group support |
| Hypothermia | Being immersed in water for an extended time or being wet and exposed to wind chill can increase the possibility of hypothermia which in turn can affect a person's functional ability | low | medium | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor weather and wear appropriate clothing for the conditions 2. Space blanket carried in first aid kit 3. Participant to advise other paddlers if they are starting to feel the effects of cold 4. Self rescue and assisted rescue practiced on safety days 5. Have a set of dry warm clothes available |
| Boat traffic | Being low to the water can make it difficult for a kayaker to be seen by other boats. A group of kayakers in a boating channel can make it difficult for bigger boats to manoeuvre. | medium | medium | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each paddler to follow marine rules/regulations 2. Maintain close proximity and move as a group in high traffic areas 3. Generally stay out of boating channels, if this not possible keep to the right of the channel 4. Generally paddle close to the banks away from boating traffic |
| Personnel injury | Injuries can occur at any time. Obstacles like jagged and slippery rocks, oyster shells, broken glass can cause injury. Falls can occur while getting in and out of a kayak. Injury from marine creatures like stonefish, bullrouts and stingrays are a possibility. Sitting for a long time in | low | medium | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wear appropriate footwear/clothing 2. Regular practice in basic paddling strokes and re entry techniques, 3. First aid kit carried on all paddles 4. Appropriate safety gear to be worn 5. Carrying appropriate safety equipment e.g. radio, mobile phone, EPIRB |

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| | your kayak can exacerbate lower body problems. Incorrect paddling technique or a capsize can cause injury. | | | |
| Equipment failure | This may be caused by poorly maintained equipment, incorrect use or breakage | Medium | Low | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trip co-ordinator to carry a spare paddle 2. Participants to carry a tow rope and essential spares and repair equipment for their kayak |