



Outside Operating guidelines and procedures

During the summer months (mid-April to mid-September) the club will meet at various outside locations most Friday evenings, all as indicated on the summer calendar.

General

Participating members who are under 18 must have a parent, guardian or approved responsible person present.

The paddles will be overseen by at least 1 experienced club supervisor plus a minimum of 2 paddlers who are deemed by the club to be competent to assist in running the club meeting.

The supervisors will all carry a mobile phone, towline or throw bag, whistle and torch whilst on the water.

A minimum of 2 club members with first aid training and appropriate first aid kit will be required on the water for the duration of the paddle.

The club members with specific roles are indicated on the meeting register and highlighted during the pre-paddle briefing.

If none of the club supervisors are present, the meeting is not to proceed.

All the participating members must sign the register before paddling and sign out at the end of the session.

Welfare and Safeguarding

The supervisors will have undertaken Welfare and Safeguarding training and their names, along with the club's Welfare officers, will be indicated on the register and our website.

If you have any concerns or issues relating to Welfare or Safeguarding, please make contact using the link on our website '[contact us](#)' page.

Set Up

All paddlers are to congregate a safe distance from the water's edge with all their kit ready for checking.

All participants clothing, boat and paddling kit will be checked off by a supervisor or competent member before the briefing.

Any concerns regarding competence, especially spray deck use, should be raised before the paddle starts or recorded if it comes to light during the session.

None of the participants are allowed on the water until after the briefing.

Before each session begins, a briefing meeting will be held by one of the supervisors to run through the '**float plan**' along with **the generic and site-specific risk assessment**.

The site-specific risk assessment will be filled out, explained to the paddlers, and if the session is deemed safe, the session will proceed.

The sessions will end (and be off the water) no later than sunset. These timings will be confirmed during the evening briefing meeting.

A simple warm up exercise will be suggested.

If there are any new club members attending an outside session who haven't paddled with us before, then the safety requirements, risk assessments and responsibilities are to be explained.

One of the supervisors will appoint an approved, land based 'point of contact person' for each paddle. This person will be in possession of the dedicated club emergency mobile phone, members emergency contact details and a club first aid kit (including bivy bag and space blanket). They will also hold the completed register, float plan and risk assessment file for the duration of the paddle.

Going afloat

The supervisors will oversee boat launching.

When paddlers are getting into the boats, one supervisor (or competent member) will be on the water, and the other supervisor will assist with getting participants onto the water.

One of the competent members must check that the spray decks are being used correctly, and the paddler can fit and remove their spray deck easily and that it is suitable for the specific boat they are using.

Once on the water, the head count is to be confirmed and recorded by the land based 'point of contact person'. The method of group control suitable for the session will be decided by the supervisors, for example: - novice paddlers kept together with a supervisor or competent paddlers front and rear.

During the paddle

Under normal paddling conditions, a group will consist of a maximum of **8** paddlers, which must include **1** supervisor plus **2** competent assistants.

Two or more groups will be considered if numbers permit but the ratio of supervisor/assistant to paddlers must be retained.

Higher ratios of supervisors to paddlers will be considered if highlighted by the session risk assessment.

The group is to remain together, and no paddlers are to be out of verbal contact range.

Supervisors will regularly check the paddlers wellbeing – tired, cold, thirsty etc. If there is a problem during the session, it may be shortened to accommodate the paddlers wellbeing, and the land-based person will be informed if deemed necessary.

If the session has taken significantly longer than expected without notification and the land-based person has not been able to contact the group, then the appropriate emergency services are to be contacted.

End of paddle

Supervisors and competent persons will oversee safe exit from the water and lifting boat and kit to dry land.

The land-based person, if they are not at the exit point already, will be called and informed of the group's safe arrival. A debriefing and sign out will be taken by one of the supervisors

Any safety or damaged equipment concerns should be recorded on the session sheet at the end of the paddle.

Accidents

Any accidents, injury or near misses will be entered on the Alton Canoe Club accident register sheet by one of the paddle supervisors.

Any accidents or near misses, especially those that require medical assistance or the emergency services, will also be reported to Paddle UK.

Personnel

Supervisor

- Must have a minimum of 10 years paddling history and/or have a leader/coaching qualification and is deemed capable and suitable to act as a supervisor by the committee.
- Must have completed at least the 'introduction to safeguarding' eLearning course.
- Must be capable of conducting rescues.

Competent paddle assistants

- Must have a minimum of 3 years paddling with the club or have an instructor or coaching qualification.
- Must be over the age of 16

Land based person

- Must be a competent person who has previously been agreed by the committee.
- They must have received instruction as to how to fulfil the role.

Welfare and Safeguarding Officer

- Must have completed the requisite training and have the approved qualification.

The names of the above personnel will be published before the summer outside sessions commence and indicated on the session paddle register.

Signed _____ Date _____ Chairman Name _____

April 2026