

Nevis Canoe Club Risk assessment

Assessment carried out by: Paul Biggin 3rd June 2024 to be reviewed annually.

This assessment is aimed at peer groups, who may have varying experience, meeting informally. The assumption is that a group is safer than an individual. Individuals are all responsible for their own actions and must make their own decisions as to whether their experience, their craft and equipment and they themselves are up to the trip. At the same time individuals are expected to share their varying experience to help others and all are expected to behave as a group.

Hazards. Who might be harmed and how?	Level of Risk - likelihood and consequence	Control actions, by who and when?								
Loading and unloading kayaks from vehicles.										
Passing traffic may injure participants.	High: risk of serious injury.	Choose unloading area away from traffic. Unload on side away from traffic. Post a guard to warn of passing vehicles.								
Heavy lifting can cause back strains.	Medium	Work in pairs. Use boxes or steps which are stable. Use correct lifting techniques.								
Poor roof rack equipment and/or tying on.	High: risk of serious road traffic incident or injury.	Driver is responsible for using good equipment and technique.								
Launching and landing										
Slips on jetties and seaweed covered rocks	High: risk of broken limb, hip, wrist, etc.	Choose a sandy or fine shingle beach. Avoid steep loose rock banks or rip rap. Use paddle for support! Slide boats if possible or use trolleys.								
Launching or landing in surf	High: risk of capsize, possible head or limb injury.	Use correct technique. Launch or Land one at a time.								
On the water										
Capsize	High risk, getting cold and wet or hypothermia. Boat gets waterlogged. Dislocated shoulder.	Practice heel hook rescue. Carry spare clothes including hat gloves and overcag. Check bouancy. Carry a pump and a towline.								
Getting blown offshore	Medium.	Check weather forecast. Stck together as a group. Carry PLB, Radio and phone.								
Getting swept away by tide or river current	Low.	Check tide times and range. Stay together as a group.								
Collisions	Low.	Aim to pass astern of other boats. Take care especially in rescues.								
Being hit by a paddle	Low. Can cause cuts and bruises.	Beware, especially in rescues, paddles have sharp edges. Take a first aid kit.								
Breaking or loosing a paddle	Medium:	Take a spare paddle and towline								
Loosing a hatch cover	Low:	Take a repair kit.								
Medical emergency	Low:	Take a first aid kit and a means of summoning help.								
Water hazards										
Rocks	Low to high: a capsize can result in injury	Wear a helmet. Paddling among rocks requires its own risk assessment								
Overhanging branches	High: capsize and entrapment especially in current	Avoid places where this is likely. Paddle midstream.								
Remote location	Medium: Communication likely to be poor, response likely to be delayed.	Take PLB, Radio and phone. Take bivvy bag, emergency food and clothing.								
Worsening weather	High: sudden strong winds can tire, demoralise, separate groups, cause capsizes.	Study forecast, have a plan B including safe landing zones, abandon or cancel. Use rafting and towing.								
Large waves, swell	Low: loosing visibility within group	Keep to group.								
Breaking waves, surf	High: Capsize near rocks or shelving beach. Split up of groups and capsizes in wind against tide conditions, or just strong wind.	Preplan trips with route, wind and tide conditions in mind. Avoid unintended adventures into breaking waves. Have practiced rescue drills in place.								
River or tidal currents	Medium: Capsize	practice manouvers in currents, ferry glide, entering and exit from eddies.								
Sunshine	Medium: sunburn, dehydration	Take a hat, sunscreen, and water.								
Night paddling										

