



Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club

Operating Procedures

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to

set out formally the operating procedures for Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club and define what is club activity.

a. Managing a club's duty of care

Clubs have a duty of care towards their paddlers and coaches and leaders, and need to have documents in place that show how they manage this duty of care. This requirement comes from the following:

- Health and safety legislation requires safe working practices covering customers and employees.
- Health and safety legislation defines volunteers as employees, for the purposes of the legislation.
- Duty of care and responsibilities are met by risk assessments and operating procedures.
- Clarity needs to be provided on what is the responsibility of the Club, hence the published list of club activity. The Club needs to be able to provide records of the club activity that takes place.
- Operating procedures need to include written authorisation of coaches and leaders, assessment of their competency, and the limit of their authorisation.
- Insurance cover covers failures, but the insurance company expects to see active management of risks before it will provide cover.

2. CLUB

a. Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club is a community club run by volunteers

All tasks are done by volunteers. Members are expected to take on a share of the effort involved in running the Club and to respect the work done by others. Prompt responses to requests are appreciated as this helps to minimise the work that has to be done, for example by paying subscriptions promptly, providing copies of documents and completing membership and consent forms.

b. Club affiliation to British Canoeing

Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club (The Club) is a non-profit-making canoe and kayak club. The Club is affiliated to British Canoeing (BC) and therefore the Club and its members are required to follow BC's conditions of affiliation. The conditions of affiliation are included within the Club's procedures (this document and the other documents included on the Club documents and procedures page on the website).

The Club requires its members to follow the operating procedures set out in this document and the other documents included on the Club documents and procedures page on the website so that the Club's activities can be conducted safely and within the requirements of the Club's affiliation to BC, occupation of the premises and the Club's insurance policies.

<http://lbcc.org.uk/>

c. Public liability insurance

The Club carries public liability insurance for club activity (see section 3a) via the BC insurance scheme. This insurance includes member to member cover, which is not always available with other insurance policies.

When members are paddling outside of club activity, they are not covered by the Club's insurance policy. Accordingly, the Club requires certain members to hold their own public liability insurance and to provide details of it to the Club.

Public liability insurance may be obtained by holding *On The Water* membership of BC or by alternative cover. If alternative public liability cover is held the member is required to provide to the Secretary a copy of the insurance policy cover note and the conditions of the insurance showing that it includes paddling.

The members who are required to hold their own public liability insurance are:

1. Members who are authorised coaches or leaders.
2. Members who store their own boat in the Club boatshed.
3. Members who use club equipment outside club activity.
4. Members who have a boatshed key.
5. Members who launch from the pontoons at the club premises.

Members who are not required to hold their own public liability insurance are:

- Members who take part only in club activity using club equipment.
- Members who take part only in club activity using their own equipment, which they bring to the Club for each club activity session.

BC requires the Club to provide basic contact details of each member who is covered by the BC insurance policy and this process is managed via BC's GoMembership system. The Club requires all members to give the Club permission to link them to BC on the BC GoMembership system.

d. Club associate members of British Canoeing

Club associate members of BC are members of BC affiliated clubs, who are not On The Water members of BC, and where the Club has paid the BC annual capitation fee.

The Club is obliged to provide the contact details of club members who are club associate members of BC to BC.

Club associate members of BC receive:

- Public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance while undertaking club activity.
- Insurance for entry-level competitions and events organised for and on behalf of BC Discipline Committees or Regional Development Teams.
- A BC E-newsletter (if details are provided via the BC Go-Membership system).

Club associate members of BC do not receive:

- Public liability insurance for paddling outside of club activity
- Waterways license
- Voting rights at the BC AGM

e. Assumed risk sport and personal responsibility

The Club requires that all its members acknowledge and recognise BC's Participation Statement: **"Canoeing and kayaking are assumed risk water contact sports that may carry attendant risks. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks, and be responsible for their own action and involvement."**

The existence of operating procedures and risk assessment does not detract from the personal responsibility of all involved in paddling activities.

f. Personal health and protection against waterborne diseases

Medical, mobility and behavioural conditions can affect a person's ability to paddle safely. Members are required to notify the Club of any conditions that may affect the paddler's ability to paddle safely. They are also required to inform the coach or leader at the start of each session. Medical conditions that need to be disclosed include: blackouts or seizures of any kind (including epilepsy), heart conditions, respiratory conditions, diabetes, reduced mobility eg for climbing back into a boat, and sight and hearing difficulties affecting communication. Psychological and behavioural conditions affecting communication and social interactions also need to be declared in the same way. This is not an exhaustive list.

A failure to declare a serious physical or mental impairment that could jeopardise the safety of the person or the group may invalidate the person's membership of the Club. If the Club doesn't know about a condition, we cannot put measures in place to accommodate it, and so may place that person and/or the group in unforeseen peril. Where such conditions are disclosed, we willingly explore what is needed and whether we can safely include the person in our programme, or lay on additional activities to accommodate that person's needs. However, it must be recognised that there may be instances where the Club cannot safely accommodate an individual's needs. Where this occurs, the Club will do what it can to signpost the person to an organisation that can help.

As with all sports and particularly water sports, there is a potential for coming into contact with viral or bacterial infections. Members are advised to wash after being in water or using paddling equipment.

Precautions against Leptospirosis (Weil's Disease)

- Avoid ingesting canal and river water.
- Wash your hands after paddling. The Club provides disinfectant hand wipes in each of the boat sheds, located near the doors.
- Shower after capsizing.
- When practicing rescues consider the location.

BC provides advice on how to avoid water-borne infectious diseases here:

<http://britishcanoeing.org.uk/uploads/commonUploads/British-Canoeing-Water-borne-infectious-diseases-v1-Jul-2015-with-copyright.pdf>

If a member of The Club has suffered from Leptospirosis or a severe flu-like illness for more than a few days, that person should consult their GP, explaining their symptoms in the usual way, mentioning their involvement in water activities and the possibility that they might be infected by Leptospirosis. Please can they also complete an incident report.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/leptospirosis/>

3. PADDLING

a. Club activity

The Club arranges its public liability insurance through BC. The insurance only provides cover for club activity. Club activity is defined by BC as: **“any activity that has been assessed as part of the Club’s safety framework and promoted on the Club calendar, website or noticeboard.”**

“Club activities also include inter-club activities where the responsibility for risk assessment and management is carried out and then shared between all participating clubs.”

The BC insurers want to be able to know exactly what they are insuring, and therefore BC requires the Club to identify all club activity sessions, and maintain a schedule of the authorised coach or leader for supervised sessions.

All club activity has the following characteristics

- Risk assessed
- The control measures stated to mitigate the risks identified within the risk assessments are included in the Club’s operating procedures.
- Advertised on the Club’s website, <http://lbcc.org.uk/>
- A record is maintained of when the club activity takes place, which may be at standard times, or occasional sessions.
- A member paddling alone is never undertaking club activity.
- BC has advised that it is necessary for the advertising of club activity to be accessible to all the club members, or as a minimum it should be clear how members can be added to the circulation of information about a particular type of club activity.
- Circulation of information is required to be by methods that are moderated by club officials, so as to ensure that the club’s safeguarding procedures, and GDPR privacy requirements are followed.

Club activity may be then be divided into two categories:

b. Supervised club activity

Supervised club activity has the following additional features:

- Delivered by and through authorised coaches and leaders, or external coaches.

- A record is maintained of the coach or leader who is running each session.
- The authorisation process for coaches and leaders is documented.

Supervised club activity may be advertised as follows:

- Club training plan
- Email
- Facebook
- WhatsApp

Examples are;

1. Taster sessions open to prospective members
2. Club coached sessions
3. Races and events
4. Pool sessions

c. Unsupervised club activity

Unsupervised club activity has the following additional features:

- Is not supervised by a coach or leader.
- The paddlers are required to have a minimum level of paddling competence according to the water and weather conditions.
- Has a minimum group of two and a mobile phone is carried.
- May not include juniors unless supervised by their parent or carer.

d. Club Races and Events

Club trips and tours are organised by club coaches and leaders. Guidance may be given, but you are still responsible for your own safety. Paddlers should follow the instructions of the designated leader.

Leaders take many factors into account when deciding how trips may operate. Safety of the group is the most important factor, and leaders may need to advise a member that they cannot go on a particular trip, or some part of a trip for safety reasons. Members must accept that leaders' decisions regarding paddler safety override all other factors such as members' requests.

Participants on a paddling trip have a valid expectation that all participants on a trip are covered by public liability insurance. Club trips and tours are intended for paid up club members only. However, the leader may permit experienced paddlers who are not club members to join the trip at the leader's sole discretion. A non-club member would not be insured under the Club's insurance policy and consequently a non-member attending a club trip must be an *On The Water* member of BC and show their membership card to the leader before going on the trip. The visitor must use their own equipment.

All club trips are led by volunteers and members should assist in making the trip an enjoyable day for everyone. Members should not put leaders under pressure to lead in places where the leader does not wish the group or individual paddlers to go, accept participants who are not club

members etc.

A paddler who decides to depart from the club activity must inform the leader and accept that the leader and the Club are no longer responsible for the paddler's safety.

e. Emergency contact details

Coaches and leaders are provided with emergency contact details for paddlers by the membership secretary. These will be initially provided and then updated as soon as any changes are notified.

f. Paddling at night

All paddlers paddling after dusk must show lights that are visible from front and rear.

g. Pool sessions

The Club operates pool sessions at Tiddenfoot swimming pool. Club members are required to follow the sports centre's procedures. In addition to this the Club has the following requirements:

1. An authorised club coach or leader is present at all club sessions.
2. Any emergencies should be reported to the centre's staff immediately and the centre's own emergency/accident procedures will be followed. Our members will assist the centre staff where appropriate.

h. Transport to club away trips

The Club takes no responsibility for the transport of members to trips, races or events. Members make their own arrangements regarding travel.

i. Club trips with overnight stays

When the Club organises a club trip that includes an overnight stay the Club is only responsible for the paddling part of the trip. Members are responsible for themselves for the rest of the trip. Juniors are the responsibility of parents/carers and they should ensure they are supervised for the whole trip.

j. Emergency Procedures/Reporting of Incidents, Accidents and Near Misses

The Club endeavours to promote a safe environment for all paddling sessions taking place at the Club and on away trips. Policies and procedures are in place to promote safe paddling and to minimise the likelihood of accidents and incidents. These include: risk assessments, paddling procedures, safeguarding procedures and emergency procedures.

Emergencies, accidents and critical incidents:

In the event of an emergency/accident/critical incident:

1. Stay calm but act swiftly and observe the situation, ensuring it is safe for you to intervene.

2. Assess and where possible make safe other participants and bystanders, and the injured person to ensure no further injury/danger.
3. Listen to what the injured person is saying.
4. If on water, the lead coach should direct the rescue procedure according to BC Foundation Rescue and Safety Training or other appropriate rescue training.
5. The lead coach should assess the situation and direct any first aider at the scene to administer first aid for minor injuries, to allow the lead coach freedom to direct others. If no other first aiders are present the lead coach should administer first aid.
6. If needed, a defibrillator is located on the wall at the rear of the canoe club building.
7. Do not move someone with major injuries unless action is required to prevent further injury. For specialist attention, call the emergency services on 999.
8. Other coaches and adults present should maintain safety of bystanders.
9. For all people directly involved, inform their named emergency contact.
10. The membership secretary will provide coaches with up-to-date emergency contact details and notify them of any changes immediately.
11. If a critical incident occurs involving behaviour seriously in breach of the code of conduct, the lead coach will ask all involved to return to dry land immediately. The lead coach and, if available, a committee member will attempt to mediate and make the situation safe. All parties and any witnesses will be asked to complete an incident form.
12. The lead coach should inform the Safeguarding Officer of any incident with a safeguarding concern at the earliest opportunity.

Reporting Accidents/Incidents

1. It is essential that accidents, incidents and near misses are reported accurately and fully in order that lessons may be learned and procedures may be amended, if necessary, with a view to reducing the likelihood of recurrence.
2. The lack of a report could hamper any subsequent investigation and will lead to substantial criticism of the person who should have made the report at the time.
3. Any accident which involves use of any first aid kit should be reported on an accident/incident form. Reporting all incidents including minor incidents is part of ensuring that the club has a robust safety culture.
4. An accident/incident reporting form should be completed at the scene where possible or as soon as is possible when away from club venues.

5. The blank accident/incident reporting forms are kept in the club house, by the kitchen shutter.
6. Completed forms should be forwarded to the Secretary, secretary@lbcc.org.uk
7. The Secretary will read the report and gather any additional information before deciding what action, if any, needs to be taken in respect of the accident, incident or near miss.
8. If someone is taken to hospital as a result of the emergency/accident/incident, further advice regarding reporting requirements should be obtained from the Secretary and/or BC.
9. The coach / leader should take advice from the Secretary regarding whether the Club's insurers should be notified of the incident. The Club is insured via the BC insurance policy for clubs and further information is available on the BC website. A BC Incident Report Form may need to be completed.
10. The Secretary will carry out an annual review of all accident/incident forms completed to identify any patterns or trends and the Secretary will report findings to the Committee, who will adjust policies and procedures when required.
11. Any near misses should also be reported according to the same procedures.

k. Responsibility to the environment

We are fortunate to be involved in a sport that allows us to enjoy the wildlife and explore the landscape as an essential part of the paddler's pleasure for aesthetic, cultural and recreational reasons. The responsible use of canoes and kayaks leaves no trace of passing and causes no erosion, noise or pollution; and is unlikely to have any significant impact on or lasting disturbance to wildlife and the water environment. BC recognises that the wildlife and landscape of Britain is a part of our common heritage, and has a clear duty to concern itself with the care of the environment where canoeing takes place. There is more information here:

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/go-canoeing/access-and-environment/environment-good-practice>

l. Access on water

It cannot be assumed that access is available to paddle on all waters deep enough to float a canoe or kayak. The law in England and Wales is such that there is no certainty of public access, and permission may be required. BC provides more information here:

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/go-canoeing/access-and-environment/access-to-water>

Many navigations, particularly canals, need licences and many of these are covered, in England, by BC *On The Water* membership, but there are others that require a separate licence.

4. PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

a. Procedures and policies

When using the Club premises members of the Club are asked to follow Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club's procedures and policies. These are notified to members in various ways including the LBCC website: <https://lbcc.org.uk>

b. Keys to the boat shed

All members who hold keys to the boat shed must observe these rules:

- Always lock and alarm the shed doors after you have used them. Do not rely on another person to lock up unless you have specifically passed on this responsibility to them.
- Do not use any boats or equipment belonging to other members.

The key remains the property of the Club and should be returned if the member is no longer paddling or ceases to be a member or upon the request of the committee or its representative. The charge for the key will be refunded.

The padlocks are "key retention" which means that you can only remove your key when the padlock is locked. While a door is open, never lock the padlock and remove your key unless you are certain that someone else has a key and will lock up. When you lock up always check no-one is left inside.

c. Manual handling

Paddlers should take care when moving or lifting people or equipment. Paddlers are recommended to read and take heed of BC's information on injury prevention:

<https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/resource/preventing-kayaking-injuries/>

Members are expected to assist others in carrying heavy boats to reduce the risk of injuries.

d. Care of club boats and equipment

To ensure that both boats and equipment fulfil their maximum life expectancy the following guidelines for use should be followed:

- Boats are to be treated with care at all times. All members have a duty to ensure that boats remain serviceable and available for other members to use and enjoy.
- Please only use boats that you are capable of paddling confidently. If you are unsure of your ability to paddle a particular boat, please take advice from a club coach. All boats can be damaged, particularly when being emptied of water, and there are techniques to minimise this risk.
- Following use, boats are to be emptied of water, cleaned (particularly of sand/dirt) and returned to their allocated racks.
- Any damage is to be reported to the boat maintenance officer via the whiteboard on the boatshed door. Damaged boats are not to be used until repairs have been completed.

- Boats are not to be modified in any way. This includes taping, padding, removal/replacement of seats or any other modification.
- All club boats should be carried to and from the water and not dragged across abrasive surfaces such as concrete, tarmac or sand. If you are unable to carry a particular craft obtain help from a fellow paddler.
- Where a member damages or loses club equipment, the circumstances of that damage or loss will be investigated. This investigation will refer to the age and condition of the equipment prior to the damage or loss as well as the event itself. Members borrow club equipment on the understanding that it will be returned in a similar, or better, condition and that they will be responsible for funding any repair or replacement. Any replacement will normally be on a like for like basis. Fair wear and tear is expected and the Club covers this.
- Only sit in a racing boat when it is on the water. Sitting in a racing boat when it is out of the water causes damage and is not permitted.
- Boats are not to be placed on a hard surface at any time. The best place for them is on the water. They may be placed for short periods on the grass, ensuring that they do not cause an obstruction. Alternatively, they may be placed on boat stands.

e. Use of club boats and equipment

The Club has a wide range of club boats and equipment for the use of members.

- Members are responsible for checking over the condition of club boats before and after use.
- Club coaching sessions launching from the Club and club trips have priority over other usages of club boats.
- When club boats are borrowed for paddling not for club activity the member must have their own public liability insurance eg by holding BC *On The Water* membership.

f. Clothing and personal equipment

Paddlers must wear clothing appropriate to the weather conditions, water temperature and location of the paddling activity being undertaken.

Paddlers are recommended to wear appropriate footwear securely attached to their feet. Wetsuit boots or shoes, old trainers are suitable.

Paddlers may wish to carry food, water and/or sunscreen according to the weather conditions and length of session.

Club members wishing to use their own personal equipment are responsible for ensuring that the equipment is appropriate for the activity and maintained safely. The Club does not take responsibility for the use of personal equipment.

A dry change of clothes at the boat shed / destination is essential for all trips whatever the weather.

Coaches and leaders may ask a paddler not to go on a trip if they are unsuitably equipped. By seeking to attend a club trip a paddler agrees to abide by the leader's decisions.

g. Buoyancy Aids

1. In accordance with BC guidance the Club policy is that buoyancy aids should be worn by all paddlers when on the water. A life jacket may be worn as an alternative to a buoyancy aid.
2. Racing: It is accepted that when training or racing, paddlers may wish not to wear buoyancy aids. In accordance with marathon racing rules the Club policy on the wearing of buoyancy aids when training or racing is as follows:
 - a. Divisions 7,8,9, 10 and lightnings: buoyancy aids to be worn at all times.
 - b. Divisions 1-6: buoyancy aids are recommended at all times but are discretionary: race organisers may make buoyancy aids compulsory if conditions dictate enhanced safety precautions. Paddlers in this category are encouraged to wear buoyancy aids when paddling alone or in adverse weather conditions.
3. Buoyancy aids are not life jackets: they provide additional buoyancy to keep an unconscious or inactive wearer afloat but will not keep an unconscious or inactive wearer's face out of the water to allow them to breathe. They will only work if in good condition and fitted properly. As well as wearing buoyancy aids other safety measures should be adopted when on the water: sufficient and appropriate clothing, self or group rescue ability, deep water rescue training, hazard awareness, emergency response alert ability.

h. First aid boxes

The Club's first aid box is located in the clubhouse.

When someone has used items from the first aid box it should be considered whether an incident report should be completed. See the Emergency Procedures (section 2j of this document) for further information.

There is a defibrillator located at the rear of the Canoe Club building on the school side of the building. The code is located on the information board in the club.

i. Boat storage

1. The storage of member owned boats at the Club is a privilege, not a right, of membership of the Club.
2. The Club's requirements to store Club boats and equipment take priority over private racking that is in use and/or applications for private racking.
3. Access to the Club and members' boats can be restricted with notice from the Committee.

4. The Committee will set the fee for boat racking alongside annual membership fee.
5. An applicant can only succeed in being allocated a rack if they are a person to whom the Committee is willing to allocate a key to the Club's boat shed.
6. Any member who wishes to be allocated a private boat rack should apply to the membership secretary.
7. If more applications are received than private racks are available, applications will be added to a waiting list for each type of boat.
8. Members should be mindful that the purchase of a private boat does not guarantee them an allocated rack nor does it create an expectation that one will be provided.
9. A rack for a private boat is only made available to members who paddle regularly at the Club, for example at least once a fortnight. Members may be asked to remove their boat if the committee considers that the boat is rarely used.
10. If a private boat is sold (with the intention of not being replaced) or otherwise disposed of by its owner, the rack which it occupied shall immediately revert to the control of the Club. Use of the rack does not pass with ownership of the boat, nor does this necessarily mean the rack shall be allocated to a member on the waiting list.
11. All boats and paddles stored at the Club must be clearly marked with the owner's name and telephone number.
12. Privately owned boats are NOT covered by the Club's loss and damage insurance. Members store their boats at their own risk and are advised to take out insurance for loss or damage, however caused.
13. Owners of private boats are responsible for their maintenance and repair. Club spares must not be used to repair a private boat without approval from the boat maintenance office, and, if approval is given, costs of parts used must be reimbursed to the Club.
14. Users of privately owned boats are subject to Club operating procedures regarding reporting of safety related incidents and rules of the canal and navigation.
15. The Club reserves the right to revise racking allocations and licences, and to allocate members an alternative rack.
16. Any member who has not paid their racking fee for the current subscription year, or any outstanding balance from the previous year, and/or their annual membership subscription by a time period of one calendar month after subscriptions are due, and / or has failed to provide details of their public liability insurance shall immediately become liable to forfeit the use of a private rack, unless alternative arrangements are agreed. The Committee is empowered to request a defaulting member to remove their boat from the premises within 28 days. Failure to do so will result in the boat being either removed to another part of the

premises (not necessarily inside the building) plus, the assumption of a loan of the boat to the Club to use as it wishes until removal.

17. **WARNING:** in the event of non removal after the Committee has required a boat to be removed for non payment of fees (unless agreed) or provision of insurance documentation after the second following calendar month (two months since fees were due/ insurance has expired) or otherwise, the committee reserves the right to take steps to dispose of that boat and to sell the same subject to and consistently with the requirements of the torts (interference with goods) act 1977 and to use such part of the proceeds as shall be necessary to discharge the member's liability to the Club.

5. VISITORS

a. Friends and family of club members

Club members may take friends and family for a paddle in a club boat in the following situations:

- The club member has individual public liability insurance and the friends and family are in the same boat, for example an open canoe.
- The club member and the friend / family member have individual public liability insurance for water sports and the friend / family member is in a separate boat.

In other circumstances the friends and family may not use club equipment or paddle from the club premises as they would not be insured.

Friends and family of club members are expected to act in an appropriate manner when they are on The Club premises or near to the Club's paddling activity. For example

- Follow the Club' safeguarding procedures
- Follow the Code of Conduct - Paddlers

Club members may be subject to the Club's complaints procedure in respect of the behaviour of their friends and family whom they invite to the Club.

b. Visiting experienced paddlers at the club

LBCC is happy to welcome experienced paddlers from other clubs to take part in Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club training sessions. The session must be part of regular training sessions or in a session run by a nominated club leader. To qualify paddlers must be members of an existing British Canoeing Club and an *On The Water* member of British Canoeing.

c. Come and Try sessions

Club coaches and leaders may offer taster sessions to prospective members who have enquired about joining the club. Taster sessions will be advertised on the website.

6. PADDLING LOCATIONS

a. River and Canal Rules

- Paddlers should follow the rules of the canal : stay on the right-hand side of the river or

canal unless overtaking and give way to large / less maneuverable vessels.

- Paddlers should show courtesy to other river and canal users.
- No swimming is permitted in the canal except as part of rescue training or following a capsize.

Version	Date of approval	Type of amendments
Operating Procedures 2024	Committee meeting:11/03/2024	Full review