



**Paddlesport Safety and Rescue
Sample Programme and Session
Plans**

BCAB Paddlesport Safety and Rescue Course

Sample Programme and Session Plans

Introduction

This document provides an example of the British Canoeing Awarding Body (BCAB) Paddlesport Safety and Rescue course programme and the accompanying session plans for the 6 modules.

Tutors are required to obtain, understand and consider the participants' current understanding, knowledge, ability, the craft that they use and the typical environments that they will paddle. This can be done prior to module 1 through introductions or part of a more formal process.

Note: Tutor to participant ratio is maximum 1:8.

The main focus for the Tutor is to ensure all participants are able to contribute, explore and practice. The 6-hour programme does not take into account introductions, information gathering, administration, getting ready or any transportation, the timings provided are for the delivery of the modules.

All modules are interactive, practical sessions, discussing and using equipment, and exploring possible solutions to common issues in a sheltered water environment.

Notes:

1. Participants rescue from their chosen craft throughout the course;
2. Maximum of 4 participants immersed in the water at one time.

Participants

Participants need to either hold the British Canoeing Awarding Body Paddle Explore Award or equivalent ability in/on their preferred craft, due to the paddling environment and the boat/board control required to complete the course.

The Paddlesport Safety and Rescue course is available to all ages. Tutors should check participants' suitability, as well as having appropriate mechanisms for anyone under 18.

Equipment

In addition to the participants chosen craft, the following equipment needs to be made available throughout the course:

- A selection of tow systems appropriate for a sheltered water environment;
- A closed cockpit kayak;
- An open canoe;
- A sit-on-top kayak;
- A stand up paddleboard.

Note: For competition discipline participants, appropriate craft must be provided.

Venue

The Paddlesport Safety and Rescue Course must be delivered in suitable venues that do not exceed a sheltered water environment.

Course duration

The Paddlesport Safety and Rescue course is a 6-hour programme that consists of 6 modules, of which can be delivered in a day or modular, over a maximum of a eight week period that suits the participants.

Time of year and water temperature

It is crucial that courses are run at appropriate times of the year that provide an appropriate learning environment, enabling the course to be delivered as outlined with participants immersed in the water. Care is advised and courses should not be run when water and air temperatures are low.

PADDLESPOUT SAFETY AND RESCUE COURSE

COURSE PROGRAMME

Module	Time	Module Outline
Module 1	30 minutes	Clothing and equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft overview, safety considerations and features • Clothing and equipment worn • Additional safety equipment
Module 2	30 minutes	Safety frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltered water environment and weather considerations • Safety principles • Rescue protocols • Calling for help
Module 3	60 minutes	Contact and Towing rescues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting swimmers • Towing systems • Recovering equipment
Module 4	60 minutes	Self-rescues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-rescues • Assisted self-rescues
Module 5	150 minutes	Deep water rescues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various craft from preferred craft • Techniques for getting swimmer out of the water • Multiple rescues • Unconscious / unresponsive rescues • Entrapped rescues
Module 6	30 minutes	Reflections from the course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on own learning and areas for development; • Skills checklists.

PADDLESPORT SAFETY AND RESCUE COURSE

MODULE 1

Module Title:	Clothing and Equipment
Time:	30 minutes
Module Outline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft overview, safety considerations and features; • Clothing and equipment worn; • Additional safety equipment. 	
Delivery:	
<p>One group with either their own clothing and equipment or equipment that is provided as part of the course.</p> <p>Note: It is better if participants bring their own clothing and equipment so they can practice and consider uses and limitations.</p> <p>Explore, discuss and show as a group (remembering to keep it within the context of the sheltered water environment) as well as promoting the 'clean principle' minimising any snag potentials.</p> <p>Craft overview, safety considerations and features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show how to carry out checks, for example, any damage, splits, wear to the structure, deflated/leaks, drain plugs, etc.; • Explain how additional craft buoyancy can aid rescues (if applicable); • Show relevant attachment points that need to be checked for safety and carrying, for example, grab handles, leash attachment points, canoe painters; as well raising awareness of snag potentials; • Explain how to check paddles and introduce that they could be used as a reach rescue. <p>Note: Anyone paddling a Stand Up Paddleboard or Ski must wear a leash.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation that Stand Up Paddleboarders and those paddling skis wear a buoyancy aid as well as a leash; 	

- Any water that has flow or is moving, a Quick Release Belt attached to a leash is recommended.

[Should I wear a buoyancy aid when Stand Up Paddleboarding?](#)

[Stand Up Paddleboard leashes: which one's right for me?](#)

[Stand Up Paddleboard leash information video](#)

Clothing and equipment worn:

- Highlight the need for considering the time of year and weather when choosing appropriate clothing;
- Discuss and show appropriate personal clothing, windproof, footwear and headwear as well raising awareness of snag potentials;
- Remind, demonstrate and get participants to fit a buoyancy aid (practical demonstration of appropriate adjustment and fitting).

[Equipment for paddling video](#)

Show additional safety equipment that is highly recommended to carry:

- Mobile phone in a waterproof case (fully charged);
- Whistle;
- Small first aid kit;
- Spare clothing;
- Food and drink.

Notes:

It may be relevant to introduce the participants to additional equipment such as a **group shelter** and a **knife** which may be helpful dependent on their role/responsibilities and the environment they will paddle in.

It is recommended that Stand Up Paddleboarders wear a buoyancy aid as well as a leash. **It is expected that Tutors and participants wear both during the delivery of the course.**

Throughout, encourage participants to reflect on the learning from this module and openly discuss as a group.

Towing systems are covered in module 3.

PADDLESPOUT SAFETY AND RESCUE COURSE

MODULE 2

Module Title:	Safety Frameworks
Time:	30 minutes
Module Outline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltered water environment and weather considerations; • Safety principles; • Rescue protocols; • Calling for help. 	
Delivery:	
Sheltered Water Environment:	
<p>In a group, explore and highlight the sheltered water environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the different sheltered water environments – estuaries/beaches/slow moving rivers/lakes/lochs/canals, etc.; • Managed environments - such as those at organised events/challenges; • Explore the potential dangers within the sheltered water environments – weirs/tidal flow/other waterway users/off-shore winds/large exposed inland waterways, etc. <p>Inland waterways video</p> <p>Weir safety a beginners guide</p>	
Weather considerations:	
<p>Using resources, encourage the group to consider the weather considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss where to obtain weather forecasts and what to take into consideration, show apps from a phone and websites available/ screenshots if no service is available; • Explain about wind strength and direction, including off-shore winds/outlook and temperature. These considerations are all significant in deciding where to go and what to wear; 	

- Emphasise why it is important to observe the actual conditions vs. forecast. Are the water and conditions aligned to the forecast?;
- Emphasise the importance of not underestimating the wind, both strength and direction, as well as how the land can affect wind strengths and directions with funnelling effects;
- Raise awareness of cold-water shock, hypothermia, heat exhaustion, dehydration, and sunstroke.

[Weather and Tides video](#)

Safety Principles:

- The use of CLAP (Communication, Line of Sight, Avoidance, Positioning) when on the water;
- Explain the (Self – Team – Casualty – Equipment) protocol and provide examples in context to the participants and the sheltered water environment;
- Discuss what rescues are of a low risk and how other rescues may be of a higher risk to self and others;
- Remind of safe manual handling techniques from pre-course resources;

Calling for help and attracting attention:

- Revisit module 1 and show them how to use a mobile phone in a waterproof case whilst on the water to contact the appropriate emergency services;
- Discuss other methods of calling in help – emphasise the difficulties in isolated spaces, whistle, methods of location, etc.

Notes:

Pre-course information provided; the safety principles section is adding context to the resources.

Safety frameworks and principles must be revisited on each of the modules 3-5 as either setting tasks or as a reflection focus.

Throughout, encourage participants to reflect on the learning from this module and openly discuss as a group.

PADDLESPOUT SAFETY AND RESCUE COURSE

MODULE 3

Module Title:	Contact and Towing Rescues
Time:	60 minutes
<p>Module Outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting swimmers; • Towing systems; • Recovering equipment. <p>Notes:</p> <p>Only 4 participants to be immersed in the water at one time. Participants to rescue from their preferred craft.</p> <p>Delivery:</p> <p>In a group, remind participants of the need to consider low-risk to high-risk rescues, and that making contact with a person or their equipment can increase the risk to the rescuer.</p> <p>Remind participants of the principles of getting afloat safely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe distance from each other; • Helping each other; • For SUP (use of prone paddling, kneeling and a safe depth to stand up). <p>Provide scenarios throughout, enabling participants to explore and understand context of the techniques being used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A paddler has drifted away from the group in the wind. Practice towing them approximately 20 metres back to the group using a contact tow. • A paddler is feeling tired from paddling and wants assistance. Practice towing for approximately 50 metres using a waist mounted tow. • A paddler is struggling with shoulder pain and wants some help to get back to shore. Practice using an improvised towing method to move the paddler a short distance back to shore. 	

Assisting swimmers:

- Encourage the participants to consider the environment and whether it is more appropriate to assist the swimmer to the bank/shore or to their craft;
- Explore and practice safe methods of approaching swimmers, including using prone paddling on a SUP;
- Practice methods of picking up swimmers appropriate to the preferred craft that the participant is paddling.

Towing systems:

- Advise participants to keep towing systems simple and appropriate to the sheltered water environment;
- Show a variety of towing systems and how their preferred craft can use them to assist others;
- Explain the importance of a quick release system, and provide opportunities for participants to set up, tow and release their systems.

Note: Provide opportunities for participants to tow over a variety of distances for them to experience effectiveness and efficiency of the systems adopted.

Recovering equipment:

- Explain the importance of keeping hold of equipment. Introduce the issue that the wind can make equipment drift away from the rescuer very quickly;
- Demonstrate methods of carrying retrieved paddles appropriate to the preferred craft the participants are paddling;
- Using the towing techniques practised earlier, explore how a retrieved craft can be moved.

Notes:

Safety frameworks and principles covered in pre-course information must be revisited either when setting tasks or as a reflection focus.

Some towing techniques can be revisited in module 5 if the craft requires emptying.

Throughout, encourage participants to reflect on the learning from this module and openly discuss as a group.

PADDLESPORT SAFETY AND RESCUE COURSE

MODULE 4

Module Title:	Self-Rescues
Time:	60 minutes
<p>Module Outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-rescues; • Assisted self-rescues. <p>Notes:</p> <p>Only 4 participants to be immersed in the water at one time. Participants to practise from their preferred craft.</p>	
<p>Delivery:</p> <p>Getting on and off the water safely, including falling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate, explore and practice simple and effective methods of good practice self-rescue techniques from the participants preferred craft; • Emphasis on a successful self-rescue, which for some craft could mean assistance is required - canoe/competition craft/kayak; • Highlight that if they are close to the shore and it is accessible, it may be more appropriate to retain their equipment and swim to the bank; • Throughout the self-rescue practice period, introduce how others can be of assistance during a self-rescue, as well as the swimmer giving assistance (stabilising the craft, etc.). <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed Cockpit Kayak - capsize in deep water and gain assistance from another paddler to help empty the water and climb back into the kayak; • Canoe - capsize in deep water and gain assistance from another paddler to help empty the water and climb back into the canoe; • Sit on Top - flip the boat and climb back on from either the side or the stern; • SUP - flip the board and climb back on from either the side or the tail. 	

Notes:

This phase of the course can be tiring for some participants, so ensure they can rest in-between attempts.

For SUP participants, demonstrate and allow practice of falling – get low and aim to let buoyancy aid hit the water first, by tucking forwards slightly.

It is important that participants are confident they have a self-rescue technique that works for them, either on their own or assisted.

Safety frameworks and principles must be revisited either when setting tasks or as a reflection focus.

PADDLESPORT SAFETY AND RESCUE COURSE

MODULE 5

Module Title:	Deep Water Rescues
Time:	150 minutes
<p>Module Outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescuing various craft from participants preferred craft; • Techniques for getting swimmer out of the water; • Multiple rescues; • Unconscious / unresponsive rescues; • Entrapped paddler. <p>Notes:</p> <p>Only 4 participants to be immersed in the water at one time. Participants to practise from their preferred craft.</p>	
<p>Delivery:</p> <p>Rescuing various craft from participants preferred craft:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind participants of safe manual handling and the use of appropriate technique and the use of assistance; • Demonstrate appropriate and effective methods, explore and practice in pairs emptying various craft from their preferred craft - keeping participants out of the water at this stage will allow focus on recovery of the craft, using appropriate safe techniques. <p>Techniques for getting swimmer out of the water:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When participants are both confident and have the ability to recover a variety of craft, introduce paddlers/swimmers into the practice; • Demonstrate how a tape/stirrup can be used for those who may need assistance back onto/into their craft; 	

Multiple rescues:

- Discuss in context to a sheltered water environment, how to conduct rescues of multiple swimmers and their craft;
- Explore as a group low-risk to high-risk (for example direct those close to the shore to self-rescue, use of assistance, priorities of rescue);
- Set up scenarios in context of multiple craft rescues, including the need to self-rescue.

Unconscious / unresponsive rescues:

- Explore options to recover the unconscious/unresponsive paddler to the bank. These options should be simple and utilise the group members;
- Demonstrate and practice with unconscious paddlers in and out of their craft;
- Introduce the importance of ensuring and checking the unconscious person is breathing and the urgency of calling for help.

Entrapped paddler:

- Practice from their preferred craft, rescuing an entrapped canoeist and kayaker;
- Introduce effective and efficient options to rescue an entrapped paddler, including the rescuer entering the water and reaching over the upside down craft. Explore how this technique can also be initiated from their chosen craft;
- Discuss and practice the next steps after the initial rescue, using appropriate in context sheltered water environment scenarios incorporating the use of the group, calling for help and towing methods with support.

Notes:

This phase of the course can be tiring for some participants, so ensure they can rest in-between attempts;

Safety frameworks and principles must be revisited either when setting tasks or as a reflection focus;

It is important that participants are confident they have the ability to rescue both a canoeist and kayaker that are entrapped in their craft.

PADDLESPOUT SAFETY AND RESCUE COURSE

MODULE 6

Module Title:	Reflection and Skills Checklists
Time:	30 minutes
Module Outline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections from the course; • Reflections on own learning and areas for development; • Skills checklists. 	
Delivery:	
Reflections from the course:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a group, discuss and share key learning points, what worked well, what was difficult, what solutions did you come up with. Use a format to capture the learning to aid and support individual reflections. 	
Reflections on own learning and areas for development :	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pairs, discuss your areas of strength and what you would like to develop, use the skills checklist to aid discussions. 	
Skills checklist:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants complete their skills checklist with the Tutor and agree areas for development, and ideas on how to complete the development areas identified. 	