SUP Safer

Sample Programme and Session Plans

BCAB Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) Safer Course

Sample Programme and Session Plans

Introduction

This document provides an example of the British Canoeing Awarding Body (BCAB) SUP Safer course programme and the accompanying session plans for the 4 modules.

In order to ensure that the content is pitched at the right level, Providers are required to obtain, understand and consider the participants' current understanding, knowledge, water confidence, ability and the typical environments that they will paddle. This can be done through introductions or part of a more formal process.

Notes:

1. The example provided is based on a 1:8 ratio.
2. Module 4 is based on only 4 persons immersed in the water at one time.

For larger group sizes, the Provider must consider timings or splitting the group. The main focus for the Provider is to ensure all participants are able to contribute, explore and practice without the overburden of specific technicalities. The 4-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 equipment, showing where to obtain information and exploring possible solutions to common mishaps. Module 4 is a water-based session that will require participants to get into the water to practice the techniques being explored. (**Note**: maximum of 4 participants immersed in the water at one time).

SUP SAFER COURSE

COURSE PROGRAMME

Module	Time	Module Outline
Module 1	45 minutes	SUP Equipment • Craft overview, safety considerations and features • Clothing and equipment worn • Additional safety equipment
Module 2	25 minutes	Environment and weather • The sheltered water environment • Other environments • Weather considerations • Tide and flow • Water features
Module 3	20 minutes	Planning • Knowledge, experience and ability • What to expect and what to look out for • Where and how to find help
Module 4	150 minutes	Safety on the water • Getting started safely • Supporting others • Rescue techniques • Calling for help, sustaining yourself whilst waiting for assistance

SUP SAFER COURSE

MODULE 1

Module Title:	SUP Equipment
Time:	45 minutes

Module Outline:

- Craft overview, safety considerations and features
- Clothing and equipment worn
- Additional safety equipment

Delivery:

One whole group with their own clothing and equipment, or provided as part of the course.

Note: It is better if participants bring their own clothing and equipment so they can practice and consider uses and limitations.

Explore, discuss and show as a group (remembering to keep it within context of the sheltered water environment and participants).

SUP overview, safety considerations and features:

- Show how to carry out checks - any damage, splits, worn to the structure, ideal pressure, deflation, checking for leaks, etc.;

- Provide advice on storage, pre-season checks and ongoing maintenance;

- Show relevant attachment points that need to be checked for safety and carrying – grab handles, attachment points;

- Fin check;

- Leash check, setting up and including release systems - dry land exercise to demonstrate quick release belt in action and for all to experience;

- Talk through checking paddles and on-shore demonstration of how they could be used as a reach rescue.

Note: In Module 4, this is a practical demonstration on the water and an opportunity to practice.

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

For any water that has flow, moving or might present a snag hazard, it is **highly** recommended that participants wear a Quick Release Belt attached to a leash.

Resources:

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

Clothing and equipment worn:

- Highlight the need for considering the time of year and weather for choosing appropriate clothing;

- Discuss and show appropriate personal clothing, windproof, footwear and headwear;

- Demonstrate and get participants to fit a buoyancy aid (practical demonstration of appropriate adjustment and fitting).

Equipment for paddling video

Show additional safety equipment:

- Mobile phone in a waterproof case (fully charged);

- Whistle;

- Small first aid kit;

- Spare clothing;

- Food and drink.

Note: Remind participants that, when receiving an attendance certificate, they will be signposted to further learning, training and other resources to remind them of the topics covered in Module 1.

SUP SAFER COURSE

MODULE 2

Module Title:	Environment and Weather
Time:	25 minutes

Module Outline:

- The sheltered water environment
- Other water environments
- Weather considerations
- Tide and flow
- Water features

Delivery:

In a group, explore and highlight what the sheltered water environment is:

- Discuss the different sheltered water environments – estuaries/beaches/slow moving rivers/lakes/lochs/canals, etc.;

- Explore the potential dangers within the sheltered water environments – weirs/tidal flow/other waterway users/off-shore winds/large exposed inland waterways, etc. (linked to Module 3 - Planning).

It is important to remind participants that, for any water that has flow, moving or might present a snag hazard, it is **highly recommended** to use a Quick Release Belt attached to a leash.

Inland waterways video

Weir safety a beginners guide

Using resources, encourage the group to consider the weather considerations:

- 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 (Link to Module 1 – SUP Equipment);

- Emphasise why it is important to observe the actual conditions vs. forecast. Are the water and conditions aligned to the forecast? Plan B (link to Module 3 – Planning);

- 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, heat exhaustion, dehydration, and sunstroke.

[Weather and Tides video](#)

Note: Remind participants that when receiving certification, they will be signposted to further learning, training and other [resources](#) to remind them of the topics covered in Module 2.

SUP SAFER COURSE

MODULE 3

Module Title:	Planning
Time:	20 minutes

Module Outline:

- Knowledge, experience and ability
- What to expect and what to look out for
- Where and how to find help

Delivery:

In a group, explain why participants need to consider theirs' and others' knowledge, experience and ability:

- Emphasise the importance of choosing environments and conditions that are well within the capabilities of themselves and others;

- Explain the vulnerability of paddling on your own and the recommendation to always paddle with others as a supportive group;

- Discuss the opportunity for development by joining an affiliated club or contacting a Delivery Partner to gain further knowledge and skills through formal organised training.

Encourage and discuss, as a group, why a plan is important, what to expect and what to look out for:

- Advise to plan in advance, do your research (Paddle Points, local knowledge, guidebooks, apps, etc.). Provide examples of resources to help inform planning and understanding the environment, considering the audience and including the use of apps and websites accessible from their phones, etc.;

- Encourage to choose areas that are known and have been paddled before to gain and build confidence;

- Explain the importance of informing someone where you are going and anticipated timings to be back off the water.

Note: Show one of the following to support planning and timings: Paddlelogger, Safety TRX, Go Paddle, Garmin, etc.;

- Discuss and identify known hazard avoidance. Include natural and manmade hazards, including weirs, ensuring that there is a plan to get out of the water early and walk around such hazards;

- Revisit and remind participants to check that the conditions match the weather forecast close to time of departure. What is Plan B? Just because a trip is planned, it does not mean having to do it if the conditions are not what was expected. How long will you and others be out of the water and is the plan known by everyone?

- Explain the importance that they keep a watchful eye and ear out for hazards, keeping away from potential issues, e.g. weirs, fallen trees, other water users (rowers, fisherman, motor craft, etc.);

- Provide top tips on what kit to have for the end of the session, e.g. dry clothes, changing mat/coverall robe, drinks and spare food, etc.;

- Signpost to the paddler's code (considerate paddling - looking after the environment and being considerate of others).

Skills and knowledge development:

- Signpost to [Delivery Partner Scheme](#) or [Affiliated Clubs](#) to gain further skills and knowledge.

- Show Go Paddling website look up - [finding course providers](#)

Note: Remind participants that, when receiving certification, they will be signposted to further learning, training and other resources to remind them of the topics covered in Module 3.

SUP SAFER COURSE

MODULE 4

Module Title:	Safety on the Water
Time:	150 minutes

Module Outline:

- Getting started safely
- Supporting others
- Rescue techniques
- Calling for help, sustaining yourself whilst waiting for assistance

Notes:

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

Only 4 participants to be immersed in the water at one time.

Delivery:

Getting on and off the water safely, including falling:

- Discuss, explore and practice methods of getting afloat (kneeling), safely apart from each other and a safe depth to stand up;
- Practice departing the bank/shore/beach and landing in a safe kneeling position;
- Demonstrate and allow practice of falling – wobbly/go low/falling into the water, arch back and let buoyancy aid hit the water first;
- Allow them to experiment getting back on their boards, and assist by showing demonstrations of good technique;
- If unable to get back on the board, show someone else assisting them to get back onto their board;

Note: this can be tiring for some participants, so ensure they can rest in-between attempts.

- Set up a short paddling exercise 25-50m, kneeling at first, then into the standing position coming back to land, ensuring they follow the shallow water concept of returning to the knees. Using a short, triangular course can raise their awareness of paddling into, across and downwind in a sheltered water environment.

Review and emphasise safe depths/methods of getting back on the SUP, tailored to the individuals' needs and ability. Use of others to help.

Efficient methods of recovery and movement:

- Provide an opportunity for participants to explore and practice methods to retrieve a dropped paddle, as well as methods to return to the shore;
- Retrieving your own paddle - post remount using hands to propel whilst on belly (prone) or knee(s) paddling;
- A prone paddling exercise of approximately 100 metres to build craft confidence and understanding of reliance on board over paddle.

Review and emphasise the use of prone paddling, emphasis on losing your paddle does not prevent its recovery or their return to shore.

Leashes:

A follow on from Module 1.

- Revisit the choice of leashes and the environments;
- Demonstrations and practice of releasing a belt system with tension (to highlight the need for the right system);
- Locating the release mechanism (toggle or webbing);
- Important to emphasise that once a Quick Release system has been deployed, there is no floatation unless a buoyancy aid is worn.

Review and emphasise the need for the correct choice of leash to the environment being paddled, importance to practice (safely) and that it is **highly** recommended to wear a buoyancy aid.

For demonstration purposes only, show how different the water height is from the mouth when wearing, and not wearing, a buoyancy aid.

Supporting others:

- Together, explore and discuss common mishaps that occur in sheltered water and other environments;
- Emphasise that getting out of your comfort zone too quickly makes the SUP paddler vulnerable;
- Provide demonstrations and get the group to practice in pairs to carry out self/assisted rescues;
- Introduce simple solutions if someone in the group gets fatigued or injured;
- Provide examples and options of line tows or with improvised leash and contact tows;
- Assist a fellow paddler to get back on their board, including utilising an appropriate board flip to assist.

Review and emphasise the benefits of paddling with others to support during paddling and rescues, as well as early call for help if needed, rather than too late.

Unconscious:

- Explain that, although not common, this is an important topic to both discuss and practice;
- Demonstrate and allow to practice in turning a face-down, in the water, casualty, opening and maintaining their airway and calling for help.

Review and emphasise the importance of knowing and practising the technique, although uncommon and the importance of calling for help.

Calling for help and attracting attention:

- Revisit Module 1 and show them how to use a mobile phone in a waterproof case whilst on board to contact the appropriate emergency services;
- Discuss other methods of calling in help – emphasise the difficulties in isolated spaces, whistle, strobe, VHF, PLB, What3Words, etc.

Note: It is important that the participant leaves the course confident that they have a method of rescue and means of calling the emergency services and attracting nearby attention.

Note: Remind participants that, when receiving certification, they will be signposted to further learning, training and other resources to remind them of the topics covered in Module 4.