

OFFSHORE WINDS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDS

Guidance Document

Over the past six months British Canoeing, NGB for Stand Up Paddleboarding, has commissioned several research projects to develop insight to enable evidence driven guidance and qualification content for the Stand-Up Paddleboard community.

Recent statistics released by the RNLI show that offshore winds have been a significant contributor in Stand-Up Paddleboarders getting into trouble. Over the past few years British Canoeing have been active in raising awareness through working with major retailers promoting point of sale information and educational programmes.

British Canoeing's current guidance is for Stand Up Paddleboarders [to avoid offshore winds](#).

What happens to a Stand-Up Paddleboarder in an offshore wind?

The study provided clear evidence of the significant impact that moderate offshore winds have on SUP paddlers.

In 30mins in a Force 4 wind (18-20 mph) a paddler could drift approximately 1 mile.

The research also indicated that different paddler profiles on the Stand-Up Paddleboard can affect drift, including the size of the person, adult and child on the board, as well as tidal influences, wind gusts and type of board meaning the distance drifted could exceed the example given.

The research has evidenced, that if a paddler remained static, with no attempt to paddle, that in a standing position the paddler would drift the furthest, followed by kneeling, then laying down on the board. Sitting on the board with legs aside slowed down the drift further.

Prone paddling

Adopting the prone paddling position (laying down) and using arms to propel the board is an efficient method of making progress back to land against an offshore wind. However, this demands specific physical conditioning and practice, and those new to such technique quickly tire and no or little progress is made.

Stand-Up Paddleboard Brake Position

Our offshore winds research has shown that a Stand Up Paddleboarder, if caught out in an offshore wind and unable to paddle/prone back to the land, can reduce the amount of distance they drift by adopting the SUP Brake Position (SBP).

The SBP is 63% more effective at reducing the speed at which a SUP paddler will be blown out to sea when compared to a SUP paddler standing on their board.



Recommendations

1. Our safety guidance remains the same, advising Stand Up Paddlers to wear a buoyancy aid, carry a means of communications in a waterproof pouch, [wear the correct leash](#), and [avoid offshore winds](#).
2. Prone paddling to be practised and used as an appropriate technique to make progress
3. Attend a British Canoeing Awarding Body [SUP Safer course](#), that covers the use of prone paddling techniques, keeping safe and approaches to deal with incidents.
4. Adopt the Stand-Up Paddleboard Brake Position if unable to return to shore to slow down any drift, dial 999, and remain on the board and be more visible to the emergency services.

For further information on this research there is an [abstract from the research](#) and [podcast available](#).