

## OFFSHORE WINDS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDS July 2023

### Abstract from research

Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) has experienced a surge in popularity in recent years. However, along with this growth in participation, there has also been a substantial increase in the number of individuals encountering difficulties while out on their SUPs. The RNLI have witnessed a significant increase in the number of SUP paddlers seeking assistance with a substantial majority of these rescues have attributed their occurrence primarily to offshore winds.

The study was aimed to provide informed guidance to SUP users, British Canoeing Awarding Body Coaches and Leaders on the effects of offshore winds on SUP paddlers, and to make recommendations on the possible course of action to take should a SUP paddler find themselves being blown offshore.

As part of this study, a field-based methodology was utilised to gather empirical data concerning the impact of offshore winds on SUP paddlers in three primary positions:

1. Standing
2. Kneeling
3. Prone

The subsequent phase of data collection concentrated on assessing the efficacy of various techniques, including sitting with legs astride the SUP and using both legs and paddle to generate drag. The primary objective was to determine whether these factors exerted a substantial influence on the rate of drift in offshore wind conditions.

The findings of the study provide 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 evidence also highlighted an effective technique for SUP paddlers to adopt in case they find themselves in an offshore wind situation, known as the **SUP Brake Position**.

Currently, this technique is not widely advised to SUP paddlers, as the recommendation is to lie prone on the board and paddle back using their arms. However, this approach leads to rapid exhaustion for paddlers who are not adequately conditioned, and resting in a prone position results in a 36% faster drift rate compared to adopting the **SUP Brake Position**.



For more information on this research there is a [guidance document](#) and [podcast available](#).