



**Inland Open Water Safety and Rescue
Sample Programme and Session Plans**

BCAB Inland Open Water Safety and Rescue Course

Sample Programme and Session Plans

Introduction

This document provides an example of the British Canoeing Awarding Body (BCAB) Inland Open Water Safety and Rescue course programme and the accompanying session plans for the 7 modules.

Tutors are required to obtain, understand and consider 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 minimum 1:2 and maximum 1:6.

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 moderate inland open water environment.

The moderate inland open water environment is defined as large areas of open water that exceed the sheltered water definition, where the paddlers are no more than 500 metres offshore and in wind strength that does not exceed Beaufort force 4.

Notes:

1. Participants rescue from their chosen craft throughout the course;
2. It is not mandatory that there is mixed craft on this course but it can be delivered with mixed craft if required by the participants;
3. Care must be taken with the amount of participants immersed in the water at one time.

Participants

Participants need to either hold the relevant British Canoeing Awarding Body Personal Performance Award or equivalent ability in/on their preferred craft due to the paddling environment and the boat/board control required to complete the course. This should be filtered via joining instructions and first contact to make sure the participants are suitable for the environment that the course will be conducted in.

As an example, the Open Water Touring Award or Progressive Canoe Award would be seen as the appropriate level of ability to fully engage on the course.

The Inland Open Water 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, where appropriate for the craft, needs to be made available throughout the course:

- A selection of tow systems appropriate for an inland open water environment;
- Quick Release Belt attached to a leash;
- Bailer or pumps for closed crafts;
- Methods for calling for help;
- Map of the course venue;
- Group shelter;
- Appropriate first aid kit;
- Appropriate repair kit;
- Spare clothing;
- Knife.

Note: For a mixed discipline course, appropriate craft must be provided.

Venue

The Inland Open Water Safety and Rescue course must be delivered in suitable conditions that are above the sheltered water environment and do not exceed the moderate inland open water environment.

Course duration

The Inland Open Water Safety and Rescue course is a 6 hour programme that consists of 7 modules. This can be delivered in a day or modular, over a maximum of an eight week period to suit the participants.

Time of year and water temperature

It is crucial that courses are run at 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 when water and air temperatures are low.

INLAND OPEN WATER SAFETY AND RESCUE COURSE COURSE PROGRAMME

Module	Time	Module Outline
Module 1	45 minutes	Safety frameworks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inland open water environment and weather considerations ● Safety principles ● Rescue protocols / Decision making ● Calling for help / Attracting attention ● Journey planning
Module 2	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 3	90 minutes	Providing assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Holding position ● Systems for towing and assisting a paddler ● Injured paddler ● Recovering equipment ● Assisting a swimmer ● Evacuating
Module 4	45 minutes	Deep water rescues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Techniques for emptying/righting craft and getting the swimmer out of the water and ready to continue the trip
Module 5	40 minutes	Self-rescues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-rescues ● Assisted rescues
Module 6	90 minutes	Rescue scenarios <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incident management ● Multiple rescues ● Unconscious / Unresponsive rescues

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrapped / Entangled rescues
Module 7	20 minutes	<p>Reflection and skills checklist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections from the course • Reflections on own learning and areas for development • Skills checklist

INLAND OPEN WATER SAFETY AND RESCUE COURSE

MODULE 1

Module Title:	Safety frameworks and journey planning
Time:	45 minutes
Module Outline:	
<p>Safety frameworks (30 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inland open water environment and weather considerations • Safety principles • Rescue protocols / Decision making • Calling for help / Attracting attention <p>Journey planning (15 minutes)</p>	
Delivery:	
Inland open water environment and weather considerations:	
<p>In a group, explore and highlight the moderate inland open water environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the different inland open water environments – estuaries/beaches/slow moving large rivers/lakes/lochs, etc.; • Introduce the notion of managed environments (e.g. reservoirs, private lakes), as well as those at organised events/challenges; • Explore the potential dangers within the inland open water environment – tidal flow/other waterway users/off-shore winds/large exposed inland waterways, fetch, etc. <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; • Get the group to compare the weather forecast to what is actually happening at that time; • Reinforce that these considerations are all significant in deciding where to go and what to wear; 	

- Raise awareness of cold-water shock, hypothermia, heat exhaustion, dehydration and sunstroke;
- Question how this will affect their journey plan and what decision making process they will need to make the trip safe. Does the get on location need to change?

[Weather and Tides video](#)

Safety principles:

- The use of CLAP (Communication, Line of Sight, Avoidance, Positioning) when on the water;
- The Clean Principle: This principle should become a way of thinking for paddlers. Applying these principles considerably reduces the risk of equipment, clothing and ropes snagging;
- Equipment considerations if we are working with ropes that are quick to release;
- Discuss the low risk and high risk scale for conducting the course with regards to rescues and moving people and craft;
Lower risk ←————→ Higher risk
- Remind the participants of safe manual handling techniques.

Rescue protocols / Decision making:

- Explain the STCE (Self – Team – Casualty – Equipment) protocol and provide examples in context to the participants and the inland open water environment;
- Discuss the difference between Slow-thinking and Fast-thinking decision making for inland open water rescues. Approaches need to be considered rather than rushed but once finalised, put into action in a deliberate manner.

Calling for help / Attracting attention:

- Show the group 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, personal locator beacons, use of phone apps, e.g. what3words GPS, Emergency SMS service;
- Explain how to use a map to find help - grid references, commonly used symbols, etc.;
- Send a copy of your journey plan to a close contact in case of delayed return or injury, to ensure help is available.

Note: Further to the pre-course information provided; the safety principles section is adding context to the resources.

Pre-course information to include the BCAB Journey Planning Sheet as a template. Get candidates to complete one for the location, as well as having an alternative plan.

Safety frameworks and principles must be revisited on each of the modules 3-6, as either setting tasks or as a reflection focus.

Reviewing the plan after the journey:

Discussion on the plans made to influence the plan for the day, then revisit in module 7.

- Emphasise why it is important to review the journey plan. Did it work? What changes did you make? Was the forecast correct?

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

Notes:

Keep this section short as this will be reviewed in module 7, where they can write any changes they would make on their journey planners.

Encourage participants to register for the Emergency SMS Service - Text 'Register' to 999 there will be a response with instructions on how to use the

service. More info:

https://www.emergencysms.net/registering_your_mobile_phone.php

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MODULE 2

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>A group discussion using their own clothing and equipment. Tutor to bring spare/additional equipment to show examples of different types of clothing and equipment used as part of this course.</p>	
<p>Note: It is better if participants bring their own clothing and equipment so they can practise and consider uses and limitations.</p> <p>Explore, discuss and show as a group (remembering to keep it within the context of the inland open water environment).</p>	
Craft overview, safety considerations and features:	
<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 as raising awareness of snag potentials; • Explain how to visually check paddles integrity, especially if they are Carbon or split into 2/3 pieces. 	
Note:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone using a Stand Up Paddleboard or ski must wear a leash; • For any water that has flow or is moving, a Quick Release Belt attached to a leash is recommended. 	

Clothing and equipment worn:

- Highlight the need to consider the time of year and weather when choosing appropriate clothing;
- Discuss appropriate personal clothing, windproof, footwear and headwear, as well raising awareness of snag potentials;
- As a group, discuss the different clothing options for various disciplines;
- Clarify the fitting of a buoyancy aid (practical demonstration of appropriate adjustment and fitting).

[Equipment for paddling video](#)

Additional safety equipment:

Discuss additional safety equipment that is highly recommended to carry, depending on the craft paddled:

- Mobile phone in a waterproof case (fully charged);
- Whistle;
- Knife;
- Sling or tape with or without a Karabiner;
- Suitable towing system appropriate for the craft;
- Small first aid kit;
- Group shelter;
- Spare clothing;
- Small repair kit;
- Food and drink.

Notes:

- 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 if using a Stand Up Paddleboard.

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

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MODULE 3

Module Title:	Providing assistance
Time:	90 minutes
Module Outline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Holding position ● Systems for assisting a paddler ● Systems for towing an injured paddler ● Recovering equipment ● Assisting a swimmer ● Landing and Evacuating 	
Delivery:	
Holding position	
<p>As a group, discuss and practice methods for the group to hold position, preventing paddlers being spread out and separated while a rescue is being carried out. Strategies for this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pointing into wind and paddling gently to match the wind; ● Changing trim; ● Turning around on a SUP to face upwind and paddle while the board still faces downwind; ● Using transits to check for any drift. 	
Systems for assisting a paddler:	
<p>Explore simple solutions for assisting a paddler who is tired or struggling in the conditions. The solutions should enable them to keep paddling and should be set up with the consideration that they might need to be used over a long period during a trip. Explore the concept that it does not need to be the group leader (or most experienced paddler) involved in the system. For SUP, the importance of keeping leashes attached to both board and paddler at all times should be emphasised.</p> <p>Such systems could include:</p>	

- Flying V (front of craft together, paddles on the outside of the 'raft'. Craft not attached by ropes, etc.). For single blade craft, with use of a leash, grab under knee to assist this for SUP;
- Rafted canoes - discuss pros and cons of using a quick simple box raft design using painters, or a more 'long term' set up using spars;
- Tow (with a waist or deck mounted system) while both paddling for kayaks or skis (to assist with directional control and speed);
- 'Tandem and Tow' for Canoe and SUP;
- 'Board overlap' for SUP.

Systems for towing an injured paddler:

Participants should be introduced, through scenarios, to systems to tow an injured or incapacitated paddler. These should include supported tows.

Such systems could include:

- The use of a waist, or deck, mounted tow line from a kayak;
- The use of rescue tapes;
- Using painters on canoes for simple tows or box rafts and adding more canoes to form a diamond raft;
- Use of a leash, grab under knee from a SUP;
- Towing more than one paddler, so that the injured paddler can be supported by a helper. Considerations around ease of support and quick release for the helper should be discussed;
- The solution is required to be shared with the group so that they can hold position or point into the wind to keep the group together.

Recovering equipment:

Methods for towing and handling empty craft should be explored and practised in windy conditions. Systems should be quick and simple to set up and able to be released quickly.

Assisting a swimmer:

Methods for moving a swimmer that has become separated from their craft should be explored and practised in windy conditions. Decision making around whether to assist them into/onto your own craft (where possible) should be discussed, with reference to STCE.

Explore and introduce appropriate methods for dealing with an unconscious paddler who is in the water.

Landing and Evacuating:

Through a whole group scenario, explore issues surrounding landing the group to solve a problem or evacuating a casualty and the group.

Landing craft with an injured paddler should be practised and environmental considerations explored, e.g. a steep bank or a beach with an onshore wind and associated waves.

Decision making around finding an appropriate landing point should be discussed, in relation to the distance from incident, the wind direction and strength, the suitability of landing places (e.g. beach or steep bank, sheltered areas etc.), and the accessibility for vehicles or emergency services if evacuation is required.

Once on land, discuss supporting paddlers to prevent hypothermia and methods for getting help if needed.

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

Notes: Participants should be given the opportunity to try various systems relevant to their craft choice(s). They should be able to familiarise themselves with each relevant system and the method of quick release, before trying it out

up/down/cross wind, so that they can understand the pros and cons of each system.

Embed the skill so that they can hold position or point into the wind to keep the group together.

Tutor to reinforce Manual handling during practical learning. Suggest the [BCAB Manual Handling eLearning resource](#).

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MODULE 4

Module Title:	Deep water rescues
Time:	45 minutes
Module Outline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techniques for emptying/righting craft and getting the swimmer out of the water and ready to continue the trip. 	
Delivery:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind participants of safe manual handling, the use of appropriate techniques and the use of assistance from the swimmer and other group members. • Demonstrate appropriate and effective methods, explore and practise righting and emptying craft, using appropriate safe techniques. • Explore simple effective ways to help the swimmer back into/onto their craft; • Demonstrate how a tape/stirrup can be used for those who may need extra assistance back onto/into their craft; • Explore alternative ways to empty craft where appropriate, e.g. bailing or pumping. <p>Throughout, encourage participants to reflect on the learning from this module and openly discuss as a group.</p>	
Notes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor to intervene in the event of poor manual handling, reset and carry on. • Reiterate the key principles in all rescues such as STCE, CLAP, etc. 	

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MODULE 5

Module Title:	Self-rescues
Time:	40 minutes
Module Outline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assisted self-rescues ● Unassisted rescues 	
Delivery:	
<p>The module should be individualised to meet the needs of the participants. A range of methods should be explored to ensure that each participant leaves with an appropriate and efficient self-rescue, both assisted and solo, for their craft.</p>	
Assisted self-rescues:	
<p>From their chosen craft, the participant should be able to fully capsize/fall off in a controlled manner and stay in contact with all of their own equipment.</p>	
<p>Explore methods for emptying/righting and getting back into/on the craft, with assistance from other group members. Such methods could include:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the use of another craft to empty your own craft; ● a group member holding/supporting the craft as the participant climbs back in/on; ● bow/paddle presentation rescue for kayak; ● SUP/ski paddler supporting the craft whilst the swimmer climbs back on/in. 	
Unassisted self-rescues:	
<p>A scenario where the capsized paddler is unable to regain contact with their group should be explored, relevant to the craft(s) on the course.</p>	
<p>Explore methods to right/empty the craft and get back into/onto it, applicable to the moderate inland open water environment.</p>	
<p>Such methods could include:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kayak: Roll, re-entry and roll, cowboy scramble, stirrup rescue; 	

- **Canoe:** Flipping, re-entering and bailing or paddling swamped (importance of appropriate flotation should be explored here). Methods for supporting the re-entry using bags should be explored where appropriate for the participant;
- **SUP:** Understanding of the environment and the effect of the wind on self-rescue should be explored, as well as a back-up option using a tape, for occasions when the participant is too tired for their usual method to work;
- **Ski:** Flipping, re-entering.

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

Note:

- Tutor to intervene in the event of poor manual handling, reset and carry on.
- Reiterate the key principles in all rescues such as STCE, CLAP, etc.

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MODULE 6

Module Title:	Rescue Scenarios
Time:	90 minutes
Module Outline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incident management ● Multiple rescues ● Unconscious / Unresponsive rescues ● Entrapped / Entangled rescues 	
Delivery:	
Incident management:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In context to a moderate inland open water environment, discuss how to support a cold or injured paddler; ● Using the knowledge from module 1, share options for creating a plan using the equipment and rescue protocols. 	
Multiple rescues:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In context to a moderate inland open water environment, discuss how to conduct rescues of multiple swimmers and their craft; ● As a group, explore 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; ● Question/discuss an all in rescue scenario. 	
Unconscious / Unresponsive rescues:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore options to recover the unconscious / unresponsive paddler to the bank. These options should be simple and utilise the group members; ● Be aware of safe handling and lifting of craft and bodies; ● Show boat to boat, boat to swimmer, rafting/ towing; ● Explain the importance of keeping the airway open; ● Discuss the ways we can call for help in remote areas, as well as how to look after the casualty during this time. 	

Entrapped / Entangled rescues:

- In context of the moderate inland open water environment, discuss how to approach and conduct rescues;
- Share examples; foot entrapment; tangled in lines; caught on a barrier/post; clamping of open boats when rafted;
- Keeping rescuer/s safe, exploring low risk to high risk e.g. weather, environment, access, etc.;
- Explore different craft and ways in which to rescue paddler and equipment.

Notes:

- Encourage the group to register with the emergency SMS service;
- Different scenarios provided for unconscious/ unresponsive rescues;
- Reiterate the key principles in all rescues using known acronyms such as STCE, CLAP, etc.

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MODULE 7

Module Title:	Reflections and Skills Checklist
Time:	20 minutes
Module Outline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections from the course; • Reflections on own learning and areas for development; • Skills Checklist. 	
Delivery:	
Reflections from the course:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and share key learning points, what worked well? What was difficult? What solutions did you come up with? 	
Reflections on own learning and areas for development:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants should leave the course with a good understanding of their own areas of strength and areas to develop. The Skills Checklist could be used to aid this discussion. 	
Skills Checklist:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants should complete their Skills Checklist with the Tutor and agree areas for development, and ideas on how to complete the development areas identified. 	