



Kerry Canoe Club

Safety Statement 2026

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SECTION 1- Introduction and Contacts

1.1 Introduction

This Safety Statement is designed to address the particular arrangements for safe operation of the Kerry Canoe Club. The Safety Statement sets out duties and responsibilities of Committee, members and visitors as well as general policies and arrangements for safety within the Club. It is the duty of all of us to take reasonable care of one's own health and safety and that of any other person who may be affected by our acts and to maintain a safe and healthy paddling environment.

It is our intention to provide a safe and enjoyable environment in which to participate in Paddle sports activities such as Kayaking and Canoeing. We aim to provide an environment that is conducive to learning the above sports in a manner that is not threatening to the members and is controlled. We adopt a 'Challenge by Choice', philosophy in all our activities, thus members are never pushed beyond their limits.

We believe that the safety of our members is of paramount importance above all other matters. In the event of their safety being compromised, the activity will be stopped immediately. It will not be continued until such a time that their safety can be assured.

Kerry Canoe Club members will always take weather conditions into account before activities begin. All activities will be designed in relation to current forecast weather conditions bearing in mind the ability of that group.

An essential element of safety is knowledge of correct procedures and of dangers associated with each particular procedure or operation. This Safety Statement provides a framework within which safe practice of our sport is possible. It is important that the procedures in this document are followed for the prevention of accidents.

The governing body for Paddle sports in Ireland is Canoeing Ireland, herein referred to as CI. They provide training and instruction to all Paddle sports nationwide and provide course syllabi that must be followed by all Kerry Canoe Club instructors during courses, as well as all CI safety guidelines that will be adhered to by all Kerry Canoe Club instructors and experienced members.

1.2 Contacts

Kerry Canoe Club Committee

Position	Name
Chairperson	Barry Coen
Club Secretary	John O'Sullivan Darcy
Treasurer	Andy Miller
Training Officer	Eoin O'Reilly
Equipment Officer	Pam Sheehan
Honorary President	Brain O'Flaherty
Safety Officer	John Selby-Burwell
Children's / Junior Officer	Segio Valente
Children's / Junior DLP	Roman Puotkalis
Disability & Inclusion Officer	Caroline Berry

Contact email : Kerrycanoeclubkillorglin@gmail.com

Safety Organisations

Organisation	Contact details
Local Hospital (University Hospital Kerry)	066 718 4000
Police / Gardaí	999 or 112
Fire and Rescue Service	999 or 112
Coast Guard	999 or 112 Channel 16 (VHF)

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1.3 Location of First Aid Kits

The majority of Leaders and senior members should be first aid trained.

The main club first aid kit is kept in the club house and regularly checked by the club safety officer.

Instructors / Leaders and experienced paddlers should carry a first aid kit on all trips and is their responsibility to keep these checked/maintained.

SECTION 2 - Arrangements for Safe Working

2.1 Safety Responsibilities

2.1.1 Role of the Chair of the Club

The Chair's role with respect to safety involves the following;

Ensuring that everyone is familiar with the Safety Statement.

- That there are first aiders and first aid equipment available if required.
- That trip leaders are suitably experienced.
- Ensuring that novices are well looked after.
- That relevant training is provided where necessary.
- And that everyone is aware of the action to be taken in an emergency.

2.1.2 Role of the club member

- Clubs should endeavour to offer their members a safe environment in which to participate in activities. The Officers will, to the best of their abilities, bring to the attention of members the risks associated with the activities. However, members are expected to make themselves aware of hazards and to be responsible for their own health and safety.
- They must not jeopardize the health and safety of other members through their own actions.
- Members are expected to follow instructions given by Officers or trip leaders
- Members should attend relevant training courses provided for them
- They should raise any safety concerns that they have with an Officer or trip leader
- Members should inform an Officer or trip leader of any relevant medical conditions that might impinge on their ability to participate or that might affect emergency first aid treatment
- Members are responsible for obtaining as much information as possible about any planned activity, to be able to make an informed decision as to whether it is a suitable activity for them.

2.1.3 Role of the Kerry Canoe Club Instructor

Kerry Canoe Club recognises that competent leadership by activity instructors is the most important safety factor of all. Instructors need to be able to safeguard the physical and psychological health of the people in their care.

2.1.4 Role of the Members

Club members and participants of a trip should make themselves aware and understand the safety instructions relating to the activity they are taking part in and in the equipment they use. They should:

- Follow all safety instructions from experienced members, discuss any doubts and/or personal fears with the instructor prior to commencing the activity (e.g. fear of water, heights, etc.)
- Wear all personal protective equipment as instructed; Report all equipment problems or other unsafe systems they are aware of, and;
- Take care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their behaviour.

2.2 Safety Training

Safety training shall be provided by the club on an ongoing basis. It is up to the individual to attend these courses. For some club activities safety training may be made mandatory.

2.3 First aid

All registered CI instructors are qualified First Aiders. Relevant First Aid training and revision days will be provided each year. It is up to all club members to participate in relevant training. There is 1 large club first aid kit based at the Club House.

Instructors / Trip leaders are expected to carry a basic first aid materials on trips.

Materials	First Aid Travel Kit Contents
Adhesive Plasters	12
Individually wrapped Triangular bandages	2
Safety Pins	2
Large Individually wrapped sterile wound Dressing (approx. 13x9cms)	1
Individually Wrapped Wipes	8
Paramedic Shears/scissors	1
Pairs of Latex Gloves	1
Additionally, where there is no clear running water, Sterile Eye Wash	1

The officers in charge of the first aid kits are:

- John Selby-Burwell, Safety Officer
- Pam Sheehan , Equipment Officer
- Barry Coen, Chairperson

2.4 Consultation and communication

If members feel or are made aware of any unsafe practices or unsafe equipment they are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the Club Safety Officer. To confirm permission to organise a personal trip, a member of the core committee needs to be consulted: this committee will exist of the Safety Officer and/or the Chair and one more committee member

This document will be reviewed on an annual basis (or more frequently if work practices change or new equipment is introduced). Staff and the Safety Representative will be consulted on any changes to be made.

2.5 Equipment Maintenance

2.5.1 Club Equipment

The safety and suitability of equipment is primarily the responsibility of the Club Equipment Officer. However, all members are expected to be vigilant and to address and report defects. Scheduled inspections will be carried out regularly. A major inspection will be carried out twice yearly. General inspections are to be carried out before and after each club trip.

2.5.2 Emergency Communications Equipment

2.5.2.1 Mobile Phones

Mobile phones will be brought on all activities, preferably by all participants but at least by all the leaders and instructors.

2.6 Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol misuse by members strictly prohibited such that:

- No member may get on the water under the influence of alcohol or consume alcohol on the water or during breaks off the water.
- Alcohol consumption in breach of these restrictions is strictly prohibited as it risks the safety and comfort of other members and will be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

Drug misuse by members is strictly prohibited such that:

- No member may get on the water under the influence of drugs or consume drugs on the water or during breaks off the water.
- Drugs misuse in breach of the above restrictions is strictly prohibited as it risks the safety and comfort of members and will be regarded as a disciplinary matter. Kerry Canoe Club cannot tolerate criminal behaviour in this regard.

All members are required to bring this policy to the attention of new members, if they see anyone consuming or misusing drugs, or appears to be under the influence of either to report them to the Club Safety Officer.

2.7 Bullying

Canoeing Ireland Clubs do not tolerate bullying. Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while to be condemned, it should not be described as bullying. Only aggressive behaviour that is systematic and ongoing should be regarded as bullying.

Sanctions will be taken against those found to be in breach of the policy. Club members should contact any committee member or their Safeguarding Officer for assistance on this issue.

Refer to Canoeing Ireland Discipline and Appeals Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Codes of Conducts.

2.8 reporting of accidents and near miss events

All accidents and near misses (incidents that could have led to a serious injury but didn't) must be reported to the Club Safety Officer, and must be recorded in the appropriate logbooks. The Club Safety Officer will investigate the causes of the incident and together with the involved members fill out the Club Accident Report Form or the Club Dangerous Occurrence Form. Copies of the completed form should be forwarded to the Club Safety Officer. The purpose of an investigation is to establish all the facts relating to the incident, to draw conclusions from the facts and make recommendations to prevent reoccurrence. Each accident will be looked at from the point of view of location, activity, procedures and people.

2.8.1 Accident report form

Accidents are defined as incidents where a person is injured to such an extent that they require first aid or other medical treatment (doctor, nurse, hospital visit). Accidents that occur as a result of the clubs' activities or while a member is participating in the club's activities must be investigated, recorded on the CI accident report form (form attached in the appendix) and a copy sent to CI within 5 days of the accident occurring.

2.8.2 Insurance of Club Members

Members are insured against personal injury while participating in club activities. Club activities are defined as

- Official trips approved by the committee
- Competition trips that have been defined as club trips by Kerry Canoe Club
- Committee
- Personal trips that follow the Personal Trip Safety Guidelines (see 2.8.3)

Non-members are not insured; CI will not deal with claims that may arise. Officers must ensure members are signed up on the CI registration system and that each account has been activated, which is only to happen after the annual membership fee has been received by the Club Treasurer.

Further details can be found at <http://www.canoe.ie/insurance/>.

2.8.3 Personal Trip Safety Guidelines

Kerry Canoe Club provides a calendar of events which includes training for personal, leadership and safety skills. The club is very strong in provision of safety and leadership skills and has a calendar of events which provides space for personal skills development.

We recognise the invaluable contribution made to the club by its members in terms of passing on these skills. The development of any individual's personal skills must not be hampered. To that end we permit use of kayak club equipment for use by members in club trips which fall outside the base club calendar.

These trips can be organised "on spec" often based on the unpredictable nature of available paddling conditions.

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2.8.3.1 Definition of a personal club trip

A club trip is any trip in which any club member **uses club gear**. The member must meet the requirements outlined below. Failure to comply with the policy equates to a failure in making the on-spec trip a club trip and therefore should not be using club equipment.

The Trip leader must publish the trip details on the clubs WhatsApp group or Spond application. The WhatsApp Group and Spond are monitored by the committee, who will step in if the proposed trip does not meet club guidelines.

Any member that requires the use of club equipment, will need to get loan of said equipment approved by a member of the committee for that specific trip.

Members should comply with the guidelines 2.8.3.2, 2.8.3.3, 2.8.3.4, 2.8.3.5 and 2.8.3.6.

2.8.3.2 Traceability requirements

All equipment being used must be entered into the log book (sample page in appendices). Log book to include:

2.8.3.3 Group/Skills requirements

Suggested Layout or parameters for Club users:

Groups size of no less than 3 people

There must be a ratio of 1:1 where there is one member who has passed proficiency assessments equivalent to the grade of water being paddled to one member who is less experienced.

Instructors; different ratios apply to qualified CI or BCU instructors.
(As outlined in the CI syllabus)

Previous experience; in addition to proficiencies members need to ensure that there is sufficient experience in the group. Paddling members should have previous experience of similarly graded rivers.

Level 4 paddlers and above, if willing have the option to adopt a 2:1 ratio of less experienced members to each Level 4 paddler on water no higher than Grade 3, ie. 2 less experienced members to each Level 4 paddler.

Surf Kayaking trips:

One competent club paddler in order to borrow club gear. Surf conditions, weather conditions, location and paddler experience have to be taken into account by the committee.

2.8.3.4 River levels and weather

The river in question has to be assessed on the day and paddled 'within its grade'. If the river looks high, the river grading may have to be adjusted upwards. This has to be reflected in group members' proficiency levels.

2.8.3.5 Club site sessions

Solo paddling on Grade 1 is low risk both in terms of likelihood and magnitude of any dangers. Despite this we regard it as necessary to take a cautious step by requiring paddlers to go a step further in skills requirements by needing a minimum of level 2 proficiency and an RSR course (or equivalent).

2.8.3.6 Equipment requirements

Members must use whatever gear is appropriate for the water they intend to paddle. Some examples:

- A throw bag and sling should be brought on all river trips. Suggest kit list for rivers: <http://www.canoe.ie/skills-awards/level-4-kayak-skills-award/>
- Further safety, such as a 'dope-on-a-rope' system should be provided where necessary, examples like 'Little Eas' on the Clare Glens River or 'Jacksons' on the Avonmore River.
- At least one first aid kit per group.

2.8.4 Serious accidents and fatalities

Serious accidents or fatalities must be reported to the Safety Officer, as soon as possible. See incident reporting above:

2.9 Hiring of Equipment and Services.

2.9.1 Hiring of transport

When hiring minibuses or other vehicles for club outings only those named as drivers (with the appropriate driver's license) are insured to drive the vehicle. Other club members must not drive. Where possible only minibuses fitted with seat belts should be hired, check with the hire company beforehand.

What Drivers must do at an accident or in an Emergency?

- If you are involved in an accident, you must stop your vehicle and remain at the scene for a reasonable time. If vehicles are blocking the roadway or posing a danger to other road users, the roadway should be marked and the vehicle should then be removed as soon as possible.
- If you are asked by a Garda, you must give your name and address, the address where the vehicle is kept, the name and address of the vehicle owner, the vehicle's registration number and evidence of insurance, such as the name of your insurance company or a disc or motor insurance certificate. If there is no Garda at the scene, you must give this information to any person involved in the crash or, if requested, to an independent witness.
- If you or another person is injured and there is no Garda at the scene, the accident must be reported to the nearest Garda station. If the accident damages only property and there is a Garda in the immediate vicinity you must report it to the Garda. If there is no Garda available, you must provide this information to the owner or the person in charge of the property.
- If, for any reason, neither a Garda nor the owner is immediately available you must give all relevant information at a Garda station as soon as reasonable possible.
- At the time of the accident don't admit liability. Many people feel apologetic about accidents for which they are not responsible (aggression doesn't signify innocence either).
- Make a note of the name, address and insurance information (company & policy number) of the other people involved.
- Make a note of the registration numbers and positions of any vehicles.
- Tell us about the accident as soon as possible by calling a committee member.
- The ULSU C&S office requires an accident report form to be completed in every case.
- Where a person or persons are injured, the accident must be reported at the nearest convenient Garda Station if no Garda is present at the scene of the accident.

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- Where damage to property only is involved it is not necessary to report the accident at a Garda Station provided the driver gives necessary details.
- If you are involved in an accident with a visiting motorist, also report the accident to the Motor Insurers Bureau of Ireland, 39 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. Telephone: (01) 676 9944.

2.9.2 Hiring of Venues

If a venue (external to your club) is to be used by the club for its own activities or for events a committee member should ensure that there are sufficient trained security persons at the venue for the duration of the event (if required). The Committee member must clarify whether the venue will provide these or if they need to be supplied by the club.

The Committee member should also request the venue manager to sign some formal contract.

2.9.3 Purchase of Services

Where a club uses the facilities of a service provider (e.g. windsurfing school, dive centre, outdoor pursuits centre) or equipment belonging to a service provider an officer of the club must ensure that the service provider has public liability insurance. A copy of the certificate of insurance should be obtained by an officer of the club prior to the use of the venue or equipment. A copy of the insurance certificate must be given to the Committee.

Ensure that the insurance policy wording does not exclude any of the activities that your club will be participating in. If the service provider cannot provide a certificate then the club should use an alternative service provider.

2.9.4 Hiring of Equipment to be used on site

If a club or group is hiring in equipment for use on the Club site, the club's officers must first obtain permission from the committee. Once permission is obtained the club must get an up-to-date copy of the service provider's insurance certificate. A copy of the insurance certificate must be sent to the committee.

The equipment/event can only proceed if the event is given the go-ahead by the full committee.

2.10 Loaning of Equipment

Equipment belonging to the Club must not be loaned to third parties who are not members of the club. A club member must not borrow equipment for use by third parties even if the club member is present or in the group using the equipment.

2.11 Trips in Ireland (day and longer)

Club officers must leave contact details with a designated responsible person before setting out on a trip, giving the destination and estimated time of return. The club officer should contact the designated person on return of the club members. In the event of a problem arising, the designated person should be instructed to contact the appropriate authorities.

2.12 Trips abroad

Trips abroad should be notified in writing to the Committee at least one week prior to departure. The names of all trip participants, their next of kin and contact addresses and numbers must be provided to the Committee.

2.13 Annual Review of the Safety Statement.

The Safety Officer should review the Safety Statement at the beginning of each Club year. The names of those designated to look after first aid kits, etc. should be changed. A new copy of the Safety Statement should be produced and dated with the current Club year clearly printed on the cover. A copy of the revised Safety Statement must be given to the Committee.

SECTION 3 - Hazards and Control Measures - Water Based Activities

3.1 Kayaking/Canoeing Hazards

- Drowning
- Injury from equipment or capsizing (concussion, etc)
- Separation of person from kayak / canoe
- Manual handling injury
- Capsizing & entrapment
- Slips, trips and falls
- Collisions
- Weather and conditions
- Hypothermia
- Bacterial and viral infections (i.e. leptospirosis)

3.2 Risk Assessment

Kayaking/canoeing is deemed a high-risk activity.

3.3 People at Risk

All involved.

3.4 Control Measures

1. All participants must wear appropriate clothing on a kayaking/canoeing session. The prerequisites include a correctly fitted CE393 50 Newton buoyancy aid with reflective strips, a wetsuit and a helmet. Spray decks may be worn where the instructor is satisfied with the participant's proficiency (being able to perform a calm and capable capsize drill). It is compulsory that all kayakers/canoeists from the Club wear the Club buoyancy aids, alternatively they may wear their own personal buoyancy aid as long as it meets the club's minimum standard.
2. An experienced member will supervise all canoeing/kayaking sessions.
3. All kayaking/canoeing participants will be assessed by the instructor/senior member after launching and only participants of capable abilities will be allowed to continue.
4. If a canoe/kayak has capsized, the person/persons in charge will carry out necessary capsize rescue techniques, e.g. X-Rescue.
5. If a canoe/kayak is drifting with people on board, the person/persons in charge will immediately instruct or tow this canoe/kayak back to safety.

6. All on-water canoeing/kayaking activities should occur only during daylight hours.
7. The Club adheres to all Canoeing Ireland recommendations regarding teaching ratios (1:8 – Beginners, 1:6 – Improvers)
8. Care should be taken to avoid prolonged exposure in the water to avoid the hypothermia.
9. Depending on the cause and the severity of the accident, first aid will be provided by appropriately trained club members. If further medical assistance is required, the person/persons in charge will ensure this is provided
10. The possibility of infection from the water and riverbank will be brought to the attention of participants and water and soap or antibacterial gel should be always available in the first aid kits.

3.5 The Instructors

The kayaking/canoeing instructor has an important role in ensuring the safety of clients. The club aims to have a certain number of qualified CI instructors amongst their members. Trainee instructors or experienced members will be encouraged to follow REC 3 training. In addition to his/her responsibilities under Section 2.3 of the Kerry Canoe Club Safety Statement the kayaking/canoeing instructor should:

- a. Be trained and be sufficiently competent to coach members to the appropriate level.
- b. Define a safe operational area on the water taking account of the nature of the activity, the ability of the group, water and weather conditions and the equipment available. Brief participants to stay at or within it.
- c. Ensure that safety and rescue equipment appropriate for the activity is available.
- d. Modify or curtail the activity if prevailing conditions are inappropriate for the customers or the planned activity.
- e. Ensure that all on-water activities occur only during official daylight hours.

3.6 Water Activities Criteria

In Summary all Water Activities require the following criteria:

1. A CE approved PFD with minimum of 50 Newton with reflective tape must be worn.
2. Appropriate standard of equipment & adequate safety equipment to provide cover
3. The skill level of the participant & the dynamics of the group shall be considered when planning a session. The environmental conditions and potential changes shall also be taken into account when planning sessions.
4. Canoeing Ireland clubs implements a policy of "Challenge by Choice" & "Sport for All", thus allowing full participation at the discretion of the participants own knowledge of the risks involved. Kerry Canoe Club must be informed of all disabilities/illnesses prior to the commencement of the activity.
5. In the event of lightening, all water activity must be terminated immediately.
6. All on-water activities should occur only during daylight hours.
7. Personal trips using Club equipment can only take place if following the safety requirements stated under 2.8.3.

3.7 Pool Safety

When members are participating in pool training, they shall adhere to all pool rules without exception.

SECTION 4 - Hazards and Control Measures - Off-Site Activities

4.1 Off-Site Activities

As the sports participated in by the club are outdoor activities they occur in various outdoor locations. This section deals with the risks involved in doing so.

4.2 Road Safety.

All vehicles shall be parked considerately and safely. When changing due care should be taken not to obstruct the roadway, and be carried out a safe distance from the roadway. When crossing the road, the 'safe cross code' should be used and crossing should be carried out as quickly as is safely possible.

4.3 River Ingress.

When entering the river members should do so from a safe position, that is a position where they can enter their boat safely and enter the water safely. This includes 'seal launches' if no other option is present and it is safe to do so. All seal launches shall be carried out at one's own risk.

4.4 River Egress.

When exiting the river members should do so from a safe position, that is a position where they can exit a boat safely.

4.5 Steep Ground Traversing.

When traversing steeply inclined ground members should use appropriate precautions, if necessary an anchor point should be set up and appropriate rope systems used.

SECTION 5 - Hazards and Control Measures – Club House

5.1 Fire Risk Assessment

The Risk of Fire at the club house is very low due the nature of the setup.

To reduce the risk of fire in any of the storage containers, No Smoking or naked flames are allowed in any container.

5.1.1 Measures

In the event of a fire members should evacuate club house area immediately and contact the emergency services.

Members should only attempt to fight the fire if they feel it is safe for them to do so.

5.2 Slips, Trips and Falls

Hazards	Trips and Falls
Risk	Medium
Assessment	Kayaks and/or equipment causing obstructions in areas deemed as walkways, could cause a member to lose their balance, stumble or fall
People at Risk	All members / visitors
Control Measures	To reduce the risk of trips hazards, all members should ensure kayaks and equipment is placed in such a way as not to pose a trip hazard to other members.

5.3 Manual handling

Hazards	Manual Handling Injuries
Risk Assessment	Medium
People at Risk	Kayak/canoe participants
Control Measures	<p>All members will lift correctly</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand close to the boat 2. Bend your knees and keep your back straight 3. Grasp the boat firmly 4. Lift with your legs and not your back 5. Never lift a boat that is too heavy – get help 6. Boats on high racks must not be removed by oneself (No climbing on racks) 7. Only lift a boat that is within your lifting capacity

SECTION 6 - Hazards and Control Measures - Vehicles

6.1 Vehicles

Kerry Canoe Club does not have operate any vehicles,

6.1.1 Personal Vehicles

Members are solely responsible for the safety, maintenance, and operation of their own vehicles. It is essential that all vehicles are in safe working condition and comply with applicable safety regulations. By participating in this event/activity, members acknowledge their responsibility to ensure their vehicle is fit for use, and agree to operate it safely at all times.

6.1.2 Kayak Loading and Transport

Members are also responsible for the safe loading, securing, and transport of their kayaks (Personal or Club). All kayaks must be properly secured to vehicles using suitable equipment (e.g., straps, roof racks, or trailers) to prevent accidents during transport. It is the member's responsibility to ensure that kayaks are loaded in a way that does not pose a risk to themselves, other participants, or the public. Proper safety precautions must be taken when lifting, loading, or unloading kayaks to avoid injury.

SECTION 7 - Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 -CI Accident Report Form

Canoeing Ireland - Incident report form

Please complete this form for any accident, however minor.

Person's name:	Age:
Address:	

Date/Time of incident:	Activity:
Location:	Course / Group name:

Description of incident:

Please give a full account of events and subsequent actions / measures by staff or others, including names of any persons involved / present at the time (continue overleaf if necessary)

--

Date / time of first contact with next of kin / parent / guardians / school (please give their names):

--

Instructors' names (please sign, print and date):

--

Details of any subsequent actions / follow up (inc dates):

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