

Bromley Canoe Club Safety Framework

December 2025

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1. Purpose and Scope

This framework sets out Bromley Canoe Club's approach to planning, leading, and supervising paddling activities across a range of environments, from very sheltered water to advanced white water.

It ensures that all BCC activities align to the Paddle UK Standards for Deployment (2024) while embedding the Club's own processes.

All Club organised activities must follow this Safety Framework.

Coaches, leaders and supervisors must abide by the Club Safety Framework. Failure to follow the Framework may result in the Club removing approval for the member to operate as a Club approved coach, leader or supervisor.

Any member concerned that activities are operating outside of this Framework should raise their concerns with the Committee or the Safety Officer.

The requirements and standards for officials of the Club have not been detailed within this document and these are in the Standards for Deployment on the Paddle UK website.

The remit for coaches and leaders have not been reproduced in this document and these can be found on the Paddle UK website.

The following documents also form part of the Club Safety Framework and should be read in conjunction with this document.

- Bromley Canoe Club Activity Protocol - Sevenoaks Swimming Pool
- Bromley Canoe Club Activity Protocol - Chipstead Lake
- Bromley Canoe Club Activity Protocol - General Club Paddling Activities
- Risk Assessments for activities / environments

2. Environmental Classifications

- Very Sheltered Water
 - Quiet canals with easy bankside access and egress.
 - Small lakes, which are not large enough and do not have difficult landing, where problems could occur if there is a sudden change in conditions.
 - Gentle, slow-moving rivers.
 - The definition implies weather conditions that are not in themselves likely to cause problems.
 - At any point, the paddler should not be more than 50m from the bank.
 - Swimming pools are included in this definition although we have a specific protocol for our swimming pool sessions.
- Sheltered Water
 - Ungraded sections of slow-moving rivers where the group could paddle upstream against the flow (not involving the shooting of, or playing on, weirs or running rapids).
 - Areas of open water (e.g. lakes and lochs) where the paddlers are no more than 200 metres offshore and the wind strength does not exceed Beaufort force 3, avoiding the group being swept/blown out of the safe working area.
 - Slow moving estuaries (less than 0.5 Knots).
- Moderate Water
 - Large areas of open water that exceed the sheltered water definition, where the paddlers are no more than 500m offshore and in wind strengths that do not exceed Beaufort force 4.
 - White Water: Grade 2(3) white water. This means substantively grade 2 with isolated grade 3 rapids that may be portaged. A higher grade of rapid may be present which can be easily portaged e.g. Bala Mill falls.
- Progressive Water
 - Large areas of open water which exceed Moderate Water and/or have winds in excess of Beaufort force 4.
 - Canoe: River up to and including grade 3(4). This means substantively grade 3 with isolated grade 4 rapids that may be portaged.
 - Kayak: Rivers up to and including grade 4.
- Advanced Water
 - White water grade 4/5.
- Specialised environments e.g. white-water stadiums.

3. Summary of Operational Protocols

- Pool Sessions
 - Qualified lifeguard present at all times.
 - BCC Pool Supervisor and Pool Coach/Leader present.
 - Reception check-in required.
 - Induction (swim test, capsize drill & manual handling) for all new paddlers.
 - Equipment in store managed by adults.
 - Incidents logged.
 - Local emergency action plan.

 - Example: Sevenoaks Leisure Centre

 - References: Sevenoaks pool operating procedure

- Day / Part Day Trips
 - Duty Paddlesport Leader appointed.
 - Ratios: 1:8 solo craft, 1:12 crew craft or as specified by Paddle UK.
 - Groups organised as Coached/Led, Supervised, or Collaborative (min. 3 craft per group).
 - Risk assessment.
 - Attendance register.
 - Local emergency action plan.

 - Example: Chipstead, Medway
 - References: Chipstead operating procedure, day trip operating procedure.

- Multi-day trips
 - Designated trip organizer and lead paddler.
 - Designated emergency Committee member (not on trip)
 - Pre-trip risk assessment required.
 - Groups organised as Coached/Led, Supervised, or Collaborative
 - Appropriate rescue equipment.
 - Localised emergency action plan.

 - Moderate water example: Exe, Barle, Dart loop, Lower Tryweryn
 - Progressive water example: Upper Dart, Ogwen, Upper Tryweryn
 - Advanced water example: Lynn

 - References: Weekend trip operating procedure

4. Activity Categories

Activities are categorised as one of the following:

- Coached / Led Club Activity
- Supervised Club Activity
- Collaborative Club Activity
- Club Event
- External Activity

Multiple types of activity may take place during a specific Club session. For example, a Chipstead session or a weekend white water trip may have groups that are being coached / led, supervised groups and collaborative paddling groups.

Activity organisers should make clear to participants the type of activity categories that may be provided and which category a paddler would be a member of: For example - on a weekend trip it should be made clear to each group if they are a coach/led, supervised or collaborative group.

Activities that fall outside the planned activity for a trip are not considered Club organised and this must be made clear to anyone engaging in that activity. An example would be walking in the hills / mountains or visiting a white-water stadium as individual paddlers when there is no water in the river.

4a. Coached / Led Club Activity

Under 18s may be part of this category.

Activities in this category will be formally led or coached by an approved Club Leader or Coach.

Any paddler who is considered not to have the paddling skills for the relevant environment must be in this category. To move beyond this category, the paddler must meet the 'supervised' paddler criteria for the relevant environment.

The leader or coach will be approved for specific paddling environments and **must not** operate outside the Club's approved environments when engaged in coaching or leading on behalf of the Club.

Leaders and coaches must have Paddle UK qualifications and be up to date in terms of CPD, safeguarding and required first aid certificate. They must be current Paddle UK and BCC members.

The Club will approve leaders and coaches following the process outlined later in this document.

A coach / leader may be approved to coach in one level higher than the remit for their formal qualification. This must have been agreed by both the coach / leader and the Club Committee using the Club approval process.

4b. Supervised Club Activity

Under 18s may be part of this category.

Activities in this category will be supervised by a Club approved supervisor.

Paddlers in this category must meet the Club's 'supervised paddler' criteria for the relevant environment, and this should have been recorded against their JustGo profile. Generally, these will be paddlers who have the technical paddling skills for the environment but may be lacking in experience or safety skills and knowledge.

When paddling the group should function as a collaborative group with the supervisor encouraging group engagement and intervening only if necessary for safety. They may wish to discuss ideas with the group about how else things could have been done.

The supervisor must have completed the Paddle UK online safeguarding course and have basic first aid knowledge.

The **supervisor is not a formal leader of the group**. They are present to ensure the actions of the group are safe and to intervene if required. The group should be encouraged to conduct their own briefings including the strategy for completing the trip, including access / egress points. The supervisor should intervene if items are missed from the briefing or if the strategy does not seem safe.

A leader or coach may substitute for a supervisor at the same level as they are approved for leading or coaching.

A leader or coach may also be approved to supervise at a higher level than they can lead / coach.

4c. Collaborative Club Activity

Under 18s must not be part of this category.

Activities in this group do not require a Club coach, leader or supervisor.

Paddlers in this category must meet the Club's 'competent paddler' criteria for the relevant environment, and this should have been recorded against their JustGo profile.

Paddlers in this category are expected to be self-sufficient in terms of briefing including the strategy for completing the trip including access, egress and emergency egress. They are responsible for their own safety and first aid cover.

Records of people attending must be kept for collaborative Club activities.

4d. Club Event

A Club event is any activity organised by the Club, which is open to the general public.

Activities only open to members are not 'events'.

This does not include potential new members of the Club attending either Chipstead or the pool session for the first four occasions.

Club events will follow Paddle UK guidance for events and should have an identified 'event safety officer' and 'event safeguarding officer'. The event safety officer should have completed the Paddle UK training for event management. An example of an event would be the Chipstead Sailing Club open day.

4e. External Activity

This category includes both paddling and non-paddling activities organised by the Club using third party providers. Examples include - white water safety courses, climbing, laser quest, inflatables.

The Club should conduct due diligence that the provider has the suitable experience, skills and qualifications to run the relevant activity.

It should be noted that the Paddle UK public liability insurance does not extend to non-paddling activities.

4f. Ad-hoc Activities (Non Club activities)

Ad-hoc activities organised by members of the Club in addition to the list published by the Committee, are not recognised as 'Club activities'.

Members engaging in these activities are not covered by Paddle UK public liability insurance unless they are individual members of Paddle UK in their own right.

This category includes members arranging their own paddlers with other members of the Club outside the timetable of events published by the Committee. For example – the Lee Valley WhatsApp group.

5. Coach, Leader and Supervisor Approval Process

All coaches, leaders and supervisors must go through the Club approval process.

The approval process may be started by the member or by the Committee approaching a member to suggest they seek approval as a coach / leader or supervisor.

A coach or leader seeking approval to act within Paddle UK remit will normally be approved, however the Club may refuse approval where concerns have been raised concerning any aspect of the coach / leader's suitability.

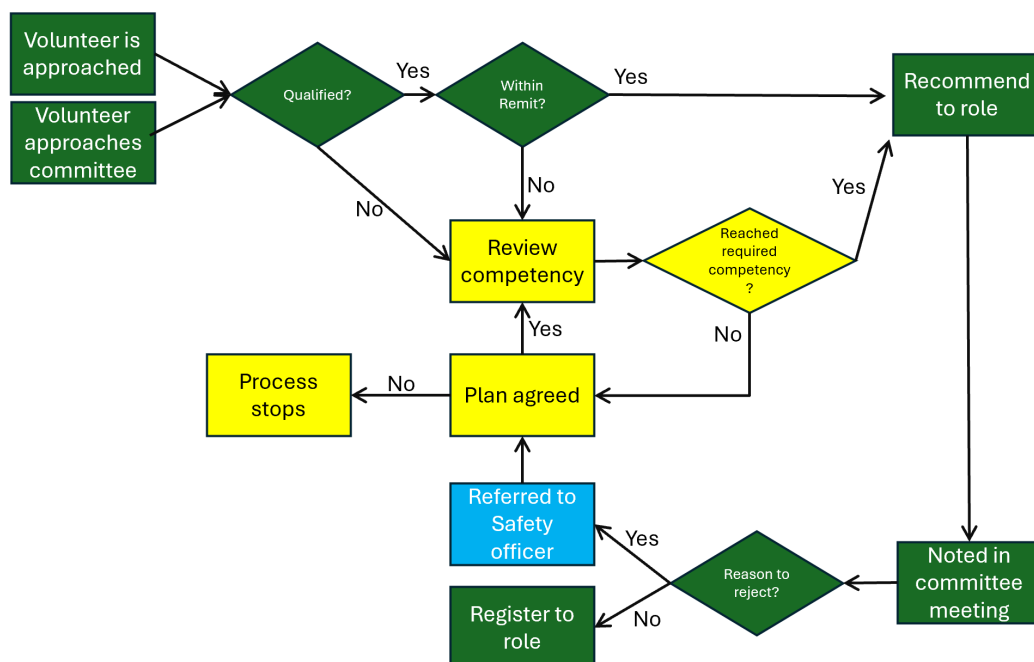
Coaches and leaders are expected by Paddle UK to make professional decisions concerning their own ability to continue to operate in the more challenging environments. Concerns should be raised with the Safety officer or another member of the Committee where it is felt the coach or leader is not making appropriate decisions concerning their own paddling abilities which may compromise the safety of the group.

Supervisors may go through the approval process once it is confirmed they meet the minimum standards.

The criteria for supervisors include a requirement for relevant experience. A coach or leader who is qualified for that environment should determine if this standard has been met. If there are any concerns that the standard is not being consistently applied then this should be raised with the Safety Officer.

Where Paddle UK personal paddling awards form part of the requirements for a supervisor, the paddler is expected to be at a good standard for this environment. A paddler who is just able to meet the personal paddling skills should not be approved as a supervisor.

All approvals must be recorded against the members JustGo profile.



6. Leadership and Coaching Competency Standards

The suggested standards for coaches and leaders in each environment are set by Paddle UK.

Normally the Club will approve coaches and leaders to act within the remit of their award. However, the Club reserves the right for the Committee to withhold approval where they have concerns or where a coach / leader does not follow the Club Safety Framework.

The Club may approve a coach or leader to operate as a leader in an environment one level above the standard set by Paddle UK. This will only be considered where the individual has considerable experience at that level of paddling and suitable safety training. For example, a white water leader with experience and a personal advanced white water award may be approved by the Club to lead (not just supervise) on grade 3/4. This is consistent with Paddle UK guidance that a coach or leader may make professional decisions about their practice and if it is appropriate.

Approval of a coach / leader must be recorded on their JustGo profile.

No pressure should be put on any coach or leader to operate outside the remit suggested by Paddle UK.

Coaches and leaders **must not** operate in an environment unless they have been formally approved by the Club for that environment.

7. Supervisor Standards

Supervisor standards are set by the Club for each environment. This is achieved primarily through a combination of personal paddling awards (or leading / coach awards), experience and safety training.

All supervisors **must** have completed the online **safeguarding** course.

All supervisors **must** have **first aid knowledge** – this could be demonstrated through formal certification or other Committee approved route.

All supervisors must go through the approval process above to formally record them as a Club supervisor for specific environments.

The approval to be a supervisor at one level assumes approval for all lower environments.

A 'lapsed' coach or leader may be used as a supervisor but must go through the same approval process.

Coaches and leaders may be supervisors at higher levels than their coaching / leading remit. However, they should ensure that their group contains only members who have met the requirements for being supervised in the environment. They must take care not to accept paddlers who require coaching or leading in an environment that they are only approved to supervise.

Where a personal performance award is specified, this is the basis for the assessment criteria. It should be assessed as per award, but the participant may choose not to pay for the certificate. The standard expected for a supervisor is good at that level of award. A paddler just meeting the requirements is unlikely to be a suitable supervisor.

Where suitable experience is required to be a supervisor, recommendations should come from a coach or leader who is qualified for that environment.

Any concerns about the suitability of a person to be a supervisor should be raised with the Safety Officer or another member of the Committee. Any member of the Committee who receives a concern raised about a supervisor must make the Safety Officer aware without delay. The Safety Officer must investigate all concerns raised and formally report back at the next Committee meeting. A record of the concern should be kept and the matter should be discussed in a sensitive manner with the supervisor concerned.

Where concerns are found to be genuine the Committee should withdraw approval for the member to act as a supervisor. A plan may be agreed for the paddler to follow to regain approval as a supervisor.

Supervisors **must not** supervise groups in an environment unless they have been formally approved by the Club for that environment.

Approval of a supervisor must be recorded on their JustGo profile.

Environment	Supervisor - minimum standard
Chipstead	• Explore award (personal paddling) • Paddlesport Safety and Rescue Course • Experience of paddling at Chipstead
Swimming Pool	• Meet Chipstead criteria • Signed off by a Club approved Coach or Leader that they are competent to conduct the pool induction.
Other Flatwater	• Explore award (personal paddling) • Paddlesport Safety and Rescue Course • Experience of different venues / weather • Knowledge of weir safety
Flatwater but in flood (eg Thames / Medway with strong flow)	• Explore award (personal paddling) • Paddlesport Safety and Rescue Course • Experience of different venues / weather • Knowledge from Introduction to white water safety and basic throwline usage. (the course does not have to be completed but should be used to check knowledge) • Suitable experience of flowing or white-water rivers. Experience / knowledge to assess variety of weirs.
White water (grade 2(3))	• White Water Award • Suitable experience at this level • White Water Safety course
White water (grade 3/4)	• Any White Water coach / leadership award • Suitable experience at this level OR • Progressive White Water Award • Suitable experience at this level • White Water Safety course
White water (grade 4 / 5)	• Any White Water coach / leadership award • Suitable experience at this level • Advanced White Water Safety course

8. Supervised Paddler Standards

Paddlers aged under 18 may be in this category.

Paddlers in this category will have the personal paddling skills to manage their craft in the environment.

Paddlers may not possess one or more of

- basic first aid knowledge
- safety and rescue skills.
- Ability to assist others in trouble or knowledge of how to achieve this safely
- Ability to retrieve equipment or knowledge of how to achieve this safely.

Paddlers may not always get a pre-paddle briefing or the strategic approach to running the river correct. Supervisors should assist where necessary so that paddlers gain more experience.

A supervised paddler may be part of a supervised group in the assessed environment and all environments below that level.

Environment	Supervised paddler – minimum standard
Chipstead Club assessed (based on a simplified Discover Award)	• Has basic control over the kayak. • Understands the kit available at Chipstead. • Understands what clothing should be worn for Chipstead. • Understands manual handling techniques. • For closed cockpit kayak, has demonstrated capsize drill.
Other Flatwater	• Discover award. • Participated in Chipstead or other led flatwater paddles.
Flatwater but in flood (eg Thames / Medway with strong flow)	• Discover award and experience of paddling on flowing rivers. • Understand the additional hazards presented by the rivers flow.
White water (grade 2(3))	• Paddling skills from white water award. • Understand what to do in the event of a swim (self or other).
White water (grade 3/4)	• Paddling skills from Progressive White Water Award. • Understand what to do in the event of a swim (self or other). OR • White Water Award. • Wide experience of grade 2(3).
White water (grade 4 / 5)	• Paddling skills from Advanced White Water Award . OR • Progressive White Water Award. • Wide experience of grade 3/4.

Where personal paddling awards are specified, these may be assessed as achieved however the paddler is not required to purchase a certificate from Paddle UK.

Where a paddler chooses not to purchase a certificate, a record will be made by the Club on JustGo.

Standards other than formal Paddle UK awards may be assessed by any coach or leader approved by the Club for that environment.

9. Competent Paddler Standards

Paddlers **under 18** may be assessed against these criteria but they **must not be part of a collaborative group** even if they meet the standards.

Paddlers in this category will have the personal paddling skills to manage their craft in the environment.

Paddlers will possess basic first aid knowledge.

Paddlers will possess safety and rescue skills. They will understand the order of priorities (self, team, 'victim', equipment), know how to assist each other and retrieve equipment.

Paddlers are able to conduct a pre-paddle briefing and agree their strategy for the trip eg access and egress points, emergency procedures, group management strategies.

Paddlers are able to make suitable decisions about finding a line down rapids and assess in initial condition and decide if conditions have changed, such that they should end the trip early.

A competent paddler (18 or over) may be part of a collaborative group in the assessed environment and all environments below that level.

Environment	Criteria for Competent Paddlers
Chipstead Club assessed (simplified Explore Award as only for the single venue)	- Supervised paddler criteria for Chipstead met. - Has good control of the craft and basic support strokes. - Can paddle against the wind at Chipstead - Has demonstrated the ability to - assist a swimming paddler in deep water, - empty the kayak / canoe - assist them back into their kayak / canoe.
Other Flatwater	Explore Award
Flatwater but in flood (eg Thames / Medway with strong flow)	- Explore Award - Knowledge / experience of the risks of flowing water / weirs / canoe shoots. - Expectation is to recognise the need to avoid weirs and when conditions may be unsuitable to use canoe shoots etc.
White water (grade 2(3))	White water award
White water (grade 3/4)	Progressive White Water Award
White water (grade 4 / 5)	Advanced White Water Award

Where personal paddling awards are specified, these may be assessed as achieved however the paddler is not required to purchase a certificate from Paddle UK.

Where a paddler chooses not to purchase a certificate, a record will be made by the Club on JustGo.

Standards other than formal Paddle UK awards may be assessed by any coach or leader approved by the Club for that environment.

10. Other Paddlers

All paddlers that do not meet the standards for competent or supervised paddlers must be coached or led.

11. Equipment Standards

All paddlers must wear a suitable buoyancy aid and appropriate footwear and clothing for the conditions and the environment.

Kayakers must wear helmets on moving water or when negotiating weirs.

First aid kits and appropriate rescue equipment must be available.

12. Governance & Record-Keeping

12a. Activities

All activities must be logged in JustGo, including attendance.

12b. Members profiles

The following records must be logged in JustGo against the paddler's profile:

- Paddle UK personal paddling awards where the certificate is not purchased.
- Meeting the criteria for a supervised paddler for an environment.
- Meeting the criteria for a competent paddler for an environment.
- Approval to act as a Club coach or leader in an environment.
- Approval to act as a Club supervisor in an environment.

12c. Accident and near-miss

All accidents and near-misses should be reported to the safety officer.

A record should be made on the after trip report for the Committee.

The safety officer will determine if further investigation is required and the results of this with any correspondence will be stored by the Club.

The results of the investigation will be reported to the Committee and also to the parties involved in the incident. Any 'lessons learned' will be used to update risk assessments as appropriate.

Where there is any injury (other than minor) the incident will be reported to Paddle UK.

13. Review & Continuous Improvement

This framework will be formally reviewed every two years, or sooner if Paddle UK updates their Standards for Deployment.

Feedback from coaches, leaders, paddlers, and the Committee will inform updates to maintain best practice.

Feedback received may be used to update the framework at any time agreed by the Safety Officer and the Club Committee.

14. Quick Reference for supervised paddlers, competent

paddlers and supervisors

Environment	Supervised	Competent	Supervisor
Chipstead	Club assessed (simplified Discover Award) - Has basic control over the kayak - Understand the kit available at Chipstead. - Understand what clothing should be worn for Chipstead. - For closed cockpit kayak, has demonstrated capsize drill.	Club assessed (simplified Explore Award as only for the single venue) - Has good control of the craft and basic support strokes. - Can paddle against the wind at Chipstead - Has demonstrated the ability to assist a swimming kayaker in deep water, - emptying the boat - assisting them back into their kayak.	Explore award + PSRC
Swimming Pool	Not applicable	Not applicable	Meet Chipstead criteria and signed off they are competent to conduct the pool induction.
Other Flatwater	Discover award and participated in Chipstead or other led flatwater paddles.	Explore Award	Explore award + PSRC + experience of different venues / weather Knowledge of weir safety
Flatwater but in flood (eg Thames / Medway with strong flow)	Discover award and experience of paddling on flowing rivers. Understand the additional hazards presented by the rivers flow.	Explore Award with additional knowledge / experience of the risks of flowing water / weirs / canoe shoots. Expectation is to recognise the need to avoid weirs and when conditions may be unsuitable to use canoe shoots etc.	Knowledge from Introduction to white water safety and basic throwline usage. Suitable experience of flowing or white-water rivers. Experience / knowledge to assess variety of weirs.
White water (grade 2(3))	Paddling skills from white water award. Understand what to do in the event of a swim (self or other)	White water award	White Water Award with suitable experience and WWS
White water (grade 3/4)	Paddling skills from Progressive White Water Award OR White Water Award, and wide experience of 2(3).	Progressive White Water Award	Any WW coach / leadership award + experience OR Progressive White Water Award with suitable experience and WWS
White water (grade 4 / 5)	Paddling skills from Advanced White Water Award OR Progressive White Water Award, and wide experience of grade 3/4.	Advanced White Water Award	Any WW coach / leadership award with suitable experience and AWWS