

6. General Navigation Advice for Canoes & Kayaks

Regulations that affect you

⚠ A vessel of less than 20m in length or a sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway.

⚠ A vessel shall not cross a narrow channel or fairway if such a crossing impedes the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within such channel or fairway.

Simply put, canoes and kayaks must keep well clear of vessels such as ships, tugs and tows & passenger vessels (ferries)

⚠ Where a vessel has (a) sunk; (b) been damaged; (c) caused damage to anything (including a vessel) or is on fire:

⚠ The master shall forthwith give notice and particulars of the occurrence to a harbourmaster.

Loss of a canoe or kayak when on the river should be treated as a vessel sunk and reported (e.g. to the Port of Plymouth).

⚠ Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight as well as by hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision

Keep a good look out in front and behind at all times - large passenger vessels can appear from behind unexpectedly especially where the line of sight is restricted by bridges and by bends in the river.

Your responsibilities: Water is a great place for sport and recreation, but it is also an environment which needs to be treated with respect.

⚠ Take account of Notices to Mariners issued by any port authority (Plymouth Sound and the lower Tamar & Plym come under the Port of Plymouth), tides, water and weather conditions.

⚠ Be aware of any hazards on your chosen journey and ensure you and any persons with you are confident in their abilities.

⚠ Use suitable equipment in good condition.

⚠ Leave details of your trip with a responsible person

⚠ Report incidents to a harbourmaster (also see "Regulations that Affect You")

In this context anyone navigating a kayak or canoe is a Vessel Master. The Club and those in loco parentis should use this fact in a risk assessment in assessing whether someone should be allowed to go out on the river, most especially at night.

Being highly visible: When on the water at night or in conditions of low visibility (rain, snow or fog) it is just as important to be seen as it is to keep a good lookout. Below are some easy to follow tips on how to be "highly visible":

⚠ Retro-reflective strips placed on clothing/buoyancy aids and also on the shaft of the paddle near the blade. White LED lights worn either on a helmet or about the shoulder can be very effective, but care must be taken to avoid impairing night vision

⚠ Neon coloured clothing is very effective in low visibility conditions but is not as effective at night as retro-reflective strips

As a minimum all paddle powered vessels shall "have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision."

The Tideway: Canoes and kayaks should keep clear of bridge abutments, security (exclusion) zones around Ernesettle to Devonport on the west side of the Tamar, Burns Island, HMS Raleigh & Drakes Island, moorings, vessels manoeuvring.

Crossing the River: This can be the most hazardous part of any journey and must be undertaken keeping a constant good look out. When clear to do so canoes and kayaks should cross the main channel as a closely formed group and avoid a single file or spaced out formation.

¹ Adapted from the guidelines issued jointly by Canoe England and the Port of London Authority. The full document can be found at http://www.pla.co.uk/display_fixedpage.cfm/id/2673#responsibilities



Welcome to your canoeing & kayaking club. To new members, we are glad you have chosen to join us. For continuing members, good to have you back and thank you for your continued support.

If you need this Handbook in an alternative format please contact the Membership Secretary and we will do our best to provide it in a form you can access.

This handbook is designed as a brief guide to what you can expect from the club and how you can help contribute to the club running safely and smoothly for everyone. Please keep the handbook safe (you never know when it will answer a question). Whether or not you are a new member, please take the time to familiarise yourself with the contents. We just might ask you questions later to test you

1 Operation: membership runs from the 1st April through to 31st March of the following year. Prompt renewal of membership is appreciated, as without a valid membership you will not be able to join in club activities or use the equipment, as club insurance will not cover you. You can apply or renew using the same form (downloadable from the website) by post or in person on club nights. The Membership Secretary is usually the first port of call. Ensure that you inform the Membership Secretary of any changes to your details in case they are needed.

1.2 What, When & Where: The club is situated at the boathouses at Jubilee Green slipway, Saltash (next to the free public car park under the Tamar Bridge).

Club night is Thursday evening on the water at 7pm until 9pm or sunset from April through to the last week of September. A range of activities are offered including skill progression at various award levels and friendly trips around the estuaries.

For younger members Paddle Power Passport is an option. Coaching is also provided for other disciplines (e.g. open canoe, sea kayak, surfing & touring), although these may also occur on other days especially where appropriate or where there is a high demand for the required boats.

- ✓ Boats for all activities are allocated on a first come first served basis!
- ✓ Please ensure you are ready to get in the water by 7pm on club nights

We know how daunting it can be to join a new group of people and we try to be a friendly bunch. If you feel it may help you for your first couple of times to be buddied up with somebody, feel free to ask and we will try our best.

At the start of each club night a coach or member of the committee will signpost: introducing the coaches, the activities available and essential notices/information.

Longer estuary/river paddles around S. Devon & E. Cornwall are arranged on roughly a monthly basis throughout the year and are open to all of level 1 standard or above (with or without your own boat/transport) as are the frequent white water paddles organised during the off-season for those with at least level 2. These normally run on a Sunday morning and meet at the boathouse to car-pool. For those who wish to use club boats, paddles or spraydecks on these trips there is a minimum donation of £2 towards kit upkeep.

1hr Pool sessions are also offered during the winter months at Saltash Leisure Centre to brush up or learn new skills, although at a sessional fee (£7.50 in 2012). The Club also tries to arrange 1 or 2 trips/camps further field.

- ✗ Do not obstruct public use of the slipway
- ✗ Do not run on the slipway
- ✗ Do not attempt to carry a boat on the slipway that is too heavy for you to safely control
- ✓ Be careful of trip hazards eg. ropes, other canoes/ paddles and the metal securing rings
- ✓ Keep boats (especially smaller ones) on the grass when not in use

5.2 Correctly fitting buoyancy aids must be worn by everybody during all water based activities. **The wearing of adequate head protection is strongly recommended but is mandatory for all members aged under 18.**

5.3 For each activity on a club night, a list is posted on the shed door. All members must ensure they have put their full name on the correct list and tick the appropriate box as they go on the water and again as they come off.

5.4 Members must ensure that they update the club and coaches of any new or worsening of a condition that may affect their ability to paddle, or that could result in a medical emergency situation at any club activity. In the case of the latter use of medi-alert cards (laminated) is advised. Ensure you carry emergency medication with you in a small water-tight bag.

5.5 Rules of the Water: It is up to members to have a working knowledge of and abide by the rules relating to boats (see section 6)

5.6 The lead coach for each activity has absolute discretion as to whether a member is permitted to undertake that activity based on canoeing/kayaking ability, water & weather conditions, clothing and physical ability to be reasonably safe during the activity.

5.7 **First Aid:** Most coaches are qualified emergency first-aiders and there is a club 1st Aid kit in the 2nd shed. Please ensure that you inform the membership secretary of any changes to your emergency contact details.

If you have difficulty accessing the club in any way due to a disability, please contact the Membership Secretary & we will arrange to talk with you to see what help we can provide and/or what assistance can be applied for if you need adaptations.

5 Health & Safety: This is probably the most important part of this handbook (if the least exciting). Canoeing is obviously a water-sport and as such extra vigilance is required around the water. If you follow the rules below you will minimise the risk of harm to yourself and others. Please remember health & safety is a joint responsibility between you, other members and the club.

5.1 Equipment: The club provides boats, buoyancy aids (NB these are not life jackets), paddles (left & right handed), spraydecks & helmets for use on club activities only. The club owns a number of types of boat:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| ✦ Open Canoes | ✦ White Water Kayaks |
| ✦ General Purpose Kayaks | ✦ Children's Kayaks |
| ✦ Sea Kayaks | ✦ Racing Kayaks |
| ✦ Touring Kayaks | ✦ Double Kayaks |

5.1.2 It is the responsibility of the member to ensure that they choose the equipment that is appropriate:

- ✓ for water & weather conditions
- ✓ for Member's abilities
- ✓ that fits
- ✓ for the activity

5.1.3 Members **must inspect their equipment** before and after use. If you notice any defective equipment, report it to a coach or committee member. We have 2 club Equipment Officers.

5.1.4 **The Slipway:** is for general public use (including large boats) & can get very slippery especially at low tides, as such:

Social activities such as skittles, snow tubing, BBQ's, meals also occur throughout the year at various locations.

All official club activities are provided by appropriately qualified coaches. Please remember that all coaches and officials are volunteers and so activities are provided or may be cancelled at short notice if there are insufficient coaches at an adequate level

1.3 **Other Benefits:** At present a valid TCA membership card will gain you a 15% discount at Kayaks and Paddles at Lee Mill (N.B. Special offers are not included) & online at www.nookie.co.uk (use code from notice board). The club also collects vouchers from AS Waterports, Exeter. Members have also obtained discounts at other water-sport stores by showing their card.

1.4 **Under 12's:** must be accompanied by an appropriate adult member on the water at all times (even if undertaking the Paddle Power Program)

2 Conduct: Please be aware that your behaviour on the water and off reflects on the club. As such, members are required whilst at club activities to behave in a manner that is legal and doesn't bring the club in to disrepute.

3 Communication: The club will do its best to keep members informed of events, notices and other information of interest. In order to keep club running costs to a minimum the club will generally use the methods below, however if you do not have access to the internet please let the membership secretary know.

3.1 **Notice-board:** Situated on the boathouse door for essential notices. Please check this each time you are at a club night.

3.2 **Newsletter:** This is the main method of communication giving dates of events and contacts as well as news. It is normally sent out monthly as an e-mail attachment.

3.3 **E-mail:** Used to inform members of urgent, time sensitive or important information. Please help our Membership Secretary (and yourself) by informing them of any change to your e-mail address or any other contact details.

3.4 **Website:** Our web address is www.tamarcanoassociation.org.uk runs (such as the full copies of the club's policies & procedures outlined where you will find the majority of information relating to how the club in this handbook), the current newsletter (in case you delete or lose yours) & useful links/info. We hope to expand the site over 2013.

3.5 **Facebook:** We have an invite only group on Facebook which offers members the chance to chat, arrange non-club paddles, ask questions & share information/pictures/videos as well as providing reminders of club events. Details of how to join are on the notice-board.

4 Governance: The club is run on your behalf by a committee according to a constitution, Club policies & procedures. As an affiliate member of Canoe England/British Canoe Union we also operate according to the governing bodies' guidelines. Despite all of these, this is your club so please let members of the committee know your thoughts on how the club is run, or even better stand for election to the committee (fresh eyes are always welcome, so don't worry if you have only been a member for 5 minutes).

4.1 **Annual General Meeting:** This is held in mid April. The committee is elected and the major issues relating to the running of the club for the next 12 months are discussed, as well as reviewing how things have gone over the previous year. As such, it is the best way for you to be involved in the running of the club. If you have anything you want placed on the agenda concerning the running of the club, please contact the club Secretary by the end of February. If you are unable to attend in person to discuss an issue, please write to the Secretary by the 1st April so that your views can be included at the meeting in proxy via the Chairperson.

4.2 **The Committee:** Normally meets 4 times a year to manage the running of the club. Again, if there is an issue relating to the running of the club that you feel needs to be dealt with before the next AGM, please contact a committee member or write to the Secretary.

4.3 **Complaints & Grievances:** If you have a problem with any other member, we would hope that you are able to resolve it between yourselves, but this may not be easy to do. If it concerns another member, where possible please let the coach who has led the activity know of the issue as soon as possible. The coaches and committee members are often available before or after club activities.

If you are still concerned/unhappy or the issue relates to a coach, please talk to a committee member. Where this fails to resolve the problem or you have a problem relating to a committee member, please talk to the Chairperson if possible or appropriate, Alternatively put your concern in writing to the Chairperson via the Secretary or Vice-Chair with as much detail as you can.

4.4 **Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection:** The club welcomes children, young people and potentially vulnerable adults. As adults we have a basic duty of care towards vulnerable people. **In the event you are concerned about the safety of a child or the behaviour of an adult towards a child attending the club please speak to one of the Child Welfare Officers as soon as possible.** The details of the officers are on the back of the shed door. If this isn't possible speak to a coach or committee member. This of course does not replace an individual members responsibility to take reasonable immediate action to prevent serious risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

4.5 **Equal Access:** The club prides itself on helping everybody regardless of age, disability, gender, race or sexuality to fully participate.

Where a person feels that they are prevented from accessing the club on grounds of age/sex/race/sexuality or feel they have been harassed on grounds of age, sex, sexuality, race or disability, then the complaints' procedure outlined in 4.3 should be used.