



Principles for independent peer group paddling

On some regular club paddle evenings, the club recognises that some experienced paddlers may wish to paddle in an independent peer group, without a coach. The club is content for such independent paddles to be organised on the margins of a regular club paddle subject to some conditions. (For the avoidance of doubt, the club recognises that members may paddle however they like away from the club).

The principles for independent peer group paddling are:

- independent peer group paddling should be restricted to members of the club who have successfully completed club beginners' and intermediate level courses, hold a British Canoeing 'explore' level award (formerly 2* award), or who are recognised by the lead coach for that evening as an equivalent standard
- members paddling in an independent peer group must recognise that they are doing so entirely at their own risk and that the club, committee, and coaches accept no responsibility or liability for any incidents arising on an independent peer group paddle
- members paddling in an independent peer group must complete the signing-in sheet in the usual way
- members paddling in an independent peer group will normally use their own equipment. However, they may use club equipment as usual if this is practical. Each member is responsible for checking that all equipment used is in good working order and safe
- members paddling in an independent peer group must nominate an organiser from among the group for the paddle
- an independent peer group must take with them a mobile phone, a first aid kit and a towing system, and any other appropriate safety equipment (for example, a throw line, flares, and / or a knife)
- the organiser for the independent peer group must:
 - inform the lead coach of the members of the peer group, and mark their names on the signing-in sheet to identify them as such (an asterisk and key 'independent peer group paddle' is sufficient, the organiser of the peer group should also be clearly marked)
 - inform the lead coach in general terms of the intended route and activities of the proposed independent peer group paddle
 - confirm to the lead coach that all members of the group have confirmed that they are members of the DCC

- confirm that s/he has explained to each and every member of the peer group that they will be paddling without a coach and entirely at their own risk
- confirm that s/he has confirmed with each member of the peer group that they meet the experience standard
- inform the lead coach of every piece of club equipment which is being used
- confirm that each participant of the peer group has checked the safety of all of the equipment they intend to use
- confirm that a first aid kit and towing system will be taken, that someone has a working mobile phone, and discuss any other safety equipment which might be required
- agree with the lead coach a time for the peer group to return to the club house, to coincide with the completion of the regular club paddle
- the lead coach, having considered all of these circumstances, may wish to make further suggestions or recommendations to the participants of the independent peer group. The participants must follow any instructions made by the lead coach
- on the completion of the independent peer group paddle, the organiser of the group must confirm to the lead coach that all of the participants have returned to dry land safely, that all club equipment has been returned to the clubhouse, and / or report any incidents which have arisen
- in case of any incidents or problems, the lead coach must act appropriately and also report the details to the club committee as soon as practical

The safety of members is the club's top priority. Any member acting in any way which might jeopardise their own or other people's safety should be reported to the committee and may be sanctioned.