



Guidance Documents to Writing Water Safety Polices

Introduction

BWSW commissioned Atlantic Crest to develop a set of water safety policies, including a Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP) including a water recovery plan for voluntary member clubs.

The schedule of template documents is, as stated below:

1. **Creating your Normal Operational Plan**
2. **Emergency Action Plan**
3. **Risk Assessment**

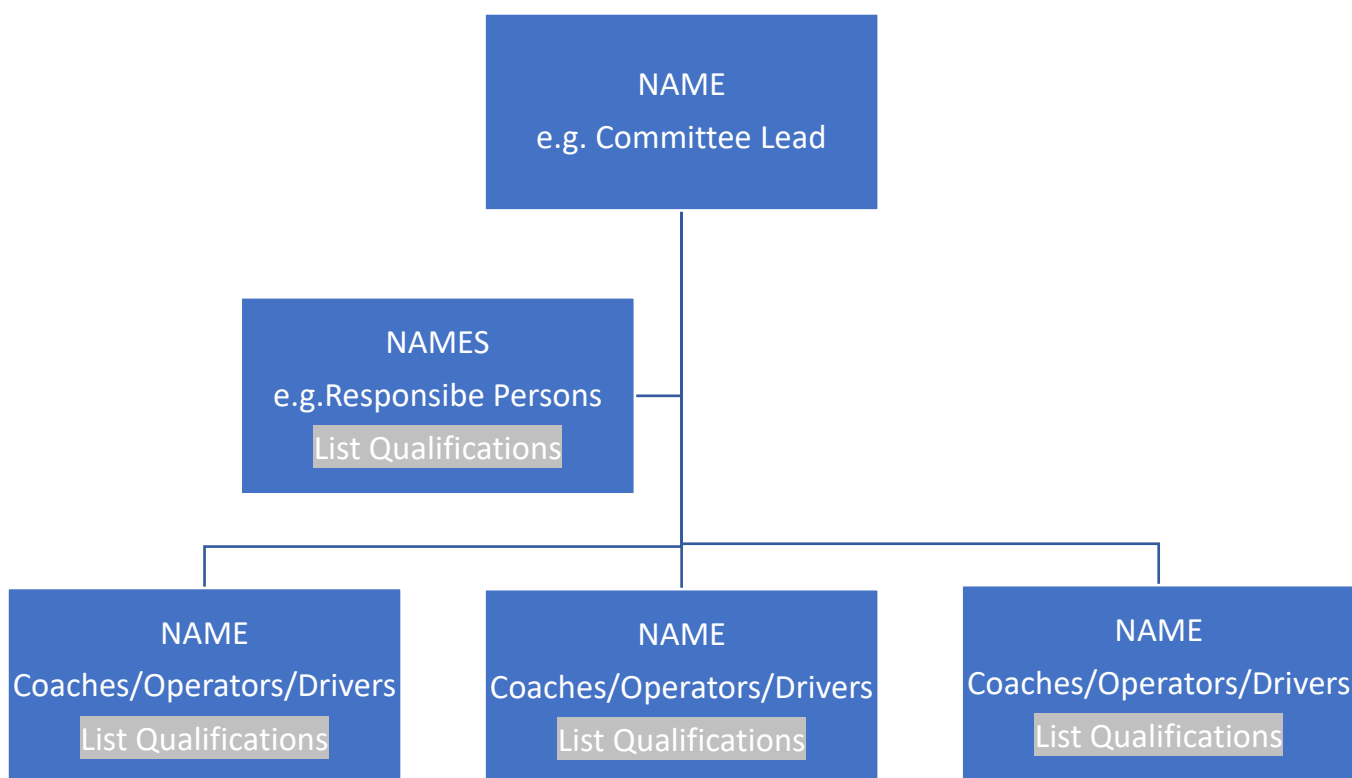
These documents are intended to offer guidance when you prepare your own Normal Operational Plan and Emergency Action Plan for your individual club / site and the activities taking place.

N.B. All clubs are different, and these documents are to be considered as a guide only. Clubs are to utilise these documents to write your own documentation that are club specific ie. that need to be based upon the club, its members, and the particular activities available at the club.

Creating your Normal Operational Plan

This document is intended to offer guidance when you prepare your **own** Normal Operational Plan for **your individual club/site** and the activities taking place. It is primarily intended for the use by our voluntary clubs, on the basis our commercial sites will have their additional health and safety legislation requirements. For Welfare and Safeguarding please see One Voice documentation for all welfare and safeguarding issues.

Site or Club Management



1.0 Activity

- Provide detail of your activities
- Provide a description of the site, conditions, weather – use photos
- Detail who operates the activity (this could be a cable operator, boat driver, boat owner member, committee member or coach)
- Club members: Responsible persons

2.0 Site/club Management

- List what activity takes place (operational times), example:
 - Water Skiing
 - Wakeboarding
- State: During operating hours, there should be an additional club members/responsible person with understanding or qualifications of water safety on site while activities are taking place
- Operational hours could be displayed via site or club notices (onsite signage, social media, and website)
- Detail safety measures in place at the venue or club when it is operational
- Detail safety measures in place at the venue or club when not operational
- Detail any signage or public rescue equipment
- Signage advises visitors and residents that water is dangerous (and also point out any other onsite hazards) . Boats could be operating. Unauthorised access is prohibited
- Clear management arrangement for the activities displayed
- Emergency access point. This could be the site address and main gates; it could be the use of 'what3words' (a website which enables user to find a direct location, which is more direct than a postcode - www.what3words.com) or longitude and latitude if site/club postal address not obvious via sat nav. The access point for the emergency services must be kept clear at all times
- Nearest Hospital: name, address and times
- Criteria to take a person to the hospital or to call for an ambulance
- Record all incidents and or near misses (accident report form)

3.0 Facilities

- List site or club facilities, including car park, docks, changing area, showers, public buildings and toilets – also must state egress points and location of first aid kits
- Use general site map which labels (points) the above (does not necessarily have to show floor plan of building, could be Google Maps image)
- List qualified first aid persons
- If relevant, list any first aiders qualified for AED (Automated External Defibrillator)
- The first aid boxes should be accessible and if a club has an AED this should be accessible (Note: quick access to AED can make a substantial difference to survival rates)

4.0 Activity / Participant Management

Personal attributes for activities should be assessed by a responsible person at a site or club, these could include:

- Minimum age (Parental/guardian consent maybe required)
- Requirement to be confident in the water and able to be a good swimmer

Before activities commence, all participants should be aware of:

- Timings
- Tides (if relevant)

- Safety instructions
- Request for any medical conditions to be declared
- Equipment required: wetsuit, shorts and buoyancy aid
- Safety points (safety briefing) boat and cable
- What to do if in difficulty (instructions included in safety briefing)
- Evacuation plan (fire procedures etc.)

5.0 Training and Equipment

It is recommended that responsible person; committee or club members who manage an activity:

- Hold an appropriate qualification for the activity
- Are aware of all site or club safety recommendations
- Hold a recognised first aid qualification (which should include AED , where relevant)
- Responsible person and participants should be appropriately dressed for the activity
- Responsible persons or boat drivers at a club, should have available:
 - Radio/Mobile phone
 - UV protection.
 - If appropriate, waterproof and warm equipment or clothing
- When appropriate, all responsible person's or club member's training records and copies of qualifications, should be held by the site manager or club committee
- Responsible person, committee, or club member: training should be provided where it is appropriate for the activities. This could include any of the following:
 - Fitness and swimming ability
 - Water recovery practice
 - Boat driver training
 - First aid, Life Support and AED (Automated External Defibrillator)
 - Safeguarding training
 - Water ski and wakeboard training

6.0 Club member/Responsible person(s): Briefing, Checks and Set Up (day to day)

- Responsible person or club members should be familiar with the operational and emergency procedures
- First Aid point or first aid box and if access to and AED (Automated External Defibrillator) , knowledge of its location
- Visual check of access/egress point and equipment
- If appropriate, weather, wind and water quality check
- If water ski and wakeboard equipment is provided by a member or club, it should be in good condition and inspected frequently
- There should be communication: by radio or mobile phone
- Rescue equipment should be checked

7.0 Operational Safety at the site/club

- Wetsuits or neoprene shorts are recommended
- In appropriate circumstances participants should be counted in and out of the session, especially when busy and/or guests are on site there should be an awareness of all participants on site.
- Ratio of responsible person(s) to users
- The land based team are responsible for calling the emergency services and using a signal to signify emergency. This can either be members or responsible people that are at the club when activities are happening.
- BWSW qualified coaches are first aid trained and will be a responsible person in the boat or responsible person at the club
- A first aid box should be on hand, with warm thermal protection for a casualty. Where possible a defibrillator should be on hand
- Response times should be tested to reach a casualty and ensure their face is out of the water as soon as possible.
- Emergency actions should be determined by a robust risk assessment
- There should be a water recovery policy
- There should be a fire policy
- There should be a marine VHF radio at coastal locations

8.0 Communication Procedures (as appropriate for each site)

8.1 Radio/Mobile Protocol

- Keep communication to a minimum and only use when needed
- Water stations are to be assigned a name or number. The radio or mobile is assigned to the respective water station, e.g. Station 1 (Station A or Dock) will also link with Radio/mobile 1 (Radio/mobile A or Dock) the stations are defined by their location – water exit points, docks, boats, egress point etc. this is for a quick determination of location of incident and the responder
- Land based radio if appropriate for your club, to have a different reference, e.g., Radio/mobile base
- Emergency code means there is a major incident (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 -see Emergency Action Plan)
- Supervisor or team leader (this can be a designated committee member or member) will have a mobile phone and coordinate emergency services if needed
- When speaking on the radio or mobile, start by stating your station
- Indicate whether the message is for another station or whether a general message
- When you finish speaking say over and wait for response
- Note when communication is over, say over and out (for marine VHF the call is ended by saying the word **OUT not over and out**)

9.0 Water Recovery, Spinal Cord and Joint Injury Management

Procedures should be in place to deal with watery recovery in the event of a joint or limb injury, in particular spinal injury and or head injury. Management of major injuries in deep water presents challenges. Where there are no issues with consciousness or normal breathing, a person of responsibility (or qualified person) has time to consider the best and least painful rescue plan. With any dynamic environment, there are usually different options including location, environment and distance from base.

The key options for water recovery are:

1. *Rescue Tow*

- In the event of a joint injury or a minor injury that prohibits movement, a rescue tow provides least disruption to the casualty, for example use with a dislocation. The rescue tow can be achieved in different ways, for example:
 - a. Injured party on their back with rescuer behind supporting chin or upper body and swimming the injured person to shore
 - b. Injured party holds ski rope/while supporting rescuer supports the casualty whilst towed to shore by the boat.

2. *Rescue Tube*

- Rescue tube for conscious weak casualty, using non-contact tow
- Rescue tube that is useful for short distance rescue, when there is little evidence of spinal injury. Can be used for limb injury. The rescue tube is also useful for short distances when the casualty is unconscious
- An example of a rescue tube can be found in figure 2 below

3. *Rescue Sled or Inflatable Stretcher*

- Rescue sled for potentially serious/spinal injury
- A rescue sled supports the casualty in the water, whilst safely moving casualty to shore and whilst safely manoeuvring the casualty out of the water. Limiting the potential risk of further harm/damage to the casualty
- It should be considered with any potential spinal injury whether a casualty is unconscious or conscious, due care should be taken to prevent any further injury/damage. In the event the casualty is not breathing airway management takes president. In that event evacuate participant asap.
- An example of a rescue sled can be found in figure 1 below

4. *Stand Up Paddle Board (SUP)*

- Using a SUP as a rescue board. SUP provides a flat base for rescuing a potentially spinal injury casualty or a dislocation. The operation requires the SUP to be always on the location and ready for action. It can be operated by one person, who can pull the casualty up onto the board
- An example of a Stand Up Paddle board can be found in figure 3 below

It is understood that any deep water management of a casualty with a spinal injury will require moving them, and a rescue sled/ specialist spinal sled or rescue tube create best options whilst minimising movement. A SUP can be used in circumstances where other two options are not available.



Figure 1 – Rescue Sled



Figure 2 – Rescue Tube



Figure 3 – SUP

10.0 Environmental Conditions

- Water quality is examined in line with the European Bathing Water Directive (now DEFRA) and recorded
- If required, there can be a check for Blue Green algae
- Water clarity can be visually checked
- Water temperature (e.g. risk of hypothermia)
- Water state:
 - Conditions on the water will be affected by the weather. Wind strength will influence wave height. Wave chop also can affect the activity. The Beaufort scale is a good indicator of wind and wave conditions that will help you make a decision based on your capabilities before participation. The Beaufort Scale can be found on the Met Office website <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/guides/coast-and-sea/beaufort-scale>
- Weather forecast should be checked with particular attention to increasing winds and lightening. Do not forget the lightening 30 : 30 rule. If there is less than 30 seconds between flash to bang leave the water and seek shelter. Stay inside shelter until 30 minutes have passed since the last clap of thunder
- Strong tide and winds can affect boat handling when towing water ski and wakeboard

If any of the above factors adversely affect safe operation of the activity, the activity should be stopped.

11.0 Inspection

- Manufacturers guidelines should be followed for all equipment
- All equipment should be checked frequently for loose fixings, damage, and sharp edges
- Rescue equipment should be checked and ready for use
- Rescue equipment should be in good condition
- The first aid kit should be fully stocked and materials in date
- AED (Automated External Defibrillator) fully checked; battery charged (if applicable)

12.0 General Emergency Control for sites/clubs

- All emergencies are reported to the activity supervisor/responsible member at the club via verbal or radio communications
- The responsible person / member at the club will decide on whether the emergency required escalating to a committee member or further to emergency services
- Coordination of the incident will be via the responsible person(s) at the club who will also arrange for any emergency services, using mobile phone
- Radio, mobile and in standard coastal waters (International Life Saving Federation) lifeguard hand signals used to communicate between shore and boat crew
- Rescue: responsible person to signal rescue and remove casualty to shore
- Location grid reference map ref sheet (also consider just3words)
- Nearest hospitals
- NHS ambulance station
- Location of first aid boxes and AED (Automated External Defibrillator)
- If possible (when more than a single boat driver and participant are using the water), a member is located at club/site to direct emergency services
- Someone to remain with casualty
- Responsible person at the club or committee member to arrange for family support if needed
- Record all incidents (please find attached accident report form)

13.0 Accident Reporting

All accidents are recorded, and data analysed to optimise safety. Near misses or other situations that could result in potentially dangerous situations will also be recorded to establish if there are any hazard hot spots that need further examination.

14.0 Checks

Visual checks to consider.

- Pre-check responsible person numbers
- Weather conditions
- Wind speed
- Water quality
- Water conditions
- Communications
 - Radios
 - Emergency mobile phone
- Access and Egress
- Club
- Emergency Radio and Mobile

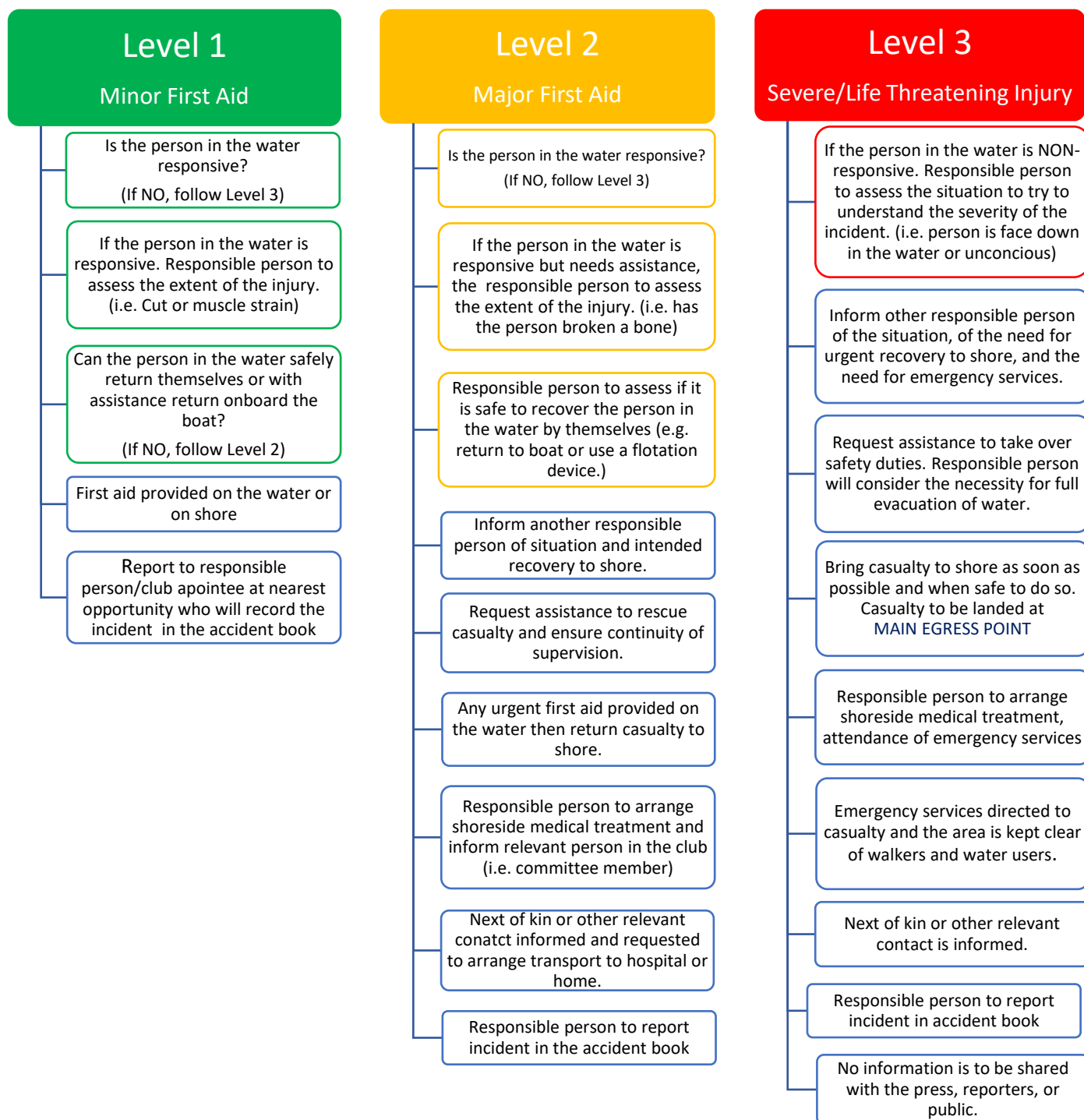
- Equipment check
 - Instructor PPE
 - Rescue tubes
 - Inflatable craft
 - Rescue sled

- PPE
 - Wetsuit and any appropriate footwear
 - Sun protection
 - Heat protection
 - Hydration
 - Radio/mobile (checked for battery)
- Equipment checks
- First Aid and AED (Automated External Defibrillator)
- Warming kit

Emergency Action Plan Template

The Emergency Action Plan should be consistent and work in conjunction with the risks and procedures stated in the clubs Risk Assessment and Normal Operating Procedure documents.

Note: Following any incident resulting in an injury of any severity or any near miss, an Accident Report Form must be filled out and logged by a responsible person at the club.



Responsible Person: this is a person determined by the club / committee who is on site and responsible, with regards to an accident, emergency, and safety situation. This can be an individual, boat drivers, observers, coaches, safety principals or assigned members or committee members. This EAP requires two responsible persons at all times.

Risk Assessment Template

General Information

The Premises

Location		Date	
Assessor		Review Date	

The Occupants

Approximate number of occupants	
Maximum number of members	
Associated times / hours of operation (club and water usage / access)	
Number of Guests	
Number of disabled participants / members	

Any incident experienced

Number of incidents in the past 10 years	
Nature of last incident	

NOTES:	People at Risk: Rescue Equipment: Environmental Conditions:			
Risk Factor/Hazard	RISK Rating	Outcome	Control measure	Residual Risk Rating
Cold Deep Water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drowning Hypothermia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction Wetsuits Buoyancy Aids First Aid kit and warming blankets 	
Water Temperature		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cold water shock Hypothermia Overheating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction Water temp check Appropriate Wetsuit PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelter First aid/warming kit 	
Tidal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tidal cut-off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water safety training Tide charts Local knowledge Planning 	
Waves		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limb injury Head injury Spinal injury Drowning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water safety training Rescue capability SCIM (Spinal Cord Injury Management) equipment First aid 	
Rip Currents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drowning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water safety training Rescue capability First aid 	
Entering and Exiting Water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical injuries Limb injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water safety training Rescue capability First aid 	
Collision with Obstacles		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical injuries Limb injury Spinal injury Head Injury Drowning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescue capability SCIM equipment Temporal/Spatial zoning Codes of practice Education Signs First Aid 	
Collision with other craft		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical injuries Limb injury Spinal injury Head Injury Drowning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescue capability SCIM equipment Temporal/Spatial zoning Codes of practice Education Signs First Aid 	
Fatigue		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction to signal for help Wetsuits Buoyancy aids 	
Serious medical condition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heart condition Seizure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All medical conditions recorded Supervision Rescue capability 	
Slips/Trips		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft tissue injury Structural injury Head/Spinal injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined edges Edge protection Signage Daily inspection Clear loose material First aid box 	
Water Quality		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sickness / Diarrhoea Skin Infection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water test when appropriate (contact local council) Check results are good Have algal bloom plan Red flag when poor water quality 	
Weather		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact injuries Electrocution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular weather check 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stranded from shore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lightening, follow appropriate guidance Emergency Action Plan 	
Hypothermia/Hyperthermia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce exposure to prolonged heat or cold Correct PPE Informed on signs and symptoms First aid Club operating procedure 	
Lone Working		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction for new members or guests members to follow all safety procedures Notify someone where you are, including start and end time Have communication for support if help needed Emergency alarm First aid box 	
Drug or Alcohol (bad behaviour)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical injury Serious illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No alcohol or drugs permitted 	
Access/Egress		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cold water shock Drowning Soft tissue injury Structural injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction Club Operating procedures Emergency procedure 	
Disorderly Behaviour		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of practice Training conflict resolution Water 	
Lifting and carrying craft		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical injuries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only carried a short distance. Use correct equipment for moving the obstacles. Shared lifting between staff 	
Injury from equipment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical injuries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCIM equipment Safety policies Correct PPE No horseplay 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	

Red High - not acceptable
 Amber Medium - As Low as Reasonably Practicable (ALARP)
 Green Low – acceptable or ALARP



Significant Findings from Risk assessment:

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	What are you already doing to control the risk?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who Needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done

* This template needs to take in consideration all / any health and safety regulations and relevant legislations.