

Fife Sea Kayak Club Operating principles

Taking account of the Paddle Scotland Standards of deployment 2024, the following principles will apply to our paddling activities as a club.

Type of activity	Example	Covered by club insurance	Qualified Instructor or coach required	Notes	Covered by Generic Risk Assessments	Approved by club Safety Officer	Club trip organiser in place
Formal Coaching	Organised coaching sessions	Yes	Yes	FSKC bring in external coaches for formal training sessions.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Formally Led Paddle	Group paddle advertised as formally led	Yes	Yes	Qualified Sea Kayak Leader or above takes overall responsibility for group, in line with club risk assessment and safety framework. Group members responsible for following instructions/ guidance of leader.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Collaborative Club Activity	Group paddle with competent club members	Yes	No	All members take responsibility, in line with the club's risk assessment, for their own and each other's safety. Paddle must be agreed by those taking part, as appropriate for the skills and experience level of the group.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supervised Activity	Supervised training / development sessions e.g. Loch sessions, Rescue and rolling practice sessions	Yes	No *	There are clear supervision arrangements using people skilled enough for the responsibility. * Where appropriate e.g. some pool and loch development sessions, will have a suitably qualified person/s supervising.	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. General activities will be deemed to be approved by the club safety officer if they follow the principles set out in the club paddling activities Risk Assessment.
2. Any other activities will be assessed on an individual basis, as and when required.
3. Members organising planned trips are required to complete basic Paddle UK Risk Assessment and risk Management eLearning (available free to members)

Grades of paddle

Importantly the nature of any paddle may vary depending on wind and sea conditions on the day which will affect the level of difficulty and the same paddle may be graded differently on different days

As a general guide however, each club paddle can be graded as shown below:

Development paddle	This will be a relatively short paddle in sheltered conditions, which may be on a loch or sea. Wind speed is expected to be F3 or below and paddlers will not be exposed to tidal races or overfalls. Simple escape routes will always be available.
Grade A	Single day trips up to 20Km in distance. Relatively easy landings with escape routes available. They will offer relative shelter from extreme conditions and little affected by ocean swell. Some tidal movement and short crossings may be found, but no tidal races or overfalls expected.
Grade B	Mainly day trips up to 30Km in distance. Some awkward landings and sections of coastline with no escape routes should be expected. Tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, crossings, ocean swell and surf may be encountered. They will also be exposed to the weather and associated conditions.
Grade C	Single and multi-day trips of greater distances. These trips will have difficult landings and will have no escape routes for the majority of the trip. Fast tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, extended crossings, ocean swell and surf may be found on all of these trips. They will be very exposed to the weather and conditions, therefore requiring detailed planning.

(Paraphrased from *Scottish Sea Kayaking Guide*; Presda Press)

1. New members must attend at least one development paddle before taking part in a Club **Grade A** paddle as part of a group. This may be relaxed where the new member is a competent paddler e.g. joining from another club and can provide documented evidence, though attendance on a development paddle is still advised.
2. Generally, members should progress to the grade of paddle they're comfortable at, through each grade from A to C, gaining skills and experience at each level.
3. Members taking part in Grade A to C paddles must be competent in deep water rescues; as both rescuer and paddler in the water, and have practiced this (in conditions appropriate to the grade) in the previous 12 months.

Link to Generic FSKC Risk Assessment

<https://fskc.groups.io/g/main/files/General%20Club%20Documents/Health%20and%20Safety/FSKC%20Sea%20Kayaking%20Activities%20Risk%20Assessment%202025-6.docx>