

Risk Assessment – Kayaking, Hamworthy Park to Brownsea Island

Activity	Kayaking (Supervised Trip)	Location	Poole Harbour – Brownsea Island
Activity Type	Supervised kayaking event led by qualified leaders operating within agreed ratios		
Assessor	James Wardle	Last Reviewed	28 December 2025
Reviewed By	Stephen Everitt		

<p>Scope and Context</p> <p>This risk assessment covers a supervised kayaking trip to Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour. The activity is delivered under the supervision of suitably qualified and experienced leaders, operating within agreed participant ratios and following Paddle UK and RYA safety guidance.</p> <p>Leaders are responsible for planning, dynamic risk assessment, decision-making, and emergency response. Participants are expected to follow leader instructions and operate within the limits of their ability.</p> <p>The assessment recognises the dynamic nature of Poole Harbour, including tidal streams, commercial traffic, changing weather conditions, and varying levels of participant experience.</p> <p>When overnight camping all equipment will be taken by a Drascombe Coaster . See separate risk assesment</p>
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Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Risk	Existing Controls	Risk Level	Further Actions
Adverse weather on return journey	All participants	Fatigue, loss of control, assisted return required	Weather and tide checks by leaders; conservative planning; leader authority to shorten or abort trip or Return via Ferry	Medium	Confirm weather windows and contingency plans
Participant fatigue	Participants	Reduced concentration and capability	Managed pace; rest breaks; food and hydration planning; leader monitoring	Medium	Reinforce self-reporting of fatigue
Commercial and recreational vessel traffic	All participants	Collision risk	Route selection; safety brief; high-visibility clothing; leader vigilance, Pool harbor VTS channel 14	Medium	Brief participants on harbour traffic patterns

Tidal streams and shallow areas	All participants	Loss of control or grounding	Passage planning using tide tables; local knowledge applied	Medium	Avoid shallow areas at low tide
Capsize	Individuals involved	Cold shock, immersion, injury	Buoyancy aids worn; leaders trained in rescue; group management	Medium	Review rescue plan before launch
Equipment failure	All participants	Loss of propulsion or control	Pre-trip equipment checks; spare paddles carried	Low	Remove faulty equipment from use
Communication failure	All participants	Delayed assistance	Leaders carry waterproof comms; emergency contacts and float plan in place	Medium	Confirm signal coverage
Medical issue	Individual participant	Medical emergency	First aid kit carried; leaders first-aid trained; emergency access known	Medium	Confirm medical disclosures

General Notes

- This is a supervised kayaking event.
- Qualified leaders hold responsibility for planning, supervision, and safety management.
- Participants must follow leader instructions at all times.
- Safety takes precedence over completing the journey.
- This risk assessment should be reviewed annually or following any incident or near miss.
- This assessment aligns with Paddle UK safety principles.