

# Risk Assessment – SUP Away Day Trip (Self-led) – Winchester / Non-tidal River

**Activity:** SUP Away Day Trip – Winchester / non-tidal river (Self-led)

**Location:** Winchester area (e.g., River Itchen – non-tidal reaches; launch/landing per event plan)

**Activity Type:** Self-led Away Day Trip (travel, unfamiliar access points)

**Date last reviewed:** 23 January 2026

**Assessor:** James Wardle

**Reviewed by:**

**Review due:** January 2027

## Scope and Context

This risk assessment covers a self-led SUP day trip on non-tidal river sections around Winchester, involving travel, launching from unfamiliar access points, and paddling in a rural environment.

Non-tidal rivers can still have current, shallow gravel, overhanging trees, weirs/locks, and limited exit points. Logistics (parking, transport, late return) add risk compared to local club paddles.

Participants are responsible for their own safety; group members should agree a plan and stay together.

## Additional Controls (Activity Specific)

- Pre-trip planning: identify launch/landing points, parking, access permissions, hazards (weirs, locks, low bridges), and no-go areas. Confirm the planned distance is realistic for the group.
- Weir/lock rule: do not attempt to paddle over weirs. Portage at designated points only. If unsure, get out early and walk the bank.
- Equipment: buoyancy aid, suitable clothing, leash with quick release (waist), repair kit (pump, patch), spare fin, and first aid kit within group.
- Buddy system + headcounts at bridges/decision points; agree 'stop and regroup' rule.
- Travel risk: car share arrangements, safe loading of boards, roof rack checks, and a clear plan for end-of-day transport.

- Emergency plan: identify nearest road access points and how to communicate location (What3Words or OS grid as appropriate).
- Respect landowners and other users; do not block access points; follow local bylaws.

## Risk Assessment Table

Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Risk	Control Measures	Risk Level	Further Actions
Unfamiliar access/egress points	All participants	Slips, injury, getting lost	Pre-check access; arrive in daylight; controlled carry/launch; choose safer access if conditions poor; keep group together.	Low-Medium	Share map pin(s) before travel
Weirs / hidden drops / obstructions	All participants	Serious injury, board damage	Explicit 'no weirs' rule; get out early if uncertain; portage at known points; maintain lookout; keep to main flow where safe.	Medium	Brief likely hazard locations
Tree strainers / overhanging branches	Participants	Entrapment, injury	Keep away from outside of bends where branches collect; maintain distance; if swept towards obstruction, drop to knees/sit and paddle away; leash quick release.	Medium	Choose conservative line; avoid high-flow days
Shallow water / fin strikes	Participants	Falls, injury	Use shorter/river fin where possible; paddle in deeper channels; step off carefully in shallow gravel; keep ankles protected.	Low-Medium	Encourage footwear and river fin
Separation in rural sections	All participants	Delayed assistance	Buddy system; compact group; regroup points; phones waterproofed; agreed emergency plan and exit points.	Low-Medium	Set conservative turnaround time
Travel/transport incidents	Participants; public	Road traffic accident, kit loss	Safe loading, straps checked, driver rest; avoid fatigue; ensure adequate time; board/kit secured.	Low-Medium	Designate a 'transport lead'

## General Notes

- This risk assessment should be reviewed annually or following any incident or near miss.