



**GEOGRAPHE
OUTRIGGER
CANOE CLUB**

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN
2024/2025 Season



Geographe Outrigger Canoe Racing Club Inc.

**Based at Geographe Bay Yacht Club
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CLUB RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024/2025

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Revised: 08 September 2020 Addendum: Canoe Management

Revised: 15 June 2021, 04 April 2022, 28 June 2023, 19 June 2024

Revised 28 July 2024 incorporating AOCRA updates

INTRODUCTION

Geographe Outrigger Canoe Racing Club Inc. (Geographe Outriggers) is a non-profit organisation whose safety and operation is managed by club members. Geographe Outriggers adheres to the Integrity Policies, Bylaws and 'AOCRA Rules' as supplied by the national governing body - Australian Outrigger Canoe Racing Association (AOCRA).

The club is made up of a Committee and its members. The Committee are as follows: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Registrar and a number of general committee members and co-opted delegates.

The Secretary is the primary point of contact for club members and is also the person who makes direct contact with AOCRA and the Western Australian Zone of AOCRA (WAZA). AOCRA collects a club membership list via online registrations. The Secretary also provides AOCRA with a list of the committee members and their contact details via the AOCRA website.

The Club Committee at its meetings discusses current and new business, including new guidelines and directives as issued by AOCRA or WAZA amongst other business.

All paddlers are made aware of current and future requirements and their obligations as paddlers in relation to safety and conduct when representing the club at regattas and other paddling related functions and fundraisers.

This Risk Management Plan (RMP) outlines the process required to ensure training sessions and other club activities are conducted in a safe manner. A risk assessment is undertaken on an annual basis, to ensure all foreseeable risks are identified and control measures implemented to mitigate the risk to the paddler and the CLUB. The assessment of risk is every individual paddlers' responsibility not just that of the coach/session leader/crew/steerer/captain. Every paddler is responsible for their own safety at all times and should not put anyone else at risk by their behaviour. To ensure that all paddlers are aware of their responsibilities, all club members are required to read, understand and acknowledge Geographe Outriggers Risk Management Plan (See Attachment 1). Parents, on behalf of their children (junior members) must also understand and sign the Risk Assessment Acknowledgement form, which is relayed to juniors at training sessions and events.

ADMINISTRATION

Club and AOCRA Membership

Once a paddler has come and tried paddling for 6 sessions (within a 3-month period) they must join as a member of the [Geographe Outriggers](#) and of [AOCRA](#) to be able to continue paddling.

Insurance fees are governed by AOCRA, and membership fees are governed by the Geographe Outriggers committee and are reviewed at the Club AGM each year.

AOCRA membership and insurance involves registering or renewing at www.aocra.com.au. Members must register with AOCRA and shall only paddle if AOCRA membership status is current.

In order to become a member of Geographe Outriggers (GOCRC), all paddlers are to read and acknowledge the Risk Management Plan and other documents as indicated by GOCRC Committee, join AOCRA and pay GOCRC membership fees when due. Paddlers are not to paddle if AOCRA fees have not been paid.

Club membership paperwork completed must include the following each season:

1. Club Membership Registration Form
2. Paddler's Risk Assessment Acknowledgement
3. Parent/Guardian Consent Form

If the paddler has a medical condition, they must disclose this in their AOCRA application www.aocra.com.au and their Club Membership Registration Form. Swimming competence must be declared. A Medical Declaration Form (available online at the time of application) must be completed and signed by the paddler's doctor and returned to the AOCRA registrar. The paddler's membership with AOCRA will not be complete until the AOCRA registrar receives this Medical Declaration.

A Parent/Guardian Permission Form needs to be signed for 14U Paddlers who intend to race in senior events.

Visiting / New Paddlers

- Visiting or new paddlers will be under direct supervision of the GOCRC Coach, Session Leader, or Steerer.
- A briefing of safety requirements and paddling expectations will be discussed prior to entering the water.
- For a non-AOCRA member an Indemnity and Release Form will be completed.
- New paddlers are entitled to up to 6 sessions (to be used within 3 months) where AOCRA insurance is provided. After 6 sessions (or 3 months whichever comes first), the paddler MUST complete all club membership requirements as noted above and pay AOCRA and Club membership fees. New paddlers are not permitted to paddle for any further sessions until Club membership requirements are completed, and the Club Treasurer receives payment.
- Paddlers from another AOCRA Club will be allowed to train; safety measures and expectations will be covered with that paddler before commencement of training by the coach, team captain, or steerer.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

AOCRA

www.aocra.com.au is the website for AOCRA and all administrative documents, regatta schedules, sporting updates, latest news and regatta results. See also the WA Zone section of this website.

Incidents – Injuries and Equipment Damage

- All injuries sustained in training, competing or during travelling to or from training or organized regattas no matter how minor are required to be reported.
- An online incident report www.aocra.com.au “Report an Incident” must be completed as per AOCRA requirements (Regatta and Training Rules). Members MUST log into the AOCRA website to be able to lodge an incident report.
- Incidents must be reported within 7 days of the event.
- A copy of the report is automatically sent to the AOCRA Safety Officer and the WAZA and Club secretaries.

- An incident report must be completed to enable a paddler to make an insurance claim for medical or related expenses and for equipment damage claims.

Coaching

- **Geographe Outriggers (GOCRC)** has qualified Coaches, experienced assistants e.g., session and team leaders, steerers, and parent volunteers.
- **All Coaches MUST be registered Club members**
- All Coaches and assistants must meet the requirements of AOCRA Rules – Section 9 Working With Children Policy and hold a current Working with Children’s Check (WCC).
- Coaches must meet the requirements outlined in the AOCRA Rules – Section 9 Coaching
- Coaching records are kept and may be periodically reviewed by the Club President, WAZA Committee, and AOCRA.
- Swim and tread water tests are logged by the Coaches and records are kept by the Club Coaches/Club Secretary/Club Treasurer
- Canoe Huli (capsize) drills - with and without covers for OC6 - are logged by the Club Coaches/Club Secretary/Club Treasurer
- Coaches provide training programs, in accordance with AOCRA’s Policy. Training sessions are logged and recorded on the InstaTeam app (and considered a written record of attendance), detailing the following:
 - Time and date
 - Attending paddlers
 - Type and duration of the session
 - Course description
 - Weather conditions
 - Any incidents or injuries

Safety – Paddler Suitability (Swim, Tread and Huli Tests and Drills)

All GOCRC /AOCRA members must undertake annual swim/tread water/canoe huli (flip) tests as per AOCRA Rules – Section 8.1 and 8.1.2 and with results recorded in a Club register

Minimum Standard for the Swim/Tread Water Test:

- Seniors – Swim 400m with no external aid, and tread water for 5 minutes.
- Juniors including Minnows – Swim 150m with no external aid, and tread water for 3 minutes.

- Juniors competing in Senior paddling events must complete the Senior swim and tread water tests.
- If a Club member fails either the annual swim or tread water test, that member must wear a Personal Flotation Device minimum Level 50S (PFD) (as described in AOCRA Rules), whilst training or competing in any form of outrigger canoe.
- If a Club member fails the test to safely re-enter the canoe under their own strength, they are to be advised that they are not eligible to paddle. They will be given further opportunities to undertake the test, at the discretion of the Club Coach. The Club member may be offered the opportunity to utilise rope assistance (e.g. sling, strop, bridle) to help them to re-enter the canoe. If this is unsuccessful, the paddler must have that apparatus with them every time they are in the canoe.
- Club members using OC1/OC2/V1 craft need to undertake Huli drills to confirm their competency to right and reboard their canoe following a huli.

GENERAL WATER SAFETY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Training in offshore and Coastal waters AOCRA Rules (8.7)

Geographe Outriggers (GOCRC) is located adjacent to Geographe Bay Yacht Club, with launching of canoes from Geographe Bay. GOCRC is based within Geographe Bay on the Indian Ocean in “unprotected waters”. When paddling in Geographe Bay there are some unique risk management issues. The club will adhere to the AOCRA Rules (8.7) regarding training in and off shore and coastal waters.

The primary risk is the potential for interactions between outrigger canoes and large marine vessels, fishing boats, yachts and general marine pleasure craft. All preventative measures must be taken to avoid collisions including actions such as canoes giving way to larger craft and the use of lights during after-hours paddling. The canoe launch point is relatively protected. All paddlers must be aware of the other craft in the area and alert their steerer when required.

There is a risk of capsize nearby and/or collision with the Busselton Jetty in windy conditions. Steerer's should give the jetty a wide berth when paddling on the windward side of the jetty. Inexperienced steerer's should only choose to paddle between the pylons of the jetty in calm

conditions. Paddlers in seat one (the Stroke) should be capable of steering the bow to alter course when required, such as avoiding a jetty pylon or another canoe.

Another potential risk is an interaction with pleasure craft in and around the Port Geographe Marina. Steerer's must have a good understanding of the rules regarding entering and leaving a port. The beach adjacent to the carpark on Freycinet Drive, Port Geographe is the club's winter training location. Steerer's and Canoe Captains must be aware of the safe entry and exit points within the marina in case of an emergency.

The club also uses nearby rivers and inland waterways for paddling where the appropriate safety equipment may also include thermal clothing and closed footwear.

Swim Tests

Swim tests must be conducted in accordance with the AOCRA Rules – Section 8.1 Paddler Suitability - Swim, tread and huli. The policy is in place to ensure that paddlers are able to support themselves in the water, right and reboard a canoe in the event of a huli (capsize) or other incident.

Huli (Capsize) Drills

Every season club members must undergo “capsize drills” during training. The coach will explain the capsize drill prior to the canoe entering the water and then a practical “flip” is carried out. The coach logs the participants' names and date.

The capsize drill is conducted at the start of each season to ensure every paddler understands their role in the case of a real capsize. Never paddle in equipment that you are not prepared to lose should the canoe flip.

The risk of wearing a PFD and being trapped under a capsized OC6 must be considered. Wearing a Level 50 PFD is better than a Level 100 or 150 PFD for swimming out from under a capsized canoe.

Re-entering an OC6 Canoe

There is a potential risk when re-entering an OC6 canoe from the water. A paddler needs to be able to reach high and lift their body out of the water and onto the gunnel or into the cockpit of the canoe before shuffling onto the seat. In this procedure, injuries have occurred including shoulder injuries and broken ribs. If a paddler believes he/she will experience difficulty re-

entering the canoe safely then rope assistance (e.g. sling, strop, bridle) can be rigged and used to help. This is carried with the paddler every time he/she enters the canoe. Care should be taken when assisting individuals into a canoe as back strain can occur.

Sun Safety AOCRA Rules (8.8)

AOCRA has accepted a sun smart policy and acknowledges that the sport is conducted in an environment where sun safety is paramount. It is recognised that skin cancer is preventable by the application of preventative measures such as sun safe dress standards, wearing of hats, wearing of sunglasses and use of protective sunscreens during competition and training.

Paddling presents risk in regard to both hyperthermia and hypothermia. Club coaches and paddlers will make themselves aware of the prevailing and forecast weather conditions and dress accordingly. In excessive heat or cold, coaches will undertake a risk assessment based on the conditions and assist paddlers in the appropriate hydration, nutrition, clothing and protection. Additional equipment should be considered given the prevailing weather conditions. (i.e. Space blankets, 1mm paddling clothing etc)

Hydration AOCRA Rules (8.8)

Another aspect of being in the sun for long periods is the risk of dehydration through exposure. Suitable water bottles should be taken and used during long paddles, for new paddlers frequent stops should be built into the training session by the coach.

Paddlers, in conjunction with their Club Coach, will consider prevailing conditions and paddling distance to determine if hydration and food should be carried.

Weather Precautions AOCRA Rules (8.2)

AOCRA has a strict policy on the use of canoes during strong and gale force wind warnings. Under no circumstances are canoes to be put into the water during a gale force warning (34+ knots).

Coaches are responsible for assessing the conditions for every training sessions and make a determination on training with safety of all paddlers paramount in that decision making process.

If a Strong Wind Warning (26-33 knots) is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) and is current at the time of a training session or event, then a risk assessment needs to be carried

out. Offshore winds on Geographe Bay can look deceptively “calm” but a few hundred metres offshore can lead to a dangerous situation particularly in the case of a capsize. An alternative location to paddle is within the protected waters of Port Geographe Marina, or the nearby “drain”.

General Safety Rules to be followed at all times:

- All club training sessions must be sanctioned and recorded on the InstaTeam app.
- All paddlers are to participate and be under the guidance throughout the training session of the respective coach, team leader, session leader, or steerer.
- Club canoes and equipment must be maintained to appropriate safety standards. Canoe rigging must be checked prior to every session and re-rigged where necessary.
- Paddlers must advise the Coach, Session Leader, or Steerer/Captain if they have an illness or medical condition that may increase their safety risk or risk to others.
- Any person showing signs of alcohol consumption or other erratic/unsafe behaviours will not be allowed in the canoe.

CANOE SAFETY

The club adheres to the AO Rules (8.7) regarding training off shore and in coastal waters, and incorporates safety equipment legislated in Western Australia.

Canoe Leader's responsibility

A team leader is appointed for each crew for every training session. This person can be the steerer and is responsible for the safety of the canoe and the paddlers. This team leader ensures that the canoes are equipped for the training session and meets the club safety requirements.

Steerer's responsibility

The steerer (or master) of the canoe is legally responsible for the navigation and direction of the canoe and the paddlers in the canoe. All paddlers must follow the steerer's directions when on the water.

Geographe Outriggers requires all canoes to carry the following safety equipment during training sessions.

This Safety Checklist is placed in a prominent position in the club shed.

OC12 – OC6 – OC4 SAFETY CHECKLIST

1. A minimum Level 50S PFD must be carried on board each canoe or worn - one for each paddler – every time the canoe is put on the water in Geographe Bay.
2. Two (2) bailers tied into the canoe with cord.
3. Tow rope secured to the canoe and ready for deployment.
4. Spare paddle secured to the canoe.
5. Rigging secure and bungs in place.
6. If training at or within 45 minutes of dark an all-round white light must be secured to the canoe for night navigation
7. Storm covers are to be put on canoes in the event of rough conditions. This is at the discretion of the Coach, Session Leader, or Steerer/Captain.
8. WA Department of Transport requirements include an in-date set of flares when paddling over 400m offshore - 2 handheld orange smoke flares (day use) and 2 handheld red flares (night use).

OC1/V1 – OC2 SAFETY CHECKLIST

1. A minimum Level 50S MUST be worn - one for each paddler – every time the canoe is put on the water in Geographe Bay.
2. Inflatable lifejackets are acceptable as a PFD when paddling providing that the gas cylinder has been checked and certified by the club. This is undertaken in the first two weeks of every October as an annual assessment.
3. A leg rope (ankle, knee or waist leash) is a mandatory safety feature and must be attached to OC1/OC2/ and V1 canoes. It is recommended that paddlers use them to ensure their own personal safety especially when offshore and/ or in conditions where the paddler/s may become separated from their canoe.
4. Check all rigging is secure and bungs are in place.
5. V1's require a bailer – tied in.
6. If training at or within 45 minutes of dark an all-round white light must be secured to the canoe for night navigation
7. No club canoes will be used for individual sessions without a documented club coaching program. This is for AOCRA insurance purposes.

8. The above minimum requirements must be adhered to for personal accident and liability insurance cover.

Additional Precautions

- Paddlers must use club Check-In/Out board with paddler's names
- Paddlers training or paddling outside scheduled club training times do so at their own risk and responsibility. Notify someone of your course and return time and paddle with a buddy.
- A mobile phone carried in a waterproof container is recommended with the Sea Rescue number as well as any other emergency numbers.
- There are no more than 6 paddlers in each OC6 canoe for any session unless a decision is made for coaching purposes.

Team lifting, carrying and storing of OC6 canoes

Only lift, carry, launch or store OC6 canoes with 5 or more persons.

Where possible use beach trolleys to manoeuvre OC6 canoes.

A minimum of 4 people to lift, 1 person at back to steady canoe and 1 person to place the trolley under the canoe.

Appoint one person as the team leader to plan and communicate the lift instructions.

Use correct lifting technique, think before you lift and adopt a stable position.

ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

All incidents (injury & equipment damage) MUST be reported immediately to the Club Secretary or president immediately. All incidents must be logged into the AOCRA online system within 7 days of incident.

SAFETY EDUCATION

All paddlers should be made aware of preventative and safety measures and how to deal with potential risky situations such as:

- How to rig a canoe
- Safely lifting the canoe on and off the trolley
- Carrying canoes safely to the water

- Protecting the rudders of the OC1/2's
- How to safely fit and use the PFD's
- Understanding the wind and ocean currents
- Managing a canoe in the surf
- How to capsize and recover a canoe
- How to safely exit and reboard a canoe
- Use of storm covers
- How to rig the canoe tow rope
- Use of flares, and when to use them
- Bailing techniques
- Using a VHF radio to contact VMR Sea Rescue (Ch 16/80) and ACRM Base (Ch 80/22)
- Emergency Phone contacts for Ambulance, Busselton Hospital, Sea Rescue
- How to load the canoe trailer and tie the canoes down safely
- How to tow the canoe trailer safely
- Preparing for the sun, cold weather, and rehydration
- Canoe maintenance and repair

The club coaches should provide education and training for all paddlers in the above skills.

UNUSUAL RISK MANAGEMENT SCENARIOS

Procedures are detailed below for the following unusual situations:

1. Canoe in unexpected severe weather (strong winds, heavy rain, lightning)

In the case of an unexpected weather event all paddlers should remain with the canoe. The canoe has positive buoyancy and will not sink. Paddlers may be asked to don their life jackets by the Coach, Session Leader, or Steerer/Captain at the first sign of inclement weather or in poor visibility or darkness. In the case of lightning and/or thunder, the canoe shall return immediately to the nearest shore. If the paddlers are incapable of returning the canoe to shore, then the use of a mobile phone is recommended to alert rescue authorities. Should the mobile phone be inoperable then flares should be used to alert the public.

2. Canoe fails to return, lack of light.

If a canoe does not return to the club at the expected ETA a search should be conducted based on the information left on the Check-In/Out board at the outrigger shed. This information will include Canoe Description, Intended Course, Paddler's Names, and ETA and should be provided to the authorities – Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Police.

3. Medical emergency (e.g., heart attack, physical injury, unconsciousness, hyperthermia, sun stroke)

The coach, canoe leader, and steerer should be made aware who in their crew has current First Aid accreditation. Prevention should be the priority for any crew and all paddlers should be appropriately dressed and prepared for sun, cold water, and hydration. In the event of a medical emergency the most qualified first aider should carry out the appropriate first aid. Each season, a list of First Aiders names should be placed on the club notice board.

4. Paddler separated from the canoe.

In the event that a paddler is separated from the canoe ('Man overboard' scenario) in rough conditions a spotter should be assigned who points directly at the swimmer and continues to point at the swimmer until the canoe is turned around and able to approach the swimmer for retrieval. In rough conditions, it is easy to lose sight of a swimmer in the water.

5. Shark alert

These can be via shark alert apps www.sharksmart.com.au on smart phones, advice from other boaters or beachgoers, or via a shark-spotting helicopter or drone. When the Coach, Session Leader, or Steerer is made aware of a shark in the vicinity all paddlers are to remain in the canoe and the canoe is to return to the club or the nearest beach landing. Swimming, deep-water changeovers, and capsize drills should be conducted in waters where there have been no shark alerts within the previous 6 hours.

6. Private tender boat

The club sometimes uses private members' boats for paddling support and coaching purposes. The skipper of the boat must have a Recreational Skippers Ticket (RST) and ensure all WA Department of Transport requirements are met before taking club members on their boats. In the case of junior paddlers parental permission must first be

obtained. Safety around paddlers in the water includes disengaging the propeller (placing in Neutral) in the vicinity of swimmers and not using reverse gear around swimmers.

CONCLUSION

Geographe Outriggers (GOCRC) complies with all AOCRA policies, rules, regulations, requirements and guidelines. All members are made aware of their membership obligations and requirements for training and sign the Paddler's Risk Assessment Acknowledgement.

Attachment 1: Paddler's Risk Assessment Acknowledgement



PADDLER'S RISK ASSESSMENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a member of Geographe Outrigger Canoe Racing Club I have been made aware of the Risk Management Plan for the Club, and I have read the document.

I understand my obligations as a member of the Club to adhere to all the safety requirements as per this Risk Management Plan.

SENIOR MEMBER

Full Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	

JUNIOR MEMBER PARENT/GUARDIAN

Junior's Full Name	
Parent/Guardian's Full Name	
Signature	
Date:	