

## SAFETY ALERT

Contact: [safety@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:safety@britishcanoeing.org.uk)

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>CASE STUDY</b> <b>Emergency Casualty Evacuation</b> <b>Evacuation of casualty and the role of Marshalls</b>
Date Issued	November 2018

### Background

This case study follows a life threatening incident at a remote river side location in a marathon race. It demonstrates how good decision making, prompt action and team work were crucial in producing a successful outcome.

Event Marshalls not only play a role in the smooth running of an event but can also provide an important safety and rescue service at their stations making key decisions and acting as central points of contact.

### The Incident

- ✓ During a race and in a remote location one member of a K2 crew started to feel chest pains. These became severe and a decision was made to stop. The K2 partner sat the casualty down on the bank and tried to make them comfortable.
- ✓ Being isolated the K2 partner needed to make a decision on how to get help. They left the casualty and ran to a marshalling point at the race turn.
- ✓ At the race turn one of the race Marshalls called an ambulance and directed them to drive to the closest road access point. This was still some 400 metres from the casualty.
- ✓ The K2 partner and a second Marshall ran back to the casualty, assessed their condition, tried to make them comfortable and maintain body temperature with coats, hat and extra clothes.
- ✓ The first Marshall went to meet the ambulance and also *kept open contact* with the second Marshall/casualty, via mobile phone.
- ✓ A motor boat, already on the water for safety cover, was then sent to collect the casualty and transfer them to the rendezvous point with the ambulance.
- ✓ The transfer was successful and the casualty was taken to hospital by ambulance.

The succession of good decisions and actions by a number of people combined with good communications was central to the successful evacuation of the casualty to hospital.

### What can be learnt?

Despite a successful outcome it became apparent to those involved that additional measures to assist in the process would have helped. Those involved in the incident are keen to share their experience:

**Marshalls**, particularly if stationed at remote locations, it is important to carry:

- Warm spare clothing

- Thermal/space blanket. A strong recommendation from this incident is that you should also consider the need for a sleeping bag or blanket
- First aid kit
- Means of communication, normally a mobile phone, and have emergency contact numbers to hand
- They should know their location and be able to relay their position on the course in an emergency. Consider if maps are appropriate for Marshalls to carry
- Marshalls should know how (by what means) and from where to evacuate a casualty

**Competitors** should be briefed: -

- On their obligation to assist fellow competitors in difficulty
- To know where the Marshalls are located and where assistance can be sought

**Event Organisers**

- It is recommended that course diagrams or route maps show the location of any Marshalling, evacuation and first aid points

British Canoeing has produced an event safety audit. This is a check list designed to cover all types of canoeing events and to act as a guide to help in the planning and running of events. A copy can be found [here](#)

### **Outcome**

On arrival at hospital the casualty was confirmed as having suffered a heart attack. They underwent emergency treatment which was successful and were discharged after 4 days.

The prompt action of all involved, from the very start, ensured that the damage to the heart was minimal and a successful recovery is predicted.

By submitting incident reports to British Canoeing you can help us to identify and address issues within the sport. To report an incident go to <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/go-canoeing/incident-reporting>