



River Clean ups safety and organisation

This information acts as a guide to the steps you should take when running a river clean up. The scale of the event, nature of the water and prevailing conditions on the day, will determine the extent of each.

The event should be guided by an overall safety and organisational plan. An example of what this could look like is below.

Organisation and Safety

Risk Assessment

Carry out a risk assessment. Think about how the cleanup will be run, what are the potential hazards involved in undertaking it and what measures or precautions do you need to take for the safety of people taking part.

Check the weather and water levels, if the river is too high or the sea too rough, you might want to consider rescheduling.

Leadership/organisation

Appoint a leader or organiser for the day. They should:

- Delegate tasks and appoint sub team leaders if needed
- Ensure the volunteers are suitably equipped and know what job they are doing
- Make sure the team have the means to communicate with the leader or appointed person during the clean up, for organisational and safety purposes

Appoint an Event Safety Officer

On the Water

If people in your party are paddling:

ALWAYS WEAR YOUR Buoyancy Aid

Appoint a "Lead" Boat (Front) and "Sweep" Boat (Rear)

Ask people to stay behind the lead and in front of the sweep. The lead and sweep should be more experienced paddlers, and should both be equipped with first-aid kits.

Incidents

Should there be any incidents, remember to keep a written record and let British Canoeing know as soon as you can on the online incident reporting system:

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/go-canoeing/incident-reporting>

Say thanks

Say thanks to everyone involved in making the cleanup a success.

If you had any civic leaders, VIPs or reporters attend, send a formal thank you note with photos of your event and stats about your cleanup. Remember to send British Canoeing some photo's and a short write up. We would love to have your event as a news feature.

mediaenquiries@britishcanoeing.org.uk

Example Risk Assessment: River Cleanups

DATE -CARRIED OUT:

ASSESSMENT CARRIED OUT BY:

HAZARD	WHO MIGHT BE HARMED?	HOW MAY THE RISK BE ADEQUATELY CONTROLLED?	WHAT FURTHER ACTION MAY BE REQUIRED?	Review comments / review date
DROWNING/ CAPSIZE ON WATER	Paddlers Others	BAs to be worn at all times when on the water or banks. All paddlers to use familiar craft. Kayakers advised not to overload sacks of rubbish and to use opens as intermediate collection points.	All paddlers to be briefed on the need to avoid any potentially hazardous manoeuvres on the water. Kayakers to use onion sacks only. Black sacks can be used by open boaters. Paddlers encouraged to stay in groups. At least one whistle per group.	
Cuts to hands and feet from rubbish or natural hazards	Paddlers	All participants must wear suitable shoes for bank or boat use. Collectors to be encouraged to wear protective gloves whilst handling rubbish	Ensure adequate distribution of first aid kits through the groups.	
SLIPS TRIPS AND FALLS	Paddlers/bank based helpers	Good footwear to be worn that is suitable for both use in the boat and working on rough banks	Briefing of participants to be aware of this and not take unnecessary risks. Put personal safety first, group second, and anyone else last.	

WEATHER	All	Weather forecast checked by organizer in advance. If lightening is a possibility all paddlers to leave the water immediately and find suitable shelter until improvement noted. Ensure all are adequately clothed to deal with cold and wet weather, but sun screens to be available.	Briefing of participants in advance of getting on the water.	
POLLUTION AND WATER QUALITY	Paddlers	Organiser to contact EA/CRT in advance and enquire about any known issues.	All to be advised to use hand wash products before eating or drinking and to shower/bathe after returning home. Paddler briefing to include warning about Weils Disease.	
OTHER RIVER USERS/CONFLICTS	Paddlers and other users	Paddlers instructed to be aware of other river users and how to take appropriate/avoiding action. If a confrontation develops, advise to remain calm and summon help as quickly as possible. All such incidents to be reported to organiser	Informed as to possible other river users and location	
RIVER HAZARDS e.g. Weirs and manmade features/ overhanging trees or strainers	Paddlers	Paddlers warned of potential hazards and boats organised accordingly on the water	Assess river conditions, inspect the river if necessary and undertake a dynamic risk assessment before getting on the water.	
Sharps	all	Collectors to be encouraged to wear protective gloves whilst handling rubbish and advised not to touch sharps.	Provision of sharps box	
