

## SAFETY ALERT

### WHITE WATER PADDLING

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

On the 15<sup>th</sup> November two individuals from two different groups of experienced white water paddlers sustained serious back injuries while paddling the falls in the Glen Etive area.

Both paddlers sustained broken vertebrae and required rescue by the Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team. After hospital treatment in Glasgow and Fort William of 11 and 13 days both have been discharged and their ongoing recovery is progressing well.

As the White Water season progresses these incidents serve as a reminder of the forward planning we need to do for trips, and the action we may need to take in an emergency.

1. Always take an effective means of communication/way of calling for help with you.

*In these incidents a mobile phone signal could only be obtained by climbing to a higher location. Consider what other communication devices would be appropriate particularly where mobile phone signals are not guaranteed.*

*Also remember that even if you have no signal on your network, it may still be possible to make an emergency call as your phone will try all networks.*

2. How are you going to identify and describe your location if you need help?

*In this incident the emergency call was answered in Glasgow. It required a call to a third party, causing delay, to establish the position of the group and casualty.*

*Always have an emergency plan, understand the problems you might encounter and how to solve them. Know your location, in this incident; a grid reference would have resolved the problem.*

3. Always check river levels before you go. Assess the risk and paddlers capability.

*Although this was not held as an issue in these incidents, you should always make sure the water is suitable for the whole group and understand how different water levels increase the difficulty and risk.*

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>