CPCC Risk Assessment - Thames Paddles

Date:	**01/01/2024** **Reviewed 01/02/2025** **Reviewed 01/10/2026**

Assessors Name:	**Glen Cowsill**	**Review Date:**	**01/10/2027**

Description of assessment	**Club Thames Paddles – Covering Westminster downstream up to Teddington Lock upstream**

Location Details	**Chiswick Pier Canoe Club area of normal operation.** **Covering Westminster downstream up to Teddington Lock upstream.**

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Preparing Kit **Kitting up in the garage store and preparing boats on the main Pier (inside of the handrails).**						
Slip and fall on pontoon or pier access ramp. **Trip on equipment.**	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of breaks and strains.	Grit and salt available for icy days. The pier and pier access ramp has a nonslip tread and handrail. Kit room and store areas are periodically tidied.	Grit and salt should be scattered on the pier access ramp and pontoon when required.	Paddle Leader Paddle Leader	Prior to paddle Prior to paddle	

		Boat security cables replaced with flexible cable. Gangway periodically cleared in the garage to allow fire escape from the office and use by other members. Buoyancy aids, cags provided with appropriate hangers to prevent being stored on the floor.	Pontoon to be washed and brushed to remove mud and faeces slip hazards. Retain a clear path on the left hand side of the pontoon to allow RNLI rapid access. Briefing at the end of the session on returning the kit as you found it.	Paddle Leader Paddle Leader	Prior to paddle On completion of paddle	
Manual Handling Lifting and carrying of boats and equipment.	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of sprains and strains.	Only coaches, independent paddlers and committee to have keys to access boats to ensure an experienced person is at site for lifting and carrying.	Movement of boats to be supervised by experienced members. Consider the opportunity to teach and show correct handling. Two people per boat preferred.	Paddle leader Paddle leader	On unlocking equipment On unlocking equipment	
Rushing, shortage of time	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of ill prepared equipment leading to incident or poor response to incident.	Paddles advertised with clear meeting time and location and on water time.	Experienced members arrive in good time and supervise paddle preparations.	Paddle Leader	Prior to paddle	
Other Pier Users	Other users of the pier. - houseboat owners -curious locals	Good relations are actively maintained with other pier users.	Keep access routes available. Be aware of other use of the pier on the day and separate activities.	Paddle Leader Paddle Leader	Prior to paddle Prior to paddle	

	accessing pier. Risk of interference with preparations and injury.					
Launching from / Exit onto pontoon **Preparing the Pontoon, carrying boats and equipment onto the Pontoon and launching / recovering boats.**						
Manual Handling Carrying of boats from pier to pontoon (vice versa).	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of sprains and strains.	Only coaches, independent paddlers and committee to have keys to access boats to ensure an experienced person is at site for lifting and carrying.	Movement of boats to be supervised by experienced members. Consider the opportunity to teach and show correct handling. Two people per boat.	Paddle leader Paddle leader	On unlocking equipment On unlocking equipment	
Biological Hazard. E.g., Weil's disease, animal, and bird droppings.	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of illness.	Boats are periodically jet washed and cleaned. Equipment kept clean and indoors.	Pontoon to be washed and brushed to remove mud and faeces hazards.	Paddle leader	Prior to launching	
Water Drowning	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of drowning and death	Members paddling on the river must be able to swim. Controlled by taster session/membership form and assessed pool sessions. Requirement to wear BA for everyone on the pontoon and paddling. Medical information requested on	Notice has been placed on the access to the pontoon stating, "Buoyancy Aids to be worn beyond this point". Throw rope and life buoy to be available on the pontoon. Fitting of buoyancy aids to be supervised by experienced paddler under direction of	Safety Officer Paddle Leader Paddle Leader	1/6/2024 Prior to pontoon access	Jan 2006

		sign up.	Paddle Leader. Weak swimmers to be asked to make themselves known to the Paddle Leader (privately if possible) at the beginning of the session. Medical information reminder to be made as part of briefing.	 Paddle leader Paddle leader	 Prior to launch Prior to paddle	
Water Entrapment under the pontoon or pier.	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of casualty entrapment and complex rescue under pontoon or pier.	All above conditions are in place for drowning. Members are advised not to lone work on the pontoon.	Emergency exit ladder has been fitted to main body of the pier adjacent to the pontoon	Safety Officer	1/6/2025	Jan 2006
Slips, Trips and Falls	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of breaks, strains or drowning.	Grit and salt available for icy days. Pontoon access steps upgraded to metal 2024.	Grit and salt should be scattered on the pontoon when required. Pontoon to be washed and brushed to remove mud and faeces slip hazards. Six monthly inspection of pontoon access steps.	Paddle Leader Paddle Leader Maintenance officer	Prior to paddle Prior to paddle Six Monthly	
Nighttime visibility	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of accident/	Low level illumination fitted around the Pier area. Pedestal lights not working on circulation area.	Requests have been made of Chiswick Pier Trust, for rectification of pontoon lighting, to cover pontoon area and pontoon access.	Safety officer	1/6/2025	

	injury due to poor visibility.		**NOTE: Multiple requests made - increase urgency of request to Trustees**	CPCC Chair	1/6/2026	
Launching from pontoon	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of **–** increased risk of capsize or collision with moored boats, especially during peak tide.	Consider the order of launching so the first on the water can, and is capable of, assisting in the event of a wet rescue being necessary. Consider the waiting position of the group whilst launches are ongoing.	Consider the best launch for conditions. During higher flow seal launch may not be appropriate. Extra attention and clear coaching during higher flow.	Paddle leader	Prior to launch	
Exit from pontoon	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of **–** increased risk of capsize or collision with moored boats, especially during peak tide.	Consider the order of exit so the last off the water can, and is capable of, assisting in the event of a wet rescue being necessary.	Extra attention and clear coaching during higher flow. Boats to be moved onto pier and stored, not left as hazard on pontoon.	Paddle Leader Paddle leader	Prior to recovery As each boat is recovered onto pontoon	
Club Paddling **Chiswick Pier Canoe Club area of normal operation, Westminster downstream up to Teddington Lock upstream.**						

What are the hazards?	**Who might be harmed and how?**	**What are you already doing to control the risks?**	**What further action do you need to take to control the risks?**	**Who needs to carry out the action?**	**When is the action needed by?**	**Done**

Water	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of Drowning (and secondary drowning)	Members paddling on the river must be able to swim. Controlled by taster session/membership form and assessed pool sessions. Members attending Thames paddles must have demonstrated basic paddle skills during assessed pool sessions. Requirement to wear BA for everyone on the pontoon and paddling. Medical information requested on sign up. At least one phone and or VHF radio on the water to summon help. **Solo paddles are not a part of the club safety management.** **The club would not endorse or be liable for the paddle. A minimum of two, advised three paddlers are required for club paddles.**	Fitting of buoyancy aids to be supervised by experienced paddler under direction of Paddle Leader. Weak swimmers to be asked to make themselves known to the Paddle Leader (privately if possible) at beginning of the session. Leader to check throw rope and rescue equipment prior to launch. Medical information reminder to be made as part of briefing. Coaches brief to identify any individual concerns before session starts and may place specific resource to reduce risk. i.e. partner up coach with an at-risk paddler.	Paddle Leader Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to launch Prior to launch Prior to launch Prior to launch Prior to launch	
Lifting and carrying of equipment	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of cuts, sprains/strains.	Sufficient paddlers should be available to assist each other carrying kit during the paddle.	Ensure boats are carried between two people. Ensure the burden of kit is spread evenly.	Paddle Leader Paddle leader	During paddle, prior to landing During paddle, prior to landing	

Slip and fall on steep / slippery banks	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of cuts, breaks, and strains.		Launch and egress points to be selected for ease of access to the river. Check members' footwear is appropriate. Assist each member to the level required for their own abilities.	Paddle Leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	During launch and recovery activities Prior to paddle During launch and recovery activities	
Weather conditions **Storm, mist, fog, rain, or snow.** *(see wind separately below)*	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Increased risk of injury or illness through collision, capsize or loss of concentration.	No session if a storm is forecast for the period of the paddle. No session if visibility is less than bank to bank. Phone PLA for update on river conditions before session.	In reduced visibility or darkness ensure two constant (not flashing) white lights are displayed. One fwd and one aft, each visible through 180 degrees. The boat lighting must be visible through 360 degrees. Visibility is a minimum of 800m. A whistle and light should be attached to each PFD. Additional briefing on keeping group together, signals and potential hazards. Stop regularly to regroup and well before hazards i.e. dove pier, or bridges. All paddlers must be suitably dressed for the conditions with Dry Suits, Cags and warm clothing as conditions dictate.	Paddle Leader Safety Officer Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to launch 1/4/2025 Prior to paddle During paddle Prior to paddle	1/1/2026 (whistles)

Wind	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Increased risk of injury through collision, capsize or loss of control.	No beginners if winds exceed force 4 on Beaufort scale (See Appendix 2) and consider independent paddlers only. Cags available to reduce wind chill.	Where force 3 winds are experienced consideration should be given to other factors before session goes ahead (tide, flow). Direction of travel and type of craft used i.e. inexperienced canoeist should not go out in force 3 winds. Additional care given to loading and unloading. Coaches to assess suitable clothing as per hypothermia risk. Consideration to be given to cancelling session when gale force winds expected.	Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to paddle Prior to paddle Prior to paddle	
Low Temperature (atmospheric and water).	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of Hypothermia.	Web site and paddle posting includes suitable clothing suggestions. Spare clothes, cags and spray decks are available for use. Hot showers available. Weather conditions included in paddle posting to warn paddlers before session.	In adverse weather Phone the PLA before the session to check any imminent weather changes. Paddle leader to ensure participants wear clothing appropriate to the conditions. All paddlers must be suitably dressed for the water temperature conditions with Dry Suits, Cags and warm clothing as conditions dictate. Paddle Leader to bring additional warm, dry spare clothing with them, including, (spare gloves, layers, hats).	Paddle Leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to launch Prior to launch Prior to paddle	

			Paddle briefing to include what to do if feeling cold and empower paddlers to raise the issue. Paddle leader to be prepared to change plans based on paddlers condition i.e. stop earlier. Hot drink or hot water is advised to be carried in cold temperature. First aid kit to include thermal blanket	Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to launch During paddle During paddle Prior to paddle	
High Temperature	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of Dehydration / heat stroke / sun burn.	Website and paddle posting have suitable clothing suggestions. Weather conditions included in paddle posting to warn paddlers before session.	Paddle leader to ensure participants wear clothing appropriate to the conditions, suitably dressed for the water temperature and protected from direct sunlight. Carry spare hats and sunscreen. Breaks for rehydration. Paddle leader to be aware of the signs and symptoms of heatstroke and act on identifying an issue.	Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to launch During paddle During paddle	
Exhaustion	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of confusion, fatigue and unable to follow	Medical conditions and age identified on sign up. Tandem boats or canoeing available to paddle for weaker paddlers. Tow ropes available.	Briefing to include a request to disclose medical conditions. Awareness of the coach or leader to look for signs of exhaustion. Be prepared to reduce session length as required or split the group if	Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to paddle During paddle During paddle	

	instruction and follow safety procedures	At least one phone and or VHF radio to be on the water to summon help	sufficient leaders are available for both groups and/or tow as necessary. Carry spare drinks/snacks for longer trips.			
Inappropriate response to Injury	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of aggravating injury or illness.	Coaches, Paddle Leaders and Paddle Instructors have conducted at least 8-hour water based first aid training.	Maintain a list of First Aiders in the clubhouse. Maintain a basic paddling first aid kit in the clubhouse. Paddle leaders to carry first aid kit on all paddles.	Safety Officer Safety Officer Paddle Leader	1/3/2205 At all times Prior to paddle	1/1/2026
Pre-existing conditions – Medical conditions	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of medical condition presenting during the paddle and impeding paddlers ability.	Medical conditions are identified on the sign up form.	Pre paddle briefing is to request disclosure of relevant pre-existing conditions. Paddle leader to make a decision on the impact of the condition and if condition would negatively affect ability to complete the paddle. Additional snacks and drinks to be carried and made available. Tow ropes to be carried and available.	Paddle Leader Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to paddle Prior to paddle During paddle During paddle	
Alcohol or substance misuse	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members.	Tow line available to support recovery of boat	Paddle leader has final say on whether someone is fit to paddle.	Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to paddle During paddle	

	Risk of impaired judgment and poor decision making and reaction time from paddler.		Challenge excessive alcohol consumption at rest breaks.			
Lack of Communication	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of Paddle Leader losing control of the paddle group leading to an incident or injury.	Paddle leader nominated for each paddle, with responsibility for communicating and implementing PLA, Paddle UK and Club rules. Paddle leader nominates assistant for each paddle, with responsibility for assisting Paddle leader.	Paddle leader and assistant agree positions on the water and identify additional actions that may be required based on paddling risk. Breaks to be built into paddle to allow group cohesion and dynamic risk assessments based on changing conditions, paddler level and any incidents. Club remit for paddling numbers to be developed from the Paddle UK deployment guidelines. Club deployment guidelines to be based on availability, competencies, and conditions of local conditions.	Paddle Leader Paddle leader CPCC Committee	Prior to paddle Prior to paddle 1/6/2025	Coaching Remits – Leading Regular Sunday Sessions – Issued Feb 2026

Biological Hazard. E.g., Weil's disease, animal, and bird droppings.	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of illness.	Boats are periodically jet washed and cleaned. Equipment kept clean and indoors. Warning on website including wiles disease.	Advise club members of the risk of ingestion / absorption of biological hazards. Maintain good hygiene practices, particularly prior to eating and drinking.	Paddle leader	Prior to launching	

			Carry fresh water and sanitiser.			

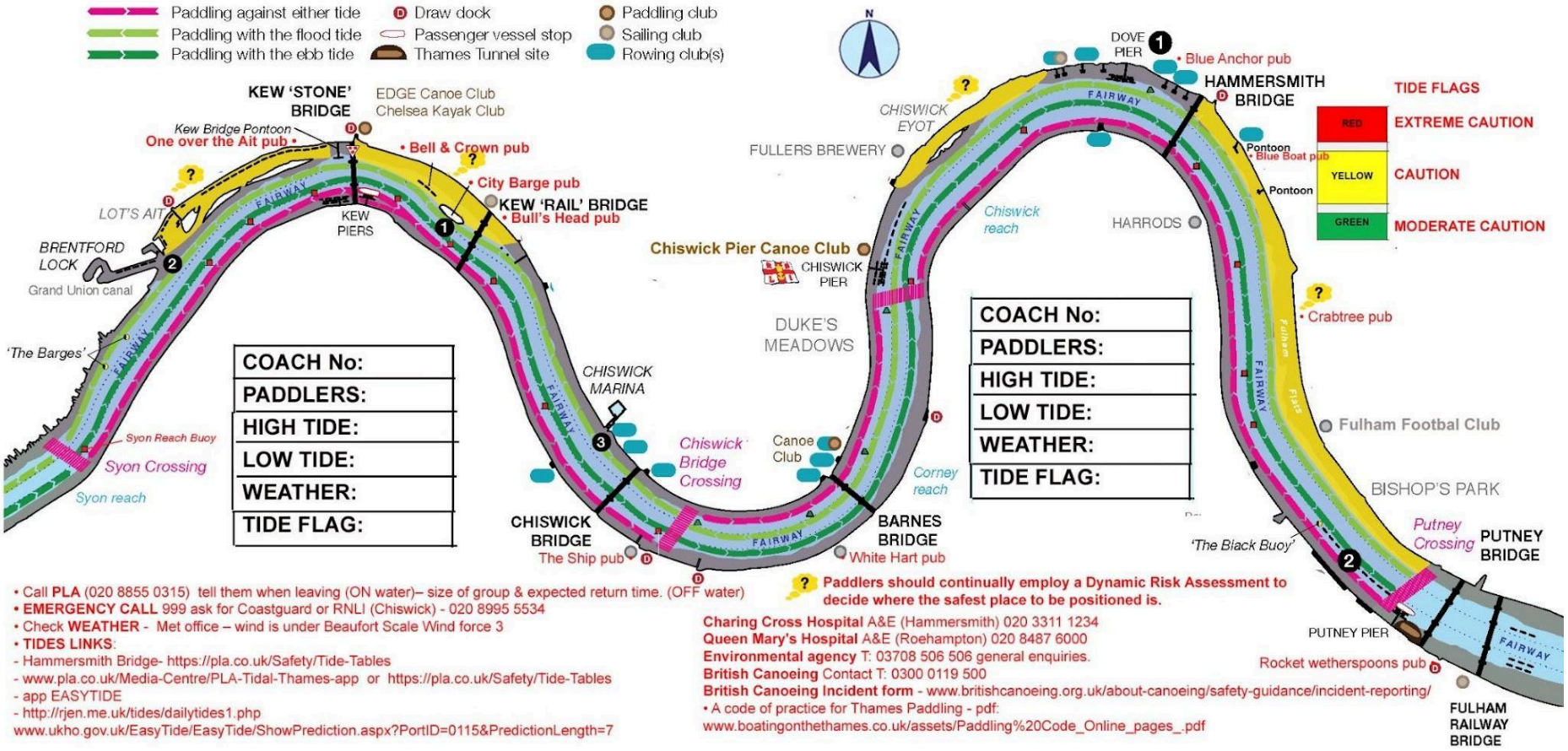
Water Quality – pollution, natural contaminants, sewage, garbage – causing illness or injury	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of illness	Thames water live surface water discharge information is monitored prior to planning a paddle. Washing facilities, soap, and showers are available at the pier and most stopping facilities. Pontoon swept to remove faeces before launching.	Consideration is given to cancelling a paddle, in the event of high surface water discharge, in the area of paddling or immediately upstream. Brief paddlers on completion and during breaks to remind all to wash hands before eating/drinking.	Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to launch During paddle	
Darkness	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Increased risk of injury or illness through collision, capsize.	The Tideway Code has clear guidance for lighting a kayak on the Thames.	Sunset should be identified as part of the session plan. In reduced visibility or darkness ensure two constant (not flashing) white lights are displayed. One fwd and one aft, each visible through 180 degrees. The boat lighting must be visible through 360 degrees. Visibility is a minimum of 800m. Check a whistle and light are attached to each PFD. Stop regularly to regroup and well before hazards i.e. dove pier, or bridges.	Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	Prior to paddle Prior to paddle Prior to paddle During paddle	
Tidal Flow	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members.	Tide reported on paddle posting before paddle.	Plan paddles to avoid launching or exiting during peak flow and to prevent paddling against the tide.	Paddle leader	Prior to paddle	

	Increased risk of losing control, capsize or collision.	Paddle planned to make use of the tide to provide the easiest session. Different exit points available depending on tide see appendix 1.	Launch boats facing into oncoming flow to allow visibility of oncoming debris and better control of boat leaving the pontoon. Dynamic assessment of entry and exit considered during peak flows i.e. position of throw ropes on the pontoon and location of coaches to support.	Paddle leader	During launch	
Fluvial Flow Strong flow caused by recent rainfall will increase water flow	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Increased risk of losing control, capsize or collision.	Fluvial flow identified by PLA flag Tidal Fluvial flow widget (pla.co.uk) No ebb tide session on Red flag. No ebb tide session for beginners on yellow flag.	On yellow flag beginners, novices and weaker crews are advised not to go afloat on the ebb tide. Also consider other risks such as wind, weather, and visibility to see if session goes ahead. Additional consideration needed on entry/exit onto pontoon.	Paddle leader	Prior to paddle	
Static objects in or near the water -Moored boats -Jetties -Bridges -Buoys -Overhanging vegetation	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Increased risk of capsize collision, entrapment and injury.	Avoid moored boats. Chiswick pier, Dove Pier and other risks identified on map of operating area Appendix 1 Dove Pier identified as an accident blackspot. Kew bridge was identified as an accident blackspot.	Emphasise the need for group to maintain awareness of surroundings, particularly oncoming river hazards during rescues and recovery. Briefing to highlight risks posed by Jetties, boats, other static objects and specific avoidance instructions.	Paddle leader	Brief prior to launch	

			Rest breaks before specified hazards reiterate risk and positive evasive actions. Emphasise the need for clients to maintain awareness of each other's positions and condition.			
Moving objects in the water -debris -Submerged objects -logs	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Increased risk of capsize collision, entrapment, and injury.	.	Emphasise the need for group to maintain awareness of surroundings, particularly oncoming river hazards.	Paddle leader	Brief prior to launch	

Other river users -Pleasure boats -Ferry -Motor Vessels	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of collision and capsize and injury.	River rules are in place for the transit of Pleasure boats, Ferry's. and Motor Vessels. They will navigate to the Starboard side of the fairway as directed by Col Regs, unless crossing at a designated crossing. The tideway code gives specific guidance to paddlers operating in the upper tideway area.	Always maintain awareness of river position and oncoming vessels, briefing paddle group regularly. Emphasise the need for the group to maintain awareness of surroundings, particularly during rescues and recovery. Paddle leader to be aware of and have demonstrated understanding of correct river rules and positioning required by both the Tideway Code and Col Regs.	Paddle Leader Paddle leader Paddle leader	During paddle Prior to paddle Prior to paddling	

Other river users -Rowers -Sail boats -Other Paddlers .	Coach, Paddle Leader, Paddle Instructor, Club members. Risk of collision and capsize and injury	River rules are in place for the transit of man powered vessels. The rules change depending on the section of the river's bias to man powered vessels or motor vessels and the direction of the flow of the river. This is called "working the slacks". The tideway code gives specific guidance to paddlers operating in the upper tideway area. https://www.pla.co.uk/assets/tidewaycodedigital.pdf Members are encouraged to read the tideway code.. Linked on website. Laminate map for coaches/leaders to take on the water. See appendix 1 Coaches/Leaders must have experience of paddling the Thames before in being remit. Site specific training (based on the Tideway Code) is offered to all club members.	Always maintain awareness of river position and oncoming vessels, briefing paddle group regularly. Emphasise the need for the group to maintain awareness of surroundings, particularly during rescues and recovery. Paddle leader to be aware of and have demonstrated understanding of correct river rules and positioning required by both the Tideway Code and Col Regs. Dynamic risk assessment to determine best placement on the river based on Col Regs, Tideway Code Guidance, frequency of craft and environmental conditions. Maintain group cohesion and identify roles for coaches with large groups (lead, rear and sides). Plan, advertise and deliver at least one session of Site Specific Training prior to summer and a second prior to autumn.	Paddle Leader Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader Paddle leader Safety officer	During Paddle Prior to paddle Prior to paddling During paddle Prior to paddle 1/4/2025	



Appendix 1 above

Office use only (to be completed by a risk assessment sampler if selected for sampling)

Sampled by	**GC**	**Position:**		**Date:**	**22/10/26**

Notes: