**Risk Assessment**

Risk Assessment is the identification and recording of the control measures required at all the potential hazards on a course, in respect to their likelihood of causing harm to riders, officials and the general public, who all may be affected by the event taking place.

A template will be prepared for the completion of a risk assessment.

Undertaking an assessment: A competent person, who would generally be an experienced canoeist, should undertake the risk assessment. No formal qualification is required and they do not need to be a member of the BCMRC.

To gain a good perspective it is desirable to paddle the course to get a canoeist perspective and paddle over the course.

As all the decisions reached are subjective rather than objective, it is recommended that more than one opinion is sought/considered.

It is important to be able to demonstrate through this assessment process that all known aspects in the use of the course have been considered and assessed. You do not have to record the reasoning behind the decisions made.

A Formal Risk Assessment entails: The recording of all potential hazards on a course and identifying a rating of low, medium or high. Where the risk is deemed to be high or medium, control measures MUST be introduced to reduce the risk to low. No stretch of water should be used for an event unless through introducing active measures, the risk can be reduced to low.

As part of assessment process, traffic flows and any known history of the course/event should be considered and recorded.

Defining levels of risk: In considering a course, the following risk ratings should be used:

• LOW RISK: is where other water users would not reasonably be impeded by the normal progress of competitors.

• MEDIUM RISK: is where other water users may be impeded by the progress of competitors or the actions of other water users may impact on a competitor’s progress. The consequences of any such interference might be overcome by paddler action alone.

• HIGH RISK: where competitor’s actions alone are not likely to reduce the risk to low.

Hazards Identification: It is not intended that this list is exhaustive or definitive, but is provided solely as a guide to identifying common hazards.

The factors to take into account include:

* Water junctions and other places where boats may join or leave the course i.e. marinas, moorings, slipways
* the number of other water users at the times the competitors will be paddling the course.
* forward vision, e.g. obstacles, that may obstruct the view of another water user from seeing competitors clearly.
* portages:
  + get out point
  + bank and towpath
  + put in point
* the speed, type and amount of traffic.
* Water conditions

It is also important to take into consideration the time of the year, time of day, and day of the week that the course is going to be used, as conditions may vary widely and affect the level of risk.

Some consideration needs to be given to local events (whether weekly, monthly or annually), such as rowing regattas, rambling events, social events

Example risks

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| ***Risk*** | ***Scenario*** | ***Action*** |
| *Low* | *Where a minor channel joins the main water course.* | *No action required* |
| *Low* | *Where a course passes a business premises that is normally busy.* | *No action required* |
| *Low* | *Islands* |  |
| *Low* | *Low bridges or trees* | *Warn paddlers on the start sheet and on the signing-on sheet.* |
| *Medium* | *Marina outlet, busy mooring,* |  |
| *Medium* | *Potential underwater obstructions* | *Warn paddlers on the start sheet and on the signing-on sheet.* |
| *Medium* | *Portages* | *Race Marshall at location* |
| *Medium* | *Race turns* | *Well singed, Marshall at location* |
| *High* | *Weirs, sluices, waterfalls* | *Warn paddlers on the start sheet and on the signing-on sheet.* |
| *High* | *Major hazard.* | *Warn paddlers on the start sheet and on the signing-on sheet. Place safety signs prior to the hazard.* |
| *High* |  |  |

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