



BRITISH DRAGON BOAT RACING ASSOCIATION

www.dragonboat.org.uk

Guidelines for Outrigger Canoe Paddling (O1s and O2s) Recommendations for Clubs and Individuals

Introduction

Outrigger canoes are purpose-built boats or modified kayaks that are used as an alternative to dragon boats for individual training or performance monitoring. They are typically used for crew selection by both clubs and the Great Britain team.

The boats are designated as outriggers and are called O1 for the single seat boat and O2 for the two seat boat. Any reference in this document to an O1 also applies to an O2. The boats are of a single hull design with one or two cockpits, equipped with an outrigger/ama/float on one side, held by two support bars. The boats are steered by a rudder operated by the feet which allows the boat to be paddled with a single blade on one side only, using a dragon boat stroke. The boats should be fitted with integral buoyancy in the form of solid buoyancy or air bags and should carry a suitable bailer.

Most O1s used for dragon boat training are designed for use on placid inland waters such as small lakes, docks, calm rivers etc, they should therefore only be used in these conditions. O1s should not be used in rough weather, particularly strong winds where they are likely to become hard to handle or suffer from swamping as they are open cockpit boats. This guidance does not cover the use of OC1s or use in tidal or offshore conditions.

The use of O1s is considered a useful supplementary activity to dragon boat racing, which may take place either in the same location as a dragon boat club or away from the club. O1s are owned both by clubs for use by their members or by individual members of the BDA.

Acceptance of Risk

O1s are used as part of formal club sessions, in small ad-hoc groups and individually in a similar way other craft are used in water sports such as canoeing, stand up paddle boarding and single sculling. As such the British Dragon Boat Association (BDA) deems paddling an O1 to fall within a similar level of risk. It is therefore considered appropriate that they are regarded as an assumed risk activity where the individual user is responsible for carrying out a suitable risk assessment proportionate to the level of risk before using them.

In addition, where O1s are owned by a club for the use of their members the club should have a suitable safety policy and risk assessments for their use. The guidelines for a Club Safety Policy for the use of O1s are described later in this document.

Purpose of Guidelines

The guidelines presented in this document may be used by both individuals and clubs owning O1s to put in place suitable policies and risk assessments. The existence of these guidelines does not detract from an individual's responsibility to ensure they are competent to use the boat and to assess the conditions in which they will be paddling.

Members should be aware that O1 paddling is not currently covered by the BDA coaching scheme and hence club coaches do not have formal qualifications to teach O1 paddling, however we recognise that many club coaches have the skills necessary to do this. Clubs are therefore encouraged to put in place a competency framework to assist individual paddlers to undertake an assessment of their own competence and knowledge to paddle an O1.

Insurance

Club activities (including O1 paddling) are covered by the clubs' BDA insurance, however, to benefit from the Personal Liability and Personal Accident element of that cover a paddler will need to be an individual member of the BDA.

Guidelines for the use of O1s

We recommend that all users of an O1, whether owned by the club or privately should

1. Carry out an individual dynamic risk assessment before going on the water.
2. Ensure that they are aware and compliant with the Club O1 safety policy.
3. Ensure the equipment is serviceable before going on the water.
4. Be able to perform a self-rescue in the event of a capsize.
5. Be aware of the water usage rules for their location.
6. Understand the needs of other water users and show them due regard.
7. Always wear a suitable buoyancy aid.
8. Understand the risks from wind, flow and temperature on the water conditions.
9. Paddle in a group of two or more.

Clubs' Safety Policy for the Use of O1s

Clubs with O1 paddlers should ensure their safety policy includes information on specific hazards associated with O1 paddling at the club such as:

Site Information

- The nature of the water space and its potential risks
- Access and egress points
- Local traffic
- Locks and weirs
- The effect of local weather conditions
- Stream conditions on rivers
- Known hazards on the site or water
- Advice on where to find information that may affect the site
- Availability of facilities for hand washing and toilets

Site or Club Specific Rules

- Requirements for any qualifications required by group leaders
- Any assessment of competency that is required
- Local rules such as those imposed by water sports centres
- Requirements for the wearing of buoyancy aids
- Agreed circulation maps or routes on the water
- Requirements for size of groups or restrictions on lone paddling
- Hours of operation or restrictions on night paddling
- Requirements for lights when paddling at night
- Requirements for boat licenses
- Any need to sign on and off the water
- Requirements to carry out a written risk assessment

Typical Competencies required to paddle an O1

The following competencies may be used by clubs to allow paddlers to self-assess their competency to paddle an O1. We would suggest that it is amended by clubs to ensure that it is specific to their situation and that they encourage (or require) their members to make use of it. We have also included a suitable test sheet in Appendix One.

Paddlers should be able to do the following

- Wear suitable clothing for the prevailing conditions
- Select and wear a suitable buoyancy aid
- Get the boat off the rack safely, with assistance if necessary.
- Check the boat and paddle are fit to use. Do a visual check of the hull, tightness of ama (float) connections, footrest and rudder bolts. Ensure the rudder is working and the boat has sufficient buoyancy.
- Safely carry the boat to the water's edge, lay it on the side of the bank with the ama (float) in the water and the rudder over the water in the 'ready to launch' position.
- Adjust the seat position, put the boat in the water and get in.
- Paddle off from the bank using left and right draw strokes as necessary.
- Demonstrate forward paddling with the ama (float) under control and not flying out of the water.
- Demonstrate a deliberate turn to the right and left and end correct course to a straight line.
- Turn the boat round using forward, backward and draw strokes in a restricted space.
- Demonstrate effectively stopping the boat under control in an emergency.
- Perform a self-rescue including a demonstration of how to empty the boat
- Paddle the boat back to the bank and disembark. Lift boat out of water and put back on rack.
- *Clubs should add any specific competencies they deem appropriate*

Paddlers should know the following

- Where to find the BDA and Club Safety Policies
- Local water and weather conditions. *Here clubs should insert specific hazards associated with their section of water*
- Local water circulation rules. *Here clubs should insert specific rules associated with their section of water*

Further resources

Clubs should add the location of their safety policy and other documents useful to O1 paddlers.

Useful websites

<https://www.dragonboat.org.uk/the-bda/policy-documents/> – for the BDA Safety Policies

www.gaugemap.com – for river flow volumes

Clubs should add any useful websites specific to their water and club

APPENDIX ONE

**Outrigger Canoe Paddling (01s and 02s)
Recommended Basic Competency Test**

	Activity	Complete
1	Paddler is able to describe how to find information on the 4Ws of water safety: Wind, Waves, Water Conditions (including hazards) and Weather forecast for the session ahead.	
2	Paddler is able to describe the local policy for recording that craft and paddlers are “booked on” and “booked off” of the water.	
3	Paddler is able to describe the local emergency contact procedures and details which will be in place prior to taking to the water.	
4	Paddler is able to describe how to assess which clothing or attire is appropriate for a given water session.	
5	Paddler is able to describe and demonstrate the correct fitting of a serviceable Buoyancy Aid (BA). Paddler describes how to assess whether the BA is correct for any given person	
6	Paddler is able to assess and demonstrate checking of an O1 or OC1 for serviceability – including inherent buoyancy (air bags / float block).	
7	Paddler is able to assess and describe the essential fixtures and fittings required prior to an O1 or OC1 taking to the water.	
8	Paddler is able to describe the basic operation of a rudder and how this operation is affected by the water direction and flow around the craft.	
9	Paddler is able to safely enter and exit the craft.	
10	Paddler can demonstrate effective forwards and backwards paddling using the rudder as required.	
11	Paddler can demonstrate effective left and right turns using the rudder as required.	
12	Paddler can demonstrate effectively stopping the boat in an emergency maintaining directional control and stability.	
13	Paddler can explain why turning towards an outrigger / float / ama is significantly different to turning away from the outrigger / float / ama.	
14	Paddler is able to draw the craft sideways and can explain why the craft performs differently when drawing to Left or Right.	
15	Paddler can demonstrate and effective sweep turn to left and right	
16	Paddler can demonstrate an effective cross bow stroke to turn to left and right.	
17	Paddler can demonstrate an effective “J” stroke / Canadian / Pry stroke to turn the craft to left and right.	
18	Paddler can effectively propel the boat forwards and backwards using the hands (lost paddle situation).	
19	Paddler can effectively turn the boat left and right on the spot using the hands (lost paddle situation).	
20	Paddler can effectively draw the boat left and right using the hands (lost paddle situation)	
21	Paddler can demonstrate an effective capsize taking account of inherent head injury hazards.	
22	Paddler can effectively self- rescue self and boat to shore.	
23	Paddler can effectively land the boat taking account of any water in the craft without causing damage or risking injury.	