

Safe Paddling Plan

Latest update and review 14/11/25

Ross Malloy & Matt Bulbeck

QMSC allows experienced paddlers (minimum PaddleUK Explore/BSUPA L2 Race or Tour, or equivalent experience) using their own equipment to access the reservoir. The venue is relatively unique in the local area, with no flowing water and entry/exit points on any bank. The main risks concern the size of the reservoir and its exposure to wind. As such, paddlers are asked to adhere to additional safety requirements, in addition to those laid out in the Safety Policy.

QMSC Paddlesport Lead and Technical Advisor: Matt Bulbeck (BCAB Sheltered Water Kayak Coach L3, BSUPA L2 race and touring SUP instructor)

QMSC responsibilities:

Start of day:

1. The Duty Officer at the start of each day will complete a daily risk assessment (found on the daily rota), with the associated score dictating the paddle areas for the day.
2. The Duty Officer will update the Paddle Information Board with the decided paddling areas for the day, outlining any 'C' areas on the Daily Information Board.

End of day:

3. QMSC will check all tally bands have been returned at the end of each day and attempt to contact any paddlers who may have forgotten to return their band by phone and email (from sailondon@queenmary.org.uk)
4. Before closing the water, QMSC staff will check for any missing tallies, then sweep the water at the end of the day (with binoculars on shore and/or with a powerboat) to ensure all paddlers have returned to shore.

Responsibilities for paddlers

Before launching any paddled craft, paddlers must:

1. Watch the QMSC safety briefing video and read the paddle safety page on the website - if a new member or day visitor
2. Hold valid third-party insurance
3. Check the Daily Information Board and Paddle Information Board regarding the risk score on the day, and any relevant mitigations.
4. Take a tally band from the board in the clubhouse and sign it out on the front desk before launching, **and return it to the box on the front desk when safely ashore**

Whilst afloat, paddlers must:

1. Wear a properly fitted and well-maintained Buoyancy Aid
2. Ensure they paddle both within the operating area designated for the day and within their own personal/craft limitations. Paddlers should be able to self-rescue or swim their kit to shore from their chosen paddle location.
3. When circumventing an exclusion zone, paddle as close to the external boundary markers as possible
4. Be mindful that paddled craft are required to keep clear of all wind powered craft

Daily Risk Assessment

The table below (found on the staff rota) should be completed by the DO daily to calculate a risk score, which should be displayed on the Paddle Information Board.

Risk score	1	2	3	4	5	Score
WIND STRENGTH (base)	0 to 4 KNOTS	5 to 8 KNOTS	9 to 12 KNOTS	13 to 18 KNOTS	OVER 19 KNOTS	
WIND DIRECTION	S/SW	SE	E/W	NW	NE/N	
OTHER ACTIVITY	None	Individual free sailors/small training groups	Several training courses and free sailors	Organised events anywhere on reservoir, several free sailors on same side as paddling	Organised events and several free sailors on same side as paddling	
Total Risk score						

This score is then used by the DO to allocate paddling areas by group size:

Areas by group size and risk score

	A	B	C	D
Solo	3-5	6-8	9-12	13+
Pair	3-6	7-8	9-12	13+
Small group (3+)	3-8	9-12	13-14	15+

Operating area definitions

A	General paddling area as noted on Daily Information Board	
B	No further than 50m from the bank in the general paddling area to the boundary buoy on the East Side	
C	Specified area noted on the Daily Information Board	See Daily Information Board
D	Paddling not permitted	Paddling not permitted

The Duty Officer has the authority to limit the paddling area beyond the risk score, prevent any person from going afloat and pull anybody off the water for any reason. All paddlers are required to speak to the Duty Officer before going afloat if the red flag is flying.

'Windy' days, any days with lightning or fog, and any evenings the club is open will always be a 'C' day due to reduced staffing. The paddling area may change in the evening compared to during the day – in this case both will be marked on the Daily Information Board. QMSC reserves the right to close the water for paddling for any reason. In this case, it will be displayed on the club website.

Organised group paddle sessions with a dedicated safety boat may go afloat in an allocated operating area at the discretion of the DO, AMS or Paddlesport Lead, decided in a similar way to other organised events at the club. These need to be planned and booked in advance of the day.

QMSC SUP hire and tuition

Paddlers hiring equipment must remain inside marker and mooring buoys within 50m of the shore closest to the clubhouse, from the end of the bund to the exclusion zone around the abstraction works. Any person hiring equipment from QMSC must receive an induction from a trained staff member before going afloat. Instructors running paddle tuition must abide by the relevant SOPs.