Procedures and training

Guideline for Paddlers and Steers People

Paddlers agree that there is risk of injury or death from the activities involved in this sport and that they paddle entirely at their own risk.

All RHKYC members, development course fee payers and guests must abide by these safety guidelines when using the club canoes during organized club sessions. All paddlers should ensure that the canoes are in good and safe working condition before setting out for any paddling session, and that the canoes are loaded with the necessary equipment including but not limited to: bailers; life jackets; spare paddles and safety kit.

Paddlers should follow the guidelines set out in detail below

It is the responsibility of each paddler to ensure that:

1. They have completed appropriate training and understand club policy particularly on safety
2. They wear a PFD. If they chose not to wear a PFD at all times, then they must be a strong swimmer and know how to put on both types of PFDs while in the water.
3. They have proper dress and hydration for the paddling session and are competent swimmers.
4. Paddlers needing assistance in the event of a water emergency must notify the steersperson of the crew they are in.
5. They understand they are paddling at their own risk and agree to notify the coach, session leader and/or steersperson of any health issues or safety concerns before and during the session.
6. In the event of an incident that they fill in the appropriate ‘incident report form’ within 24 hours of the event and circulate it to The Rowing and Paddle Sports Manager and the Outrigger Coordinator. Refer to “Reporting Accidents” in this document for more information.

The steers person works with their crew ensuring that:

1. The canoes and their rigging have been safely prepared (instructions/guidelines on how to rig club boats (OC6’s, 2’s and 1’s can be found on team snap);
2. The necessary lifejackets, bailers, spare paddles, safety kit have been loaded in the canoes and spray skirts fitted when the prevailing conditions require it;
3. All paddlers are adequately briefed on huli prevention and recovery and other relevant safety issues (a “buddy” system should operate among all crew members e.g. seats 1 and 2, seats 3 and 4, and seats 5 and 6 must act as safety buddies);
4. Prevailing weather conditions allow the planned paddling session given the paddlers’ relative experience.
5. They listen to any safety concerns voiced by the paddlers and proceed conservatively.
6. They follow the plan agreed by the coach, session leader or group of steerers before leaving the beach.
Planning: tides, wind and waves

We are fortunate in Hong Kong to have detailed tide and wind forecasts. Check the forecast when planning a long paddle and adjust the point at which you turn back to Middle Island.

Use the Marine Department Hong Kong Tidal Stream Prediction System to check tides. The system offers detailed tides by location and time. The tidal speed on the Southside of Hong Kong Island is usually sub 1knot but remember 1knot is 1.9km/h or circa 20% of the speed of a canoe doing 10km/h. If you paddle for an hour with the tide you will travel 12km when you turn for home against the tide it will take you 1.5 hours to get home!

The Hong Kong Observatory has Wind Forecast for Water Sport Activities. There are forecasts for Stanley and Tai Tam Bay. The forecast wind speed is proportional to the length of the line. A red line represents wind speed greater than or equal to 25 km/hr. Click on the clock for detailed wind speed, temperature and rainfall. Outriggers are relatively light and sit high in the water. Windspeed and direction matters when planning a paddle.

Paddling at Dusk or Night

Paddling at dusk or night: You must carry a 360 degree visibility white light firmly affixed to the canoe to signal your position to other vessels. Stay within well-known areas as it's easy to get disoriented and paddle into an unsafe position.

Paddling in Adverse Weather Conditions

The definition of ‘adverse weather conditions’ is extremely subjective based on the individual paddlers relevant experience. Everyone is responsible for their own safety and should make a judgment call based on their level of ability and stay within their own limits. If you do not feel confident paddling in the weather conditions do not paddle. For the purposes of this document reference will be made to The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) Weather Warnings and Signals Record (www.hko.gov.hk.) If in doubt of the prevailing weather conditions, paddlers should check Weather and Marine Forecast Warnings with the HKO.

1. Never paddle alone.
2. Never paddle when lightning is visible and if you see lightning whilst paddling, leave the water as soon as safely and practically possible.
3. All RHKYC paddling sessions in Club boats (both recreational and race training) will be CANCELLED in the event of the following adverse weather conditions:

   (a) Hoisting of Typhoon Signal #3 or above by the HKO;
   (b) Hoisting of the Black Rainstorm warning by the HKO;
   (c) Issuance of a Strong Monsoon warning by the HKO;
   (d) Issuance of a Tsunami warning by the HKO;
   (e) Lightning visible
4. As Hong Kong has a number of micro-climates, thunderstorms and weather fronts are often localised to a specific area and move very quickly. In the event of a Thunderstorm warning being issued by the HKO the coach, session leader and/or steersperson should refer to the HKO ‘Weather Information for Water Sports’ and/or the ‘Weather Radar Images’ and/or ‘Lightning Location Information’ before making an assessment on the session plan. It is the coach/session leader/steerspersons responsibility to inform their crew of the potential risk and only proceed if all paddlers are comfortable in doing so. If paddlers are on the water and the conditions suddenly change, exit to a protected area as soon as it is safe to do so and wait for the storm cell to pass before returning to the start/finish point.

5. Use extreme caution when paddling in moderate to high winds with moderate to large seas. Never go out in such weather conditions in an OC6 without an experienced steersperson and spray skirts fitted. If you are paddling an OC1/2 use a buddy system and stick together. If in doubt, air on the side of caution and stay in the protected areas.

6. All paddlers to be aware of paddling in the following conditions:
   
   a) Conditions with offshore winds. If you are separated from your boat or you cannot continue paddling because of injury or boat damage you will drift out to sea.
   
   b) Conditions with lee shore winds. A lee shore wind is where the wind blows directly onto the rocks or land. If you huli close to a lee shore there is a high chance you will be blown onto the rocks.
   
   c) Paddling alone. Chance of rescue if you have injury or equipment malfunction is significantly decreased. Never paddle alone.

7. If in doubt as to whether an RHKYC paddling session or event will be held in the event of adverse weather conditions, RHKYC paddlers should telephone/WhatsApp the session leader and/or Coach to verify the continuance of paddling sessions or events. In most cases a dry land fitness session will be held instead.

Planning routes

All paddlers are recommended to install Hydrographic Office eSeaGo app. Once installed download the offline nautical chart of Hong Kong waters. This app is excellent for planning routes. For long paddles and/or new routes use the ‘route navigation’ function in the main menu to set waypoints to plan the route. This will provide total distance of the route in nautical miles (1.85km – note you can in settings change the distance units to km). Pay particular attention to hazards marked on the chart.

The app tracks offer real time tracking on the chart.

Paddling in/near Commercial and Shipping Areas

When paddling in the shipping or wakeboarding areas, large and small boats often have trouble seeing outrigger canoes and there have been incidents in Hong Kong where vessels have hit or nearly hit outrigger canoes. It is strongly recommended that paddlers are aware of surrounding boat traffic and are conservative when setting their direction of travel. For all shipping/ferry lane crossings, steers people should endeavor to, to the extent that these recommendations maximize safety for paddlers, follow these recommendations:

1. Cross at the narrowest accessible point;
2. Cross perpendicular to the direction of travel of the shipping traffic;
3. If an approaching vessel is estimated to be less than one kilometer and/or is travelling at an unknown speed, the steersperson should always be conservative and aim to cross across the stern of the passing vessel;
4. Forego crossings of the shipping lane/ferry lanes when the forecast visibility is less than 3000 meters in the area, or at night;
5. Forego stopping or considerably slowing in the shipping/ferry lanes unless absolutely necessary, including doing so in order to surf the wake from the passing vessel.

For all crossings of ferry pier areas, canoe steers people should endeavor to, to the extent that these recommendations maximize safety for paddlers, follow these recommendations:

1. Navigate at a distance greater than 100 meters from the end of the ferry pier, unless doing so would cause greater likelihood of harm;
2. Cross the area at times when vessels are not entering/exiting the area;
3. Forego stopping or slowing considerably in the area, unless absolutely necessary;

**Canoe Preparation**

**OC6:**

1. Ensure that the canoe rigging (both rubber & rope) on both the amas and iakos is tight and in good condition (e.g. not degraded by sun and salt water) and that the bungs in the front and back of the canoe are safely in place to prevent any water ingress into flotation tanks.
2. Ensure that the canoe covers are secured properly and that seat zippers work properly.
3. Always carry enough lifejackets for the number of paddlers in each canoe at all times. Store Lalizas 70169 under the iakos in a standard canoe. Use the Palm Glide inflatable PFDs in an unlimited strapped to the ama-side of the seat so that easily accessible in a huli.
4. Always carry adequate buckets and bailers securely mounted on each canoe with ties and clips.
5. Always carry a waterproof emergency safety bag in each canoe (with first aid kit, safety flares, spare rigging rope, duct tape) that must be securely attached to the canoe at seat 6. Steerers should carry a mobile phone in a waterproof container with them.
6. Always carry a spare paddle and a spare rope (for use in event of towing) in each canoe.
7. Always use the trolley to move the canoes in and out of the water – never drag the canoes along the rocks or sand as this may result in damage to the canoe hulls and ama. If the canoe and ama are being carried, do not lift the canoe by the seats but hold on to the struts underneath the seats when lifting.
8. If paddling at night, ensure that working lights are mounted on each canoe.
9. Each paddler must be aware of their role when righting the canoe in the event of a Error! Reference source not found.).
10. Each paddler must ensure that these steps are taken before setting off in the canoe. However, it is the ultimate responsibility of the steersperson of each canoe to ensure that all of these safety precautions are taken.

**Club OC1 and OC2 Usage**

In order to use an OC1 or OC2 outside a formal training schedule follow the RHKYC OC Club Boats booking instructions (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AGZ6a44xISBN8Nf0vVP7m5yyte1CN2gz).

**ADD LINKS TO RIGGING VIDEOS**

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Canoes can and will occasionally get damaged in normal use but it is unacceptable for damage to be caused through abuse on land or in the boat shed and/or the loss of equipment due to carelessness. We encourage all members to respect the canoes, comply with the usage rules and enable the club to maintain these fun boats in a seaworthy condition for all the members going forward. Any damage should be reported as soon as practically possible to the Rowing and Paddle Sports Manager and the Outrigger Co-ordinator and/or the club coach and/or the session leader.

**Note:** if you are involved in an incident you must complete the 'incident report form' and forward to The Rowing and Paddle Sports Manager and the Outrigger Coordinator. Please refer to “Reporting Accidents” Section in this document.
Dress, Food and Hydration

Each paddler must ensure that they are adequately dressed for the prevailing weather conditions and be aware of the risks associated with hypothermia. Each paddler should have adequate protection against the elements (e.g. sun, wind, rain, hot and cold temperature conditions). It is recommended that paddlers always wear some foot protection in and out of the canoes, either flip flops, booties, or some sort of water sandal. It is advised not to move the canoes in and out of the water in bare feet.

Each paddler must ensure that they have sufficient water, fluid replacement drinks and food (e.g. power bars, energy gels etc.) for the duration of each paddling session (however short or long). This is particularly important given the hot and humid summers in Hong Kong.

Heat:

1. The heat and humidity in Hong Kong can be very dangerous when performing a strenuous activity such as paddling.
2. Always ensure you take plenty of water (or preferably a sports drink) with you, and stop and drink regularly. For longer sessions and races it is recommended to start hydrating the previous day to prepare your body for rigorous exercise.
3. Wear sunscreen and a hat.
4. Wear a top at all times when paddling – a light, long-sleeved top is ideal.
5. If you feel unwell, stop paddling and return to the beach. Get inside, drink plenty of water, have a cold shower. If you still feel unwell, seek medical advice.

Cold:

1. While Hong Kong is tropically warm and humid during the summer months, during the rest of the year the air and water can get cold enough to be a real danger. Ignore paddling in cold weather at your peril and always wear the appropriate clothing.

Being seen:

1. Wear high visibility clothing

Warmup routine

RHKYC OC training program includes warmup exercises designed to reduce the risk of injury. Outrigger Warm up – Legs, rotation, and balance:

1. Forward lunges x 10
2. Backward lunges x 10
3. Walking lunge with leg lift and twist torso to tap your ankle with your outstretched arms x 10
4. Sumo squats x 1-
5. Frog jumps – Squat, squat, Jump x 10
6. Repeat walking lunge with Leg lift and Twist of arms x 10
7. Rotation – Seated, bend your knees, place one hand on opposite shoulder, other arm reaching oblique across the body, rotate torso back towards the floor with stop at 45 degrees, return and repeat.