



## BEC SAFETY GUIDELINES

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## 1. BEC SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL

### 1.1 Introduction

Brighton Explorers Club (BEC) exists to encourage members to enjoy a variety of sporting pursuits;

BEC is a club and not an activity centre, where the activities promoted by BEC can be dangerous if undertaken without consideration for the appropriate safety requirements.

BEC is committed to maintaining high standards of safety. This document defines reasonable precautions to ensure that activities are carried out under safe conditions; to encourage all members to participate in club activities in a safe manner. Responsibilities are shared; placing emphasis on the individual member to take responsibility for their own actions; for their own safety and the safety of others.

These guidelines have been written to help in achieving a safe practice and to allow you to HAVE FUN SAFELY!

For the purposes of these guidelines, a club trip or activity is defined as one where an invitation to the membership has been communicated via email from the BEC website. The following activities are not considered official BEC activities: non-BEC events that are promoted to BEC members and, events communicated via the BEC-Chatter mailing list. Nevertheless, in the interest of everyone's safety, consideration should be given to following these guidelines for any activity.

### 1.2 Personal Details

All participants in BEC activities should be a member of the club; if an accident should occur it is vital that personal details of the injured person, including next of kin, are available.

Trip organisers/leaders should be able to establish the identity of participants and their membership status.

Members may be asked to prove their membership before taking part in a BEC activity and are asked to carry their membership card.

It is recommended that all club members have their own personal accident insurance.

It is the responsibility of individuals to ensure that someone, usually the activity leader, is aware of any health concerns that may affect their safety or performance. e.g. allergic reaction to bee stings, diabetes, migraine. This includes where remedies or medication are kept in their packs, and how they should be administered.

In an emergency, next of kin details for all members are available via any committee member. Committee member contact details are available to the public via the website.

### 1.3 Incident Book

An Incident Book is maintained by the Vice Chair to record all incidents, accidents, near misses and practices likely to cause an accident. It is everyone's duty to report such occurrences.

The incident book is reviewed at every Committee meeting, following which any recommendations to reduce the risk of similar occurrences will be raised with the Section Leader and/or trip organiser.

### 1.4 Club Equipment

Club equipment is maintained and checked by Section Leaders. However, this does not divest responsibility away from a member who borrows club equipment.

If a member borrows a piece of club equipment (eg. kayak, bouyancy aid, climbing rope, helmet, map, ice axe, bike light, etc) they should:

- Know how to use the equipment correctly and safely
- Check the equipment is fit for use, and not rely on the judgement of the Section Leader, or the person who last used it

If a member discovers a fault with club equipment it should not be used, and should be brought to the attention of the Section Leader.

Anyone misusing club equipment or behaving in an unsafe manner will be refused further use.

### 1.5 Group Size and Solo Activity

BEC highly recommends that activities should not be carried out alone. Where experienced members choose to use BEC equipment or facilities alone, they do so at their own risk. A minimum of three participants is recommended, although it is recognised that only two people may be available for some activities.

### 1.6 Looking Out For One Another

When someone is unwell they may be reluctant to ask for help and their judgement may be impaired, so on any club activity we are all responsible for looking out for one another. Sometimes it may be necessary to be firm with someone who is unwell, as they may not appreciate that they need support.

If during an activity, someone experiences things like chest pains, confusion, breathlessness or a head injury, it is recommended that someone contact the emergency services for advice.

If someone leaves an activity early because it is more challenging than they expected, because of an accident, because their gear is not suitable for the conditions, or because they feel unwell, this person is likely to be vulnerable. It is recommended that they should not go alone and that they should not drive unless they improve significantly.

Please always be ready to play your part in such situations, offer assistance actively but tactfully and do not leave it to the leader to notice or manage such situations.

### 1.7 Mobile Phones

Mobile phones can be useful to take on an activity and have sometimes proved helpful in emergencies. However, they are not a substitute for other safety precautions and the mountain rescue services stress they should be used to call for help only in cases of real emergency. If you do call for help, make sure to keep your mobile turned on so the emergency services can call you back.

#### 1.7.1 'ICE': A Message from the Ambulance Service

If we were to be involved in an accident or were taken ill, the people attending us would have our mobile phone but wouldn't know who to call. Hence the 'ICE' (In Case of Emergency) Campaign.

The concept of 'ICE' is a method of contact during emergency situations. As mobile phones are carried by the majority of the population, all you need to do is store the number of a contact person or persons who should be contacted during emergency under the name 'ICE'. For more than one contact name, simply enter 'ICE1' 'ICE2' 'ICE3' etc.

In an emergency situation, emergency service personnel and hospital staff may be able to contact the right person by dialling the number you have stored as 'ICE'.

#### 1.7.2 Emergency Number 112

112 is an internationally recognised number that can be used from mobile phones to contact the emergency services. Calls to 112:

- Will automatically use another available network, if your normal network is unavailable
- Can be made via pay-as-you-go phones, even if no credit is available
- By pre-registering your phone, emergency text messages can be sent to 112
  - Text messages have a better chance of getting through in areas of poor phone signal
- Further information in the video here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=XPZv\\_8dABfU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=XPZv_8dABfU)

## 2. OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

### 2.1 General Points

- Be aware of the welfare of other party members and pay particular attention to the welfare of less experienced members of the group and check that they have adequate clothing and equipment
- Each participant should be aware of emergency procedures in case of accident
- Any slip or fall, no matter how far, may induce personal injury and/or emotional shock
- Carry food, drink, spare clothing, first aid supplies and survival equipment appropriate to the environment and potential conditions. Personal medication is the responsibility of the individual participant
- No person should take part in any BEC activities if their ability or judgement are impaired by alcohol, drugs or other substances
- Never be afraid to change plan or turn back in the interests of safety, particularly when inexperienced participants could be faced with conditions beyond their ability. Be aware however, that a significant alteration to a stated route may affect search and rescue efforts if they were required

All participants should be aware of the effects of wind and weather conditions:

- Activity may lead to loss of energy/exhaustion which may place the individual in 'difficulty'
- Loss of energy/exhaustion may be made worse by loss of body heat
- Cooling affects are much greater where there is a brisk wind, and may come on much quicker than you may think, regardless of level of fitness and air temperature
- Be aware of the potential for sunstroke, sunburn and dehydration
- Sun reflecting off surfaces like water and snow, will increase its effects.
- It is advisable to wear hi-factor sun-block to protect skin
- Wear sunglasses to avoid glare and temporary blindness
- Always carry adequate drinking water.
- For all outdoor activities, the Activity Leader should check local conditions, however this does not divest participants from their personal responsibilities

### 2.2 Natural Hazards

#### 2.2.1 Dogs and cattle

Livestock can often be deterred from following you too closely by turning to face them with both arms raised. Don't brandish a stick, as this may excite them, and use an ordinary speaking voice rather than shouting. Don't walk between a cow and her calf. If you are threatened by cattle when walking a dog, you should let the dog off the lead - it's better that they go after your dog than you.

#### 2.2.2 Insects

Insects can be a serious irritant, especially midges in Scotland in the summer. Consider carrying an insect repellent, and know how to treat bites and stings.

#### 2.2.3 Ticks and Lyme Disease

Ticks are tiny blood-sucking insects found in moist, coarse, permanent vegetation in woodland, heath and moorland including bracken, leaf litter and decaying mats of grass and sedges, particularly in places where deer live, attaching themselves to passing animals and humans. Some ticks carry infections that can affect humans, the most serious of which is lyme disease. Although seldom fatal, lyme disease is a debilitating condition that can remain in the body for many years, affecting the

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nerves and occasionally even leading to chronic arthritis and heart conditions. Lyme disease is still very rare, though by no means unknown.

Ticks need to be attached to the body for at least 24-36 hours to transmit the disease and even if you come into contact with them, it should be possible to detect and remove them before any harm is done. The highest risk is in late spring and early summer when the tick is most active and feeding. If you walk through rough vegetation, especially during these months, consider taking the following precautions:

Wear close-weave long trousers and long-sleeved shirts, and keep cuffs fastened and trousers tucked into socks, shoes or boots rather than open sandals, or protect bare skin on arms and legs with insect repellent: DEET or permethrin can protect against ticks for several hours

If you find a tick, remove it immediately, preferably with tweezers. Grasp it firmly as close as possible to the skin, and pull firmly and steadily without jerking or twisting until it disengages itself - try not to squash since it could squirt blood. Wash your hands and the bite area afterwards, using disinfectant if available.

After your walk, examine your body carefully for ticks, including their favourite feeding places - the backs of knees, groin, under the arms and on the scalp

If part of the tick breaks off, or if you think any part of it may be left in your skin, consult your doctor immediately. If possible, take the tick with you, folded in sticky tape, so that it can be sent for analysis. If you think you have been bitten by a tick, seek medical advice straight away, indicating that you are concerned about the risk of Lyme disease, since early treatment with antibiotics will normally prevent the illness developing any further.

Further information on Lyme Disease and ticks can be obtained from NHS Direct,

### 3. LEADING BEC ACTIVITIES

As described in the introduction above, BEC is a club and not a professional activity centre. As such, any member is permitted to organise or lead an activity. The ethos of BEC is an informal club that encourages people to partake in, and organise, sporting activities for the enjoyment and personal development of people, especially young adults. In the interests of the safety and enjoyment of club members and the general public, some guidelines are given below.

- An activity leader should have suitable experience of the activity they are leading, having performed it to a similar level, on several occasions in the past.
- They should ideally have been a participant in a similar BEC activity on at least two previous occasions, eg. two previous BEC Walks, or two previous MTB rides, etc.
  - BEC wishes to encourage events however, so if you are a new member considering organising an event, please feel free to discuss with the Section Leader, Vice Chair or another Committee member
- Consider what experience or skill participants will require for the proposed activity
  - Where required, check that new members understand what's involved in the activity and explain what skills or equipment they require
  - Activity leaders have the right to politely turn someone away if they are not suitably equipped for the activity
- Consider the balance of experience in the group and if there are enough experienced people
- Consider whether to limit the group size for safety reasons, or availability of club equipment
- For activities like walking, cycling and trips, participants should have the mobile phone number of the activity leader. This can be very useful in case someone gets lost or separated from the group. Ideally the leader will also have the mobile number of all the group. This can be done in the email advert, by asking attendees to text the leader their mobile number.
- It is good practice to remind participants to inform the leader of any medical or health issues that may affect their safety or performance
- Useful guidance is also provided on page 13 under "Guidance Notes for Leading Cycle Rides", some of which is applicable to activities other than cycling
- Regular weekly events are usually arranged by or in consultation with the relevant Section Leader
- For weekend or longer trips:
  - The Vice Chair should be informed of the trip in advance, to check it does not clash with other events and so it can be put on the Club Programme
  - The leader is recommended to read the "Guidance Notes for Trip Organisers"  
<http://www.brightonexplorers.org/library/Guidance%20Notes%20for%20Trip%20Organisers.pdf>

## 4. CAVING GUIDELINES

### General

BEC will only recognise Caving activities that are arranged by agreement with the Caving Section Leader or a committee member. In that agreement, the activity leader will be identified and any decision made by the activity leader is final.

#### a) Group numbers and route planning

- Refer to the general guidance on group size and solo activity (page 3)
- Always include experienced cavers in the party.
- Take notice of the local weather forecast and ground conditions. Flooding can happen very quickly and violently.
- Leave a note of your trip route and a latest time out with a responsible person. Make sure they know how to contact cave rescue, and most importantly confirm your safe exit with them.

#### b) Each participant must be aware of personal safety and the safety of others around them.

- Pick a cave within everyone's capabilities. Ensure all members of your party are skilled in the techniques needed to progress safely within the cave.
- An accident underground is easy; rescue is difficult and sometimes impossible. Most accidents are caused by falls, loose boulders, rising water and exposure. Take special care in these situations.
- Exiting a cave can take much more effort than entry - plan your trip with the return in mind
- No participant should attempt anything they are not competent to cope with
- No person is permitted to take part in any BEC Caving activity whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substances that may impair judgement.
- Always carry emergency lights, food, a first aid kit and survival bag.

#### c) All participants must be aware of the correct use of equipment:

- Ensure you wear clothing and footwear suitable for your trip.
- Check ropes, ladders and belays before use and ensure they are rigged properly.
- Check that ropes are long enough and always knotted at the lower end.
- Perfect ladder and rope techniques above ground, before trying them underground
  - In particular, participants should be familiar with SRT (Single Rope Technique), when partaking in a trip that requires the use of this technique
  - Members who are new to performing SRT on a BEC trip may be asked to attend a preliminary SRT session, in order for them to demonstrate the technique and to integrate with the existing BEC Cavers. This helps to ensure the smooth and safe operation of the new group
- When belaying, always use a belay device.
- An abseil device must be used in all abseil activities.

### New Cavers

Only a qualified cave leader, or other recognised competent caver is to introduce a New Caver to BEC caving activity. The leader must give consideration to the level of fitness of the New Caver and confirm the availability of all required safety equipment.

**Additional information can be found on the British Caving Association website here:**

<http://www.trycaving.co.uk/content/view/24/1/>

## 5. CLIMBING GUIDELINES

### General

Climbing activities are arranged by the Climbing Section Leader or other competent climber. In that agreement the activity leader will be identified and any decision made by the activity leader is final.

- a) Refer to the general guidance on group size and solo activity (page 3)
- b) Each participant must be aware of personal safety and the safety of others around them:
  - The 'climber' must confirm their belay before climbing, and must not start climbing until acknowledged by their belay
  - No participant should attempt anything they are not competent to cope with
  - No person is permitted to take part in any BEC Climbing activity whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substances that may impair judgement.
- c) All participants must be aware of the correct use of equipment:
  - Before you climb, check condition of the harness, rope, karabiners, belay device and any other items of equipment.
  - It is recommended that head protection should be worn in line with BMC guidelines.
  - Suitable Footwear must be worn for security of footing.
  - A Harness must be worn when roped climbing; make sure the harness is fitted correctly and is securely fastened in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
  - When tying on, the rope must be tied into the harness in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
  - When belaying, always use a belay device.
  - An abseil device must be used in all abseil activities.
- e) Route planning:
  - Be aware of the approach/escape routes
  - Always check the tidal conditions on sea cliffs
  - Take full account of the forecast weather conditions
- j) Lead climbing is a serious undertaking and should only be attempted by people competent to undertake this activity.

### New Climbers

Only the Climbing Section Leader (or other nominated competent person) is to introduce a New Climber to a BEC climbing activity. The Climbing Section Leader (or nominated competent person) must give consideration to the level of fitness of the New Climber and confirm the availability of all required safety equipment.

For the safety of all participants the New Climber:

- Must be able to correctly put on and fasten a climbing harness
- Must be able to 'tie-on'
- Must be able to 'belay'
- Must be able to communicate using standard climbing/belay calls between belay and climber

Where this is not the case, BEC requires the New Climber to undertake an introductory course at a climbing wall/centre.

The exception to this is where BEC members who are also BMC members, may be covered by their BMC insurance to introduce a beginner to the basic techniques. This should be confirmed beforehand with the Climbing Section Leader and/or Committee.

**Further Reading: The BMC produce a number of publications on safety and good climbing practice, some of which can be downloaded free:**

[http://www.bmcshop.co.uk/index.php?cPath=357\\_203\\_413&&view=all](http://www.bmcshop.co.uk/index.php?cPath=357_203_413&&view=all)

## 6. COASTEERING GUIDELINES

### General

BEC will only recognise Coasteering activities that are arranged by agreement with the Coasteering Section Leader or a committee member. In that agreement, the activity leader will be identified and any decision made by the activity leader is final.

a) Each participant must be aware of personal safety and the safety of others around them.

- Participants must be able to swim at least 25m
- No person is permitted to take part in any BEC Coasteering activity whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substances that may impair judgement.

b) Group numbers

- Refer to the general guidance on group size and solo activity (page 3)
- Always include at least two experienced Coasteerers in the group
- The group should consist of no more than eight people
- The group should keep close together

c) Pre-entry discussion

Before entering the water an experienced member of the group should lead a discussion covering the following:

- The planned route
- Possible escape routes
- The importance of keeping together and looking after each other
- Agree who is leading the group and who is staying at the back (these should be experienced members)
- Agree how to enter the water
- Agree where and when it is safe to jump (if the plan is to do jumps), and the signal to show all is well after these jumps

d) Sea conditions and weather

- Check the local sea condition forecast (eg."magic seaweed" website)
- Before entering the water, check the sea conditions
- The conditions should be assessed by the experienced coasteerers and the group should not go out if conditions are considered unsafe or beyond the capabilities of the group.
- Do not coasteer in areas in which strong currents can pull people out to sea (e.g. Portland)
- Be aware that being in the water for an extended period of time risks hypothermia. Let the group leader know if you are too cold.
- Be aware of the risk of dehydration. Ensure you are hydrated before starting the session.

e) Route planning

- The route should be discussed among the group and everyone be comfortable with the duration and difficulty
- Leave a note of your trip route and a latest time out with a responsible person
- Always confirm your safe exit with the responsible person
- Be aware of escape routes and be prepared to finish the session early if required

f) Jumps:

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- The depth of the water should be checked visually with goggles / mask before any jumps.
- 3m depth of water is required for a jump from heights of up to 10m. Higher jumps are not recommended
- Consideration should be given to the difficulty of the climb up to the jump
- After each jump participants should signal that they are ok

g) All group members should wear:

- Wetsuit
- Appropriate water helmet
- Bouyancy aid
- Suitable footwear – good soles and toe protection

h) Optional clothing

- Gloves and over gloves
- Shorts and Kagul (protects wetsuit)

i) Group kit

- Throw line
- Knife (in case of entrapment)
- Goggles / Mask

j) Group kit to be left at entry point

- First aid kit
- Mobile phones on different networks
- Water and food
- Warm clothing

## 7. CYCLING GUIDELINES

### General

BEC will only recognise cycling activities that are communicated via email from the BEC website. Any decision made by the activity leader is final.

- a) Refer to the general guidance on group size and solo activity (page 3)
- b) Each participant must be aware of personal safety and the safety of others around them. No participant should attempt anything they are not competent to cope with
- c) Riding 'North Shore' equipment is a high risk activity and not recommended. North Shore equipment refers to dedicated high-level man-made boards and platforms, and not low-level boards commonly found at UK trail centres.

d) **All** participants should carry the following equipment and know how to use it:

**Bike** - Make sure the basics of your bike are going to survive the ride:

- Wheels and tyres are good and true (straight), no broken spokes, tyres have sufficient tread depth
- Brakes work and have enough wear left, cables are all good with no fraying.
- Gears work smoothly, chain is good i.e. no rusting or seized links, cables are not frayed etc.

**Helmet** – A cycling helmet is recommended. It should be in good condition and meet a recognised safety standard.

**Pump** - which fits your tyre valve.

**Spare inner tube(s)** - which fit your wheels/tyres. If you don't know how to use it, someone will be able to help!

**Tyre levers** - Enough to get your tyres off and back on again.

Tool for removing wheel(s) if applicable eg. a spanner.

**Suitable clothing**, for warmth and/or waterproofness - Many thin layers allow you to tailor to the conditions better than one thick layer

**Water** - This can potentially be supplemented with proprietary energy/isotonic powders

**Snacks** – High energy carbohydrate foods are best, such as museli bars.

**Mobile phone** – With phone number of the ride leader, in case you get lost!

e) The following items should also be considered:

**Lights** – Bright off-road lights are essential for Mountain Bike rides in darkness. A rear red light for road sections. Consider also lights for the ride home at the end or unexpected delays.

**Lock** – useful if stopping at a pub.

**Puncture repair kit** - In case you run out of spare inner tubes.

**Multi-tool** - Many of these include all the tools you need for adjusting brakes, cables and gears. (i.e. Allen/hex keys, cross head & flat head screw drivers, small spanners)

**Chain splitter tool** - Ideally carry some spare chain links, or 'power link' depending on your chain type to repair a broken chain - You can function a repair on most things - but not a broken chain.

A few **zip ties** and/or Velcro straps of various sizes may come in useful.

**First Aid kit** – See Appendix 1 for a basic first aid kit

**Cycling gloves** - suitable for the season.

f) Other points to note

**Slippery conditions** - If it's wet out there, be aware that it can get very slippery. Chalk especially so, which can become like ice when wet. Green looking chalk is the worst.

**Be alert when riding** - To traffic, other riders, walkers, horses and livestock. Slow down and pass carefully, try not to surprise them. If approaching from behind, call out a friendly greeting.

**Close all gates after you** - unless they have been obviously fixed open by the land owner.

Additional information can be found on the British Cycling website here:

<http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/staticcontent/Safety-Points-0>

and the **IMBA-UK** (International Mountain Biking Association UK) website here:

<http://imba.org.uk/about-imba/policies/>

## Guidance Notes for Leading Cycle Rides

### Preparation Beforehand

Know the route - If you do not ride the area frequently, try to plan your ride in advance instead of making it up as you go; and try to ride your route in advance to make sure it is rideable. Some summer tracks are awful in winter!

Timing - The risk of something going wrong increases the longer you are out. Plan the ride for the conditions and anticipated standards of the riders. Consider stoppage time for breaks, punctures, chatting, etc. Typically this will be 30-45 minutes on a 2 hr evening ride.

Shortcuts - Try to plan your ride to include short-cut options. If your ride looks like it will take much longer than originally planned you can take one of your short-cuts to bring the ride back to the start in an acceptable time. (Before the pub stops serving food!)

Weather – check the forecast and advise people what clothing (or suncream!) may be needed

Email - When you advertise the ride try to give an idea of the route. Remind the riders to bring a suitable bike, suitable clothing, helmet, spare inner tube, pump, snacks, a drink and lights, if it's likely to get dark before you return.

Phone contact – It's recommended that you provide your mobile number, and also ask people new to you to text you their number.

Club Lights – For night rides, remind beginners that club lights are available to borrow, who they are available from (usually the Section Leader) and to arrive 10 minutes early in order to fit them.

Equipment – As leader, consider bringing: first aid kit, map, compass, extra snacks, extra clothing and tools. Walkie talkie radios may be useful on some rides and are available to borrow from the BEC Climbing Section Leader. A more comprehensive kit list for leaders is available on the in the Members Documents area of the BEC website.

### During the Ride

Please don't lose anyone!

The group

- Briefly explain the route and introduce yourself to those you don't know
- Do a head count before starting
- Advising the whole group of the number will help people holding gates to count the group through
- Ask someone to be an assistant / back marker
- They should have your phone number and perhaps a map, or know the area
- Tell them the route and ask them to help shut gates and ensure no-one gets left behind

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- If you have large numbers of 15 or more, ask someone to be mid-marker, or consider splitting into two groups

### Stopping Points

- Try to plan your breaks at points where you would change direction
- If changing direction without a stop, leave someone as marker, so riders don't miss the turn.
- Before you move off from a break point:
  - Do a head count
  - Explain the next leg of the ride
  - Give advice on any expected hazards, eg. go slowly due to steep muddy descent
  - Look and ask if everyone is ready before moving off
- If you come to a gate which is not a break point ask the rider following you to hold the gate open and wait for the last rider (back marker) - Remember, the riders are waiting for you to lead, so, in that way you can keep the ride moving.

### Accidents

- If an accident occurs, keep calm and do not put yourself or anyone else in danger
- Identify any first aiders in the group and give first aid
- If the injured person needs to retire from the ride, at least one other person should stay with them

### After the Ride

- Head Count - When you finish the ride do a final head count.
- If someone is missing:
  - Check with the group if there is a legitimate reason
  - If not, phone the person to check they are OK. If no one in the group has their number, it can be obtained from a Committee member

See also the general section "LEADING BEC ACTIVITIES" on page 6.

Further reading here: [https://www.ctc.org.uk/sites/default/files/file\\_member/201009040.pdf](https://www.ctc.org.uk/sites/default/files/file_member/201009040.pdf)

## 8. KAYAKING GUIDELINES

### General

Kayaking is a high risk activity; for your own safety and for the safety of others you will need to know the basic kayaking skills and safety practices before you will be allowed to take part in a BEC kayaking activity. With the exception of pool sessions, BEC requires beginners to undertake an introductory course with a qualified instructor, leading to a BCU (British Canoe Union) 1 Star Award. A beginner is defined as someone with no previous experience.

BEC Kayaking Section Leader(s) will be able to offer guidance on approved courses of instruction. Section Leader contact details can be found on the BEC website.

New members with previous paddling experience must have BCU 1 Star Award or equivalent skills, which include:

- lift and carry a kayak safely
- be able to paddle in a straight line on flat water and stop, when required
- exist from a capsized boat and be rescued or swim safely to shore
- have knowledge of basic safety equipment e.g. buoyancy aid, helmet, clothing, footwear, etc.
- be aware of others safety
- be aware of hazards e.g. cold leading to hypothermia

Members who wish to take part in white water activities must demonstrate an appropriate level of skills and experience, which will be defined by the trip leader. This will vary depending on the grade of the river and the experience of the group.

BEC will only authorise Kayaking activities under supervision of an experienced member; any decision made by the activity leader is final.

a) All participants must be aware:

- That open water will be much colder than the local ambient air temperature
- Cold water will bring on instant heat-loss, causing the body temperature to cool rapidly

b) Each participant must wear suitable clothing:

- Wet suit or dry cagoule/suit (not provided) or synthetic layers (not provided) and windproof cagoule (provided by BEC)
- Footwear (not provided). Flip-flops are not recommended as they tend to get lost in the event of a capsized/swim. Wet shoes, sandals or trainers with Velcro fastenings are recommended. Laces can get caught inside the boat and should be avoided.
- Floatation aid (provided)
- Head Protection (provided)

c) Each participant must be aware of personal safety:

- All participants must be able to swim at least 50 metres in open water.
- No participant shall 'go out' further than the limit (distance from shore/bank) set by the leader
- No participant shall 'break-away' from the group unless instructed to do so by the leader; e.g. return to shore.
- Refer to the general guidance on group size and solo activity (page 3)

- All participants must be made aware of the affects of wind, weather and tidal conditions, and do not attempt anything they are not competent to cope with.
- Where required, all participants must complete and sign the Kayak Activity Register form.

### Novices

'Novice' refers to a person having little experience of kayaking.

Only the Kayaking Section Leader (or their nominated competent person) is to introduce a novice to a BEC Kayaking activity. The Kayaking Section Leader (or their nominated competent person) must give consideration to the level of fitness of the novice and confirm the availability of all required safety equipment.

- a) All points under the section 'General' (above) apply.
- b) Novice Kayakers are welcome to attend any kayaking activity promoted as part of the weekly programme. However, their participation in any kayaking activity will be at the discretion of the Kayaking Section Leader (or their nominated competent person)
- c) All novice kayakers will be expected to show proficiency in basic personal safety before being allowed 'on the water'.
- d) Novices will be grouped with an experienced kayaker in the ratio 5 novice kayakers to one experienced kayaker (Max).
- e) All novice kayakers must stay with their group at all time, unless instructed otherwise by a leader (e.g. return to shore).

### Pre-Activity Checks

- a) All points under the 'General' and 'Novices' sections (above) apply.
- b) The Activity Leader must check local conditions (weather, state of water, etc) before setting out.
- c) All persons taking part in the kayak activity must be sure their boat is 'fit for purpose':
  - Check that the boat has buoyancy, and that the buoyancy is firmly located in the boat, inflated and in the correct position.
  - Check all toggles and/or loops at both ends of the boat for security of attachment.
  - Check that the foot rests (where fitted) are correctly adjusted.
- d) All persons 'on the water' must wear a buoyancy aid. Make sure the buoyancy aid is:
  - Of suitable size for the individual person
  - Is fitted correctly
  - Is securely fastened
  - Ask for assistance if you are unsure
- e) All persons 'on the water' must wear suitable footwear in case of glass etc on the river/sea bed.
- f) All persons 'on the water' must wear a spraydeck and make certain that the release strap is secure and is on the outside of the boat (exception can be made in the case of a beginner or novice in very calm inland or inshore waters and under close supervision, where the novice may want to build up confidence first).
- g) All persons 'on the water' must wear a helmet even if, as is often the case at Brighton, surf is only encountered when leaving and returning to the beach.

h) All persons 'on the water' must be aware of the affects of the sun reflecting off the surface of the water, which may bring on sunstroke and sunburn; it is advisable to wear high factor sun-block to protect skin from sunburn; and also to wear sunglasses to avoid glare and temporary blindness.

### **Experienced Kayakers:**

a) Experienced kayakers wishing to paddle at times other than BEC weekly sessions must inform the Section Leader or other responsible member of the water sports sections (if Section Leader not available) of their plans before taking part in such activity.

The member(s) will be expected to submit a plan of the activity to include:

- Names of all Members taking part
- Date and Time of Activity
- Location of Activity
- Equipment Borrowed
- Expected Date and Time of Return

N.B. This applies even at ad-hoc times when a member wishes to 'take out a kayak for a quick paddle' on a warm sunny afternoon...

b) All points under the section 'General' (above) apply.

c) In summer carry extra drinking water on longer trips. Remember to take precautions against the cold even on sunny days. Take extra clothes, including a windproof cagoule.

d) Winter conditions are not suitable for novices, who should take up kayaking when the water temperature and conditions are usually more favourable.

e) Refer to the general guidance on group size and solo activity (page 3).

f) Keep an eye on each other ensuring that no one is left behind. In difficult conditions operate a "buddy" system for safety.

g) No party should put to sea without at least one member being competent in deep water rescue techniques.

**Additional information can be found on the British Canoe Union website here:**

<http://www.bcu.org.uk/our-sport/getting-started/safety/>

## 9. SURFING

### General

Surfing is a high risk activity; for your own safety and for the safety of others you will need a good grasp of the basic surfing skills and safety practices as well as familiarizing yourself with these Safety Guidelines before you will be allowed to take part in a BEC surfing activity.

BEC strongly suggests beginners undertake an introductory course with a qualified instructor. A beginner is defined as someone with little or no previous experience. The BEC Surfing Section Leader(s) will be able to offer guidance on approved courses of instruction, eg. at main Surfing beaches. The Section Leader's contact details can be found on the BEC website.

BEC will only authorise Surfing activities under supervision of an experienced member; any decision made by the activity leader is final.

New members with previous surfing experience must demonstrate competent safety skills, which include:

- Be able to assess a surf break for hazards, including currents and potential collision objects
- Understand the safety flag system (black/white – surf craft area, red/yellow – bathing area, red- dangerous conditions, etc)
- Have knowledge of surfing safety etiquette & wave priority, and respect other users
- have knowledge of basic safety equipment e.g. leashes, clothing, footwear, etc.
- be aware of others safety and be able handle board appropriately
- be aware of hazards e.g. cold / tiredness leading to weakness or hypothermia
- be aware of safety practices eg able to protect head, neck, spine & limbs in event of unscheduled dismount (particularly in shallow or busy water), how to deal with currents

a) All participants must be aware:

- Of local conditions and hazards particular to break and conditions. Please be aware the characteristics of a break can vary wildly according to conditions and tide heights (eg violent shore dump at high tide, rips on incoming, wind effects etc)
- Basic safety skills and procedures.

b) Each participant must wear suitable clothing:

- Appropriate thickness wet suit for season
- Wet shoes. Not essential but recommended for pebble beach. Flip-flops are OK for the beach but not on the board
- Bonnets and gloves (if water temperature dictates)

c) Each participant must be aware of personal safety:

- All participants must be able to swim at least 100 metres in open water and have the necessary fitness to keep themselves safe
- No participant shall 'go out' further than the limit (distance from shore) set by the leader
- Refer to the general guidance on group size and solo activity (page 3)
- All participants must be made aware of the affects of wind, weather and tidal conditions. No-one must attempt anything that they are not competent to cope with

### Novices

'Novice' refers to a person having little experience of surfing.

Only the Surfing Section Leader (or their nominated competent person) is to introduce a novice to a BEC Surfing activity. The Surfing Section Leader (or their nominated competent person) must give consideration to the level of fitness of the novice and confirm the availability of all required safety equipment.

- a) All points under the section 'General' (above) apply.
- b) Novice Surfers are welcome to attend any surfing activity promoted within BEC. However, their participation in any Surfing activity will be at the discretion of the Surfing Section Leader (or their nominated competent person)
- c) All novice surfers will be expected to show proficiency in basic personal safety before being allowed 'on the water'.
- d) Novices will be grouped with an experienced surfer in the ratio 5 novice surfers to one experienced surfer (Max) if not surfing in lifeguard patrolled designated water craft area.
- e) All novice surfers must stay with their group at all times, unless instructed otherwise by a leader (e.g. return to shore).
- f) All surfers (novice and more experienced) to use buddy system (designated pairs with regular check in) if not in lifeguard patrolled area
- g) Winter conditions are not suitable for novices, who should take up surfing when the water temperature and conditions are usually more favourable.

### Pre activity Checks

- a) All points under the 'General' and 'Novices' sections (above) apply.
- b) The Activity Leader must check local conditions (weather, state of water, local hazards etc) before setting out.
- c) All persons taking part in the surf activity must be sure their board is 'fit for purpose':
  - Check that the board is watertight with no sharp edges and fins etc are in good condition
  - Check there is an appropriate amount of wax to prevent slippage.
  - Check leashes including all fasteners for damage or wear and tear.
  - Use a board appropriate to your skill and size, as well as the current conditions. Be aware it can be difficult and dangerous as well as impeding your fun and progress to use the wrong board. If in doubt consult a surf shop or experienced member.
  - Ask for assistance if you are unsure
- d) All persons must consider suitable footwear in case of glass etc on the beach/sea bed.
- e) All persons must be aware of effects of dehydration & ingesting seawater (including cramp and exhaustion). Make sure you are well hydrated and fuelled before entering water. No one is allowed on the water after consuming drugs or alcohol. We recommend no surfing within 1 hour of a heavy meal.
- f) All persons 'on the water' must be aware of the affects of the sun reflecting off the surface of the water, which may bring on sunstroke and sunburn; it is advisable to wear high factor sun-block to protect skin from sunburn.

## Experienced Surfers

a) Experienced surfers wishing to surf at times other than BEC advertised sessions must inform the Section Leader or other responsible member of the water sports sections (if Section Leader not available) of their plans before taking part in such activity.

The member(s) will be expected to submit a plan of the activity to include:

- Names of all Members taking part
- Date and Time of Activity
- Location of Activity
- Equipment Borrowed
- Expected Date and Time of Return

N.B. This applies even at ad-hoc times when a member wishes to 'take out a surfboard for a quick paddle' on a warm sunny afternoon...

b) All points under the section 'General' (above) apply.

c) In summer carry extra drinking water on longer trips. Remember to take precautions against the cold even on sunny days. Take extra clothes.

d) Refer to the general guidance on group size and solo activity (page 3).

e) Keep an eye on each other ensuring that no one is left behind. In difficult conditions operate a "buddy" system for safety.

f) Please respect local users and consider the appropriateness of the intended surf "break" for the target group. Be aware of Localism (where it exists and why). Taking a large group of inexperienced beginners onto a busy line up or shortboard/reef break is not likely to make you any friends or lead to an enjoyable experience.

Additional information can be found on the National Surf Schools and Instructors Association website here: [http://www.nssia.org/Safety\\_Rules.html](http://www.nssia.org/Safety_Rules.html)

Google "Surf safety Guidelines" for more useful tips

## 10. WALKING GUIDELINES

### General safety rules

Walking in most of Britain should present no serious problems even to a beginner, provided you follow a few simple rules.

Don't take unnecessary risks by tackling overly long or difficult routes.

Know where you are or have a map and the ability to read it.

On longer walks, be aware of "escape routes" in case you need to cut your walk short for whatever reason.

Make sure you have plenty to eat and drink and are adequately dressed for the length of time you'll be out.

Take a sensible approach to the weather, which in Britain is rarely severe but changeable and often wet. Check the forecast before you set out (try the Met Office), always take a waterproof and keep an eye on the sky. Rain, mist or fog and cold are the obvious hazards, but strong winds can be a problem too, especially on exposed hillsides or coastal cliffs.

Make a special effort to be sure someone knows when you expect to be back.

### On lowland walks you should consider carrying

Map, compass and navigation equipment.

Full water bottle and/or thermos flask, adequate for your walk.

Extra clothing, especially in winter

Food, unless you're absolutely sure you'll be able to eat on the way

Emergency rations

A first aid kit and any medicines you might need

Mobile phone

### Walking on roads

When walking on roads, follow the advice in the Highway Code: use the pavement if there is one and safe crossings wherever possible. Where there is no pavement walk on the right, facing oncoming traffic, crossing to the other side before sharp right-hand bends. Take special care on country roads with no pavements where traffic may be moving very fast.

### Mountain walking

In the most mountainous parts of Britain, in North Wales, the Lake District and in particular the Scottish Highlands, be prepared for more challenging weather, especially in winter. Conditions can vary dramatically from valley to mountaintop, and even in spring and summer, the Scottish Highlands can rapidly turn cold and windy. "Wind chill", where the combined effects of high winds and cold air dramatically lower the body temperature, is dangerous and potentially fatal. It is therefore especially important to be properly equipped when walking high up on the mountains in bad weather. Warm and waterproof clothing, a map, compass and good navigation skills are essential, and in addition to the standard equipment for lowland walks, you should also carry:

- a **survival bag**: a heavy-duty bag for body insulation in an emergency
- a torch and spare batteries
- a **whistle** If a real emergency occurs; the international distress signal is a group of six loud blasts of a whistle, to be repeated at one minute intervals.
- **additional warm clothing**, including hat and gloves
- **high-energy rations** such as mint cake, chocolate, dried fruit

- water purification tablets
- a first aid kit

If you are likely to meet heavy snow or ice you should wear a pair of heavy-duty winter walking boots that can be fitted with crampons: these are metal spike attachments that give a better grip in icy conditions and not all boots are suitable for them. Also, you should carry and know how to use an ice axe. You will need to learn how to use axes and crampons properly: in the hands of a novice they can cause rather than prevent accidents.

Many hill walkers carry a bothy bag. This is rather like a tent without poles, made of lightweight waterproof nylon. They are available in a range of sizes and you should carry one that is adequate for the size of your party. With two people or more they have the advantage of being able to share body heat.

It's especially important to be sensible about not over-reaching yourself: don't push yourself, or your party, beyond your limits, and don't hesitate to cut your walk short if you are tiring, or the weather is worsening.

Leave a route card or other indication of your likely location with a responsible person, and notify this person immediately of your safe return.

### **Route Cards**

On most walks you can simply memorise your route or highlight it on the map. But for more demanding walks, consider preparing a route card. This should define the location of checkpoints along the way (grid references), times between checkpoints, bearings and "escape routes" in the event of accident, or bad weather.

Before setting out, you should leave a copy of the card with a responsible person, and notify them on your safe return. In the event of an accident, help will arrive more quickly if rescuers have detailed information about your route. If you feel a detailed card would unnecessarily restrict your movements, at least leave a few notes about your intended whereabouts.

### **Body matters**

#### **Temperature and water**

In cold weather the greatest danger is hypothermia or exposure: this occurs where the body temperature is chilled to a life-threatening level, and is aggravated by wind chill. To avoid it make sure you have enough warm clothing and extra food and plenty of water. In warm weather, the principle hazards are sunburn, windburn and dehydration. Sunhats, sun cream, and water can prevent serious sunburn or heatstroke.

Don't underestimate the amount of water you need. Doctors recommend drinking 1.5-2 litres of water a day even for an ordinarily active lifestyle, and you will need more if you walking strenuously and/or the weather is hot. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Still mineral or tap water is adequate: fizzy drinks are not recommended as they take longer to drink, a problem if you need to rehydrate quickly. Avoid drinking unboiled or unpurified water from streams, and when in the hills, carry emergency water purification tablets.

#### **First Aid**

You should not walk in remote areas without a basic knowledge of first aid. At least one person in a party should know how to bandage an ankle or apply a splint to a broken limb, and hill walkers should be able to recognise the signs of hypothermia and how to respond.

See Appendix 1 for a basic first aid kit.

The fundamental rule of first aid is warmth, rest and reassurance.

## **Blisters**

Blisters are simply the result of friction, but they can make a walk a miserable experience. To help prevent blisters:

- Wear comfortable, good-fitting, worn-in boots or shoes, especially on long walks
- Wear good walking socks in the right size; consider wearing two pairs
- Keep your toenails trim
- Change your socks daily
- Quickly remove any foreign bodies from your socks and boots
- Ensure that the tongue and laces of your boots are arranged correctly and evenly
- Check your feet carefully and regularly for any sign of rubbing and tenderness
- Walk as much as possible in your boots so that hard skin develops at friction points
- Act immediately you feel any friction or discomfort: blisters can form very quickly

If you feel a blister developing, stop walking, take your boots and socks off and examine your feet. Consider applying some material cushioning or padding, or a breathable waterproof plaster, or possibly some strips of surgical tape.

**Additional information on safety and equipment can be found on the Ramblers website here:**

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/advice-for-walkers/safety-and-equipment.aspx>

## 11. WINDSURFING GUIDELINES

### General

Windsurfing is a high risk activity; for your own safety and for the safety of others you will need to know the basic windsurfing skills and safety practices before you will be allowed to take part in a BEC windsurfing activity.

BEC requires beginners to undertake an introductory course with a qualified instructor. A beginner is defined as someone with no previous experience.

BEC Windsurfing Section Leader(s) will be able to offer guidance on approved courses of instruction, eg. at Hove Lagoon. Section Leader contact details can be found on the BEC website.

BEC will only authorise Windsurfing activities under supervision of an experienced member; any decision made by the activity leader is final.

a) All participants must be aware:

- That open water will be much colder than the local ambient air temperature
- Cold water will bring on instant heat-loss, causing the body temperature to cool rapidly

b) Each participant must wear suitable clothing:

- Wet suit or dry suit
- A rash vest is recommended, for warmth in colder conditions, to be worn under the wetsuit
- Wet shoes or boots are important to protect against sharp stones or debris
- Buoyancy aid (provided by BEC)

c) Each participant must be aware of personal safety:

- All participants must be able to swim at least 50 metres in open water.
- No participant shall 'go out' further than the limit (distance from shore/bank) set by the leader
- Refer to the general guidance on group size and solo activity (page 3)
- All participants must be made aware of the affects of wind, weather and tidal conditions. No-one must attempt anything that they are not competent to cope with
- If falling from the board it is recommended to raise the arms to protect the head

### Novices

'Novice' refers to a person having little experience of windsurfing.

Only the Windsurfing Section Leader (or their nominated competent person) is to introduce a novice to a BEC Windsurfing activity. The Windsurfing Section Leader (or their nominated competent person) must give consideration to the level of fitness of the novice and confirm the availability of all required safety equipment.

a) All points under the section 'General' (above) apply.

b) Novice Windsurfers are welcome to attend any windsurfing activity promoted as part of the weekly programme. However, their participation in any windsurfing activity will be at the discretion of the Windsurfing Section Leader (or their nominated competent person)

c) All novice windsurfers will be expected to show proficiency in basic personal safety before being allowed 'on the water'.

d) All beginner and novice windsurfers must stay with the group at all times, unless otherwise instructed otherwise by a leader (e.g. return to shore).

### Pre-Activity Checks

- a) All points under the 'General' and 'Novices' sections (above) apply.
- b) The Activity Leader must check local conditions (weather, state of water, etc) before setting out.
- c) All persons taking part in windsurfing must be sure their board and rig are 'fit for purpose'
- d) All persons 'on the water' must wear a buoyancy aid. Make sure the buoyancy aid is:
  - Of suitable size for the individual person
  - Is fitted correctly
  - Is securely fastened
  - Ask for assistance if you are unsure
- e) All persons 'on the water' must wear suitable footwear in case of glass etc on the river/sea bed.
- f) The wearing helmets in windsurfing generally comes down to the prevailing conditions and personal choice. BEC members are recommended to assess the conditions and wear a helmet if deemed necessary, or in doubt.
- g) All persons 'on the water' must be aware of the affects of the sun reflecting off the surface of the water, which may bring on sunstroke and sunburn; it is advisable to wear high factor sun-block to protect skin from sunburn; and also to wear sunglasses to avoid glare and temporary blindness.

### Experienced Windsurfers:

- a) Experienced windsurfers wishing to sail at times other than BEC weekly sessions must inform the Section Leader or other responsible member of the water sports sections (if Section Leader not available) of their plans before taking part in such activity. The member(s) will be expected to submit a plan of the activity to include:
  - Names of all Members taking part
  - Date and Time of Activity
  - Location of Activity
  - Equipment Borrowed
  - Expected Date and Time of Return
- b) All points under the section 'General' (above) apply.

Some more general information on Windsurfing safety can be found here:

[http://www.learntowindsurf.com/basics\\_safety.shtml](http://www.learntowindsurf.com/basics_safety.shtml)

## APPENDIX 1: BASIC FIRST AID KIT

Carry a basic first aid kit, which may include:

- Dressings – a few to include large and medium sizes
- Crepe Bandage
- Plasters – a selection in various sizes
- Triangle Bandage
- 4 safety pins to secure bandages
- Steristrips – for closing large wounds
- Antiseptic wipes
- Small scissors or penknife
- Tic Remover
- Antihistamine tablets
- Disposable gloves
- Electrolyte tablets – to ease cramp or dehydration
- Painkillers such as aspirin and paracetamol could be included but note these should only be self administered
- Foil blanket or jacket (better)
- Duck tape (various uses including fixing dressings, stabilisation of broken limbs, etc)