

Abbey Rapids Slalom and WWR Risk Assessment



Activity: Slalom and WWR Events at Abbey Rapids **Assessment by:** Andrew Crowhurst
Review / re-assessment due: Nov 2026

Date: 06 Nov 2025

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Likelihood (1=Low, 5=High)	Severity (1=Low, 5=High)	Control measures
Manual handling in event set up/ take down	Event volunteers	2	3	All volunteers to be aware of and use good manual handling techniques when carrying equipment for setting up events
Erecting / dismantling marquees/gazebos	Event volunteers	2	2	Volunteers to be briefed on keeping clear of moving parts on gazebos.
High winds moving marquees / gazebos	Paddlers, event volunteers, spectators, public	2	4	Event organisers to ensure marquees / gazebos are adequately secured / weighted down. Marquees / gazebos to be taken down in the event of high winds.
Rising water during event	Paddlers, spectators, public	3	3	Event Safety Officer / Organiser should: Inspect and continue to monitor how fast the water levels are rising. The starter should be able to notify control of any sudden increase in water levels since as they are on the waters edge so would have to move in the event of sudden water level rises.
Being struck by moving vehicles in the car park / campsite	Paddlers, event volunteers, spectators, public	2	3	Traffic moving around the site to be at low speed as advertised in the event information. Parking to be arranged to ensure emergency vehicles can access the campsite if needed.

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Being struck by moving vehicles on the road between the carpark / campsite and the riverbank	Paddlers, event volunteers, spectators	2	4	The road is a small, quiet road, with a traffic lighted junction at one end, so any traffic on the road should not be travelling fast. Signage will be placed at either end of the section of road to be used by pedestrians to alert drivers that there may be pedestrians in the road.
Catering – burns / scalds	Event volunteers	2	2	Kitchen layout to be set up to minimise risk. Kitchen access to be restricted to essential staff only to reduce the number of people at risk. First Aid provision on site.
Catering – food preparation	Event volunteers, paddlers, public	2	2	Catering team to ensure food preparation adheres to best practice regarding food hygiene as far as is practical in a temporary kitchen. (e.g. hand washing facilities/routine, cold storage in cool boxes, separate cooked and uncooked meat).
Catering - Fire	Event volunteers, paddlers, public	1	4	Kitchen to be set up to minimise the risk of fire, and to ensure adequate escape routes from the catering tent. Fire blanket to be available in the kitchen for small fires (e.g. pan fires) Emergency procedures to be used if fire service is required.

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Course erecting / dismantling – working at height and trip hazards	Volunteers in the course maintenance team, public	2	4	<p>Course building / dismantling volunteers to wear Buoyancy Aids if operating in the water</p> <p>Course volunteers to be aware of any potential heavy rainfall likely to cause a rise in water level.</p> <p>Where ladders are used, they should be used by experienced volunteers working in teams to ensure ladders are stable, secure and supported during use.</p> <p>Ensure course ropes are tied so they do not present a hazard on the river or bank, and any ropes crossing the river right bank where paddlers and spectators will be moving around are to be well above head height.</p>
Slips, Trips, Falls	Paddlers, event volunteers, spectators	3	4	<p>Event information to advise paddlers to beware of uneven surfaces and wet steps. Signage will be provided on the steps leading to the riverbank reminding users that the riverbank is uneven and may become slippery when wet.</p> <p>Ensure paths are kept clear of boats and equipment, boats are not to be left at the top or bottom of the steps leading to/from the riverbank. Event officials to enforce or move boats as appropriate.</p> <p>Electrical wiring to be run so it does not form a trip hazard.</p> <p>Tutti and PA wiring to be run so it does not cause a trip hazard and such that crossing of paths is minimal.</p>

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Electrical safety – use of the generator	Event Staff	2	4	<p>Generator only to be operated by suitably experienced individuals.</p> <p>Generator to be located outside and at least 2 m away from any tent or vehicle and be cordoned off with only relevant event staff having access to the area.</p> <p>The generator should not be refueled whilst running; it must be switched off before any refueling can take place.</p>
Electrical safety - electrocution / overload	Event volunteers	1	3	<p>Visual inspection of wiring prior to and during use and remove defective leads from use until they can be repaired.</p> <p>Ensure sufficient extension leads are used to avoid overloading sockets.</p> <p>Extension leads to be protected by RCD's / surge protection.</p> <p>Appropriate outdoor leads / connections to be used for outdoor wiring (e.g. caravan/camping leads).</p>
First Aid Provision	All	3	3	<p>At least one qualified event First Aider will be appointed for the event (ideally 2 people).</p> <p>First Aid Kit kept in control and checked prior to the event.</p> <p>Organiser to advise of any equipment used.</p> <p>First aid to be summoned via control - First Aid information to be included in event information and notices displayed at the event.</p> <p>Emergency Plan covers summoning emergency services and/or directing people to local hospitals.</p>
Welfare Provision	Young people	2	1-5	<p>A suitable person with Safeguarding training will be appointed as Event Welfare officer.</p> <p>Event Welfare Officer Poster to be displayed at control.</p>

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Event notices / information – advising paddlers of hazards	All	1	2	Organiser to ensure that required / relevant safety notices are displayed at race control and if required by the river access and by finish.
Canoeing / Water Related Activity				
Carrying kayaks / canoes	Paddlers, Spectators, Officials	2	2	Paddlers are familiar with appropriate manual handling for carrying their equipment. Juniors to be assisted as appropriate by coaches / parents.
Carrying of boats up the steep rocks at the get out	Paddlers	2	3	Signage and communication will advise paddlers to help each other up the rocks when exiting the river. Paddlers staying on after finishing their runs will be able to assist in the event of anyone falling in.

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Paddling – capsize during official practice and race runs	Paddlers, Safety Team	3	2	<p>All paddlers are notified that Canoeing is an ‘assumed risk sport’ both on completing entry and by notices displayed.</p> <p>All paddlers to wear appropriate protective equipment including Buoyancy Aid and helmet as per slalom rules.</p> <p>Water Safety Coordinator to position bank and boat-based safety as appropriate to the level of the event and based on where incidents are likely (e.g. by the main rapid). Dynamic risk assessment once course is erected and throughout the event.</p> <p>Paddlers to be reminded of the requirement to stay on the water and provide safety after their runs in event information. Rules relating to this to be enforced and those not complying to be reported to the Chief Judge team. Reminder notices to be placed at start and by finish area.</p> <p>Practice and race runs to be organised so there are adequate gaps between paddlers</p> <p>Organiser to ensure that required / relevant safety notices are displayed at race control and if required by the river access and by finish.</p>
Paddling – capsize during ‘free’ practice	Paddlers	3	3	Paddlers / parents / coaches to be made aware in event information that they are responsible for their own safety during free practice.

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Safety team - undertaking rescues	Safety Team, Paddlers	2	3	<p>Water Safety coordinator to ensure that safety team are suitably experienced for their role and are briefed on emergency procedures and their position.</p> <p>Bank based safety to wear buoyancy aids and helmets and have throw lines available. Boat based safety, if required, to wear usual paddling kit.</p> <p>Safety rota to be managed by Water Safety Coordinator and to allow for frequent changes of volunteers. Volunteers to be briefed to stay on post until relieved and the importance of arriving on time for the stint.</p>
Being struck by other paddlers equipment on the water (Boat / Paddle)	Paddlers	2	3	<p>All paddlers are notified that Canoeing is an 'assumed risk sport' both on completing entry and by notices displayed.</p> <p>All paddlers to wear appropriate protective equipment including Buoyancy Aid and helmet.</p> <p>Start intervals as per slalom rules to minimise the possibility of paddlers colliding.</p>
Pinning on rocks, trees or bank	Paddlers	2	4	<p>Course to be planned to minimise potential of pinning.</p> <p>Tree branches that have fallen into the slalom course to be removed by course team on Friday.</p> <p>Safety team to be positioned where a significant risk is identified.</p> <p>All paddlers are notified that Canoeing is an 'assumed risk sport' both on completing entry and by notices displayed.</p>

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Hypothermia	Paddlers	2	4	All paddlers to wear usual protective clothing / equipment for paddling appropriate to the conditions / weather. To include Buoyancy Aid and helmet. First Aid kit to include suitable equipment to treat condition. Qualified First Aiders at the event.
Leptospirosis (Weil's Disease)	Paddlers	2	4	All paddlers to be aware of the risk and follow standard practice of covering cuts etc, and that Canoeing is an 'assumed risk sport' on event information and notices. As this is a natural river it is advised that all paddlers wash hands / face between paddling & eating. Signage will present to advise paddlers to wear closed-toe footwear when on the river bank to reduce the likelihood of any small cuts to feet.
Course changes and adjustment Additional danger of falling into the water or paddlers being entangled in ropes	Volunteers erecting or dismantling the course. Paddlers General public	3	3	Additional to general course building controls: Where adjustments require ropes to be across the river at low level, start will be held whilst the adjustments are carried out and a lookout to be positioned upstream to stop paddlers passing down river. For major changes, paddlers to be advised that the river is closed by PA and at get in. Buoyancy aids and helmets to be worn by volunteers where there is a risk of entering the water.
Camping provision				

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People being struck by moving vehicles	Campers	1	4	Site layout means only low speeds are possible and all users will be reminded to travel at slow speeds in the event information. Campers to supervise children.
Slips, trips and fall	Campers	2	3	Campers to supervise children. Access to and from the camping field through the gate only.
Fire	Campers	1	4	Campers advised to pitch units at least 2m apart to minimise risk of fire spreading.