

Class C Waters



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Introduction

This is the second edition of a new factsheet to provide guidance for Leaders who wish to provide water activities on Class C Waters. 'Sidelineing' indicates changes from the previous edition.

Further editions will be published in the light of experience and will be notified in Scouting Magazine, Talking Points and the Activities Newsletter.

Definition of Class C Waters

For the purpose of our rules, all Class C Waters must be non-tidal and are:

Inland lakes, lochs or other stretches of placid water which are less than 100 metres wide throughout the region being used and where surface turbulence is limited to the regular waves produced by wind action. This also includes rivers or canals which again are less than 100 metres wide in the region that is being used.

What is not included are waters less than 100 metres wide in the area that is being used where the surface is turbulent because of weirs, rapids, waterfalls or fast flowing currents (white water).

This definition therefore includes:

- Public boating ponds and other similar inland waters, where it is possible to walkout following capsizes.
- Larger stretches of water with, no doubt, greater depth.

In certain circumstances - such as high wind - a stretch of water which has been classified as Class C may not, on the day of activity, be so.

It should be noted that the listings in the National Directory of Waters take precedence over the definition in this factsheet.

Activities on Class C Waters

The relevant rule within POR is 42.2(b):

All Water Activities on Class C Waters except Powerboating are approved by a Leader provided they follow the standards contained in the factsheet 'Class C Waters' available from Headquarters.

Thus this allows for a variety of activities on waters classified as Class C - kayak practice in swimming baths, traditional rafting, hire of craft in the local park or canoeing at the local campsite - without the requirement for the leader of the activity to be authorised. It is implicit that those supervising the activity have the appropriate skills and knowledge. Note that this requirement still exists for Powerboating; the remainder of this factsheet is written without reference to this latter activity (see the factsheet *Motor and Powerboating*).

Although the above allows for some degree of spontaneity in providing activities, the provisions of POR Rule 37.1 (b) still apply:

The District Commissioner is responsible for approving all activities. This will usually be by means of an informal system agreed between the District Commissioner and each Group Scout Leader. For special events and activities, such approval will be granted by a County, National or Chief Commissioner, as appropriate. There are additional requirements for those activities which fall within the scope of the

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*Association's Adventurous
Activity Authorisation Schemes
(see Rule 37.2).*

It is implicit that:

- Participants have received (basic) instruction and appropriate briefing.
- Suitable equipment is used.
- The activity is appropriate to the ages of the participants.
- All participants have been briefed.
- There is appropriate supervision by a person who has sufficient skill/knowledge of the water activity.

Swimming Requirement for Those Taking Part in Water Activities

In accordance with our Rules (42.1(b)), all members of the Movement taking part in any water activity should demonstrate to a suitable person their ability to swim 50 metres in ordinary clothes and keep afloat for five minutes.

A non-swimmer may take part in some water activities, at the discretion of the responsible person, only if certain precautions are taken. In Class C Waters there must be no more than one non-swimmer in any craft and in the case of single-handed craft supervision must be on a one-to-one basis. The non-swimmer must wear a lifejacket/buoyancy aid, in accordance with the factsheet *Water Safety (incorporating Life Jackets and Buoyancy Aids)*. For activities on larger (and deeper) expanses of Class C Water it would be prudent to assess the young person's ability to recover from a capsized craft in more controlled circumstances (such as in a swimming pool).

Responsible Person

In approving the activity the Leader has to ensure that the activity will be under the immediate control of a responsible person (who could be the Leader, in person).

The responsible person must:

- Ensure that the Rules contained in POR are followed.
- Ensure that a Risk Assessment is carried out (see later).
- Ensure other users of the water do not constitute a hazard.
- Carry out any local operating procedures (if using, for example,

swimming pool, boating or similar waters).

- Ensure that the activity is supervised by someone who has sufficient skill/knowledge of the water activity.
- Ensure that a safety briefing is given to all participants and supervisors.
- Ensure that participants do not move into any adjacent waters not classified as Class C (which are thus, at a minimum, Class B1).
- Be in a suitable position to oversee the area in which the activity is taking place.
- Be prepared to stop the activity if and when required.
- Ensure that there is a person who has received emergency aid training and that a first aid kit is available.
- Have access to a telephone for use in the event of an emergency.

Buoyancy Aids

All participants are to wear buoyancy aids/lifejackets in accordance with the information set-out in the table in the factsheet *Water Safety (incorporating Life Jackets and Buoyancy Aids)*.

Supervision of the Activity

The following is applicable:

- The maximum size of any one party is 18 participants.
- There must be a ratio of at least one supervisor to every group of 6 participants.
- The party is to be divided so that every participant is allocated to both a designated group and a supervisor.

Supervisors

Supervisors should:

- Have the ability to take effective emergency action and should be suitably dressed for this; they must have sufficient skills/knowledge of the water activity.
- Be in a suitable position to supervise - either on land or on the water - and should not be more than 50 metres from all the participants in their designated group. This may only be possible/practicable if on the water.

Note: one of the supervisors can be the responsible person.

Safety Briefing

The safety briefing must include:

- A demonstration of the emergency signal.
- A demonstration of the recall signal.
- Identification and use of any safety equipment (supervisors).
- Limits of the area to be used [only Class C Water] and no more than 50 metres from the supervisor.
- An explanation of any hazards.
- Where to get out of the water.
- Allocation of participants to supervisors.
- An explanation of the buddy system, the principle of working together and raising the alarm.
- Telling the supervisor when leaving and returning to the water.
- Explanation of procedures for capsize/recovery, falling into the water or getting into difficulties.
- All open cuts should be covered with waterproof plasters.
- Explanation about actions if flu symptoms develop (telling the doctor about going into the water - see the factsheet *Water Safety (incorporating Life Jackets and Buoyancy Aids)* for more detail).

Risk Assessment

The factsheet *Activities - Risk Assessment* provides guidance for leaders planning activities for the members.

In the context of water activities on Class C Waters, the following points need to be considered each time the activity is planned:

- Location:
 - Class C Water (less than 100 metres in width in the region of the activity)?
 - Water still or slow moving?
 - Suitable weather conditions?
 - No hazards?
 - No blue-green algae?
 - Other water users will not constitute a hazard to participants

(both on the water and fishermen)?

- Any other factors?
- Activity:
 - Suitable for all participants?
 - Safety briefing carried-out?
- Equipment:
 - Craft inspected before use?
 - Buoyancy aids/lifejackets?
 - Throwline?
 - First Aid Kit?
 - Emergency telephone?
- Personnel:
 - Maximum participants 18 to any one party?
 - Any non-swimmers?
 - Responsible person?
 - Supervision (at least one to each 6 participants)?
 - Person with emergency aid training?

Further Information

Further information should be sought from District or County Area Water Activities Advisers or if on a campsite or other location the person in charge (eg warden).