

# Canoeing



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0845 300 1818

## Introduction

This factsheet provides the facts required to run canoeing for a group of young people, or to do it for themselves if they are a young person. It should be read in conjunction with the factsheet FS120084 Scout Led Activities Index, and Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) of The Scout Association.

## What is canoeing?

Canoeing is a way of travelling over water through the use of a canoe, a small craft which is propelled through the use of a paddle. The canoeing permit refers to open canoeing, a craft that does not have a deck enclosing the occupant(s) and which was designed to be paddled using a single bladed paddle, often from a kneeling position. Kayaking and closed cockpit canoeing are covered by the kayaking permit scheme. Open canoes can also be propelled using a pole, sail or motor. Use of a sail, with the exception of an improvised sail, is covered by the dinghy sailing permit scheme, and use of a motor by the power boating permit scheme.

## What is a canoeing permit?

The adventurous activity permit scheme is designed to ensure that only people with the relevant skills and experience lead adventurous activities for young people. All activities classed as adventurous can only be led by someone holding the appropriate permit. Young people (under 18) can take part in adventurous activities for themselves with personal activity permits.

A canoeing permit is required for all Canoeing taking place except in class C water. Definitions of

water classifications can be found in POR rule 9.44 [www.scouts.org.uk/por9.44](http://www.scouts.org.uk/por9.44).

## Levels of permit

Canoeing permits can be issued for the type of water as well as the class of water. Each permit can be further restricted (such as through tidal, non-tidal, group size, geographical location etc) to end up with an individual permit to the level of the competence and requirements of an applicant.

## Types of permit

There are three types of permit available for canoeing on each type of water. These are:

- **Personal** – Allows a young person (under 18) to take part in canoeing with others with a personal canoeing or kayaking permit.
- **Leadership** – Allows the permit holder to lead canoeing for a single group.
- **Supervisory** – Allows the permit holder to remotely supervise more than one canoeing group.

## Permit Limitations

- **Personal** – If you hold a personal canoeing permit you can go canoeing with others who hold a personal canoeing or kayaking permit. It does not allow you to go canoeing with anyone not holding a canoeing or kayaking permit.
- **Leadership** – If you have a permit to lead canoeing then you can look after a maximum of eight canoes or 12 people (whichever is less) at a time, subject to any restrictions on your permit, and need to remain on the water with these

canoes at all times. Canoe permit holders can only look after canoes and not kayaks.

- **Supervisory** – If you hold a permit to supervise canoeing then you can supervise up to three groups. All supervised groups should have means to communicate with the permit holder who will need to be in or have immediate access to a rescue craft (this may be another canoe) and be in a position to provide prompt assistance if required. You remain responsible for all the groups you are supervising, but designate someone with the appropriate skills to be the group leader.

### Designations

When supervising groups from a distance the holder of a canoeing supervisor permit needs to designate a group leader. This designation lasts only for the current activity while the permit holder is supervising.

People designated as group leaders should have the necessary skills and be responsible enough to lead a group safely in the craft and on the class of water being paddled. There is no problem with making young people group leaders if they are up to the role, and it can be used as a useful development tool.

### Further Definitions

The types of water are defined below:

- **Canoe Open Inland** – Canoeing on inland non tidal waters including rivers of less than BCU grade 1.
- **Canoe River** – Canoeing on inland non tidal moving waters of BCU grade 1 and above.
- **Canoe Sea** – Canoeing on tidal waters (including tidal inland waters) where there is no intent of doing activities in the surf.
- **Canoe Surf** – Canoeing where there is an intention of doing canoeing activities in the surf (this is only available on B2-A class waters).

Those holding a permit for B1 in any of the above types of water may also operate in the other types of water on B1 waters.

### Useful Links

- [FS120084](#) Scout Led Activities Index  
(References relevant Rules and guidance)
- [FS120086](#) Commercially Led Activities Index
- [FS120100](#) Adventurous Activity Permit Scheme