



Health & Safety Guidelines for Paddlers

Please observe the following precautions and guidelines whilst paddling at the club:

- All paddlers should be able to swim 50m in light clothing.
- All paddlers should wear buoyancy aids (except marathon paddlers in higher divisions) and adequate foot protection.
- Ensure any cuts or abrasions are covered with waterproof dressings.
- Paddlers should not eat food or chew gum whilst on the water.
- If you have any medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes etc. please let the person in charge of the session know about this.
- If you swallow any canal water during the session, please let the person in charge know.
- If after the canoe session, you develop any flu like symptoms, please see a doctor as soon as possible and tell them that you have been canoeing.
- Please comply with any instructions given to you by the person or persons in charge of the session.
- Ensure any items such as mobile phones, cameras and car keys are not carried on your person when paddling, as they may get damaged.
- Do not bring valuables to the club if you can help it. Any items left in the club house are left entirely at your own risk. We have a safe in the club house which you can use at your own risk to store valuables, keys, mobile phones etc.
- Wash hands thoroughly before eating or drinking.
- Take a shower as soon as possible after a canoeing session.

Weil's disease (Leptospirosis)

Weil's disease is the result of an infection caused by bacteria called *Leptospira*. Symptoms can range from mild (such as headaches, muscle pains, and fevers) to severe (kidney damage).

Weil's disease is often transmitted by animal urine or by water or soil containing animal urine coming into contact with breaks in the skin, eyes, mouth, or nose.

It is rare, but it is recommended that you cover cuts to minimise the risk of infection and always wash thoroughly as soon as possible after being out on the water. If you experience poor health, such as flu-like symptoms, consult your doctor as soon as possible. For more information on Weil's disease see the [Leptospirosis page on NHS Direct](#).

Blue Green Algae

Occasionally there is blue green algae on the canal – especially in the summer. This can cause a rash after skin contact and illnesses if swallowed. The Canal & River Trust will advise us if there is a build-up of algae on the canal.

Precautions against being affected include covering cuts, washing as soon as possible after being on the water and avoiding eating and drinking before you have washed your hands.