



**“Find us at the beach by the old boat ramp”
In Yorkeys Knob Cairns Queensland**

HEKILI RISK ASSESSMENT

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Brief Description
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Contact Officer: Hekili OCC Secretary

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PO Box 191, Yorkeys Knob Qld 4878, Queensland

ABN 28 561 248 896

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1. INTRODUCTION

Hekili Outrigger Canoe Club Inc. (HOCC) is a non-profit organisation whose safety and operation is managed by club members. Hekili OCC adheres to AO Rules (latest version July 2024) and all AO Integrity Policies as supplied by the national governing body – Australian Outrigger Canoe Racing Association Ltd. (AOCRA). These documents can be located at: [AOCRA | Administration](#)

This risk assessment outlines the process required to ensure training sessions are conducted in a safe manner. The risk assessment process is the responsibility of every paddler. In certain situations, the final decision will be made by the designated coach or the steerer/captain of the canoe. A paddler is responsible for their own safety at all times. If an individual would prefer not to paddle due to conditions, or they feel unsafe or uncertain on the water, they must inform the coach or steerer/captain immediately.

All paddlers are made aware of current and future requirements and their obligations as paddlers. This relates to safety and conduct during training, when representing the club at regattas and other paddling related functions and fundraisers. Paddlers are informed when they:

- Complete the indemnity form.
- Club and AOCRA membership
 - Once a paddler has come and tried paddling up to six sessions (within a 3-month period) before they are expected to join as a member of the club and AOCRA to be able to continue paddling
 - New paddlers are entitled to up 6 sessions only (to be used within 3 months). After 6 sessions (or 3 months, whichever comes first), the paddler is required to complete all club membership requirements as noted above and pay AOCRA and Club membership fees
- Risk Assessment Acknowledgement form (attachment 1)
- Become a member
- Renew their membership
- Read the Risk Management Plan (attachment 2)

1.1. Club Records and Documentation

In respect to safety the following documents are, through the Club Secretary, maintained and filed:

- Hekili Risk Management Policy
- Coaching and Safety spreadsheet which identifies:
 - Registered Coaches. All Coaches must meet the requirements outlined in the AOCRA Rules – Section 9. Coaching.
 - All junior coaches and volunteers must meet the requirements of AOCRA's Rule – section 9 Working with Children.
 - First Aid Certificate holders

- Working With Children card holders
- Annual swim/tread/huli training to meet insurance purposes
- Vessel registration

Maintenance notes club equipment (ie: vessels and other safety equipment such as PFD's, leg ropes, safety bags etc.) are compiled by the Club Captain and kept by the Club Secretary.

2. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

2.1. Swim, Tread and Huli Tests

These tests must be conducted in accordance with the AO Rules – Paddler Suitability (Swim, Tread and Huli) – Section 8. The policy is in place to ensure that paddlers are able to support themselves in the water, right and reboard a canoe in the event of a huli or other incident.

2.2. Swim and Tread Test

All club members must undertake annual swim/tread water/canoe huli (flip) tests as follows and results recorded in a club register:

- Seniors – swim 400m with no external aid and tread water for 5 minutes
- Juniors including Minnows – swim 150m with no external aid and tread water for 3 minutes

Refusal to complete the swim and tread test will result in a fail. Failure to 'pass' means that the individual must wear a PFD during training and regattas until a 'pass' is obtained. Failure to wear a PFD may negate any insurance claims made which involve the individual.

2.3. Huli / Flipping Drills

Canoes can flip over, both in races and training sessions. The Club Coach will explain the flipping drill prior to the canoe entering the water and then a practical "flip" is carried out.

Due to the dangers of marine stingers in far northern waters, flip drills are usually conducted in protected waters where risk of marine sting is reduced (i.e. inside stinger nets when appropriate).

Failure to complete a huli results in information being passed to the committee and they need to determine whether paddling restrictions (eg: not to paddle in rolling swells in open water) need to be placed on the individual.

Documentation which records a paddlers successful completion of this skill is kept by the Club Secretary.

2.4. Coaching Qualification Requirements

All coaches **MUST**:

- Meet the certification requirements documented in AO Rules
- Registered Coaches. All Coaches must meet the requirements outlined in the AOCRA Rules – Section 9. Coaching.

- All junior coaches and volunteers must meet the requirements of AOCRA's Rule – section 9 Working with Children.
- Be registered Hekili Club members
- Where a Junior Coach or Volunteer does not have a Working with Children Card, they must still complete the form in Section C and there should always be a card carrying coach/volunteer present. In all situations, Junior Coaches and Volunteers should try to avoid being in a situation where they are alone and out of visual range with a junior.

3. POSITION REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. Coach(es)

At least one qualified coach or experienced steerer must be at each training session. Prior to attending training, the coach/steerer must have made themselves familiar with wind, current and tidal conditions. The coach/steerer is able to make the decision regarding whether paddling will occur.

The coach is responsible for team members. They need to take into consideration the competency levels of paddlers on the beach and determine if there are concerns. If there are, these concerns need to be accounted for and the training/session needs to be sculpted accordingly.

The coach must always:

- Complete a risk assessment for the session – this is able to be conducted mentally based on known competency of paddlers present; weather conditions; training duration and training plan.
- In the case of a strong wind warning the risk assessment must be documented.
- Allocate steerers/canoe captains that they feel will be capable of making informed decisions to assist in keeping the crew members safe, given the known paddling conditions.

3.2. Steerer / Canoe Captain

- The steerer (or master) of the canoe is legally responsible for the navigation and direction of the canoe and the paddlers in the canoe. All paddlers must follow the steerer's directions.
- This person is responsible to check the canoe condition and ensure that it has the required safety equipment.

If the steerer is in training the above requirements should be allocated to a trained coach in the canoe or the paddler with the most experience.

A team captain is appointed for each crew for every training session. This person shall be the steerer in most cases, *unless* the steerer is new and in training, then the team captain reverts to either: the qualified coach, assistant coach, or next most experienced person in the canoe. This person ensures the safety of all of their crew. This person ensures that the canoe is equipped for the training session and meets the club

safety requirements. The team captain of the session does not in any way negate the coach/s responsibility or purpose for the session.

3.3. Paddlers

A paddler is responsible for their own safety at all times. They may assist other roles in the club by ensuring that safety equipment is in each canoe.

They must listen to instructions provided by the coach and also the steerer/canoe captain. If an individual would prefer not to paddle due to conditions, or they feel unsafe or uncertain on the water, they must inform the coach or steerer/captain immediately.

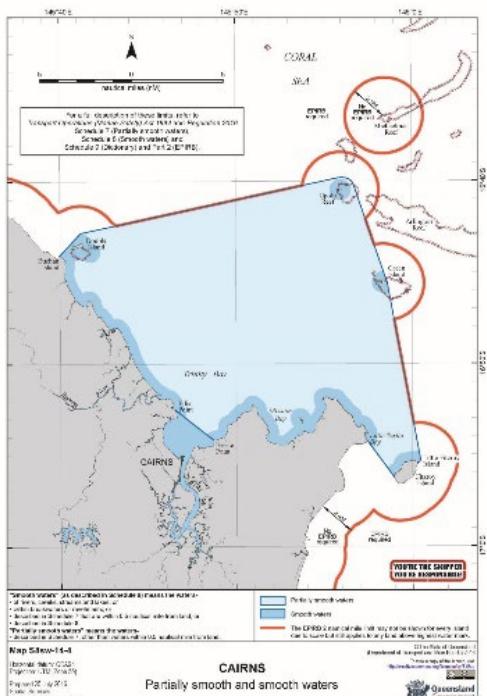
4. GENERAL WATER SAFETY - PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

4.1. Yorkeys Knob beach by the boat ramp and YKBC Marina.

When paddling in this location and the surrounding water and islands there are some unique risk management issues. The identified risks and their controls are documented in Attachment 2 and each paddler should read this attachment to familiarise themselves with the risks and agreed club controls.

The primary canoe launch point is off the small beach adjacent to the rock wall that separates the Yorkeys Knob boat ramp and the marina traffic from the beach. This location is relatively protected. The secondary canoe launch point is from the boat ramp which enters the marina and is protected by the rock sea wall.

Queensland Maritime Safety designates all waters in this locality as either Smooth or Partially Smooth Waters. Anything outside of this is considered Open Water. Refer to the map here. www.msqa.qld.gov.au/Safety/Smooth-and-partially-smooth-water-limits/Swl-cairns



The following addresses certain risks and actions to mitigate, minimise or prevent injury to persons or damage to canoes when paddling with Hekili OCC.

4.2. Sun Protection

Paddling involves long periods of time exposed to the elements and appropriate sun/wind protection should be used including, hats, sun cream, long sleeved sun shirts and sunglasses. AOCRA have a sun protection policy within the AO Rules (8.7).

4.3. Hydration

Outrigging often requires long periods on the water with no immediate access to fresh water. The exposure to heat and sun may result in dehydration. Individuals must take suitable water bottles or water packs on long paddles and it is encouraged that water is taken out by individuals during hour long training sessions as well. For new paddlers, frequent stops should be built into the training session by the coach.

4.4. Wind Warnings

AOCRA and Hekili have a strict policy on the use of canoes during strong and gale force wind warnings.

Before each training session the coach(es) are to check the [BOM website](#) and [www.seabreeze.com.au](#) and understand wind/current/tidal conditions for the training period.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) uses the Beauford Wind Scale to measure wind. Follow this link to see the BOM wind definitions:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/lam/glossary/beaufort.shtml>

More specifically the BOM Marine Weather Definitions (follow the link): [Wind - Reference material - Marine Knowledge Centre \(bom.gov.au\)](#) defines the following:

- Strong wind warning: 26 to 33 knots
- Gale warning: 34 to 47 knots
- Storm force wind warning: 48 to 63 knots
- Hurricane force wind warning: 64 knots or more

As previously documented, in certain situations the final decision in relation to paddling, will be made by the designated coach or the steerer/captain of the canoe. This is particularly important in adverse conditions as the steerer/captain is responsible for the safety of the crew and vessel. The steerer/captains directions/commands are to be strictly adhered to at all times.

Gale Force Warning

Under no circumstances are canoes to be put into the water.

Strong Wind Warning

In the event of a strong wind warning by local authorities, the following procedures must be put in place for all paddling activities:

- A risk assessment must be completed and recorded by the club coach(es) before the paddling session
- Risks must be assessed, maritime rules considered and potential risks deemed to be minimal.

Hekili OCC has access to protected (smooth and partially smooth waters located:

- In the YKBC Marina. This is fully protected from the ocean by a rock sea wall.
- Within the area defined by Half Moon Creek – Yorkeys Knob point – Trinity Beach – Western most point of Double Island.
- Within Half Moon Creek
- Refer to the map at Section 4.1

OC1, OC2, OC3 and V1 paddlers must adhere to the same rules as OC6 paddlers and must check the BOM accordingly. OC1, OC2, OC3 and V1 paddlers must be responsible for their own actions.

4.5. Canoe Safety

- All sessions must be logged with an on-shore person and include an expected return time, this is particularly important for sessions (training or social) which occur outside the designated club training times.
- For sessions that start or finish in hours of darkness, sessions are to be carried out in areas away from major boat traffic.
- Storm covers are to be put on canoes in the event of rough conditions. This is at the discretion of the team Coach and Captains.
- The canoe rigging must be checked prior to every session and re-rigged where necessary.
- Any person showing signs of alcohol consumption or other erratic/unsafe behaviours will not be allowed in the canoe (this is at the discretion of the team Coach and Steerers).

Hekili OCC requires all canoes carry the following safety equipment. These requirements are in accordance with sD.7.5 of the AOCRA Regatta and Training Rules Policy.

4.6. Mandatory OC6 Requirements

- One Type 1, 2 or 3 PFD for each paddler every time the canoe is put in the water. These should be easily accessible. Specifics regarding the type of PFD required can be located in [AOCRA Rules](#) (Effective April 1st 2021). HOCC Committee will ensure that they purchase the correct PFD types on behalf of the club members.
- Two bailers
- One bottle of vinegar during stinger season.
- When a session begins or finishes in darkness white lights must be affixed to the canoe and/or one or more of the paddlers (as per Maritime Safety Queensland, <http://www.msqa.qld.gov.au/Safety/Navigation-lights.aspx>)

4.7. Desirable OC6 Requirements

- an EPIRB must be carried in areas that are designated as Open Waters (as per the map instructions from Maritime Safety Queensland – Refer to Section 4.1) or be accompanied by a motor boat equipped with the correct safety gear.
- In the event of rough conditions you may fit storm covers to the canoe
- A radio in each canoe to allow communication if there is a potential that the canoes may become separated
- A spare paddle to assist if one is broken or lost

4.8. Mandatory OC1/2 Requirements

- One Type 1, 2 or 3 PFD for each paddler every time the canoe is put in the water. These should be easily accessible.
- A leg rope must be attached and it is recommended that paddlers use them to ensure their own safety, especially when offshore and/or in conditions where the paddler/s may become separated from their canoe.
- When a session begins or finishes in darkness white lights must be affixed to the canoe and/or one or more of the paddlers (as per Maritime Safety Queensland, <http://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Safety/Navigation-lights.aspx>).
- All paddlers must log the training session on WhatsApp and or TeamApp.

5. ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

5.1. Preventative Measures

- All paddlers should be made aware of preventative measures and how to deal with a situation on the water. Measures include:
 - Use of PFD's
 - Bailing techniques
 - Understanding the ocean / waterways
 - How to rig a canoe
 - How to huli and recover a canoe
 - How to exit and reboard a canoe
 - Managing a canoe in the surf
 - Attaching storm covers
 - Use of a tow rope
 - What to do in the case of a marine sting

5.2. Incidents, Injuries and Equipment Damage

All incidents (injury & equipment damage) must be reported immediately. They should be reported to two people:

- Firstly, the Club Coach or Club Captain and

- Secondly, the President or Secretary.

All incidents must be logged into the AOCRA online system within 7 days of incident. *NB: if you do not make the 7 day limit, please report as late reporting is better than no reporting.*

An incident report MUST be completed to enable a paddler or club to make an insurance claim for medical or related expenses or for equipment damage claims.

The report form can be located on the AOCRA website, after sign-in. It is strongly suggested that a verbal or written report is made to two of the individuals listed above and they will place a report into AOCRA on your behalf.

6. ATTACHMENT 1

RISK ASSESSMENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a member of Hekili Outrigger Canoe Club I have been made aware of the Risk Assessment document for the Club.

I have read the document.

I understand my obligations as a member of the Club to adhere to all the safety requirements as per this Risk Assessment.

Surname	
Christian Name	
Signature	
Date	

7. ATTACHMENT 2

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

#	Element	Description	Potential Hazards	Consequence	Likelihood	Risk	Control measures / Management Strategies	Residual Risk
1	Pandemic Covid	Communicable viral disease	Spread of viral infection	Major	Likely	High	<p>Covid-19 training for all coaches & committee</p> <p>Strict Hygiene Protocols & Supplies (personal and equipment before, during and after use)</p> <p>Social Distancing where practical</p> <p>Congregating is discouraged</p> <p>No unnecessary body contact</p> <p>Signage Do Not Enter & Must not attend sessions if unwell or displaying even mild flu like symptoms</p> <p>Must adhere to the current Qld Health guidelines</p> <p>COVID-19 in Queensland Health and wellbeing Queensland Government (www.qld.gov.au)</p>	High likely/ High

#	Element	Description	Potential Hazards	Consequence	Likelihood	Risk	Control measures / Management Strategies	Residual Risk
							Encouraged to get a Covid-19 vaccination & a flu shot	
2	Canoe Management	Launching canoe from the beach	Sprains, strains lifting canoe	Minor	Likely	Medium	Training, only lift with 5 people or more present	Low Unlikely / minor
		Shore Break	Personal injury Canoe damage	Minor	Unlikely	Low	If large shore break is present, launch canoe/s from boat ramp	Low Unlikely / minor
		Poor state of equipment	Flip/submerge Personal injury	Minor	Unlikely	Low	Equipment to be checked before each training session	Low Unlikely / minor
		Transporting canoes (on trailers to & from sites)	Motor vehicle accident, road debris damage	Minor	Likely	High	Only allowing experienced drivers to tow. Adequately insured vehicles. Use of appropriate vehicles for towing.	Medium Likely / medium
3	Coaches	Training qualifications	Not trained, liable for damage to paddlers and canoes	Minor	Unlikely	Medium	All coaches must be accredited, or coach assistants must work under an accredited coach	Low Unlikely / Minor
		Volunteers	Not well instructed, nor trained, causing incorrect instruction to paddlers	Minor	Unlikely	Low	All volunteers must work under an accredited coach	Low Unlikely / Minor
4	Training Safety	Late canoe procedure - if a canoe has not	Lack of direction due to lack of light. Loss of	Major	Unlikely	High	Training sessions to be logged.	Low Unlikely / Major

#	Element	Description	Potential Hazards	Consequence	Likelihood	Risk	Control measures / Management Strategies	Residual Risk
		returned from training	vision / direction. Huli – unable to right canoe				White lights to be carried	
		Lack of light	Limited visibility to other marine craft.	Medium to Major	Likely	High	If training dusk or dawn, all canoes must carry a torch/lantern that has a white light	Medium Likely / Major
		Cross training	Physical injury due to over exertion/lack of technique/insufficient training – lack of fitness	Minor	Likely	Low	Working to fitness and experience level	Low Unlikely / Medium
		Flipping	Physical injury, panic, drowning	Minor to major	Likely	Medium	All paddlers must be trained in flip-drills. All paddlers must be able to tread water for 5 mins and be able to swim 100m minimum	Low Likely / Medium
		Medical Emergencies	Heart attack, asthma, dehydration	Major	Unlikely	High	Ensure medical declarations are filled out correctly and coaches are aware of individual's conditions	Medium Unlikely / Medium
		Marine stingers	Severe pain and reaction if stung. Possible death from heart failure	Major	Unlikely	High (November to May)	All paddlers to wear full length protection during stinger season. All canoes to carry vinegar. All paddlers to know procedure in the case of someone being stung (ie	Medium Likely / Medium

#	Element	Description	Potential Hazards	Consequence	Likelihood	Risk	Control measures / Management Strategies	Residual Risk
							immediately douse area with vinegar & call 000)	
	Stingrays, Stonefish & other biting/stinging marine creatures	Severe pain and reaction if bitten or stung. Possible infection of wounds	Major	Unlikely	Low	Train all paddlers in marine animal environment, awareness, & respect	Low Unlikely / Major	
	Crocodiles / sharks	Severe pain, possible death from animal attack	Major	Unlikely	Low	Train all paddlers in marine animal environment, awareness, & respect. Check recent Crocodile sightings in the area by using the QWildlife App	Low Unlikely / Major	
	Sun stroke / hyperthermia	Severe pain, possible unconsciousness from dehydration	Major	Likely	High	Train all paddlers in correct sun protection & adequate hydration methods	Medium Likely / Major	
	Sand Bar	Flipping, swamping, damage to canoe if flipping in shallow water	Medium	Unlikely	Low	Train all paddlers to recognise water behaviours	Low Unlikely / Medium	
	Shipping / Boating traffic	Collision, injury, damage to craft	Major	Likely	Medium	All canoes to use white light (as per MSQ) at dusk or dawn	Medium Rare / Major	
5	Junior safety	Adult coaches & volunteers	Inappropriate interactions	Major	Unlikely	High	All adults must have blue card when working with juniors	Medium Rare / Major

#	Element	Description	Potential Hazards	Consequence	Likelihood	Risk	Control measures / Management Strategies	Residual Risk
		Parents of junior paddlers	Inappropriate behaviour, swearing, berating child in front of peers	Medium	Unlikely	Low	All coaches (& assistants & volunteers) are trained in mitigating bad behaviours	Low Rare / Minor
		Juniors aged 10 years and under	Cannot swim strongly, flip, drowning	Major	Unlikely	High	A risk assessment must be conducted by a Level 1 sports specific outrigger coach prior to each training / racing session. Correctly fitted life jackets must be worn by all paddlers under 10 years at all times	Medium Unlikely / Medium
6	Weather	Strong wind warning	Flip, blown off course, impact damage to canoe or body, drowning	Major	unlikely	Medium	All paddlers must only paddle in protected or smooth waters, as per the QLD Maritime Safety maps, and according to AOCRA Training & Race Rules	Medium Unlikely / Medium
		Gale force wind warning	Flip, blown off course, impact damage to canoe or body, drowning	Major	unlikely	High	In accordance with AOCRA race and training rules, no canoes are to be launched during a Gale force warning	High Unlikely / High
		Cyclone WATCH & WARNING	Flip, blown off course, impact damage to canoe or body, drowning	Major	Unlikely	High	AOCRA race and training rules apply - no canoes to be launched. Remove	High Unlikely / High

#	Element	Description	Potential Hazards	Consequence	Likelihood	Risk	Control measures / Management Strategies	Residual Risk
							canoes from beach.	
	Electrical storms	Struck by lightning	Major	Unlikely	High	If lightening is present, canoes should not be launched	Low Unlikely / Medium	
	High / low air/water temperature	Hyperthermia / hypothermia.	Medium	Unlikely	Low	Train paddlers in correct hydration & clothing protection	Low Unlikely / Medium	

The primary risk is the potential for interactions between outrigger canoes and marine vessels including fishing boats and general marine pleasure craft. All preventative measures must be taken to avoid collisions including actions such as canoes giving way to larger craft and the use of lights during on canoes prior to sunrise, after sunset and in the twilight hours preceding these events.

All paddlers must be aware of other craft in the area and alert their steerer when required. When launching and berthing vessels at the beach, it is essential that all paddlers maintain an awareness of breaking waves and how they may buffet the gunwales and potentially cause the canoe to move heavily on to paddlers standing in the water.