

GUIDANCE ON THE RETURN TO PADDLESport ACTIVITY

Limited return to paddling for exercise Issued 13 May 2020

Getting back on the water

Following the changes to the Welsh Government's guidance on exercise, we are all keen to get back on the water as quickly as possible. However, this process will need to take place in phases to manage the risks to paddlers, the Welsh public and our emergency services.

This guidance document provides information on how to paddle safely under the current government regulations.

Please stay current with any changes to government guidance, which can be found here: [Leaving Home to Exercise](#)

We all have a responsibility to follow these guidelines to limit the spread of the virus, protect our emergency services and maintain the reputation of our sport. There is a significant chance that if people act irresponsibly, we could see a return of some restrictions. Please continue to do your part for the good of everyone in paddlesport and in our local communities across Wales.

General guidance for a return to paddling for exercise

- You should not paddle (or leave your house) if you or any member of your household are displaying any of the signs or symptoms of COVID-19 now or in the previous 14 days;
- Stay well within your capabilities; *See the additional advice in the next section about how to assess which locations and activities are appropriate;*
- You should only paddle with members of your household;
- Stay at least 2m from other people outside of your household — the only exception to this rule is possibly in a rescue situation;
- Where possible, you should use safe launch points within walking distance of your home. If you have to drive to your nearest safe launch point, you must stay in your local area. If there are no suitable launch points in your local area, you should stay home and use another form of exercise; *See the [Welsh Government's guidance on what they mean by 'local'](#);*
- Avoid any location that would require a shuttle;
- Avoid areas that you know will be busy;
- Launch and land as quickly as possible;
- We do not recommend paddling on your own;

- Do not share equipment outside of your household;
- Wash your hands and all equipment before and after each activity and after touching any gates or other surfaces;
- Avoid public toilets where possible;
- Respect rural communities and other water users;
- Respect access points and local restrictions; *See the additional advice below about what to do if an access point has been closed;*
- Be sensitive to the environment – after weeks without paddling, wildlife may have moved into certain areas and you should avoid disturbing nesting birds and other wildlife;
- Follow Check Clean Dry protocols;
- Ensure that your Canoe Wales membership is current so that your insurance cover is valid.

Keeping risk to a minimum

You should restrict your paddlesport activities to environments where you and your fellow paddlers are well within your capabilities. This is to reduce the chance of any accidents or incidents which might require the emergency services, which will continue to be under enormous pressure for an extended period of time.

You should consider all of the following:

- Are we all competent to paddle at this venue, bearing in mind that we haven't paddled for at least eight weeks?
- Have I checked the current conditions for the location I want to paddle?
- Have I checked the weather forecast?
- Do we have the correct clothing and safety equipment?
- How will we deal with an incident which requires a rescue?
- How far will we be journeying?
- Are the access or egress points open to the public?

We all have a responsibility to keep risks as low as possible. Although the emergency services have advised us that they will continue to respond to any paddling incidents, a simple rule of thumb is to consider whether or not you would do the activity if there were no emergency services.

If you need further advice on any of this guidance, you can email Paul Marshall at coaching@canoewales.com. Please include your phone number in your email.

What to do if a launch point has been closed

Check before you leave home and do not visit any venues or launch points which are closed. Please be aware that a significant number of car parks and paddling venues continue to be closed to the public.

If you arrive somewhere and find a venue is closed, do not get into any conflicts with the landowner or site manager by attempting to use the venue.

Please report any closures to Canoe Wales with details of the location. In many instances, a venue may have to remain closed for public safety, but in others we will attempt to work with the landowner or site manager to discuss options for it to safely reopen.

If you are already paddling and are challenged from the shore by a landowner/site manager or a member of the public, try to diffuse the conflict and then report the incident to Canoe Wales.

To report a closure or an incident, email Phil Stone: phil.stone@canoewales.com and fill in an incident report form here: <https://www.canoewales.com/report-an-incident>
Please include your phone number in your email and your incident report.

When will we move on to the next phase?

As soon as we have more information about the next set of government guidance, we will publish new advice. Unfortunately, we do not have a timeline for when the next phase might start. In the meantime, thank you for your support and please continue to get in touch with Canoe Wales with any issues or problems you are facing so we can provide assistance.