



Lone working Policy

This lone working policy provides a framework to ensure the safety of paddlesport coaches working without direct supervision. It is designed to meet standard health and safety obligations while addressing the unique environmental and physical risks of paddlesports.

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that lone working is managed effectively and that risks to coaches are reduced to the lowest practicable level. It applies to all NCKC coaches who operate without constant supervision or the immediate presence of a colleague.

2. Definition of Lone Working

For the purposes of this policy, lone working for a paddlesport coach includes:

- Coaching a group on the water without another qualified instructor present.
- Preparing equipment or scouting water levels alone at remote sites.
- Opening or closing a water sports centre early in the morning or late at night.

3. Core Safety Requirements

Before any lone coaching session, the coach must ensure the following are in place:

- **Qualifications & Competence:** Coaches must hold a valid [Paddle UK](#) qualification appropriate for the environment
- **Insurance:** Valid public liability insurance covering independent coaching.
- **Medical & First Aid:** A current First Aid certificate is mandatory. Coaches must disclose any personal medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, epilepsy) to their manager/buddy that could affect their safety while alone.

4. Mandatory Operating Procedures

- **The Buddy System:** A "buddy" must be appointed for every lone session. The coach must inform them of the **Launch Time, Location, and Estimated Return Time.**
- **Check-In/Out:** Coaches must contact their buddy via phone or message immediately upon launching and upon returning safely to shore.
- **Communication:** A fully charged mobile phone in a waterproof case must be carried at all times.
- **Float Plan:** A written plan including the intended route and group details should be left with the buddy or at the base office.



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5. Risk Management

- **Dynamic Risk Assessment:** Coaches must continually assess changing conditions (weather, water flow, group fatigue) and be prepared to cancel or adapt a session if risks become unacceptable.
- **Equipment Checks:** All safety equipment, including throw lines, tow lines, and first aid kits, must be inspected before use.
- **Environmental Limits:** Lone coaches should operate strictly within their comfort zone and remain with operating remit when alone.

6. Emergency Response Protocol

If a coach fails to check in within 30 minutes of the agreed return time, the buddy must:

1. Attempt to contact the coach via phone.
2. Contact the base manager or emergency contacts.
3. If no contact is made after 60 minutes, alert the Emergency Services providing the float plan details.

7. Incident Reporting

All near-misses, accidents, or incidents occurring during lone work must be reported via the [Paddle UK Online Incident Reporting System](#) and to the organisation's management within 24 hours.