

BSCC Risk Assessment – Bishops Stortford Winter Series Canoe Race 2025

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Date of Assessment: 7 September 2025 **Assessment review date:** 1st November 2025

Activity: Winter Series canoe race **Location:** River Stort (between the head of navigation in B. Stortford town centre and Sawbridgeworth Lock)

Date of Event 2nd November 2025

A competitors' briefing will be held on the day. All potential hazards will be outlined along with actions expected to be taken.

All boats are required to be licenced.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Hypothermia	Competitors, effects of cold due to rain combined with wind chill and or immersion.	Race taking place in November with potential for adverse weather conditions, briefing pack advises paddlers to wear appropriate clothing. First Aiders to be present and contactable by phone. Mostly experienced competitors who will dress appropriately The youngest competitors will be under the supervision of experienced Team Leaders and/or parents who will advise them on appropriate clothing	If weather conditions are very cold, paddlers will be advised of the need to wear suitable clothing Thermal blankets and warm drinks and showers will be available at the finish.	Race Organiser Event Safety Officer	2/11/25	

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Capsize	Junior or less experienced Competitors in windy or congested conditions	The race participants are mostly experienced competitors. Safety boats will be present at the start/pre-start of the Under 12 race (where capsize is most likely).	Where there are a large number of boats in one race, starts will be split to reduce congestion The under 12 Class to be asked to raft up at the pre- start for stability in windy conditions	Race Organiser Marshals	2/11/25	
Drowning	Competitors following capsize and unable to self-rescue.	All competitors able to swim 50m in canoe clothing. All boats must have adequate buoyancy to float and support crew in the event of a capsize. Less experienced competitors ranked Division 7-9 and all under-16s required to wear buoyancy aids Competitors in other classes are required to render assistance to any paddler in difficulty Marshalls on the bank are equipped and trained in the use of throw lines. First Aiders in attendance <i>See also "Locks" below</i>	Team Leaders familiar with competency of individual and will be tasked with ensuring that buoyancy aids are worn by under 16s in Divisions 6 and above. Race Organiser will insist on obligatory use of buoyancy aids if weather/water conditions are deemed adverse or forecast to be adverse. A final inspection of key points the river on the day will result in the race being cancelled if necessary Safety boat(s) will follow the Under-12 racers. A safety boat will be stationed at the turn on the Under 12 years courses	Event Safety Officer Race Organiser	2/11/25	
Locks	Competitors, immersion in deep water	Canoeists portage around locks rather than pass through. Competitors will be advised at the briefing not to enter the locks to portage.	Marshals wearing buoyancy aids-and equipped with throw lines will be posted at each turn point and at Southmill Lock to assist in the event of capsize.	Event Safety Officer Race Organiser	2/11/25	

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Collision with people on the towpath	Walkers, Spectators and Race staff at risk of collision with portaging paddlers running along the footpath	Signs will be displayed at Southmill, Twyford, Spellbrook, & Sawbridgeworth locks, and also in the town centre to inform the general public of the race. Race briefing to warn competitors to keep their distance from members of public on the towpath & to behave with courtesy and consideration	Marshals will be present at Southmill, Twyford, Spellbrook, & Sawbridgeworth locks to warn the public of approaching competitors and to ensure the safe and courteous behaviour of all The booking-in desk and refreshment queues will be located to avoid crowding on the towpath	Race Organiser Marshals	2/11/25	
Collision with vehicles at road crossings	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public at risk of impact injury	Signs will be placed on the road at Pig Lane and Spellbrook to warn approaching vehicles. Road crossings will be manned by marshals in high- vis jackets specifically tasked with managing road crossings	Competitors to be advised at the race briefing that they do not have automatic right of way over vehicles and must listen to advice from marshals	Race Organiser	2/11/25	
Collision with other river users	Competitors Damage to boat or capsize.	Mostly experienced competitors Other river users to be made aware that race is occurring; Notices will be placed near the river at club house and at Southmill Lock-and sent to Hallingbury Marina for display at least two weeks prior to the event. Notices will also be placed at other affected locks in the days immediately prior to the race. CRT will be advised of the race. Race briefing to warn competitors to keep river right & to behave with courtesy and consideration to other river users. In particular to be alerted to the potential hazards presented by powered craft	For the Under 12s race, safety boats and marshals at both ends of the course will endeavour to alert powered craft to the presence of young paddlers Collisions with third parties will be advised to CRT, BC and Insurers.	Race Organiser Marshals and Safety Boats	2/11/25	

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Collision with other competitors	Competitors Damage to boat or capsize.	Mostly experienced competitors. Competitors will be advised to maintain river right and an adequate distance between each other's boats to prevent collision	Dynamic risk assessment by all to avoid situation	Race Organiser	2/11/25	
Collision with natural hazards	Competitors Damage to boat or capsize.	Mostly experienced competitors It is expected all paddlers will have received a basic level of training before being permitted by their clubs to compete. The course will be inspected in the week leading up to the race to ensure that no trees or other natural hazards are causing an obstruction. Where practicable any obstructions will be removed.	Competitors, Marshals and staff manning safety boats will be warned of the position of any known hazards at the race briefing.	Race Organiser	2/11/25	
Slips, trips and falls	Competitors, Spectators & Race staff moving along the towpath	Mostly experienced participants, aware of the inherently uneven and potentially slippery conditions on portages and unsurfaced towpaths.	Marshals will be instructed to remain vigilant to ensure that equipment is not left where it will obstruct the towpath. Competitors, Marshalls and staff will be warned of the specific slip hazards on the wooden boarding at portages, specifically Pig Lane downstream	Race Organiser Marshals	2/11/25	
Lightning	Competitors risk of lightning strike when holding carbon paddles over water	Weather forecast is monitored prior and during the race. Where lightning is forecast the race timing may be adjusted or the race cancelled.	For an occurrence of lightning during the race, all paddlers will have been briefed to get off the water as soon as possible until the storm has passed. Marshals will try to ensure this occurs	Safety Officer Race Organiser Marshals	2/11/25	

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River debris	Competitors Risk of cutting feet on sharp objects	Low levels of rubbish present in the river	Competitors (and the parents of u14s) will be advised to wear foot protection	Race Organiser	2/11/25	
Injury from Lifting / Carrying Equipment	Competitors	Mostly experienced competitors Adults (parents/teammates) will be available to move boats for young paddlers at the start/finish Competitors who require assistance at the portages are invited to contact the Race Organiser in advance to make arrangements	Competitors will be reminded in the briefing of the risks inherent in lifting and handling boats	Safety Officer Race Organiser	2/11/25	
Anglers	Competitors entanglement and capsizes	The race organisers liaise in advance with the local Angling Societies to ensure no conflict. Notices will be placed at the near the river at club house and at Southmill Lock at least two weeks prior to the event. Notices will also be placed at other affected locks in the days immediately prior to the race. Competitors informed at the race briefing to keep clear of the fishing lines.	Any anglers seen along the course on the day of the race by marshals will be advised that the race is taking place.	Race Organiser Marshals	2/11/25	
Waterborne disease	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public at risk of infections such as Leptospirosis (Weils) and E.coli	High level of awareness of Weil's disease in canoeing community, competitors will be reminded of the risks at the race briefing. Showers & hand washing available in changing rooms	First aid kit and clean dressings will be available at the clubhouse	Safety Officer Race Organiser First aider	2/11/25	

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Cross-contamination of waterways with invasive species	Ecosystems / wildlife	Visiting paddlers will be reminded in pre-event documentation and at the briefing to follow Check-Clean-Dry protocol		Race Organiser	2/11/25	
Food hygiene & Barbeque	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public at risk of food poisoning or burns	Food for competitors will be pre-prepared under the supervision of a club member with a knowledge of food hygiene regulations. Hand washing facilities available on site. BBQ strictly supervised all those not involved in food preparation kept away from the food preparation area and hot surfaces. Fire extinguisher and fire blanket to be located at the BBQ.	Competitors, Team Leaders and parents will be reminded on the day of the need for hygiene Hand-sanitizer will be provided for those handling food. Customers to be warned if being served hot drinks or food.	Safety Officer Race Organiser Social Committee	2/11/25	
Injury from moving vehicles in the car park and access route	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public at risk of impact injury	The hard-standing car park at the clubhouse is reserved for key staff and visitors with disabilities or towing trailers. Most competitors and spectators arriving by car will park on the adjoining field. Traffic calming measures operating in the lane Plenty of open space for people to congregate away from the car park 5mph speed limit whilst on lane and site – signs clearly displayed	The field will be checked prior to the event and any hazardous areas marked with barrier tape. In the event of the weather making the ground in the field unsuitable for vehicles, it will not be used. Signs will be placed on the Hallingbury Road to clearly mark the turning for the benefit of visiting drivers At the key times for vehicles entering and leaving, the lane entrance and field will be supervised	Safety Officer Race Organiser	2/11/25	

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Safeguarding Failure	Young or vulnerable competitors or volunteers.	Compliance with Paddle UK Safeguarding policies and procedures for children (SPC-P1) and adults (SPC-P6): https://paddleuk.org.uk/safeguarding-policies/	Signage to remind lone adults that they should avoid using the changing rooms with young persons. All juniors must be accompanied to the event by an adult who takes responsibility for them.	Event Welfare Officer	2/11/25	
Door hinges	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public	Doors will be secured if being left permanently open during the event to avoid injury if they swing shut.		Safety Officer Race Organiser	2/11/25	
Fire	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff	Most of the activity will take place outside. Club fire plan has been published. Fire extinguishers on site.		Safety Officer Race Organiser	2/11/25	
Any injury/incident requiring medical assistance	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public	A designated first aider will be based at the clubhouse to deal with minor injuries. There is easy vehicular access to the clubhouse if emergency assistance is required. For injuries/incidents elsewhere on the course, Marshals will have mobile phones which can be used to dial 999.	Marshalls at offsite locations will be provided with the What3Words code for the nearest vehicular access to their location for use when summoning assistance	Safety Officer Race Organiser	2/11/25	

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General	Competitors, Spectators, Race staff and General public	1. The Safety Officer will ensure that only CRT licenced craft participate in the race, that all participating craft appear structurally sound and are equipped with sufficient buoyancy. 2. A list of paddlers participating will be published to the Marshalls, who will be able to communicate issues and resolutions via a WhatsApp Group. 3. Two internal toilets provided at the club – 1 suitable for disabled visitors, anti-bacterial soap provided in the toilet areas.	Two external Porta-loos will be provided to mitigate against the risk of congestion at peak periods before and after racing.	Safety Officer Race Organiser	2/11/25	

Office use only (to be completed by a risk assessment checker if selected for sampling)

Checked by:		Position:		Date:	
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