



QSKC Policy: Club Grading System

January 2021

Introduction

This grading system is provided for member's benefit, describing a clear set of parameters designed to illustrate Club Policy for Club Events.

Through inspection of the grading system and discussion with the particular Trip Leaders, prospective paddlers should determine whether they and their equipment meet the participation requirements.

For Grade 1 paddles, club members are required to have a PA Basic Skills Award or higher.

For Grade 2 and higher events club members are required to have had their personal club grading assessed by a club member that holds a PA qualification of Sea Guide or higher, or a current Grade 2 paddler approved by the QSKC President and Training Officer. This assessment can be performed on any club paddling activity with prior notice. The successful assessment will be recorded in the club member's logbook and club database. **Alternately, a member holding both *Intro to Sea Skills* AND *Enclosed Sea Skills* PA awards is deemed to be a Grade 2 paddler.**

Note:

- Graded Club Events led by Grade 1 and Grade 2 Trip Leaders will be canceled from the Club's program if a strong wind warning has been issued by the BOM (greater than 25knots) for the area in which the trip is being conducted. Trip Leaders with Paddle Australia Guide or higher qualifications are qualified to guide groups of novices on activity and day based programs in sea kayaks in varying sea conditions (Refer PAQS Handbook)
- If the location or date of a Club Event is changed by the Trip Leader for any reason prior to the event, the Trip Leader is to notify the Events Coordinators via email at: events@qskc.qsn.au
- Trip Leader to Participant Ratio (Refer PA Safety Guidelines-v2):
 - 1:6/1:8 at sea, depending on conditions and skill level of participants & leader
 - 1:2 on remote trips with a committing shoreline and surf over 1 metre
 - 1:10 if conditions are forecast stable and paddling close to shore/all participants can roll/self rescue.

Definitions

Item	Definition
Club Event	Any event, paddle, activity scheduled by the QSKC and posted on the QSKC Web Site events calendar comprising a minimum of 3 Members.
Equipment	All relevant items recommended, required or utilised by a person participating in a Club Event.
Member	Any current fully financial member of the Queensland Sea Kayak Club Inc (QSKC).
Prospective Member/ Visitor	A visitor can take part in the Basic Skills Award Training. The participant must sign the comprehensive indemnity waiver and must pay \$10.00 to cover insurance requirements.
Instructor, Leader, Guide	Person who holds the relevant qualifications recognised by Paddle Australia.
Sea Kayak	As per Paddle Australia Safety Guidelines. When used in sea conditions, the kayak must be a recognised sea kayak with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum volume enclosed cockpit (bulkheads or integrated cockpit) so that the kayak is controllable in sea conditions with the cockpit flooded• Positive buoyancy made up of compartments or fixed flotation – it is recommended that empty compartments be filled with buoyancy material that will minimise the amount of water that enters a compartment in the event that its integrity is compromised• Deckline system of at least 6mm in diameter that is secured to the deck with fastenings that will not fail under normal sea conditions, and that are sufficiently spaced to keep the deckline controlled. The deckline system plus cockpit surrounds should provide handholds for the complete length of the kayak• Toggles or other safe handholds as near as practical to bow and stern. If used, hand loops must not allow the full insertion of a hand• Pump or self bailer.
Trip Leader	Person or persons duly authorised by the Club, to lead a Club Event.
Night Paddle	Any paddle which includes on-water activities prior to Sunrise or after Sunset.

Individual Equipment Prerequisites All Grades

Item	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Well maintained, sea-kayak with at least 2 bulkheads and fitted deck lines	M	M	M
Australian or NZ Standards approved Life Jacket (Level 50) with a suitable whistle attached by lanyard	M	M	M
Helmet (if surf is involved)	N/A	M	M
Sponge/ bailer	M	M	M
At least two litres of water	M	M	M
Cag or paddle jacket, warm clothing, sun-protective clothing, hat and sunscreen, all accessible from the cockpit	M	M	M
Footwear suitable for paddling, swimming and walking on rocks	O	M	M
Space blanket Emergency Lighting & Duct Tape/or equivalent	O	O	M
Spray Skirt	M	M	M
Tow Line	O	M	M
Paddle Leash	O	M	M
Hands free pump system (electric or foot)	O	O	M
Emergency food	O	O	M
Signal Mirror	O	O	M
Knife	O	O	M
Nourishment for duration of trip	M	M	M

Legend: M = Mandatory O = Optional

Group Equipment Prerequisites All Grades

Item	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Spare Paddle, First Aid Kit, Space blanket Emergency Lighting & Duct Tape/or equivalent	O	O	M
Compass & Charts	O	O	M
EPIRB (where legally required (not PLB))	O	O	M
VHF	O	O	M
Flares & V Sheet	O	O	M

Legend: M = Mandatory O = Optional

Grade 1

Description

- Open to members holding the Basic Skills Award or equivalent (at Trip Leader's discretion)
- Paddling in sheltered inshore waters such as the Broadwater, with seas up to 0.5m, 0m surf, with safe launching/landing points
- Paddles up to 15km per day, if more than 15km trip leaders must show in their planning/trip briefing that they have taken the distance into consideration
- If wind is over 15 knots (or over 10 knots for a night paddle), trip leaders must show in their planning/trip briefing that they have taken the wind into consideration
- Max distance of 1.5NM (2.8km) from shore
- Maintain a cruising speed of up to 4km/hour.

Paddlers Requirements

- For inexperienced members holding a Basic Skills Award or equivalent.
- Paddlers should have an appropriate level of fitness, which will enable them to safely paddle the distance specified in the trip plan.
- Individuals must self assess their, and their equipment's, ability to participate in this level Club Event and should consult the trip leader if any aspect of their suitability requires clarification.
- For Grade 1 night paddles, the paddler must have previously participated in a minimum of 3 Grade 1 day paddles.

Trip Leaders Requirements

- Equipment as per Grade 1 Equipment Prerequisites plus, provide a suitable means of emergency communication, first aid kit, spare paddle, tow rope and must implement the event in accordance with Club Float Plan
- A Grade 1 Trip Leader must be a current QSKC Grade 2 paddler and have successfully completed the QSKC Grade 1 Trip Leader Training Event. This Event may be conducted by a current club member who holds a current PA Sea or Enclosed Sea Guide qualification or above.
- Within 6 months of completion of the Grade 1 Trip Leader Training Event, the prospective Grade 1 Trip Leader must lead a trip with a current Grade 1 Trip Leader. Once that trip has been conducted the person conducting the Trip Leader training event can recommend to the QSKC Committee that a candidate meets the Grade 1 Trip Leader requirements by completing the Grade 1 Trip Leader Assessment form on the QSKC website. The QSKC Committee has the authority to ratify or reject the recommendation. The requirement to conduct the first Grade 1 trip in the company of a current Grade 1 Trip Leader applies to future Grade 1 Trip Leaders.
- Trip Leaders with current PA qualifications of Sea or Enclosed Sea Guide or higher may conduct trips in accordance with their PA limitations.
- To maintain a current Grade 1 Trip Leader endorsement, a Grade 1 Trip Leader must conduct a trip at least once every 6 months. This requirement will come into place from July 1 2015 and applies to both present and future Grade 1 Trip Leaders.
- For Grade 1 night paddles, the Trip Leader must be a Grade 2 Trip Leader.

Grade 2

Description

- Open to members (Grade 2 assessed) and qualified visitors at Trip Leaders discretion.
- Seas to 1m and surf to 0.5m
- Paddles up to 20km per day, if more than 20km trip leaders must show in their planning/trip briefing that they have taken the distance into consideration
- If wind is over 20 knots, trip leaders must show in their planning/trip briefing that they have taken the wind into consideration
- Max distance of 5NM (9.2km) from shore
- Maintain a cruising speed of up to 5km/hour.

Paddlers Requirements

- Paddlers are required to have been assessed as competent to Grade 2 level in open ocean conditions
- Paddlers must be capable of:
 - performing self rescue with paddle float within 4 minutes
 - performing an assisted rescue within 3 minutes
 - performing low brace
 - towing another craft for 10 minutes
 - capable of paddling in and out through surf zone
- Some familiarity with charts and navigation is desired
- Paddlers should be able to swim 50m wearing a Life Jacket (Level 50) in open ocean
- Paddlers should have an appropriate level of fitness, which will enable them to safely paddle the distance specified in the trip plan with frequent breaks and at least 1 stop during the paddle.
- Has attended 4 x QSKC Grade 1 paddles
- Follows instructions from Trip Leader or delegate
- Communicates positively in a group

Trip Leaders Requirements

- Equipment as per Grade 2 Equipment Prerequisites plus, provide a suitable means of emergency communication, first aid kit, spare paddle and must implement the event in accordance with Club Float Plan
- Grade 2 Trip Leaders should have a current PA Sea Skills qualification or equivalent. The equivalence may be applicable to candidates with extensive sea kayaking experience and demonstrated skills in leadership, paddling and rescue techniques. A dispensation from the formal Sea Skills qualification may be issued by QSKC to prospective trip leaders fulfilling the described criteria.
- A Grade 2 Trip Leader must have led at least 6 Grade 1 trips, and been a 2IC on at least 2 Grade 2 trips prior to being recommended to the committee.
- A club member with a current PA Sea Guide or higher qualification can recommend to the QSKC Committee that a candidate meets the Grade 2 Trip Leader requirements by completing the Grade 2 Trip Leader Assessment form on the QSKC website. The QSKC Committee has the authority to ratify or reject the recommendation.
- Trip Leaders with current PA qualifications of Sea Guide or higher may conduct trips in accordance with their PA limitations.

Grade 3

Description

- Open to qualified members and qualified visitors (at Trip Leader's discretion) in open waters, seas to 2.5m and surf to 1.5m
- These paddles may require launching and landing through the surf with some time spent in the surf zone
- Paddles up to 30km per day along open coastlines and rocky headlands, if more than 30km trip leaders must show in their planning/trip briefing that they have taken the distance into consideration
- If wind is over 20 knots, trip leaders must show in their planning/trip briefing that they have taken the wind into consideration
- Max distance of 5NM (9.2k) from shore
- Maintain a cruising speed of 6 km/hour.

Paddlers Requirements

- For proficient paddlers holding a current PA Sea Skills Award or above
- Extensive experience and skill including kayak surfing and Eskimo rolling are required.

Trip Leaders Requirements

- Equipment as per Grade 3 Equipment Prerequisites plus, provide a suitable means of emergency communication and must implement the event in accordance with Club Float Plan
- Trip Leaders must hold a minimum of PA Sea Guide qualifications and be authorised by QSKC Inc.