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Adverse Weather Plan



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Introduction

School of Outdoors organises events that take place outdoors in the countryside. As such they are susceptible to adverse weather, and poor conditions can prove to be very hazardous to all involved.

For the purpose of this plan, School of Outdoors class adverse weather as unfavourable or potentially harmful weather.

Background

School of Outdoors has a broad portfolio of clients across the UK and have many years' experience in dealing with all types of weather conditions. The Company Directors have over 20 years' experience of risk management in an outdoor setting.

Objectives

The Objective of this plan is to ensure that adverse weather is dealt with appropriately and that any injuries or accidents caused by adverse conditions are avoided. The priority is to ensure the safety of all participants, clients and team members at the time of adverse conditions.

Responsibilities

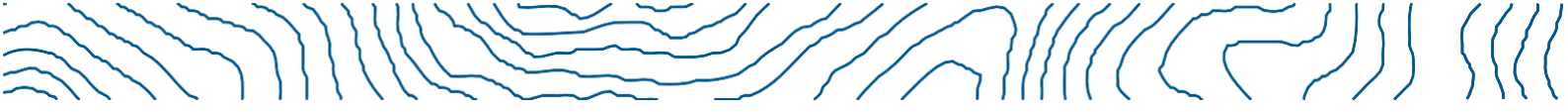
School of Outdoors continually monitor the long- and short-term weather forecasts for all its events. Should these forecasts predict adverse weather then the appropriate actions will be taken across the events during that period. If dangerous or severe weather is forecast, then events may be adapted or postponed. Should the conditions during an event become adverse without warning then the appropriate actions will be taken by the Course Director to ensure the safety of all.

If an event is adapted School of Outdoors will ensure the level of qualification and experience of its team members reflect the new conditions the event will operate in.

The Course Director, will be responsible for monitoring the weather forecast prior to and during the event. The weather monitoring method is detailed below. Should adverse weather be forecast for the event dates then Company Directors will ensure that Participants, Clients and Instructors are aware and Emergency Plan provisions are put into place.

Monitoring

Weather monitoring is key to any outdoor event as weather conditions can not only make or break an event but can also be potentially hazardous and cause participants to be put at risk. As a result, all precautions must be taken to ensure that any adverse weather can be dealt with and to be reliably informed of what to expect to be suitably prepared. Weather monitoring is the best defence against adverse weather conditions as it allows you to act before the conditions take hold and so, avoid dangerous situations. School of Outdoors monitor weather through conventional systems such as [Met Office](#), [BBC Weather](#), [MWIS](#) and [YR](#). Alongside these



we use more site-specific individual monitoring techniques such as visual assessments, localised or specialist mountain forecasts. For our paddle sport activities we will also monitor information using the [Government website](#) and [River Levels UK](#), checking levels and wind force.

Long Term Weather Monitoring

The long-range forecast monitors 10 days in advance. Top temperatures, wind speed and whether rain has been forecast or not will be noted. Weather will bring additional challenges on SUP expeditions due to increasing / decreasing water levels and wind effecting ability to make progress. Rain, wind and on the odd occasion snow melt can make a big difference and these things need monitoring in advance both short and long term. Where it is suspected that river levels may increase an alternative route should be used, where that is not possible the expedition should be postponed

Short Range Forecast

These forecasts offer more in depth and accurate information. These will also be noted, and any concerns discussed by Company Directors and Course Directors.

The below conditions and times at which they are forecast to occur will be discussed:

- Heavy rain
- High / Low Temperature
- Storms, in particular electrical storms
- Wind speed

Arrangements and Procedures

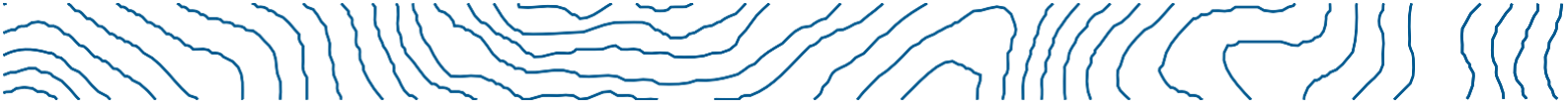
This section lays out examples of arrangements and procedures that would be implemented in the event of adverse weather. To ensure these procedures can be effectively implemented, full details will be communicated to Course Directors, instructors and Clients.

Wet Weather

- Events where an overnight stay in a tent is planned participants will be required to demonstrate their sleeping equipment is fully waterproofed.
- Participants will be required to carry and wear waterproof coat and trousers. Participation can be refused if participants arrive without.
- Emergency shelters will be carried by the participants or their instructor.
- Additional clothing can be carried in a dry bag.
- Dynamic risk assessments will be carried out by Course Directors and Instructors on route choice) and campsite arrangements.

Paddlesport specific

- Appropriate Paddlesports kit worn including jacket or cag to keep off wind
- Route choices will be agreed with course directors in advance, this will include emergency escape points, appropriate campsites and take into account the expected



water levels and weather conditions. Where required a change of route or curtaining the expedition will take place

Sun Exposure

- Participants will be required to carry and wear sunhats, use sun cream of factor 30spf and carry a minimum of 2 litres of water. Participation can be refused if participants arrive without these items.
- Shift timings to avoid the hottest part of the day; shorten routes and give preference to routes that offer additional shade.
- Factor in additional breaks in shaded areas.
- Provide additional water where appropriate.
- Provide additional sun cream, hats and rehydration solutions.
- Review the equipment to be carried by participants.
- Instructors and participants to be reminded of the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Paddlesport specific

- Where a helmet is needed to be worn then it is seen as appropriate not to wear a sunhat but participants need to be reminded to put sun cream on more regularly

Strong Winds

- On events with overnight stays in a tent Guylines will be used and camping away from trees.
- Routes will be adapted to avoid gusting winds where possible.
- Where appropriate breaks to be taken to wait for weather windows.
- Where appropriate event maybe cancelled

Paddlesport specific

- Where appropriate the venue should be changed to a more sheltered location
- Paddlers should avoid banks with lots of trees / branches prone to breakage, instructors will always have line of sight on teams either paddling ahead or behind.
- Course Director / Instructors to be aware of the remit of awards and ensure they stay within these.

Electrical Storms

- Avoid sheltering under lone trees.

Walking specific

- Keep off high walking routes
- Try and keep high ground between the team and the storm
- Leave metal walking poles and metal framed backpack 100m away from you.

Paddlesport specific

- No water activities done in electrical storms.



Cold Conditions

- Participants will be required to wear woolly hats and gloves. Participation can be refused if participants arrive without.
- On events with overnight stays in a tent additional warm kit will be required.
- In the event of snow and ice, journeys to and from the event might be impacted and locations may be changed.
- Instructors will carry additional warm equipment.
- Additional supplies will be sought where freezing conditions may affect the supply.

Paddlesport specific

Cold weather is defined by conditions that are likely to cause participants to get cold fairly quickly or cause issues quickly if they fell in when paddling. Course directors will assess risk at the start of each day and define if teams need extra equipment

- All participants to carry neoprene gloves, pogies or mittens in cold weather to use when needed
- Where wetsuits are worn for cold conditions 5mm minimum thickness.

Cancellation During the Event

Course Directors in consultation with Company Directors will make any decisions on cancelling entire events during adverse weather.

Version Control

Version	Author	Summary of Changes	Date
1.0	Dominic Taylor	Policy created	31/08/2019
1.1	Alex Wilkes	SOO class of adverse weather	15/02/2021
2.0	Jonathan Hitchinson	Full Review	01/09/2022
3.0	Jonathan Hitchinson	Full Review	01/09/2023
4.0	Jonathan Hitchinson	Full Review added paddlesports	01/08/2024