

Rafting (White Water and Traditional)

(Guidelines on the Issue of a District Commissioner's Authorisation)



Introduction

This is the third edition of the factsheet which replaces that coded FS120612 and dated March 96. It provides guidance for the use of white water rafts and traditional rafts used for expeditions.

Further editions may be published in the light of experience from this edition. Publication of future editions will be notified in SCOUTING Magazine, Talking Points and the Activities Newsletter.

White Water Rafting

General

White water rafting usually takes place on B2 or B3 waters (rivers or artificial white water facilities). Participants descend the designated section of the river in a rubber raft. The crew paddle according to instructions of the helm.

Occasionally the activity may be undertaken in a one person rubber raft, although this is not common in the United Kingdom.

Authorisation

One person in each raft should be authorised, or the activity should be under the supervision of a suitably authorised person. These authorisations are granted by the appropriate Commissioner (normally District but occasionally County or Area of National) on the advice of the appropriate County Water Activity Assessor. The assessment for these authorisations will be based on the three following areas:

- a) Persons applying for authorisation should fully understand the responsibilities of the authorisation and be aware of the limits of their authority. They should be aware of the need and be able to tailor the activity to the physical and mental needs of the young people concerned.

This is the first and most critical aspect of the authorisation procedure. Commissioners should consider every applicant thoroughly before adding their supporting signature to the application.

- b) Persons who wish to be authorised should be in possession of the necessary skills and theoretical knowledge.
- c) Persons applying for authorisation should have a good knowledge of the waters in which they intend to operate and should appreciate local hazards.

Technical

The guidance table outlines the recommended minimum standard of technical ability which should be achieved before any authorisation is granted. These standards are, however, a starting point and Assessors must also consider knowledge and experience before making a recommendation. There may be occasions when the person can show considerable experience without necessarily holding a nationally recognised qualification. In such cases, there should be an assessment for the persons technical knowledge and ability against that needed for the national qualification. The person should be encouraged to take a direct assessment at their level of competence in order that their standard of instruction and supervision will match national requirements. Qualifications for this activity are issued by the British Canoe Union and the Scottish Rafting Association.

Class of Water	Technical Qualification	Maximum level of Authorisation
B2	BCU/SRA Assistant Raft Guide	Take charge of a raft
B3/A	BCU/SRA Raft Guide	Take charge of a raft

All waters BCU/SRA
 Trip Leader Supervise
 white water
 rafting

Traditional rafting

General

Note: When professional guides are employed, they must be BCU/SRA qualified Raft Guides or under the direct supervision of BCU/SRA Trip Leader.

The building and operation of a traditional raft using pioneering equipment and techniques does not normally require a District Commissioners' authorisation for water activities. If a traditional raft is intended for use on tidal water, for an overnight expedition or an expedition of over 10 miles in length, authorisation is required. A traditional raft should not be used on B3 or A class waters.

Safety

The following points are a summary of the key points in 'Water Safety (incorporating Lifejackets and Buoyancy Aids)'.

Authorisation

Lifejackets and buoyancy aids

When white water rafting on B2 or B3 waters a buoyancy aid should be worn. This should be to CE 50 Newton Standard or to the old BMIF or BCU Standards and appropriately marked.

When appropriate, there should be an authorised person on each raft or the activity should be under the supervision of a suitably authorised person. These authorisations are granted by the appropriate Commissioner (normally District but occasionally County or Area or National) on the advice of the appropriate County Water Activity Water Assessor. The assessment for these authorisations should be based on the three following areas:

When white water rafting on A Class waters a lifejacket should be worn. This should be to the CE 150 Newton Standard or the old British Standard BS3595 and appropriately marked.

- a) Persons applying for authorisation should fully understand the responsibilities of the authorisation and be aware of the limits of their authority. They should be aware of the need and be able to tailor the activity to the physical and mental needs of the young people concerned.

Members of The Association taking part in any water activity must be able to demonstrate to a suitable person (such as a Scouter) their ability to swim 50 metres in ordinary clothes and keep afloat for 5 minutes.

Dress

As there is a potential to be pitched out of a white water raft, participants should always wear a helmet (a canoe type is suitable), a wet suit or clothing to protect the arms and legs and lace up footwear, in addition to the lifejacket or buoyancy aid.

This is the first and most critical aspect of the authorisation procedure. Commissioners should consider every application thoroughly before adding their supporting signature.

The raft

- Particular attention should be paid to the condition of the rubber. Taped seams and repairs should be carefully examined.
- Any frames, bottom boards etc. should be complete, with no breaks or jagged surfaces.
- All independent buoyancy chambers should be air tight and inflated.
- Safety lines (if fitted) should not foul the deck area of the raft.
- The rudder, rudder attachment and steering gear should be in a functional state.
- There should be adequate provision of oars or paddles to propel the raft, with a supply of spares.

- b) The person who wished to be authorised should be in possession of the necessary skills and theoretical knowledge.

- c) Other persons applying for authorisation should have a good knowledge of the waters in which they intend to operate and should appreciate local hazards.

Technical

The guidance table outlines the recommended minimum standard for technical ability that should be achieved before any authorisation is granted. These standards are, however, a starting point and Assessors must also consider knowledge and experience before making a recommendation. There may be occasions when a person can show considerable experience without necessarily holding a nationally recognised qualification. This may often

be the case in traditional rafting. In such cases, there should be an assessment of the person's technical knowledge and ability against those

needed for a national qualification. It should be noted that in this case the technical ability will relate to water awareness as much as purely boating skills.

Class	Technical Standards	Maximum Level of Authorisation
C	None required	Authorised to helm or supervise the activity
B1 Inland	BCU 2 star, or RYA NDSC Level 2, or Scout Association B1 Pulling Certificate, or Royal Yachting Association Inland Helmsman Certificate	Authorised to helm
B1 Tidal	Any of above with tidal knowledge and experience	Authorised to helm
B2 Inland	BCU 3 star, BCU Inland Proficiency RYA NDSC Level 3, Scout Association B2 Pulling Certificate or RYA Power Boat Certificate Level 2.	Authorised to helm
B2 Tidal	BCU Sea Proficiency or any of the above with tidal knowledge and experience	Authorised to helm
B1/B2	Under the standards RYA Dinghy Instructor or BCU Instructor	Authorised to supervise the activity
B3/A	Not appropriate	

Safety

The following is a summary of the key points in 'Water Safety (incorporating Lifejackets and Buoyancy Aids)'.

Lifejackets and buoyancy aids

It is recommended that a buoyancy aid is worn at all times when operating a traditional raft. This should be to CE50 Newton Standard or the old BMIF or BCU Standards and appropriately marked.

Swimming

Members of the Association taking part in any water activity must be able to demonstrate to a suitable person (such as a Scouter) their ability to swim 50 metres in ordinary clothes and keep afloat for five minutes.

Other Hazards

Leaders and practitioners should be aware of the range of waterborne hazards such as Blue Green Algae, Weil's Disease, etc

The raft

Rafts used for overnight expeditions or for expeditions of more than 10 miles should be inspected as follows:

Buoyancy

- Buoyancy should be sufficient to support craft and crew. It can be built in or if provided by other means must be securely fitted to the craft.

Construction

- . The construction should be compatible with the task proposed.

Cooking appliances

- . If gas cooking appliances are carried, they should be checked for gas tightness and external venting of the gas stowage compartment. All inflammable liquids carried should be securely stowed.

Emergency equipment

- . A repair kit of tools and spares, capable of tackling simple repairs should be carried.

Engine

- . If fitted, the means of attaching, and the ease and safety of refuelling should be checked.

First aid

- . A first aid kit in a waterproof container should be carried.

Flares

- . If going on tidal waters, flares of the correct date should be carried and properly stowed.

Lights

- . Navigation lights of the correct power should be provided if an overnight expedition is planned.

Mast

- . The mast and its running rigging (if one is fitted) should be in a functional state.

Mooring gear

- . There should be adequate mooring ropes or anchors and chains appropriate to the waters being covered in the expedition.

PUBLICATIONS CROSS REFERENCE

Current Edition of

Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association

Authorisation Scheme for Water Activities - FS120601

Water Activity Assessment and Advice
Water Safety (incorporating Lifejackets and Buoyancy Aids) - FS120603