

Bell Boat Helm Course Guide

Introduction

The Bell Boat Helm is a twin-hulled open canoe seating up to 14 children or 8 adults, plus the helm. It is a standard class boat. Bell Boating is a rewarding and enjoyable sport of recreation and can be used in outdoor education, expeditions and competition.

The Bell Boat Helm Award is aimed at coaches, youth leaders and others who wish to introduce and develop paddlers on Bell Boats for recreation and sport based on sheltered water. The Bell Boat helm, when acting as such, will be permitted to take responsibility for the crew and the boat within the guidelines and conditions attached to the award. The main priorities of the helm for themselves and their crew are safety and enjoyment. The award is relevant for use throughout the year, within the provisions listed.

Course Structure

Candidates must attend a two day course of instruction and assessment or take part in a modular course of similar duration. The course content will include personal skills, group control and rescue in canoe and kayak.

For existing Placid Water Award holders, a one day Bell Boat Helm course or modular equivalent should cover aspects of the course specific to the Bell Boat.

To achieve this award the candidate must:

1. Hold minimum 1 day First Aid
2. Have a working knowledge of safety and rescue using the Bell Boat
3. Be over 18 years old (candidates may attend when over 16 years old and be called trainee helms)
4. Must be competent in the practical assessment
5. Pay a certification fee of £12 for members or £25 for non members

Areas of Operation

Bell Boat Helms may operate in environments up to sheltered water, including slow moving rivers and canals, small lakes or small areas of larger lakes – waters designated C or B1 by the Scout Association. Please refer to the British Canoeing Terms of Reference for full environmental descriptions.

Equipment

All relevant paddling equipment will be supplied.

Certification Fees

Candidates who successfully complete the course will be recommended to British Canoeing for certification subject to a certification fee of £12 for members or £25 for non members.

Insurance

Once trained Civil Liability Insurance is required to operate as a Bell Boat Helm. This is included in Home Nation membership. Non-members are responsible for making their own insurance arrangements.

Technical Syllabus

- Philosophy, Bell Boat and Sheltered Water
- Safety – Equipment
Boat, Paddles, Safety Equipment, the Crew, Man Overboard, Awareness of paddling environment – Current, Weirs, procedure at Locks, Weather, First Aid, Leptospirosis
- Coaching group Control
Coaching of techniques – Paddling, Steering, Manoeuvring, Negotiating a Lock, Lining
- General Information
The next step, British Canoeing, Access to water, the Environment

Assessment

The bell Boat Helm Award will be assessed over 2 days. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the following skills with a Bell Boat and crew successfully and safely

- Safety routine, checking equipment and screening crew
- Load a boat and give safety information to crew
- Move away from the bank
- Basic paddling technique
- Emergency stop
- Steering the boat over a straight course
- Steering through a figure of eight course
- The procedure of negotiating a lock
- An approach to the landing stage and disembark the crew and secure the boat
- The procedure for lining the boat round a rapid or weir

The candidate will have attended a two day course, be conversant with the Bell Boat Helm syllabus and able to answer questions on basic first aid, safety, access and British Canoeing

Safety when using locks with Bell Boats

Bell Boats should only be taken through locks if there is a trained helm in charge. The helm should ensure that there are enough competent adults on board to be able to position the boat. The crew should be trained in handling the boat before using the locks.

The helm should be wary of other pleasure boats as they approach and leave the locks. The crews are often unskilled, having just picked up the boat. The bell boats must keep clear of the pleasure craft. Do not go through locks with other pleasure craft except when under supervision of the lock keeper.

The helm should operate the locks – with assistance. It is best to have just one other adult helping. If children are helping they must be trained to keep well clear of the edge of the lock and trained not to run.

There must be an adult on the boat going through the lock who must be trained to keep hold of the chains or use ropes and keep the boat well clear of the lock gates. This is particularly important when going up. All the crew must remain seated whilst going through the lock.

The helm is in charge of the operation and must watch the crew constantly. Watch out for:

- People standing up and fooling around
- The boat taking in water because of turbulence
- The boat catching on the side walls
- Ropes snagging
- People running or going close to the edge of the lock

The water must be let in and out in a controlled way. Particularly, do not let the flow in to be excessive. Use only one paddle and let the lock fill slowly until the paddle is covered. The helm should be ready to quickly close the paddle if needed.

Do not use locks unless you are sure of your competence.