

# Paddleboarding Advice for SCA Events

Paddleboarding has been growing in interest around the world, with plenty of paddlers taking to all kinds of waters. It is only natural that paddlers look to take part in events, races, conferences and symposiums. This document outlines the critical safety advice for those looking to take part or organise these types of events.

## 1. Definitions:

**Paddleboarding** – this refers to all things Stand Up Paddling. Paddleboarding to be used as the generic term as standing up may not be the best / safest option for certain waters, certain people or locations.

**ISUP** – this refers to inflatable stand up paddleboards.

**Events** – this refers to all types of competitions, gatherings, conferences and symposiums. It is not an exhaustive list but aims to encompass formal gatherings where there is an organiser charged with offering advice to attendees.

**Leashes** – a way of connecting the paddler to the board.

**Personal Flotation Device (PFD)** – this is the generic term used in this document to cover buoyancy aids and life jackets.

## 2. Personal Flotation Device (PFD)

All\* participants must wear PFD whilst using stand up paddle boards.

Consideration should be given in the following scenarios:

- Type of water being paddled
  - For many paddleboarders on open water the choice maybe a life jacket that can be deployed if required. These are becoming more common as time goes on. They are typically low profile and worn round the waist. The paddler can then – if they wish – deploy it from its bag and use the toggle to inflate before putting over their head. These can be repacked and deployed at a later date.
  - On rivers the choice should be a buoyancy aid. These are normal for canoeists / kayakers to wear and offer permanent floatation as well as warmth and protection.
- Nature of the activity
  - Depending on whether it is a: river trip, open water, Polo competition, Glasgow – Edinburgh race, it may lead the organiser / paddleboarder to make a choice of which PFD is more suitable.
- Competency of paddler
  - Lesser competent paddlers should be wearing a buoyancy aid as standard. They generally will not have the decision making ability of what would be best. More advanced paddlers could make a different choice.
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\* For events where other paddlers in other craft are not wearing a PFD then that can include paddleboarders. However the following section must be adhered to.

## 3. Leash

All boards must be fitted with a Leash and be used by the paddler.

Consideration should be given to the following:

- Leashes to be worn at all times whilst on the water.
  - Regardless of the discipline all paddlers to wear a leash.
  - There is an exception to that rule which is for Polo.

- Coiled
  - To be worn when on the river at all times.
  - Never in surf.
  - Can be worn on open water events – especially when there is a large number of paddlers around to ensure that there is no (or little) drag.
  
- Straight
  - To be worn in surf at all times.
  - Never on a river.
  
- If any flow to the water a waist system or quick release method is required.
  - It is essential for river work that a quick release system is worn.
  - It must be worn round the waist and NOT be a quick release harness on buoyancy aid.
  - The quick release harness on a buoyancy aid may not release as there must be an equal and opposite force to make it release.
  - If wearing a waist mounted PFD then the leash must not attach to this as if a release is required then the PFD will no longer be attached to the paddler.

#### 4. Boards

When on any board in shallow water (and not White Water Spec, more due to water type) (water less than 1m), users should be advised to kneel.

#### 5. Inflatable

- If an event sends participants further than 2km from base then a repair kit must be taken with paddleboarders at all times.
- Pump to be included with paddleboarder after 5km from base.

#### 6. Fins

Should take every care to ensure they are facing the water (potential injury may occur if board is upside down). While every care should be taken when boards are off water, either by removing the fin or facing towards the sky in either own area or with people monitoring safety of non-Water users.