



1st Kesgrave Scout Group

Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave, Suffolk IP5 1JF

Name of activity, section, event, and location	1 st Kesgrave Scout Group - Rafting	Date of risk assessment	21 Jun 2026	Name of person who undertook this risk assessment	Alan Comber (working with others)
		Date of next review	1 Sep 2026		

This document covers rafting. It should be read in conjunction with the section meeting and events risk assessment which covers generic items.

In the context of this document rafting covers – building a raft or other watercraft using pioneering techniques. Please refer to POR and Scout Association rules before taking part in rafting.

Hazard identified? Risks from it?	Who is at risk?	How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed?	What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
A hazard is something that may cause harm or damage. The risk is the harm may occur from the hazard.	For example: young people, adult volunteers, visitors	Controls are ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk from it. For example, you may use a different piece of equipment, or you might change the way you do the activity.	Keep checking throughout the activity in case you need to change what you are doing or even stop the activity. This is a great place to add comments which will be used as part of the review.
Terrain / Venue – Unsuitable terrain, steep descents, size, access etc	All present	Keep away from sluice gates, weirs, overflow pipes, locks, slippery steps/slopes, rocky areas, where livestock are present (can knock you in), large drops etc or where currents may be fast or unpredictable. Is the area downstream or around the corner also suitable/safe (in case someone falls in the water and is taken there). If someone falls in the water, can you get them out with a throw line, lifebuoy etc or could you wade in to get them out without putting yourself in danger. If not provide a support craft that is appropriate to the type of water being used eg have someone in a canoe, kayak etc. They should be manned by suitably qualified people ie have a canoe permit for the type of water being used. Remember that sudden and	

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		unexpected immersion in cold water has a rapid and dramatic effect on the body's systems and will impair people's ability to reach safety. If entering the water ensure you find an area where you can get in and out easily, no deep mud, vegetation, rocks, roots, rusty cans or wires underfoot. Avoid areas below cliffs (lose stones falling, being dislodged). If you are near the sea or an estuary, check tidal conditions, so you know when high tide is, how high it will reach, and whether there are any strong local currents. Avoid areas that could be cut-off or submerged by a sudden wave or quick rise in the tide level? The tide may advance more quickly than your group can retreat. Also avoid steeply shelving shingle beaches, where one step could take someone out of their depth. Check to make sure there are no electrical pylon wires overhead or in the immediate vicinity that could get caught up in any ropes, poles etc.	
Kit / Equipment – injuries to people during the activity.		Ensure all kit used is in a good condition and suitable for the activity ie make sure any ropes, spars, barrels etc used are of the correct size and strength for its intended use, ropes aren't frayed, barrels don't leak, buoyancy aids have been certified, paddles don't have sharp edges etc. Report any damaged or faulty equipment.	
Preparation - inexperience etc	All present	Consider raft building training before hand to ensure raft quality on the day is better. Check the activity safety requirements / rules specified in POR eg wearing buoyancy aids etc and act accordingly.	
Activity Area – injuries during the activity.	All present	Ensure the raft is built on an area that has few obstructions and is as level as possible. The area immediately around the area should not be walked through; only individuals participating in the activity should be in close proximity. If necessary, consider physically marking out a 'restricted' area. Cordon off any areas that need to be for safety reasons and to make inaccessible to others and the public.	
Rafting Activity – injuries to people caused by equipment used, failures, use eg cuts, bumps, bruises, rope burns, crush injuries, lacerations, abrasions, puncture wounds, eye damage, sprains, strains and fractures etc	All present	Ensure participants are wearing suitable footwear – cover feet, footwear doesn't come off easily (no crocs, wellingtons etc), laces done up etc. If required for supervision, kit quantities available, keeping participants occupied, creating teams etc, consider sorting participants into smaller groups. If groups are required consider whether they need to be matched in terms of age, ability, temperament, working together, etc. Participants should be briefed/given appropriate training for the rafting activity and cover as appropriate:	

		• The construction technique(s) to be used etc. • Knots and lashings to be used. • Carrying, lifting, and storing the rafting equipment. Plan the structure before starting to build it and follow any plan provided. Ensure that the raft structure is stable/sturdy enough to minimise movement and take the weight and forces expected during use and not fall apart easily when on the water (unless intended to do that or water is safe enough to allow this). Ensure that the construction of the raft and use of ropes minimises the changes of entrapment and entanglement eg ropes to be tied off neatly with no trailing ends, ropes not creating a web or criss-crossing the structure, etc If the raft is decorated (with a mast, bunting etc) make sure it is safe ie won't fall down, trap people etc. If appropriate ensure the raft has an attached tow line for emergencies etc. A throw line / lifebelt should be available at the water's edge. A knife(s) should also be available to cut ropes in an emergency. Consider whether a wading stick would be appropriate for emergencies or checking access to the water for paddling. When dismantling the raft: • Think carefully about the safest way to dismantle the raft. • Ensure everyone is safely distanced away before collapsing any parts.	
Personal Hygiene and Well Being – exhaustion, sunburn, Hyperthermia, eye strain, hypothermia, bites etc	All present	Ensure participants: • Have any existing cuts covered eg with a waterproof plaster. • Have access to drinks (hot / cold) as appropriate to the weather conditions. • Drink enough water and do not dehydrate. • Apply sun cream / wear hats in hot / sunny weather – sunburn. • Wear sunglasses if needed - eye strain. • Wear glasses if they need them and have a suitable strap attached, • Apply lip balm in cold/windy conditions. • Have towels and spare clothes available to change into after the activity if required.	

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		- Do not drink water from the pond, stream, river etc. - Do not eat during the activity (or if participants need to wash hands before doing so). - Have any injuries looked at and dealt with appropriately and in a timely fashion. Everyone to wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid. Everyone should be able to swim 50m wearing their clothing or equipment for the activity and keep afloat for 5 minutes. If not, provide non-swimmers with additional support. Participants informed to wash hands and ideally shower soon afterwards and provided with details of Weils disease.	
General Behaviour – horseplay, overexcitement, injuries.	All taking part	Participants will only be able to take part in pioneering and rope activities if leaders are sure their behaviour is safe. Have a clear location for those not participating in the activity that is safely out of the way. Participants should be briefed/given appropriate training as appropriate to their abilities/knowledge and cover as appropriate: - Not playing with the rafting kit ie throwing or waving poles about, using poles as spears, swords etc. The dangers of injury or poking someone in the eye. - Not running around the raft building area. - If a pole is falling and the rope's sliding through your hand, let it go! - Don't wrap a rope around your wrist or otherwise fasten it to you - if what it's connected to gives way it'll yank and cause injury. - Don't use inappropriate knots. - Not to use the raft without adult supervision. - The dangers involved ie large poles can fall if not securely held; you need to be careful when lifting or positioning poles; you need to be aware of what poles are near you and may fall; the risk of getting caught in the ropes; the risk of falling/slipping especially when barrels and poles are damp/wet. - Keeping out of the way when not taking an active role, especially not being near any construction work.	

		• Not interfering with the structure ie unnecessarily rock it, bounce up and down on it, overload with too many participants, un-tie knots etc. • That poles and barrel will become slippery when wet. • Being hit by paddles, caught in ropes, not going under the raft etc. • Splashing people. • Participants briefed to sit on top of raft and not to hold on to ropes/barrels or poles. • The correct use of paddles. • Not pushing, dragging or ducking others. The activity should be monitored to make sure it is being constructed, used and dismantled safely and the chances of injuries are minimised. Behaviour will be monitored for horseplay, dangerous activities etc and the activity will be stopped or a cooling off period introduced if the activity gets out of hand or injuries are likely to happen. A clear communication method will be used to stop the activity if necessary.	
Leadership – Inappropriate / Inadequate Leadership	Leaders and Helpers	Make sure the activity leader is competent to construct and check the raft. Ensure all necessary permits and permissions are in place. Determine whether an activity permit is required to run the rafting at the chosen location. You don't need a permit for activities on Class C waters (safe, inland water less than 100m wide). Young people should be closely supervised at all times. The raft should be checked to make sure participants are using the correct knots and lashings and they are fit for purpose (ie tight enough), before being accepted as safe. Leaders should be positioned so they can ideally see all the participants all the while they are involved with the activity. Before using the raft, the person supervising should check and decide if it is safe to use, taking account of stability, protrusions, the area, the weather, too slippery/wet to use etc. Leaders should check buoyancy aids are fitted correctly prior to anyone entering the water. The number of participants and load on a raft should be limited appropriately and take account of age and capabilities.	

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		An assessment should be made to decide on whether a land-based helper is required to permanently hold a tow rope on the raft whilst being used especially in fast flowing water (tidal or river). A spotter(s) should be in place on the land whilst the rafts are in use and be prepared to enter the water if required. They should also be wearing a buoyancy aid. Support craft should be considered and appropriate to the type of water being used eg have someone in a canoe, kayak etc. They should be manned by suitably qualified people ie have a canoe permit for the type of water being used. The raft should be periodically checked to ensure it is still safe to use and stable. If any issues are found participants should be asked to come off / stop using it and the issue(s) resolved before being used again. Ensure rafts are secure when leaving them unattended to prevent them floating off. Consider taping off to warn people passing not to use it whilst unattended / unsupervised.	
Accessibility / Inclusiveness / Health Issues	All present	Ensure the activity takes account of any health issues such as being frightened of the water, etc. Ensure appropriate arrangement are in place for non-swimmers (inc supervision and floatation devices). See POR rules on water-based activities for details.	
Incidents	All present	Ensure participants can easily move away from the area in the event of an emergency ie rafts collapsing or falling apart.	
First Aid / Injuries that need treatment	All present	Ensure the first aid kit has provision for hypothermia – survival bag, aluminium blanket etc and you have suitable antiseptic wipes for cuts. Tweezers should be considered to help with removal of splinters.	
Other Control Measures - Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Health & Safety at Work	All Present	If possible, determine the water quality of the area being used.	
Weather - rain before and during the activity, hot weather causing heat exhaustion or sun stroke, lightning, darkness.	All present	Assess the weather risk before and during the activity and act accordingly. Damp / wet weather can make the structure slippery and wet ropes can stretch or tighten. Do not run a rafting activity during heightened or adverse weather conditions such as lightning, hail, strong winds and other unsuitable weathers conditions. If heavy rain has been happening before the day, consider the implications on water depth and flow rates.	

