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## FSC OPERATIONAL CODES OF PRACTICE

### No. P6 : Use of boats on inland waters

**Mandatory** : All UMs  
: All appropriate FSC employees at Units using vessels  
on inland waters

**Discretionary** :

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1. In the context of this FSC OCoP, inland waters are considered to be all freshwater bodies regardless of the physical dimensions of such water bodies and regardless of whether such water bodies are flowing or still.
  
2. This FSC OCoP is produced to cover the use by Units of :
  - a. inflatable or hard boats regardless of the means of propulsion.
  - b. canoes and kayaks
  - c. rafts.

during any activity regardless of whether or not students are participating in the activity.

The use of such vessels by those Units, licensed as Outdoor Adventure Activity Centres, is determined by the terms of their licence.

This FSC OCoP is intended to cover similar matters in respect to the use of such vessels by other Units during activities, such as water sampling, which are not *per se* regarded as adventure activities. Nevertheless, any Unit using or intending to use vessels, particularly canoes, kayaks or rafts :

- i. **Must**, in the first instance, notify the CEO of such usage or intended usage.
- ii. Is strongly recommended to consult the UM at Castle Head Field Centre, particularly if so advised by or agreed with the CEO.

**Guidance Note :** Under the Activity Centres [Young Persons' Safety] Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licencing Regulations 1996, **watersports is a licensable activity** and comprises sailing, canoeing, kayaking, rafting and wind surfing, on

the sea, tidal waters, inland waters at a location where any part of those waters is more than 50 metres from the nearest land, and turbulent inland waters. Rowing is exempt.

Use of vessels propelled by engines is not mentioned in the Act or in the Regulations.

3. The practice of using such vessels during an activity brings academic, personal and social benefits to a field course.  
In view of the report of the Attwood Inquiry and where such vessels are so used by a Unit, the UM **must** ensure that the educational objectives for such activities are documented.

It is imperative that the health and safety requirements of such activities are met fully and that staff operating any vessels are qualified, competent and have a knowledge of local conditions and potential hazards.

4. Major concerns over health and safety can be related to:

- a. Drowning;
- b. Ingestion of contaminated water;
- c. Leptospirosis;
- d. Exposure.

5. If a Unit does decide to use vessels, then the UM **must** ensure the following :

- a. Written approval by CEO obtained [see also section 2.i. above].
- b. Collated and detailed information relating to the use of vessels for each specified activity and at each specified location is documented. Exemplars of such information, as produced at Castle Head Field Centre, are given in Appendices 1 and 2.
- c. Staff, who are involved in the activity in a supervisory or safety role, have received suitable instruction and training in the techniques to be employed in the event of :
  - i. a vessel capsising
  - ii. personnel requiring recovery from the water.

6. The leader of an activity involving the use of vessels **must** ensure that :
- a. Suitable clothing is worn by all personnel in the vessels.
  - b. Each person is wearing an appropriate buoyancy aid and has been instructed on its correct use.
  - c. Each person has been given appropriate instructions on expected behaviour and safety procedures, especially maintaining balance whilst in the vessel.
  - d. Actual and forecast weather conditions are, in their professional judgement and experience, such that the activity can be carried out safely at the chosen location.
  - e. Water conditions are well within the safety limits of the vessel and the experience of the personnel in the vessel.
  - f. Appropriate emergency procedures can be implemented if necessary. In this respect and where so determined by the emergency procedures, appropriately trained personnel and suitable equipment [e.g. a support vessel] must be present.
  - g. The vessels do not become so widely separated that the support vessel [if required under the emergency procedures] could not, in an emergency, provide an appropriate response.
  - h. No toxicity warning has been issued for the water.