

The Windsurfing Club has many levels of ability and competence and this Risk Assessment covers the main hazards. As a result the risks are wide ranging and may depend on the ability of the windsurfer and the weather and water conditions. Despite the fact that there are different abilities, many of the risks are the same, so the Risk Assessment will be of a general form applying to every member, with an added clause for the more experienced sailor.

General Activities: Racing Team Events and Freestyle individual events as part of the SWA series, Varsity (2010 at Location TBC) Beginners days and trips to the coast. The Club also competes in BUSA at Calshot in Southampton

Classification of the different abilities according to the RYA.

- 1. Novice: A sailor who has little experience on a board. Should be able to sail in a straight line, turn around (tack & gybe) and come back in on his/her own.*
- 2. Beginner: A sailor who is able to do all that a Novice can do. A sailor who is becoming more confident on the board, getting to grips with the flare gybe, beach starting, experiencing the harness and taking the first steps towards planning.*
- 3. Intermediate: A sailor who is confident using the harness and the footstraps, making the transition towards the first short board, practising the waterstart and other more advanced techniques.*
- 4/5 Advanced: A sailor who is a competent waterstarter, and is now stating to sail in waves and high winds. These people carry the greatest risk, as they are jumping and generally being more extreme.*

Novices are pre-beginner level, and are only allowed on the water when an instructor session is run and powerboat cover is present. Only qualified RYA instructors are allowed to run beginner sessions.

HAZARD	CONTROL MEASURES IN PLACE	RISK FACTOR	FURTHER CONTROL MEASURES
<u>On the Beach:</u> Equipment Blowing Away	Unattached sails should not be left unattended. Kit should be placed facing upwind. Equipment should be carried properly by members.	Medium	All beginner sailors will be instructed to do this when leaving their kit if they undertake a beginner's session.
Straining muscles when downhauling sails.	Warm up is essential. Use easyrig or harness to aid downhaul process.	Low	

Treading on sharp objects.	Sailors are advised to wear boots.	Low	
Kit not rigged properly.	Sailors should ask advice from more experienced.	Low	All Windsurfing Instructors carry out a safety briefing prior to entry into the water and any defective kit is replaced or repaired.
<u>Weather Hazards</u>		Medium	
Offshore wind and outgoing tide.	These combinations of coastal conditions are to be avoided, sailors should not leave their depth in these conditions.		The Windsurfing Instructors make the decisions on entering the water, dependant on their knowledge of the area of water, the size of group, the abilities of the group. Weather reports are obtained pre-trip from a variety of sources: shipping forecast, TV forecast, telephone and newspaper forecasts.
Rips	Strong rips should be avoided by sailors who are not confident in their waterstarting ability.	Low	Tidal Information is available on a national and/or local basis e.g. Local Coastguard and/or Beach Lifeguards.
Lightning	Sailors using carbonfire masts should clear water if heavy storm clouds are approaching, and should not shelter under sails or trees.	High	No windsurfing allowed in these conditions.
Changeable conditions	If dark cloud band is approaching then sailors are advised to clear water until it passes.	Medium	Windsurfing cancelled until conditions improve by the Activity Leader (normally the Instructor)
Conditions too extreme	Sailors should not go out if they think that conditions are too extreme for their abilities, and should inform the group leader if they are concerned e.g. poor visibility	High	Windsurfing cancelled until conditions improve by the Activity Leader (normally the Instructor)
Dropping wind	Sailors should be careful if using small shortboards in failing winds, and should return to shore if they are unable to plane.	Low	
<u>On the Water</u>		Medium	
Shorebreak	Sailors should ask more experienced on how to deal with a large shorebreak, locations with a large shorebreak are to be avoided.		
Catapulting and Grounding	Ensure that sailors are familiar with the risk. Sailors should find out about any shallow areas. Sailors should stop before they reach the shore, and come out of the harness.	Low	
Wave Crush	Sailors should never be caught down wave of their equipment. Advanced sailors should know this and beginners do not go out in wave conditions.	Low	

Collision	Sailors are made be aware of IYRA passing rules and Sailors should attempt to return to shore if they can't control their board. Sailors should be careful during racing, where boards may be very close together and very fast.	Medium	When sailing at the coast the buddy system should be used. Each sailor is assigned a buddy, and the 2 buddies sail together, with one keeping an eye on the other from the shore. Where accidents do take place e.g. collisions for example the club member watching will call 999 and ask for the Coastguard and/or alert the Beach lifeguard. <u>Mobile phones should be available to allow for a quick response.</u> Make sure all members are aware of the international distress signal. A first aid kit is always taken on trips.
Over Exertion, cramp, muscle damage.	All sailors should warm up properly, and should rest if they feel cold in limbs. Boots should be worn in winter.	Low	
Jumping	Make sure equipment is suitable for jumping. Ask more experienced sailors for technique advice.	Medium	
Equipment Failure	Ropes should be checked before rigging. UJ's should be inspected for rips, and replaced. Sailors should know how to paddle home in the event of failure resulting in equipment being unsailable.	Low	Damaged items should be replaced immediately and boards checked by Instructors to ensure they are sage prior to entering the water.
Hypothermia	Sailors should have suitable wetsuits, long arms and legs in winter, and should be of 5mm thickness. In very cold conditions the suit should be of a very high spec, with either an ABZ or zipperless, and titanium lined. Wetsuit hats and boots can be worn, although some sailors may prefer not to. When resting sailors should wear a hat and a coat.	Medium	All Instructors are First Aid Qualified and are aware of treatment for Hypothermia. Emergency services are called on 999 if the situation is serious.
Novice Members Medical conditions.	The Club should have a knowledge of all it's members and in particular any member who has a medical condition e.g. asthmatic, epileptic etc. Any medication should be taken on all trips.	Low	A membership form is to be used by the club for all freshers and existing members and stored by the President for reference.

Poor Instruction from Windsurfing Instructors.	All Club Instructors are required to provide the Sports Federation with copies of their Qualification and Personal Indemnity Insurance cover on an annual basis.	Low	All Instructors provide a safety briefing for beginners and novices and 'beginner's days' are in place during Michaelmas term where the 'basics' are taught. All beginners must wear personal buoyancy aids when on the water. For all beginner sessions OUWC provide a Safety boat manned by one of the Instructors should assistance be required. This is organised by the club when sessions take place at Farmoor Reservoir.
Poorly run SWA events.	The events are well prepared and have safety cover, generally including students with first aid certificates and safety boat coverage.	Low	
<u>Transport</u> Road accidents in hired minibuses when travelling to matches/competitions. Use of private vehicles to take players to away venues.	Organiser/events secretary to complete Trip Registration Form before each event outside of Oxfordshire. Drivers must have passed University accredited mini-bus tests. Drivers must be 21 years or older. Drivers must follow the Highway Code. Drivers must not be under the influence of alcohol. Mini-bus courses can be organised through the Sports Federation. Boards are secured on roof racks by straps and/or inside mini-buses where room permits.	Low but potentially fatal.	All trip registration forms are to be sent a day before weekday or weekend fixtures to the ASO. Richard.dodsworth@sport.ox.ac.uk For trips out of the UK – trip registration forms are required one month ahead of the trip and these should be submitted to the ASO. Where on trips (outside of Oxfordshire) major injuries and accidents occur and the emergency services called or a player ends up requiring hospital treatment the club can gain assistance and advice from the University Security Services on (01865) 289999. Security Services will also notify the University Press Office, the college of the injured person (if required) and Departmental staff who can help. For major accidents away from site a report should be sent to the ASO richard.dodsworth@sport.ox.ac.uk

Please Note: All beginners should wear personal buoyancy when on the water. More advanced sailors are recommended to wear personal buoyancy, but some members may choose not to, as it reduces flexibility which may cause serious accidents when advanced manoeuvres are being attempted. Whenever personal buoyancy is not worn a harness will be worn that provides some buoyancy.

When sailing at the coast the buddy system should be used. Each sailor is assigned a buddy, and the 2 buddies sail together, or one keeps an eye on the other from the shore. The club is not responsible for sailors attempting extreme moves, or choosing to sail in extreme conditions.

Many Risks can be reduced by common sense, so all new members should get a briefing about all the dangers associated with the weather, sea conditions, tides etc. As long as the sailors know all about the dangers involved with windsurfing, then most dangers can be eliminated