



Singapore Canoe Federation

Code of Practice for Paddling Activities on Reservoirs and Open Waters in Singapore

Version Control

Date	Version	Approved By	Remarks
1 February 2026	1.0	SCF Community and Pathway Management Committee	Created

This Code of Practice aligns with international paddling safety and operational standards and is adapted for Singapore shared reservoirs and open coastal waters.

1. Purpose

1.1 This Code prescribes the minimum mandatory standards governing the safe conduct of paddling activities on designated reservoirs and coastal waters in Singapore.

1.2 The objectives are to safeguard life, ensure safe and orderly shared use of waterways, protect national water catchments, and establish consistent operational, safety, and environmental standards.

2. Scope

2.1 This Code applies to all SCF affiliates, clubs, coaches and individuals conducting canoeing, kayaking, stand up paddling, surfski, outrigger canoe, and SCF related paddle craft activities within designated reservoirs and coastal waters in Singapore.

2.2 Compliance with this Code is a mandatory condition for access, operation, and participation.

3. Regulatory Framework

3.1 All paddling activities shall comply with all applicable statutory regulations and directives issued by relevant authorities including the Public Utilities Board, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, and National Parks Board.

3.2 All vessels operating on reservoirs shall hold valid vessel permits and comply with permit conditions at all times.

3.3 Where any conflict arises between this Code and statutory regulations, statutory requirements shall prevail.



3.4 Non compliance with statutory regulations or this Code will result in enforcement action, withdrawal of approval, and suspension of SCF paddling privileges.

4. General Principles

4.1 Safety shall take precedence in all operational decisions. All paddlers shall possess basic swimming skills and adequate water confidence sufficient for paddling activities, including paddling sit on top kayaks.

4.2 Paddling activities shall be conducted in a controlled, responsible, and risk aware manner.

4.3 All paddlers shall respect shared use of waterways and maintain safe separation from other water users at all times.

4.4 Paddlers shall check and comply with the latest SCF advisories, notices, and waterway updates prior to launching.

4.5 Environmental protection, and preservation of reservoir and coastal water cleanliness and quality shall be maintained at all times.

4.6 Participation shall be competency based and appropriately supervised where required.

4.7 Children shall be at least five years of age and equipped with weight and size compatible paddling equipment including approved Personal Flotation Devices and paddles. Participants aged twelve years and below shall be accompanied by an adult at all times.

4.8 Consumption of alcohol or medication in, on, or around water can increase the risks of drowning by impairing alertness, judgement, coordination and reaction time.

Participants taking prescribed medication shall do the following:

- a) Consult doctors for safety advice before participating in paddling activities;
- b) Take any prescribed medication as directed by doctors;
- c) Be aware of any medication side effects; and
- d) Understand that medication can affect their ability to supervise others near water.

4.9 Participants who have consumed alcohol shall abstain from paddling water activities.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 General Duty of Care

All affiliates, operators, coaches and paddlers are responsible for conducting activities safely, exercising sound judgement, and complying fully with this Code.



5.2 Affiliates and Clubs

Affiliates and clubs are responsible for the conduct, supervision, safety, and discipline of their members during organised activities and shall ensure compliance with all regulatory and operational requirements.

5.3 Organised Paddling Activities

All organised paddling activities, including races, community events and large group training sessions, shall obtain prior written endorsement from the SCF, supported by an event safety plan, and where applicable, prior approval from PUB / MPA before commencement.

5.4 Safety Officer

For organised paddling activities, a designated Safety Officer shall be present at all times. The Safety Officer has overriding authority to suspend, modify, or terminate activities where safety risk is identified. Responsibilities include risk assessment, safety briefing, monitoring environmental conditions, attendance control, and initiating emergency response procedures.

5.5 Individual Paddlers

Individuals conducting independent paddling / training outside organised activities are responsible for their own safety, decision making, and compliance with this Code. Paddling in buddy pairs or small groups is strongly encouraged.

5.6 Conduct of Participants

All participants shall comply with safety instructions, wear required safety equipment, remain within approved paddling zones, and exercise due care at all times. Individuals who are unwell, under medication, or with relevant medical conditions shall not participate unless medically cleared and shall carry required medication where necessary.

For reservoir paddling zones, refer to the [PUB website for Water Activities](#).

For open water paddling zones, refer to the latest MPA Port Marine circular on “THE USE OF CANOES AND KAYAKS WITHIN THE PORT LIMITS OF SINGAPORE”

6. Safety Management

6.1 A valid risk assessment, emergency response plan, and evacuation procedure shall be in place for all organised paddling activities and submitted to SCF for endorsement no later than seven days prior to commencement.

6.2 Active supervision shall be maintained at all times by SCF qualified personnel or contractors for non-certified beginner participants at a ratio not exceeding one supervisor to ten participants. Weak swimmers shall be identified and subject to additional safety controls.

6.3 A mandatory safety briefing covering capsizing recovery, emergency response, and key safety procedures shall be conducted before all organised activities. For activities spanning more than



one session for the same group of participants, the briefing shall be carried out at the first session.

6.4 Approved Personal Flotation Devices shall be worn at all times on pontoons and while on water, unless a waiver from the regulatory authorities is received (e.g. selected national athletes). Personal flotation devices shall conform to ISO 12402-5, CE, EN, or USCG standards, or other recognised equivalent standards. Inflatable Personal Flotation Devices are permitted for open water activities only and are strictly not permitted for use at reservoirs.

6.5 Personal Flotation Devices shall be worn according to manufacturer specifications

6.6 Participants shall maintain adequate hydration and implement heat injury prevention measures during prolonged exposure to hot weather.

6.7 Suitable attire should allow free movement, minimise water weight, provide UV protection, and improve visibility where required especially in open waters.

6.8 For approved paddling activities before daylight hours, all crafts shall be equipped with functioning safety lights.

7. Craft and Equipment

7.1 All vessels shall be seaworthy, properly maintained, and inspected in accordance with SCF Craft Inspection Standards prior to deployment.

7.2 Inspection shall verify structural integrity of hull, deck, bow, and stern, confirm buoyancy through afloat testing, and ensure internal components including joints, cockpit, drain plug, and buoyancy compartments are intact and serviceable.

7.3 Any vessel failing inspection shall not be deployed until defects are rectified and re-inspection passed.

7.5 For vessels used on reservoirs, vessel identification markings shall be clearly visible, not less than sixty five millimetres in height, and permanently affixed on both sides of the vessel at the bow or aft deck in accordance with all applicable regulatory and identification requirements. Markings shall be maintained in legible condition at all times and shall not be obscured, altered, or removed.

7.6 For organised events involving vessels without permits, organisers are responsible for verifying seaworthiness of such vessels before they approve the launch.

7.7 Unsafe, unregistered, structurally compromised, water taking, or noncompliant vessels shall not be deployed until deficiencies are rectified and compliance verified.



7.8 Equipment shall be maintained in safe working condition and used only by authorised and competent paddlers.

8. Reservoir Operational Rules

8.1 SCF authorised inland paddling locations include Bedok, MacRitchie, Marina, and Pandan Reservoirs subject to regulatory approval and compliance with this Code.

8.2 Activities shall be conducted only within designated zones as indicated on the [PUB website](#) and authorised hours of 0700 to 1900. Where applicable, users shall abide by opening hours of the paddling facilities. Permission to operate beyond the specified hours is subject to PUB's approval on a case-to-case basis (e.g. for the National Team).

8.3 Launching and retrieving of boats onto land shall be carried out only at designated locations.

8.4 Paddlers shall meet minimum certification requirements recognised by SCF and appropriate to craft and competency level.

8.5 For outreach, introductory, or trial activities involving non-certified participants, additional safety measures shall be implemented, including closer supervision, restricted operating areas, suitable craft selection, and enhanced safety briefing and monitoring.

Paddle Craft	Minimum SCF Standards
Sit on Top / Double Sit on Top	Swim Safer 2.0 Stage 1 Basic Swimming Skills as prescribed in Singapore Standard SS701:2023
SCF Course participants	Basic Swimming Skills SCF Certified Instructor Adhere to Instructor to Participant Ratio 1: 10
Closed Deck Kayak	SCF Kayak 1 Star
Canoe	SCF Kayak 1 Star
Outrigger Canoe	SCF Ocean 1 Star
Surfski	SCF Ocean 1 Star
SUP (currently classified by NEA as Primary Contact Water Activity and approved for certain reservoirs only.)	SCF SUP 1 Star



8.6 Paddlers shall remain within approved paddling areas based on type and level of SCF Certification and maintain safe separation from structures, water users, powered vessels, and restricted zones.

9. Open Water and Coastal Operational Rules

9.1 Solo paddling is discouraged. Beginners shall paddle under experienced supervision.

9.2 Alcohol shall not be consumed before or during paddling activities.

9.3 Activities shall be conducted during daylight hours and close to the coastline, with progressive extension of range based on competency.

9.4 Paddlers shall check the National Environment Agency (NEA) short term recreational beach water quality advisories before open water activities and avoid affected areas where water quality is rated poor or unsafe.

9.5 Maritime and Port Authority circulars shall be monitored, and restricted or prohibited areas avoided at all times.

9.6 Adherence to Maritime and Port Authority canoe and kayaking safety guidelines.

9.7 Paddlers shall inform a responsible person ashore of the intended route and expected return time prior to departure.

9.8 Paddlers shall monitor tides, currents, weather, and return as soon as practicable when conditions become unsafe.

9.9 Users of canoes and kayaks shall only cross designated channels and fairways when it is safe to do so, and only if they possess the necessary experience and competency.

Emergency Contacts

Police Coast Guard 63775539 / 63775540

Maritime and Port Authority 63252488 / 63252489

Singapore Marine Safety Control Centre VHF Channel 07

10. Weather and Water Conditions

10.1 Activities shall not commence or shall cease immediately in the following situations:

a. When official authorities issue alerts or advisories relating to CAT 1 weather conditions, lightning risk, or similar severe weather warnings.



b. When conditions are assessed to be unsafe by the Safety Officer, coach, instructor, or responsible paddler, including but not limited to strong winds, rough water, fast changing weather, or poor visibility caused by heavy rain or storms.

10.2 In sudden hazardous weather, all vessels shall return as soon as practicable to the nearest safe landing point and paddlers shall seek shelter without delay.

10.3 Activities shall resume only when official alerts are lifted and conditions are assessed to be safe.

11. Mandatory Reporting for Reservoir waters

11.1 All reportable incidents occurring in reservoir waters shall be reported to SCF and PUB within two hours and pollution incidents within one hour of occurrence. A full written report shall be submitted to PUB *via* email to PUB_Water_Activities@pub.gov.sg within seven days.

11.2 Reportable incidents include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Death (including drowning) of paddlers
- b. Unconscious paddler or any paddler requiring immediate medical assistance within reservoir waters
- c. Loss of vessel, including by way of sinking
- d. Grounding where the vessel cannot refloat or be removed
- e. Collision of a person or vessel with another vessel regardless of whether personal injury or property damage had been sustained
- f. Collision of the vessel with fixed structures or objects in the water regardless of whether personal injury or property damage had been sustained
- g. Pollution incidents regardless of extent
- h. Capsizing of motorised or large non motorised vessels
- i. Bodily injuries or ailments including heat related illness, lightning injury, dislocation, fractures, deep cuts, contusions, and head injuries
- j. Falling overboard from motorised vessels
- k. Fire onboard vessel regardless of extent

11.3 Failure to report incidents may result in suspension of paddling privileges.

11.4 A near miss is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness, or damage but had the potential to do so. Reporting of near misses is strongly encouraged as part of proactive safety management to prevent future incidents. Near miss reports are treated as confidential, and are intended to improve safety awareness rather than to assign blame or liability.

Examples of near miss incidents include:

- a. Near collision or close quarter situations without contact
- b. Navigational errors such as nearly running aground
- c. Equipment malfunction or failure



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- d. Entanglement with underwater objects or lines
- e. Towing or mooring line failure causing drifting
- f. Fatigue related impairment affecting safe operation

11.5 Any individual who becomes aware of unsafe practices, violations, or safety concerns is encouraged to report such matters to SCF General Manager (gm@scf.org.sg). Reports made in good faith shall be treated confidentially and without prejudice, in accordance with applicable safety and governance procedures.

#End

Annex

Basic swimming skills or Swim Safer 2.0 stage 1 equivalent

The capacity to swim briefly and cover a short distance in the deep end of a swimming pool.

In open waters, these skills necessitate a higher level of proficiency and comfort, particularly in challenging conditions such as rough waters, sea waves and water currents.

Basic swimming skills are defined as the ability to do the following:

- a) Step or jump into water with complete submersion and return to the surface
- b) Turn around or turn over and orientate to safety
- c) Float or tread water for at least 50 seconds
- d) Utilise breathing techniques while performing swim skills, including forward movement in the water
- e) Swim to safety for at least a distance of 10 metres
- f) Exit the water
- g) Perform all the above skills while fully clothed

Longer distances and lengths of time are necessary for competency in different water environments.

List of additional references:

PUB code of Conduct for Water Activities:

<https://www.pub.gov.sg/-/media/PUB/Public/Places-of-interest/Marina-Barriage/Forms/MR-Code-of-conduct-2024.pdf>

MPA Canoeing and Kayaking Guidelines:

<https://www.mpa.gov.sg/docs/mpalibraries/mpa-documents-files/oms/harbourcraft-and-pleasure-craft-regulations/licensing-of-harbourcraft-pleasure-craft/safety-guidelines-for-canoeing-and-kayaking.pdf?>

NEA:

<https://www.nea.gov.sg/our-services/pollution-control/water-quality/recreational-beaches/beach-short-term-water-quality-information>

Singapore Standards Code of Practice for Inland and Open Water

<https://www.sportsingapore.gov.sg/media-centre/new-codes-of-practice-for-water-safety-in-singapore/>

SDBA Code of Conduct for Dragonboating: https://sdba.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Code-of-Conduct_Dragon-Boating.pdf