

# Kayaking



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## Introduction

This factsheet provides the facts required to run kayaking for a group of young people, or to do it for themselves if they are a young person. It should be read in conjunction with the factsheet FS120084 Scout Led Activities Index, and Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) of The Scout Association.

## What is kayaking?

Kayaking is a way of travelling over water through the use of a kayak, a type of canoe designed to be paddled from a sitting position using a double ended paddle. Kayaking within the permit scheme includes models generally referred to as closed cockpit kayaks and open cockpit kayaks, and also includes closed cockpit canoes.

## What is a kayaking permit?

The adventurous activity permit scheme is designed to ensure that only people with the relevant skills and experience lead adventurous activities for young people. All activities classed as adventurous can only be led by someone holding the appropriate permit. Young people (under 18) can take part in adventurous activities for themselves with personal activity permits.

A kayaking permit is required for all kayaking taking place except in class C water. Definitions of water classifications can be found in POR rule 9.44 [www.scouts.org.uk/por9.44](http://www.scouts.org.uk/por9.44).

## Levels of permit

Kayaking permits can be issued for the type of water and the class of water. Each permit can be further restricted (such as through tidal, non-tidal,

group size, geographical location etc) to end up with an individual permit to the level of the competence and requirements of an applicant.

## Types of permit

There are three types of permit available for each discipline of kayaking. These are:

- **Personal** – Allows a young person (under 18) to take part in kayaking with others with a personal kayaking or canoeing permit.
- **Leadership** – Allows the permit holder to lead kayaking for a single group.
- **Supervisory** – Allows the permit holder to remotely supervise more than one kayaking group.

## Permit limitations

- **Personal** – If you hold a personal kayaking permit you can go kayaking with others who hold a personal kayaking or canoeing permit. It does not allow you to go kayaking with anyone not holding a kayaking or canoeing permit.
- **Leadership** – If you have a permit to lead kayaking then you can look after a maximum of eight boats or 12 people (whichever is less) at a time, subject to any restrictions on your permit, and need to remain on the water with these kayaks at all times. When on B1 waters a permit to lead kayaking also allows the permit holder to lead canoes.

If permits are held for a number of different types of canoes and / or kayaks, it is acceptable to take charge of group consisting of a mixture of these craft. The permit holder must be in a craft which is

suitable for undertaking rescues of all the various boats within the group.

- **Supervisory** – If you hold a permit to supervise kayaking then you can supervise up to three groups. All supervised groups should have means to communicate with the permit holder who will need to be in or have immediate access to a rescue craft (this may be another kayak) and be in a position to provide prompt assistance if required. You remain responsible for all the groups you are supervising, but designate someone with the appropriate skills to be the group leader.

### Designations

When supervising groups from a distance the holder of a kayaking supervisor permit needs to designate a group leader. This designation lasts only for the current activity while the permit holder is supervising.

People designated as group leaders should have the necessary skills and be responsible enough to lead a group safely in the craft and on the class of water being paddled. There is no problem with making young people group leaders if they are up to the role, and it can be used as a useful development tool.

### Further Definitions

The types of water are defined below:

- **Kayak Open Inland** – Kayaking on inland non tidal waters including rivers of less than BCU grade 1.
- **Kayak River** – Kayaking on inland non tidal moving waters of BCU grade 1 and above.
- **Kayak Sea** – Kayaking on tidal waters (including tidal inland waters) where there is no intent of doing activities in the surf.
- **Kayak Surf** – Kayaking where there is an intention of doing kayak activities in the surf (this is only available on B2-A class waters).

Those holding a permit for B1 in any of the above types of water may also operate in the other types of water on B1 waters.

### Useful Links

[FS120084](#) Scout Led Activities Index  
(References relevant Rules and guidance)

[FS120086](#) Commercially Led Activities Index

[FS120100](#) Adventurous Activity Permit Scheme