



Staunton Harold Sailing Club

Welcome to Staunton Paddleboarders

Paddleboard Rules at SHSC

Paddleboarding at SHSC is governed by the same general rules as sailing. Please refer to the members area of the website for full details of the club rules. Paddleboarding is generally a less technical and more easily accessible sport than sailing, however as with any water-based activity there are inherent risks associated with being out on the water. There are also some specific risks related to paddleboarding activities. The perceived ease and simplicity of paddling a stand-up paddleboard can sometimes lead paddlers into dangers that they had never considered. Below is a reiteration of some of the key rules and some additional guidance to be considered before taking a paddleboard out on the water at SHSC.

Safety

1. Paddling is only permitted under a green flag (or yellow flag for training courses). (See club rules for full details.)
2. Buoyancy aids (also referred to as PFDs) must be always worn whilst on the water (see club rules for full details). Buoyancy aids must be of a vest style; should be correctly sized and fitted for the wearer; and in good condition. Auto or self-inflating buoyancy aids are not to be used.
3. All paddle boards must be fitted with coiled leashes and the leash must be always attached to the paddler whilst on the water. For multiple rider craft (tandem boards etc) the rear paddler must be attached to the board by a coiled leash. Only 1 leash should be used per board.
4. Independent paddlers (i.e. those not part of an organised or supervised group such as a training course) must be competent to a minimum of the club paddler standard.
5. There is always a risk of falling from the paddle board. Wear suitable clothing for the conditions. Never wear items of clothing that can fill with water e.g., launch trousers, waders, wellington boots. Footwear with a protective sole should be worn when launching and landing.
6. Be aware of the risks of cold-water shock. Dress appropriately considering the water temperature. Take steps to manage the risks associated with cold water shock.
7. Paddleboards are far less visible to safety crews than sailing dinghies are. Wear bright highly visible outer clothing. Carry some form of visual signaling with you (e.g. a bright T-shirt or rash vest that could be placed over your paddle and waved in the air to summon assistance). In the absence of a suitable signal raise your arms crossed above your head, or if in the water wave them above your head. Competent and experienced paddlers may wish to consider taking a handheld



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VHF radio out with them when paddling in challenging conditions. This must be agreed with the OOD. but are soon to be made available by the club.

8. Consider the conditions and your ability/experience before going out on the water. Paddle boards can be very difficult to handle in windy conditions. If you are heading out in windy conditions, consider making the first leg of your paddle upwind, and do not paddle further downwind than your launch point.
9. Paddlers should always adopt the “safe paddling position” when approaching shore, sailing craft, or fixed objects in the water (e.g. pontoon, moored boats).

Paddling Area

1. Paddlers have access to the same area of water as sailors. A map of the water can be seen in the club house.
2. Before heading out on the water consider checking in with the OOD. Follow their guidance with respect to any specific areas of the water to be aware of to avoid conflict with dinghy racing.
3. Paddlers are advised to take extra care at the north-east end of the reservoir (around the dam and tower). Prevailing winds can quickly take paddleboards toward the dam and tower. Underwater currents between mark 10 and the tower can affect paddleboards and potentially cause a fall. In high water levels the over-flow at the tower can be a major danger to paddleboarders. Please check for and observe any restrictions as noted on the course boards in the club house.
4. In general, sticking to the perimeter areas of the water between numbered marks and shoreline will give enjoyable paddling whilst minimising the risk of any conflicts with other craft. Please remember to observe the 5-board length margin from the shore in all areas except for the club frontage because of the fishermen.
5. Paddleboards are generally smaller, more maneuverable and slower than sailing dinghies. Paddleboarders should aim to keep clear of congested sailing areas as much as possible, and especially when racing is happening. Where paddleboards are near dinghies always aim to cross behind the dinghy if possible.

Insurance

1. Paddleboards need to be insured to the same level as sailing dinghies as defined in the club rules.



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Boards and Equipment

1. All boards and equipment used at the club should be in good order and fit for purpose. Inflatable paddle boards should always be inflated to the correct pressure as advised by the manufacturer before going out on the water.
2. Leashes are critical safety equipment and should be checked regularly for signs of wear or damage. This check should also extend to the leash attachment point on the board.
3. Buoyancy aids (PFDs) should carry a CE mark and give adequate flotation for the size of person wearing it (nominally 50N for adults). They should be properly fitted. Buoyancy aids (PFDs) should be of a style that allows the wearer to self-rescue.
4. When boards are left temporarily unattended (e.g. during lunch breaks) they should be kept to the perimeter of lawned areas out of the way of foot traffic or routes used for launching boats. It is advisable to lay boards upside down to avoid damage to the fins and minimise the risk of the wind getting under the board and picking it up. In windy conditions where this could happen, boards should not be left unattended or should be secured. Other kit such as paddles and leashes should be stacked on the board to minimise trip hazards.
5. Club boards, paddles and leashes are stored in the club paddle board store. They are stored in a semi-inflated condition. When hiring a club board it will need to be inflated to an operating pressure of 16psi before taking it out on the water - both electric and manual pumps are available in the SUP store for this. Club boards MUST be de-pressurised before being returned to storage. Fins must be fitted to boards before going out on the water. Please take care with fin attachment plates and screws as these are easily lost in long grass. Please report any loss or damage of club equipment immediately.

Invasive Species

1. The portability of paddleboards means that they can and often are transported and paddled at numerous different locations. It is important that the risk of transferring invasive species from one location to another is minimised. Any paddleboards coming to SHSC after paddling on other waters must be cleaned down and fully dried before being launched at SHSC. It is best to clean and dry your board, paddle and all other paddling equipment immediately after using it.

Novices

1. It is advisable for novice paddlers to “buddy up” with other more experienced paddlers in order to avoid going afloat alone.



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2. Novice paddlers are advised to stay adjacent to the shore in front of the club house whilst practicing newly acquired skills, and to only go out in conditions that they are completely comfortable with.
3. We ask novice paddlers to speak to the OOD before heading out on the water.
4. Any paddlers who cannot quickly and effectively self-rescue such that they are able to return to shore after a fall must only paddle as part of a group (2 minimum) with other competent paddlers.

Considerations for OODs and Safety Crews

1. OODs should consider whether the area of operation for paddleboards needs to be adjusted based on the forecast conditions and what other activities are happening on the water. Adjustments can be advised using the noticeboards in the club house.
2. Safety crews should always be aware of the number of paddle boarders out on the water and their general location. It is very easy to lose sight of a paddle boarder if they are some distance across the water, and they can disappear from view entirely if they fall from the board when some small waves are present.
3. The wake from a powerboat can very easily unbalance a paddleboarder. Please consider this when operating around paddleboards and try to minimise the waves created.
4. Paddleboarders are generally very self-sufficient and can usually self-rescue with ease. A powerboat approaching them at speed would not usually be a welcome sight. Wait a few moments before deciding to go to offer assistance – most paddleboarders will be back onto their board very quickly after a fall.
5. Look out for paddleboarders signaling for assistance. A waved flag or arms held crossed indicates that help is needed. Boarders in the water might only manage a small wave of the arms or hands. Please be vigilant.
6. When approaching paddleboarders please be aware of the possibility of other items being in the water. Paddles are often dropped. Safety bags and drinks etc. can come off the board.
7. Take extra care if you need to recover a paddle boarder into the safety boat or get very close to offer other assistance. They will have a leash trailing in the water which should still be attached to the board. Prop entanglement with a leash will drag the paddleboarder into the prop.
8. Be aware that paddleboarders are likely to use different areas of the water including the perimeter and extremities of the reservoir. Safety crews should conduct a final sweep of the reservoir including the bays and creeks, before taking safety cover off the water.



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Club Paddler Standard

All independent paddlers at the club must at a minimum be at the “Club paddler standard” as detailed below:

1. Can properly fit an appropriate leash and PFD.
2. Understand safe manual handling techniques for paddle boards whilst ashore.
3. Can safely land and launch a paddleboard.
4. Understand “safe paddling position” and when to use it.
5. Understands the risks associated with winds and how to protect against them.
6. Understand the risks of “cold water shock” and “wind chill”, and how to protect against them.
7. Understand the risks associated with power craft when on/in the water.
8. Are aware of site-specific risks and restrictions at SHSC.
9. Can paddle with directional control over a pre-defined course (min 100m).
10. Can turn a stationary board through 360 degrees.
11. Can turn a board whilst moving.
12. Can paddle effectively and maintain directional control upwind, downwind and across wind in a light breeze.
13. Understand how to fall safely.
14. Can effectively self-rescue and return to shore in a range of conditions.
15. Understand and agree with SHSC member rulers and paddle board guidance.