



# Sligo Kayak Club Biosecurity Policy

## Introduction

Biosecurity means taking action to minimise the introduction or spread of invasive non-native species and diseases. These invasive non-native species are plants or animals which have been transported outside their natural habitat and they can damage our environment, our health and our economy.

Invasive Species Ireland has highlighted that invasive non-native plant and animal species are the second greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide after habitat destruction. Unfortunately, many freshwaters on the Island of Ireland have been significantly impacted by biosecurity issues and alien invasive species issues such as the crayfish plague and zebra mussels.

Fragments of plants and seeds can get inside kayaks and lodge under seats, foot plates, foot pumps, on paddles, spray decks and clothes. Species can also be transferred via drops of water. Invasive non-native species can outcompete and kill our native species, can block waterways and can increase the risks of flooding.

Under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 it is an offence to “plant, disperse, allow or cause to disperse, spread or otherwise cause to grow” a wide range of non-native species that are listed in the Third Schedule of these Regulations.

Biosecurity best practice is critical to preventing further disease and invasive plants and Sligo Kayak Club (SKC) have a responsibility to ensure that all club activities comply with best practice.

## Aims & Objectives of the Policy

To prevent the introduction or spread of diseases and alien invasive species of plant or animals

- To/from any other catchment visited by members of SKC
- To the Garavogue river by visiting kayakers

## Biosecurity Policy & Measures

Sligo Kayak Club have adopted the ‘Check Clean Dry’ approach (as advised by Invasive species Ireland) as these principles are recognised as key to stopping the spread of invasive species. This approach will apply for all instances where kayaks, paddles, trailers, equipment, shoes and clothing are moving between waterways. SKC will adhere to the specific guidance given for kayaks/canoes and for freshwater boating (Appendix I).

The principles apply to kayaks and equipment used by the club but also members are advised to adopt these principles on family days out and other non-club activities.

Items of equipment that require attention include both club and privately owned kayaks; clothing including wet suits, dry suits, cags, personal flotation devices, spray decks, helmets, paddles, footwear and any other items of equipment carried on the water by SKC members.



## CHECK

**CHECK** kayaks, equipment, clothing and footwear for living plants and animals. Pay particular attention to areas that are damp or hard to inspect.

## CLEAN

**CLEAN** and wash all kayaking equipment, footwear and clothes thoroughly. If you do come across any plants and animals, leave them at the water body where you found them.

## DRY

**DRY** all equipment and clothing for at least 48 hours – some species can live for many days or weeks in moist conditions\*. Drain any excess water from the kayaks at the water body where you were paddling; make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

\* Note where complete drying is not possible items can be sprayed or wiped down with disinfectant. Milton and a spray pump are available in the SKC boathouse for this purpose.

There are four essential components to the biosecurity policy:

1. Awareness
2. Education
3. Training
4. Biosecurity measures for routine operation and club events.

1. Awareness

There are a number of measures taken to promote awareness among all club members and visitors to the boat house.

The club has adopted a 'Leave No Trace' principle of 'take only pictures and leave only ripples' and has incorporated this policy into the SKC Safety Framework (Appendix 2). Club members are advised that they are to act and behave by this principle both on and off the water. This policy is published on the club website at [www.sligokayakclub.com](http://www.sligokayakclub.com), is incorporated into the welcome letter for all new club



members (Appendix 3), will be published on the club Facebook page and communicated to all members via the club Whatsapp group to ensure awareness of this policy.

The club has placed signage on the door of the new club house to remind members and visitors of the importance of biosecurity. Members are advised to assume that all waterways are infected. Photographs of the signage at the SKC boathouse are included in the Appendix 4.

All members on club trips are to be reminded of the importance of adhering to this policy given the increased danger of spreading invasive species when moving kayaks and equipment between different waterways.

## 2. Education

A biodiversity awareness campaign will be launched in June 2021 for existing members of SKC and will involve information sessions for members on the Biosecurity Policy for Sligo Kayak Club events.

Members are prohibited from moving boats or equipment and paddling on catchments affected by the Crayfish Plague. Rivers currently affected by crayfish plague (Aug 2019) include:

- the River Bruskey/Erne (Co Cavan; detected 2015)
- River Suir (Co Tipperary/Waterford, detected 2017)
- River Deel (Co Limerick, 2017)
- River Barrow (Co Carlow 2017)
- River Lorrha (Co Tipperary, 2017)
- River Al (Westmeath, 2018)
- River Maigue (Co Limerick, 2019)
- River Clare (Co. Galway/Mayo, 2019)
- River Nore (Co. Kilkenny, 2019)

Map showing infected catchments:

<http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/invasive-species/crayfish-plague/>

Members are advised that as the plague can spread throughout the water bodies connected to these infected rivers, all connecting streams, rivers and lakes should be treated as infected. Emergency containment measures may also apply to these water and members should check in advance of travel to other water bodies.

## 3. Training

All new and existing members must familiarise themselves with the club biosecurity policy. Members will be required to complete an online declaration, confirming that they have read, understood and have agreed to comply with the defined controls.

All members made aware that biosecurity measures apply for all instances where boats, paddles, trailers, equipment, shoes and clothing are moving between waterways. It is highlighted to members that the dangers are not only associated with boat movement but also where equipment, shoes and



clothing are moved between waterways and that all equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and dried for at least 48 hours before being used in a different waterway (or sprayed with disinfectant where thorough drying is not possible).

Examples of resources used in training and available on the club webpages:

- Animal & Plant Health Agency - Aquatic Invasive Alien Species Video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EoggtzYr4Qk&feature=youtu.be>
- Biosecurity Measures - Inland Fisheries Ireland  
<https://youtu.be/x8Gn75Ykz9Y>
- Deadly Crayfish Plague in Ireland Summer 2017  
<https://youtu.be/YBpp6ZUvsCY>

#### 4. Biosecurity for Routine Operation and for Club Events

##### 4.1 Routine Operations

SKC – routine training, peer paddles and leisure activities involve kayaking on the Garavogue River and Lough Gill for the purposes of training or leisure activities. This includes use of both club kayaks/equipment stored at the club premises at Doorly Park and private kayaks/equipment stored off site.

All club members will be informed during training and in the policy of the biosecurity measures required for not only the movement of boats but also where paddles, trailers, equipment and clothing are transferred on and off site.

Club members are advised to adopt the check, clean, dry approach when boats, equipment or clothing/footwear are being moved off site whether for club events or for leisure activities.

##### 4.2 Club Events

SKC club events involve the transfer of kayaks and related kayaking equipment between various coastal and inland waterways throughout the North West of Ireland primarily, for the purposes of club organised training, leisure activities or competition. Such events have the potential to import and export diseases and alien invasive species so it's important that SKC identify and incorporate biosecurity measures in the planning stage of all events.

- SKC have incorporated biosecurity hazard and risks mitigation measures into the club Safety Framework & Risk Assessment for club organised events.
- SKC will communicate to participants their personal responsibility for maintaining biosecurity via **Check, Clean, Dry** via the registration process. This gives the



participants time to ensure their boats and kit are drained of water, cleaned thoroughly and effectively before such events.

- All canoes/kayaks must be inspected for aquatic vegetation, mud, materials or living organisms/materials and all such materials should be removed prior to leaving home site. Water must also be drained from the boats prior to leaving the site.
- Participants will also be required to clean boats and kit prior to leaving the event site. Where wash facilities are not available members will be required to avail of the wash facilities at the SKC boathouse prior to storage of the kayaks and equipment.
- Sligo Kayak Club will enquire with organisers of any away event the club may be attending i.e. event organised by other club or body, on the availability of wash stations at the event site.

### 4.3 Visiting Clubs

SKC does not currently host visiting clubs as part of routine club activities or club events. In such a future scenario all visiting clubs or individual paddlers will be required to follow the Check, Clean, Dry approach as outlined in this policy document.

Additional controls to be implemented include:

- All visiting kayakers must inspect their kayaks and kayaking equipment for aquatic vegetation, mud, materials or living organisms/materials and must ensure they are cleaned, dried and free of these hazardous material *prior* to arrival at the SKC event. Non-club participants will be required to submit a declaration as part of event registration process, that all boats, trailers and related kayaking equipment have been checked, cleaned and dried prior to arrival at the event site.
- All visiting kayaks & equipment will be inspected for aquatic vegetation, mud, materials or living organisms/materials on arrival at the SKC event location.
- Any dirty/fouled boats will be turned away and anyone who arrives with damp or dirty kit will be required to visit the cleaning stations prior to the event.
- A cleaning station will be set up at the event site for the purposes of cleaning any boats or equipment not meeting the standard required.
- At the launch and closing of the event, participants and attendees will be reminded of their responsibilities in relation to biosecurity measures required.



### Provision of Enhanced Biosecurity Measures: Future State

It is the intention of SKC to provide enhanced, dedicated washing facilities through future site development at Doorly Park:

1. The SKC site currently has no access to running water at the club site. SKC is to canvass for the provision of water services to the site at Doorly Park for the purposes of installing a permanent wash station for cleaning of kayaks and related equipment to enhance the above biosecurity measures.  
Such wash stations will provide clean water for the preparation of disinfectant solutions for cleaning kayaks and related kayaking equipment and for the rinsing of said kayaks and equipment post-cleaning.
2. Future proposed site developments at Doorly Park will replace the current storage container facilities with a purpose-built permanent club structure, which will provide heated running water to enhance the above cleaning process for all kayaks and club equipment.

### References:

- Invasive Species Ireland <http://invasivespeciesireland.com/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/>
- Royal Yachting Association – Sustainable Events Toolkit Boating Events (2019) <https://thegreenblue.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Sustainable-Events-Toolkit-online.pdf>
- Cumbria Freshwater Invasive Non-Native Species Initiative - Event Biosecurity Support Pack <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/eLibrary/Content/Internet/534/578/41836144542.pdf>
- Cumbria Freshwater Invasive Non-Native Species Initiative - Event Biosecurity Support Pack
- <http://cfinns.scrt.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Event-biosecurity-risk-assessment-1.pdf>
- Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland - IRISH BLUEWAY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT Phase 3: Blueway Management and Development Guide August 2018 <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2020-08/blueway-development-and-management-guide-full-report.pdf>
- The Freshwater Blog <https://freshwaterblog.net/2019/08/16/check-clean-dry-how-canoers-can-help-control-the-spread-of-invasive-species/>
- The National Biodiversity Data Centre – Crayfish Plague <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/invasive-species/crayfish-plague/>
- Canoeing Ireland <https://www.canoe.ie/water-access/>
- Stop the Spread <https://www.canoe.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/stopthespread.pdf>



Appendix 1:

**STOP THE SPREAD**

Invasive plants and animals harm the environment and wildlife, and block waterways making paddling difficult. They can be small and hard to spot so are easily spread on damp equipment and clothing.

Protect the environment and sport you enjoy by keeping your kit free of invasive plants and animals.

**Remember to check these places**

**CHECK**  
**CLEAN**  
**DRY**

**Check** boats, equipment and clothing after leaving the water for mud, aquatic animals\* or plant material. Remove anything you find and leave it at the site.

**Clean** everything thoroughly as soon as you can, paying attention to the inside of your boat and areas that are damp and hard to access. Use hot water if you can.

**Dry** - drain water from every part of your boat and dry with a sponge or towel before leaving the site. Dry everything thoroughly for as long as possible before using elsewhere as some invasive plants and animals can survive for two weeks in damp conditions.

Watch out for:

- ASIAN CLAM
- SIGNAL CRAYFISH
- FLOATING PENNYWORT

**NIEA** Northern Ireland Environment Agency  
**DA** Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
**invasivespecies** IRELAND  
Find out more about invasive plants and animals and how you can help to stop the spread at:  
<http://invasivespeciesireland.com/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/>  
2016-10-20-0204



## Appendix 2: Safety Framework

The SKC Safety Framework is too large to include in this appendix.

This document may be viewed online at [www.sligokayakclub.com/about/policy-documents/](http://www.sligokayakclub.com/about/policy-documents/)





## Appendix 3: New Member Welcome Letter



### Welcome to Sligo Kayak Club!

#### **Introduction**

We are a very active club who kayak all year round and we welcome our members to join us in a range of activities that range from safety training, charity swim support, peer paddles, surf, sea, lake and river trips, social events, BBQ's, social outings and much more.

Our aims are:

- To promote the sport and recreation of kayaking
- To facilitate kayaking activities for SKC members
- To facilitate relevant education and training in the discipline of Kayaking
- To safeguard the wellbeing of its members

#### **Keep Informed**

We generally use a Club WhatsApp group and our Facebook page to let members know what is happening in the Club. When you join, we will add you to the WhatsApp group. Please download the app and we will add you to the group. Parents/Legal Guardians of Junior members should do this too. Please read through the 'Docs' section, as there is lots of useful information there for new and experienced kayakers alike.

Facebook - Please 'like' us.

#### **Membership**

This runs from 1st January each year until the end December. Please make sure you submit your completed membership form and membership fee, prior to your first outing, after 1<sup>st</sup> January each year. You are not permitted to participate in Club paddling events until your membership form has been submitted and the membership fee has been paid. Once you have your Level 2 Skills award, adult members welcome to organise a peer paddle (not formal club paddles). Currently, the Club's main peer paddles are on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6pm. If a beginner's course is being run on a Tuesday night, priority for the Club equipment is given to those involved in the Beginners course.

Members with their own equipment can go for a peer paddle on this night too whilst the container is open or join the beginners to learn some more tips.

#### **Gear Hire**

Please register on Eventbrite prior to attending any club events, as directed by the event organiser(s). We charge €2 per item hired for personal gear, boats and paddles to a maximum €5 per session. If attending Club safety training



sessions, attending Canoeing Ireland events or participating in Club approved swim support days, members can use Club gear. All equipment must be returned immediately after the event or paid for at the above rate per day. Winter pool sessions are €7.50 which includes the use of Club gear. There is a maximum charge of €15 per week for families or individuals (Monday to Sunday incl. Pool Session). If you have your own equipment then Club sessions will all be free, except the Pool Sessions that are €7.50.

#### **When can I come out with the Club?**

Check WhatsApp for start dates for all sessions. Generally, they start around April/May each year.

Club Paddle – Tuesday nights or Thursday nights – Once you have completed your L2 skills, you can come out from 6-8pm to get more confident in the water and to practice your skills. The instructors/leaders will let you know when you are ready to join the Peer Paddles, and which ones would be appropriate for your skill level i.e. rivers, sea, surf or lake sessions.

#### **Membership Manual & Operational Documents**

It is important that all members read these and they are available at: [www.sligokayakclub.com](http://www.sligokayakclub.com)

#### **Child Protection**

The Club at all times prioritises the Protection and Welfare of Children and adheres to the ICU, Child Protection Policy ([www.canoe.ie](http://www.canoe.ie)). It is guided by the Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011. Committee Members and leaders must attend Children First Training and are subject to Garda Clearance Checks, there is a Children's Officer in the Club and a trained Designated Liaison Person.

#### **Getting Changed**

There is a strict policy of NO CHANGING in the containers. Parents should ensure that a towel or robe is available to their children as changing is in the open with public access. Parents are required to be present when their child/children come off the water.

#### **Biosecurity / Leave No Trace**

The club has adopted a 'Leave No Trace' principle of 'take only pictures and leave only ripples' to apply on and off the water. Additionally, the club has implemented a biosecurity policy designed to protect our waterways from invasive species. Members are asked to familiarise themselves with the policy available on our website at [www.sligokayakclub.com](http://www.sligokayakclub.com).

#### **The Committee**

All our Sligo Kayak Club leaders, instructors and Committee members are volunteers and put in a huge amount of time and effort to keep the Club active, safe and fun.. Please support them where you can and adhere to Club policies, procedures and guidelines.

Please feel free to contact any of them if you have any queries. The current Committee is listed on our website.

See you on the water! [www.sligokayakclub.com](http://www.sligokayakclub.com)

Appendix 4: Photo of Signage

