



1 What is a “Signed-Off” Paddler?

A “signed-off” paddler is a member of Manvers Waterfront Boat Club who has been authorised by the club committee to paddle on the lake without safety cover – for example outside of normal paddlesport sessions.

2 Environmental Definition

Manvers Lake is classed as an inland Sheltered Water environment under the current British Canoeing Environmental Definitions.

Ungraded sections of slow-moving rivers where the group could paddle upstream against the flow (not involving the shooting of, or playing on, weirs or running rapids). Areas of open water (e.g. lakes and lochs) where the paddlers are no more than 200 metres offshore and the wind strength does not exceed Beaufort force 3, avoiding the group being swept/blown out of the safe working area. Slow moving estuaries (less than 0.5 Knots).

Examples: Small enclosed bays, enclosed harbours where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore, defined beaches with easy places to land throughout, no tide races, overfalls or surf.

Note: The definition implies normal conditions and care is advised when water and air temperatures are low.

<https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/download/331/>

3 “Signing-Off” Procedure

3.1 Pre-Requisites

The paddler must be a fully paid-up member of Manvers Waterfront Boat Club.

3.2 Applying to be Signed-Off

All paddlers wishing to be signed-off must submit a request form listing any relevant experience and qualifications (proof of qualifications and experience is required).

<https://www.mwbc.org.uk/signed-off-paddler-request-form.html>

We recommend that you read the associated guidance note document before submitting a request to be signed-off. This gives information about the skills and knowledge you will need to demonstrate.

https://www.mwbc.org.uk/uploads/9/4/5/7/9457387/mwbc_paddlesport_signed-off_paddler_guidance_notes.pdf

Depending on the paddler’s qualifications and level of experience:

1. The paddler will be signed off without a formal assessment, **or**
2. The club will contact the paddler to arrange an assessment



3.3 Assessment

The following club paddlesport coaches can carry out an assessment of a paddler's competence to be signed-off:

- BCU Level 2 Paddlesport Coach (or above)
- BC (UKCC) Level 2 Paddlesport Coach (or above)
- BC Paddlesport Coach or Performance Coach

The aim of the assessment is to ensure that the paddler has the necessary knowledge and skills to paddle safely on Manvers Lake without supervision or safety cover being in place.

The basis of the assessment is the British Canoeing Paddle Discover Award in the context of paddling at Manvers Lake. The assessment should be carried out in the type of craft you intend to use – e.g. closed or open cockpit kayak, canoe, or SUP.

We are not looking for you to be an incredibly skilful paddler – we are looking for you to be able to enjoy paddling safely without undue risk to you or others.

Specifically:

Section 1 – Getting Ready

- Choice of clothing and equipment – suitability for weather and water conditions
- Safety - do I have a first aid kit? How do I contact the emergency services?

Section 2 – At the Venue

- Awareness of club rules
- Water conditions – water temperature, calm or rough?
- Weather conditions – air temperature, wind speed & direction, sunny or cloudy?
- How could the water and weather conditions affect me?
- Do I need to modify or cancel my planned activity? Know your limits!

Section 3 – On the Water

- Awareness of other users – other boats, windsurfers, anglers, swimmers
- Environmental awareness - wildlife
- Launching & Landing – where and how do I launch or land
- Controlling your craft – moving forwards, stopping, reversing, turning.
- Can you control your craft adequately in the prevailing conditions?
- Safety & Rescue – can I deal with a capsized? Can I get myself safely back to shore or back into the craft?

3.4 Sign-Off

You must demonstrate that you have the knowledge and skills to paddle safely at Manvers. Do not be disheartened or offended if you do not pass the assessment first time. You can always try again, and your coach will give you feedback to help you understand where you need to improve.



Ask for feedback whether you pass or fail – it will be willingly given!

Once you pass, your membership record will be updated to show you as “signed-off” with any conditions or restrictions that might apply – for example, the type of craft you can paddle.

If you wish to become signed off in an additional type of craft, you can ask to be assessed again in that craft. You will only need to demonstrate the extra skills for that craft.

4 What Next?

Becoming a “signed-off” paddler should be viewed as the beginning of your journey, not an end destination! Even people who have been paddling for many years can still learn something new.

There is a wealth of experience and knowledge available within the paddlesport section at Manvers – we strongly encourage you to tap into it to improve your paddling skills and knowledge. Do not be afraid to ask for advice or help!

We would strongly encourage you to practice capsize and rescue drills in a safe environment. Being confident that you can deal with an emergency will make you more confident on the water. Even better – look at doing a Foundation Safety & Rescue Training course. This will give you a solid understanding of paddlesport safety and rescue principles and techniques.