

13 May 2020

Dear Paddling Ohana,

The UK government's newly released COVID-19 recovery strategy document — [Our Plan to Rebuild](#) — outlines changes in restrictions to exercise.

Based on this document, and relevant guidance from water authorities and agencies, Great Britain Outrigger recommends the following:

- GB Outrigger affiliated clubs should remain closed, as clubs fall under the government guidance that specifies leisure facilities remain closed until July 4.
- To avoid potential strain on the emergency services and to reduce social contact and travel, we recommend that you avoid paddling at this time. Please keep in mind that by using the water you could inadvertently be encouraging, by example, others who are less capable than you to use the water.
- Should you decide to paddle: OC1, V1 or OC2 paddling only is possible provided the following conditions are met:
  - Paddlers in the same boat are members of the same household
  - The boats are privately owned
  - Access to the waterway you are using is public or the landowner has clearly provided permission.
  - You are paddling in sheltered waterways
  - You adhere to UK government restrictions related to social distancing, hygiene and travel
  - You have made yourself aware of the risks associated with paddling during the pandemic, have carried out an appropriate risk assessment for the area you will be paddling in and put into place appropriate control measures
  - You only go out on the water if you are experienced and it is safe to do so (you should not be a novice paddler)
  - You do not require a launch to accompany you (either for safety reasons or coaching)
  - You have completed appropriate safety checks (boat, weather, environmental) and are using appropriate safety equipment
  - You have verified recreational use of the waterway is allowed by the local water authority (eg Environment Agency, Port of London Authority, Canal & River Trust) (see links to these agencies, below)

Environment Agency: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

Canal & River Trust: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk>

Port of London Authority: <http://www.pla.co.uk/>

## Safety Precautions

Usual safety precautions should be adhered to at all times:

- **Tell someone you are going paddling and when you are likely to be back**
- You should have at minimum the following safety equipment:
  - Life jacket
  - Have on your person, at least one form of two-way communication (eg. mobile phone, VHF radio) and one form of one-way communication/signalling device (eg whistle, flare, PLB). Please be sure you know how to use this equipment!
  - Spare paddle
  - Leg leash
- Please consider the weather conditions before paddling. Check the tide & check the wind conditions. Do not paddle in weather conditions (eg strong wind/ current /swell) that are beyond your capability. You do not want to put yourself at any risk of requiring rescue at any time.
- Be extra careful transporting your boat as it may not be possible to ask anyone for help, whether lifting the boat on and off your car or carrying your boat to and from the water. Be careful and avoid any unnecessary injuries at this time.

We also suggest you stay local. By doing so you are supporting the entire paddling ohana, many of whom work for the NHS, emergency, police, and fire services, the military and are key workers.

A hui hou, mālama pono.

Kindest regards,

GBOCA Executive

*The above information is correct at time of circulation but as and when the Government and WHO advice is updated, we will provide an update.*