



# Safety | Policies & Procedures



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## 1. NOCC – Management of Safety

### Introduction

The document aims to outline an overall approach to the management safety for Noosa Outrigger Canoe Club (NOCC) in the delivery of its activities.

To maintain the safety of all our member's, affiliated clubs are required to implement and annually review their Risk Management Plan and ensure it conforms to the AOCRA requirements. All members must abide by their club's Risk Management Plan. *Safety is the responsibility of all paddles and should not fall upon any one party.*

**Noosa Outriggers Risk Management Plan is located in the Members Area on the website under Club Information - please take the time to read it.**

There are many things we can all do to improve safety in our clubs, for example: wear appropriate clothing for the conditions, don't paddle when feeling ill or injured, maintain paddling equipment including canoes, assisting other members with safety aspects and keeping a keen eye on all situations.

### Safety matters

**EVERY time you go out on the water, it is recommended you follow the below steps:**

- Get a weather report. Heed the information and play it safe.
- Fill in a trip sheet. Let someone know where you are going and when you will return.
- Check canoes for safety – positive flotation, bungs, bailers, lashings, ama.
- Life jackets are a requirement for all crew and are compulsory when crossing the Noosa Bar [see below safety policy for further information].
- Storm covers fitted – if necessary.
- All paddlers to be swim tested and proficient.
- Huli drill perfected.
- COMMONSENSE activated.

Note: When required for extreme safety measures or as a requirement for racing, Flares, V-sheets, signalling mirror in a waterproof bucket tied into the canoe may be needed.

*For further information please contact a Coach or Committee Member.*

**ALL INCIDENTS ARE TO BE REPORTED TO COACHES BY THE RELEVANT STEERER WITH THE REPORT ALSO LODGED TO AOCRA.**

### Basic Safety Procedures

**Strong Wind Warning** - AOCRA has a strict policy on using canoes during strong and gale force wind warnings (winds above 34kts). Under no circumstances are canoes to be put into the water during a gale force warning.

**Thunderstorms or Forecast Thunderstorms** - no paddling or training should be conducted during forecast or actual thunderstorms.

Before every canoe leaves the shore, the Steerer must be aware of safety practices:

- Steerer must have knowledge of Navigational Rights of Way.
- Canoe must be checked for maintenance, rigging of iako's/ama and bung position.

- Check for required gear – bailers and life jackets - know the water and the weather.
- Paddlers, steerers and coaches should all know the prevailing conditions and possible changes of weather.
- Winds create waves, so if it has been windy most of the day, don't practice outside unless prepared (e.g. spray covers, escort boat plan).

If caught outside:

- Take a land sighting and head for it.
- Take notice of the time and distance you have to travel and prevailing conditions (i.e. tide and swells).
- Don't panic and start sprinting, it will tire you and the team, plus you will lose concentration on direction and swell pattern.

If you flip/Huli:

- Stay on the ocean side of the canoe (canoe is 165 kg and 13 metres, man is 80kg and 1.75m).
- Turn the canoe perpendicular to the wave direction, it makes less of a target.
- Identified paddler to gather paddles up before they become lost or projectiles and follow your Huli drill process.
- Steerer, tell your crew what you are going to do and what is expected of each member (in time it will become second nature, but until then discuss it)
- If the canoe breaks up, stay away from the broken edges as they can be sharp
- Get your canoe seaworthy, ashore and size up your repairs before arguing about who or what caused the flip.

Surf:

- Ideal canoe position is perpendicular to swell direction.
- Speed of canoe has to attain speed of swell.
- The steerer will announce the swell (hit it, pick it up etc.).

Maximising survival time:

Various techniques have been developed to maximise survival time in the water; these are summarised below:

- **Treading water** - well known technique requiring a conscious movement of arms and legs in a peddling motion so as to maintain the head above water.
- **Lessen the escape of heat** - in addition to the head, normally clear of the water, areas of the body through which heat loss occurs are the sides of the chest and groin. These areas can be protected by holding the arms by the sides and up across the chest and raising the knees and hold them together.
- **Huddle closely together** so that the chest and arms are protected. This can reduce appreciably the rate at which the body loses heat and increases survival time by up to 50%.

It is vitally important to be totally familiar with life jackets and all lifesaving equipment. Practice putting on life jackets both on land and on the water.



## 2. NOCC Policies

### Noosa Outrigger Canoe Club and AOCRA Membership

Paddlers who have tried paddling up to six sessions (within a 3 month period) must join as a member of the Club and of AOCRA if they wish to continue paddling.

AOCRA governs insurance fees, and membership fees are governed by the NOCC Management Committee and are reviewed at the Club AGM each year.

AOCRA membership and insurance involves renewing or registering for membership at [www.aocra.com.au](http://www.aocra.com.au)

Club paperwork completed includes the following:

- NOCC Membership form.
- Acknowledgement of risk assessment understanding; refer to Attachment 1.
- Members must also register for AOCRA membership online at [www.aocra.com.au](http://www.aocra.com.au) It is the responsibility of members to pay fees when due. This can be done online in two steps:
  - Log onto the AOCRA website and follow the links to pay AOCRA membership, this includes AOCRA paddler insurance.
  - NOCC Membership Fees – payment via NOCC Website.

Paddlers shall only paddle if either AOCRA fees or Club fees have been paid.

If the paddler has a medical condition, they must disclose this in their AOCRA application ([www.aocra.com.au](http://www.aocra.com.au)). A medical declaration form (available online at the time of application) must be completed by the paddler's doctor and returned to the AOCRA registrar. The paddler's membership with AOCRA will not be complete until the AOCRA registrar receives this medical declaration.

### Visiting / New Paddlers

Coach or Captain will supervise visiting (paddlers from other clubs) or new paddlers. New Members will be advised to join the novice coaching session and be assessed before moving to racing crews.

A brief rundown of the sport will be discussed before entering the water.

For a non-AOCRA member, an indemnity and release form will be completed. New paddlers are entitled to only a maximum of 6 sessions within 3 months), of which at least three must be specific training sessions for come-and-try paddlers. After six sessions (or 3 months whichever comes first), the paddler MUST complete all club membership paperwork as listed above and pay AOCRA insurance money and Club membership fees. New paddlers are not permitted to paddle for further sessions until the club treasurer receives completed paperwork and monies.

## **Coaching Policy**

Each season, NOCC will develop and deliver approved coaching and cross training programs for each crew. The program will be developed and overseen by a NOCC qualified person with a Level 1 Sports Specific Outrigger Canoeing Certificate.

All assistant coaches will hold at least a Basic Principles of Coaching Level 1 Certificate.

The Head Coach will hold or be in the process of obtaining a Level 1 Sport Specific Coaching qualification and have a substantial amount of experience.

NOCC has several accredited coaches, led by a coaching coordinator and volunteers.

All coaches MUST be registered club members.

All junior coaches and volunteers must meet the requirements of AO Rules – Section 9 Working with Children and hold a Blue Card.

Coaches must meet the requirements outlined in the AO Rules Section 9 Coaching.

All coaches keep coaching records which the coaching coordinator may periodically review. The details required are as per the AOCRA Coaching Manual. Swim and tread water tests are logged by all coaches and records are given to the club secretary and the head coach.

Canoe huli / tipping drills (with and without covers for OC6) are logged by all coaches and records are given to the club secretary and the head coach. These details will be recorded on the club members' website (restricted viewing).

## **Record Keeping Policy**

NOCC will maintain the following records:

- Training session coaches must keep a diary of all coaching instruction carried out.
- Paddlers borrowing club OC1s or OC2s will be required to have a coach with them and a record of all paddlers to be kept by the coaches.
- A register will be kept for all OC6 training sessions.
- As AOCRA members, all NOCC must complete the Medical Declaration if any medications are in use. Any significant injuries, such as back, heart, pregnancy etc., are noted and a Doctors' Certificate stating the member's fitness must accompany the application.
- A register of member training is to be maintained by the Club; this is to include, but is not limited to, the following: First Aid; steerer, coach and boat licences.

## **Swim Test Policy**

This policy is to help ensure the safety of NOCC members and supports them whilst participating in club activities.

Club coaches and team captains shall conduct water safety drills for all new and current OC6 paddlers.

New OC6 paddlers can review the OC6 basics videos (available online) and documentation where capsize technique is demonstrated and discussed.

All members must attend a coastal or ocean training session at the beginning of each season and/or before racing.

Swim tests must be conducted in accordance with the AO Rules Section 8 Paddler suitability (Swim, tread water and Huli).

The policy is in place to ensure that paddlers are able to support themselves in the water, right and reboard a canoe in the event of a huli or another incident.

At this session, all paddlers will be required to undergo a swim test and a capsize drill:

- A minimum standard shall be for persons in senior divisions - swim 400m and tread water for 5 minutes.
- Junior division paddlers shall be able to swim 150m and tread water for 3 minutes.

NOCC will assist members that need help to meet minimum swimming requirements to attain this level. Any paddler who is not swim competent must wear a PFD when paddling.

The steerer is responsible for ensuring the water safety of persons under his/her care. In a competition environment it is the responsibility of the team captain.

NOCC will facilitate the training of members to ensure a member competent in First Aid and resuscitation techniques is available where appropriate.

In conditions over 25 knots, no training shall be held in open seas. In conditions up to 25 knots, training will be held at the club coach's discretion.

Storm covers will be fitted when deemed necessary (in sloppy conditions and rough water) to reduce the risk of swamping.

All OC6s shall carry a minimum of two (2) bailing buckets or similar equipment to bail out canoes

PFDs will be carried or worn – 1 PFD for each person in the canoe.

## **Huli / Capsize Drills Policy**

Canoes do huli both in races and training sessions. Every season club members must undergo a "huli drill" during a training session. The coach will explain the huli drill before the canoe enters the water and then a practical huli is carried out. The coach logs the drill participants and dates.

The drill is conducted each season to ensure that each paddler understands their role in the case of a real "tip". Never paddle in equipment you are not prepared to lose should the canoe tip.

If a Club Member "fails" the test to safely re-enter the canoe under their own strength, they are to be advised that they are not eligible to paddle. They will be given further opportunities to undertake the test, at the discretion of the Club Coach and Club Safety Officer.

The Member may be offered the opportunity to utilise a rope ladder or bungee cord (or similar) to assist them to re-enter the canoe. If this is successful, the paddler must have that apparatus with them every time they are in the canoe.

## **Safety Policy**

### **Noosa River Environment**

There are some unique risk management issues when paddling in the Noosa River and attempting to cross the bar.

The primary risk whilst paddling in the river area is the potential for interactions between outrigger canoes

and larger marine vessels, including dredges, fishing boats, general marine pleasure craft and people carrying out varied recreational activities (e.g. stand-up paddle board riders, kayakers and surf skis etc.). All preventative measures must be taken to avoid collisions, including canoes giving way to larger craft and using lights during night-time and low-light paddling. The canoe launch point is relatively protected and upriver of most major marine traffic. All paddlers must be aware of the other craft and people in the area and alert their steerer when required.

*The area from the bridges south to Lake Weyba is restricted to all NOCC canoes. There is no access to this part of the river due to strong currents, in-water obstacles and the risk of serious damage and injury.*

### **Crossing The Noosa Bar**

Noosa is a designated coastal bar. Even on a good day, conditions on a bar can change quickly and without warning. Local knowledge, experience, type of canoe and crew make-up are critical factors when attempting bar crossings. If the weather looks adverse, a bar crossing should not be attempted. A coastal bar should never be underestimated as even small waves can capsize or swamp and sink a canoe.

All paddlers must adhere to the following when crossing the bar:

- Steerers are considered “Masters” of the craft and have the final say on whether a bar crossing will be attempted; if a steerer deems the conditions unsafe, the decision must be accepted as final for that day.
- All paddlers exiting the river and crossing the bar or entering the river from the ocean must wear a life jacket (PFD). *\*See below new regulations as at December 2024.*
- Racing covers should be fitted to V6 canoes if conditions in the bar crossing are choppy to prevent swamping of the canoe.

If the weather looks adverse, don’t risk a bar crossing.

Only experienced steerers should attempt to cross the bar and only after a thorough assessment of conditions has been completed.

The following factors must be considered:

- State of tide and current flow in the bar;
- Sea conditions including ground swell size and wave period and shape of breaking waves;
- Wind strength and direction.

All steerers MUST hold position inside the bar to observe wave patterns and conditions before crossing to ensure the canoe is seaworthy and carrying all the required equipment (See OC6 Canoe Equipment Checklist below). Crossing a bar on a run-out tide when the most dangerous wave conditions usually occur increases the potential risks. It should only be considered when the bar conditions regarding swell size and wind strength are favourable. Be prepared to cancel or delay the crossing when the tide is ebbing, and wind strength and wave conditions are unfavourable. The crew set up for a bar crossing is to be set by the steerer considering the experience and strength of individuals (male or female). Paddlers in seats 1-2 MUST be aware of risks and indicate consent to sit in the seat to steerer /coach and be mindful of the impact minimising procedures (i.e. duck and tuck). Other paddlers must also ensure their paddles are “locked” into the water as waves pass.

Covers are to be placed on canoes at the Steerers discretion.

Any time a crossing is attempted (in or out), patience by paddlers is required, and only the steerer's directions are to be followed and carried out as promptly as possible. Steerers must accept the request of any crew member not wishing to cross the bar.

## New lifejacket rules starting from 1 December 2024

Wearing a lifejacket [personal floatation device PFD] is **compulsory**:

- When alone or accompanied only by children under 12 years in an open boat less than 4.8m in length and underway.
- During the crossing of a designated coastal bar in an open boat, as well as in any open area of a boat of any length, and on certain craft.
- While boating between sunset and sunrise in an open boat less than 4.8m in length and underway.
- Children aged over one year and under 12 years must wear a lifejacket when on an open boat or in the open area of a boat of any length while it's underway.

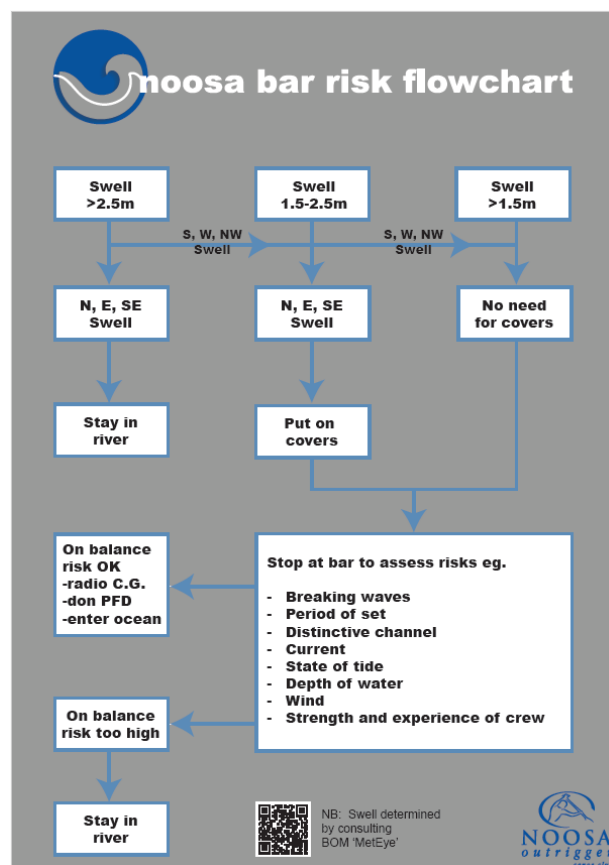
**Update – June 2025:** QLD Maritime has made it clear that no exemptions will be granted for regattas or club training under this rule and the decision from QLD Maritime is firm. Acceptance of Level 50 lifejackets (as opposed to bulkier types) is a positive outcome and should be seen as a practical and more comfortable solution for paddlers under the current regulations.

### Specific craft requirements as of 1 December 2024

You must wear a lifejacket when crossing a designated coastal bar in the following types of craft:

- Small sail boats (fun boats, lasers, herons);
- Pedal boats;
- Rafts (including inflatable rafts);
- Rowboats (excluding those operated by Surf Life Saving Australia Clubs);
- Sea and surf kayaks.

The following flowchart will assist in the decision to cross the bar. This document is also on our website under Club Information.



## **Pre-Sunrise/Night-Time Paddling Policy**

NOCC recognises that paddling at night or in low light conditions requires special precautions.

All canoes **MUST** have an operational flashing white light visible from 360 degrees. Note this may be achieved by using a combination of lights. Most canoes are fitted with attachments behind the steerer's seat to which a light pole can be fitted.

Shipping/boating channels are to be avoided where at all possible. It is recommended that paddlers do not go out alone.

## **Drugs Policy**

At all times NOCC will be governed by the rules and regulations as prescribed in AOCRA, ANTI-DOPING POLICY and AOCRA ANTI-DOPING REGULATIONS and by the LIST OF BANNED SUBSTANCES OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE and THE AUSTRALIAN DRUGS SPORTS AGENCY as amended from time to time.

### **Application**

NOCC condemns the use of performance-enhancing drugs and doping practices in sport.

The use of performance-enhancing drugs and doping practices is contrary to the ethics of the sport and potentially harmful to the health of athletes.

The only legitimate use of drugs in sport is under the supervision of a physician for a clinically justified purpose.

### **Medical Declaration**

All members using medication, requiring notification, shall be required to complete a Medical Declaration which their medical practitioner must sign.

### **Penalties**

Members will be reminded of the penalties and sanctions when it is determined that a person has committed a doping offence. Refer to AOCRA ASDA policy.

### **Alcohol**

NOCC strongly recommends that competitors at all Senior level divisions **do not** consume alcohol while competing or training.

The consumption of alcohol by junior division competitors at any Junior event is forbidden regardless of age.

## **Sun Safe Policy**

NOCC acknowledges that the sport is conducted in an environment where sun safety is paramount. It is recognised that skin cancer is preventable and is best dealt with by the application of preventative measures.

Paddling presents risk regarding both Hyperthermia and Hypothermia. Club coaches and paddlers will make themselves aware of the prevailing and forecast weather conditions and dress accordingly. In excessive heat or cold, coaches will undertake a risk assessment based on the conditions and assist paddlers in the appropriate hydration, nutrition, clothing and protection.

Education on sun smart methods is available at various levels, and ultimately the responsibility for sun safety rests with each individual and in the case of minors, with the parents.

A NOCC cap will be available for NOCC members and long sleeve shirts can be purchased as part of the race uniform.

At regattas, NOCC will provide a sun shelter.

NOCC will make SPF 30 sunscreen available during training and regattas.

### 3. NOCC Procedures

#### Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure

- All incidents including First Aid treatments, Medically Treated Injuries and Near Misses are to be reported and the appropriate report forms are to be completed.
- Incidents are to be reported to AOCRA via the AOCRA website.
- [www.aocra.com.au](http://www.aocra.com.au) is the website for AOCRA and all administrative documents, regatta schedules, sporting updates, latest news and regatta results are available on this site.
- An online incident report ([www.aocra.com.au](http://www.aocra.com.au)) must be completed by the steerer (or the coach on duty) as per AOCRA requirements. Members MUST log into the AOCRA website to be able to lodge an incident report. Incidents must be reported within 7 days of the event.
- A copy of the report is automatically sent to the AOCRA Safety Officer and the zone and club secretaries.
- An incident report MUST be completed to enable a paddler to make an insurance claim for medical or related expenses and equipment damage claims.
- A NOCC incident form should also be completed as part of the clubs ongoing risk assessment process.
- The decision to refer a person for medical treatment is at the discretion of the First Aider. However, if a person is to be taken off-site for medical treatment, the steerer/coach must contact the Safety Officer or Club President at that time. AOCRA should be advised immediately of any reportable incident that occurs.
- A nominated First Aider must accompany all injured persons requiring medical attention to the doctor/hospital.
- All medically treated injuries shall be immediately reported to the Safety Officer for determining investigation requirements and recording. Reporting of Near Miss incidents is to occur by the next day.
- The severity of the accident/incident will determine the minimum composition of the investigation team. If an injury occurs, the injured person is to be included, where possible, in the investigation process.
- All members shall be responsible for reporting all paddling-related incidents/injuries to their immediate Steerer/Coach at the time of the incident/injury and before the end of their session. Failure to report an incident/injury could result in no support for an insurance claim.

#### Emergency Evacuation Procedure (on water)

- Steerer, Coach and First Aider to ascertain situation.
- The closest point of withdrawal identified.
- Emergency personnel notified (see emergency contact list).

#### Canoe Regatta Safety Equipment Procedure

All canoes shall carry a minimum of two (2) bailing buckets or similar equipment to bail out canoes.

A towrope of 25 metres minimum length by 12 mm diameter, SILVER ROPE, available for immediate use, is compulsory on all OC6 canoes for ALL MARATHON RACES.

NOTE: NOCC will teach paddlers the correct TOWING procedure. All canoes shall carry a minimum of One (1) spare paddle.

Storm covers are to be fitted at the direction of the Race Director or other officials or for training sessions in prevailing conditions.

The captain of each team is responsible for the rigging of the canoe and inspection for seaworthiness before each event or training session.

All crew shall be swim competent and capsize experienced.

Where required by AOCRA rules, a PFD for each person in the canoe shall be carried on board each canoe.

## Strong Wind Warning

AOCRA has a strict policy on using canoes during strong and gale force wind warnings (winds above 34kts). Under no circumstances are canoes to be put into the water during a gale force warning.

## Thunderstorms or Forecast Thunderstorms

No paddling races or training will be conducted during forecast or actual thunderstorms.

## Canoe Equipment

NOCC requires all canoes carry the following safety equipment during each training session.

OC6 – LIST the safety equipment here:

- A Type 1, 2 or 3 PFD MUST be carried on board each canoe - one for each paddler – every time the canoe is put on the water.
- It is a club requirement that each paddler supply their own PFD.

OC1/2 – LIST safety equipment here.

- A Type 1, 2 or 3 PFD MUST be carried on board each canoe (but preferably worn)- one for each paddler – every time the canoe is put on the water.
- A Leg rope is a mandatory safety feature and must be attached to OC1/OC2 canoes. It is recommended that paddlers use them to ensure their own personal safety, especially when offshore and/ or in conditions where the paddler/s may become separated from their canoe.
- If training at or near dark paddlers must wear a light attached to their person or canoe – e.g. headlight
- All sessions must be logged with an on shore person and include an expected return time.
- All paddlers must log the training session on the sign-in and sign out sheet on the club notice board
- Paddlers are not permitted to train on club canoes alone. There must be at least two paddlers in attendance at all times.
- When training at dusk or dawn or sessions that start or finish in the hours of darkness, the following equipment must also be included:
  - Flashing light with 360 degree visibility on all craft.
- For sessions that start or end in hours of darkness, sessions are carried out in areas out of significant

boat traffic.

- Storm covers are to be put on canoes in the event of rough conditions. This is at the discretion of the team Coach and Captains.
- The canoe rigging must be checked before every session and re-rigged where necessary.
- Risk Management Strategy and Plan Page 19
- The steerer (or master) of the canoe is legally responsible for the navigation and direction of the canoe and the paddlers in the canoe. All paddlers must follow the steerers directions.
- The captain of each crew is responsible for the safety of the canoe and the paddlers.
- It is good practice for all paddlers to check the canoe, whilst it remains the captain's responsibility
- There are at most 6 paddlers in each canoe for any session.
- Any person showing signs of alcohol consumption or other erratic/unsafe behaviours will not be allowed in the canoe.

A team 'captain' is appointed for each crew for every training session. This person ensures the safety of all of their crew. This person ensures the canoe is equipped for the training session and meets the club safety requirements. This can be the steerer. The 'captain' may delegate this responsibility to an experienced member of the crew.

OC1/2/V1 the club will follow the minimum requirements that paddlers must adhere to when paddling outrigger small craft, that is any craft other than a OC6, to be eligible for personal accident and liability insurance cover- for both enclosed waters and for open waters.

OC6 – the club will adhere to the AO rules (8.7) regarding training in offshore and coastal waters.

## Accident Procedures

All paddlers should be made aware of preventative measures and how to deal with a situation on the water.

Measures may include:

- Use of PFDs;
- Bailing techniques;
- Understanding the ocean / waterways;
- How to rig a canoe;
- How to huli and recover a canoe;
- How to exit and reboard a canoe;
- Managing a canoe in the surf;
- Attaching storm covers;
- Use of a tow rope.

All incidents (injury & equipment damage) will be reported immediately to the Club Secretary or president. No one else is suitable and one of these people MUST be contacted. All incidents must be logged into the AOCRA online system within 7 days of the incident.

## Compliance

NOCC complies with all AOCRA policies, rules, regulations, requirements and guidelines. All members are made aware of their membership obligations and requirements for training. If a member decides to train or paddle using club equipment outside club approval/guidelines they do so at their own risk and responsibility.

## 4. Document Control

| Document Description          | Version | Reason for Issue | Approved by | Date    |
|-------------------------------|---------|------------------|-------------|---------|
| Safety, Policies & Procedures | 1.0     | New document     |             | 09/2025 |
|                               |         |                  |             |         |
|                               |         |                  |             |         |