

Touring

Touring Award

Award Description

This award is designed to develop your ability to apply appropriate decision making skills to an enjoyable and safe day out touring.

Extended Award Description

Your Touring Award endorses your skill, judgment and decision making required to have a successful day on a river or estuary. You will be confident in planning and undertaking journeys with proficient skills to be in control throughout. Your award should be seen as a sound basis for building the experience and knowledge associated with the Open Water Touring Award holders.

Award Content

1. Location

When heading to the water we should have an understanding of our paddling location and how we will access it. Some factors we may consider are:

Factor: Weather conditions

We may need to determine: What is the weather forecast for the time we are on the water? Which direction and how strong is the wind? How might the wind speed and direction affect us and impact on the waters we can choose from? Is the wind due to increase or decrease?

Factor: Water conditions

We may need to determine: What are the current water levels? What size is the area we will be paddling? How far from shore could we be and how far will we paddle? Does the water we are going to paddle on have any flow? Are there

any important landmarks or hazards to look out for on our journey? What is the water quality like? How would we find this information?

Factor: Access and environment

We may need to determine: What restrictions might there be on the water we are paddling on? Where will we access/egress the water? What environmental factors might affect this decision? How would we direct support to us in an emergency situation? How can we reduce our impact on the environment and animals around us?

2. Getting Ready

Before getting to the water we must choose suitable kit and equipment and have the correct knowledge to use it. Key points we may consider are:

What will we take?

Do we have the kit we need to keep us safe and comfortable throughout our trip? How will we pack the kit and keep it dry? What needs to be left loose, tied in or on a leash? How will we pack the kit to make it easy to access? What nutritional requirements might we have during our trip?

What will we wear?

What are the clothing options available to us as tourers? How might external factors affect which clothing we choose? Are we confident in the use of our chosen personal safety equipment?

What will we use?

What are the different equipment options available and why might we choose one over the other? How might different hull design/type impact our paddling? How do we use our equipment?

3. At the Water

Before we set out on our journey we need to be confident in our ability to deal with the complications it might bring. We must also be aware of other users and consider how we will safely get on the water.

Consideration: Other users - we may need to share the water with swimmers, paddlers and anglers, amongst others. To do this safely, an 'etiquette' amongst these users has developed to minimise conflict and help everyone enjoy the environment. It is also important to know something about the others we are paddling with

We may need to observe: Who else is in the area? Are we using a managed or supervised venue? What is the etiquette here? Where can we park and change considerately to other users? Who else is paddling with us? What is their current ability? Have we an agreed aim and motivation for the trip?

Consideration: Safety and rescue

We may need to know: How can we protect ourselves and others from any potential hazards? What additional equipment might be useful to carry and have access to? What would we do if someone we are paddling with gets really cold or overheats? How would we safely get ourselves or others back to shore or into the craft? How would we deal with a capsized craft? How would we deal with loose kit? What potential injuries might we need to treat? How might we do this? Do the conditions match our forecast? How can we change our plans if they are not?

Consideration: Getting to the water

We may need to determine: How are we going to get to the access point and do we need to organise a shuttle? What is the best way to carry, load and secure our craft to protect ourselves or others from injury and prevent unnecessary damage? How will we get our craft and additional equipment to the water? Are there any restricted areas and how would we find this out?

4. Touring Skills

When paddling we should be in control. Key features of being in control include us staying relaxed, understanding how to travel forwards and turn. We will also need to be able to manoeuvre our craft in tighter places and stop. But before we can do that, we need to be able to launch.

Skill: Getting on the water

We may need to consider: How does the height of the bank and depth of the water affect how we launch? How can we work together to launch safely? Are there other water users who will be affected by our getting on the water? How can we minimise any disturbance to them? How will the wind and flow affect the positioning of our craft as we launch? How can we stabilise the craft during launch? Where will our equipment be positioned while we launch?

Skill: Forward paddling

We may need to consider: How can we set up our craft to help us paddle in the direction we wish to go? How can changing our trim, edge, paddling speed and style aid our journey? How can we best utilise the wind or flow to aid us? How is the wind and flow going to affect us?

Skill: Journeying - when journeying we will think about looking where we want to be. 'Future water' is a term often used to describe this.

We may need to know: What craft and body positions we can use to get the most from the environment? What other factors could come into play? What paddle strokes, poling techniques and sailing methods can we use to be as efficient and effective as possible? When might we choose to use a pole or ropes instead of a paddle? How can we use the wind to our advantage? What strokes and methods would we use to go around an obstruction, through small gaps, move sideways, enter or cross eddy lines or flows and prevent a capsizing? How can we affect the shape and speed of our track over water?

5. After the Session

Every paddle session is an opportunity for learning and improving. We can use each session to positively aid our future development by reflecting on our trip.

Look around: Have conditions changed whilst we were out on the water? Was that expected? Did anything else occur which was not expected whilst on our trip? How did we deal with that?

Watching what others do: How was our trip in relation to others? Why did we/they have a good day? Are they using their skills more efficiently than us?

Consider what you will take away: What have we learnt today? What can we focus on next time?

6. Future Development

Each day we spend paddling we further expand our skills and knowledge, creating a more enjoyable experience on the water. With no two experiences ever the same, we never stop learning.

Continually evaluating the choices we make creates a natural evolution of decision making ability and skills. When we reach a certain point in this, it may be worth considering moving onto the Open Water Touring Award.

