



## Guidance for Water Users at Talkin Tarn on precautions to be taken in the presence of Blue Green algae.

### Background

Members of the club are responsible for their own safety at all times. It is the duty of the club to ensure that risk of reaction to coming into contact with Blue Green Algae(cyanobacteria) is minimised in accordance with the risk assessment.

The Environment Agency publish advice notes on the risks and precautions to be taken in the event of Blue Green Algae levels <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blue-green-algae-advice-for-the-public> presenting a hazard to water users. Copies of this document are available for all members to consult from and to help inform their decision making.

Blue Green Algae occurs naturally in inland waters, and Human health risk from exposure to Blue-Green algae toxins can arise through direct contact with exposed parts of the body (especially sensitive areas such as ears, eyes, mouth and throat), swallowing or inhaling water containing the algae. Different groups of water users are at different levels of risk, depending on the amount of time they are likely to spend in/ close to the affected water. Participants in descending order of likely risk are as follows: -

1. Swimmers, paddlers, dogs, other animals including some farm animals, children playing at water's edge, fishermen using the bank and water's edge.
2. Windsurfers whose level of competence, as assessed by a sailing school, puts them at risk in the prevailing wind conditions of becoming immersed in or blowing into, areas of algal scum.
3. Dinghy and catamaran sailors, **rowers**, canoeists, windsurfers as assessed by the club to be competent for the prevailing conditions.
4. Fishermen fishing from a boat or pontoon, pleasure boats

### Procedures Specific to Talkin Tarn

This advice note covers three simple steps:

1. Assess and manage the risk
2. Provide Information to all water users
3. Declaration to be signed by participants

#### Assess and manage the risk

1. On each training session or race day an appointed official of the club shall read the latest results provided by the City Council and the Environment Agency. This will be available on the notice board outside the changing rooms. If the City Council believes that Blue Green Algae may present a risk the amber warning will be displayed on the information supported by the amber or red flag being flown on the flag pole outside of the boat house tea room.
2. In the event that the amber or red flag is flying the appointed club official should inspect the shore and bays to note collections of thick aggregations of Algae or scum and declare such areas as out of bounds. Contact with these areas is to be avoided and every effort should be made to ensure that users do not use out of bounds areas.
3. The race officer, coach and safety officer shall make themselves familiar with any areas that are deemed out of bounds by the appointed official and adjust their program accordingly.
4. The rescue boat operator shall consult the note and watch to ensure that users avoid out of bounds areas.
5. In the event that a user capsizes in an out of bounds area the safety officer shall make every effort to minimise the time the user spends in contact with the Algae, returning them to the launching area as quickly as possible and before attempting to recover any craft.
6. The user will be advised to use the shower facilities to reduce the risk of skin irritation.
7. A record of the incident will be kept in accordance with the requirements of the governing body.

#### Provide Information to all Water Users

The basic principle applied is that if those responsible for the management of club:

- i. Take the steps necessary to help users avoid the worst areas of contamination;  
and
  - ii. Fully explain to users the possible risks and the personal safety precautions that should be taken;
  - iii. then those who choose to go onto the water will have voluntarily accepted such risks as there may be.
1. Users, other than juniors, are responsible for their own safety and the safety of other water users at all times. The club undertakes to provide all the relevant

information for the user to decide whether they wish to go onto the water on any particular day.

2. Water users are advised to read notices on the notice boards to understand the current level of Algae, any out of bound areas and seek advice from the safety officer, coach or nominated official before going onto the water.
3. New members will be made aware of the possible risk of reaction to the Blue Green Algae and instructed on how the club will work with the user to minimise risk, including a copy of this note and access to the Environment Agency leaflet on Blue Green Algae.
4. As part of the application, and at the annual renewal, users will be asked to confirm that they understand the procedure adopted, will work within any guidance issued to them for their safety including conforming with requests to treat certain areas of the Tarn as out of bounds. (see note below on juniors)
5. At the start of each club event the users should make themselves aware of any out of bounds areas and ensure that they are avoided. If the safety officer, coach or other club official requests that the user moves from an area this shall be done without delay.
6. Members going onto the water outside of scheduled times do so at their own risk and should ensure that they are familiar with the latest EA analysis and assess the risk for themselves. This includes the identification of out of bounds areas. The club accepts no responsibility for the welfare of members outside of scheduled meetings.
7. Avoid horseplay near the water.
8. Ensure that broken skin is protected from possible contact by providing cover such as bandage or plaster.
9. In the event that your skin does come into contact with the Algae then wash with clean water as soon as practical.

### **Working with Children (Juniors)**

By 'children' we mean those who would be regarded in law as too young to make a valid judgement about whether to accept the risk of injury by participating in a hazardous activity.

Water sports have an element of risk. All water sports are properly managed at the Tarn and most risks associated with it are self-evident,

This is not the case with potential dangers arising from water pollution or Blue Green algae growth.

An instructor or coach in charge of a group of juniors must provide the standard of care as outlined in British Rowing guidance WG 3.1 duty of care.

Instructors must therefore try and judge what a parent (having the same information on algae problems that the instructor has) would do when deciding whether to allow their child to use the water for sailing or rowing. This should take into account the prevailing conditions and the ability of the child.

Written consent from a parent or guardian

Whilst it not essential to obtain written consent from the parent or guardian, it is good practice to obtain a parent's consent. It is important to realise however that such consent does not operate as an effective disclaimer of responsibility. The legal rights of a child will not be affected by a disclaimer made either by the parent or made directly by the child. Neither will those of a young person. The significance of the consent of the parent is that it indicates that you are behaving towards the child as they would. That the parent or guardian has read and understood the potential risks and recognises that the instructor or coach will be allowed to make decisions with the best interests of the child in mind.

#### Declaration to be signed by participants

It is proposed that users are asked to sign to confirm the principles outlined above at the time of joining or renewing membership. Such declaration shall confirm that they have read and understood the procedure for protection from Blue Green algae contact and that they will comply with all authorised instructions to ensure the safety and well-being of themselves and other water users.

In the case of children a signature by the parent of guardian recognises that they understand and accept the risk and will allow the instructor or coach to make decisions on the day in the best interests of the child.