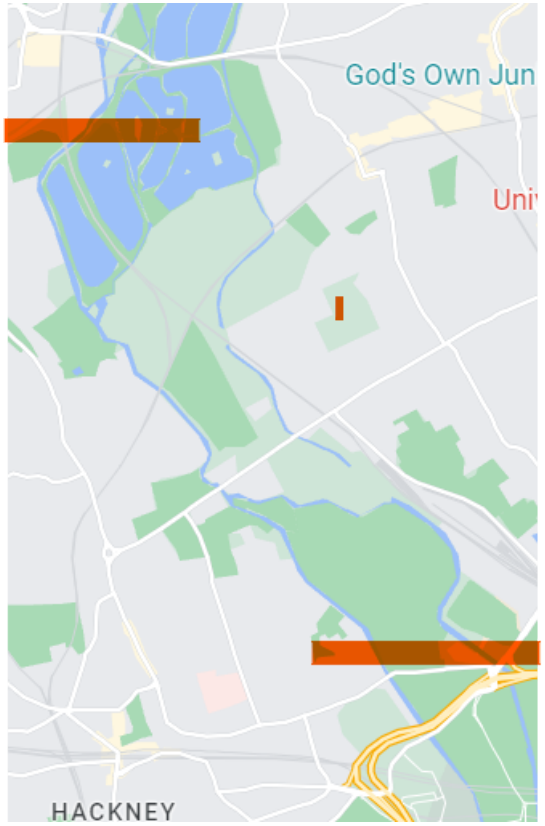
Leaside Off-Road Cycling Risk Assessment

Normal Operating Area

Reviewed:19/08/2025
Next review date: 19/08/2026
Reviewed by: Sam Saunder



The Normal Centre Operating Area is defined between the two lines. To the top, Markfield Park, and to the bottom, the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. This includes the towpath on both sides of the River Lea / Lea Navigation and the cycle path through Hackney Marshes as well as Springfield Park

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Risk	Potential Cause	Who is At Risk?	Control Measures	Risk	Comments
Manual handing Injury	Incorrect technique used.	All	Ensure the correct lifting method is used by staff as advised in H&S and Normal Operating Policies. Staff to advise participants on the correct method of lifting and carrying bicycles. Staff to ensure that bikes are always stored in appropriate storage facilities with clear access.	Medium	Ensure staff are fully trained on manual handling procedures. Participants are not allowed to collect or return bikes from the container. Staff are to issue and return all bikes.
Defect to bicycle.	Misuse of equipment. Broken equipment not put into quarantine or replaced	All	Ensure all bikes meet safety standards. Check bikes before use. Bicycles subject to periodic inspection by a full-time member of staff.	Low	Instruct participants to do a basic safety check on their bikes, e.g. correct tyre pressure, brakes are working correctly both at front and back, wheels are fully secured and gears functioning. This should be done with participants before each cycling session to teach them personal safety routines that they should follow. Staff to carry small repair kit on session
Slippery bankside	Poor weather. Surface water. Wildlife droppings.	All	Staff to communicate clearly that there is no cycling near the waterfront (back of the centre)	Medium	
Falling off bike	Slippery surface. Inadequate footwear. Uneven surface. Inappropriate behaviour. Sports Injury.	All	Helmets must be worn correctly at all times when using bikes. Reduce speed, particularly when the surface has become wet and/or slippery. Warmup in carpark before session.	Medium	Correct control of bicycle should always be introduced (and repeated) during sessions.
Falling into water	Inappropriate behaviour. Inability of participant to control bike effectively Fall whilst cycling along riverside	All	Clear instructions to participants on movement on pathways by bankside and towpath. Staff to communicate clear rules about safety near water's edge. Staff to take particular care on towpath between: • Rowing Club and Mildmay Park • And Lea Bridge Road and Copper Box Arena	Medium	Safety Briefing Cycling route should be planned according to group ability. The Hackney Marsh/Old River section should only be used by suitably experienced staff, with competent groups. There is the option of part of the group can follow the cycle path, in which case extra care should be taken on communicating stopping points.

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			As well as ramps on all footbridges crossing the river. The section of pathway through the woods alongside the old river and hackney marshes poses extra risk as the banks are sloping.		
Clothing caught in freewheel or pedals	Inappropriate clothing Untied shoelaces	All	Ensure that all users wear adequate clothing for mountain biking. Provide equipment to prevent clothing from entanglement i.e. rolling up loose clothing around ankle region Instruct participants to check their shoelaces	Low	Group must be briefed on risk of clothing/laces getting caught. Staff to visually check before leaving site.
Cycle collision -with other participants -with pedestrians -with dogs -with road furniture	Participant unable to control bike Lack of awareness of others Lack of awareness of surroundings Public idiocy	All	Staff to safety brief all participants. Staff to maintain good group control during sessions and raise awareness if need be. Etiquette to be briefed and extra care taken around dogs on leads and children.	Low	Incident to be logged in the incident/accident book by coach/instructor/leader in charge of session. Staff and volunteers leading activities must be trained in relevant first aid.
Poor Weather	Slippery surface because of mud and surface water or snow/ice Lightning strikes Getting too cold/hot	All	Staff to make sure appropriate clothes are worn.	Medium	Lead instructor can call off session if the risk increases significantly because of weather conditions. Cycling route must be planned accordingly taking risk caused by poor weather into consideration.
Wellbeing	Hypothermia caused by long exposure to elements Heat exhaustion. Injuries due to coming off bike.	All	Helmets must be worn at all times when taking part in cycling activities. Footwear (in particular shoelaces) must be checked before departure. Appropriate clothing that protects cyclists from elements must be worn. Bottles of drinking water must be taken along especially during hot weather.	High	Activity leads must hold relevant first aid qualifications (e.g. outdoor first aid) Instructor should have a spare bottle of drinking water with them at all times. There are points where drinking water is available to refill bottles. These should be included in the route plan in hot weather
Visitor unable to take or forgotten medication	Medication has been left at site or not brought to the centre.	Participants with medical needs.	Staff to ensure all medication is taken on activity. Waterproof bags to be provided and kept with participants.	Medium	Staff must <u>not</u> provide their own personal medication.

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			Staff to be made aware of any visitors with medical needs.		
Operating outside of the Normal Operating Area	Wanting to go further afield with more experienced and capable groups	All participants	From time to time, some user groups will want to go beyond the NOA. All of the risks are the same as detailed above, with the only addition being distance from base. Suitably experienced staff are allowed to extend the operating area under the following conditions: 1. They know the area they are going to use 2. They share the route and plan with someone at Leaside before they go 3. They carry a comprehensive tool/repair kit 4. They carry suitable first aid kit 5. The plan fits within the session times and is cut short if the return will be later than the session end time 6. The group is deemed capable of riding the extended distances involved	Medium	There should be a reason for going outside of the NOA and this should form part of the planned activity, rather than being an ad-hoc decision during the session. The locations visited are likely to include, and not limited to: Victoria Park + skate park QEOP + Bike trails Mabley Green + skate park Hackney Bumps Cheney Row Park + bike track Walthamstow wetlands Cycle leaders to raise their intention to operate outside of the NOA during the briefing, when a briefing does not take place the KICKER should be informed. The Leader must carry a method of long range communication (Mobile Phone) and have the KICKER phone number saved.