

CHANGING ROOM GUIDANCE

This guidance has been produced in response to a number of queries from individuals, clubs and centres seeking advice about safe use of changing facilities, in particular adults and children sharing facilities. There are no specific legal requirements regarding the use of changing facilities; this guidance document is therefore intended to provide practical guidance to support individuals, clubs and centres to develop their own policies and procedures which will fit their specific environment.

It is important that once a Changing Room policy has been created, it is clearly communicated and known by everyone using the facility (remember to provide information in advance, to those attending for the first time). It is also important that everyone knows what to do if they feel the policy is not being adhered to or if they have any concerns.

One way of reducing the risks associated with adults and children sharing changing facilities would be to provide separate gender specific facilities for both adults and juniors. However, there are very few venues where it is either practical or possible to provide this level of facility; therefore other Safeguarding measures should be put in place.

Unlike some other sports where there is a clear separation between adult team and junior team sessions, canoeing is often participated in by a mix of age groups at the same time. Therefore when it comes to the use of changing rooms it is not always easy to allocate specific time slots for use for adults only or use for children only (although this is an option which may work for some venues).

There are no rules stipulating under 18s and adults of the same gender should not share changing facilities; however the following guidance should be considered.

- Gender specific changing rooms are available.
- Changing Room Policy and contact details of who to report concerns or breach of the policy to, are clearly posted in or near each changing room for all users to see.
- Parents of U18s know and agree to the Changing Room Policy and are aware they are for mixed age group use.
- Where possible, there should not be a time when one adult is alone in the changing room when U18's are present and vice versa, there should not be a time where an U18 is alone in the changing room when there are adults present (unless when the U18 is accompanied by their parent).
- Where possible, coaches should shower and change at a different time or in a different changing facility to the group they are coaching.
- Mobile phones, cameras or any other recording devices **must not** be used in changing rooms at any time.
- Parents of U18s should be allowed to supervise their child (of the same gender) whilst in the changing room.
- Children under the age of 8 can change, when accompanied by their parent, in the changing room of the opposite gender.

Remember, not everyone (adult or child), will be comfortable using group changing facilities. No pressure should ever be put on someone using the facilities and the option to change at home or for an individual to find an alternative provision should always be made available.

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