



Risk Assessment

Date Compiled: 1st April 09

Location: Watergate Bay

Date of Activity: Ongoing

Activity: Kite surfing on the sea and launching and landing of LEI kites on land.

Location background information:

Watergate bay is a west-north west-facing beach and is almost two miles long. Kite surfing should be conducted 2 hours before and after high tide to ensure beach safety. At higher tides there is no beach available for launching.

There is a sea wall running along the top of some of the beach, with buildings directly behind this. High cliffs run along the whole beach.

There can often be considerable swell at Watergate Bay however there are usually good flat sections of water between the waves for beginners.

During spring tides there can be considerable water movement and rips in certain places.

RNLI lifeguards patrol the beach during the peak season and there are swim zones indicated by red and yellow flags located at intervals along the entire beach. Kite surfing in these swim zones is strictly forbidden and care should be taken when kite surfing upwind of these zones in case the rider gets into difficulty and drifts downwind into the swim areas. Kite surfing is allowed north of the rocks when the beach is patrolled by the RNLI.

Wind Directions: Watergate bay can be used in wind directions ranging from S round to N. SW winds offer excellent conditions, as it is cross-on shore.

S winds are cross-shore and can be gusty, Care needs to be taken if kiting up at the North end of the beach as any escape route down wind is hampered by rocks and the headland.

Who is at Risk: Kite Flyer and other kitesurfers.

All third party beach and water users and pets.



Risk Control Measures:

Location	Risk	Control Measure
Watergate Beach	Kite Lines: Can cause lacerations if grabbed or someone is hit by them at speed	<p>Launching and landing of kites to be done with assistance from an experienced kite surfer. Solo launch and landing should be conducted with extreme care and vigilance for other beach users.</p> <p>Kite killer, safety leash system to be checked and fully functional.</p> <p>Ample space should be left between each kite flyer. At least two line lengths.</p>
	Collision: Risk of collision with other water users or entanglement	<p>All kite surfers to know and understand the 'rules of the road' or right of way to avoid collisions.</p> <p>Kite surfers entering the water have priority.</p> <p>No kite surfing anywhere within the RNLI flagged swim zones.</p>
	Kites: Can be heavy and cause injury if hitting someone at high speed	<p>It is important to secure the kite well when not in use. The mixture of small pebbles and sand on the beach can cause the kites to 'skid' if not weighed down sufficiently on the beach.</p> <p>Ample space to be left between each flyer and they must watch out for people and animals in the flying zone.</p> <p>Horses use this beach occasionally, so either land kites or hold kites still in neutral zone if animals appear in the flying area.</p> <p>All kite surfers must use a safety leash system.</p>
	Board: If the rider is hit by their board it can cause an injury. A loose board may create a hazard to other water users.	<p>Helmets should be worn by all kite surfers, especially in waves to prevent head injuries.</p>
	Windsurfers and other kite surfers: Possible collision with other water users	<p>The kite surfer must keep a look out for windsurfers and other kite surfers and follow the 'rules of the road'</p>



	People on the shoreline: Risk of collision	Kite surfers must keep vigilant for people wandering into their downwind flying area and either land their kite or take it to the neutral zone until they have passed.
	Rip currents: Dragging Kites away from beach	Kite surfers should assess the situation before going out. Allow enough escape area if the kite is dropped.
	Swimmers and surfers: Risk of collisions	Watergate Bay is a popular surf beach and kite surfers should show respect especially when catching waves that surfers are trying to catch. Kite surfers can catch waves much easier than surfers and should show consideration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kite surfers should never enter the RNLI designated swim zones but out of season these zones are not enforced. Kite surfers must be vigilant for swimmers in the water. Swimmers and surfers often come into the area used for kite surfing. If a swimmer or surfer is encountered then the kite should be moved to the neutral zone to avoid collision and stop their movement until the water user has passed.
	Cliffs: Falling rocks Cutting off access	Kite surfing should not be conducted at high tide. There is a risk of falling rocks from the high cliffs.
	Rocks: Risk of collision with submerged rocks	There is a line of rocks in front of the hotel that can be exposed. Local knowledge should be sought, or kite surf at low tide so that the rocks are visible.
	Tides: Cutting off access	At higher states of the tide, if a kite is dropped near the cliffs, it can be difficult to relaunch and the kites might find themselves trapped as the cliffs cut off access from the beach. No kiting here at two hours either side of high tide.
	Waves: Risk of losing control of the kite when flyer caught by shore break.	Watergate Bay can experience large swell and waves. Kite surfers must assess the conditions and only enter the water in conditions they are comfortable in and must wear appropriate safety equipment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not go out further than you are prepared to swim in considering the



		prevailing conditions. • Be aware of swim zones and other water users and pack down if the kite is caught in heavy waves and is dragging towards other water users.
	Risk of damage or loss of kite if dropped in the shore break	If a kite is dropped in the shore break it is often very difficult to re-launch so the kite surfer should be ready to flag the kite out and pack down.