

# 2.2 Steering & Navigation

## Be safe, be seen Responsibilities

### Personal

- Check the steering equipment before the outing as part of the boat checking procedure
- Follow correct steering procedures and navigation rules when on 'home' water, or away at a training camp or competition venue
- Report to the club any transgression of navigation rules you have observed
- Inform the club of any change in the location or type of hazard encountered
- Report any defects in steering equipment to the club responsible

### Club

- Provide advice and training for those who steer boats
- Ensure steering equipment is suitably maintained
- Display a plan of the local water including circulation patterns, the location of hazards and access points
- Ensure that those who steer boats are familiar with the information on the local plan
- Provide information on relevant local byelaws (eg those issued by the Port of London Authority) and ensure that these are observed



### Coach

- Provide information and training to crews on navigation, hazards and steering rules at all venues visited
- Check that crews (and particularly those steering) know the location of all hazards and how to avoid them
- Set a good example to crews when coaching
- Inform the club of any change in the location or type of hazard encountered
- Report to the club any transgression of navigation rules that they have observed

### Club Water Safety Adviser/Regional Water Safety Adviser

- Ensure the club has produced a map of the 'home' water showing:
  - the navigation pattern
  - permanent hazards
  - access and exit points to and from the water in case of emergency
- Review the Club Safety Plan and inform members of any required changes in the navigation rules
- Liaise with other water users on the safe use of the 'home' water and agree a common policy

### Competition Organisers

- Provide clear instructions on the steering and navigation rules for the competition
- Provide information about warm up and cool down areas

### Launch Drivers

- Observe good steering practice during an outing and advise crews on any steering issues or problems

## Minimum standards to be adopted

Any person steering a boat takes on a highly responsible role and must:

- Communicate effectively with their crew
- Be aware of their position at all times relative to circulation patterns, hazards and other water users
- Maintain a high level of attention both visually and aurally in order to be able to assess situations and take appropriate action to avoid accidents
- Learn and use concise commands for boat control both off and on the water – and to be able to use these correctly, clearly and instructively
- Understand and observe the local navigation rules and the audible and visual signals given by others with whom the water is shared
- Know how to stop the boat safely in an emergency
- When visiting unfamiliar water, take particular care to learn of local hazards, weather conditions and rules of navigation

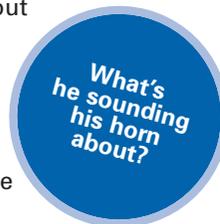


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- Be conversant with safety and rescue procedures in the case of accident
- Recognise and respect the rights and needs of other water users, especially anglers
- Watch out for swimmers at all times and be alert to unexpected floating objects
- Know what to do in the case of an accident or capsize – and to have practised dealing with such situations



- Coxswains must wear an approved lifejacket or buoyancy aid when on the water, both in training and in competition
- Inflatable lifejackets must not be worn under other garments
- In 'front-loader' boats only manual inflating lifejackets must be worn and must allow easy and unrestricted escape from the boat
- Coxswains must fully understand and be practised in the operation of their lifejacket/buoyancy aid
- Those responsible for steering boats must be able to satisfy their club and coach that they are in good health with adequate vision and hearing. Where prior evidence of epileptic fits or blackouts exists, coaches and crews must seek medical advice and be made fully aware of actions to be taken should an incident arise
- Coxswains should wear clothing suitable for the weather conditions. Particular care should be taken to ensure warmth around the head, neck and lower back, wrists and ankles. Water resistant outer gloves are recommended but bulky or heavy clothing and 'wellington' type boots which hinder movement, are to be avoided (where practicable) and should only be worn if easily removable by kicking off without the use of hands
- Rowing or sculling in the dark or in poor visibility is dangerous and is not to be encouraged. At all times in poor visibility, (eg after sunset and early morning) craft shall be fitted with white lights showing fore and aft and visible through 360 degrees, as required by COLREG (Rule 25). Where a local Navigation Authority specifies differently, then such requirements must be met
- Coxswains must be aware of the symptoms and dangers of hypothermia
- Voice projection and radio communication equipment when carried in the boat, must be securely fixed to the boat, not the coxswain. Similarly in competition, deadweight must not be attached to or carried in the clothing of the coxswain



- A map of the 'home' water must be exhibited in a prominent position(s) showing:
  - the navigation pattern
  - all permanent hazards
  - sites of any potential temporary hazards – if appropriate
  - locations of emergency life belt sites, safety aids, etc.
  - sites of public telephones
  - easy access for emergency vehicles, ideally using GPS sites where it is easy to get out of the water
  - sites where it is difficult, or impossible, to get out of the water
- Any changes in the type or location of hazards must be brought to the attention of participants
- All members must be educated on the navigation rules
- A system must be in place to re-educate transgressors or discipline anyone blatantly disregarding the navigation rules
- Liaise with other water users to establish a safe and workable navigation plan

## Navigation rules

The International Regulations for Preventing Accidents at Sea lay down a series of sound signals to be used by the Masters of craft when about to change direction, there are also light and other signs used to indicate temporary or other hazards in the navigation channels.

Set out below, with their meanings, is a selection of those signs and signals most likely to be encountered by rowers and scullers.

## Sound signals

- I am altering my course to starboard
- ■ I am altering my course to port
- ■ ■ My engines are going astern
- ■ ■ ■ I am doubtful if you are taking sufficient avoiding action

There are other signals and for more information reference should be made to more extensive literature on the subject.

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## Bridge signals

When an arch or span of a bridge is closed to navigation the following signals will be suspended from the centre of the arch:

by night: 3 red lights in an equilateral triangular configuration

by day: 3 red discs in place of the lights, each 0.6 metres in diameter

When the headroom of an arch or span is reduced, but still open to traffic, the following signals shall be suspended from the centre of that arch:

by night: 1 white light

by day: a bundle of straw large enough to be easily visible



## Further good practice

(In addition to minimum standards to be adopted)

- Level 1 Steering Award
- Level 2 Steering Award

## Further information

### ARA website

- Level 1 Coxing/Steering award
- Watch Where You're Going poster

### Other

- COLREGS: Collision Regulations – Port of London Authority
- Rowing on the Tideway – Thames Regional Rowing Council and Port of London Authority
- Keep a Good Lookout poster

