

Introduction

Safety on and off the water

Safety has become an increasing issue in sport and in our daily lives. For some people this is a question of having more rules, and for others it is a matter of having more common sense.

Both viewpoints have some merit and in developing Row Safe the ARA has defined responsibilities and standards of practice for all those involved in the sport so that each of us can manage safety issues within our rowing environment.

All decisions about safety at rowing clubs and competitions should be based on 'risk management' as no 'book of rules' can possibly cover all situations. By continually assessing likely risks and taking action to manage them, some generalised 'standards' can be developed, enabling us to provide guidance on how to avoid and take action on unforeseen hazardous situations.

The key element in this process is a balanced assessment of risks in advance, the communication to club or competition members on how to take action to limit those risks and how to cope with hazards when they occur. A policy of risk management also requires a review of system failures and any necessary re-shaping of guidance and rules in the light of the experience gained.

A strong theme for this framework is 'think safe' and the ARA's aim is to provide clubs with educational and training resources that will encourage all members to have safety in mind from the moment they approach their club premises or a competition area to the time of leaving.

The main message in the new Row Safe guidance is that clubs have a responsibility to provide information, education and training about safety, and individuals have a responsibility to find out, learn, question and put this into practice. A club should be confident that none of its members can find themselves in a situation where they can justifiably say 'I was never told about that' or 'I didn't know who to ask or what to do when it happened'. Having safety in mind at all times is an important part of what it means to be a club member.

'Row Safe' outlines the roles responsibilities and minimum standards of safe practice. It also gives guidance on further good practice. Row Safe will continue to be developed in response to new standards and safety issues and, just as importantly, feedback from members.

"I'm pleased to endorse this Row Safe Guide. In my view safety is not something that should curtail what we can do. Safety training can be fun and rewarding and good practice allows us all to enjoy rowing in an environment which is as safe as necessary."



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Redgrave".

Sir Steve Redgrave, CBE