



Row Safe

Key points for your safe rowing

A brief summary of the initial elements of safety and procedures that need to be addressed by both experienced rowers and those new to the sport. Your club and coaches will be able to further educate and train you in the topics covered in this pamphlet.

www.ara-rowing.org/safety

Water safety
doesn't just
happen —
we have to
learn to be
safe...



Before you go afloat

Health difficulties

One of the first steps you must take is to disclose any relevant health problems. Rowing clubs are not qualified to give you medical advice, so you should raise any concerns with your doctor. However, clubs are often able to make provisions for health difficulties, allowing you to take part safely.

Swimming competence

You must be sure that you can achieve at least the minimum swimming standard and water competence set out by the club. You should be asked to complete a swimming competence test before any water activity takes place and will be trained in capsize/immersion procedure. If for any reason you are unable to meet the requirements then a buoyancy aid or lifejacket must be worn.

Remember that giving false information could put you and others in danger and it is very important to ask about anything you do not understand.

Log books

It is a good idea to record your progress. Keeping a log of your own experience, training and knowledge of your club is an excellent way to stay

safe in the sport and can also serve as a reminder of what you should know and do.

New to the water?

You need to know where you can and cannot row. Consider:

- Local navigation rules – boat booking board, outing times and so on
- Where to turn around and which direction to boat
- When it is safe to row, when it isn't
- Lighting, visibility and weather conditions
- The location of the Water Safety Code, notice board and local rules
- Local hazards like stream or tide, and other water users
- Right of way
- Where the nearest emergency contact point is and who to summon in case of an emergency

Young people

If you are under 18, or are the parent or a carer of someone under 18 who is learning to row, you should know who your club welfare officer is and how to contact them. The ARA *Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy* is available to download at: www.ara-rowing.org/safeguarding



Clothes and weather conditions

In competition, athletes race in their club strip. This usually consists of a garment called an 'all-in-one', which is stretchy and close fitting with both top and shorts in one piece. Sometimes other clothing may be worn underneath, depending on the weather.

Although it is not necessary to wear an all-in-one for training, the principle of having close fitting garments which allow easy movement is important, as this avoids the oar or sculls getting caught which could lead to a capsized.

Normal conditions

It is important to know what you should wear in differing weather conditions. If, for instance, the conditions are normal, then wearing close fitting garments that are of a stretchy material should suffice, as they generally won't restrict your movements.

Cold weather

If the conditions are cold, then you should wear:

- Warm/waterproof layers
- A first layer of a thin technical/thermal material, which can wick (transfer) away moisture from your body
- Layers of light clothing to allow you to regulate your temperature by removing a layer as you warm up or replacing as you cool down
- Suitable headgear, since half of the body's heat loss can be through the head
- A light windproof/waterproof top, which will reduce heat loss and the wind chill factor
- A close fitting tracksuit top, bottom or sports leggings, since the arms and legs are areas where heat loss can be a problem and cold muscles struggle to perform

Warm weather

In hot or sunny conditions, you should wear:

- Clothing to keep you cool and protect you from exposure to the sun
- Layers of light clothing (like t-shirts) which wick away moisture from the body and can be easily removed as you warm up
- Headgear for sun protection and clothing to prevent sunburn

- Sunglasses to reduce glare from the water
- Sun cream or sun block

Note that a water bottle is a must for both winter and summer training and racing. Dehydration will impair your performance and can lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Sharing water bottles, however, should be avoided.

What you should not wear

- Loose fitting clothes that could catch your oars or get stuck in your slide when rowing
- Bulky garments that can absorb water and become very heavy when wet like fleeces and quilted items
- Clothes that restrict your movement when rowing or if you fall in the water like denim jeans and tops
- Everyday, non-sporting clothes

Wellington type boots are worthy of special mention. Wellingtons, which cannot be easily removed or kicked off without the use of hands, should never be worn in the boat.

They present a real danger if you end up in the water.

Be a
'weather
watcher'
and dress
for the
conditions...



Boats and Equipment

Boat and equipment checks

It is advisable that you know the correct procedures when checking your boat or equipment in advance of each outing, including:

- Boat and blades
- Bowballs
- Heel restraints
- Boat buoyancy – hatches, canvas, bungs, manufacturer plates and so on
- Loose parts
- Steering equipment

Capsize instructions

In the event of a capsize, the golden rule is to **stay with your boat**, summon assistance and get your body out of the water as soon as possible. You ought to know how to turn the boat over, get back in or use it as a life raft.

Boat handling

Make sure that you are able to:

- Lift and carry the boat/equipment safely
- Use the trestles correctly
- Launch, land and steer the boat correctly
- Stop the boat on the water safely
- Back down and turn a boat around correctly

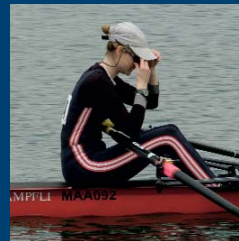
Personal flotation devices (PFDs)

PFDs (lifejackets and buoyancy aids) should be worn by beginners when skill levels are low and the risk of a capsize is high. Users should be aware of the different types of PFDs and know how to store them safely, check they are in working order, identify the correct type to wear in different circumstances and secure them correctly.

Throw bags

You never know when you may be in a position to attempt a rescue using a throw bag to pull a person in the water to safety, which is why practice is important. There is a very simple technique involved and you should ask your coach or club to show you how to successfully aim and throw the bag.

“Your boat and equipment keep you afloat – look after them and they won’t let you down...”



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T: 020 8237 6700 E: info@ara-rowing.org W: www.ara-rowing.org

Amateur Rowing Association, 6 Lower Mall, Hammersmith, London, W6 9DJ