

5.2 First Aid

Are we prepared if there is an accident?

Responsibilities

Personal

- Be aware of your club's emergency plans and procedures
- Report any accidents to First Aiders or club officers and provide details of any first aid sundries, such as plasters or disposable gloves etc. used
- Report to the club any deficiencies in first aid cover or summoning of emergency assistance

Club

- Have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) within the Club Safety Plan and ensure adequate First Aid is available during all club activities
- Communicate the EAP to all club members
- Encourage Club First Aiders to maintain their certification
- Keep a record of who they are
- Provide suitable quantities of First Aid materials within box(es) clearly identified as 'First Aid'
- Locate sufficient First Aid Boxes in easily accessible areas of the club and/or boathouse

Club First Aiders (if applicable) usually members who have undergone a training course in administering First Aid at work and hold a current First Aid at Work certificate

- Provide First Aid cover at club sessions as required by the club
- Conduct regular inspections of first aid sundries and equipment to ensure adequate supplies are available and in good condition
- Attend regular refresher training courses to ensure certification stays current

Competition Organisers

- Produce an EAP and ensure adequate First Aid cover is provided
- Ensure documentation and signage is such that competitors and spectators should be aware of the location of the First Aid Post(s)
- Ensure adequate communication to summon first aid is provided
- Inform all the emergency services of the competition, its Safety Plan and, specifically, make arrangements with the ambulance service for an emergency response
- Ensure that the ARA Regatta/Head Medical Return is completed (including a nil return)

Minimum standards to be adopted

- Adequate First Aid facilities must be available at club sessions and competitions
- Clubs must ensure First Aid Boxes are available with the agreed minimum contents (see the recommended list)
- Clubs must ensure all First Aid boxes have sufficient regular checks against a list of contents detailed inside the lid and the inspections recorded and dated
- All launches must carry a First Aid Box (or bag) with minimum agreed contents along with sufficient thermal blankets for the crews concerned when on the water
- Adequate numbers of thermal blankets for club activities must be available for emergencies
- Communicate the Club EAP to all members and publish emergency phone numbers and location of the nearest telephone if available
- The location of the club, including postcode and directions for emergency services, must be displayed in a clear concise manner and in particular by the side of all club telephones
- All emergency access points on a Club's plan of their waterway must be named and where possible a postcode added to assist Emergency Services
- Identify club members who are recognised First Aiders
- Maintain an up-to-date list of club First Aiders and display for members information

Further good practice

(In addition to minimum standards to be adopted)

- Promote First Aid sessions to all club members
- Promote lifesaving skills and resuscitation techniques to all club members
- Establish links with local First Aider providers
- Consider the suitability of the provision of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)

First Aid and Ambulance cover at competitions

Points to be considered:

The Competition Organisers must decide whether the organisation of emergency and First Aid support justifies the appointment of a Medical Officer (who does not have to be medically qualified) or whether this role will be combined with another role eg the Safety Adviser or Chairman of the Organising Committee.

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The Competition Organisers must decide what is appropriate first aid and ambulance cover for the competition and share this information with all competitors and officials.

When considering the requirements, a number of points must be taken into account:

- Location of the competition - remote or in a built-up area, easy or difficult access
- Extent of boating areas and type of race - large Head race to short, contained Regatta
- Potential hazards - cold or hot weather, capsize, limited access points
- People - number of competitors (age and rowing experience), spectators and supporters
- Access to NHS Ambulance Service - the organisation and speed of response varies from region to region. Details of the service provided need to be known
- First Aid Point(s) - typically these will be at the clubhouse or at appropriate points on the course, eg near the finish line or marshalling area
- Transporting the injured to the First Aid Point or ambulance - safety launch or private car, etc
- Proximity of permanent medical facilities - the location of the nearest hospital providing appropriate A&E support must be agreed between the ambulance service and competition organisers. This may not necessarily be the nearest hospital

On-site qualified first aid and medical personnel

- St John Ambulance the British Red Cross or private organisations are frequently employed at competitions to provide basic first aid cover. The scope of the cover provided needs to be understood by event organisers. These organisations will conduct their own assessment of the cover required
- Trained first aiders may be used at the event, providing cover in various capacities, eg club members, water sports centre staff. The presence of additional qualified first aiders in safety launches is desirable
- Qualified medical personnel, often Club members, are highly desirable. They are not covered by the ARA's insurance but by their own professional indemnity, which they should check. It should not be assumed that all medical personnel are qualified to deal with all types of incident that may occur
- Depending on the assessment of the requirements for the competition, paramedics, who are well qualified to deal with the majority of incidents encountered at rowing events, may be used

Make sure you know what to do in an emergency

Incident Control and Communications

If there is a medical occurrence, it is vital that it is clear who is in charge of handling the incident. There are likely to be a number of radio or telephone communications systems and it is essential that race officials, rescue launches and first aid providers understand how these systems interrelate both before rowers take to the water and for the duration of the competition.

Incident reporting and Medical Returns

All incidents must be recorded and reported online. Where first aid is required an ARA Regatta/Head Medical Return must be completed.

The various medical and rescue organizations may have their own recording systems, but cannot be relied upon to capture the information required by the sport.

The First Aid Box

There is no standard list of items to put in a First Aid Box, it depends on what you assess are the needs of your club. However, as a guide and where there is no special risk at the club site, both on and off the water, a minimum stock of first aid items should be:

First Aid knowledge can save lives

Leaflet giving general guidance on first aid x 1
Individually wrapped sterile adhesive waterproof dressings (assorted sizes) x 20
Sterile eye pads x 2
Individually wrapped triangular bandages (preferably sterile) x 1
Safety pins x 6
Medium-sized (approximately 12cm x 12cm) individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings x 6
Medium (approximately 10cm x 10cm) sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings x 2
'Micropore' tape 2.5cm x 1 roll
Disposable gloves – non latex x 2 pairs
Scissors x 1 pair
Antiseptic cleaning wipes x 6
Resuscitation face shield

Other items you may consider are:

Eye bath and sterile eye wash
Eye pad
Sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings large and small (15cm x 15cm and 5cm x 5cm)
Spare supplies of frequently used items

NB You should not keep tablets or medicines in the First Aid box.

The above is a suggested contents list only, equivalent but different items are considered acceptable.

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Rescuing and Resuscitation

On finding a person in the water who is in need of rescue:

Approach – establish there is no danger to yourself or the victim. If the person is in difficulties DO NOT go into the water to attempt a rescue – you may also become a victim

Look – is there something to help pull the victim out – a stick, some rope, clothing etc.

Reach – try to reach the person, but first lie down to prevent yourself being pulled in to the water

Throw – if the victim cannot be reached, throw any floating object, football, plastic bottle as a support

Tow – pull the victim steadily to the bank

If in a safety launch, carefully approach the victim if it is safe to do so, and bring to the shore. Remember to engage neutral or stop the engine to avoid serious injury from propeller

Remember - there may be neck or back injuries requiring extra care when moving the victim

Resuscitation, to be effective, must be started immediately, even if the patient is in a launch, otherwise irreversible damage or death may occur within a few minutes.

The saving of life during a medical emergency depends on the accurate assessment and proper management of the ABC of resuscitation;

- A – Airway
- B – Breathing
- C – Circulation (signs of life)

Further information

Row Safe – related sections

- 1.8 Cold Water Immersion & Hypothermia
- 5.1. Sunburn, Heat Stroke & Exhaustion

ARA website

- Basic Life Support poster

Other

- Royal Life Saving Society – www.rlss.org.uk
- British Red Cross – www.redcross.org.uk
- St John Ambulance – www.sja.org.uk

