



BRITISHROWING

# Row Safe

## Key points for your safer 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.

[www.britishrowing.org/safety](http://www.britishrowing.org/safety)



Water safety  
doesn't just  
happen —  
we have to  
learn to  
recognise risks



# 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 and be able to demonstrate this when asked. 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.

You must be briefed in capsizing/immersion procedure before any water activity takes place and the club should also arrange practical training.

## 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 safer 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, etc.
- 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 Row Safe guidance, notice board and local safety rules
- Local hazards like stream or tide, and other water users
- Rights of way etc.
- Emergencies contact point, telephone locations, telephone numbers 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 the club welfare officer is and how to contact them. The British Rowing Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy is available to download at: [www.britishrowing.org/safeguarding](http://www.britishrowing.org/safeguarding)

## Sunny weather



### T-shirt

Layers of light clothing which can be easily removed as you warm up and protect you from the sun.

### Shorts



### T-shirt

Layers of light clothing which can be removed or replaced as you heat up and cool down

### Tech top

A thin technical top which can wick moisture away from your body



### Leggings

### Body warmer



# Clothing and weather conditions

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.



### All in one



### Sunglasses

To reduce glare from the water



### Sun cream

For sun protection



### Water bottle

A water bottle is a must. Dehydration will impair your performance and can lead to heat exhaustion



### Cap



### Splash top

A light windproof/waterproof top to reduce heat loss and the wind chill factor



### Hat

To reduce heat loss

### Long socks



## Cold weather



### Water bottle



### What not to wear

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

#### Wellington boots deserve a special mention.

Wellingtons, which cannot be easily removed or kicked off without using hands, should never be worn in the boat. They present a real danger if you end up in the water.



Be a 'weather watcher' – be prepared for changes 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 – in good condition
- Bowballs – securely fastened
- Heel restraints – strong and correctly adjusted
- Boat buoyancy – secure hatches, canvas and bungs, manufacturer's information plate etc.
- Loose or damaged parts
- Steering equipment – fully working

## 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 lines

You never know when you may be in a position to attempt a rescue using a throw line 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 line. Your boat and equipment keep you afloat – look after them and they won't let you down...

# WHAT NEXT?

For further guidance and information go to:

- Your club safety notice board
- Your Coach and Captain
- Your Club Water Safety Adviser
- The British Rowing publication –

**Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing**,  
available at your club or on the British Rowing website  
[www.britishrowing.org/row-safe](http://www.britishrowing.org/row-safe)



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