

1.7 Weather & the Environment

Shall I go out today?

Responsibilities

Personal

- Assess the weather and water conditions for the duration and type of outing you are undertaking in accordance with the rules and guidelines available
- Be aware of your personal limitations and the local weather conditions, rules and guidelines
- Respect the individual concerns and capabilities of other crew members if boating in adverse conditions

Club

- Set out rules and guidelines for outings covering local weather and water conditions
- Inform members of the rules and guidelines
- Set up a communication network with the local navigation authority and other water users and communicate relevant information to crews
- Take due regard of any advice or direction provided by local navigation or other relevant water authority relating to local water or weather conditions and amend risk assessments and safety plans accordingly
- Ensure that rules and guidelines are observed
- Suspend or curtail boating activities where the conditions are assessed as unsafe
- Establish procedures for rowing or sculling in the dark, or in poor visibility

Assess conditions and amend as necessary

Coach

- Assess the weather and water conditions for the duration and type of outing you will be controlling in accordance with the rules and guidelines available
- Consider all the participants personal limitations, limitations of their equipment and safety facilities available
- Respect the individual's concerns and capabilities if boating in adverse conditions
- Take particular care to learn of local hazards, weather peculiarities, and local rules of navigation particularly when visiting unfamiliar water
- Ensure that every rower in your charge is aware of, and understands, the rules and guidelines for the activity being undertaken
- Ensure that the whole crew, including the coxswain, is suitably dressed and adequately protected for the weather conditions (wet, hot or cold) that they are likely to encounter

Club Water Safety Adviser

- Monitor compliance with the club's rules and guidelines
- Alert the club of any issues that may impact on these rules and guidelines
- Review incidents and advise on preventative measures
- Advise the suspension of activities should you believe the conditions be unsafe for whatever reason

Competition Organisers

- The Safety Adviser and the Chairman of the Race Committee shall monitor water and weather conditions leading up to and throughout the period of the competition
- If safety is compromised any of the key race officials associated with a particular race must halt racing, and should involve the Safety Adviser and the Chairman of the Race Committee as soon as possible
- Establish an effective procedure to stop or suspend racing in total or by class of event until such time as safe conditions are restored and to adhere to any advice given by the Competition Water Safety Adviser
- Ensure there are facilities for competitors, support staff and officials to cope with weather conditions
- Incorporate the risk from lightning in the Competition Safety Plan

Know your limitations

Regional Water Safety Adviser

- Review incidents in the Region and advise on preventative measures
- Facilitate contact between local clubs and navigation authorities in relation to local water or weather conditions



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Minimum standards to be adopted

Rules and guidelines for the following conditions:

- wind
- rain / snow / hail
- lightning (see further information)
- current / stream
- tide
- heat / cold
- poor visibility
- low light - 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



Further good practice

(In addition to minimum standards to be adopted)

- Clubs should establish and display a document identifying the criteria for assessing unsafe local rowing conditions as they apply to various boat types and individual abilities. This should include a list of those persons or roles authorised to undertake this assessment to allow or restrict boating activities
- A system of informing crews about how currently applied restrictions should be put in place. This could be in the form of coloured boards / flags or information boards. Whichever system is used it should be prominently displayed
- Restrictions on boating activities should be agreed between local clubs

Further information

Row Safe – related sections

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

ARA website

- Lightning Guidance

Other

- Level 2 Coaching Manual