

# 1.2 Risk Assessment

## Don't take risks that have not been assessed

### Responsibilities

#### Personal

- Comply with any rules, advice and guidance given by the club, ARA, Club Water Safety Adviser, Regional Water Safety Adviser, competition organisers and coaches to ensure that the risks to yourselves and others are adequately managed
- Assess the risk of your own activities and manage them to a tolerable level
- Only take risks you are comfortable with

#### Club

- Ensure that all activities undertaken by the club (both on and off the water) have undergone a suitable and sufficient assessment of risk and activities are as safe as necessary
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken for all junior activities

#### Coach

- Instruct participants in the process of personal risk management to enable them to adopt suitable control measures
- Assess the risks involved and run the activity safely

#### Club Water Safety Adviser/Regional Water Safety Adviser

- Provide advice and guidance to the clubs, coaches, competition organisers and individuals on risk assessment and the management of all activities undertaken to an acceptable level

#### Competition Organisers

- Ensure that all the activities associated with the competition have undergone a suitable and sufficient assessment of risk and that risks are adequately managed through the Competition Safety Plan

#### Training Camp Organisers

- Ensure that all the activities associated with the camp have undergone a suitable and sufficient assessment of risk and that risks are adequately managed through a Safety Plan

#### Launch Drivers

- Ensure your activities are risk assessed and adequately controlled

## Minimum standards to be adopted

- Clubs are to have risk assessments completed for all of their activities that have a potential risk – both on and off the water. A suitable Safety Plan including an Emergency Action Plan can then be published
- All significant new activities undertaken by a club must have the risks assessed before the activity is allowed to be undertaken and the situation managed to control risks to an acceptable level
- Competition organisers to have risk assessments completed for all of their activities to enable a Competition Safety Plan to be drawn up
- Clubs, competition organisers and organisers of camps are to review risk assessments on an annual basis or following a significant incident, change in any relevant legislation or guidance

## Further good practice

(In addition to minimum standards to be adopted)

- Risk assessments should be reviewed after:
  - an incident
  - analysing summary of recordable and reportable incidents
  - a competition review
- Risk assessments should be published on club Safety Notice Boards and included in club induction packs or induction process
- Water Safety Advisers and coaches should attend a suitable risk assessment training course

All significant club activities must have the risks assessed, documented and communicated to all members.

In addition to any other activities deemed necessary risk assessments should be conducted for:

- training activities
- land and water-based activities
- competitions
- transportation to competitions/camps
- training on non-home waters and training camps
- learn to row sessions
- summer school camps, etc.



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## What is meant by risk assessment?

*“Hazards are assessed to ensure the combination of the likelihood of harm occurring and the consequences from that harm, have adequate precautions in place – which when taken make the risk acceptable to all.”*

As clubs have developed, so they have either formally or informally assessed the local hazards involved in their activities and have evolved rules and precautions in an attempt to reduce or eliminate the risks.

Risk assessment is the process of identifying potential hazards and managing effectively the risks posed by them. This involves checking whether existing safeguards and emergency action plans are adequate to reduce risks to an acceptable level or whether further action is needed.

The purpose of this is to highlight unacceptable risks to determine steps to control them to acceptable levels or eliminate them all together.

Risk is reduced by employing a combination of controls and not relying on just one control measure.

Risk assessments are only worthwhile if action is taken on the findings. Assessments need to be carried out by competent persons with knowledge of the activities, locations, environment and people involved.

As an assessor ask yourself the following:

- What hazards exist?
- In the course of the activity being assessed, who is at risk from the hazard?
- How often does exposure to the hazard occur?
- How likely is it that the incident will occur?
- How serious would the consequences be?
- What steps exist to prevent incidents?
- Could more be done to reduce the level of risk?



Because there are many different aspects of our sport, it is important to consider as many as possible. You may need to draw in other parties with relevant knowledge to help assess risks within their particular areas of expertise.

## A simple risk level estimator

BS8800:2004 provides a simple risk level estimator together with a risk based control plan which can be modified to relate more directly to the rowing environment. Extracts from this standard are included below along with some additional matrix guidance.

Likelihood of harm	Severity of harm		
	Slight harm	Moderate harm	Extreme harm
Very unlikely	Very low risk	Low risk	Low risk
Unlikely	Low risk	Medium risk	Medium risk
Likely	Medium risk	Medium risk	High risk
Very likely	Medium risk	High risk	Very high risk

Category of risk	Evaluation of acceptability
Very low risk	Acceptable
Low risk	Risks that should be reduced so that they are acceptable - if reasonably practicable to do so
Medium risk	
High risk	Unacceptable
Very high risk	

NB: Acceptable here means that risk has been reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable.

### Examples of categories for likelihood of harm and severity of harm

Categories for likelihood of harm	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely
Typical occurrence	There would be <b>frequent opportunities</b> that individuals will be exposed to the identified hazards	It is <b>probable</b> that individuals will be exposed to the identified hazards	It is <b>possible</b> that individuals could be exposed to the hazards	It would be a <b>remote chance</b> of individuals being exposed to the identified hazards

Slight harm	Moderate harm	Extreme harm
Cuts, abrasion – first aid treatment, superficial equipment damage	Medical treatment required, slight equipment damage	Fatality or major injury, major equipment damage

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Example:

- **Slight harm** - event might be grounding craft on a shoal or obstacle
- **Moderate harm** - event would be collision with minor injury to person and slight damage
- **Extreme harm** - event could be a collision with a motorised craft or a bridge buttress involving major injury or fatality

Set a good safety example

## Hazards: rowing is a relatively safe sport, so what are the hazards?

What hazards have been encountered in the past in running the competition or in managing boating activities?

Consider water hazards: depth, turbulence, currents, obstacles and pollution. Look at access to the water: is the bank made up, shelving or vertical? Can casualties be recovered readily and does road access exist? What about visibility? Can all the activities be clearly monitored from the bank? Is there any history of accidents arising from any of the above?

**No history of accidents:** Look at the activities themselves, are they supervised or unsupervised? What is the degree of competence of the athletes involved? Time of day and month of the year have an effect on visibility and water temperature.

**The participants:** Are they a hazard to themselves? Can they swim and what tests are carried out to ensure they can? Are they properly equipped for the conditions they will encounter? Coxswains must wear lifejackets or buoyancy aids but are they adequate and in working order and is the coxswain adequately protected against the elements?

Anticipate how conditions could change

**Damaged equipment:** It is a hazard to everyone, to the user in the first instance, to those around who may be affected by it, or those who have been forced into a dangerous rescue operation.

## Further information

### Row Safe – related sections

- 1.4 Competitions & Safety Plans
- 1.7 Weather & the Environment
- 1.8 Cold Water Immersion & Hypothermia
- 1.9 Swimming & Capsize/Swamping Training

### ARA website

- Fit to Compete poster
- Example Club Safety Plan
- Example Competition Safety Plan
- Example Risk Assessments

### Other

- Level 2 Coaching Manual
- HSE 5 Steps to Risk Assessment

If in doubt, don't go out