

## 7. Equipment

There are hazards and risks associated with equipment and some equipment is used to reduce risk. These are covered in this chapter.

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

[7.1 Boats and Blades](#)

[7.2 Transport and Trailers](#)

[7.3 Safety Aids](#)

[7.4 Launches](#)

[7.4.1 Launch Safety Kits](#)

### 7. Equipment

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RowSafe provides general guidance to clubs and their members on safe practice in rowing. It is however the responsibility of each club to maintain up-to-date risk assessments and define and monitor its own safety practices, guidance and procedures specific to its environment and activities, which clubs shall ensure are made known to their members and members shall comply with the same.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the medical and other similar information and guidance in this manual is accurate and reflective of best practice at the time of publication, it is the users' responsibility to ensure that such information and guidance is up to date before acting upon it. British Rowing accepts no responsibility for the content of third party websites accessed through links in this publication.

## 7.1 Boats and Blades

### Equipment Checklist

A thorough [boat and equipment](#) check includes the following:

- No visible signs of damage to the hull, for example scrapes or cracks.
- Buoyancy compartments, seals, hatch covers, boat hull and ventilation bungs are secure and watertight. Buoyancy Bags have been installed if no under-seat buoyancy compartments are fitted.
- Bow ball is in good condition and securely fixed (where the construction of the boat, or its composition, is such that the bow is properly protected or its shape does not present a hazard in the event of a collision, then this requirement need not apply).
- Fixing screws or bolts do not represent a hazard in the event of an accident. Any sharp protrusions should be covered or removed.
- Heel restraints are strong, secure and durable and the correct length (laces and cable ties are not appropriate). They must be properly adjusted (each heel shall be restrained to prevent it from rising higher than 7cm measured at right angles, from the footplate) and in working order.
- Shoe fastenings such as laces or Velcro must be able to be released immediately by the rower with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap.
- Rudder lines, steering mechanisms and rudder (where fitted) and fin, are secure and in good working order.
- Outriggers, swivels, gates, seats, runners and stretchers are secure and operating correctly and show no signs of cracking or fatigue.
- Blades are undamaged and buttons are secure and properly set.
- The boat is suitable for the situation in which it is to be used, for example maximum crew weight.
- Lighting, if required, is suitable for the outing and working correctly (see [Safety Alert - Lights on Rowing Boats](#)).
- Consider the use of “splash boards” if the water conditions are difficult.

**Check blades are undamaged and buttons are secure**



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# Expectations

## Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand that equipment with defects can cause accidents.
- Know how to check equipment.
- Routinely check equipment prior to each use.
- Only use equipment that is in good condition.
- Routinely check equipment after each use.
- Report any defects found to a coach or other appropriate Club Official.

Know how to check the equipment you are using



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## Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Provide storage for boats and equipment in an orderly fashion, in well-lit premises where possible, to minimise damage to people or other equipment.
- Provide information to members on how boats should be checked (see [Safety Alert - Check your boat before you go afloat](#)).
- Ensure that all boats have sufficient buoyancy and provide extra buoyancy if needed.
- Keep a record of the manufacturer / supplier's information regarding the inherent buoyancy of the boat.
- Maintain all equipment in good working order and suitable for the conditions in which it will be used.
- Require members to report any damage to boats and equipment to a responsible official without delay.
- "Quarantine" a damaged boat or piece of equipment, with the nature of the damage clearly marked, and ensure that it is not used.
- Ensure that any damage to boats or equipment is repaired before the boat or equipment is used again.
- Ensure that all incidents are reported to British Rowing using the [Incident Reporting System](#).



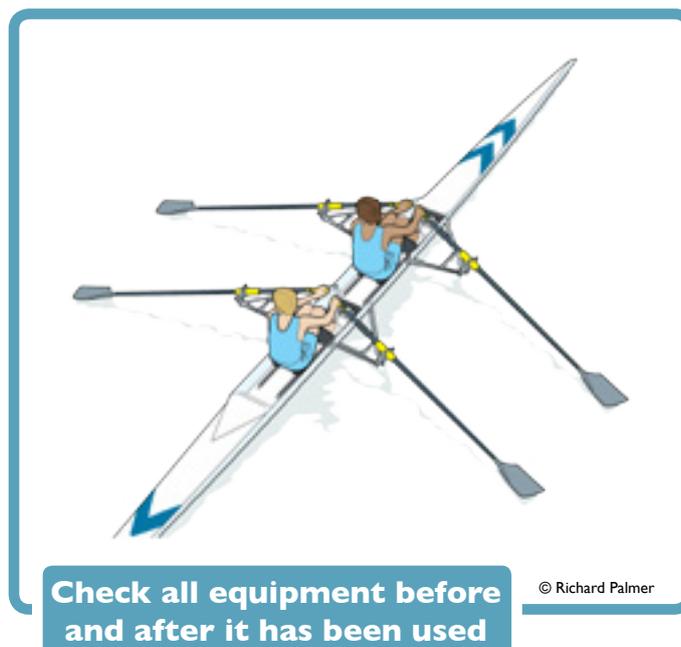
Maintain all equipment in good working order and suitable for the conditions in which it will be used

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## Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Coach others on:
  - The need to check equipment.
  - How to check equipment.
  - What to do if defects are found.
- Ensure that equipment is checked prior to it being used.
- Ensure that equipment is checked after it has been used.
- Ensure that quarantined equipment is not used.



## Event

Event Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Inform participating clubs of the arrangements for boat checking.
- Facilitate boat checking prior to launch.
- Ensure that the results of Control Commission Checks are collated and returned to the Regional Rowing Safety Adviser.
- Ensure that all significant defects are reported using the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).

## Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Maintain records of Control Commission Checks within its region.
- Advise clubs of, and provide recommendations on, reported non-compliance.
- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on boats and blades.

## British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.
- Provides safety training material on its website, [including training on how to check boats](#).
- Provides courses that include safety.

## Further Information

- Safety Alert - Lights on Rowing Boats - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Lights-on-Rowing-Boats.pdf](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Lights-on-Rowing-Boats.pdf)
- Safety Alert - Check your boat before you go afloat - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Check-Your-Boat-Before-You-Go-Afloat.pdf](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Check-Your-Boat-Before-You-Go-Afloat.pdf)
- Boat Safety Checks - [youtube.com/watch?v=f-52ajVjzkl&feature=youtu.be](https://youtube.com/watch?v=f-52ajVjzkl&feature=youtu.be)
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - [incidentreporting.britishrowing.org](https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org)
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](https://britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)
- Correct fitting of a WinTech Quick Release Wing Rigger - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WinTech-Quick-Release-Wing-Rigger-Fitting-2.pdf?e413ae](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WinTech-Quick-Release-Wing-Rigger-Fitting-2.pdf?e413ae)
- FISA's Minimum Guidelines for the Safe Practice of Rowing - Section II A Safe Rowing Equipment - [worldrowing.com/mm/Document/General/General/10/90/86/Minimum\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Safe\\_Rowing\\_English.pdf](https://worldrowing.com/mm/Document/General/General/10/90/86/Minimum_Guidelines_for_Safe_Rowing_English.pdf)

## 7.2 Transport and Trailers

The club risk assessment can be used to identify the hazards associated with the use of vehicles and trailers by the club. If these risks are overlooked then the results can be significant.

### Expectations

#### Everyone

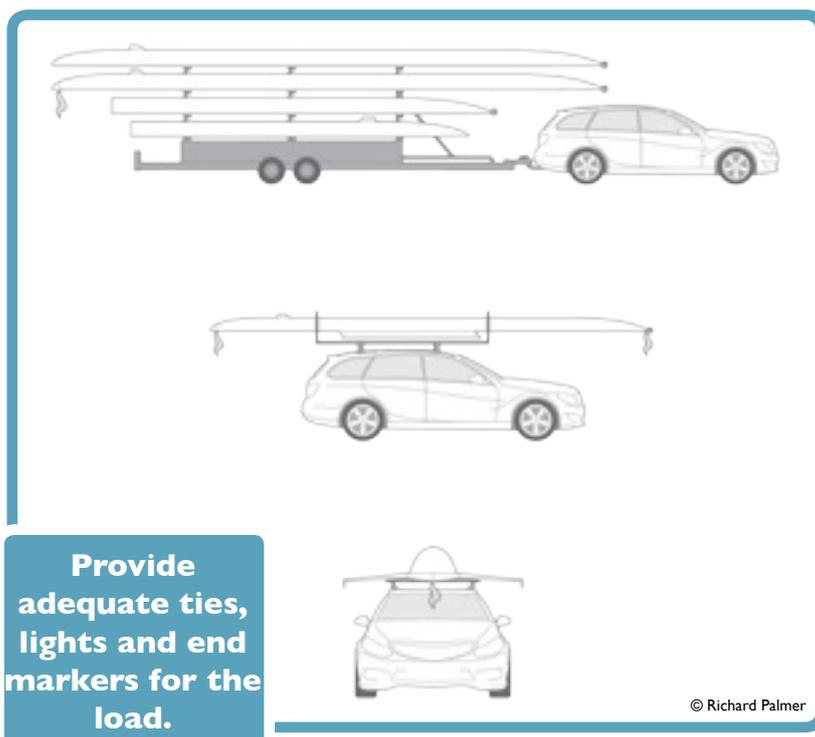
Everyone is expected to:

- Follow the club's guidance on loading the trailer.
- Take care when handling boats and loading a trailer.

#### Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that any vehicle or trailer used by the club is maintained in a roadworthy condition.
- Ensure that trailers are correctly labelled with the Maximum Allowed Mass (MAM), tyre pressures and jacking points.
- Confirm that all drivers have the appropriate vehicle licence and insurance for the trailer type, length and load.
- Provide information on towing and loading the trailer (see leaflet – [Guidance for Transportation of Oar Propelled Racing Boats](#)).
- Ensure that the risks associated with loading and trailing boats are included in the club's Risk Assessment and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risk to an acceptable level.
- Provide adequate ties, lights and end markers for the load.
- Provide spare bulbs, spare wheel, jack and tools for changing a wheel.
- Provide an assistant who can help the driver with navigation, manoeuvring and emergencies.



## Trailer Towing Vehicle Drivers and Minibus Drivers

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Drivers are expected to:

- Have the appropriate licence and insurance for the vehicle and trailer (see [DVLA Requirements for towing trailers in Great Britain](#) leaflet).
- Understand the regulations and responsibilities of trailer towing and minibus driving.
- If towing, then before each trip, check:
  - The nose weight of the trailer.
  - That the trailer is correctly loaded.
  - That the load is secure.
  - The lights, brakes, safety chain and jockey wheel.
  - The weather forecast and road conditions.
- Plan the route so as to avoid areas and times where conditions are likely to be difficult.

## Coaches

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Coaches are expected to:

- Ensure that members know how to load and check the trailer.

## Event

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Event Organisers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Ensure there is easy access and adequate parking for towing vehicles and trailers.

## Regional Rowing Councils

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Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on transport and trailers.

## British Rowing

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British Rowing:

- Provides advice and guidance on the loading and towing of rowing boat trailers.
- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.
- Provides safety training material on its website.
- Provides courses that include safety.

## Further Information

- Guidance for the Transportation of Oar Propelled Racing Boats Leaflet - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TowingGuidance.pdf?ef682d](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TowingGuidance.pdf?ef682d)
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - [incidentreporting.britishrowing.org](https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org)
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](https://britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)
- Driving and Towing Limitations for Drivers Flowchart - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TowingFlowChart.pdf?ef682d](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TowingFlowChart.pdf?ef682d)
- DVLA Requirements for towing trailers in Great Britain Leaflet - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/INF301.pdf?ef682d](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/INF301.pdf?ef682d)
- DVLA Driving a Minibus Leaflet - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/DVLA-MinibusDriving-Inf28.pdf?ef682d](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/DVLA-MinibusDriving-Inf28.pdf?ef682d)
- Rowing & Trailers - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/RowingnTrailers-RM-Jun-08.pdf?ef682d](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/RowingnTrailers-RM-Jun-08.pdf?ef682d)
- Trailer Towing - [rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=108](https://rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=108)
- Safety Alert - Trailer oscillations when towing - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-2014-Trailer-Towing.pdf](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-2014-Trailer-Towing.pdf)

Advice on towing abroad is available from:

- The Caravan Club - [caravanclub.co.uk/overseas-holidays/advice-and-information](https://caravanclub.co.uk/overseas-holidays/advice-and-information)
- The AA - [theaa.com/motoring\\_advice/overseas/index.html](https://theaa.com/motoring_advice/overseas/index.html) and [theaa.com/motoring\\_advice/general-advice/towing-advice-what-you-need-to-know.html](https://theaa.com/motoring_advice/general-advice/towing-advice-what-you-need-to-know.html)

## 7.3 Safety Aids

Safety aids, such as lifejackets, throw lines and emergency blankets, can save lives. It is essential that they are readily available and maintained in good condition, and that everyone knows how to use them correctly.

### Expectations

#### Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Know how to use the club's safety aids.
- Follow the club's rules on their use.
- Wear a lifejacket when coxing, in a launch or when required by the club or a coach. Coxes in bow-loader boats must wear a manual inflation lifejacket.
- Not wear an inflatable lifejacket under any other garment.
- Check the lifejacket before use and ensure that it is fitted correctly. See [Safety Alert - Lifejackets](#).
- Report any safety equipment that is damaged, missing or deployed within the club.
- Wear a lifejacket if:
  - They cannot swim.
  - They are juniors who have not completed a capsizing drill.
  - Because of a medical condition, there is a risk that they may become unconscious or immobile whilst afloat.
- Report any incidents involving safety aids to the club and to British Rowing.



**Wear a  
lifejacket when  
coxing**

#### Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Use the Club Risk Assessment and Safety Plan to determine the type and quantity of safety aids (such as lifejackets, throw lines, lifeguard tubes, and emergency blankets) for the needs and size of the club.

- Provide and maintain safety aids (see [RYA - How to wear a lifejacket correctly](#)).
- Provide training to club members in the use of safety aids.
- Ensure that safety aids are readily available to members and are stored correctly.
- Implement a procedure to manage damaged, missing or deployed safety aids.
- Review the requirements for, and the use of, safety aids and implement any changes in their type or use.
- Check lifejackets for leaks, damage and gas cylinder integrity at regular intervals (at least once a year) and record the results. See [Safety Alert - Lifejackets](#).



## Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Set an example by following the club's procedures on the use, maintenance and storage of safety aids.
- Train participants in the correct usage of safety aids.
- Make lifejackets available to non-swimmers and participants who are nervous about the water.
- Carry a throw line and practice using them.

## Event

Event Organisers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Provide sufficient lifejackets and other safety aids to officials and those involved in running the event.
- Ensure that people wearing lifejackets provided by the Event Organisers know how to fit them correctly and know how to use other safety aids.

## Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs and events in their region on Safety Aids.

## British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.

- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.
- Provides safety training material on its website.
- Provides courses that include safety.

## Further Information

- Safety Alert - Lifejackets - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf](http://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf)
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - [incidentreporting.britishrowing.org](http://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org)
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](http://britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)
- RYA - How to wear a lifejacket correctly - [youtube.com/watch?v=NNfXMLG5pI4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNfXMLG5pI4)

## 7.4 Launches

Launches should be properly maintained and used “within their capabilities”. Some launches are intended as coaching launches but can still be used as a safety launch providing launch drivers and crew understand what to do and providing that the boats are suitable for the conditions in which they are used.

### Expectations

#### Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Follow the club’s guidance on using a launch.
- Take care when using a launch.

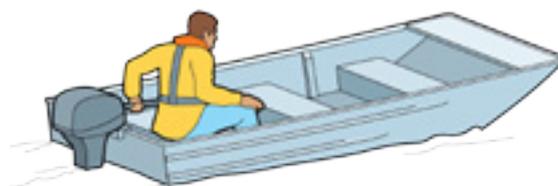
#### Club

Club Officers are expected to:

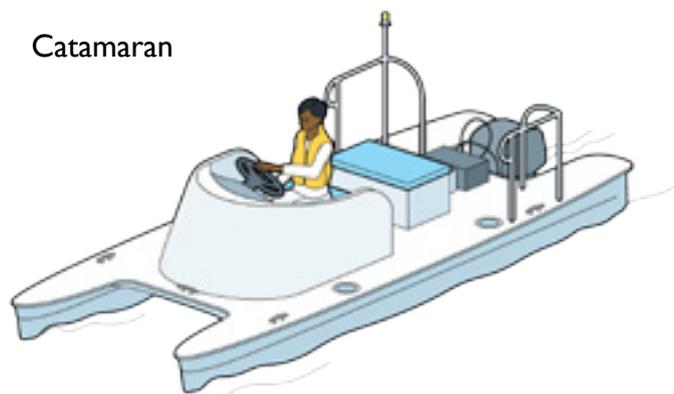
- Ensure that any launch, including its motor, used by the club is [maintained in good working order and safe condition](#).
- Ensure that the maximum load is known and adhered to.
- Define procedures for recovering rowers.
- Provide information on the safe use of the launch.
- Ensure that the risks associated with using a launch are included in the club’s Risk Assessment and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risk to an acceptable level.
- Provide a safety kit for use in the launch (see [RowSafe 7.4.1](#)).
- Provide spare parts for the maintenance of the launch.

Ensure you are using a launch suitable for the conditions

Tin Fish



Catamaran



RIB (‘Explorer’)



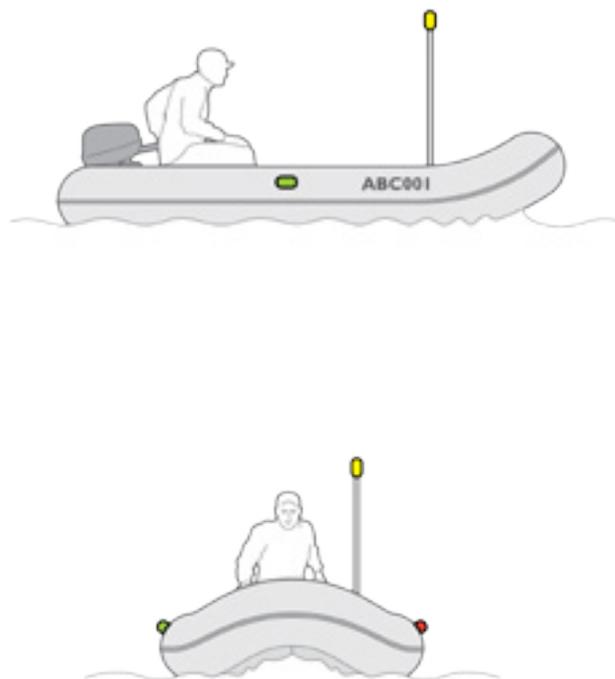
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## Launch Drivers

Launch drivers are expected to:

- Wear a [correctly fitted lifejacket](#) whenever afloat and ensure that all their crew do so.
- Before each use, check that:
  - The [launch, including the motor is in good condition](#) before starting to use it.
  - There is adequate fuel for the outing.
  - The engine is secure and properly mounted.
  - The safety kit is on board.
  - If necessary, the lights are working.
- Report any defects or problems.

Make sure the lights are correctly displayed and working



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## Event

Events and Event Organisers are expected to:

- Ensure that any launch used by the event is in good working order and safe condition.
- Ensure that the maximum load of the launches is known and adhered to.
- Define procedures for recovering rowers.
- Provide information on the safe use of the launches.
- Ensure that the risks associated with using a launch are included in the Event Risk Assessment and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risk to an acceptable level.
- Provide safety kits for use in the launches (see [RowSafe 7.4.1](#)).
- Ensure that there is adequate fuel for the event.

## Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs and events in their region on launches.

## British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.

- Provides safety training material on its website.
- Provides courses that include safety.

## Further Information

- Safety Alert - Outboard Motor Safety Checks - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert- Outboard-Motor-Safety-Checks.pdf?ef682d](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert- Outboard-Motor-Safety-Checks.pdf?ef682d)
- [RowSafe 7.4.1](#) - Launch Safety Kits
- Safety Alert - Lifejackets - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf?ef682d](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf?ef682d)
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - [incidentreporting.britishrowing.org](http://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org)
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](https://britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)
- RYA Scotland - Choosing a Safety Boat - [ryascotland.org.uk/aboutus/committees/pbs/Documents/RYA%20Safety%20Boat%20Briefing%20-%20Speaker%20Notes.pdf](https://ryascotland.org.uk/aboutus/committees/pbs/Documents/RYA%20Safety%20Boat%20Briefing%20-%20Speaker%20Notes.pdf)

## 7.4.1 Launch Safety Kits

It is recommended that the following equipment should be included in a Launch Safety Kit.

- A First Aid kit in a waterproof bag, checked monthly.
- A throw line or equivalent grab line.
- A serrated safety knife with rope cutter.
- Enough survival equipment or 'Bivvi bags' for the launch's passenger capacity. (Note: Foil blankets tend to keep cold people cold and are not recommended.)
- Sufficient lifejackets for the maximum number of passengers and crew.
- A spare kill-cord for crewman or passenger in the event of the driver falling over board.
- A spare length of rope.
- A bailer.
- A paddle.



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As a result of the risk assessment of the location, water and weather conditions, the following equipment may also be required.

- A tool kit including spares for rowing boats (such as spanners, nuts and washers and cord).
- A minimum toolkit and spares for the engine.
- An anchor and line appropriate for the water and weather conditions.
- A communications device such as a waterproof VHF radio transceiver or mobile phone.
- A boathook.
- An audio signalling device: air horn, loudhailer or megaphone.
- A pump for the sponsons (buoyancy chambers) plus a spare valve, valve cap, and a repair kit for inflatables or Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIBs).
- Spare fuel.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Simple handholds on the side of the launch to provide assistance to anyone being rescued or for the driver if they fall overboard.
- Spare lifejackets, spare fuel tank (open water use), and alternative means of propulsion adequate for the expected conditions, in-date flares, maps, navigation aids or GPS system.
- Suitable lights in low visibility conditions.
- Life raft (valise) able to hold the appropriate number of people and suitable for inshore use.
- Rescue tube - an approximately 1 metre long, high-buoyancy foam tube developed for water rescue or other flotation device capable of supporting a casualty in the water.
- Ladder, rope sling, or similar equipment to help when retrieving a casualty from the water into the boat.
- Rescue strop for pulling the casualty up a steep or vertical bank.
- Sea anchor to prevent the launch drifting with the wind; this could be a canvas bucket on a rope.
- Searchlight with a beam strong enough to locate a casualty at night.