

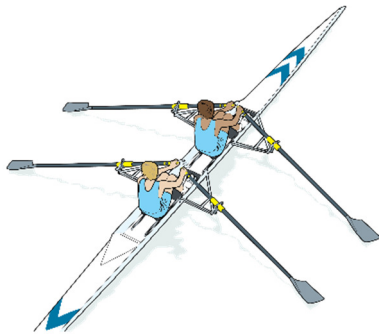


Guidance for Rowers and Canoeists on shared water

INTRODUCTION

The growth in participation in water sports means that many rowing and canoe clubs and centres have to share the water where they row or canoe and it is important to build good relationships. This advice is published jointly by British Canoeing and British Rowing.

Rowing boats and canoes behave very differently. By understanding these differences, and agreeing and following some basic guidelines, rowers and canoeists can happily share the same piece of water. The following table highlights the major differences:



Rowing and sculling boats	Canoes and Kayaks
Relatively fast	Relatively slow
Good view astern, poor view ahead	Good view ahead, poor view astern
Not very manoeuvrable	Manoeuvrability varies according to design
Wide (up to 7 m blade tip to blade tip)	Narrow
Difficult to stop quickly	Easier to stop quickly

What canoeists need to know about rowing boats

- There are many different types and sizes of rowing and sculling boats, for 1, 2, 4 or 8 people.
- Rowing boats (especially 4s and 8s) are fast and go well in straight lines.
- Rowing boats do not naturally stop quickly but rowers can do an emergency stop.
- Rowers do not face the direction of travel.
- Some rowing boats have coxes – some are in the front of the boat, some are at the back.
- Coxes have restricted vision – the ones in the front cannot see behind at all or to the side very easily, coxes at the back have difficulty seeing directly ahead, can see to the side and have limited vision behind.
- Rowers rely on other boats being where they expect them to be, i.e. following the agreed rules of the river, because they cannot easily see them.
- Coaching launches can create significant wash.

What rowers need to know about canoes

- Canoe is a generic term that applies to all paddle boats.
- Canoes vary in manoeuvrability and can stop quickly.
- Canoes are generally slower than rowing boats.
- Some canoes are very unstable, especially flat water racing boats, and can be capsized by the wash from launches.
- Canoeists face the direction of travel.
- Canoe coaches are normally in a canoe not a launch.
- Canoes are often in groups.

Rules of the road and overtaking other boats

Unless there is an agreed circulation plan that specifies otherwise you should always follow the Collision Regulations. In some areas, for example on the tidal Thames (Tideway), more complex rules apply. The Collision Regulations can be summarised as follows:-

- Keep as far to the starboard side (right-hand side as defined by the direction of travel) as practicable.
- When overtaking, the
 - Overtaking boat should keep clear.
 - Overtaken boat should move towards the bank, if possible, and hold its course.
 - Overtaking boat should move towards the middle of the waterway and pass as quickly as possible.
 - Overtaking boat should try not to cross the centre line of the waterway.
 - Overtaking boat should then steer away from the middle of the waterway, back towards the starboard side.
- All boats should keep a good lookout in all directions at all times.
- All boats should keep clear of stationary boats and pass as quickly as possible.

Canoes overtaking rowing boats is the easier manoeuvre:

- The rowers can see the canoe approaching.
- The canoeists can see the rowing boat ahead.
- The canoeists can see boats approaching from the other direction.

Rowing boats overtaking canoes is more difficult but most rowing boats are faster than most canoes:

- The rowers cannot easily see the canoe ahead.
- The canoeists cannot easily see the approaching rowing boat.
- The canoeists may not hear the rowing boat approaching.
- The rowers with limited forward vision are in the middle of the river.
- The rowers may not see boats approaching from the other direction.

When overtaking, follow the agreed procedure and

- Overtake quickly.
- Get well past the other boat.
- Move in towards the bank without impeding the overtaken boat.

How to communicate with other types of boat – how to warn them of danger

If there is danger of a collision, it is essential that participants know how to warn the boats. You may need to shout several times.

To warn rowers that there is a hazard ahead shout: “*Look ahead*” early and loud.

Refer to the type of boat i.e. sculler, pair (2 rowers), double (2 scullers). For example, “*Look ahead sculler*”, “*look ahead pair*”.

If a collision is imminent and the rowing boat needs to be stopped, shout type of boat, *hold it hard, hold it up* e.g. “*Sculler hold it up, hold it hard*”, “*Four hold it up, hold it hard*”.

If a rower needs to alert a canoeist, then it should be sufficient to alert the canoeist of the presence of the rowing boat. Simply ask them to look in the appropriate direction, e.g. “*Look Astern*”.

If all else fails, shout “*STOP*” several times, very loudly.

If a collision would otherwise be inevitable then both boats should reduce speed and steer to avoid it.

Reporting incidents

Both British Rowing and British Canoeing have Incident Reporting systems that are available to everyone to report incidents. The Incident Reporting systems can be found at <https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/> and <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/about-canoeing/safety-guidance/incident-reporting/>. If appropriate these incidents can be shared between these bodies.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Get to know each other

It is much easier to resolve problems with people you know so the first step is to establish contact between the clubs and centres. It is good practice to establish a local water users’ forum. You could also, for example, hold a social event like an open day so that you can try out each others’ boats and understand how they differ.

Develop a Local Code

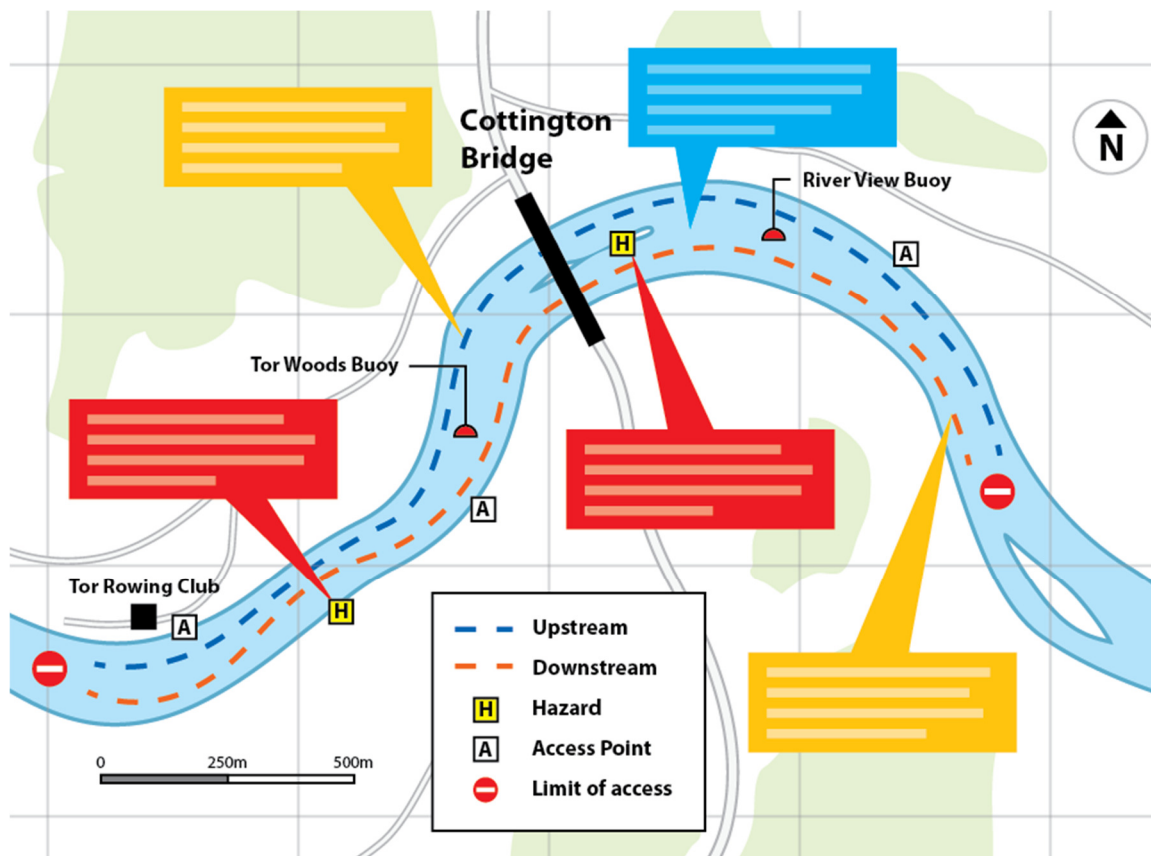
Clubs and centres should work together to define a local code for using the waterway and understand each other’s needs. (Some or all of this may be covered by local navigation authority rules.) This could include:

- Circulation plan for the area showing
 - Rules of the road including how to overtake other boats
 - Procedures for approaching and leaving landing areas
- Times when clubs and centres will be using the water
- How to communicate with other types of boat – how to warn them of danger
- Contact details

Circulation Plan

Agree a circulation plan showing: -

- the routes that participants should follow on the waterway
- where boats can stop and rest
- where boats can travel at speed (e.g. straights)
- where boats should proceed slowly (e.g. around blind bends)
- where to turn and cross the waterway



Display the plan prominently in the clubs and centres, and ensure that all participants understand it and abide by it.

Procedures for approaching and leaving landing areas

There should be an agreed safe way to approach and leave the landing areas. This will depend on the direction of flow of the water and visibility.

As a general guideline, boats should leave and approach the landing area into the tide or current. In tidal areas, the direction will vary with the tides. If there is a strong current, it may be necessary to have someone on land to help to control the boat. If the landing area is close to an obstruction or other hazard, it may be necessary to turn and approach from some distance away.



Times when participants will be using the water

In areas where space is limited, it may be necessary to agree times when clubs and centres are using all or part of the waterway. In this case, display the schedule prominently and ensure that participants understand and abide by it.

Contact details

Clubs and centres should also display contact details of the other clubs and centres in the area so that participants can contact them in event of an incident or problem.

For more information, please contact:-

British Rowing
safety@britishrowing.org

British Canoeing
safety@britishcanoeing.org.uk