

1. Culture and Expectations

The analysis of reported incidents has shown that most harmful incidents associated with rowing are the result of at-risk behaviour. A positive safety culture can do more to ensure everyone's safety than the technical issues that many tend to focus on.

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1.1 Roles and Expectations

Everyone involved in rowing is expected to ensure their actions or lack of action do not compromise the safety of themselves or others. Confusion in role definition can lead to necessary tasks being left to others and not being completed at all.

Expected roles are outlined in very general terms below and in more detail throughout RowSafe.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own safety both on and off the water.
- Ensure that their actions both on and off the water do not put others at risk.
- Be aware of, and abide by, the Club Safety Rules.
- Follow the guidance in the Club Safety Plans.
- [Report all incidents](#) both within the club and to British Rowing.

Club

Club Officers are expected to ensure a positive safety culture (see [RowSafe 1.2](#)) and safe practice within the club; they are expected to:

- Establish and publish a Safety Policy in which they commit to safety.
- Provide a safe environment for their members and others to enjoy their sport.
- Appoint a Club Rowing Safety Adviser(s) (CRSA) (see [RowSafe 3.4](#)), to lead and advise on promoting safe practice.
- Support the CRSA and take their advice into account.
- Establish and communicate Safety Rules that define what is, and what is not, appropriate behaviour (these may be integrated into the more general Rules of the club).
- Complete and maintain Safety Plans to guide members on safe practice in rowing.
- Provide members with education and training in risk assessment and safe practice.
- Produce and maintain a Club Risk Assessment that covers all the activities of the club.
- Complete the British Rowing Annual Safety Audit and consider implementing any improvements that this suggests.
- Liaise with all water users and other stakeholders (such as the local sailing club) to ensure that neither will put the other at risk.
- Encourage club members to be accountable for safety and report all incidents.
- Take appropriate action if its members fail to abide by its Safety Rules.

Event

Event Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Complete and maintain an Event Risk Assessment and use this to define Safety Plans for the event.
- Promote and communicate safe practice in all activities associated with the event.
- Appoint an Event Rowing Safety Adviser (ERSA) (see [RowSafe 4.4](#)) to lead and advise on promoting safe practice, support their ERSA and take their advice into account.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Develop and encourage a positive safety culture (see [RowSafe 1.2](#)) and safe practice in the region.
- Support clubs and events in organising their activities and encourage them to follow good practice based on the risks associated with the type of club, waters and activities in the region.
- Promote safety education and training.
- Review the safety provision of events within the region and provide or withhold approval for each of them to be held.
- Review safety at clubs and events and provide feedback to those clubs and events.
- Maintain contact with navigation and other authorities to assist their clubs and events to operate safely.
- Appoint a Regional Rowing Safety Adviser to lead and advise on promoting safe practice.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides leadership and promotes a positive safety culture (see [RowSafe 1.2](#)).
- Provides support through safety education and training for regions, clubs, events and members.
- Appoints an Honorary Rowing Safety Adviser.
- Supports the National Rowing Safety Committee.
- 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

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System – incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- [RowSafe 1.2](#) - Positive safety culture
- [RowSafe 3.4](#) - CRSA Job Description
- [RowSafe 4.4](#) - ERSA Job Description
- Rules of Racing - britishrowing.org/events/entering-events/rules-of-racing
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive

1.2 Positive Safety Culture

A positive safety culture is a bit like a sense of humour, it is difficult to describe but you know what it is when you see it.

What is safety culture?

The safety culture of any organisation is formed from a combination of individual and group:

- Beliefs;
- Values;
- Attitudes;
- Perceptions;
- Competencies; and
- Patterns of behaviour.

These determine the commitment to, and the style of, a club's approach to safety.

Clubs with a **positive safety culture** have:

- Communications founded on mutual trust;
- Shared perceptions of the importance of safety; and
- Confidence in the effectiveness of their safety precautions.

Building a positive safety culture

Safety culture does not just develop on its own and it does not happen quickly. The best way to start is to help people to understand how their behaviours can influence their safety; in time this will influence that behaviour, and help those people to develop positive values and attitudes.

It may be necessary to impose behaviour using rules. Eventually, imposed behaviours become learned behaviours, and learned behaviours will become natural or instinctive behaviours. This all leads to improved competence and will, in due course, help to develop attitudes and beliefs.

This does not just happen on its own; it takes leadership and commitment. It needs a desire from the leaders of the club to improve the way members act together to keep themselves and each other safe. This all starts with influencing behaviour.

Leading people to change their behaviour

The leaders of clubs can motivate and encourage their members to develop "safe" behaviour and avoid "at-risk" behaviour. The first step is to understand the importance of behaviour in the causation of incidents. This was described in an article in [Rowing and Regatta](#).

“Leaders” in this context are not just those in positions of responsibility but also everyone whose decisions can impact on the safety and wellbeing of others. This will include club officials, coaches, coxes, steers, rowers, scullers, parents and helpers. Almost everyone involved has some sort of leadership role.

Leaders can encourage people to improve their behaviour by first defining the behaviour that is acceptable and that which is not acceptable. This should not be a long list but should contain the issues that matter most. More can be added later as behaviour improves. This information should then be published so that members can understand it. This will influence their behaviour.

There should be consequences of both acceptable and at-risk behaviours. There should be positive consequences for acceptable behaviour and negative consequences for at-risk behaviour. This could be as simple as a coach thanking a cox who took great care when steering to avoid hazards and keeping to the navigation plan, and taking a cox who did not to one side and providing stern words of advice.

Knowledge of the consequences, at the time of the behaviour tends to feedback and influence the behaviour. To be effective, consequences should be soon, certain and significant.

Why should a club want to build a positive safety culture?

Having a positive safety culture leads to a cohesive, considerate, friendly atmosphere. It will also enhance the reputation of the club particularly amongst the parents of juniors. It will reduce the number of injuries that stop rowers from performing and it will reduce the amount of equipment damage.

This cohesion will help when it comes to competition. The pride and sense of belonging that rowers have for their club will motivate them to succeed.

A positive safety culture in a rowing club would result in everyone taking care to keep themselves and others safe. For example, members would always:

- Consider safety when deciding whether to start, or continue, an activity.
- Check their boats before going afloat.
- Take care when handling boats.
- Follow the instructions of their cox and coach.
- Take care when launching.
- Dress appropriately for the conditions.
- Always abide by the circulation plan or rules of the river.
- Keep a good lookout.
- Report all the incidents that they see.
- Take care when coming ashore.
- Clean their boats before putting them away.

A positive safety culture may be difficult to define but it is an invaluable asset for any club.

Further Information

For further information and training opportunities contact the Honorary Rowing Safety Adviser at safety@britishrowing.org.

1.3 Club Safety Policy

A safety policy provides the opportunity for a club to make a clear statement of its intention to keep its members safe. It can also form the basis for the development of a positive safety culture (see [RowSafe 1.2](#)).

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Read the Club Safety Policy and show their commitment to it by signing a copy.
- Implement the policy to the best of their abilities.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Define the safety policy for their club, there is a specimen policy in RowSafe 1.3.1.
- Communicate it widely.
- Invite members to commit to it by signing it.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Support the implementation of the safety policy.
- Lead by example.
- Commit to the safety policy.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on safety policies.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides support through safety education and training for regions, clubs, events and members.
- Provides courses that include safety.

Further Information

- [RowSafe 1.2](#) - Positive Safety Culture
- RowSafe 1.3.1 - Specimen Club Safety Policy - see example below

1.3.1 Specimen Safety Policy:

<h2>Club Safety Policy</h2>	<p>(++ insert Club Badge or Logo ++)</p>
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+++ insert name of club +++ has a zero tolerance for anyone being harmed as a result of our members' participation in the sport.

We believe that harm is not an inevitable consequence of our activities and that incidents that cause harm can be avoided. We will strive to provide an environment in which the sport can be practiced safely and enjoyably by our members. We will guide and lead our members in a way that fulfils these aims.

We recognise that our members have primary responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. The Club, through its Officers and Committee, will encourage safe practice having due regard for the guidance provided by British Rowing in RowSafe.

The Club has safety rules that it expects its members to respect; these can be found (*insert location*). Complying with these rules will help to prevent harm.

The Club is also committed to learn from the incidents it becomes aware of and will share this information to help others in the sport to learn too. We are committed to make appropriate use of British Rowing's Incident Reporting System.

Members are invited to refer any questions and concerns, relating to safety, to the Club's Rowing Safety Adviser (*insert name*) or his (*or her*) deputy (*or deputies*) (*insert name(s)*).

Signed by Chairman:.....

Date:.....

NB:You can copy and paste this Safety Policy into an editable document.