

## 10. Coastal Rowing

Many of the hazards and risks associated with coastal rowing, together with their barriers and controls, are similar to those for other types of rowing. This chapter deals with the issues specific to rowing on the sea.

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### 10. Coastal Rowing

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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.

## 10.1 Coastal and Inshore Rowing

Coastal and inshore rowing in this context refers to rowing on the coast but within a short distance of land. Coastal rowers typically use sliding seat boats that are specifically suited for this purpose. These boats are not suited for open sea, offshore or ocean rowing.

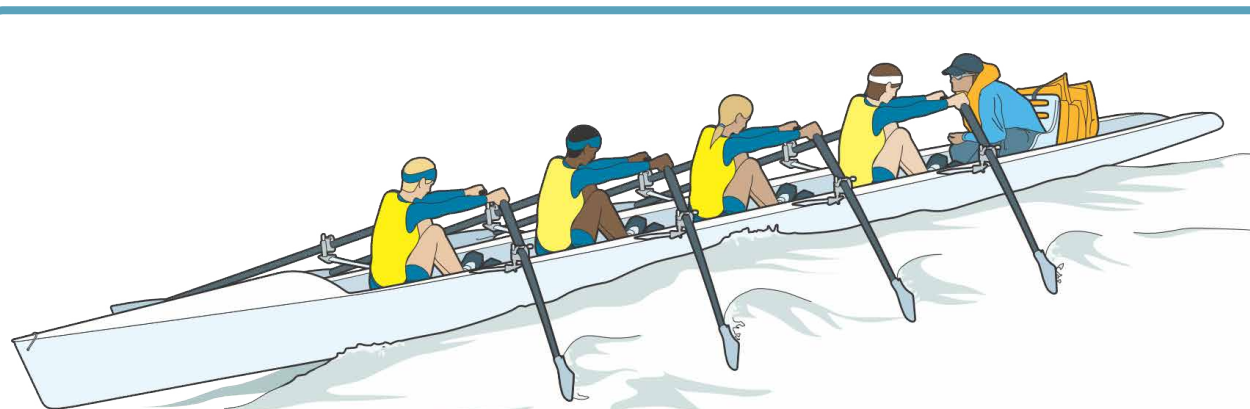
### Expectations

The other sections of RowSafe also apply to coastal and offshore rowing. However, the following additional expectations are also appropriate.

### Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand the hazards associated with coastal and inshore rowing (such as tide, wind strength and direction and waves) and the barriers and controls to be used.
- Check, prior to each launch, that:
  - Their boats have sufficient buoyancy,
  - Self-bailers, where fitted, are in full working order, and
  - If self-bailers are not fitted then that there is a method of manual bailing.
- Understand the correct techniques for launching and recovery from a beach or slipway. There is further information on [boat handling in rough water](#).
- Understand [how to fit and adjust a lifejacket](#), especially coxes are expected to wear correctly fitted lifejackets at all times when afloat.
- Abide by club rules, local navigation rules and any other rules.



**Understand the hazards associated with coastal and inshore rowing**

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## Club

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Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure all boats and equipment used by their members are fit for their intended purpose and safe to use in the intended environment.
- Ensure that all coxes and rowers understand the hazards (such as tide, wind strength and direction and waves), and the barriers and controls to be used.
- Ensure that crews abide by local navigation and other rules.
- Ensure that all boats have sufficient buoyancy.
- Ensure that self-bailers, where fitted, are in full working order. If self-bailers are not fitted then ensure that there is a method of manual bailing. This does not apply to those single sculling boats where the boat design ensures self-bailing.
- Ensure that crews are educated in the correct techniques for launching and recovery from a beach or slipway. There is further information on [boat handling in rough water](#).
- When no launch is available then ensure that no crew goes out without an experienced coastal rower supervising the session, in the boat with them (either as rower or cox) or from the beach keeping them close to shore.
- Ensure that there is a method of radio communication with the shore in the boat if a safety launch is not available and ensure that there are at least two rowing boats afloat at any one time and that they operate a buddy system. Marine Mobile Band VHF's are preferred as these can be used to call the Coastguard directly.
- Ensure that coxes' lifejackets have crotch straps fitted and that coxes are trained to fit and adjust them correctly.

## Coaches

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Coaches are expected to:

- Understand the hazards associated with coastal and inshore rowing and also understand their barriers and controls.
- Assess risk prior to each outing and either modify the planned outing or find a safer alternative if the level of risk is not low or moderate, taking into account the capabilities of the crew.
- Coach crews in the hazards, and the barriers and controls to be used (such as understanding tide, wind strength and direction and waves).
- Coach crews so that they are able to check that:
  - Boats have sufficient buoyancy,
  - Self-bailers, where fitted, are in full working order, and
  - If self-bailers are not fitted then that there is a method of manual bailing.
- Coach crews in the correct techniques for launching and recovery from a beach or slipway. There is further information on [boat handling in rough water](#).

- When no launch is available then ensure that no crew goes out without an experienced coastal rower supervising the session, in the boat with them (either as rower or cox) or from the beach keeping them close to shore.
- Have a means of communication with the boat and with someone on shore.
- Coach coxes to fit and adjust their lifejackets (including crotch straps) correctly.

## Launch Drivers

Launch drivers are expected to:

- Hold qualifications of, or equivalent to, at least RYA Level 2 Powerboat with coastal endorsement.
- Ensure that they have an effective means of communications with the shore and emergency services.
- Ensure that they are competent to rescue crews from rowing boats in coastal conditions.
- Ensure that their launches are suitable to rescue rowers in the conditions that they are likely to encounter.
- Understand the correct technique for recovering a person to a safety boat.

## Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils, in regions with coastal and inshore rowing clubs, are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to those clubs on coastal and inshore rowing.

## 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

- Boat Handling in Rough Water - [coastalrowing.org/storage/downloads/safety/BoatHandlingInRoughWater.pdf](https://coastalrowing.org/storage/downloads/safety/BoatHandlingInRoughWater.pdf)
- Safety Alert on Lifejackets - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf](https://britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf)
- 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)

## 10.2 Fixed Seat Sea Rowing

Fixed seat sea rowing in this context refers to fixed seat rowing on the open sea or in estuaries.

### Expectations

The other sections of RowSafe also apply to fixed seat sea rowing. However, the following additional expectations relate specifically to this style of rowing.

#### Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand the hazards associated with sea rowing (such as tide, wind strength and direction and waves) and the barriers and controls to be used.
- Understand the correct techniques for launching and recovery from a beach or slipway.
- Understand how to fit and adjust a lifejacket, especially coxes who are expected to wear correctly fitted lifejackets at all times when afloat.
- Not wear boots (such as wellington boots) when afloat as they make it very difficult to tread water.
- Abide by club rules, local navigation rules and any other rules.



**Ensure all boats have sufficient buoyancy**

#### Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Use their club's Risk Assessment ([see RowSafe 3.1](#)) to determine the club's safety plans, safety rules and emergency procedures ([see RowSafe 3.2](#))
- Use the Risk Assessment to determine under what conditions, if any, it is safe for a boat to go afloat alone (i.e. not accompanied by another rowing boat or a safety boat). Where it is not safe for a boat to go afloat alone then boats should stay in close contact with each other.
- Use the Risk Assessment to determine under what conditions rowers should wear lifejackets.
- Ensure all boats and equipment used by their members are fit for their intended purpose, safe to use in the intended environment and that boats are not used in conditions that would expose rowers to an unacceptable risk.
- Ensure that all boats have sufficient buoyancy for the conditions in which they are to be

used. Boats without additional buoyancy should not be used in areas and at times when sea conditions are rough. This is particularly important in traditional wooden gigs as, without additional buoyancy, they will not support their crew when swamped.

- Ensure that all coxes and rowers understand the hazards (such as tide, wind strength and direction and waves), and the barriers and controls to be used.
- Ensure that crews abide by local navigation and other rules.
- Ensure that crews are educated in the correct techniques for launching and recovery from a beach or slipway.
- If a radio is carried, ensure that someone on board is competent to use it and knows which channels to use. (see [RowSafe 2.3](#))
- Ensure that coxes' lifejackets have crotch straps fitted and that coxes are trained to fit and adjust them correctly.
- Ensure that a boat safety kit is provided for each boat (see [RowSafe 10.2.1 Gig and Other Fixed Seat Boat Safety Kit](#)).

## Coxes

Coxes are expected to:

- Wear a lifejacket at all times when afloat
- Check, prior to each launch, that:
  - Their boats have sufficient buoyancy for the conditions likely to be encountered
  - That there is a method of manual bailing
  - Seals and bungs are correctly fitted
  - Seats and stretchers are secure
  - The rudder and rudder lines are in good condition and working order
  - The oars are in good condition
  - Thole pins are in good condition correctly placed (hard forward, soft astern)
  - The safety kit and other safety equipment (see [RowSafe 10.2.1](#)) are aboard the boat
- Know and understand the [sound signals](#) and [lights](#) used by other vessels.
- Learn about local hazards, local rules of navigation and [navigation marks](#) particularly when visiting unfamiliar venues.
- Read and understand the [principles of coxing](#)

## Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Understand the hazards associated with sea rowing and also understand their barriers and controls.
- Assess risk prior to each outing and either modify the planned outing or find a safer alternative if the level of risk is not low or moderate, taking into account the capabilities of the crew.

- Coach crews in the hazards, and the barriers and controls to be used (such as understanding tide, wind strength and direction and waves).
- Coach coxes so that they are able to check their boats and equipment as described above.
- Coach crews in the correct techniques for launching and recovery from a beach or slipway.
- When no launch is available then ensure that no crew goes out without an experienced sea rower supervising the session, in the boat with them (either as rower or cox) or from the beach keeping them close to shore.
- Have a means of communication with the boat and with someone on shore.
- Coach coxes to fit and adjust their lifejackets (including crotch straps) correctly.
- Ensure that a boat safety kit is carried in each boat when afloat (see [RowSafe 10.2.1 Gig and Other Fixed Seat Boat Safety Kit](#)).
- Know and understand the [sound signals](#) and [lights](#) used by other vessels.
- Learn about local hazards, local rules of navigation and [navigation marks](#) particularly when visiting unfamiliar venues.

## Launch Drivers

Launch Drivers are expected to:

- Hold qualifications of, or equivalent to, at least RYA Level 2 Powerboat with coastal endorsement.
- Ensure that they have an effective means of communications with the shore and emergency services.
- If a radio is carried, ensure that someone on board is competent to use it and knows which channels to use. (see [RowSafe 2.3](#))
- Ensure that they are competent to rescue crews from rowing boats in offshore conditions.
- Understand the correct technique for recovering a person to a safety boat.
- Ensure that their launches are suitable to rescue rowers in the conditions that they are likely to encounter.
- Know and understand the [sound signals](#) and [lights](#) used by other vessels.
- Learn about local hazards, local rules of navigation and [navigation marks](#) particularly when visiting unfamiliar venues.



**When no launch is available make sure an experienced coastal rower supervises the session, either as a cox or rower, or from the beach**

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## Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils, and Rowing Associations in regions with coastal and inshore rowing clubs, are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to those clubs on fixed seat sea rowing.

## 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

- Launching and recovery – Principles of Coxing – Lyme Regis Gig Club, <http://www.lymeregisgigclub.com/media/pg/97/1458123262/principles-of-coxing.pdf>;
- Flushing & Mylor Pilot Gig Club Members Handbook - <http://www.fmpgc.org/images/docs/Club%20documents/FMPGC%20Members%20Handbook.pdf>
- Safety Alert on 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/)
- Sound Signals - <http://www.boatsafe.com/nauticalknowhow/soundsig.htm>
- Navigation Lights - <http://www.bosunsmate.org/seamanship/lights.php>
- Navigation Marks - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYyED6cXtl&index=3&list=PLomvEgt6UAfE45F1qiSpr0\\_hxXlo-kbnf](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYyED6cXtl&index=3&list=PLomvEgt6UAfE45F1qiSpr0_hxXlo-kbnf)



## 10.2.1 Gig & Other Fixed Seat Boat Safety Kits

For gigs and other fixed seat rowing boats that are used on the open sea, it is recommended that the following equipment should be included in a Boat Safety kit.

- A First Aid kit in a waterproof bag, checked monthly
- A throw line, throw bag or equivalent grab line (at least 15 metres long).
- A serrated safety knife with rope cutter
- An audio signalling device: air horn, whistle, loudhailer or megaphone
- Enough survival equipment or 'Bivvi bags' for the maximum number of persons on board. (Note: Foil blankets tend to keep cold people cold and are not recommended.)
- Sufficient lifejackets for the maximum number of persons on board
- A bailer
- Spare thole pins
- A communications device such as a waterproof VHF radio transceiver or mobile phone, fully charged
- A tow line secured to the bow of the boat

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

- A tool kit and spares
- A spare length of rope
- An anchor and line appropriate for the water and weather conditions
- Sufficient in-date flares
- GPS system
- Compass
- Suitable lights in low visibility conditions
- Sea anchor to prevent the boat drifting with the wind; this could be a canvas bucket on a rope
- Fenders