Safety Alert - Rowing in Floods

There are five different issues with floods. Let’s examine some of the Barriers (to prevent occurrence) and Controls (to reduce the severity of harm) for each:

1. **The water in flooded rivers tends to move quickly**
   - **Barriers include:** Start by rowing upstream. Use bigger, faster boats. Stay close to the bank and, if appropriate, the inside of bends.
   - **Controls include:** Rescue the crew with a launch. Land the boat and carry it back.

2. **The water in flooded rivers tends to be turbulent**
   - **Barriers include:** Avoid areas that can be turbulent e.g. downstream of bridges.
   - **Controls include:** Rescue the crew with a launch or throw line from the bank.

3. **Stationary objects, such as buoys, in fast moving water are hazardous**
   - **Barriers include:** Take care to avoid obstructions and do not stop upstream of one. Have a coach to supervise the outing and provide an extra lookout.
   - **Controls include:** Rescue the crew with a launch or throw line from the bank.

4. **The water over flooded land may hide solid objects (e.g. fence posts) slightly below the surface**
   - **Barriers include:** Take care, keep a good look out and use local knowledge.
   - **Controls include:** Check the depth and, if necessary, carry the boat back to the boathouse.

5. **Flood water is often contaminated with sewage, farm animal waste and other materials, and may contain other debris**
   - **Barriers include:** Avoid exposure to the water. Cover cuts, etc with water-proof dressings.
   - **Controls include:** Shower after the outing. Seek medical advice if there are symptoms.

If these are not sufficient then find a land-based activity.


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