



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.

There is more information at https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/81_Flooding_2.pdf here and there will be more information in the November HRSA Monthly Report. This will be available at <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/hrsa-monthly-report-archive/>.

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[This Safety Alert is a safety guidance document. Please read our safety message and disclaimer in RowSafe.](#)