

HRSA Monthly Report

July 2020

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TEAMWORK OPEN TO ALL COMMITMENT

Incident reports

Last month I commented that the number of reported incidents had increased from 19 in May to 139 in June. In July there were 205, many of which were simple capsizes. There were no incidents involving serious injury or illness.

There were two incidents on the same day at the same club that involved near misses with powered vessels.

The one in the morning involved a large motor vessel, travelling at speed, and a sculler. The photo shows that the large motor vessel was on the "wrong" side of the river. The sculler managed to avoid a serious collision by sculling into the overhanging trees.



The incident in the afternoon. It involved a "motorised residential barge, significantly wider than a standard canal-going narrow boat and maybe also a bit longer". It too was on the "wrong" side of the river. The view ahead of the driver, who was at the stern, may have been obstructed by the boats superstructure and was probably obstructed by the overhanging trees.

In another incident the wash from a tug travelling at excessive speed caused a 1x to be partially swamped. This was reported to the local navigation authority.

A 10 metre motor launch pulled out from the edge of the river in front of a 1x heading in the opposite direction. The sculler performed an emergency stop but there was a minor collision with the side of the 1x. In spite of much shouting, the launch did not stop but continued to head down the port ("wrong") side of the channel.

Please take care to give motor vessels a wide berth. Even those with professional crews may not be aware of the potential consequences of their actions.

There was an incident where a sculler "touched the top of the head of a swimmer who was in the middle of the river" with the flat face of his blade. The swimmer was wearing an orange cap and had an orange inflatable buoy. He had become separated from others in his group. Please take extra care, at this time of year, to keep a good lookout and avoid collisions with swimmers.

Another sculler had a collision with a I metre long radio controlled model sailing. The model boat suffered some damage. Please give way to sailing boats, even little ones.

There were several incidents involving anti-social behaviour by others; these include:-

- Pouring the contents of a drinks can onto a sculler who was passing under a bridge, this was accompanied by verbal abuse.
- A fisherman throwing stones at a passing sculler.
- A group throwing stones from the bank. Most missed, but two hit the sculler on the back and one on the neck. This was reported to the police via their community Facebook page.
- A fishing line became entangled around the bow ball of a 1x and the fisherman pulled the boat to the bank.

Please be aware that some people do not behave as we hope they would and please report serious incidents to the Police.

Disaster and Recovery Planning

There was a request to support the production of advice on Disaster Planning for a new section of Club Hub. This assistance was provided. In addition, more detailed advice was prepared in the expectation that it could be incorporated as an additional document in the Club Hub section of <u>Safety in Club Premises</u>.

The document is structured to deal with Identification, Prevention, Response, Containment and Recovery in relation to disasters. A "draft for comment" is included in the circulation of this report.

I am not an expert on this topic so please feel free to suggest improvements. In particular, please feel free to suggest types of disaster that have not been included and additional information on Prevention, Response, Containment and Recovery. Please also feel free to suggest the removal of anything you feel to be irrelevant or incorrect.

We should always be careful to find the balance between brevity and excessive detail. It is possible for guidance to be so extensive that the level of detail can be overwhelming. Please bear this in mind when commenting.

Please send any comments to <u>safety@britishrowing.org</u>. Thank-you.

Sepsis Feedback

There was feedback on last month's information on Sepsis and the accompanying Safety Alert. This was that:-

"I've been a member of my local mountain rescue team for many years.

It seems to me there was considerable cross-over for us getting back into full swing as our mountains and crags are becoming popular again. Also that our hill training has been cancelled for a number of weeks before the fairly recent resumption. Our team doctor referred to your valuable report in a team meeting tonight where it was well received."

Work with British Canoeing

There was a discussion with a colleague at British Canoeing about Stand Up Paddleboards (SUPs). He reported that British Canoeing is aware that around 10,000 SUPs per week have been sold during the furlough period and their increased presence on most rivers is very noticeable. British Canoeing is not the National Governing Body for SUP's but many users have joined British Canoeing and it is providing training courses and some guidance for them. He asked whether we had had many reported incidents with SUPs

I checked the Incident Reports for this year so far. There were only five with specific mentions of SUPs. Most of our rowing has been in single sculls so it is not surprising that there have been a few, mostly harmless, comings together. Information on these incidents was provided.

Specific questions relating to Coronavirus

There were some specific questions relating to COVID precautions. In one a club explained that its Juniors were using proprietary bleach sprays. I was concerned at the prospect of Juniors handling neat bleach or using hand held sprays. The use of these sprays outdoors, where the spray can be redirected by the wind, could be hazardous. The spray may impact on someone's face. I feel that it is safer to wipe surfaces using a cloth that has been immersed in diluted bleach in a bucket.

I feel that anyone handling bleach, even when it is diluted, would be well advised to wear washing-up gloves. I prefer these to disposable plastic gloves as they are longer, protect the wrists and make it less likely that there will be bleach inside the glove.

There was another enquiry about the extent to which the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations applied to the storage and use of bleach in a Rowing Club. The response was that these regulations are made under the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and in general do not apply to sports clubs that do not have employees. The law may apply to the extent that the club is in control of premises. This does not mean that clubs should not be guided by the regulations but they may not be required to comply with them.

There were other questions relating to restrictions that are no longer in force.

Protection for people in Launches

There was a question about the current need for an apron and whether one can be carried and donned if needed. If it has to be worn whilst on the water then should it be under or over the life jacket?

The response was that the purpose of the apron is to prevent virus particles from contaminating the clothing of the rescuer. The apron can be discarded easily if this happens, it is not so easy to discard clothing. As a general rule, nothing should be worn over a lifejacket as, if it actuates, it could cause the chest to be compressed making breathing difficult.

However, if the apron or gown was one of those flimsy thin plastic products that fits loosely and tears easily then it may be acceptable to wear it over a lifejacket.

Please do not consider carrying it in the boat and putting it on when needed; in a rescue situation there is rarely time to do this.

If you are trying to protect the wearer then it is best to wear a mask and a visor type face screen. If you do not have a mask then it will have to be a face covering. A face covering may not provide much protection to the wearer but it should help to protect the other people nearby.

Covid Precautions Video

A parent of a Junior at Tees Rowing club has produced a video describing the Covid precautions taken at the club. The <u>video</u> has been shared with the Juniors at the club and subsequently widely circulated with the permission of the parents of the juniors involved. All parents were asked to confirm that they have watched it with their kids. This is not an official British Rowing video but was produced for Tees Rowing Club.

Capsize Drills

There was a request for information about capsize drills. At the time it was not possible to access a swimming pool and the club was contemplating completing the capsize drill in the river. There was concern about Weil's disease.

The response was that there is guidance on Weil's disease on the British Rowing website here and there is general advice in section 8.4 of RowSafe. Please understand that this disease is relatively rare in the UK.

I have a vague recollection that some time ago our Medical Committee discussed the issue you raised (capsize drills in open water) and concluded that the risk of Weill's disease is low. I cannot find any documents that confirm this so please treat this suggestion with caution. At this time of year the risks associated with cold water immersion should not be high.

Don't Swim with the Boat

There was a discussion about the safety precautions at a sculling course for "improvers". These were satisfactory except that it included the advice that scullers who capsize should swim, with their boat, to the nearest bank.

Swimming with the boat is not the preferred method. Even in summer, it is better to climb on to the boat and paddle it with the hands to safety. The sculler will be much more conspicuous, and more likely to avoid collisions if they do it this way.

The logic on climbing on top of the capsized boat is incorporated into RowSafe, and has been agreed with the National Rowing Safety Committee. Their view was unanimous. They all agreed that the old technique of swimming with the boat should not be used.

There are two problems with swimming the boat to the bank, particularly when it is a considerable distance away as it can be on the Tideway. The first is that when the weather is cold it prolongs the time for which the sculler is immersed in cold water. The density of water causes the rate of heat loss to be much greater than it would be in air.

The second applies all year round and relates to the risk of collision with another rowing or sculling boat or with a motor boat (launch, Class V passenger vessel, etc.). People in the water are much less conspicuous than those sitting in or on a boat. This is clear from the number of reported incidents involving scullers colliding with swimmers. In addition, people sitting in or on boats can see further than those in the water and are better placed to warn others.

Foot quick release systems

Someone asked about foot release systems. My response was that there is some information in previous Monthly Reports. The simple logic is that if the shoe is intended to detach from the boat and stay on the rowers feet, in the event of a capsize, etc. then there is no need for a heel restraint. If the shoe is intended to stay in the boat then a heel restraint is needed.

Permission to go Sculling

There was a question as to whether it was acceptable for one or two competent older (17 years) junior single scullers to row, in a group with adult single scullers, if a club risk assessment deems it safe for their stretch of water. There would not be a coach (necessarily) just other competent adult rowers in the group.

This appears to comply with the then current version of the British Rowing Covid guidance (Version 4). As most 17 year old scullers are more competent than some adults I have no concerns from a general safety point of view.

Rower Development Guide

There was a request for assistance in defining the competence levels of scullers. It was recommended that the Rower Development Guide be used. This is available on RowHow and there is further information on the British Rowing website here.

Rowing Safety at the National Watersports Centre (NWSC)

There was a request for my club's safety procedures and risk assessment from a trustee of the NWSC together with a question about whether adult crews and scullers are allowed to go out on their own without supervision. The response was that our club is very small (about 20 members). Most of the members are relatively old and mature and are generally risk averse. We have one safety rule that everyone must obey and that is that nobody goes out alone in a small boat (1x, 2x, 2-); they must always operate a Buddy system and have been trained or instructed in Buddy Rescue. Our organisations are so different that my procedures would not be relevant.

Our venue is not like the NWSC in that we are isolated in an area where the population density is low but there are often staff on the water. Also the Lake has an irregular shape, is surrounded by higher land and has some wooded sides so we can usually find sheltered water. It is also quite big with 370 acres of navigable water.

There was a further question about who is who is ultimately responsible for safety on the lake. The response was that the old cliché applies that "everyone is responsible for their own safety and that of everyone else". This may be a cliché but it is true.

Of course the club has some responsibilities for its members. Small boats are not allowed to go afloat alone. We operate a buddy system. Larger boats (4+, 4x+ and 8) with experienced crews are allowed out alone.

Rowing Safety Quiz

A third Rowing Safety Quiz was included in last month's report. The answers are presented in Appendix I

Backstays

I was asked to confirm that a single sculler is not required to have to have backstays on his or her sculling boat. If they were to run into someone, causing injury or damage, will rowing insurance cover them?

The response was that the guidance is for backstays to be fitted to the front rigger on each side of any boat containing more than one person. Consequently this guidance does not apply to singles.

The rationale is a little complex, it is all to do with the rotational moment of inertia in a boat about its vertical axis. In the event of an impact with the a rigger, the force on the item (or person) being impacted upon depends on the rotational inertia of the body impacting. A Ix has almost all its mass concentrated at one point (the body of the sculler, it therefore has comparatively little rotational inertia. In the event of a collision, the Ix will tend to rotate about its vertical axis therefore reducing the force at impact. The same is not true of boats with more people where the distance between the various isolated masses (people) will result in it having a very much higher rotational inertia.

As far as insurance is concerned, I understand that insurers expect sports clubs to implement National Governing Body guidance. In other words, if a Rowing Club does not implement British Rowing guidance then it may be asked to justify this decision in the event of a claim.

There is another consideration. Boats with backstays tend to go faster because pin deflection is much reduced. This is why all riggers on all GBRT boats are fitted with backstays.

Use of a whiteboard

Someone asked whether their club should have a white board so that rowers can record who is afloat, their outing time & duration, their intended area of operation and the boat used, and whether they should have a book in which to record and incidents (even if minor).

The response was that this all seems eminently sensible, it is what my club does. There was also a reminder to please report incidents (even trivial ones and near misses) using the British Rowing Incident Reporting System here. Knowing what happens in the real world, helps us to structure our advice.

Appendix 1 - Answers to the June Rowing Safety guiz

Repacking throw bags

- I You have used a throw line, it has been dried, how do you repack it into the throw bag?
 - Coil the rope carefully and gently push it into the bag
 - Coil the rope roughly and stuff it into the bag
 - Push the rope into the bag, a few centimetres at a time, starting from the end attached to the bag
 - · Push the rope into the bag, a few centimetres at a time, starting from the free end
- 2 What do you do with the end of the throw line?
 - Leave it protruding from the bag
 - Push it into the bag to keep it tidy and prevent it from snagging on something

Radio Procedure

- 3 What do you say if you want to start a communication with someone at the boathouse?
 - Hello, is there anybody there?
 - (your name) calling boathouse, come in please
 - Boathouse, boathouse, this is (your name). Over
 - Boathouse, boathouse, this is (your name). Out
- 4 Which proword should you use if someone needs assistance but nobody is in "grave and imminent danger of loss of life"?
 - Help
 - Mayday
 - Pan pan
 - Sécurité
- 5 What do you say at the end of a conversation with another operator?
 - Over and out
 - Bye
 - Over
 - Out

Sunburn, Heat Illness and Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is not usually serious if you can cool down within 30 minutes. If it turns into heatstroke, it needs to be treated as an emergency. A person with heat stroke is not able to maintain their normal body temperature.

- 6 Which one of the following will NOT help to reduce the risk on a hot sunny day?
 - row in the early morning
 - row in the evening
 - · drink plenty of cold drinks, especially when exercising
 - wear light-coloured, loose clothing
 - drink lots of beer
 - sprinkle water over skin or clothes
 - avoid extreme exercise

7 Which one of the following is NOT a symptom of heat exhaustion?

- high levels of fatigue or tiredness,
- dizziness,
- nausea or vomiting,
- chills or shivering,
- fast weak pulse,
- being hungry
- clammy cool skin,
- appearing pale,
- numbness or tingling in head, neck, back or hands
- being thirsty

8 Which one of the following will NOT help someone with heat illness?

- Move them to a cool place
- Get them to lie down and raise their feet slightly
- Encourage them to move around
- Get them to drink plenty of water. Sports or rehydration drinks are OK
- Cool their skin spray or sponge them with cool water and fan them
- Use cold packs around the armpits or neck

9 What do you do if someone with Heat Illness or heat exhaustion:-

- o is feeling unwell after 30 minutes of resting in a cool place and drinking plenty of water
- o is not sweating even though too hot
- o has fast breathing or shortness of breath
- o is feeling confused
- o has a fit (seizure)
- o loses consciousness or is not responsive

(I correct answer from the list below)

- Send them home
- Call 999
- Give them more to drink
- Wait and see if they get better

10 Which one of the following is NOT a symptom of heat illness?

- confusion/lack of mental clarity
- walking with a limp
- inability to hold a conversation
- bizarre behaviour
- hot, red skin
- fainting
- headache
- rapid strong pulse
- sweating

11 Which one of the following will NOT help to reduce the risk of sunburn?

- Use sun high factor sunscreen
- Wear a wide brimmed hat
- Wear a loose long sleeved shirt or top
- Tie long hair up into a bun

Waterborne Infections and Diseases

This relates to "normal" precautions and does not include precautions to protect against COVID 19.

12 Which ONE of the following will NOT help rowers to protect themselves:-

- Read and understand any information on waterborne infectious agents and contamination provided by the club
- Seek urgent medical advice as soon as they think that they may have any relevant symptoms
- Inform the club if they have contracted a disease associated with a waterborne cause so that others can be encouraged to take greater precautions
- Keep away from other people who have contracted a waterborne disease
- Cover all cuts or grazes with waterproof dressings
- Wash or shower after any significant contact with water from the river, lake, canal, etc
- Never drink water from sources such as rivers, lakes, canals etc.
- Wash hands thoroughly before eating or drinking.
- Clean open wounds, such as blisters or calf abrasions with an anti-bacterial substance.
- Wear suitable footwear when launching or recovering a boat,

Note Please remember that Sepsis and Weil's disease are rare in the UK but that they can both develop into life-threatening and lifechanging conditions.

13 Which ONE of the following is NOT a symptom of Sepsis:-

- acting confused, slurred speech or not making sense
- blue, pale or blotchy skin, lips or tongue
- a rash that does not fade when you roll a glass over it, the same as meningitis
- difficulty breathing, breathlessness or breathing very fast
- Euphoria, feeling excessively well
- feeling very unwell or like there's something seriously wrong
- not urinating for a day
- has swelling, redness or pain around a cut or wound
- has a very high or low temperature, feels hot or cold to the touch, or is shivering

14 Which ONE of the following is NOT a symptom of Weil's disease:-

- severe headache
- chills
- muscle aches
- feeling angry
- vomiting
- Some people may not have any symptoms

15 When do the symptoms of Weil's disease typically develop:- (I correct answer)

- Within 24 hours of infection
- between 7 14 days after infection
- only after repeated exposure

Typically symptoms develop between 7 - 14 days after infection, although it can be as short as 2 - 3 days or as long as 30 days

Which one of these need you NOT do if you have fallen in to water containing significant quantities of blue-green algae?

- Wash exposed skin and clothing with fresh water and soap.
- Keep clean and cool and use standard proprietary treatments like Calamine lotion if itching is very uncomfortable.
- See your doctor if you experience symptoms, and mention your exposure to blue green algae.
- Avoid drinking alcohol
- Drink a can of coke
- Do not use paracetamol

Safety Inspections and Boat Checking

17 Which of the following does NOT need to be included in a safety inspection of a boathouse (select one answer only)?

- The condition of the boats and blades
- The condition of the coaching launch and its engine
- The condition of gym equipment, (such as indoor rowing machines and weights)
- The condition of any boat trailers
- The condition of bikes, provided by the club, for use by coaches and others
- The condition and availability of Throw lines
- The condition and availability of Lifejackets
- The condition and availability of First Aid kits
- The condition and availability of Lights used on boats
- The contents of the lost property box
- The contents of Safety, and other, notice boards
- The general state of housekeeping and tidiness in the boathouse and other areas used by members
- The condition of other club facilities such as the landing stage and parking area
- The condition of gas and electrical equipment

18 Which one of the following is there NO NEED to examine when checking the launch?

- Check that the motor should not start if it is in gear (unless it is a small engines that does not have selectable gears)
- Check that the motor should not start if the kill cord is not fitted
- Check that the gear selector works correctly; the motor should not slip in or out of gear
- Check that the seats are dry
- Check that the kill cord works. The motor should stop if the kill cord is removed
- Check that the outboard motor is securely fixed to the boat
- Check that there is a secondary means of propulsion, in practice this means carry paddles or oars

When checking Heel Restraints, how is the permissible range of movement for each shoe defined? (I correct answer)

- The heel restraint should be at least 50 mm long
- The heel restraint should be at least 60 mm long
- The heel restraint should be no more than 60 mm long
- The heel restraint should be no more than 70 mm long
- The heel restraint should be no more than 50 mm long
- The heel should not be able to rise higher than the lowest fixed point of the shoe

Which one of the following is there NO NEED to include when inspecting the Gym or indoor training area,

- Check that the gym is clean and tidy
- Check that equipment is in the correct place when it is not being used
- Check that the equipment is in good condition
- Check that that materials are provided so that equipment can be kept clean
- Check that users members have access to a full First Aid kit
- Check that there is a list of current first aiders displayed prominently in the gym
- Check that there is a poster displayed showing British Rowing Technique

Head Injuries and Concussion

21 Which one of the following is NOT a symptom of concussion?

- loss of consciousness, even for a few seconds
- amnesia (memory loss)
- persistent headaches since the injury
- changes in behaviour
- confusion
- drowsiness
- excessive thirst
- a large bruise or wound to the head or face
- vision problems
- reading or writing problems
- balance problems or difficulty walking
- loss of power in part of the body
- clear fluid leaking from the nose or ears

22 If you think that someone has concussion then which TWO of the following should you do?

- Take the casualty to nearest Accident and Emergency Department to be assessed by a Doctor
- Wait for ten minutes to see if it gets better on its own
- Do not let the casualty exercise, drive or manipulate heavy machinery. Call an ambulance if necessary
- Give the casualty an aspirin to help reduce the headache

Which one of the following would NOT cause you to Phone 999 or 112 for an ambulance?

- the casualty remains unconscious after the initial injury
- the casualty is having difficulty staying awake, speaking or understanding what people are saying
- the casualty complains that he is cold
- the casualty has problems with their vision
- the casualty is having a seizure or fit
- the casualty has been vomiting since the injury
- the casualty is bleeding from one or both ears or bruising behind their ears

If someone has a head injury but has no symptoms of concussion, what three things would you tell their friend or carer?

- Nothing as this is covered by medical confidentiality
- keep an eye on the casualty for the next 24 hours
- stay within easy reach of a telephone (avoid areas with poor mobile phone coverage)
- if any symptoms appear or their condition deteriorates seek medical advice immediately

When is it safe for someone recovering from concussion to return to sport?

- As soon as the casualty feels ready to return
- All sport should be avoided for 7 10 days or longer if the concussion is severe.

Exercising when suffering from concussion can make the condition worse. Head injuries sustained outside rowing should be reported to the coach. If in any doubt seek healthcare professional advice and follow it.

Which one of the following would you NOT do to treat a minor head injury

- hold an ice pack (or a bag of frozen peas in a tea towel) to the injury regularly for short periods in the first few days to bring down any swelling
- rest and avoid stress you do not need to stay awake if you're tired
- take paracetamol or ibuprofen to relieve pain or a headache
- take aspirin to relieve pain or a headache
- make sure an adult stays with you or your child for at least the first 24 hours call 111 for advice if there's nobody who can stay with you

Do not use aspirin as it could cause the injury to bleed

Is it safe to go out alone?

Clubs are expected to use their Risk Assessments to establish rules that tell their members whether a small boat outing can or cannot happen.

Which one of the following is NOT a factor that tends to increase the probability of a hazardous event:-

- The presence of other water users (boats, wash, etc.)
- The extent to which the water is exposed to the wind
- Weather (wind strength, including gusts, direction)
- Stream speed and static obstructions such as moored boats, bridges etc.
- The absence of a tow path
- The relative experience and competence of the rower

Which one of the following is NOT a factor that tends to increase the severity of a hazardous event:-

- The absence of other water users, spectators, coaches, passers-by, water-side safety equipment
- Low water temperature and deep water (cannot wade ashore)
- Areas of where there are shoals or rocks
- Large distances to the bank
- Obstructions at the water's edge (e.g. high banks, reeds, walls, etc).

Swimming

Which one of the following does **NOT** reduce the risk of collision with someone swimming?

- Always keep a good lookout for swimmers both in the water and on the bank.
- Avoid passing close to the swimmers that you have seen, there may be more nearby that you have not seen.
- Warn other boats about the presence of swimmers that you have seen.
- Take care when (or avoid) passing under bridges that people may jump from.
- Shout at swimmers to let them know that you are approaching
- Identify areas where people regularly swim and include this information on your circulation plan.
- Keep clear of areas where people regularly swim.

Which one of the following is NOT a reason why is it important that rowers can swim?

- So that they are not scared when they are in a boat that is a long way from the bank
- So that if they capsize they can stay affoat long enough to grab their boat.
- So that they can swim to the bank, perhaps with their boat
- So that if they capsize they can swim to someone else's boat nearby.