



BRITISHROWING

HRSA Monthly Report

March 2021

Stephen Worley

TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

Double Fatality in Iowa

On Sunday 28 March at about 9:30 am a 4+ or 4x+ from Iowa State University Crew (Rowing) Club capsized on the south side of Little Wall Lake. It is reported that the wind was blowing from the North West at 20-25 mph and the water was rough. The lake is approximately triangular and the area is about 250 acres. The surrounding land is low lying so there is unlikely to be much shelter even along its windward edge. The water was cold; the lake was frozen until three weeks ago. The air temperature was about 5°C.

All five crew members entered the water. Two people swam ashore and one person was rescued by a kayak and then transferred to a Fire boat; all three were taken to hospital. One man and one woman were among those recovered.

A body was recovered by divers later that day and a further body was recovered by divers on the following day. The rowers who died were aged 19 and 20.

The wave height on open water depends on wind speed and the distance the wind has blown over the water. The incident probably occurred in the part of the lake where the water was roughest.

The CEO of US Rowing has issued a statement saying *“Our hearts go out to the families, team members, classmates, and friends of the Iowa State rowing team during this very sad and tragic time and we ask that everyone keep them in our thoughts.”* The CEO of British Rowing has sent a message of condolence.

This incident graphically demonstrates the potential consequences of cold water immersion. UK waters are cold at this time; inland water tending to be colder than sea water. Please take extreme care at this time when our enthusiasm can get the better of our judgement. It is better to be on land wishing you were afloat than afloat wishing you were on land. Have a look at the Safety Alert – [Cold Water Kills](#).

Incidents in March

A member of a rowing club was standing on the footpath next to the lake when he collapsed. An ambulance was called; he was unconscious and not breathing. CPR was started under instruction from the 999 operator and continued until the paramedics arrived. They used an AED and adrenaline to try to restart his heart. This was unsuccessful and he was taken to hospital. He could not be resuscitated. If you would like to learn more about resuscitation then please read section 8.7 of [RowSafe](#), see the Safety Alert on [Staying Alive](#), and complete the [Lifesaver](#) training.

A pair travelling at pace made blade contact with a paddleboarder. The 2- had been checking the bank side for people and keeping to a line away from where they would normally expect slower boats to be. In this case, it seems that the paddleboarder was in the middle of the river and the rowers on the other side and they did not see him until too late. It appears that nobody was injured and no damage was caused. In another incident a rower in a 1x had just navigated round a slow-moving motor cruiser and collided with one of a group of four paddleboarders. All rowers are advised to take extra care to be aware of and avoid paddleboarders. Do not assume that they know the navigation pattern as well as you do.

A 4x+ struck and became lodged between two sheets of wooden siding on the bank. The stream swung the stern round and damaged the bow.

An 8x capsized when the boys were doing a drill to front stops and they let go of the blades. It is not unusual for even large boats to capsize during square blades front stops drills, even when the rowers do not let go of the handles! Coaches should take care and avoid holding the whole crew in this position.



Suggested changes to the Highway code and Towing

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency has issued a consultative document on a “Review of The Highway Code to improve safety on motorways and high-speed roads”, this is available [here](#). This contains useful information and is well worth reading.

Some parts of the review refer to the towing of trailers. The most significant of these changes are additions of advice, these are:-

- *if your vehicle is narrower than your trailer then towing mirrors should be used*
- *you should be aware that reduced speed limits may apply (see Rule 124)*
- *(‘Further reading’) contains additional advice about safe towing.*

In the event of a breakdown, be aware:-

- *it may take longer to build up speed when re-joining a carriageway (see also Rule 276)*

“Further reading” contains the following information on Towing

Readers can find information about the safety guidance applicable to towing at the following websites:

- [Tow a trailer with a car: safety checks](#)
- [Towing a trailer with a car or van](#)
- [Requirements for towing trailers in Great Britain](#)

These documents have not changed recently but do contain useful information.

Speed Limits have not changed but the table containing information on them has been reformatted a little. This is presented, as a reminder in Appendix 1, below.

There is a new rule on stopping in a place of safety in the event of a breakdown or incident. This applies generally, not just to vehicles towing, and is presented in Appendix 2 below.

There is also a new rule on “tailgating”. This states:-

Tailgating is where the gap between you and the vehicle in front is too small for you to be able to stop safely if the vehicle in front suddenly brakes.

Tailgating is dangerous, intimidating and can cause collisions, especially when driving at speed. Keeping a safe distance from the vehicle in front gives you time to react and stop if necessary. Dangerous and careless driving offences, such as tailgating, are enforced by the police.

RowSafe 2021

The updating of RowSafe to produce the 2021 version is almost complete and the new version should be available soon on the [RowSafe](#) page of the website. All new text will be highlighted so that it is easy to identify and a summary of changes will be available, also on the RowSafe page. The most significant changes are:-

- An explanation of the derivation of Safety Plans, Safety Rules and Emergency Plans
- The addition of a section containing safety advice for people new to rowing
- The Medical panel advice on what to do if someone collapses has been incorporated into the text
- Additional advice has been included on Lightning

Avoiding Heat Illness

There was a suggestion that rowers should be allowed to rehydrate if a re-row is ordered in a race in very hot weather. There was concern that a competitor may suffer from heat exhaustion or heat stroke during the re-row.

The response was that re-rows can already be quite disruptive to a regatta program particularly when crews have entered several events and when different crews are using the same boat. Inviting rowers to go ashore for a drink would waste too much time. This issue is probably most easily addressed by Competitions advising crews to carry drinking water on hot sunny days.

This topic is already covered in section 8.2 (Sunburn, Heat Illness and Exhaustion) of [RowSafe](#). There is also guidance for coaches on hyperthermia in RowHow [here](#) (scroll down and click on Introduction to the Course, the guideline can be found under Essential Reading).

Section 8.2 contains the following:-

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Include the risks of exposure to sun and heat leading to sunburn, heat illness and exhaustion in the competition's Risk Assessments.
- Provide competitors and officials with information about sunburn, heat illness and exhaustion.
- Include hyperthermia in their Emergency Plan.
- Provide First Aid facilities.
- Ensure that sufficient drinking water is available.

Article for the Membership Newsletter

This was outlined briefly last month and the article can be found on the British Rowing website [here](#).

Lifejackets for Adaptive Rowers

Advice was requested with respect to the production of advice for adaptive rowers and their coaches. The following text was suggested:-

Appropriate lifejackets, floatation devices and safety aids should be available and may be needed for all or some sessions depending on the adaptive rower's level of skill, experience, confidence and support requirements, and the conditions at the venue at the time. These should all be assessed using a risk assessment. It is important to make sure that lifejackets, etc. are checked regularly, well maintained and worn correctly, so that nothing interferes with their correct operation and that they do not interfere with the rowing stroke or the ability of the rower to get free from the boat in the event of a capsized. More information on how to do this can be found in [RowSafe](#).

Be Kind to Yourself Safety Alert

This Safety Alert was issued in advance of the first stage of the return to rowing on 29 March. It was intended to prepare rowers for the resumption of their on-water activities and encourage them to enjoy it and to take a little time to regain their former levels of performance. The Safety Alert can be found [here](#).

Work with Rowing Ireland

The Rowing Ireland Safety Advisory Committee, produces Safety Bulletins, the first was in January and the second was in March. *"These are targeted at rowing clubs and individual members, throughout our island. The Safety Advisory Committees aim for publishing this document is, to make Safety a topic that is talked and thought about, by all members of the rowing community. The vision is to empower all our members, with the knowledge and understanding so as to keep our sport safe and enjoyable for all."*

The first Safety Bulletin can be downloaded from the Rowing Ireland website [here](#). It contains information on Club Safety Statements, Incident Reporting, World Rowing Safety information, Covid-19 in Ireland and Coastal and Offshore Rowing.

The contents of Club Safety Statements follow Irish government guidance on safety (including the guidance to industry) as promoted by the Irish Health and Safety Authority. The Irish approach to safety is interesting and best explained by viewing a video on Safety Statements recommended in the first Safety Bulletin. That video can be found [here](#).

The second bulletin deals mostly with Hazard Identification as this is the first step in developing a Safety Statement. The approach incorporates that taken within British Rowing. It also encourages people to report incidents. It can be downloaded from the Rowing Ireland website [here](#).

The Safety Bulletin contains the following generous acknowledgement:-

We would like to thank our friends at British Rowing safety for allowing us to reproduce this safety hazard quiz. The safety team at British Rowing continue to provide assistance and are proving to be a great knowledge resource for our own safety team.

Drone Coverage at a Regatta

There was an enquiry about the use of a drone at a regatta, the organisers are in the early stages of discussions with a professional aerial photography company. The following advice was provided.

The requirements for drones are far from simple. If you are using a professional operator then they will be fully aware of all the requirements.

You can find the following information [here](#).

"What are the rules for flying drones in the UK?

- Your drone must weigh under 20kg
- You can't fly above 400 feet in altitude or 500 metres from you horizontally
- Ensure your drone is always in sight
- Always keep away from aircraft, helicopters, airports and airfields
- Use your common sense and fly your aircraft safely
- Any drone weighing more than 250 grams must be [registered with the CAA](#) and the drone pilot must complete an online safety test, obtaining a Flyer ID and an Operator ID that should be attached to the Drone.
- You must not fly within 50 metres of people, vehicles, buildings or vessels
- Your drone must not be flown within 150 metres of a congested area or any large group of people such as a concert or sporting event as you may be prosecuted
- If you intend to record in an area where people are, you must inform them before you start, as you will need to respect privacy, or risk being prosecuted

If your drone is fitted with a camera there are additional regulations you must follow.

- You must not fly within 50 metres of people, vehicles, buildings or vessels
- Your drone must not be flown within 150 metres of a congested area or any large group of people such as a concert or sporting event as you may be prosecuted.
- If you intend to record in an area where people are, you must inform them before you start.

If you intend to use the drone for commercial purposes you [must have permission from the CAA](#) and [comply with additional laws](#) governing their use. To get [guidance on operating permissions for drones](#) see the CAA's website for the latest information and regulations regarding drone use."

There is a requirement for permission from Air Traffic control if the drones are to fly near an airfield. This map shows the restricted areas near you. This can be found [here](#).

There is further information on where drones can be flown, it can be found [here](#), and includes this.

- Fly below 120m (400ft)
- Do not fly closer to people than 50m (there are some exemptions for very light drones)
- Always keep a safe distance
- Never fly over people who are crowded together

Learn to Row (L2R) handbook

The Learn to Row Handbook is being revised. The safety content has been reviewed and revised to reflect current safety guidance.

Capsize drills

There was a question about the need for a capsize drill at a coastal club.

The response was that the plans seem very sensible. However, we expect rowers to be able to swim but we do not want them to have to swim. If they can swim then they will feel confident in the water and in the boat some distance from land; if they cannot then they may panic.

Please consider what would happen if a boat were to capsize. Would the crew stay with the boat and climb back in? Would there be another boat or launch nearby to assist them? The water is still cold at this time of year so swimming to the beach will not be a comfortable task. It is easy to swim in a warm pool. It is not so easy in cold water.

Many capsizes of 4s and 8s are the result of crews being held at front stops with square blades. It would help if you can avoid this.

There was a question from another club who are expecting to run Learn to Row courses over the Easter break. In the summer they would run a capsize and recovery drill in the river off the landing stage. However they expect that river conditions, water and air temperatures will make this an unfeasible. They are also in the situation where they cannot hire a pool. On signing up for the course all parents are required to confirm their child can swim 50m in light clothing and tread water for 60 seconds. Is this sufficient.

The response was I believe that my colleagues on the Medical Panel examined the risk of conducting the capsize drill in a river and concluded that in most cases the risks of waterborne infections were slight. From this point of view it is an acceptable risk. However, please do pay heed to the other risks, for example from passing motorised vessels.

The distance that people should be able to swim and the times for which they should be able to tread water depend on the venue where they will row. We do not want any rower to have to swim but we do want them to be able to, if only so that they will be confident when rowing in the middle of the river. (We would rather they avoid the middle of the river too, to avoid collisions!)

Conducting the capsize drill in the autumn may be preferable when the water is a little warmer and the air is a little cooler.

You will find this in the recently issued Safety Alert:-

It is a long time since you practised balancing a boat. Can you remember what to do if you capsize? Run through it in your head now. If you are not sure what to do, then look at [this](#) in RowHow.

The link takes you to the Capsize Drill page in RowHow where you will find a capsize drill online learning course for rowers and another for coaches and club officials. The one for coaches, etc., is an extended version of the course for rowers. You could ask your Learn to Row (L2R) students to complete this.

We have just been helping to re-rewrite the L2R guide and this is the approach we have suggested there.

Stand Up Paddleboarders

There was a question about the recent growth in the popularity of Paddleboarding on waters used by rowers. There was also suggested that there may not be an NGB for this activity and that there may not be appropriate safety standards.

The response was that the fundamental difference between access to Stand Up Paddleboarding, Canoeing and Rowing is the cost of entry. Entry level Stand Up Paddleboards are readily available for a few hundred pounds. Basic canoes cost about the same. Single sculling boats cost a few thousand pounds.

Paddleboards are inflatable and are easy to transport inside a car. Canoes are relatively short (~3 - 4 metres) and are easy to transport on a roof rack. Single sculling boats are relatively long (7 metres) and are not easy to transport on a roof rack due to the overhang at both ends.

As a result of both these factors new Paddleboarders and Canoeists have no need to join clubs, although there are clubs for both sports. They simply buy their kit, transport it to the river, prepare and launch their boat and enjoy their sport. As they do not need to join clubs then they may not join the two national associations that support their sport. These are [British Canoeing](#) (BC) (for Paddleboarders and Canoeists) and the [British Stand Up Paddleboard Association](#) (BSUPA).

New Rowers do need to join clubs to have access to boats and coaching. Canoeing and SUP use are largely intuitive so there is less need for coaching and instruction and, therefore, less need to join a club.

Both BUSPA and BC provide insurance to their members and have the equivalent of Coach Education courses.

SUP is far from an emerging sport although it is relatively new. I have been trying to find out how many people are involved and found these data for the US on Wikipedia.

According to the Outdoor Foundation's 2013 Outdoor Participation Report, stand up paddle boarding was listed as the most popular outdoor activity among first-time participants. The report stated that the median age of stand up paddle boarders was 28.

The Outdoor Foundation's 2015 Special Report into Paddlesports found that 2.8 million (or 0.9%) of Americans participated in standup paddleboarding in 2014. This was up from 2.0 million in 2013. Ages 25–44 made up the highest percentage of overall contributors (47%). The highest participation rate was teenagers ages 14–17 (1.8%), with males comprising 76% of this age bracket.

I have written about SUPs in the Monthly Reports for [October 2020](#), [August 2020](#), [July 2020](#), and July 2018.

The following comments on the safety of SUPs were included in the August 2020 report.

A competition to design a safe means of having fun afloat would probably result in something like a Stand Up Paddleboard. It has all the desired attributes for safety.

- *the boat is largely inflatable and “unsinkable”.*
- *the construction of most boards is “soft”, there are no sharp or hard components*
- *the combination of boat and paddle is relatively narrow, it does not take up much space*
- *it can be paddled through very shallow water*
- *most of them travel relatively slowly although they can be raced*
- *the occupant is facing the direction of travel, and has a good view ahead*
- *the occupant is standing so has a good view in all directions from an elevated position*
- *the standing occupant is conspicuous and clearly visible to others*

None of these qualities apply to sculling boats or stern loaded coxed boats.

I have also worked with British Canoeing to produce joint guidance for Rowers and Canoeists. This is on the British Rowing website [here](#).

Appendix 1 - Speed Limits

This is reformatted but essentially unchanged Highway Code information. It is included here simply as a reminder.

Proposed Rule

Highlighted text indicates an addition

You **MUST NOT** exceed the maximum speed limits for the road and for your vehicle (see table below). The presence of street lights generally means that there is a 30mph (48km/h) speed limit unless otherwise specified.

Speed Limits	Built-up areas	Single carriageways	Dual carriageways	Motorways
Type of vehicle	mph (km/h)	mph (km/h)	mph (km/h)	mph (km/h)
Cars & motorcycles (including car derived vans up to 2 tonnes maximum laden weight)	30 (48)	60 (96)	70 (112)	70 (112)
Cars towing caravans or trailers (including car derived vans and motorcycles)	30 (48)	50 (80)	60 (96)	60 (96)
Buses, coaches and minibuses (not exceeding 12 metres in overall length)	30 (48)	50 (80)	60 (96)	70 (112)
Goods vehicles (not exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)	30 (48)	50 (80)	60 (96)	70† (112)
Goods vehicles (exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight) in England and Wales	30 (48)	50 (80)	60 (96)	60 (96)
Goods vehicles (exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight) in Scotland	30 (48)	40 (64)	50 (80)	60 (96)

†60 mph (96 km/h) if articulated or towing a trailer.

Local signed speed limits may apply, for example:

- 20 mph (rather than 30 mph) in some built-up areas
- 50 mph (rather than 60 mph) on stretches of road with sharp bends
- on motorways and dual carriageways, signs which display the speed for the road within a red ring can be used to vary the maximum speed limit

Appendix 2 - Stopping in a Place of Relative Safety

This is a summary of a new rule in the Highway Code.

New rule – Place of relative safety

We are proposing a new rule describing safer places to stop in the event of a breakdown or other incident to ensure that readers understand:

- A place of relative safety is where the people and vehicles involved in a breakdown or other incident are less likely to be at risk from moving traffic
- The safest place to stop in the event of a breakdown or incident is a location which is designed for parking
- On motorways and other high-speed roads, the safest place to stop is a service area
- Other places of relative safety on motorways and other high-speed roads include lay-bys, emergency areas and hard shoulders
- Hard shoulders provide less protection than other places of relative safety

The rule is:-

If you need to stop your vehicle in the event of a breakdown or incident, try to stop in a place of relative safety. A place of relative safety is where you, your passengers and your vehicle are less likely to be at risk from moving traffic.

The safest place to stop is a location which is designed for parking. On motorways and other high-speed roads, the safest place to stop is a service area. Other places of relative safety include

- lay-bys
- emergency areas (see New rule – Emergency areas)
- hard shoulders (see Rule 269)

Be aware that hard shoulders provide less protection than other places of relative safety.

You and your passengers should, where possible, keep well away from your vehicle and moving traffic.

The rules on Emergency areas include:-

Emergency areas are located along motorways with no hard shoulder or where the hard shoulder is used as an extra lane (see Rule 269). Emergency areas are marked with blue signs featuring an orange SOS telephone symbol. These areas are for emergency use only (see Rule 275 and Rule 276).



At a motorway emergency area, you **MUST** call the operator using the emergency telephone provided and follow the operator's advice for exiting the emergency area. A lane may need to be closed so that you can rejoin the motorway safely

