



BRITISH ROWING

RowSafe

Safety advice for
rowers, clubs, and
competitions



MON109



Introduction

Welcome to RowSafe

RowSafe provides safety advice to rowers, clubs, competitions and everyone else associated with the sport of rowing.

RowSafe is a simple and direct web-enabled directory. The sections contain “Expectations” for various different groups, e.g. Everyone, Clubs, Competitions, Coaches, Regional Rowing Councils, and British Rowing, the list varies a little according to topic. They also contain links to other relevant information.

The Approach

It is a myth that “health and safety” is all about stopping people from enjoying themselves. RowSafe has adopted the modern safety approach of trying to find the ways in which people can take part in an activity without putting themselves and others at unacceptable risk.

We recognise that, in the real world, there is some risk associated with every activity. A little thought can go a long way to ensuring that the level of risk is acceptable.

The need for risk assessment is a continuing theme in RowSafe. This consists of thinking about hazards and the hazardous events that they can cause. Risk can be reduced by installing “barriers” that reduce the chances of a hazard producing a hazardous event and by having “controls” that limit the harm should a hazardous event occur. This is explained in detail in the Safety Basics online learning resource.

Risk Assessments can be documented and detailed, but these should be supplemented by considerations of whether it is safe to do what we were planning to do. We all do this every time we cross the road.

=.

Introduction

DISCLAIMER: 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 user’s 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.

The Update Process

British Rowing is a learning organisation, and our knowledge continues to evolve. RowSafe will be updated periodically to accommodate this learning.

Updates will be made on an annual basis around spring of each year. Each version is dated to help users to ensure that they are using the most recent version. A summary of the changes at each update will also be provided.

Users are invited to ask questions, make comments and suggest improvements; to do so please write to safety@britishrowing.org.

Version	Update date
2016	November 2016
2017	April 2017
2018	April 2018
2019	April 2019
2020	October 2020
2021	April 2021
2021	April 2021
2022	April 2022
2023	April 2023
2024	April 2024
2025	April 2025
2026	February 2026

Further Information

- Safety Basics - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=194>

Contents

1.	Culture and Expectations	7
1.1.	Roles and Expectations	8
1.2.	Positive Safety Culture	10
1.3.	Club Safety Policy	12
1.3.1.	Specimen Safety Policy and Safety and Environmental Policy	13
2.	Communication	14
2.1.	Communication of Safety Information	15
2.2.	Make up of Club Induction Pack	17
2.3.	Radio Procedure	19
3.	Club Safety	25
3.1.	Club Risk Assessment	26
3.2.	Club Safety Plans and Safety Rules	29
3.3.	Club Emergency Response Plan	33
3.4.	Club Rowing Safety Adviser Job Description	35
3.5.	Training Camps and Rowing on Unfamiliar Waters	37
3.6.	Competence in the Water	39
3.7.	Capsize and Recovery	41
3.8.	Man Overboard	44
3.9.	Adaptive Rowers at Clubs	46
4.	Competition Safety	50
4.1.	Competition Risk Assessment	52
4.2.	Competition Safety Plans and Safety Rules	54
4.3.	Competition Emergency Response Plan	57
4.4.	Competition Rowing Safety Adviser Job Description	60
4.5.	Competition Navigational Arrangements	62
4.6.	Alternative Arrangements Plan	65
4.7.	Competition Safety Boat Providers	67
4.8.	Adaptive Rowers at Competitions	70
4.8.1.	Classification and Event Types	76
4.8.2.	Boat Checking	77
4.8.3.	Race Guiding	78
4.9.	Touring	79
5.	Competence	82
5.1.	Steering and Navigation	83
5.2.	Launch Driving	87
5.2.1.	Recovering a Person from the Water into a Launch	91

Contents

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

6.	People	92
6.1.	People new to Rowing	93
6.1.1.	Safety Advice for People new to Rowing	96
6.2.	Adaptive rowers	97
6.2.1.	Rescue Provision for Adaptive Rowers at Clubs and Competitions	102
6.2.2.	Safety Launches and their Crews (for Adaptive Rowers)	103
7.	Equipment	104
7.1.	Boats and Blades	105
7.2.	Transport and Trailers	109
7.3.	Safety Aids	112
7.4.	Launches	115
7.4.1.	Launch Safety Kits	117
8.	Health	119
8.1.	Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia	120
8.2.	Sunburn, Heat Illness and Exhaustion	122
8.3.	First Aid	124
8.4.	Waterborne Infections and Diseases	129
8.5.	Concussion	131
8.6.	Coping with Illness and Diseases	133
8.6.1.	Common Illnesses	135
8.6.2.	Chronic Conditions and Diseases	137
8.6.3.	Asthma	140
8.6.4.	Anaphylaxis	143
8.6.5.	Stroke and Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA)	145
8.7.	What To Do If Someone Collapses	146
8.8.	The Health Benefits of Intensive exercise for older adults.	153
9.	Topics Covered in Risk Assessments	155
9.1.	Weather	156
9.2.	The Local Environment	161
9.3.	The Water	166
9.4.	Other Water Users	171
9.5.	Going Afloat and Landing	175
9.6.	Around the Boathouse	179
9.7.	Faulty, Incorrectly Set and Poorly Maintained Equipment	182
9.8.	Pre-existing Health Conditions and Low Levels of Fitness	186
9.9.	Ocean Rowing Risk Management Plan	189
9.10.	Rowing in floods	193
9.11.	Indoor Rowing	197

10. Rowing on the Sea	202
10.1. Coastal and Inshore Rowing	203
10.2. Fixed Seat Sea Rowing	207
10.2.1. Gig & Other Fixed Seat Boat Safety Kits	210
10.3. Ocean Rowing	211
10.3.1. Ocean Rowing Safety Equipment	215
10.4. Beach Sprint Risk Management	216
10.4.1. Safe People	217
10.4.2. Safe Equipment	219
10.4.3. Safe Practice	221
10.4.4. Safe Place	222
10.4.5. Daily Risk Assessment	223
10.4.6. Risk Rating Calculator	228
11. Land Training	233
11.1. Indoor Rowing	234
11.2. Gym Training	237
12. Incident Reporting	239
13. Auditing	241
13.1. Safety Inspections	242

1. Culture and Expectations

The analysis of reported incidents has shown that most harmful incidents associated with rowing are the result of at-risk behaviour. A positive safety culture can do more to ensure everyone's safety than the technical issues that many tend to focus on.

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

- I.1 [Roles and Expectations](#)
- I.2 [Positive Safety Culture](#)
- I.3 [Club Safety Policy](#)
- [Specimen Safety, and Safety and Environmental Policies](#)

I. Culture and Expectations

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

1.1. Roles and Expectations

Everyone involved in rowing is expected to ensure their actions or lack of action do not compromise the safety of themselves or others. Confusion in role definition can lead to necessary tasks being left to others and not being completed at all.

Expected roles are outlined in very general terms below and in more detail throughout RowSafe.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own safety both on and off the water.
- Ensure that their actions both on and off the water do not put others at risk.
- Examine their own actions if they are involved in an incident and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Ensure that they have prepared for the activity that they are about to undertake, including having eaten appropriately and have sufficient drinking water.
- Ensure that they are dressed appropriately for the conditions and that their hair, if long, is restrained such that it does not interfere with their rowing. If the hair is long enough to plait, then reduce the risk and plait it or put it in a bun or top knot.
- Be aware of, and abide by, the Club Safety Rules.
- Follow the guidance in the Club Safety Plans.
- [Report all incidents](#) both within the club and to British Rowing.
- Assist, and if necessary, rescue anyone they find to be in distress, even when racing.
- Intervene if they see anyone who may be considering self-harm, or taking their own life (see [Safety-Alert-Small-Talk-Saves-Lives.pdf](#))

Club

Club Officers are expected to ensure a positive safety culture (see [RowSafe 1.2](#)) and safe practice within the club; they are expected to:

- Establish and publish a Safety Policy in which they commit to safety.
- Appoint a Club Rowing Safety Adviser(s) (CRSA) (see [RowSafe 3.4](#)), to lead and advise on promoting safe practice.
- Support the CRSA and take their advice into account.
- Produce and maintain a Club Risk Assessment that covers all the activities of the club.
- Establish and communicate Safety Rules that define what is, and what is not, appropriate behaviour (these may be integrated into the more general Rules of the club).
- Take appropriate action if its members fail to abide by its Safety Rules.
- Complete and maintain Safety Plans to guide members on safe practice in rowing.
- Provide members with education and training in risk assessment and safe practice
- Provide a safe environment for their members and others to enjoy their sport.
- Encourage club members to be accountable for safety and report all incidents.
- Liaise with all water users and other stakeholders (such as the local sailing club) to ensure that neither will put the other at risk.
- Complete the British Rowing Annual Safety Audit and consider implementing any improvements that this suggests.

Competitions

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Appoint a Competition Rowing Safety Adviser (CoRSA) (see [RowSafe 4.4](#)) to lead and advise on promoting safe practice, support their CoRSA and take their advice into account.
- Complete and maintain a Competition Risk Assessment and use this to define Safety Plans for the competition.
- Promote and communicate safe practice in all activities associated with the competition.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Develop and encourage a positive safety culture (see [RowSafe 1.2](#)) and safe practice in the region.
- Support clubs and competitions in organising their activities and encourage them to follow good practice based on the risks associated with the type of club, waters and activities in the region.
- Promote safety education and training.
- Review the safety provision of competitions within the region and provide or withhold approval for each of them to be held.
- Review safety at clubs and competitions and provide feedback to those clubs and competitions.
- Maintain contact with navigation and other authorities to assist their clubs and competitions to operate safely.
- Appoint a Regional Rowing Safety Adviser to lead and advise on promoting safe practice.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides leadership and promotes a positive safety culture (see [RowSafe 1.2](#)).
- Provides support through safety education and training for regions, clubs, competitions and members.
- Appoints an Honorary Rowing Safety Adviser.
- Supports the National Rowing Safety Committee.
- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.
- Provides safety training material on its website.
- Provides courses that include safety.

Further Information

- [RowSafe 1.2](#) - Positive safety culture
- [RowSafe 3.4](#) - CRSA Job Description
- [RowSafe 4.4](#) - CoRSA Job Description
- Rules of Racing - britishrowing.org/events/entering-events/rules-of-racing
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System – incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert – Small Talk Saves Lives - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Safety-Alert-Small-Talk-Saves-Lives.pdf>

1.2. Positive Safety Culture

A positive safety culture is a bit like a sense of humour; it is difficult to describe but you know what it is when you see it.

What is safety culture?

The safety culture of any organisation is formed from a combination of individual and group:

- Beliefs.
- Values.
- Attitudes.
- Perceptions.
- Competencies; and
- Patterns of behaviour.

These determine the commitment to, and the style of, a club's approach to safety.

Clubs with a positive safety culture have:

- Communications founded on mutual trust.
- Shared perceptions of the importance of safety; and
- Confidence in the effectiveness of their safety precautions.

Building a positive safety culture

Safety culture does not just develop on its own and it does not happen quickly. The best way to start is to help people to understand how their behaviours can influence their safety; in time this will influence that behaviour and help those people to develop positive values and attitudes.

It may be necessary to impose behaviour using rules. Eventually, imposed behaviours become learned behaviours, and learned behaviours will become natural or instinctive behaviours. This all leads to improved competence and will, in due course, help to develop attitudes and beliefs.

This does not just happen on its own; it takes leadership and commitment. It needs a desire from the leaders of the club to improve the way members act together to keep themselves and each other safe. This all starts with influencing behaviour.

Leading people to change their behaviour

The leaders of clubs can motivate and encourage their members to develop "safe" behaviour and avoid "at-risk" behaviour. The first step is to understand the importance of behaviour in the causation of incidents. This is normally shown in the annual Analysis of Incidents; there is a link on the [RowSafe](#) page.

"Leaders" in this context are not just those in positions of responsibility but also everyone whose decisions can impact on the safety and wellbeing of others. This will include club officials, coaches, coxes, steers, rowers, scullers, parents, and helpers. Almost everyone involved has some sort of leadership role.

Leaders can encourage people to improve their behaviour by first defining the behaviour that is acceptable and that which is not acceptable. This should not be a long list but should contain the issues that matter most. More can be added later as behaviour improves. This information should then be published so that members can understand it. This will influence their behaviour.

There should be consequences of both acceptable and at-risk behaviours. There should be positive consequences for acceptable behaviour and negative consequences for at-risk behaviour. This could be as simple as a coach thanking a cox who took great care when steering to avoid hazards and keeping to the navigation plan, and taking a cox who did not to one side and providing stern words of advice.

Knowledge of the consequences, at the time of the behaviour tends to feedback and influence the behaviour. To be effective, consequences should be soon, certain and significant.

There is more information for Level 2 coaches in "Coaching Safe Behaviour"; [here](#) for Level 2 Session Coach and [here](#) for Level 2 Club Coach.

Why should a club want to build a positive safety culture?

Having a positive safety culture leads to a cohesive, considerate, friendly atmosphere. It will also enhance the reputation of the club particularly amongst the parents of juniors. It will reduce the number of injuries that stop rowers from performing and it will reduce the amount of equipment damage.

This cohesion will help when it comes to competition. The pride and sense of belonging that rowers have for their club will motivate them to succeed.

A positive safety culture in a rowing club would result in everyone taking care to keep themselves and others safe. For example, members would always:

- Consider safety when deciding whether to start, or continue, an activity.
- Check their boats before going afloat.
- Take care when handling boats.
- Follow the instructions of their cox and coach.
- Take care when launching.
- Dress appropriately for the conditions.
- Always abide by the circulation plan or rules of the river.
- Keep a good lookout.
- Report all the incidents that they see and consider how they could have been avoided.
- Take care when coming ashore.
- Clean their boats before putting them away.

Further Information

A positive safety culture may be difficult to define but it is an invaluable asset for any club.

For further information and training opportunities contact the Honorary Rowing Safety Adviser at safety@britishrowing.org.

- Coaching Safe Behaviour – Session Coach - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=148§ion=3>
- Coaching Safe Behaviour – Club coach - https://www.rowhow.org/pluginfile.php/52751/mod_resource/content/6/Coaching%20safe%20Behaviour%202019.pdf
- Safety Alert – Back to Basics, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Safety-Alert-Back-to-Basics-.pdf>

1.3. Club Safety Policy

A safety policy provides the opportunity for a club to make a clear statement of its intention to keep its members safe. It can also form the basis for the development of a positive safety culture (see [RowSafe 1.2](#)).

A club may decide to extend the scope of its Policy to include the Environment. A specimen Safety and Environmental Policy is provided below should your club choose to do so.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Read the Club Safety Policy and show their commitment to it by signing a copy.
- Implement the policy to the best of their abilities.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Define the safety policy for their club, there is a specimen policy in [RowSafe 1.3.1](#).
- Communicate it widely.
- Invite members to commit to it by signing it.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Support the implementation of the safety policy.
- Lead by example.
- Commit to the safety policy.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on safety policies.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides support through safety education and training for regions, clubs, competitions and members.
- Provides courses that include safety.

Further Information

- [RowSafe 1.2](#) - Positive Safety Culture
- [RowSafe 1.3.1](#) - Specimen Club Safety, and Safety and Environmental Policies - see examples below

1.3.1. Specimen Safety Policy and Safety and Environmental Policy

Club Safety Policy

(++ insert Club Badge or Logo ++)

+++ insert name of club +++ has a zero tolerance for anyone being harmed as a result of our members' participation in the sport.

We believe that harm is not an inevitable consequence of our activities and that incidents that cause harm can be avoided. We will strive to provide an environment in which the sport can be practised safely and enjoyably by our members. We will guide and lead our members in a way that fulfils these aims.

We recognise that our members have primary responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. The Club, through its Officers and Committee, will encourage safe practice having due regard for the guidance provided by British Rowing in RowSafe.

The Club has safety rules that it expects its members to respect; these can be found (insert location). Complying with these rules will help to prevent harm.

The Club is also committed to learn from the incidents it becomes aware of and will share this information to help others in the sport to learn too. We are committed to make appropriate use of British Rowing's Incident Reporting System.

Members are invited to refer any questions and concerns, relating to safety, to the Club's Rowing Safety Adviser (insert name) or his (or her) deputy (or deputies) (insert name(s)).

Signed by Chair:

Date:

Club Safety and Environmental Policy

(++ insert Club Badge or Logo ++)

+++ insert name of club +++ has a zero tolerance for anyone or the environment being harmed as a result of our members' participation in the sport.

We believe that harm is not an inevitable consequence of our activities and that incidents that cause harm can be avoided. We will strive to provide an environment in which the sport can be practised safely and enjoyably by our members whilst causing no harm to the environment. We will guide and lead our members in a way that fulfils these aims.

We recognise that our members have primary responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others, together with a responsibility to protect the environment.

The Club, through its Officers and Committee, will encourage safe practice having due regard for the guidance provided by British Rowing in RowSafe and in the Sustainability Guidance

The Club has safety rules that it expects its members to respect; these can be found (insert location). Complying with these rules will help to prevent harm.

The Club is also committed to learn from the incidents it becomes aware of and will share this information to help others in the sport to learn too. We are committed to make appropriate use of British Rowing's Incident Reporting System to report both Safety and Environmental Incidents.

Members are invited to refer any questions and concerns, relating to safety, to the Club's Rowing Safety Adviser (insert name) or his (or her) deputy (or deputies) (insert name(s)).

Signed by Chair:

Date:

NB: You can copy and paste these Policies into editable documents.

2. Communication

Good communication works in many directions. In rowing it is important that clubs communicate with their members and competitions communicate with participants (including umpires and officials). Effective communication often uses a variety of media, these include personal and electronic communication.

Everyone should ensure that they are aware of the information and guidance that has been made available to them and that they should report any issues or concerns that they are aware of. It is also important to feel free to ask questions and to be able to receive appropriate answers.

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

- 2.1. [Communication of Safety Information](#)
- 2.2. [Make up of Club Induction Pack](#)
- 2.3 [Radio Procedure](#)

2. Communication

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

2.1. Communication of Safety Information

Everyone should ensure that they are aware of the information and guidance that has been made available to them and that they should report any issues or concerns that they are aware of. It is also important to feel free to ask questions and to be able to receive appropriate answers.

Communication methods include:

- In person, face-to-face;
- Safety notice boards (club and competition);
- Digital communications (websites, emails and social media); and
- Training and induction materials.

Expectations

Everyone

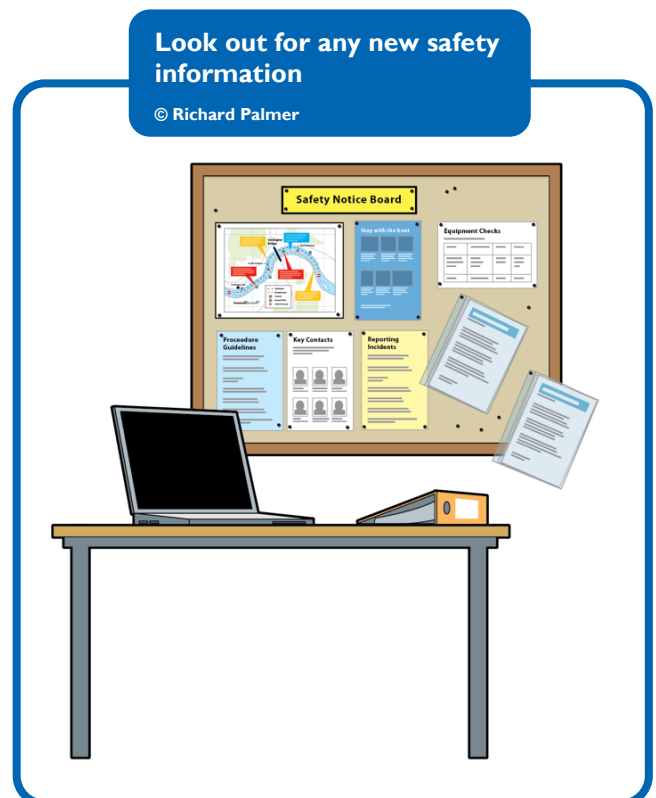
Everyone is expected to:

- Frequently check the various communication methods such as notice boards, emails and website.
- Review the information available and take appropriate action such as understanding the displayed circulation plan and abiding by it.
- Report concerns, incidents and near misses as appropriate.
- Report all incidents using the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Ask a responsible person whenever they have questions or feel that they need more information.
- Be aware of, and understand, the instructions and any safety requirements when at competitions.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Promptly review all advice issued by British Rowing and the Regional Rowing Council and take action when required.
- Make members aware of changes whenever the Club Risk Assessment, rules, procedures and advice are updated.
- Maintain regular communication with all local water users and other stakeholders and circulate any information to members. This could include information about sailing regattas and fishing competitions arranged by other organisations.
- Ensure that all members are aware of and able to access the communication methods used by the club.
- Review the effectiveness of the club's communication processes.
- Report all incidents using the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).



Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Communicate rules and safety recommendations to rowers under their supervision.
- Report all perceived safety issues to the Club Rowing Safety Adviser and Club Committee.
- Report all incidents using the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Ensure that their crews, when at competitions, are aware of and understand the instructions to competitors and any safety requirements.
- Read, understand and implement the guidance on Coaching Safe Behaviour that can be found, [here](#) for Level 2 Session Coach and [here](#) for Level 2 Club Coach.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Promptly review all advice issued by British Rowing and the Regional Rowing Council to the Competition Rowing Safety Adviser, and take action when required.
- Make competing clubs aware of the Competition Risk Assessment, local rules, procedures, advice and safety arrangements.
- Publicise rules, procedures, and other requirements.
- Encourage competitors to check the communication methods used by the competition.
- Review the effectiveness of the competition's communication processes.
- Report all incidents using the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Promote and support communication on all aspects of safety.
- Issue and maintain any regional guidance on rowing safety, acting primarily on advice from the Regional Rowing Safety Adviser.
- Recommend action as a result of incidents that may come to the attention of the Regional Rowing Safety Adviser.
- Maintain regular communication with local navigation authorities and other regional stakeholders and circulate any information to clubs (for example information relating to river closures or modifications to navigation rules).
- Maintain regular communication with British Rowing.
- Review the effectiveness of the Regional Rowing Council's communication processes.

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

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive

2.2. Make up of Club Induction Pack

The Club Induction Pack should contain information that new members would need to familiarise themselves with the operation of the club. It should provide new members with simple guidance that will keep themselves and others safe and ease their transition into full participation in the club.

The Club Induction Pack should also contain links to other information that may be needed later. If it is available on the club's website then the links should be hyperlinks.

Suggested Contents

Introduction to the Club

Provide information on topics such as:

- A summary of the history of the club.
- A list of club officials (preferably including photographs).
- A list of club First Aiders (preferably including photographs).
- Club Rowing Safety Adviser (name, photo and contact details).
- Club Welfare Officer (name, photo and contact details).
- Parking.
- Times when the club is open.
- Transport to and from the club.

Club Procedures

Include a list of procedures and links to each. Procedures could include, for example, the process for quarantining damaged equipment.

Safety Information

Provide information on topics such as:

- The location of club procedures; for example, are they located on the notice board or on the website?
- Responsibilities and expectations for everyone.
- Risk Assessments / Safety Plan; what they are and where they can be found.
- Safety Aids such as throw lines, lifejackets, launch, lifeguard tube.
- An invitation to share information that would help the club to ensure that you can row safely (e.g. if you have medical or fitness issues).
- First Aiders and First Aid provision.
- Emergency Response Plans; what they are and where they can be found.
- Clubhouse Fire Evacuation Plan.
- Emergency Contacts.
- Incident Reporting.
- Capsize / Man Overboard and Recovery Training / Floating and Swimming ability.
- Waterborne diseases.
- Where to find further safety information on the British Rowing website including RowSafe and the Rules of Racing.

Navigation

Provide information on topics such as:

- Club rules.
- Circulation plan and navigation rules.
- Outing rules.
- Hazards whilst afloat and hazards on land.
- Responsibilities and expectations of cox and steersperson.
- Responsibilities and expectations of launch drivers.
- Launch driving rules.

Equipment

Provide information on topics such as:

- Care of equipment; for example, pre and post use equipment checks.
- Types of boats and parts of boats and blades.
- Any limitations on the equipment to be used by members.
- Responsibilities and expectations when using launches.
- Responsibilities and expectations when using the rowing tank.
- Responsibilities and expectations when land training; for example, using the gym, rowing machines, bikes and weights.
- Responsibilities and expectations when using trailers.

Expectations

Specify expectations for:

- Crew (novice and more experienced rowers).
- Cox and steersperson.
- Coaches.
- Launch drivers.
- Helpers and other volunteers.

Introduction to Rowing

Provide information on topics such as:

- Rowing terminology (see the [Glossary of Rowing terms](#)).
- [Equipment](#).
- [British Rowing Technique](#).
- [Training advice](#).

Further Information

- British Rowing website:
 - Glossary of Terms - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/techniques-and-training/glossary](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/techniques-and-training/glossary)
 - Equipment section - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/equipment](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/equipment)
 - British Rowing Technique section - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/rower-development/british-rowing-technique/](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/rower-development/british-rowing-technique/)
 - Training advice section - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/training-advice](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/training-advice)
- Safety Alert Archive - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive/>

2.3. Radio Procedure

Effective use of the radios relies on keeping transmissions short and to the point, speaking clearly and following basic internationally recognised procedure.

The following guidelines are based on standard VHF radio procedure. They are internationally recognised and are consistent with the procedure regarded as standard by other radio users. The use of Procedure Words (pro-words) and the International Phonetic Alphabet makes transmissions easier to understand, especially when reception is poor. A list of pro-words and the phonetic alphabet are shown below. The pro-words are shown in red in the following examples.

Competition Organisers are advised to consider having a dedicated channel for safety and rescue communications.

Advice on Radio Licensing and Operators' Certificates of Competence are provided in Section 12 of the Guidance on Safety in Club Premises [here](#).

Radio Channels

Marine Mobile Band VHF channels

Marine Mobile Band radios typically have 57 channels with each channel having a designated function. The following channel designations should be noted:

- Channel 16 is used for initial calling, distress and safety only
- Channel 67 is the small craft safety channel
- Channels 6, 8, 72, and 77 are the primary inter-ship channels for "ship to ship" working
- Channel 70 is reserved for Digital Selective Calling (DSC) only

Other channels are reserved for Port Operations. If you operate near a port then you should know the primary channel used by that port. Monitoring the local Port Control or Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) channel can give you advance notice of large ship movements.

A list of the channels used by Port Radio (VTS) stations, locks and bridges can be found at https://www.ukseakayakguidebook.co.uk/short_articles/vhf_channels.htm

Some channels use different frequencies for "ship to shore" and "shore to ship" transmissions (these are known as duplex channels). They cannot be used for ship to ship communications.

Avoid channels commonly used by other local water users e.g. fishing boats, other local clubs.

Other radios

Other radios may have several channels but without a designated function for each channel. It is important that your club agrees which channels are to be used or that all radio users agree this at the start of the outing.

Making a Call

Listen

Only one radio can transmit successfully at a time so if you talk at the same time as someone else one of you will not be heard.

Make Your Call

To make your initial call, say their name and yours. e.g. **“Control. *This is Rescue I. Over.*”**

If you do not get an immediate reply, wait a short time and then call again saying the station names twice, for example, at a competition you may say **“Control, Control, *this is Rescue I, Rescue I. Over.*”**

At sea or where communications are difficult it is quite normal to say the station names three times for example **“Falmouth Gig Club, Falmouth Gig Club, Falmouth Gig Club, *this is Gig Swift, Swift, Swift, Over.*”**

When the other station has replied to your initial call, pass your messages. When you have finished saying something and want to hear the other station, say **“Over”**. At the end of the conversation, one station will say **“Out”**.

For example, at a competition you may hear:

“Control, *this is Rescue I Over.*”

“Rescue I, *this is Control. Over.*”

“Control, *this is Rescue I. I am in position just downstream of the bridge Over.*”

“Rescue I, *this is Control. Received. Out.*”

If communication is not clear, then you may be asked to spell a name or word. This is what you may hear.

“Station calling Exmouth NCI this is Exmouth NCI Please spell your vessel’s name, Over”

“Exmouth NCI *this is the Gig Fury Fury, I spell Foxtrot, Uniform, Romeo, Yankee, Fury. Over*”

Always use the phonetic alphabet (see below).

The [National Coastwatch Institute](#) (Callsign NCI) operates 59 Coastwatch stations around the UK. They can be called on Marine VHF Channel 65 or by phone. There is a list of stations and phone numbers [here](#). The stations will provide local maritime information, current weather conditions and sea state, and radio checks.

Examples of some standard calls

Radio Checks

At the start of a competition, Control may carry out radio checks to ensure that everyone can hear and be heard. The procedure for this is:

“Rescue I, *this is Control. Radio Check, please. Over.*”

“Control, *this is Rescue I. I have you loud and clear. Over.*”

“Rescue I, *this is Control, I have you loud and clear also. Out.*”

It is important that Rescue I knows that Control is receiving his transmissions.

Routine call to a Coastwatch Station

A routine call may be made to the local Coastwatch Station on Maritime VHF Channel 65 by a Gig, or any other vessel, leaving harbour and proceeding to sea if the club’s risk assessment, or the local conditions at the time, determine that this is appropriate.

In this example the Gig Troy is about to leave Fowey harbour and proceed to sea and wishes to call Polruan NCI.

Initial call on VHF Channel 65,

“Polruan NCI, Polruan NCI, Polruan NCI *this is* the Fowey Gig Troy, Troy, Troy. Routine safety traffic, *Over*.”
“Gig Troy *this is* Polruan NCI, *Over*.”
“Polruan NCI *this is* Troy. I am just leaving Fowey harbour and expect to return within one hour. I have seven persons on board. *Over*.”
“Troy, *this is* Polruan NCI. *Received*. Please call again on your safe return to Fowey. *Out*.”

Broadcasting to All Stations

Sometimes it is important to tell everyone something e.g. that the lunch break has just started. To pass a message to everyone, call “All Stations”.

“All Stations, *this is* Control. Be aware that the lunch break has started, and the next race is due to start at 13:00. *Out*.”

This should be used when you need to communicate information to everyone. End the message with “*Out*” if you do not expect anyone to reply.

Distress calling - Mayday

The word Mayday is derived from the French *m’aidez* (help me). It is only to be used when there is grave and imminent danger of loss of life or a vessel and immediate assistance is required. “Mayday” calls take precedence over all other transmissions.

For example, on Marine Mobile Band, channel 16:

“Mayday Mayday Mayday Rogue All Stations, *this is* Ilfracombe Gig Rogue Rogue Rogue My position is In The Range, half a mile north of Ilfracombe Harbour. We have capsized and the boat is awash. We require rescue. There are seven persons in the water with the boat. All the people in the water are wearing lifejackets. There are no other boats in the vicinity. All Stations, *this is* Rogue *Over*.”

At this point the Coastguard would respond to Rogue to confirm the information whilst another Coastguard officer would alert the appropriate Lifeboat station or Air Sea Rescue helicopter base.

If there are other vessels in the area then the Coastguard would retransmit the message using the pre-fix **Mayday Relay**. This prefix is used by a station that is not in distress to alert other stations that a vessel is in distress. For example, it would be used by a station upon sighting a red flare or other distress signal.

All further radio transmissions not directly associated with the rescue shall cease immediately and shall not resume until permission (“**Distress Fini**” (pronounced Distress Feenee)) is transmitted. All radio transmissions associated with the rescue should commence “**Mayday Rogue**”.

There is a standard order in which information should be passed in a distress or urgency situation. This can be remembered using the mnemonic “MIPDANIO”, as follows:

- M** = **M**ayday
- I** = **I**dentification (the name of your vessel)
- P** = **P**osition (your location, preferably as a bearing and distance from a well-known point)
- D** = nature of your **D**istress (what is your problem)
- A** = the **A**ssistance required (what help do you need)
- N** = the **N**umber of people involved
- I** = any other relevant **I**nformation
- O** = **O**ver

The efficient transfer of information may help to save a life.

Urgency message - prefix Pan-pan

The message prefix “*Pan-pan*” is used when there is a matter of urgency but where there is no imminent danger of loss of life or a vessel. “*Pan-pan*” messages take precedence over all except “Mayday” messages and, although they do not impose radio silence automatically, further transmissions not associated with the incident should cease until the urgency has ended. There is an example below:

“Pan-pan, Pan-pan, Pan-pan, All Stations this is Umpire 1, Umpire 1. I am 50 metres upstream of the weir I have suffered engine failure but am using my anchor to maintain this position. I will require a tow. I have 2 persons on board. All Stations this is Umpire 1 Over.”

“Pan-pan Umpire 1 Umpire 1 this is Rescue 1. I will be with you in 30 seconds Over”

“Pan-pan Umpire 1 Rescue 1 this is Umpire 1. Received Out”

Safety message - prefix “Securite”

A Safety message is often used to broadcast safety information. For example, a Coastguard radio station will broadcast gale warnings, upon receipt. There is another example below:

“Sécurité Sécurité Sécurité All stations this is Start Marshal, Start Marshal. A large motor vessel is about to enter the course and navigate up the centre of the river at speed. Suspend racing and clear the course. All Stations, this is Start Marshal. Out.”

“Sécurité” messages take precedence over all except “Mayday” and “Pan-pan” messages.

Pro-words

This is	Indicates the Station making the call
Over	Invitation to reply
Out	Indicates the end of working (Never say “Over and Out”.)
Radio Check	Tell me the strength and clarity of my transmission
Wait	If a station is unable to receive traffic, it will reply “Wait ... minutes”
Station Calling	Used when a station receives a call but is unsure who is calling
I say again / Say again	I am repeating what I have just said / Please repeat what you have just said
All after / All before	Used after “say again” to request the repetition of a part of the previous message
Repeat	Used if a part of the message is important and needs emphasising
I Spell	I shall spell the next word or group. Use the phonetic alphabet
Received	Your message has been received and understood (Do not use Roger)
Break	I am going to continue to transmit but I am going to speak to another station
Mayday	This is a distress call
Silence Mayday	Announcement to impose radio silence during a distress situation
Distress fini	Announcement made to indicate the distress situation is now resolved
Pan-pan	This is an urgency call. Urgent help is needed but there is no imminent danger of loss of life or a vessel.
Sécurité	This message contains safety information.

Phonetic Alphabet

A	Alpha	J	Juliet	S	Sierra
B	Bravo	K	Kilo	T	Tango
C	Charlie	L	Lima	U	Uniform
D	Delta	M	Mike	V	Victor
E	Echo	N	November	W	Whiskey
F	Foxtrot	O	Oscar	X	X-ray
G	Golf	P	Papa	Y	Yankee
H	Hotel	Q	Quebec	Z	Zulu
I	India	R	Romeo		

0	Zero
1	Wun
2	Too
3	Tree
4	Fower
5	Fife
6	Six
7	Seven
8	Ait
9	Niner

Further Information

- British Rowing Website
 - Safety in Club Premises <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/club-support/club-guides/safety-in-club-premises/>

3. Club Safety

Rowers, and other club members, are expected to take responsibility for their own safety and clubs are expected to provide education and training to help them to be safe. Clubs are also expected to provide a safe environment in which their members can enjoy their sport.

Guidelines with dealing with the Aftermath of a Serious Incident at a Club or Competition can be found [here](#).

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

- 3.1 [Club Risk Assessment](#)
- 3.2 [Club Safety Plans and Safety Rules](#)
- 3.3 [Club Emergency Response Plan](#)
- 3.4 [Club Rowing Safety Adviser Job Description](#)
- 3.5 [Training Camps and Rowing on Unfamiliar Waters](#)
- 3.6 [Competence in the Water](#)
- 3.7 [Capsize and Recovery](#)
- 3.8 [Man Overboard](#)
- 3.9 [Adaptive Rowers at Clubs](#)

3. Club Safety

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

3.1. Club Risk Assessment

Hazard identification and risk assessment are the basis for planning to maintain and improve safety. These provide clubs with the ability to understand the ways in which harm can be caused, and to specify Barriers to minimise the probability of that harm occurring and specify Controls to minimise the severity of harm should it occur. It puts clubs in control of their risks.

Barriers come into effect before the hazardous event and tend to make it less likely to happen. Barriers identify things that **should**, or **should** not, happen and therefore can translate into rules. This all follows from the definitions.

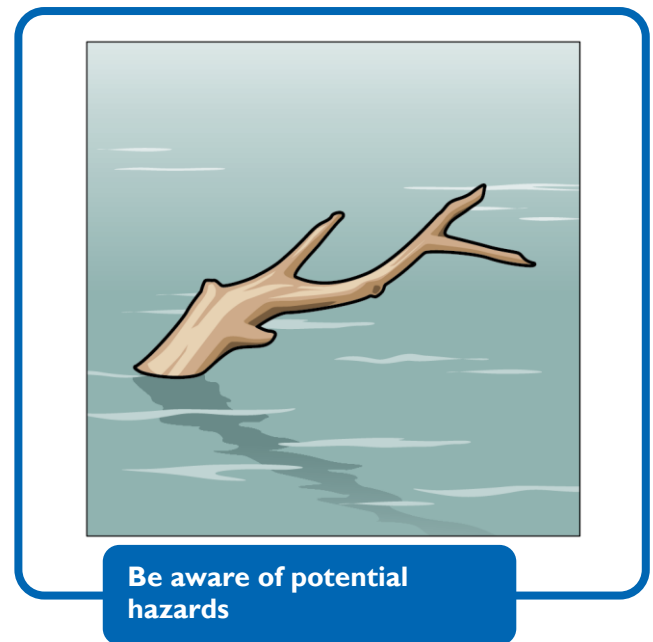
The Risk Assessment only adds value when the actions that it identifies as being needed are completed.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand, and abide by the rules that the club has defined as a result of its Risk Assessment.
- Be familiar with the club's Safety and Emergency Response Plans.
- Be aware of the hazards associated with each of the club's activities that they take part in.
- Be aware of the hazards in other club facilities such as gym, kitchen or workshop.
- Complete the [Safety Basics](#) online learning module.
- Report all incidents using the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).



Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that their club has completed a Risk Assessment for each of its activities both on and off the water. Factors to be considered include:
 - Location of the club, for example remote or in a built-up area, easy or difficult access.
 - Type and extent of boating area (for example, narrow canal, wide river or lake, estuary or the sea) and the effect that this has on the type of rescue that may be needed.
 - Potential hazards such as obstructions, weirs, sluices and limited access points. There is more information on flow over weirs [here](#), and [here](#), on the British Rowing website [here](#) and in the Safety Alert [here](#).
 - People, for example number of members, age and rowing experience.
 - Hazards in other club facilities such as gym, kitchen and workshop.
 - Travel time to the nearest hospitals with an A&E Department or Minor Injuries Unit and type of cover offered.
 - Details of the service provided by the local NHS ambulance service (this varies from region to region).
 - Availability of other rescue services such as air ambulance and lifeboat.
- Publish the club's Risk Assessments on their website or make them available to their members and the parents of junior members in other ways.
- Publish suitable Safety Plan(s) (see [RowSafe 3.2](#)) and Emergency Response Plan(s) (see [RowSafe 3.3](#)) based on the issues identified in the Risk Assessments.
- Take action, where necessary, to ensure that nobody is exposed to substantial or intolerable risk.
- Review, and if necessary, update, the Risk Assessments at least once a year.
- Review, and if necessary, update, the Risk Assessments following any significant incident at the club or elsewhere (including those communicated in Safety Alerts) (see [Safety Alert](#) Archive).
- Be aware that some older rowers, who have not practised swimming for some time, may not be able to swim as well as they think they can.

3.1. Club Risk Assessment

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

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

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Be conversant with the Risk Assessment for the activity that they are leading.
- Ensure that participants are aware of, and abide by, the club's rules.
- Understand the risks associated with the activities that they are leading.
- Review these risks at the time of the activity and determine whether, or not, it is safe to proceed as planned.
- Act, where necessary, to ensure that nobody is exposed to substantial or intolerable risk.
- Ensure that participants are aware of the hazards that are associated with the activities that they are leading.
- Report all occurrences of disregard for the Safety Rules to the club.
- Complete the [Safety Basics](#) online learning module.

Club Rowing Safety Adviser

Club Rowing Safety Advisers are expected to:

- Complete the [Advanced Risk Assessment](#) online learning module.
- Lead or facilitate the completion and review of the club's Risk Assessment.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on risk assessment.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides online learning materials, examples and templates to assist with risk management and assessment.
- Provides advice and guidance on risk assessment and control.
- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.
- Provides safety training material on its website.
- Provides courses that include safety.

Further Information

- RowSafe chapter 9 – Topics covered in Risk Assessment - [Topics Covered in Risk Assessments](#)
- Online learning modules:
 - Safety Basics - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=194>
 - Advanced Risk Assessment - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=201>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- [RowSafe 3.2](#) - Club Safety Plans and Rules
- [RowSafe 3.3](#) - Club Emergency Response Plan
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Information on flow over weirs - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYI67uZkNvQ>
- Safety Alert - Keep clear of weirs, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Safety-Alert-Keep-clear-of-Weirs-Dec-2019.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Flow over Weirs, [Safety-Alert-Flow-over-Weirs.pdf](#)
- Safety Alert - Rowing in Floods, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Safety-Alert-Rowing-in-Floods-Nov-2019.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Coping with the behaviour of others, - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Safety-Alert-Coping-with-the-behaviour-of-others-June-2023.pdf>
- Lessons Learned from the Dove Pier Incident - https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Dove_pier_LESSONS_FOR_ROW_PDF-MI.pdf

3.2. Club Safety Plans and Safety Rules

Safety Plan is how a club arranges its activities to control hazards and reduce harm.

Safety Rules specify the behaviours that the club requires of its members and any behaviours that it would find unacceptable. Rules should be simple, specific and concise.

Club Emergency Response Plans (see [RowSafe 3.3](#)) describe how the club will deal with emergencies and other incidents to minimise the harm that they would otherwise cause.

Clubs should use their Club Risk Assessment to determine the need for plans covering all activities. Clubs are also expected to consider how they keep their premises safe and use their Risk Assessment to determine the need for plans covering electricity and gas checks and building maintenance. There is further information on Safety in Club Premises [here](#).

Safety Rules and Safety Plans stem from the Barriers (to reduce the probability) and Controls (to reduce the severity of harm) in Risk Assessments. In most cases the Safety Plans and Safety Rules are derived from the Barriers and the Emergency Response Plans are derived from the Controls.

This all follows from the definitions. Barriers come into effect before the hazardous event and tend to make it less likely to happen. Barriers identify things that **should**, or **should not**, happen and therefore can translate into rules.

Emergency Response Plans are based on Controls that come into effect after the hazardous event has occurred and tend to limit its consequences. In some cases these could be written as Safety Rules (e.g. always have a launch alongside inexperienced scullers). This is just expressing a control as a "**shall** do action".

It is important to distinguish what constitutes advice in a Safety Plan (e.g. wear sunscreen on a sunny day) and when the advice has to be expressed as a Safety Rule (e.g. wear a lifejacket when coxing).

Safety Plans can also contain items such as:-

- the optional parts of the navigation plan e.g. areas where it is permissible but not obligatory to row fast
- the need to eat, drink (hydrate), and dress appropriately
- wear hi-vis tops
- washing boats after outings
- checking boats before outings
- people in the boathouse when boats are being moved
- using appropriate footwear on land and during launch and recovery to protect the feet and reduce the risk of slipping and falling
- each crew carrying a communications device such as a waterproof VHF radio transceiver or mobile phone in a waterproof pouch, tied to a person and not to the boat.

In some clubs these could be rules and in others they could be guidelines. It all depends on the individual circumstances of the club. Clubs are advised to restrict themselves to only having the rules that they really need and ensuring compliance with those few rules. If they have a proliferation of rules then people will not remember them all and one day a rule that is important will be forgotten.

Safety plans could also include the routine maintenance of barriers or controls, such as, for controls:-

- check the contents of the first aid kit every month
- check the lifejackets every six months
- provide capsizing training every year

.... and for Barriers:-

- provide safety briefings and reminders to members
- hold periodic discussions with other water users
- information when there are algal blooms or contaminated water

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others affected by their activities.
- Read, understand and follow the Safety Plans.
- Read, understand and abide by all the Safety Rules.
- Report all occurrences of disregard for the Safety Rules to the club.
- Inform their coaches if they have any pre-existing medical conditions which may impact their safety or that of others.

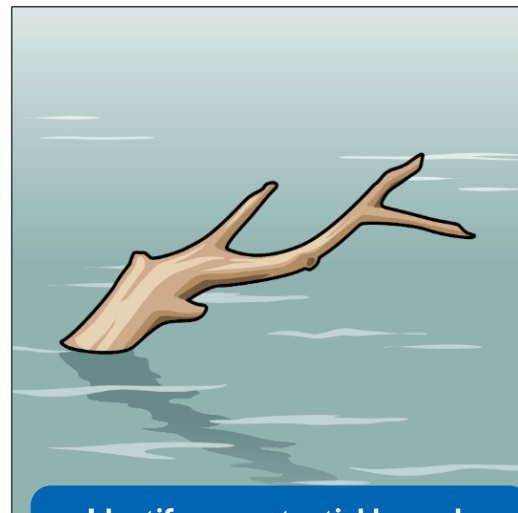
Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Produce and communicate Safety Plans and Safety Rules for all its members and coaches.
- Prominently publish and display the Safety Plan and the Safety Rules (for example, on the website).
- Modify the Safety Rules and the Safety Plan in light of incidents, Risk Assessments, Safety Alerts and developments in good practice.
- Actively promote a set of shared values and beliefs that make safe practice instinctive.
- Ensure that inexperienced coaches are supported and, where necessary, supervised.
- Upload their Safety Plan as part of the annual Safety Audit.
- Register for [Met Office weather warnings](#)

Safety Plans should include:

- A plan of the local water highlighting hazards, navigation rules and circulation patterns and emergency access points (named and where necessary with postcodes or grid references).
- Instructions to cover any variation to normal procedures needed to manage risks resulting from tidal currents, stream, wind, [floods](#) or other climatic conditions.
- Instructions for reporting incidents orally, on paper in the club and online to British Rowing.
- Vital telephone numbers relating to safety such as Club Officials, First Aiders, key holders, navigation authority, river or harbour police.
- Where appropriate, VHF radio channels and information about how to contact the navigation authority and coastguard.
- The avoidance of potential conflicts with other water users (could be included in the navigational arrangements).
- Specification of the competence requirements for individuals (including competence in the water, steering, launch driving, coaching etc).
- The assessment of weather and water conditions.
- The use, checking and maintenance of equipment (boats, launches, fixed equipment in the boathouse).



Identify any potential hazards

© Richard Palmer

Safety Rules could include:

- Rules for club members covering their responsibilities in relation to [safe practice](#).
- When and where crews can train, warm up and cool down on the water.
- The criteria for assessing the risks associated with any local water activity.
- Instructions to coxes and steers to [keep a good lookout](#) and comply with the circulation plan and navigation rules at all times when afloat.
- Instructions to rowers to [be conspicuous](#) and [wear high-visibility](#) clothing at all times when afloat other than when they are required to wear club kit during competitions.
- Use lights when they are needed. See [Safety Alert – Lights on Rowing Boats](#)
- Not wear [Dryrobe](#) denims, jeans or heavy cotton clothing at any time when afloat.
- Not wear a hoodie when rowing or sculling as the thumbs tend to catch in the pocket, or when coxing in a bow-loader as it could become entangled and impede a rapid exit.
- Not roll leggings down to the rowers ankles in boats that could capsize (doing so makes swimming difficult).
- Coxes in in bow-loaders should not wear any clothing that could become entangled and impede a rapid exit.
- Older steers may gain assistance from head mounted mirrors, or similar devices, if their neck flexibility is reduced.
- Rules relating to the training of junior members, people new to rowing and adaptive rowers.
- Rules relating to rowing in darkness, particularly for boats without coxes.
- Rules specifying the conditions, if any, under which crews may go afloat unaccompanied.
- Navigation rules based on the local environment, the requirements of the local water authority and agreements with other water users.
- Rules relating to the use of indoor rowing machines and gym facilities.
- Rules relating to the use of launches, including that drivers [should](#) be at least 18 years old unless accompanied by a responsible adult. See [Safety Alert - Children Driving Launches](#).
- If going to sea, rules on notifying the coastguard and navigation authority, radio channels to be used and monitored.
- Rules relating to Overtaking, including rules requiring crews being overtaken to move towards the edge of the navigation channel (usually towards the bank) and those overtaking to move towards the centre of the waterway but only when it is safe to do so. Overtaking crews do not have right of way.
- Not wearing earphones, etc. when afloat as this can make shouted warnings and alarm sounds difficult to hear.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Educate and train their crews in understanding and following the club's Safety Plan and Safety Rules and those of other clubs when training away.
- Lead by example.
- Report all occurrences of disregard for the Safety Rules to the club.
- Ensure that they carry the safety equipment specified by the club at all times when coaching rowers afloat.
- Carry an audible warning device, such as a whistle, to warn rowers.
- Advise rowers on how to take care of their own safety, for example to wear sunscreen on a hot day or take extra kit on a cold day and eat, drink (hydrate), and dress appropriately.
- Encourage rowers to carry with them any medication that they may need.
- Emphasise the importance of warm-up and good posture to the prevention of injuries. There is more information in the [Rower Development Guide](#) and on [Water Rowing Technique](#).
- Check the condition of any bikes used and take care when carrying throw lines, etc., to ensure that they do not become entangled in the mechanism.
- Take care not to hold crews in the catch position as this is unstable and can lead to a capsize.
- If a rower is feeling unwell after exercise, then make sure that someone stays with them until they are feeling better.
- Encourage rowers to report incidents using the [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Avoid instructing crews to turn upstream or upwind of obstructions.
- Instruct crews to take care to avoid straying into the centre of the waterway.
- Teach rowers to keep a good lookout and not rely on shouted warnings.
- If they use bikes, then ensure that they do so with due regard to the safety of themselves and others.

Club Rowing Safety Adviser

Club Rowing Safety Advisers are expected to:

- Advise on the appropriate Safety Rules and Safety Plans and their specification.
- Ensure that the Safety Plans and Safety Rules are communicated to all members.
- Advise on the extent to which members comply with the Safety Rules.
- Advise on the implementation and effectiveness of Safety Plans and Safety Rules.
- Assist with reviews of the Safety Plans and Safety Rules and with keeping the Safety Plans and Safety Rules up to date.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on Safety Plans and Safety Rules.

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

- [RowSafe 3.3](#) - Club Emergency Response Plan
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Joint guidance for Rowers and Paddlers on shared water - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Guidance-for-Rowers-and-Paddlers.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Children Driving Launches, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-children-driving-launches-1.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Collision Avoidance, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Safety-Alert-collision-avoidance.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Rowing in Floods, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Safety-Alert-Rowing-in-Floods-Nov-2019.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Lights on Rowing Boats, [Safety-Alert-Lights-on-Rowing-Boats.pdf](#)
- Safety in club premises - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/british-rowing-clubhub/british-rowing-clubhub-guides/safety-in-club-premises/>
- Safety Alert – Do not wear a Dryrobe when afloat, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Safety-Alert-Do-not-wear-a-Dryrobe-when-afloat-March-2022.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Back to Basics, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Safety-Alert-Back-to-Basics-.pdf>
- Registration for Met Office weather warnings - <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/guide-to-emails>
- Rower Development Guide - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/rower-development/rower-development-guide/>
- Water Rowing Technique - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/rower-development/british-rowing-technique/water-rowing-technique/>
- COLREGs - [MSN 178I \(M+F\)](#)

3.3. Club Emergency Response Plan

The Club Emergency Response Plan defines the actions to be taken if such an incident does happen. It will help to reduce the harm that such an incident could cause.

The Club Safety Plan and Rules (see [RowSafe 3.2](#)) describe what members and others should do to make an incident less likely to happen. Plans should be simple, specific and concise.

Club Emergency Response Plans stem from the Risk Assessments. In most cases the Emergency Response Plans are derived from the Controls. In some cases these could be written as Safety Rules (e.g. always have a launch alongside inexperienced scullers). This is just expressing a control as a "shall do action".

This all follows from the definitions. Controls that come into effect after the hazardous event has occurred and tend to limit its consequences.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand and, in an emergency, follow the Club Emergency Response Plan.
- Follow the instructions of Club Officers and coaches.
- Report any incident or condition that could give rise to an emergency to a Club Officer or coach.
- [Report incidents](#) and near misses to British Rowing.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Use the club's Risk Assessment to produce or update the Club Emergency Response Plan.
- Brief members and others using the club facilities on the content of the club Emergency Response Plan and make it available. The plan should include:
 - The process for summoning assistance in case of an emergency.
 - The location of the club, including postcode and directions for emergency services.
 - A plan showing all emergency access points, with post codes, [what3words](#) descriptors, or grid references where possible, to assist emergency services.
 - Emergency phone numbers and the location of the nearest landline telephone, if available.
 - Where appropriate, VHF radio channels to be used to contact navigation authority and coastguard.
 - The location of First Aid kits and, if available, the nearest Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).
 - List of qualified First Aiders (with photos where practical).
 - Instructions on what to do in event of a fire, how to evacuate the building and the location of Assembly Points.
 - Process for suspending or cancelling the club activities in case of an emergency.
- Where relevant, emergency arrangements for people with disabilities.
- Provide adequate First Aid cover including provision for people suffering from mild hypothermia (people with severe hypothermia should be taken to hospital).
- Provide sufficient, correctly positioned fire extinguishers and fire blankets, emergency lighting and clearly marked fire exits.
- Maintain emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers and fire blankets, check that fire exits are clear and that emergency lighting and fire doors are in working order.
- Prominently display notices showing key location and contact information in the club.
- Brief members and others using the club facilities on what to do in an emergency and how to use any equipment.
- Establish contact details and any relevant medical or other information for each member in case of emergency. Ensure that this information is kept confidential and only available to those who need it.
- Upload the Emergency Response Plan as part of the annual safety audit.
- Where appropriate, ensure that someone in each boat knows how to use a VHF radio and the correct channels to use.
- If going to sea, ensure that someone in each boat knows how to describe where the boat is.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Read and understand the Club Emergency Response Plan.
- Ensure that rowers know what to do in an emergency and where to find the notices showing key location and contact information.
- Encourage rowers to carry an audible warning device, such as a whistle, to use in an emergency.
- Ensure that participants know the location of First Aid kits including an AED, if available.
- Where appropriate, ensure that someone in each boat knows how to use a VHF radio and the correct channels to use.
- If going to sea, ensure that someone in each boat knows how to describe where the boat is.
- Report any incidents to the Club Officers and British Rowing.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on Emergency Response Plans.

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

- [RowSafe 3.2](#) - Club Safety Plans and Rules
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Safety Alert - what3words, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Safety-Alert-what3words.pdf>
- Section 2 of Safety in Club Premises on Fire Arrangements, https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/British_Rowing_Safety_In_Club_Premises_June-2023.pdf

3.4. Club Rowing Safety Adviser Job Description

It should be noted that Club Rowing Safety Advisers are not responsible for rowing safety but they are expected to provide advice on Rowing Safety. It is the responsibility of the individuals and their clubs to ensure that people are not harmed by the club's activities.

Expectations

Club

Club officers are expected to ensure a positive safety culture and safe practice within the club; they are expected to:

- Appoint a Club Rowing Safety Adviser(s), to lead and advise on promoting safe practice.
- Support the Club Rowing Safety Adviser and take their advice into account.
- Ensure that safety is a regular agenda item at meetings.

Club Rowing Safety Adviser

Club Rowing Safety Advisers are expected to:

- Be familiar with the guidance provided in RowSafe.
- Provide advice to the club committee and club leadership on all matters relating to safety as appropriate.
- Ensure the completion of the annual safety audit for the club.
- Undertake Safety Reviews of the club's activities and facilities.
- Undertake inspections and audits if requested to do so by the club and provide feedback to the club committee.
- Promote and monitor Incident Reporting within the club and the reporting of all incidents to British Rowing.
- Periodically (perhaps annually) analyse the club's reported incidents to identify any common issues and trends and initiate action to address any opportunities for improvement.
- Lead or facilitate Incident Investigations as necessary.
- Have completed the [Advanced Risk Assessment Training](#).
- Lead or facilitate the completion and review of the club's Risk Assessment.
- Use the Risk Assessment to identify required safety rules.
- Work with the club committee and the leadership of the club to develop and maintain the club Safety Plan, Safety Rules and Emergency Response Plan.
- Be willing to be a member of the Club Committee.
- Attend local and regional safety meetings.
- Work with the Regional Rowing Safety Adviser.
- Work with other water and land users on safety as required.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to CRSAs in their region.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides online training in [Risk Assessment](#).
- 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

- Online learning module:
 - Advanced Risk Assessment - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=201>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive

3.5. Training Camps and Rowing on Unfamiliar Waters

Training camps and rowing on unfamiliar waters introduce additional hazards that **should** be identified and risks that **should** be assessed. A Training Camp Safety Plan should be developed that will reduce risks to acceptable levels. **Plans should be simple, specific and concise.**

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Read, understand and implement the requirements of the Training Camp Safety Plan.
- Notify coaches, or others who need to know, of any relevant medical condition, medication or other requirements you may have. They may have to take extra care if you will be at an unfamiliar venue, or away from home.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Establish a Training Camp Organising Committee that includes the Club Rowing Safety Adviser, to plan visits to unfamiliar venues.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Adopt the Training Camp Safety Plan and ensure it is implemented.

Training Camp Organising Committee

Training Camp Organising Committees are expected to:

- Request safety information from the host club or venue management, this may include the venue's own Safety Rules and Navigation Plan. See the [Safety Alert - Know the river](#), especially when visiting new stretches of water.
- Request a generic Risk Assessment from the host club or venue management.
- Use this information to prepare a Training Camp Risk Assessment for the club's planned activities; this should include travel to and from the venue.
- Use the Risk Assessment to establish a Safety Plan.
- Review the Training Camp Safety Plan with the host club or other local experts.
- Review the Risk Assessment on arrival, paying particular attention to sources of local information and amend the Training Camp Safety Plan as necessary.
- Ensure that all coaches and participants fully understand the Safety Plan before participating in the camp.
- Establish contact details and any relevant medical or other information for each participant in case of emergency. Ensure that this information is available to those who need it at the camp.
- Check that all participants planning to attend or visit the training camp are able to do so safely.
- Understand and implement the British Rowing [Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#) where juniors (under 18 years old) are involved. Ensure that an appropriate provision is made for safeguarding.
- Ensure that there is an appropriate coach/helper/participant ratio.
- Consider contacting previous users of the location to identify any potential hazards.
- Ensure that drivers towing trailers are aware of the [relevant guidance](#).
- Check appropriateness of the Safety Plan on arrival at the training camp location for:
 - Circulation pattern,
 - First Aid provision,
 - Rescue launches, and
 - Communications.

- Check local weather forecasts and other up-to-date safety information with the host club or local experts at the time of the visit.
- Check what equipment is available as required such as lifejackets, throw lines and bikes.
- Check that all launch drivers are competent and hold any qualification required by the host club or venue management.
- Check if there are any restrictions on time, noise, age and other users.
- Establish a system for reporting incidents to British Rowing.
- Identify the First Aid provision and communicate this to the participants.
- Carry out thorough equipment checks before travelling to the training camp.
- Ensure biosecurity by Checking, Cleaning and Drying their equipment before using it at a rowing camp or on unfamiliar waters and doing so again before using it on home waters. See [Rowers » NNSS](#)
- If using equipment provided by the host club or organisation, then check it thoroughly prior to use. Ensure that all boats have sufficient inherent buoyancy.
- Conduct a post-visit review; communicate any significant lessons learned through the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).

Club Rowing Safety Adviser

Club Rowing Safety Advisers are expected to:

- Assist with the preparation of a Risk Assessment and Training Camp Safety Plan.
- Investigate any incidents and ensure that they are reported in the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Participate in the post-visit review.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on training camps and rowing on unfamiliar waters.

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

- British Rowing Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/British-Rowing-Safeguarding-Children-and-Young-People-Policy-June-2021-2.pdf>
- Guidance for the Transportation of Oar Propelled Racing Boats - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TowingGuidance.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TowingGuidance.pdf)
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- See the Safety Alert - Know the River, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Safety-Alert-Know-the-river.pdf>
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)
- Non-native Species Secretariat (NNSS) advice to rowers - [Rowers » NNSS](#)

3.6. Competence in the Water

It is important that rowers who find themselves in the water do not panic and are able to respond so that they can keep themselves safe. In effect, this means that they should be able to swim or float. [Floating](#), rather than swimming, is recommended by the RNLI, RLSS and NWSF because it tends to conserve heat and energy when in cold water.

All participants in rowing should be competent and confident in the water. Each club is expected to use its Risk Assessment to determine the capability that it requires its members to have. In particular, the club risk assessment may determine that the ability to swim is essential if there is a risk of a member entering the water upstream of a weir and being swept over that weir.

It should be recognised that the ability to swim in a pool does not guarantee the ability to swim in cold, exposed waters. This is explained further in the online learning module on [Cold Water and Hypothermia](#) and the [Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills](#).

Everyone taking part in rowing should be able to:

- Float unaided for at least five minutes

And ideally

- Swim at least 50 metres in light clothing (rowing kit).
- Tread water for at least two minutes.
- Swim under water for at least five metres.

Those rowers who can only float or swim when wearing a buoyancy aid should also wear such an aid, or a lifejacket if coxing, whenever they are afloat.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Inform the club of their current swimming or floating ability.
- Attend any swimming or floating tests as required by the club.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Record the swimming or floating ability of each member of the club and make this available to all its coaches.
- Promote a higher level of care for junior, beginner and adaptive rowers.
- Have policies in place for those who cannot, or who have not demonstrated or declared, swimming or floating competence, particularly junior, beginner and adaptive rowers.
- Reconfirm the swimming or floating ability of all members at appropriate intervals.
- Make lifejackets and buoyancy aids available to all rowers and ensure that they are worn by those not able to swim or float.
- Determine whether lifejackets or buoyancy aids should be worn by juniors who have not completed a capsized drill based on a risk assessment that includes the circumstances and their ability.
- Be aware that some older rowers, who have not practised swimming for some time, may not be able to swim as well as they think they can.

The written declarations of adults, and parents on behalf of juniors, relating to their swimming or floating ability should be respected but clubs may choose to conduct tests.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Be aware of rowers' swimming or floating abilities.
- Follow the policies and rules set out by the club for those who cannot, or who have not demonstrated or declared, swimming or floating competence.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on swimming or floating competence.

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

- Online learning module:
 - Cold Water & Hypothermia - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=165>
- [RowSafe 3.7](#) – Capsize and Recovery
- [RowSafe 6.1](#) - People new to rowing
- [RowSafe 6.2](#) - Adaptive rowers
- Safety Alert - Lifejackets, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Cold-Water-Kills-1.pdf>
- RNLI advice on lifejackets - <https://rnli.org/-/media/rnli/downloads/rnli-guide-to-lifejackets-and-buoyancy-aids.pdf?fd=true>
- British Rowing's Capsize and Recovery video - youtube.com/watch?v=DcPE8-gENLo
- Man Overboard and Recovery workshop - britishrowing.org/knowledge/courses-qualifications/safety/man-overboard-and-recovery-2
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert - Float to Live, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Safety-Alert-Float-to-Live.pdf>

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution has published a series of “how to” videos as follows:-

- How to Teach your Child to Tread Water - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QAjDqzN5Lc>
- How to Teach your Child to Float - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odWm3DeRFIA>
- How to Teach your Child to Signal for Help - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZJlEno0TFk>
- How to Teach your Child a Survival Stroke - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGXVCJP0d6A>

These are intended to show parents how to teach their children but could also be used to teach rowers of any age to improve their competence in the water.

3.7. Capsize and Recovery

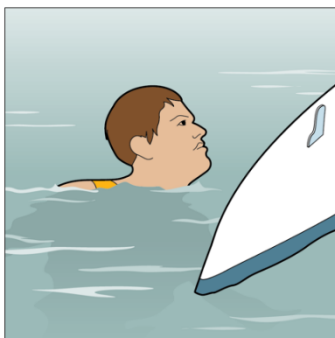
Capsize and Recovery training is important because it prepares rowers so that they will know what to do in the event of a capsize.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Know what to do in the event of capsize or swamping.
- Understand the need to stay with the boat and use it as a life raft, unless doing so results in greater danger.
- Take precautions before going afloat to reduce the risk of capsize or swamping.
- Understand that the key steps are to:
 - Get free from the boat,
 - Get out of the water, and
 - Get off the water.
- Attend any Capsize and Recovery training offered by the club or complete the [Capsize Training for Rowers](#) online learning module.
- Be aware of the effects of cold water shock and hypothermia, described in the [Cold Water and Hypothermia online module](#) and the [Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills](#).
- Not swim with the boat unless the rower is close to the bank and in easy conditions.



Know what to do in the event of a capsize

© Richard Palmer

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that all members know what to do in the event of capsize or swamping.
- Ensure that all members are aware of the effects of cold water shock and hypothermia, described in the [Cold Water and Hypothermia online module](#) and the [Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills](#).
- Promote a higher level of duty of care for junior, beginner and adaptive rowers.
- Have policies in place for those who have not been trained, particularly junior, beginner and adaptive rowers. These could, for example, require the wearing of lifejackets or buoyancy aids.
- Record Capsize and Recovery training of each member of the club and make these records available to all its coaches.
- Complete the [Capsize Training for Coaches and Club Officials](#) online learning module.

- Organise Capsize and Recovery training in a local swimming pool or another safe setting to practise:
 - Getting free from an inverted boat (including releasing the feet from the shoes).
 - Getting on top of the boat, making rescue by launch and buddy rescue easier.
 - Getting back into the boat for those who feel capable and confident.
 - Lying on top of and paddling a boat (straddle and paddle).
 - Calling for help.
 - Buddy rescue.
 - Recovery using a throw line as demonstrated in the British Rowing [Man Overboard and Recovery](#) video.
 - Developing confidence in the boat (balance drills).
 - Preparing a boat for use in the Capsize and Recovery training making sure that it has:
 - Well-sealed buoyancy compartments or added buoyancy.
 - No backstays, these should be removed for the duration of the training so as to avoid contact with rowers heads.
 - No protruding bolts or other sharp projections.
 - Correctly adjusted heel restraints.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Instruct rowers on causes and avoidance of capsize and swamping.
- Coach rowers to routinely [check heel restraints](#) prior to going afloat.
- Complete the [Capsize Training for Coaches and Club Officials](#) online learning module.
- Remind rowers of the safe capsize and rescue techniques following capsize or swamping.
- Be aware of a rower's Capsize and Recovery training.
- Follow the policies set out by the club for those who have not been trained.
- Encourage rowers to carry an audible warning device, such as a whistle.
- Avoid holding rowers at front stops because this is an unstable position and they are prone to capsize.
- Avoid whole crew catch drills with less experienced rowers (e.g. use "front end slaps" with feathered blades).
- Instruct rowers on the effects of cold water shock and hypothermia described in the [Cold Water and Hypothermia online module](#) and the [Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills](#).

Competition

Competition Organisers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Be prepared and equipped to provide assistance if capsize is identified as a hazard in their risk assessment.



Know how to recover people from the water

© Richard Palmer

Launch Drivers

Launch Drivers are expected to:

- Be competent and capable of assisting in the recovery of people in the water.
- Be at least 18 years old unless accompanied by a responsible adult, see [Safety Alert - Children Driving Launches](#).

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on capsize and recovery training.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides online [Capsize and Recovery](#) training for clubs.
- 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

- [RowSafe 3.6](#) - Competence in the water
- [RowSafe 8.1](#) - Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia
- [RowSafe 6.1](#) - People new to rowing
- Cold Water & Hypothermia online learning module - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=165>
- Capsize Training for Rowers - <https://www.rowhow.org/mod/book/view.php?id=6346>
- Capsize Training for Coaches and Club Officials - <https://www.rowhow.org/mod/book/view.php?id=6273>
- British Rowing's Capsize and Recovery video - youtube.com/watch?v=DcPE8-gENLo
- Safety Alert - Children Driving Launches, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-children-driving-launches-1.pdf>
- Royal Life Saving Society - rlss.org.uk
- Safety Alert – Stay with the boat, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Safety-Alert-Stay-with-the-boat-October-2021.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Heel Restraints, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Safety-Alert-Heel-Restraints.pdf>
- British Rowing's Man Overboard and Recovery video - <https://youtu.be/G5xQIJGhaAM?t=458>

3.8. Man Overboard

The risk of losing a person overboard can be particularly significant in sea and offshore rowing but can also be relevant where stable boats are used in other environments. This risk should be identified in risk assessments and the following guidance is intended to help in these circumstances.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Have completed the online learning module on [Cold Water and Hypothermia online module](#) and read the [Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills](#).
- Understand that the key principles are to:
 - Get free from danger,
 - Get out of the water, and
 - Get off the water.
- Shout “Man Overboard” as soon as anyone falls overboard.
- Know that a crew member should then keep pointing at the Man Overboard.
- Know how to recover a conscious, and an unconscious, casualty into the boat.
- Know how to use a throw line, as demonstrated in the British Rowing [Man Overboard and Recovery](#) video.
- Attend any Man Overboard and Recovery training offered by the club.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that all members know what to do in the event of a man overboard.
- Ensure that adequate training opportunities are available to rowers and coaches.
- Ensure that boats carry the necessary equipment.
- Record Man Overboard and Recovery training of each member of the club and make these records available to all its coaches.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Know how to call for help using a mobile phone or VHF radio as appropriate.
- Coach crews to get the boat back to the man overboard using the quickest and easiest method.
- Coach crews on how to recover a person from the water, into the boat.
- Get the man overboard off the water by getting back to shore as quickly and safely as possible.
- Coach crews to manoeuvre their boats under control both forwards and backwards.
- Coach rowers in the use of a throw line, as demonstrated in the British Rowing [Man Overboard and Recovery](#) video.
- Be aware of a rower’s Man Overboard and Recovery training.
- Follow the policies set out by the club for those who have not been trained.

Competition

Competition Organisers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Be prepared and equipped to provide assistance if man overboard is identified as a hazard in their risk assessment.

Launch Drivers

Launch Drivers are expected to:

- Be competent and capable of assisting in the recovery of people in the water.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on man overboard and recovery.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides a [Man Overboard and Recovery workshop](#) for clubs.
- 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

- Cold Water and Hypothermia online learning module - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=165>
- British Rowing's Man Overboard and Recovery workshop - <http://britishrowing.org/knowledge/courses-qualifications/safety/man-overboard-and-recovery-2>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Cold-Water-Kills-1.pdf>
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- [RowSafe 3.6](#) – Competence in the water
- [RowSafe 8.1](#) - Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia
- Royal Life Saving Society - rlss.org.uk

3.9. Adaptive Rowers at Clubs

See also

- RowSafe 4.8 Adaptive Rowers at Competitions [RowSafe 4.8](#) and
- RowSafe 6.2 Adaptive Rowers [RowSafe 6.2](#)

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Take responsibility for themselves and others and understand how their actions could affect the safety of adaptive rowers.
- Understand what actions are required to keep adaptive rowers and themselves safe.
- Provide support and guidance for adaptive rowers.
- Ensure that adaptive rowers are not exposed to risk that they would find substantial or intolerable.
- Report any incidents or concerns about the safety of adaptive rowers to the club and to British Rowing.

Adaptive rowers

Adaptive rowers are expected to:

- Provide their club with relevant information about their impairment that may affect their own safety and the safety of others and any known “warning signs”.
- Operate within their capabilities.
- Provide the club with emergency contact details and information about actions to be taken in event of a medical emergency.
- Ensure that if they have a lower leg prosthesis then they are able to release themselves from the prosthesis (or the prosthesis from the boat) in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure that any medicines that are needed are carried by the rower and that the people who are in a position to do so know how to find them and administer them.
- Ensure that their needs are included in the Club Safety Plan and Emergency Response Plan and, where appropriate, Competition Safety Plans, Emergency Response Plans and Alternative Arrangements Plans.
- Ask a coach or club official about any aspects of safety they are concerned or unsure about.
- Check that equipment is safe for them to use and report any defects.
- Seek additional medical advice when appropriate.

Carers

Carers are expected to:

- Attend initial discussions with the club and attend its induction programme.
- Ensure that the club, coaches and competition organisers are provided with relevant information relating to the impairment, warning signs and requirements.
- Ensure the club is kept up to date with any relevant changes in the impairment, requirements and emergency contact details.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that the Club Risk Assessment includes risks for those adaptive rowers who row at the club.
- Risk Assess individual adaptive rowers and ensure the resultant protocols etc. are documented and implemented.
- Ensure an appropriate level of care is promoted for adaptive rowers.
- Discuss the rower's needs and aspirations.
- Define any additional Safety Rules required to keep adaptive rowers safe.
- Provide and maintain any additional safety and rescue equipment or facilities required to keep adaptive rowers safe.
- Ensure that sufficient coaches and safety cover are available to train and supervise adaptive rowers.
- Provide adaptive rowers with advice on any issues associated with their impairment that may affect safety, particularly when rowing, or refer them to their medical professional as appropriate.
- Ensure that coaches and others supporting adaptive rowers know what to do in an emergency and have access to emergency contact details for adaptive rowers.
- Establish and practise procedures for managing incidents, including capsize or man overboard, involving adaptive rowers.
- Check equipment is appropriate and safe when adaptations are made.
- Seek advice on equipment that is suitable for each adaptive rower.
- Where necessary and feasible, make modifications to club facilities to accommodate adaptive rowers.

For adaptive rowers, Club Safety Plans should include:

- Procedures for launching and recovering boats with adaptive rowers.
- Access arrangements for adaptive rowers.

For adaptive rowers, Club Safety Rules should include:

- Criteria for assessing risks associated with adaptive rowers.
- Actions to be taken in an emergency involving adaptive rowers, including capsize or man overboard.

Further information will be provided to clubs if they complete the contact form here <https://www.britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/adaptive-rowing-support-for-clubs/>.



Check equipment is suitable and safe when adaptations are made

© Richard Palmer

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Ensure an appropriate level of care is promoted for adaptive rowers.
- Encourage adaptive rowers to ask about anything they are unsure of.
- Provide advice on any issues associated with their impairment that may affect their safety, particularly when rowing, or refer them to their medical professional as appropriate.
- Identify ability and develop a needs analysis for each individual.
- Ensure that adaptive rowers understand how the Club's Safety Plan and Rules apply to them.
- Use any specialist knowledge that they may have to assist the club and the athlete.
- Maintain effective communication with rowers with a sensory impairment (visual, hearing impaired) who may require additional support using radio and/or signage as appropriate.
- Understand the rower's impairment and know what action to take in an emergency and who to contact.
- With the rower's permission, communicate any information that affects safety to other rowers and coaches.
- Ensure that Competitions are informed whether, or not, Special Recovery Protocols are required for each adaptive rower.
- Check equipment is suitable and safe when adaptations are made for each adaptive rower.
- Seek advice on equipment that is suitable for each adaptive rower.
- Where appropriate, ensure that adaptive rowers understand how Competition Safety Plans, Emergency Response Plans and Alternative Arrangement Plans apply to them.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs and competitions in their region on adaptive rowers.

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.
- Provides advice on adaptive rowing for clubs, competitions, coaches and rowers.

Further Information

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- [RowSafe 4.8](#) - Adaptive Competitions
- Go Rowing and Getting Started - Adaptive Rowing - britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing
- Adaptive Rowing Classification - britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/classification
- Adaptive Rowing support for clubs - <https://www.britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/adaptive-rowing-support-for-clubs/>
- Club Adaptive Guide - Introducing and developing Adaptive Rowing at your Club- https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/British_Rowing_Adaptive_Rowing_Guide_61pp_v4_72ppi.pdf
- Safety Alert - Adaptive Rowing Straps, britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Adaptive-Rowing-Straps.pdf
- [RowSafe 4.8](#) - Adaptive Rowers at Competitions

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org.

- [RowSafe 4.8.1](#) - Classification and Event Types
- [RowSafe 4.8.2](#) - Boat Checking
- [RowSafe 4.8.3](#) - 4.8.3 Race Guiding
- [RowSafe 6.2](#) - 6.2 Adaptive Rowers
- [RowSafe 6.2.1](#) - Rescue Provision for Adaptive Rowers at Clubs and Competitions
- [RowSafe 6.2.2](#) - Safety Launches and their Crews (for Adaptive Rowers)

Useful Websites

- Activity Alliance: www.activityalliance.org.uk/
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: <https://adhd.uk.co.uk/>
- British Blind Sport: www.britishblindsport.org.uk
- Cerebral Palsy Sport England & Wales: www.cpsport.org
- Down's Syndrome Sport: www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/our-work/services-projects/dsactive/
- LimbPower: www.limbpower.com
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- National Autistic Society - www.autism.org.uk
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB): <https://www.rnib.org.uk/>
- Special Olympics Great Britain: <http://www.specialolympics.org/>
- The British Dyslexia Association: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
- Tourette's Syndrome (UK) Association: <https://www.tourettes-action.org.uk/>
- UK Deaf Sport: www.ukdeafsport.org.uk
- SportExcel UK - <https://sportexceluk.org/>
- Adaptive Rowing UK - <https://adaptiverowinguk.com/>
 - see also [Myths of Adaptive Rowing](#) and [Not Myths of Adaptive Rowing](#).

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org.

4. Competition Safety

This chapter addresses Safety at Competitions and Non-Competitive Events (such as Tours and Ceremonial row pasts, etc.) where crews from several clubs come together for a particular purpose.

The term Competition is intended to include these Non-Competitive Events.

Participants and their clubs are expected to take responsibility for their own safety and that of others. Competition Organisers are expected to provide a safe environment in which participants and others can enjoy their sport.

In the week before your competition consider whether it would be safe or fair to run it. Consider the weather forecast and its implications on:

- travel to the competition
- trailer towing
- parking of cars, towing vehicles and trailers
- unloading trailers
- moving people and boats on land
- walking in the launch area
- launching
- rowing to the start
- waiting on the water
- racing
- recovery of boats and people onto the land
- loading of boats onto trailers
- travel home

It is dangerous to tow trailers in icy or very windy conditions. The risks during transit to and from a competition are often more serious than those at the competition. Do not ask people to put themselves at risk.

The presence of ice on the water, or in the launching or recovery areas, and the presence of slippery conditions on land should also be taken into account. Do not expose people to these risks. Also consider the strength of the stream and the water conditions generally.

It is neither fair nor safe to expect people, especially juniors, to wait on the water for extended periods. If it is too cold for people to be waiting on the water, then consider whether the competition should take place. Sometimes waiting on the water can be the result of an unplanned incident, this should be taken into account too.

Consider the welfare of officials, coaches, spectators, etc. You have a duty to care for them too.

Do not leave it too late. An early decision to postpone or cancel will be much appreciated. It means that clubs will not need to load their trailers and gives people time to find something else that they can usefully do on the day of the competition.

Whilst the financial implications of cancelling a competition can be significant it is also worth taking into account the goodwill that an early decision will deliver. People will remember the negative experiences they have had travelling to competitions that were cancelled late and be less keen to travel there again. The same applies to competitions that were not cancelled but should have been.

Guidelines for Responding to Major Incidents at Competitions can be found [here](#).

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

- 4.1 [Competition Risk Assessment](#)
- 4.2 [Competition Safety Plans and Safety Rules](#)
- 4.3 [Competition Emergency Response Plan](#)
- 4.4 [Competition Rowing Safety Adviser Job Description](#)
- 4.5 [Competition Navigational Arrangements](#)
- 4.6 [Alternative Arrangements Plan](#)
- 4.7 [Competition Safety Boat Providers](#)
- 4.8 [Adaptive Competitions](#)
 - 4.8.1 [Classification and Event Types](#)
 - 4.8.2 [Boat Checking](#)
 - 4.8.3 [Race Guiding](#)
- 4.9 [Touring](#)

Further Information

- Schematic showing a model for the organisation of competitions - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Competition-Organisation-2021-VI-1.pdf>
- Competition Organisers Manual - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/British-Rowing-Competition-Organisers-Manual-March2024.pdf>
- [RowSafe 2.3](#) - Radio Procedure
- Guidelines for Responding to Major Incidents at Competitions [British-Rowing-Guidelines-for-Managing-Major-Incidents-at-Competitions-March2023.pdf \(britishrowing.org\)](#).

4.1. Competition Risk Assessment

Hazard identification and risk assessment are the basis for planning to maintain and improve safety. These provide competitions with the ability to understand the ways in which harm can be caused and to minimise both the probability of that harm occurring and the severity of harm should it occur. It puts competitions in control of their risks. The Risk Assessment only adds value when the actions that it identifies as being needed are completed.

In particular, the competition risk assessment may determine that the ability to swim is essential if there is a risk of a person entering the water upstream of a weir and being swept over that weir.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand, and abide by the rules that the competition has defined as a result of its Risk Assessment.
- Be aware of the hazards associated with each of the competition's activities that they take part in.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Appoint a Competition Rowing Safety Adviser (CoRSA) (see [RowSafe 4.4](#)).
- Ensure that their competition has completed a Risk Assessment and that this covers activities under its influence or control, both on and off the water. The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify any further barriers or controls needed to ensure the safety of everyone involved. Factors to be considered include:
 - Location of the competition, for example remote or in a built-up area, easy or difficult access.
 - Type and extent of boating area (e.g. narrow canal, wide river or lake, estuary or the sea) and the effect that this has on the type of rescue that may be needed.
 - Type of race such as large head race or short, contained regatta.
 - Potential hazards such as obstructions, weirs, sluices, cold or hot weather, and limited access points. There is more information about flow over weirs [here](#) and [here](#).
 - The need for a boating schedule that ensures that there are no long periods of exposure to cold or hot weather.
 - People, for example number of competitors (age and rowing experience), spectators and supporters.
 - Hazards in other competition facilities such as catering.
 - Travel time to the nearest hospitals with an A&E Department or Minor Injuries Unit providing the required cover.
 - Details of the service provided by the local NHS ambulance service (this varies from region to region).
 - Availability of other rescue services such as air ambulance and lifeboat.
- Publish the competition's Risk Assessments on the website or make them available to participating clubs in other ways.
- Use its Risk Assessment to identify risk controls that depend critically on participants' behaviour and specify appropriate (local) rules and the consequences of non-compliance (For example: "Impeding a race by rowing on the course on the way to the start will result in disqualification").
- Publish suitable Competition Safety Plans and Safety Rules (see [RowSafe 4.2](#)) and an Emergency Response Plan (see [RowSafe 4.3](#)) based on the issues identified in the Risk Assessments.
- Take action, where necessary, to ensure that nobody is exposed to substantial or intolerable risk.
- Take action to ensure the welfare of umpires and other officials.
- Review, and if necessary, update, the Risk Assessments in preparation for each competition.
- Review, and if necessary, update, the Risk Assessments following any significant incident at the competition or elsewhere (including those communicated in Safety Alerts (see [Safety Alert Archive](#))).

Competition Rowing Safety Adviser

Competition Rowing Safety Advisers are expected to:

- Complete the [Safety Basics](#) online learning module and the [Advanced Risk Assessment](#) online learning module.
- Lead or facilitate the completion and review of the competition's Risk Assessment.

Umpires and Other Officials

Umpires and other officials are expected to:

- Be aware of the content of the Competition Safety Plan(s) and Safety Rules, and Emergency Response Plan(s).
- Support the Organising Committee by ensuring that the competition is conducted safely and in accordance with the Competition Safety Plan(s) and Safety Rules, and Emergency Response Plan(s).
- Take disciplinary, or other, action specified by the Organising Committee in the event of non-compliance with any Specified (local) rule.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to competitions in their region on risk assessment.

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

- Online learning modules:
 - Safety Basics - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=194>
 - Advanced Risk Assessment - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=201>
- [RowSafe 4.4](#) - CoRSA Job Description
- [RowSafe 4.2](#) - Competition Safety Plans and Safety Rules
- [RowSafe 4.3](#) - Competition Emergency Response Plan
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Information on flow over weirs - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYI67uZkNvQ> and <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Safety-Alert-Keep-clear-of-Weirs-Dec-2019.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Coping with the behaviour of others, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Safety-Alert-Coping-with-the-behaviour-of-others-June-2023.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Flow over weirs, [Safety-Alert-Flow-over-Weirs.pdf](#)

4.2. Competition Safety Plans and Safety Rules

The primary purpose of a Competition Safety Plan and Safety Rules is to ensure the safety of participants, officials, other water users and the public at large. The Competition Safety Plan describes how officials, participants and others should act in order to ensure a safe competition. Safety plans and safety rules should be simple and concise.

Safety Rules and Safety Plans stem from the Barriers and Controls in Risk Assessments. In most cases the Safety Rules are derived from the Barriers and the Emergency Response Plans are derived from the Controls.

This all follows from the definitions. Barriers come into effect before the hazardous event and tend to make it less likely to happen. Barriers identify things that **should**, or **should not**, happen and therefore can translate into rules.

Emergency Response Plans are based on Controls that come into effect after the hazardous event has occurred and tend to limit its consequences. In some cases, these could be written as Safety Rules (e.g. coxes **shall** wear lifejackets). This is just expressing a control as a "**shall** do action".

It is important to distinguish what constitutes advice (e.g. wear sunscreen on a sunny day) and when the advice has to be expressed as a rule (e.g. obey the instructions of marshals).

Competitions are advised to restrict themselves to only having the rules that they really need and ensuring compliance with those few rules. The consequences of failure to comply with a Safety Rule (a Local Rule) should be clearly specified. If they have a proliferation of rules, then people will not remember them all and one day a rule that is important will be forgotten. **Rules should be simple specific and concise.**

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others affected by their actions.
- Read, understand and follow the Competition Safety Plan.
- Read, understand and comply with all the instructions to competitors including any local rules.
- Report any incidents to the Competition Organisers and to British Rowing.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Use the Competition Risk Assessment to produce or update the Competition Safety Plan and Rules.
- Define an Alternative Arrangements Plan (see [RowSafe 4.6](#)) that outlines the criteria that will cause the competition to be suspended, abandoned or altered if the conditions or circumstances become unacceptable, and the related actions.
- Prominently publish (e.g. on the website) the Competition Safety Plan and Safety Rules, and distribute them to participating clubs, race officials, umpires, launch drivers, safety boat crews, and other relevant parties.
- Hold briefings for officials, umpires, launch drivers, safety boat crews, marshals, participants and other relevant parties.
- Where appropriate discuss the Competition Safety Plan with emergency services, local navigation authorities and other interested parties allowing time to implement agreed changes.
- Ensure that visiting officials, umpires and marshals are familiar with the venue and have all the required venue-specific information.
- If the competition is at sea then ensure that any support vessels, other than "coded vessels", comply with the [Intended Pleasure Vessel Code](#).
- Work with competing clubs and competitors to "discourage" them from allowing people to row in conditions, etc. that they cannot handle.
- Assist clubs to adhere to the advice provided by the Non-native Species Secretariat (NNSS), and Check, Clean and Dry their equipment prior to use. See - [Rowers » NNSS](#)

Competition Safety Plans should include:

- A map or diagram showing vehicle and trailer access routes, parking areas, boat rigging areas. Care should be taken to plan to avoid or minimise vehicle movements in areas where there could be pedestrians.
- The provision of marshals in areas where pedestrians are at risk from moving vehicles.
- A plan of the local water and site highlighting hazards, navigation rules, circulation patterns and emergency access points (named and where necessary with postcodes).
- Circulation patterns to be followed during periods of racing.
- Circulation patterns to be followed during practice sessions on, or in the neighbourhood of, the course and times when crews can practise, warm up and cool down on the water.
- Circulation patterns should also identify areas where crews can perform practice starts or row at full pressure.
- A boating schedule that ensures that there are no periods of delay and exposure during cold or hot weather.
- Safety boat type, numbers and locations.
- Number and location of Marshals, Umpires and Officials.
- Instruction for Marshals (see [Safety Alert – Marshals](#)).
- Safety equipment required for the competition.
- Methods of communication between officials, to competition personnel and participants.
- Racking and boat storage arrangements.
- Launching and landing provision.
- Arrangements for adaptive rowers (see [RowSafe 4.8](#)).
- Instructions for reporting incidents to the Competition Organisers and to British Rowing.

Competition Safety Rules should specify:

- The venue-specific rules that everyone should abide by in order to keep themselves and others safe.
- The consequences of failing to abide by those rules.
- Safety rules should not restrict the use of head mounted mirrors or similar devices by steers.

Note: Safety Rules should be few and specific. They should relate to behaviours that could have a significant impact on safety. For example, at some venues, it may be appropriate to have a rule that states that any crew that rows onto the course and impedes a race shall be disqualified.

Officials

Race officials, umpires, launch drivers, safety boat crews, marshals and other personnel are expected to:

- Understand and follow the Competition Safety Plan and Safety Rules.
- Support the competition by enforcing the rules and by taking the specified disciplinary action.
- Inform the Organising Committee of any incidents or safety concerns.

Participating Clubs

Officers of participating clubs are expected to:

- Ensure that the crews that they enter into a competition have sufficient skill and ability to participate in that competition.
- Brief their participants on the Competition Safety Plan and ensure that they understand any local rules.
- Provide a representative to attend any Safety Briefings.
- Brief participants on any further information provided at the Safety Briefings.
- Ensure that their members are aware of, and abide by, the competition's rules.
- Take action, as appropriate, to ensure that nobody is exposed to substantial or intolerable risk.
- Ensure that participants are aware of the hazards that are associated with the activities that they will undertake.
- Inform the organisers if any of their rowers has pre-existing medical conditions that impact their safety or that of others.

- Tell competitors that they **should** not lie back in the boat at the end of a race, as if they had collapsed (unless they have).
- Adhere to the advice provided by the Non-native Species Secretariat (NNSS), and Check, Clean and Dry their equipment prior to use. See - [Rowers » NNSS](#)

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Read and understand the Competition Safety Plan and Safety Rules to participants.
- Discuss the contents with crews and check that they know what they should do in an emergency.
- Encourage participants to eat, drink (hydrate), and dress appropriately.
- Encourage rowers to carry an audible warning device, such as a whistle.
- Report any incidents to the Competition Organisers and British Rowing.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to competitions in their region on safety plans and rules.
- Review safety plans and rules and provide feedback.
- Give, or withhold, permission for the competition to take place.

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.
- Provides advice on [Competition Planning](#).
- Provides advice on National Competition Safety Plans.
- Reviews and approves National Competition Safety Plans.
- Provides advice on adaptive rowing.

Further Information

- [RowSafe 4.6](#) - Alternative Arrangements Plan
- Safety Alert – Marshals, [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Marshals.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Marshals.pdf)
- [RowSafe 4.8](#) - Adaptive Competitions
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)
- Competition Organisers Manual - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/British-Rowing-Competition-Organisers-Manual-March2024.pdf>
- [RowSafe 2.3](#) - Radio procedure
- Rules of Racing - [britishrowing.org/events/entering-events/rules-of-racing](https://www.britishrowing.org/events/entering-events/rules-of-racing)
- Intended Pleasure Vessel Code - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/961320/IPV_Code_-_01_January_2019.pdf
- Non-native Species Secretariat (NNSS) advice to rowers - [Rowers » NNSS](#)

4.3. Competition Emergency Response Plan

The Competition Emergency Response Plan defines the actions to be taken if such an incident does happen. It will help to reduce the harm that such an incident could cause. Emergency response plans rules should be simple and concise.

The Competition Safety Plan and Safety Rules (see [RowSafe 4.2](#)) describes what should be done to make an incident less likely to happen.

Competition Emergency Response Plans stem from the Barriers (to reduce the probability) and Controls (to reduce the severity of harm) in Risk Assessments. In most cases the Emergency Response Plans are derived from the Controls.

This all follows from the definitions. Controls that come into effect after the hazardous event has occurred and tend to limit its consequences. Emergency Response Plans tend to be based on Controls.

It is important that this plan is implemented in a timely manner. Plans should be simple, specific and concise.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand and, in an emergency, follow the Competition Emergency Response Plan.
- Follow the instructions of organisers and officials.
- Report any incident or condition that could give rise to an emergency to the Competition Organisers.
- [Report incidents](#) and near misses to British Rowing.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Use the competition's Risk Assessment to produce or update the Competition Emergency Response Plan. The appropriate level of cover may require the appointment of a Medical Officer or the provision of an ambulance or paramedics.
- Provide information about the Competition Emergency Response Plan to all involved in the competition and make it available. The plan should include:
 - Process for summoning assistance in an emergency, including how and when to call for an ambulance (999 call).
 - Location of the competition, including postcode and other relevant location information, and directions for emergency services.
 - Plan of the competition showing all emergency access points, with postcodes, [what3words](#) descriptors, or grid references where possible to assist emergency services.
 - Emergency phone numbers and the location of the nearest landline telephone if available.
 - Number and location of First Aid Points and, if available, the nearest Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).
 - How injured persons will be transported to the First Aid Point or ambulance.
 - Number and type of safety boats.
 - Number and location of marshals and instructions to marshals in an emergency (see [Safety Alert - Marshals](#)).
 - Instructions on what to do in event of a fire, how to evacuate the building and the location of Assembly Points.
 - Where relevant, emergency arrangements for adaptive rowers.
- Provide adequate First Aid cover including provision for people suffering from mild hypothermia (people with severe hypothermia should be taken to hospital). It is recommended that: -
 - Organisers understand that most emergencies in rowing competitions happen on the water – it is therefore critically important to ensure that the safety boats, rescue boats and umpire/official boats are fully briefed on and equipped for an emergency (trauma or medical).
 - Equipment should be adequate to deal with all minor medical incidents but should include an AED (Defibrillator) and all members of the medical team be competent in knowing what equipment is available to them and how to use it.

- The emergency plan should extend to how and when to call for an ambulance (999 call) including all the details of access to the incident site (address of the competition, etc.) and a contact telephone number.
- Any competition medical service **should** be competent enough to deal with any medical emergency until the ambulance arrives. This may be up to 30 minutes. Some large competitions seriously consider whether to have a paramedic ambulance on site (with paramedic attendance, plus equipment and drugs) but remember that the risk level changes if this ambulance leaves site with a life-threatening emergency and may require stopping the competition until it returns.
- The competition does have responsibility for all client groups (rowers, officials, volunteers and spectators) and numbers may require the attendance of an event doctor in addition to a paramedic(s), depending on the level of first aid provision.
- Cardiac resuscitation is at the top end of the risk list and if recognised and handled correctly, can be successful. Fortunately, cardiac arrest (either medical or trauma) is relatively rare in sport and rowing. It is just as important to consider other life-threatening or serious trauma emergencies that are more likely to occur.
- Provide a process and an effective means of communication, such as radios, to summon support in an emergency and ensure that officials, launch drivers, first aiders and other personnel know what to do and how to use any equipment. (see [RowSafe 2.3 – Radio Procedure](#)).
- Provide sufficient, correctly positioned fire extinguishers and fire blankets, emergency lighting and clearly marked fire exits.
- Maintain emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers and fire blankets, check that fire exits are clearly marked and that emergency lighting and fire doors are in working order.
- Notify the local ambulance control of the date, time and location of the competition, an estimate of the number of people likely to be present and make arrangements with the ambulance service for an emergency response.
- Offer to provide the emergency services with the Competition Safety Plan and Competition Emergency Response Plan.

Participating Clubs

Officers of participating clubs are expected to:

- Brief their members on the Competition Emergency Response Plan.
- Provide a representative to attend any Safety Briefings.
- Brief participants on any further information provided at the Safety Briefing.
- Ensure that their members are aware of, and abide by, the competition's rules.
- Establish contact details and any relevant medical or other information for each participant in case of emergency. Ensure that this information is kept confidential and only available to those who need it at the competition.
- Ensure that they have an official at the competition with their crews and that this official's contact details (e.g. mobile phone number) are known to the Competition Organisers.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Read and understand the Competition Emergency Response Plan.
- Discuss the contents with crews and check that they know what they should do in an emergency.
- Ensure that participants know the location of First Aid Points including an AED, if available.
- Encourage rowers to carry an audible warning device, such as a whistle, for use in an emergency.
- Report any incidents to the Competition Organisers and British Rowing.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to competitions in their region on emergency response plans.
- Review emergency response plans and provide feedback.
- Give, or withhold, permission for the competition to take place.

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

- [RowSafe 4.2](#) - Competition Safety Plans and Safety Rules
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive – Marshals, [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert- Marshals.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert- Marshals.pdf)
- Competition Organisers Manual - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/British-Rowing-Competition-Organisers-Manual-March2024.pdf>
- [RowSafe 2.3](#) - Radio Procedure
- Safety Alert - what3words, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Safety-Alert-what3words.pdf>
- Safety in Club Premises - https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/British_Rowing_Safety_In_Club_Premises_June-2023.pdf

4.4. Competition Rowing Safety Adviser Job Description

It should be noted that Competition Rowing Safety Advisers (CoRSAs) are not responsible for rowing safety, but they are expected to provide advice on Rowing Safety. It is the responsibility of the individuals, their clubs and the Competition Organisers to ensure that people are not harmed by the activities at the competition.

Expectations

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to promote safe practice within the competition; they are expected to:

- Appoint a Competition Rowing Safety Adviser(s), to lead and advise on promoting safe practice.
- Support the Competition Rowing Safety Adviser and take their advice into account.
- Ensure that safety is a regular agenda item at meetings.

Competition Rowing Safety Advisers

Competition Rowing Safety Advisers are expected to:

- Be familiar with the guidance provided in RowSafe and the safety requirements of the [Rules of Racing](#).
- Provide advice to the Competition Organisers on all matters relating to safety as appropriate.
- Undertake Safety Reviews of the competition's activities and facilities.
- Undertake inspections and audits if requested to do so by the Competition Organisers and provide feedback.
- Promote and monitor Incident Reporting at the competition and the reporting of all incidents to British Rowing.
- Lead or facilitate incident investigations as necessary.
- Have completed the [Advanced Risk Assessment Training](#).
- Lead or facilitate the completion and review of the competition's Risk Assessment.
- Use the Risk Assessment to identify required safety rules.
- Work with the Competition Organisers to develop and maintain the competition Safety Plan, Safety Rules, Emergency Response Plan and Alternative Arrangements Plan.
- Be willing to be a member of the Organising Committee.
- Attend local and regional safety meetings.
- Work with the Regional Rowing Safety Adviser.
- Work with other water and land users on safety as required.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to CoRSAs in their region.

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

- British Rowing Rules of Racing - britishrowing.org/events/entering-events/rules-of-racing
- Online learning module:
 - Advanced Risk Assessment - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=201>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive

4.5. Competition Navigational Arrangements

It is important that participants in competitions are aware of the navigational arrangements and the consequences of non-compliance with the navigational rules.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand and follow the navigational arrangements for the Competition (including arrangements in the competition of an emergency).
- Understand the consequences of non-compliance with navigational rules.
- Report any incidents to the Competition Organisers and to British Rowing.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Brief participants on the navigational arrangements (including arrangements in the event of an emergency) and ensure that they understand what they should do.
- Ensure that crews understand the consequences of non-compliance with navigational rules.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Communicate the navigational arrangements for a competition to participants (including arrangements in the event of an emergency).
- Ensure that crews understand the consequences of non-compliance with navigational rules.
- Discuss these with the crews and check that they know what they should do.
- Coach rowers and coxes to keep warm when waiting for head races to start (See [Safety Alert – Not Getting Cold at Heads](#)).

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Use the Competition Risk Assessment to identify any hazards that affect the navigational arrangements for the competition.
- Prominently publish (such as on the website) the navigational arrangements and distribute to participating clubs, officials, umpires, launch drivers, safety boat crews, and other relevant parties. These should include any Alternative Arrangements Plan (see [RowSafe 4.6](#)).
- Include information about the navigational arrangements in briefings for officials, umpires, launch drivers, safety boat crews, participants and other relevant parties.
- Define and communicate navigational arrangements to be used in the competition of an emergency.
- Enforce the navigational rules and define sanctions to be applied for non-compliance.
- In head races during cold weather ensure that boats launch in the same order as they start so that nobody has to wait for a protracted time. Endeavour to ensure that waiting areas prior to the start are beyond, rather than alongside, the course so that rowers have an opportunity to keep moving and thereby keep warm (See [Safety Alert – Not Getting Cold at Heads](#)).
- In head races, prepare an order of racing that minimises the need for faster crews to overtake slower crews

Launch drivers, safety boat crews and other personnel are expected to:

- Understand and follow the navigational arrangements (including arrangements in the event of an emergency).
- Inform the Organising Committee, umpires, marshals or race officials of any non-compliance with navigational rules.
- Inform the Organising Committee of any incidents or safety concerns.

Umpires, marshals and race officials are expected to:

- Understand and follow the navigational arrangements (including arrangements in the event of an emergency).
- Inform the Organising Committee, umpires or officials of any non-compliance with navigational rules.
- Inform the Organising Committee of any incidents or safety concerns.
- Enforce the navigational rules and, if necessary, in the event of non-compliance apply the defined sanctions.

Information about the navigational arrangements for a competition should include:

- A map showing:
 - Boat launch and recovery areas
 - Hazards
 - Route to start
 - The course
 - Route from finish to boat recovery area
 - Where it is safe to warm up and cool down on the water
 - Where it is safe to practise starts, etc.
 - Circulation patterns to be followed during periods of racing
 - Circulation patterns to be followed during practice sessions
- Local navigation rules.
- Arrangements in event of an emergency (see [RowSafe 4.3](#)).
- Consequences of non-compliance with navigational rules.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to competitions in their region on the navigational arrangements.
- Review navigational arrangements and provide feedback.
- Give, or withhold, permission for the competition to take place.

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.
- Provides training on Risk Assessment.
- Provides advice on Competition Planning.

Further Information

- [RowSafe 4.6](#) - Alternative Arrangements Plan
- [RowSafe 4.3](#) - Competition Emergency Response Plan
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Safety Alert – Marshals, britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Marshals.pdf
- Safety Alert – Not Getting Cold at Heads, www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Safety-Alert-Not-getting-cold-at-heads.pdf

4.6. Alternative Arrangements Plan

Sometimes the conditions at a competition are such that it cannot safely continue as planned. It may then be appropriate to abandon or suspend the competition or make other alternative arrangements. Alternative Arrangements plans and safety rules should be simple and concise. **Plans should be simple, specific and concise.**

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Respond as instructed if conditions dictate that a competition has to be abandoned, suspended or altered.
- Consider the conditions at the competition and decide whether they are able to take part safely and withdraw from the competition if they conclude that they cannot.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Register for [Met Office weather warnings](#)
- Define an Alternative Arrangements Plan that outlines:
 - The criteria that will cause the competition to be abandoned, suspended, or altered. These criteria should be objective rather than subjective and include specifications for wind speed, wave height and steepness, temperature (high and low), etc. The conditions should reflect the "exposure" of the venue and the capacity of the competitors.
 - How a decision to abandon, suspend or alter the competition will be taken.
 - Who will take that decision.
 - How the decision will be communicated to participants and officials.
 - The action that should be taken as a consequence of the competition being abandoned or suspended.
 - The criteria that **should** be satisfied to enable a suspended competition to be restarted.
- Ensure that they have the contact details, such as mobile phone number, of an official from each club present.
- Alter a competition, where circumstances permit, so that it can be completed safely. The following alterations should be considered:
 - Restricting the competition to specified boat types.
 - Restricting the competition to specified participants.
 - Changing the direction or length of the course.
 - Moving to an alternative course.

Participating Clubs

Officers of participating clubs are expected to:

- Ensure that they have an official at the competition with their crews and that this official's contact details, such as mobile phone number, are known to the Competition Organisers.
- Ensure that all their competitors are able to complete the course safely and are properly equipped (e.g., appropriate kit, carry water, etc.,).

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Assist crews in responding to instructions.
- Work with their crews to decide whether they should withdraw from a competition if the conditions deteriorate.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to competitions in their region on alternative arrangements plans.
- Review Alternative Arrangements Plans and provide feedback.
- Give, or withhold, permission for the competition to take place.

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

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- [RowSafe 4.2](#) - Competition Safety Plans and Safety Rules
- Met Office Weather Warnings - <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/guide-to-emails>

4.7. Competition Safety Boat Providers

Some competitions use external providers to supply safety cover on the water. Even though the people involved may be suitably qualified, it should not be assumed that they know enough about rowing and rowing boats to be able to operate effectively and safely in this role. Further instruction may be required.

Expectations

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Ensure that Safety Boat Drivers:
 - Hold any qualification required by the host club, navigation authority or venue management. Many navigation authorities require RYA Level 2 Powerboat.
 - Are at least 18 years old unless accompanied by a responsible adult, see [Safety Alert - Children Driving Launches](#).
 - Understand how to provide assistance to rowing boats, provide additional briefings if necessary.
 - Understand the load capacity of the boat.
 - Keep wash to a minimum, except in an emergency.
- Provide a briefing for boat drivers that includes all the information that they need to perform their duties.
- Provide drivers with a Course map showing the circulation plan and the extraction points.
- Define and communicate to all participants and personnel what is required of Safety Boat Drivers:
 - Areas to be patrolled.
 - How to summon assistance, including medical attention.
 - Where to take casualties.
- Ensure that safety boats are in good working order.
- Ensure that safety boats carry an effective means of communication and that someone in the safety boat knows how to use it and what channels to use.

Competition organisers should use their Risk Assessment and take the following into account when deciding on the number and type of safety launches required: -

- the number of crews afloat at any one time
- the presence or absence of umpires in launches
- the hazards on and near the course
- the level of experience and expertise of the rowers involved
- the presence or absence of adaptive rowers or rowers with needs
- the types of boats used
- the presence or absence of juniors
- the conditions on the day of the event
- the number of places where rowers can get ashore and the number where they cannot
- the presence or absence of marshals with throw lines
- the presence or absence of other boats afloat

It may help to consider your safety provision in previous years and to judge whether that was adequate. If it was, and the hazards, etc. are unchanged then it may be that the same provision will be sufficient this year.

Safety Boat Providers

Safety Boat Providers are expected to:

- Ensure that Safety Boat Drivers:
 - Hold any qualification required by the host club, navigation authority or venue management. Many navigation authorities require RYA Level 2 Powerboat.
 - Understand the launch driving guidance (see [RowSafe 5.2](#)).
 - Understand the load capacity of the boat.
 - Keep wash to a minimum, except in an emergency.
- Communicate the Competition Safety Plan to Safety Boat Drivers and crew.
- Provide a crew member to assist the Safety Boat Driver.
- Ensure that safety boats are correctly equipped with launch safety kits (see [RowSafe 7.4.1](#)).
- Agree the extent of the safety cover required and the safety procedures with Competition Organisers.
- Maintain safety boats in good working order.
- Where appropriate, ensure that someone in the safety boat knows how to use a radio and what channels to use.

Safety Boat Drivers

Safety Boat Drivers are expected to:

- Hold the appropriate qualifications and be competent to provide safety cover for the type of competition.
- Understand how to provide assistance to rowing boats.
- Understand what is required of Safety Boat Drivers at the competition:
 - Areas to be patrolled.
 - How to summon assistance, including medical attention.
 - Where to take casualties.
 - The need to keep wash to a minimum, except in an emergency.
- Follow the launch driving guidelines (see [RowSafe 5.2](#)).
- Helm the boat and use the crew to effect a rescue unless assistance is required.
- Know the load capacity of the boat and not exceed it.
- Check that the boat is correctly equipped (see [RowSafe 7.4.1](#)).

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide advice to clubs and competitions on Safety Boat Providers.

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

- [RowSafe 5.2](#) - Launch Driving
- [RowSafe 7.4.1](#) - Launch Safety Kits
- Safety Alert - Children Driving Launches, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-children-driving-launches-1.pdf>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- [RowSafe 2.3](#) - Radio Procedure
- Competition Organisers Manual - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/British-Rowing-Competition-Organisers-Manual-March2024.pdf>

4.8. Adaptive Rowers at Competitions

See also

- [RowSafe 3.9](#) - Adaptive Rowing at Clubs and
- [RowSafe 6.2](#) - Adaptive Rowers

There may be additional hazards and risks associated with adaptive rowers depending on the extent of their impairment.

Safety Plans and Rules should include any additional actions required to keep adaptive rowers safe.

Adaptive rowers may need extra guidance, support and supervision to keep themselves and others safe. The competition may also need to provide additional facilities or equipment.

Competitions need only to review risk and take action for the adaptive rowers who participate in the competition, not for all types of impairments.

Adaptive rowers and their clubs are expected to advise the Organiser when an entry may require enhanced safety consideration. It is recommended this be done via BROE and by direct contact using the Competition email provided on BROE. It is recommended that adaptive entries be made early to allow time for any consequential safety protocols to be determined. It is suggested adaptive entries are closed around 2 weeks before the date of the Competition.

Further information will be provided to competitions if they complete the contact form here <https://www.britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/adaptive-rowing-support-for-clubs/>.

Launching and Landing

Adaptive athletes may have added safety risks and assistance requirements imposed by their impairment. These should be supported on a “best efforts” basis by the boating marshals.

Adaptive athletes and their club colleagues are adept at managing embarkation risks caused by the impairment. The adaptive rower should be allowed to determine best practice and be given sufficient time and space to boat and de-boat safely.

Competition volunteers may help to establish a hazard free environment. For example, removing trip hazards for the mobility or visually impaired, keeping an eye on other boat movements, etc.

All relevant officials to be informed that an adaptive crew is leaving the boating area. The crew should be identified so that the officials can understand if any additional precautions may be applied.

If the crew is to proceed under supervision, as per the safety plan, the boat shall remain at or near the embarkation point, until the launch and/or supervising regime is in place.

On the Water

It is recommended that adaptive athletes should not be on the water longer than strictly necessary. Some may have conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to hot, cold or wet conditions. For example, do not hold adaptive crews at a regatta start for extended periods in order to get faster crews away.

The Organiser should implement the pre-agreed additional on-water safety protocols. If for any reason it is temporarily not possible to implement said procedures, boating and racing shall be postponed until the situation is rectified.

It is best practice to keep the number of adaptive rowers requiring additional recovery protocols, on the water relatively low. High numbers **should** be matched by an appropriate level of safety cover.

The suitability of available launches will have been discussed in the pre-Competition discussion. If an agreed launch for a particular rower is temporarily unserviceable the affected crew should return to “boats-off”. Recommendations for the attributes of appropriate safety launches and the crew involved are given in [RowSafe 6.2.2 Safety Launches and their Crews](#).

A safety launch (or a marshal launch who can call a safety launch) may accompany adaptive athletes to the start line by race or in small groups to provide:

- extra safety coverage, and
- guiding if required.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org

The use of a “sheep dog” launch depends on the athletes involved and the risks assessed. PRI athletes should always have safety launch cover within sight proceeding to and from the start.

Safety launches should be positioned close to the competitors and are strategically located along the Competition course with radio links.

It is suggested that individuals from the adaptive rower’s club may help crew a safety launch for the race. They may have practiced the water recovery protocol being employed. Other examples would be experience with a Neurodiverse rower or instructing a visually impaired individual during a race or following capsizing.

If “Race Guiding” has been agreed for safety or other reasons the Organiser **should** ensure this is in place on boating. Advice on Race Guiding is given in [RowSafe 4.8.3 Race Guiding](#).

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Take responsibility for themselves and others and understand how their actions could affect the safety of adaptive rowers.
- Understand what actions are required to keep adaptive rowers and themselves safe.
- Report any incidents or concerns about the safety of adaptive rowers.

Adaptive rowers

Adaptive rowers are expected to:

- Provide the competition with information about their impairment that may affect their own safety and the safety of others.
- Operate within their capabilities.
- Ask a competition official about any aspects of safety they are concerned or unsure about.



Provide the Competition Organisers with information on your impairment

© Richard Palmer

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org.

4.8. Adaptive Rowers at Competitions

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

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

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Ensure that the Competition Risk Assessment includes risk for adaptive rowers who participate in the competition.
- Define any additional Safety Rules required to keep adaptive rowers safe.
- Provide, in partnership with the entrant's club, any additional safety equipment or facilities required to keep adaptive rowers safe.
- Establish and practise procedures for managing incidents, including capsize, involving adaptive rowers.
- Ensure that sufficient and appropriate safety cover is available for adaptive rowers. (See [RowSafe 6.2.1 Rescue Provision for Adaptive Rowers](#)).
- Ensure that umpires, officials, boat drivers and other competition personnel are aware of any specific issues and know what to do in an emergency.
- Ensure that access arrangements for adaptive rowers participating in the competition are suitable and safe.
- Ensure that adequate medical support is provided for adaptive rowers.
- Ensure that coaches can maintain effective communication for adaptive rowers with a sensory impairment (visual, hearing impaired) who may require additional support using radio and/or signage as appropriate.
- Ensure that all safety boats have at least two crew. All crew members should wear a buoyancy aid or lifejacket, and one should be prepared to enter the water to affect a rescue.
- Ensure that all safety boats are on the water before adaptive rowers go afloat and ready for immediate use during rowing activities. Rigid inflatables with low freeboard or drop-nose safety boats are preferred.
- Make the Competition Safety Plan available to potential adaptive competitors, well in advance of the entry closing date. This can include items that help the adaptive rower to determine whether the event is likely to be appropriate (for example: the type of safety boat used) and determine whether additional safety provision is required.
- Hold discussions, prior to the draw, with the Adaptive Rower, their coach, and the Competition Rowing Safety Advisor (CoRSA). The CoRSA may include other members of the organising committee in these consultations as appropriate (e.g. Head of Race Committee, Welfare Adviser, etc). The outcome shall be a determination of risk and whether these can be mitigated within the existing safety plan or by additional protocols.
- Decide whether it is feasible to hold the proposed adaptive events safely. The final decision on acceptance of an adaptive entry is with the organiser. In most cases, a consensus is arrived at by the adaptive rower and the CoRSA. It is accepted that knowledge of the individual is with the athlete and their own club. The input of the adaptive rower's coach is usually an essential element of the risk and safety process; they will know what the person can and cannot do.
- Competitions should be aware that safety or other considerations (e.g. steering a Visually Impaired sculler) may require one or more launches to follow a race.

For adaptive rowers, Competition Safety Rules should include:

- Criteria for assessing risks associated with adaptive rowers.
- Actions to be taken in an emergency involving adaptive rowers, including capsize.
- If any additional plans are needed for one or some of the adaptive competitors, these should be agreed as early as practical and at least several days before the competition.
- These shall be documented and should be distributed to all individuals with a need to know or charged with delivering the additional safety protocols.
- The plan should include roles and responsibilities, a listing of the crews concerned and a definition of the additional protocols. It is suggested that all crews with an adaptive rower should be on the list even if they are not deemed to be at increased risk.
- The plan should confirm the process following an incident for the adaptive competitor is to be recovered all the way through to post-immersion procedures.
- The procedures for launching and recovering boats with adaptive rowers.
- Access arrangements for adaptive rowers.
- Provision for determining if on-the-day conditions are safe for a specific individual or for all adaptive competitors.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org.

It would also help if the competition organiser were able to: -

- Publish full details of adaptive events offered and standard safety plans more than a month prior to event.
- Ensure entrants have a clear method for highlighting any need for additional safety consideration to the competition.
- Suspend adaptive entries about 2 weeks before the competition to allow time for any additional protocols to be formulated.
- Prior to the competition ensure all relevant competition officials are aware of their roles and responsibilities and the procedures to be followed.
- Implement all agreed protocols at the competition.
- Report any incidents or concerns about the safety of adaptive rowers via the [British Rowing Incident Reporting System](#).

The process is a collaborative effort between the event and the entrant / club.

Officials

Race officials, umpires, launch drivers, safety boat crews and other personnel are expected to:

- Inform the Organising Committee of any incidents or safety concerns relating to adaptive rowers.
- Understand any additional Safety Rules relating to adaptive rowers.
- Be familiar with any additional safety equipment or facilities provided to keep adaptive rowers safe.
- Where boats are to be checked see [RowSafe 4.8.2 Boat Checking](#).
- Be familiar with procedures for managing incidents, including capsize, involving adaptive rowers.
- Be aware of any specific issues relating to adaptive rowers participating in the competition and know what to do in an emergency.

Participating Clubs

Officers of Participating Clubs are expected to:

- Advise the Organising Committee when an entry may require enhanced safety consideration. It is recommended this be done via BROE and by direct contact using the Competition email provided on BROE.
- Check that the Competition Safety Plan and Rules accommodate the needs of the club's adaptive rowers participating in the competition.
- Ensure that rowers with a lower leg prosthesis are able to release themselves from the prosthesis (or the prosthesis from the boat) in the event of an emergency.
- Brief adaptive rowers on the Competition Safety Plan and ensure that they understand how it relates to them.
- Check that equipment is both appropriate and safe when adaptations are made.
- Clubs entering will have risk assessed and have pre-defined protocols for each athlete with special recovery requirements. These should be provided to the Competition Organisers as they can form a useful basis to produce individual safety plan recovery protocols.

Please note an athlete's medical details are confidential and should only be discussed with those with a need to know.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Provide information to the competition organisers to help ensure that the Competition Safety Plan and Rules and Emergency Response Plan are appropriate for their participant.
- Discuss the contents of the Competition Safety Plan and Rules with adaptive rowers and ensure that they know what they should do in an emergency.
- Where appropriate maintain effective communication with rowers with a sensory impairment (visual, hearing impaired) who may require additional support using radio and/or signage as appropriate.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to competitions in their region on adaptive competitions.
- Review the arrangements for adaptive competitions and provide feedback.
- Give, or withhold, permission for the competitions to take place.

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.
- Provides advice on adaptive rowers.

Further Information

Further information will be provided to competitions if they complete the contact form here <https://www.britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/adaptive-rowing-support-for-clubs/>.

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Go Rowing - Adaptive Rowing - britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing
- Getting started - Adaptive Rowing - britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/getting-started
- Adaptive Rowing Classification - britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/classification
- Safety Alert - Adaptive Rowing Straps, britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Adaptive-Rowing-Straps.pdf
- Safety Alert – Coping with the behaviour of others, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Safety-Alert-Coping-with-the-behaviour-of-others-June-2023.pdf>
- [RowSafe 6.2](#) - Adaptive Rowers
- [RowSafe 6.2.1](#) - Rescue Provision for Adaptive Rowers at Clubs and Competitions
- [RowSafe 6.2.2](#) - Safety Launches and their Crews (for Adaptive Rowers)

Useful Websites

- Activity Alliance: www.activityalliance.org.uk/
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: <https://adhd.uk.co.uk/>
- British Blind Sport: www.britishblindsport.org.uk
- Cerebral Palsy Sport England & Wales: www.cpsport.org
- Down's Syndrome Sport: www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/our-work/services-projects/dsactive/
- LimbPower: www.limbpower.com
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- National Autistic Society - www.autism.org.uk
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB): <https://www.rnib.org.uk/>
- Special Olympics Great Britain: <http://www.specialolympics.org/>
- The British Dyslexia Association: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
- Tourette's Syndrome (UK) Association: <https://www.tourettes-action.org.uk/>

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org.

4.8. Adaptive Rowers at Competitions

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

RowSafe is a safety guidance document. Please read our safety message and disclaimer.

- UK Deaf Sport: www.ukdeafsport.org.uk
- SportExcel UK - <https://sportexceluk.org/>
- Adaptive Rowing UL - <https://adaptiverowinguk.com/>
 - see also [Myths of Adaptive Rowing](#) and [Not Myths of Adaptive Rowing](#).
- Canal and River Trust Boaters Handbook - canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/boating/go-boating/a-guide-to-boating/boaters-handbook
- Rowing on the Tideway - <https://activethames.co.uk/rowing>

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org.

4.8. Adaptive Rowers at Competitions

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

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

4.8.1. Classification and Event Types

There is information on Adaptive Rowing Classification here [Adaptive Rowing Classification - British Rowing](#) and in more detail here [Adaptive Classification](#).

Para-rowing – The “Para” classifications are determined internationally by the World Rowing and are required for most international competitions (e.g. Paralympics, World Cup, World Championships). There are 4 Para-rowing or “PR” classifications:

- PR1 – Rows in a fixed seat with fixed back due to degree of leg and core impairments.
- PR2 – Rows on a flat fixed seat due to degree of leg impairments.
- PR3 –PI Rows on a conventional sliding seat but has some physical impairments.
- PR3-VI – Rows on a conventional sliding seat with visual impairment and in international competition may wear black-out glasses to level to playing field on impairment degree.

Adaptive Rowing – In order to extend the inclusiveness of the sport, British Rowing introduced “Adaptive” classifications (AR1, AR2, AR3-PI, AR3-LI). These are for athletes who do meet PR requirements but have similar impairments.

AR0 Rowing – Another segment of disabled rowing is called mixed rowing which has no formal classification system. It is designed to cater for individuals with impairments that do not fit into the established para/adaptive categories. Examples include:

- Injuries
- Cognitive impairments (e.g. epilepsy, autism, intellectual impairment)
- Hearing impairment and deafness

Supported (Mixed Ability) Adaptive Crew Boats - A ‘supported double’ is a double scull with one adaptive rower and one non-adaptive rower. It is now the most popular boat class in community adaptive racing in the UK. The concept can extend to big boats. Some adaptive rowers are unable to row in a single or may choose “supported” as a competitive option.

Mainstream – Athletes with an impairment may enter mainstream events. These are, almost invariably, PR3/AR3 rowers.

4.8.2. Boat Checking

Adaptive boats may receive the same pre-race equipment checks (e.g. bow ball integrity) as conventional boats with the following added considerations:

An official may have limited or no experience with adaptive boat configuration. Asking questions of the adaptive rower may be an effective way of confirming the safety of adaptive configuration. If in doubt regarding the safety of a boat the official shall seek the advice of an adaptive coach.

- **Pontoon Safety Floats** – Floats are required for PRI/ARI competitors. Are optional for all other para and adaptive rowers and allowed by the rules of racing for all these rowers.
- **Foot stretcher** – PRI and ARI rowers should not have a foot stretcher that relies on heel-restraints as a method of release in the event of capsize, as they are likely to have little or nonfunction in their lower extremities (recommend nylon heel-cups). Modifications to the foot stretcher to facilitate a prosthesis (artificial limb) should allow the rower to leave the boat in the event of a capsize and should comply with British Rowing Safety Rules.
- **Body/Leg Strapping** – All strapping used by rowers should have no mechanical buckles and be released on the same side and in the same manner and direction. All leg/trunk strapping should be single-point release.
- **Hand Strapping** - All hand strapping should be able to be released immediately in a quick and safe manner.
- **Manual Inflation Life Jackets** – Any athlete who has incurred a seizure within the previous 12 months is required to wear a manual inflation life jacket (furthermore, such athletes may only compete in crew formats).

4.8.3. Race Guiding

Some singles races may require guiding during the race:

- Visually Impaired
- Cognitively Impaired
- Hearing Impaired

Guiding can be done either one of several places:

- Bank (usually with radio contact)
- Umpire Launch (guide sitting in launch)
- Special Guide Launch
- Guide scull

Guide commands can be communicated in a variety of means:

- Verbal
- Radio
- Remote Control (of rudder)

Guide commands need to conform to the British Rules of Racing with regards to prohibiting “coaching” during a race. As a result, permitted commands are meant to convey information that the athlete does not have available to them due to their impairments, but conventional rowers do, such as:

- Directions (e.g. left, right, stop)
- Distractions (e.g. motorboat approaching, wash)
- Position relative to competition

4.9. Touring

Many rowers just row for the delight of the experience of moving a boat efficiently over water. Some take this further and prefer to explore more distant waters and travel to less familiar places.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Ensure that they have the competence and are physically able to meet the stamina and fitness demands of the planned tour.
- Wear and carry clothes suitable for the weather conditions likely to be encountered during the tour.
- Not wear [Dryrobes](#), denims, jeans or heavy cotton clothing at any time when afloat.
- Not wear a hoodie when rowing or sculling as the thumbs tend to catch in the pocket, or when coxing in a bow-loader as it could become entangled and impede a rapid exit.
- Know when a lifejacket or buoyancy aid should be carried and worn and be familiar with fitting it.
- Bring boats suitable for the conditions and in accordance with organiser's directions
- Bring and carry safety equipment as specified in the Safety Plan e.g. paddles, boat hook, ropes, bailers, lifejackets/buoyancy aids.
- Check the boat and other equipment at the start of each day and ensure that it is in good condition.
- Take care of their own safety and that of their fellow rowers.
- Understand the Tour Safety Plan and Emergency Response Plan.
- Understand the route and any navigation hazards.
- Attend briefings as required. When acting as a "Boat Captain", cascade briefings to the crew.

Tour Organiser

Tour Organisers and Organising Committees are expected to:-

- Produce a risk assessment (see [RowSafe 4.1](#)) for the tour and ensure that all the Barriers (to reduce the probability) and Controls (to reduce the severity of harm) are in place.
- Have an Emergency Response Plan (see [RowSafe 4.3](#)) and a Safety Plan (see [RowSafe 4.2](#)) based on the risk assessment..
- Share the Risk Assessment, Emergency Response Plan and Safety Plan with the Regional Rowing Safety Adviser(s) and invite their comments.
- Ensure that appropriate safety equipment, as specified in the Safety Plan, is carried. This may include a First Aid kit, a tool kit, lifejackets for each member of the tour, a means of communication (mobile phone or radio), lights and any other equipment identified in the risk assessment.
- Ensure all participants are fully briefed on the route, likely conditions to be encountered, the clothing and equipment to carry and the Emergency Response Plan.
- Appoint "Boat Captains" as focal points for route and safety briefings in tours where there is more than one boat.
- Ensure the boats and equipment brought by participants are safe and suitable for the conditions likely to be encountered.
- If providing boats and equipment for participants, ensure that they are suitable and maintained in good order.
- Know how to transit through locks safely ([see below](#)), if appropriate, and be able to explain this to the members of the tour.
- Ensure that there is sufficient food and water for the participants.
- Encourage participants to eat, drink (hydrate), and dress appropriately.
- Plan the route and be aware of any hazards and all road access points.
- Ensure that the boats used are suitable for the tour.
- Ensure that the participants understand the plan for the tour.

Passage through Locks

The advice for passing through locks is: -

STAY VIGILANT This is the most dangerous part of any extended tour, and all rowers and coxes should be vigilant when in a lock to minimise risks.

- Remain vigilant whilst in the locks. It is not the time to relax and let go of the blades to fiddle with cameras, suncream or foot plates – all of that can be done once you are out of the lock
- Everyone should remain alert to possible dangers when boats are in the lock and ready to react quickly to avoid dangers
- Coxes should remind crews of how to behave as they go into the lock
- Crew should take their feet out of the straps when going into the lock
- When going downstream, check that the stern of the boat is well clear of the sill of the gate behind so that the rudder does not get caught
- Check that the bows of the boat are well clear of the gates and any obstructions on the sides of the lock
- Ensure that the blades do not get caught in ladders or other indentations on the wall of the lock as the water level changes
- Keep the blades flat on the water and under control
- Bear in mind that the force of the water entering or leaving the lock will move the boats forwards and backwards in the lock, as well as the level of the water changing, so keep checking for hazards
- If crowded, rafting up with adjacent boats may be useful
- If ropes are used, ensure they run freely around bollards and are long enough for the fall of the lock
- If you notice a problem, shout to the lockkeeper or the bank party so they can take appropriate action

When you are in the lock **EVERYBODY** in the boat has a responsibility to continually check that the bow, riggers, blades and rudder are free of hazards as the water level changes. The cox cannot see everything. If you spot a problem, alert the cox and the bank crew quickly.

All crew members should follow instructions from the cox save that in an emergency the bank leader may take over from the cox in directing the boats as the bank crew will have a better view of what is happening.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to Tour Organisers in their region on organising tours.

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

- [RowSafe 4.1](#) - Competition Risk Assessment
- [RowSafe 4.2](#) - Competition Safety Plans and Safety Rules
- [RowSafe 4.3](#) - Competition Emergency Response Plan
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Touring Rowing - britishrowing.org/go-rowing/types-of-rowing/touring-rowing
- Safety Alert – Do not wear a Dryrobe when afloat, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Safety-Alert-Do-not-wear-a-Dryrobe-when-afloat-March-2022.pdf>

5. Competence

Competence is task specific. People are competent to perform a task if, by virtue of their experience, education and training, they can perform the task to the required standard.

Safety comes from people knowing what they are doing and being careful not to do what they do not know how to do. It is an attitude of mind.

People's competence tends to expand with learning, experience and practice. It is the ability to manage this process that leads to safe behaviour. On the contrary, confidence without competence can lead to unsafe or at-risk behaviour.

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

5.1 [Steering and Navigation](#)

5.2 [Launch Driving](#)

5.2.1 [Recovering a person from the water into a launch](#)

5. Competence

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

5.1. Steering and Navigation

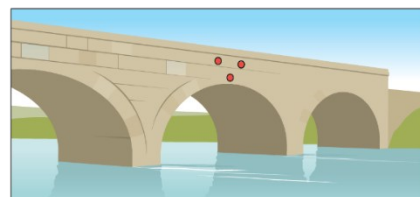
Most rowing accidents result from steering and navigation errors and these often result from lack of competence and lack of attention. Competence issues can be addressed by good coaching.

Expectations

Coxes and Steers

Coxes and steers (including scullers) are expected to:

- Always [keep a good lookout when afloat](#). Coxes who cannot see directly ahead should enlist the help of members of their crew. Steers should keep a good lookout over both left and right shoulders, perhaps assisted by a head mounted mirror or similar device.
- If the cox or steers does not know that the water ahead is clear then they should stop, or at the very least, slow down
- Review the relevant Rowing Coxing Workshop [here](#).
- [Check the steering equipment](#) before the outing as part of the boat checking procedure.
- Report any defects in steering equipment to the club responsible and quarantine the boat.
- Follow correct steering procedures and navigation rules as defined by the local navigation authority or the club.
- Communicate effectively with their crew.
- Pay attention and be aware of their position at all times in relation to circulation patterns, hazards and other water users.
- Inform the club of any change in the location or type of hazard encountered.
- Know how to stop the boat quickly and safely in an emergency as demonstrated [here](#) and [practise this skill with their crews](#).
- Where relevant, be aware of the Port of London Authority (PLA) guidance on [Rowing on the Tideway](#), and the Thames Regional Rowing Council (TRRC) requirements for [Steering on the Thames](#), if steering on the Tideway.
- Where relevant, be aware of the tidal information for rowers on the Tideway [here](#).
- Ensure that any voice projection equipment and deadweight is fixed to the boat, not to the cox.
- Wear a lifejacket, as a cox, at all times when afloat but not use an auto inflation lifejacket, or a buoyancy aid, in a bow loaded boat.
- Recognise and respect the rights and needs of other water users, especially anglers.
- Be aware of the effects of flow round [bends in rivers](#) and being [swept into danger](#).
- Watch out for swimmers at all times, even in areas where it is prohibited to swim and be alert to unexpected floating objects. [See Safety Alert - Look out for swimmers](#).
- Where there are motorised vessels, understand the [sound signals](#), [day shapes](#), [navigation marks](#) and, where appropriate, [lights](#) displayed by other vessels.
- Where a radio is carried, ensure that someone is competent to use it and knows which channels to use.
- Know how to describe the location of the boat to coastguard, RNLI or navigation authority.
- Report any transgression of navigation rules that they have observed to the club and to British Rowing.



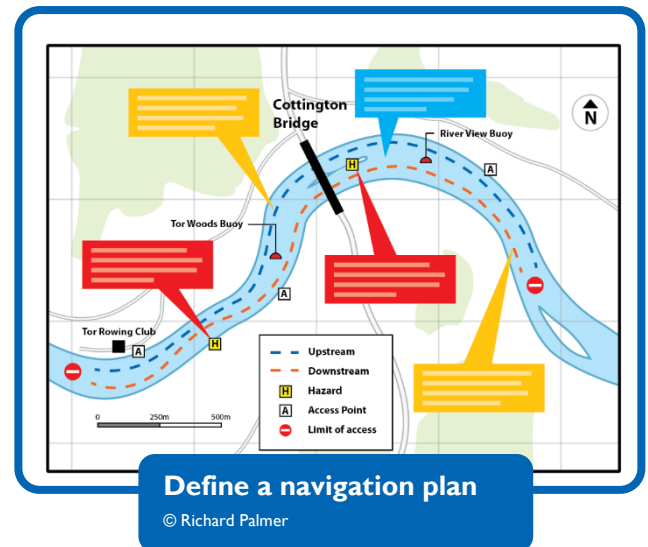
Follow correct navigation rules

© Richard Palmer

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Define a Navigation Plan, in consultation with [other water users](#) and the local navigation authority, as appropriate, this plan should show:
 - The navigation pattern.
 - All permanent hazards.
 - Sites of any potential temporary hazards – if appropriate.
 - Locations of emergency life belt sites and safety aids.
 - Sites of public telephones.
 - Easy access points for emergency vehicles where it is easy to get out of the water.
 - Sites where it is difficult, or impossible, to get out of the water.
- Display this plan prominently and ensure that all coxes and steerspersons are aware of it.
- Ensure that those who steer boats are familiar with the information on the local Navigation Plan.
- Check that people responsible for steering boats are in good health with adequate vision and hearing.
- Encourage people responsible for steering boats to abide by the Navigation Plan by providing positive consequences for those who do and negative consequences for those who do not.
- Ensure steering equipment is suitably maintained.
- Ensure that where there are motorised vessels, someone on the boat understands the [sound signals](#), [day shapes](#) and [navigation marks](#), where appropriate, [lights](#) displayed by other vessels.
- Where a radio is carried, ensure that someone in the launch is competent to use it and knows which channels to use.
- Ensure that someone on the boat knows how to describe the location of the boat to the coastguard, RNLI or navigation authority.



Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Provide information and training to crews on navigation, hazards and steering rules at all venues visited.
- Provide training to coxes and steers (see [Rowing Coxing Workshops](#)).
- Check that crews (and particularly those steering) know the location of all hazards and how to avoid them.
- Set a good example to crews when coaching.
- Inform the club of any change in the location or type of hazard encountered.
- Coach crews to stop the boat quickly and safely in an emergency as demonstrated [here](#).
- Be aware of the Port of London Authority (PLA) guidance on [Rowing on the Tideway](#), and the Thames Regional Rowing Council (TRRC) requirements for [Steering on the Thames](#), if coaching on the Tideway.
- Wear a lifejacket at all times when afloat.
- Report any transgression of navigation rules that they have observed to the club and to British Rowing.
- Ensure that where there are motorised vessels, someone on the boat understands the [sound signals](#), [day shapes](#) and, where appropriate, [lights](#) displayed by other vessels.
- Where a radio is carried, ensure that someone in the launch is competent to use it and knows which channels to use.
- Ensure that someone on the boat knows how to describe the location of the boat to the coastguard, RNLI or navigation authority.

Launch Drivers

Launch drivers (and Coaches when driving launches) are expected to:

- Be at least 18 years old unless accompanied by a responsible adult. See [Safety Alert - Children Driving Launches](#).
- Check the steering equipment before the outing as part of the boat checking procedure.
- Report any defects in steering equipment to the club responsible and quarantine the boat.
- Keep a good lookout in all directions at all times when afloat.
- Follow correct steering procedures and navigation rules.
- Pay attention and be aware of their position at all times in relation to circulation patterns, hazards and other water users.
- Inform the club of any change in the location or type of hazard encountered.
- Where relevant, be aware of the Port of London Authority (PLA) guidance on [The Tideway Code](#), and the Thames Regional Rowing Council (TRRC) requirements for [Steering on the Thames](#), and comply with the PLA requirements for Launch Drivers if driving on the Tideway.
- Where relevant, be aware of the tidal information for rowers on the Tideway [here](#).
- Report any transgression of navigation rules that they have observed to the club and to British Rowing.
- Be conversant with safety and rescue procedures in the case of accident.
- Wear a lifejacket at all times when afloat.
- Where there are motorised vessels, understand the [sound signals](#), [day shapes](#) and [navigation marks](#), and where appropriate, [lights](#) displayed by other vessels.
- Where a radio is carried, ensure that someone in the launch is competent to use it and knows which channels to use. Know how to describe the location of the boat to the coastguard, RNLI or navigation authority.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Provide participating clubs with clear information, including an annotated plan, showing the navigation rules for the competition. This should include warm-up and cool-down areas (see [RowSafe 4.5](#)).
- Encourage people responsible for steering boats to abide by the Navigation Plan by providing negative consequences for those who do not.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs and competitions in their region on steering and navigation.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides training on coxing and steering.
- 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

- [RowSafe 4.5](#) – Competition Navigational Arrangements
- Collision Avoidance video - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/collision-avoidance
- Safety Alert - Children Driving Launches, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-children-driving-launches-1.pdf>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- RNLI advice on lifejackets - <https://rnli.org/-/media/rnli/downloads/rnli-guide-to-lifejackets-and-buoyancy-aids.pdf?fd=true>
- Safety Alert - Look out for swimmers, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-look-out-for-swimmers.pdf>
- Joint guidance for Rowers and Paddlers on shared water - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Guidance-for-Rowers-and-Paddlers.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Flow round bends in rivers, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Safety-Alert-Flow-around-bends-in-rivers.pdf>
- Safety Alert - don't be swept into danger, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Safety-Alert-dont-be-swept-into-danger.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Back to Basics, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Safety-Alert-Back-to-Basics-.pdf>
- Rowing Coxing Workshops - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/index.php?categoryid=20>
 - Classic Coxing Rowing Coxing Workshop - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=102>
 - Fixed Seat Rowing Coxing Workshop - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=30>
 - Coastal Cox/Boat Captain Workshop - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=88>
- The Tideway Code - [Tideway_Code.pdf](#)
- [Tideway tide times and flag status](#) - British Rowing

Other

- Rowing on the Tideway - <https://activethames.co.uk/rowing>
- Steering on the Thames Certification - <https://www.thames-rrc.co.uk/steers-certification>
- Emergency Stop video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RBfl-O_AUo&feature=youtu.be
- Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGs) imo.org/en/About/Conventions/ListOfConventions/Pages/COLREG.aspx,
- Day Shapes - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day_shapes
- Sound signals - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkFhf9Cz68c>
- Navigation Marks - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYdED6cXtI&index=3&list=PLomvEgt6UAfE45FIqiSpr0_hxXlo-kbnf
- Lights on vessels - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-mgZHN7FKA>

5.2. Launch Driving

Risk assessment should be used to determine whether launches are required, in each specific circumstance, for safety purposes. For example, a risk assessment at a club may determine that a safety launch is not required to accompany the club senior eights but is required to accompany groups of junior scullers. Similarly, Competition Risk Assessments should be used to determine the requirement for safety launches, umpire's launches and other uses.

Launches may also be used primarily for coaching, but risk assessment may determine that even those that are used for coaching should be equipped so that they can perform a rescue.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Only drive a launch if they are competent, qualified and permitted by the club to do so.
- Report any incidents or poor practice with the club's launches to the club and to British Rowing.
- Wear a lifejacket whenever they are afloat in a launch.

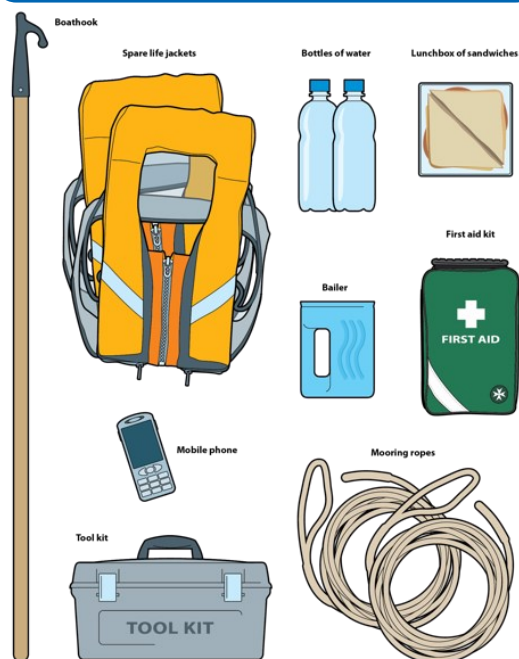
Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Identify those members and others who are permitted to use the club's launches.
- Maintain a register of people permitted to drive its launches.
- Ensure that everyone who is permitted to drive launches is competent and holds any qualification required by the host club, navigation authority or venue management. Many navigation authorities require RYA Level 2 Powerboat.
- Ensure that the level of qualification required is also determined by the Risk Assessment.
- Where a radio is carried, ensure that someone in the launch is competent to use it and knows which channels to use.
- Provide sufficient lifejackets for everyone who is likely to go afloat in its launches and require that they are used. Auto inflation lifejackets are preferred.
- Provide sufficient kill cords and safety kits (see [RowSafe 7.4.1](#)).
- Check the competence of its launch drivers from time to time.
- Periodically check that its launches are in good condition, including periodic motor checks (see [Safety Alert - Outboard Motor Safety checks](#)).
- Encourage launch drivers to check their launch prior to use (see [Safety Alert – Launch pre-use checks](#))
- Ensure that any launch that is not in good condition is quarantined so that it cannot be used.
- Where appropriate, ensure that each of its launches is identified with the three letter club code and three digit number as required in the British Rowing Rules.
- Periodically check that all its lifejackets are in good condition (see [Safety Alert - Lifejackets](#) and [Safety Alert - Check your lifejacket](#)).
- Ensure that each launch has effective and appropriate lights if it is used after dusk or before dawn.

Appropriate launches should be equipped to perform a rescue

© Richard Palmer



Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Ensure that the number and type of safety launches provided is sufficient to enable the Competition Safety Plan (see the [Competition Organisers' Manual](#)) to be implemented. The Competition Safety Plan should be based on the Competition Risk Assessment. . Safety boats should be dedicated to that purpose and not also used for umpires or marshalling.
- Where a radio is carried, ensure that someone in the launch is competent to use it and knows which channels to use.
- Identify those people who are permitted to drive the launches.
- Ensure that everyone who is permitted to drive launches is competent and holds any qualification required by the host club, navigation authority or venue management.
- Ensure that sufficient lifejackets are available for everyone who is likely to go afloat in its launches and require that they are used. Auto inflation lifejackets are preferred.
- Ensure that there are sufficient kill cords and safety kits (see [RowSafe 7.4.1](#)).
- Ensure that the launches are in good condition, including periodic motor checks (see [Safety Alert - Outboard Motor Safety checks](#)).
- Encourage launch drivers to check their launch prior to use (see [Safety Alert – Launch pre-use checks](#))
- Ensure that each launch has effective and appropriate lights if it is used after dusk or before dawn.



Launch Drivers

Launch drivers are expected to:

- Be appropriately competent to drive a launch correctly in the conditions that are likely to be encountered.
- Be at least 18 years old unless accompanied by a responsible adult. See [Safety Alert - Children Driving Launches](#).
- Check the launch prior to each use (see [Safety Alert – Launch pre-use checks](#) and [RNLI Outboard Pre-Start Checks](#)) and that the lights, if needed, are working correctly. Take care to check the steering and ensure that bungs etc. are correctly fitted.
- Always wear a correctly fitted lifejacket when afloat (see [Safety Alert - Lifejackets](#)).
- Always:
 - Carry a Safety Kit (see [RowSafe 7.4.1](#)) and paddle.
 - Use a kill cord correctly, (see the video [here](#)) and check that it works properly.
 - Carry an appropriate communication device.
 - Use the correct lights (see [Safety Alert - Launch Driving](#)).
 - Operate at a safe speed and keep wash to a minimum.
- Comply with the local navigation code and the Club Circulation Plan at all times.
- Keep a good lookout in all directions at all times when afloat and warn other water users of any hazards or developing hazardous situations.
- When necessary, instruct rowers in the water to climb on top of their inverted boat to facilitate their recovery into the launch as demonstrated in the [British Rowing Capsize and Recovery video](#).
- Ensure that the weight distribution and engine trim are such that the launch does not ride with the bows high.
- Be conscious of their wash and drive in a way that does not inconvenience other water users. See the [Safety-Alert-Consider-your-wash.pdf](#)
- Where a radio is carried, ensure that someone in the launch is competent to use it and knows which channels to use.
- Report any safety incidents both to the club or competition and British Rowing using the [Incident Reporting System](#).

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Keep a good lookout at all times when afloat and warn other water users of any hazards or developing hazardous situations.
- Remember that if you are driving the launch then your primary responsibility should be the navigation of your own vessel, and not the coaching or accompanying rowing vessels. If your role requires you to be primarily focussed upon coaching, then another helmsman should be sought who can focus upon the navigation of the launch.
- Report any safety incidents both to the club or competition and British Rowing using the [Incident Reporting System](#).

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Ensure that a sensible provision is made for safety and other launches in Competition Safety Plans.



Make sure you are appropriately qualified

© Richard Palmer

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides advice on launch safety.
- 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

- [RowSafe 7.4.1](#) - Launch Safety Kits
- Safety Alert - Outboard motor safety checks, [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Outboard-Motor-Safety-Checks.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Outboard-Motor-Safety-Checks.pdf)
- Competition Organisers' Manual - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/British-Rowing-Competition-Organisers-Manual-March2024.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Lifejackets - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf)
- RNLI advice on lifejackets - <https://rnli.org/-/media/rnli/downloads/rnli-guide-to-lifejackets-and-buoyancy-aids.pdf?fd=true>
- Safety Alert - Check your lifejacket, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-check-your-lifejacket.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Launch Driving, [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Launch-Driving.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Launch-Driving.pdf)
- Safety Alert - Children Driving Launches, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-children-driving-launches-1.pdf>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert – Launch pre-use checks, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Safety-Alert-Launch-pre-use-checks.pdf>
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)
- RNLI Outboard Pre-Start Checks - completeguide.rnli.org/outboard-pre-start.html
- RYA video on Kill Cords - <https://www.rya.org.uk/water-safety/kill-cord>
- Safety Alert Consider your Wash - [Safety-Alert-Consider-your-wash.pdf](#)

5.2.1. Recovering a Person from the Water into a Launch

Rowers who capsize are advised to climb on top of their inverted boats, as demonstrated in the [British Rowing Capsize and Recovery video](#). This makes it easier for them to transfer into the launch than it would be if they were in the water.

It helps if the launches carry boarding ladders or strops.

There is a video [here](#) showing three ways to recover a casualty into a RIB with two crew members. In all three examples the casualty is facing the launch.

The RNLI train their crews to position the casualty facing away from the launch and have two members of the lifeboat crew lift the casualty over the side of their inflatable boat.

The advice for solid hulled boats such as “tin fish” is, for a conscious casualty, stop and turn off outboard engine. The launch may need to deploy an anchor. The Anti-Cavitation plate on the outboard might be helpful as a step to allow a person to self-rescue over the transom. It may also be possible to recover the casualty over the bows using a boarding ladder.

In all other cases, the launch should provide the casualty with some method of flotation (life-ring), keep the casualty close and in contact and monitor their condition, call nearby vessels and/or 999 for assistance, and if possible, slowly make way to shore/shallows – recognising a moving propeller with a person in the water.

If a person is unconscious and in the water – it is an immediate 999 or VHF Ch16 MAYDAY call, keep their head above the surface even if recovery onboard is not possible.

These methods will work for single crewed launches. If there are two crew members in the launch then it may be possible to provide more support to the casualty but please remember the stability limitations of the launch. It does not help if the crew and the casualty are on the same side of the launch, and this causes the launch to capsize. Entry to the boat over the transom should always be considered.

There are sometimes alternatives to helping the rower to climb into a launch. It is possible to have the rower sit on their inverted boat, or in the water holding onto their boat, and then tow the boat to the bank. This can be done by driving the launch in reverse so as to keep the propeller away from the casualty. This works best when the water is not too cold.

6. People

Rowers and their clubs are expected to take responsibility for their own safety and that of others and Competition Organisers are expected to provide a safe environment in which rowers and others can enjoy their sport.

There are additional risks associated with some groups of rowers and these are covered in this chapter.

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

6.1 [People new to Rowing](#)

6.1.1 [Safety Advice for People new to Rowing](#)

6.2 [Adaptive rowers](#)

6. People

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

6.1. People new to Rowing

People who are new to rowing may not be aware of the hazards and risks associated with an activity and need additional support and supervision so that they can keep themselves and others safe.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Provide extra guidance and support for people who are new to the sport.
- Ensure that new rowers are not exposed to risks that they would find substantial or intolerable.

New Rowers

New rowers are expected to:

- Attend the club's Induction Programme and follow the advice and guidance in the Club Induction Pack (see [RowSafe 2.2](#)).
- Provide the club with relevant information such as [floating](#) and swimming and ability.
- Inform the club of any reason that they may be at risk due to current or previous illness or injury.
- Operate within their competence level by recognising their growing level of knowledge and understanding.
- Ask a coach or Club Official about any aspects of safety they are concerned or unsure about.
- Take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others affected by their activities.
- Be aware of key club and sport policies and rules and where to find them.
- Report incidents to the club and British Rowing.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that the Club Risk Assessment includes risks associated with new rowers.
- Provide an Induction Programme for new rowers. This should have an emphasis on safe behaviour.
- Explain the Club Safety Rules to new rowers.
- Ensure that all new rowers take part in the Club Induction Programme. The Club Induction Programme (see [RowSafe 2.2](#)) should include information about:
 - Local hazards, including weather conditions, and navigation rules
 - First Aid facilities and Emergency Response Plan
 - Club Safety Plan and rules
 - Safety aids
 - Clothing and hair
 - Cold water immersion and hypothermia
 - Club structure and communications
 - Boats – types, manual handling, boat checking and quarantining
 - What to do in the event of a capsize or man overboard
 - Incident reporting

- Ensure a higher level of care is promoted with beginners, [juniors](#), adaptive rowers and adults at risk.
- Support the principle that safety is everyone's responsibility.
- Encourage all members to set an example for beginners to follow.
- Ensure that sufficient coaches and safety cover are available to train and supervise new rowers.
- Make lifejackets available to all rowers and ensure that they are worn by people who cannot float and non-swimmers.
- Determine whether lifejackets should be worn by juniors who have not completed a capsized drill based on a risk assessment that includes the circumstances and their ability.
- Record personal information about the new rower including contact details, floating and swimming ability, emergency contact and parental or guardian consent for juniors.
- Provide advice on any health or injury issues that may affect their safety, particularly when rowing, or refer them to their medical professional as appropriate.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Ensure all rowers have an adequate Club Induction Programme - and check their understanding of what is expected of them.
- Set standards that rowers will follow - lead by example.
- Ensure a higher level of duty of care is promoted with beginners, juniors, adaptive rowers and adults at risk.
- Encourage new rowers to ask about anything they are unsure of.
- Encourage rowers to adopt safe behaviour (see Coaching Safe Behaviour, [here](#) for Level 2 Session Coach and [here](#) for Level 2 Club Coach)
- Provide advice on any health or injury issues that may affect their safety, particularly when rowing, or refer them to their medical professional as appropriate.
- Ensure that all beginner juniors use sculls with appropriate spoon size, blade length and handle size.
- Be prepared for people new to rowing to hesitate when given instructions, ensure that instructions are given clearly and in good time. See the Safety Alert – People new to Rowing may Hesitate [here](#).
- Ensure that people new to rowing and inexperienced rowers are kept well clear of obstructions and other hazards.
- Ensure that people new to rowing are supervised when afloat in small boats (1x, 2x, & 2-)
- Do not assume that people new to rowing will understand verbal explanations; give them the opportunity to practise.
- When mixing experienced and inexperienced rowers in a crew ensure that rowers of each type are well distributed within the boat.
- Teach people new to rowing not to let go of their handles when afloat.
- Take time to explain to people new to rowing what is going to happen and how they will be kept safe. Explain any terminology that may be used in the outing. Terms that others may feel are self-explanatory may be a complete mystery to a person new to rowing. Do not refer to "Bowside" and "Strokeside" in a sculling boat.
- Consider using the rowing technique information here [Rowing Training and Technique | British Rowing Plus](#) and here [Essential Sculling Technique for rowers - YouTube](#)
- Teach their rowers not to row away from the launch area until the coach is ready and instructs them to do so.
- Teach rowers to launch and land their boats with the bows pointed upstream.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on people new to 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.
- Provides the framework for Learn to Row courses.
- Provides coach education that helps coaches to support people new to rowing.
- Provides advice on adaptive rowing.

Further Information

- [RowSafe 2.2](#) - Make up of Club Induction Pack
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- British Rowing Youth Rowing Guidance - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/British-Rowing-Youth-Rowing-Guidance-2024.pdf>
- Coaching Safe Behaviour – Session Coach - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=148§ion=3>
- Coaching Safe Behaviour – Club coach - https://www.rowhow.org/pluginfile.php/52751/mod_resource/content/6/Coaching%20safe%20Behaviour%202019.pdf
- Safety Alert - Float to Live, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Safety-Alert-Float-to-Live.pdf>
- The science behind Float to Live - [The Science Behind Float To Live \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=The Science Behind Float To Live).
- Safety Alert - People new to rowing may hesitate, [Safety-Alert-People-new-to-rowing-may-hesitate-1.pdf](#)
- British Rowing plus technique library - <https://plus.britishrowing.org/category/training-and-technique/> .
- World Rowing animation - [Essential Sculling Technique for rowers](#).

6.1.1. Safety Advice for People new to Rowing

These are the 5 key things that new rowers should keep in mind.

1. If you do not know what to do, then do not guess; ask someone who does.
2. If you have any medical or fitness concerns, then talk to your coach or safety adviser.
3. If you cannot float or swim, then wear a lifejacket when afloat and know how to use it.
4. Do not do anything that would put yourself or anyone else at risk.
5. Be prepared for the activity that you are about to do, eat, drink (hydrate), and dress appropriately.

As a new rower, you are expected to:

- Attend the club's Induction Programme and follow the advice and guidance in the Club Induction Pack (see RowSafe [section 2.2](#)).
- Be aware of and comply with the club's safety rules.
- Provide the club with relevant information such as your floating and swimming ability.
- Inform the club of any reason that you may be at risk due to current or previous illness or injury; explain how the club can help you.
- Operate within your competence level by recognising your growing level of knowledge and understanding.
- Ask a coach or Club Official about any aspects of safety you are concerned or unsure about.
- Take responsibility for your own safety and the safety of others.
- Be aware of key club and sport policies and rules and where to find them.
- Report all incidents both within the club and to British Rowing.

Understand that everyone is expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own safety both on and off the water.
- Ensure that their actions both on and off the water do not put others at risk.
- Examine their own actions if they are involved in an incident and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Ensure that they have prepared for the activity that they are about to undertake, including having eaten appropriately and have sufficient drinking water.
- Avoid wearing loose clothing that can restrict the movement of the hands or can be snagged on equipment in the boat.
- Ensure that they are dressed appropriately for the conditions and that their hair, if long, is tied up into a bun or "top knot" such that it does not interfere with their rowing and cannot be entangled in the equipment in the boat. If the hair is long enough to plait, then reduce the risk and plait it or put it in a bun or top knot.
- Be aware of, and abide by, the Club Safety Rules.
- Follow the guidance in the Club Safety Plans.
- Report all incidents both within the club and to British Rowing.

6.2. Adaptive rowers

See also

- [RowSafe 3.9](#) - Adaptive Rowers at Clubs
- [RowSafe 4.8](#) - Adaptive Rowers at Competitions

There may be additional hazards and risks associated with adaptive rowers depending on the extent of their impairment. They may need extra guidance, support, and supervision and they may also need facilities or in additional equipment to those defined in a mainstream club or competition safety plan, to keep them and others safe.

Safety Plans, Rules and Emergency Response Plans should include any additional actions required to keep adaptive rowers safe. Clubs and competitions only need to review risk and take action for the adaptive rowers who row at their club or competition.

Many impaired athletes are no more vulnerable than their able-bodied counterparts and do not require special measures above those defined in a mainstream Club or Competition safety plan.

Not every athlete with a condition that makes them vulnerable is adaptive.

Special On Water Risks

- **Autonomic Dysreflexia** - This is a sudden increase in blood pressure and corresponding decrease in heart rate. The condition occurs in rowers with complete spinal injuries at T6 and above. It can occur anywhere within the rowing environment but is of heightened concern on water. Adaptive rowers predisposed to dysreflexic episodes should either carry relevant medication in a waterproof chest pocket or have declared the cause of such episodes during classification. Rowers, and their coaches, will be aware of symptoms and be able to use some form of signaling to the Rescue boat. If a rower suffers from Autonomic Dysreflexia, the emergency response is to raise the head above their knees (preferably in a sitting position). This position naturally reduces blood pressure. Look for the causes and seek medical help.
- **Epileptic Seizures** – Epilepsy is a syndrome rather than a disease. It presents in many different forms in different people. It is for this reason that the [guidance](#) also mentions “a special individualised risk assessment of the individual and the Competition”. “Competition” in this context could also be described as the venue and circumstances in which the person rows. Much of this personalised risk assessment should be based on information from the rower’s medical team on the probability of the rower having a seizure afloat and the type and severity of that seizure. The risk assessment may also include the steps that the rower, and their club, can take to minimise the harm that would result if the rower had such a seizure. This could include ensuring that they row in crew boats with people who are willing to support and assist them if needed.



Check equipment is suitable and safe when adaptations are made

© Richard Palmer

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org

Capsizes

All adaptive rowers are capable of self-rescue as a requirement for their general boating and training but their impairments may impose additional risks requiring support in the event of a capsized.

- **LTA-VI** – rowers may become disorientated in the event of a capsize. Safety teams should be aware of boats that contain visually impaired rowers and their seat position.
- **PR3/AR3-LI** – rowers may have an unpredictable response in the event of a capsize. Safety teams should be aware of boats that contain rowers with a learning disability and their seat position.
- **PR1/ARI** –
 - Extraction – PR1 capsizes are the most dangerous event in rowing due to the fact that
 - the athlete is highly impaired, and
 - the athlete is strapped in with up to 3 straps.
 - All PR1 athletes will be trained and tested in self-extraction in the event of a capsize and this remains the primary means of rescue. Due to minimal or lack of leg use and core capability, it is imperative that safety launches proceed as fast as possible to a PR1 capsize to extract the athlete from the water who has removed themselves from the boat. PR1 self-extractions should be maybe a few seconds slower than a conventional rower (which is typically almost immediate). If the athlete has not surfaced within a few seconds, the safety crew should immediately proceed into the water to assist extraction and affect rescue. The most rescue techniques are to:
 - attempt righting the boat (by standing on one rigger, reaching over to the other rigger across the hull and using all one's effort to leverage the athlete over...even if one cannot completely right the boat, the manoeuvre can often get the athlete's head above water to provide a breath and reduce stress), or
 - going underneath the boat to assist with the strap removal (or whatever is impeding the athlete from extracting themselves. At present the British Rowing advice is to attempt righting first, and then proceed to strap assistance. If the rescuer is having their own problems with the straps, they should immediately resort to using their safety knife to cut the straps.
 - **Cold water immersion** (hypothermia) – There is an increased risk for rowers who have thermoregulation dysfunction i.e. spinal cord injury. These rowers are unable to shiver to conserve heat at or below their injury level. Individuals can become poikilothermic (when the body assumes the temperature of its environment) very quickly, and safe and expedient removal from the water is essential.

There is more information at [PR1 capsize – Adaptive Rowing UK](#).

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Take responsibility for themselves and others and understand how their actions could affect the safety of adaptive rowers.
- Understand what actions are required to keep adaptive rowers and themselves safe.
- Provide support and guidance for adaptive rowers.
- Ensure that adaptive rowers are not exposed to risk that they would find substantial or intolerable.
- Report any incidents or concerns about the safety of adaptive rowers to the club and to British Rowing.

Adaptive rowers

Adaptive rowers are expected to:

- Provide their club with relevant information about their impairment that may affect their own safety and the safety of others and any known “warning signs”.
- Operate within their capabilities.
- Provide the club with emergency contact details and information about actions to be taken in event of a medical emergency.
- Ensure that if they have a lower leg prosthesis then they are able to release themselves from the prosthesis (or the prosthesis from the boat) in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure that any medicines that are needed are carried by the rower and that the people who are in a position to do so know how to find them and administer them.
- Ensure that their needs are included in the Club Safety Plan and Emergency Response Plan and, where appropriate, Competition Safety Plans, Emergency Response Plans and Alternative Arrangements Plans.
- Ask a coach or club official about any aspects of safety they are concerned or unsure about.
- Check that equipment is safe for them to use and report any defects.
- Seek additional medical advice when appropriate.

Carers

Carers are expected to:

- Attend initial discussions with the club and attend its induction programme.
- Ensure that the club, coaches and competition organisers are provided with relevant information relating to the impairment, warning signs and requirements.
- Ensure the club is kept up to date with any relevant changes in the impairment, requirements and emergency contact details.
- Understand the [Adaptive Rowing Safety Guidance for Event Organisers](#).

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Ensure an appropriate level of care is promoted for adaptive rowers.
- Encourage adaptive rowers to ask about anything they are unsure of.
- Provide advice on any issues associated with their impairment that may affect their safety, particularly when rowing, or refer them to their medical professional as appropriate.
- Identify ability and develop a needs analysis for each individual.
- Ensure that adaptive rowers understand how the Club’s Safety Plan and Rules apply to them.
- Use any specialist knowledge that they may have to assist the club and the athlete.
- Maintain effective communication with rowers with a sensory impairment (visual, hearing impaired) who may require additional support using radio and/or signage as appropriate.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org

- Understand the rower's impairment and know what action to take in an emergency and who to contact.
- With the rower's permission, communicate any information that affects safety to other rowers and coaches.
- Ensure that Competitions are informed whether, or not, Special Recovery Protocols are required for each adaptive rower.
- Check equipment is suitable and safe when adaptations are made for each adaptive rower.
- Seek advice on equipment that is suitable for each adaptive rower.
- Where appropriate, ensure that adaptive rowers understand how Competition Safety Plans, Emergency Response Plans and Alternative Arrangement Plans apply to them.

Further information is available by completing the contact form here <https://www.britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/adaptive-rowing-support-for-clubs/>

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs and competitions in their region on adaptive rowers.

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.
- Provides advice on adaptive rowing for clubs, competitions, coaches and rowers.

Further Information

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- [RowSafe 4.8](#) - Adaptive Competitions
- Go Rowing - Adaptive Rowing - britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing
- Getting started - Adaptive Rowing - britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/getting-started
- Adaptive Rowing Classification - britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/classification
- Adaptive Rowing support for clubs - <https://www.britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing/adaptive-rowing-support-for-clubs/>
- Club Adaptive Guide - Introducing and developing Adaptive Rowing at your Club- https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/British_Rowing_Adaptive_Rowing_Guide_61pp_v4_72ppi.pdf
- Safety Alert - Adaptive Rowing Straps, britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Adaptive-Rowing-Straps.pdf
- [RowSafe 3.9](#) - Adaptive Rowers at Clubs
- [RowSafe 4.8](#) - Adaptive Rowers at Competitions
- [RowSafe 4.8.1](#) - Classification and Event Types
- [RowSafe 4.8.2](#) - Boat Checking
- [RowSafe 4.8.3](#) - Race Guiding

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org

6.2. Adaptive Rowers

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

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

Useful Websites

- Activity Alliance: www.activityalliance.org.uk/
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: <https://adhd.uk.co.uk/>
- British Blind Sport: www.britishblindsport.org.uk
- Cerebral Palsy Sport England & Wales: www.cpsport.org
- Down's Syndrome Sport: www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/our-work/services-projects/dsactive/
- LimbPower: www.limbpower.com
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- National Autistic Society - www.autism.org.uk
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB): <https://www.rnib.org.uk/>
- Special Olympics Great Britain: <http://www.specialolympics.org/>
- The British Dyslexia Association: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
- Tourette's Syndrome (UK) Association: <https://www.tourettes-action.org.uk/>
- UK Deaf Sport: www.ukdeafsport.org.uk
- SportExcel UK - <https://sportexceluk.org/>
- Adaptive Rowing UL - <https://adaptiverowinguk.com/>
 - see also [Myths of Adaptive Rowing](#) and [Not Myths of Adaptive Rowing](#).

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org

6.2.1. Rescue Provision for Adaptive Rowers at Clubs and Competitions

Events for rowers who need adaptations are being increasingly integrated into rowing competitions. There has been some concern about Competitions having boats and competent people available that can be used to rescue rowers who use adaptations, should they need it. Many of these rowers are as capable of self-rescue as any able-bodied rower but some may sometimes need help.

The Basics - a little extra thought and preparation is needed

- People often make mistaken assumptions about the physical capabilities of adaptive rowers. “Adaptive” can, but does not necessarily, mean a “wheelchair user”. Innovative solutions to safety and other issues will have been identified by the athletes and their clubs.
- Many adaptive athletes do not require any safety measures above those defined in a mainstream event or club safety plan,
- The safety plan may have to be amended to allow for the special needs of some adaptive rowers. It is essential that every adaptive rower with such requirements has a clear Recovery Plan following capsized or injury.
- Clubs will have risk assessed and have pre-defined protocols for each athlete with special recovery requirements. These should be shared with competitions.
- The suitability of safety boat provision and the experience and training of those manning them should be assessed and deemed fully capable of implementing any special recovery plan.
- All officials and safety personnel **should** be made aware when a person with a non-standard recovery protocol is on the water (and off). Keeping the number of adaptive rowers on the water at the same time low is advised.
- The best persons to seek advice from are adaptive clubs and those clubs that have run successful adaptive Competitions.
- Experience has shown planning is everything and usually is not that complicated or onerous.
- It is important to share all relevant safety details with those entered. The athlete and club can then risk assess and determine that the arrangements meet the basic safety needs of that individual.

The Rescue

The two basic processes in rescue are: -

1. Establish the rower in a head above water position and
2. Extract the rower from the water

Once the first is achieved the second can be completed with appropriate care.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing adaptive rowing group adaptiverowing@britishrowing.org

6.2.2. Safety Launches and their Crews (for Adaptive Rowers)

The Rescue Boat

The stability of the Safety Boat is critical, as is the ease with which a casualty can be lifted into the boat. The preferred option is to use a boat with a drop front.

It may be possible also to use a boat that has a relatively low freeboard, rounded sides and is relatively stable. These include small Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIBs) and Rigidflex Newmatics (Jaffas). RIBs should not be too large as it could be difficult to lift a casualty into a large RIBs.

It may not be safe to use a catamaran launch or a “tin fish” due to their lack of stability. A catamaran launch may have high initial stability and easy access to the casualty, but their ultimate stability is limited. If two crew members stand on one side of the launch and lift the casualty, then it is likely to capsize.

Safety Boats attributes, ideally, should include the following:

- Low freeboard and/or drop-bow for safe rescue of adaptive rowers who are likely to have reduced mobility or muscle weakness in the lower extremities.
- Sufficient stability to allow safe recovery of people from the water.
- Easy manoeuvrability
- Low wash characteristics.
- Enough space to carry injured persons lying down to safety.
- Standard British Rowing safety equipment onboard including *** Ref Launch Equipment section ***
 - ‘horseshoe life ring’
 - ‘safety knife’
 - radio.
- Recorded maintenance and service history.

The Rescue Crew

Whatever type of boats are used, it is important that they have sufficient crew, with appropriate skills and equipment, to effect a rescue. It may be necessary to have people competent and equipped to enter the water to provide support.

Consider the number of people on the safety boat, and their training, at least two rescuers are needed to move a person into the boat. The number of crew members will depend on the individual risk assessment.

The Helm should not be considered as part of the vessel’s Crew. The two people required to lend assistance should be in addition to the Helm, otherwise the vessel is not in control. This will impact on the size of the safety boat needed.

Consider the difference in response of conscious and unconscious rowers. Having quick release Velcro strap fastenings should be effective if the rower is conscious but will not be effective if the rower is unconscious. At least one member of the safety boat crew should be trained and equipped to use a safety knife to cut the straps, they may be required to enter the water to do so.

Consider the number of rowers that the crew of a safety boat can effectively supervise, and within what distance.

Competition organisers should ensure that there are an adequate number of safety boats with recommended launch rescue kit.

Each safety team should keep good communication using VHF radios on dedicated channel.

7. Equipment

There are hazards and risks associated with equipment and some equipment is used to reduce risk. These are covered in this chapter.

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

- 7.1 [Boats and Blades](#)
- 7.2 [Transport and Trailers](#)
- 7.3 [Safety Aids](#)
- 7.4 [Launches](#)
 - 7.4.1 [Launch Safety Kits](#)

7. Equipment

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

7.1. Boats and Blades

Equipment Checklist

A thorough [boat and equipment](#) check includes the following:

- No visible signs of damage to the hull, for example scrapes or cracks.
- Buoyancy compartments, seals, hatch covers, boat hull and ventilation bungs are secure and watertight. Buoyancy Bags are fully inflated and installed if no under-seat buoyancy compartments are fitted.
- Bow ball is in good condition and securely fixed (where the construction of the boat, or its composition, is such that the bow is properly protected or its shape does not present a hazard in the event of a collision, then this requirement need not apply).
- Fixing screws or bolts do not represent a hazard in the event of an accident. Any sharp protrusions should be covered or removed.
- In all boats the foot stretchers, shoes or other devices holding the feet of the rowers shall be a type which allows the rowers to get clear of the boat with no delay in an emergency.
- Heel restraints are strong, secure and durable and the correct length (laces and cable ties are not appropriate). See [Safety Alert – Heel Restraints](#).
- Shoes shall be in good condition so that they do not break or become partially detached from the boat in the event of a rower trying to remove their feet during a capsized.
- The shoes are the correct size for the rower and will not hold the rowers feet too tightly.
- Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will remain in the boat, each shoe or device shall be independently restrained such that when the heel reaches the horizontal position the foot will be released from the shoe.
- Shoe fastenings such as laces or Velcro or similar materials should not be too tight and **should** be able to be released immediately by the rower with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap.
- Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will not remain in the boat, each shoe or device **should** be able to be released by the rower without using their hands or with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap or release device
- No part of the rigger, or any other structure, restricts the ability of rowers to remove their feet from the shoes in an emergency.
- Rudder lines, steering mechanisms and rudder (where fitted) and fin, are secure and in good working order.
- Outriggers, swivels, gates, seats, runners and stretchers are secure and operating correctly and show no signs of cracking or fatigue.
- The forward port and starboard rigger on all boats, other than single sculls, should be protected by a [backstay](#). See [Safety Alert - Backstays](#).
- Thole pins are in good condition, correctly placed (hard forward, soft astern) and spares are carried.
- Self-bailers (if fitted) are secure and working correctly.
- Blades are undamaged and buttons are secure and properly set.
- The boat is suitable for the situation in which it is to be used, for example maximum crew weight.
- Lighting, if required, is suitable for the outing and working correctly (see [Safety Alert - Lights on Rowing Boats](#)).
- Consider the use of “splash boards” if the water conditions are difficult.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand that equipment with defects can cause accidents.
- Know how to check equipment.
- Routinely [check equipment](#) prior to each use.
- Only use equipment that is in good condition.
- Routinely check equipment after each use.
- Report any defects found to a coach or other appropriate Club Official.
- Not wear [Dryrobes](#), denims, jeans or heavy cotton clothing at any time when afloat.
- Not wear a hoodie when rowing or sculling as the thumbs tend to catch in the pocket, or when coxing in a bow-loader as it could become entangled and impede a rapid exit.



Know how to check the equipment you are using

© Richard Palmer

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Provide storage for boats and equipment in an orderly fashion, in well-lit premises where possible, to minimise damage to people or other equipment.
- Provide information to members on how boats should be checked (see [Safety Alert - Check your boat before you go afloat](#)).
- Ensure that all boats have sufficient buoyancy and provide extra buoyancy if needed.
- Ensure that the cox's area of bow loaded boats has no protrusions or other obstructions that would catch on the cox's lifejacket straps, or clothing, or hair in such a way that it could impede their exit from the boat. Also ensure that the straps and clothing are adjusted so that they will not catch on any part of the boat.
- Ensure that coxes in bow loaded boats do not wear any clothing that could affect their ability to rapidly exit the boat in the event of a capsize.
- Keep a record of the manufacturer / supplier's information regarding the inherent buoyancy of the boat.
- Maintain all equipment in good working order and suitable for the conditions in which it will be used.
- Require members to report any damage to boats and equipment to a responsible official without delay.
- "Quarantine" a damaged boat or piece of equipment, with the nature of the damage clearly marked, and ensure that it is not used.
- Ensure that any damage to boats or equipment is repaired before the boat or equipment is used again.
- Ensure that all incidents are reported to British Rowing using the [Incident Reporting System](#).



Maintain all equipment in good working order and suitable for the conditions in which it will be used

© Richard Palmer

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Coach others on:
 - The need to check equipment.
 - How to check equipment.
 - What to do if defects are found.
- Ensure that equipment is checked prior to it being used.
- Ensure that equipment is checked after it has been used.
- Ensure that quarantined equipment is not used.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Inform participating clubs of the arrangements for boat checking.
- Facilitate boat checking prior to launch.
- Ensure that the results of Control Commission Checks are collated and returned to the Regional Rowing Safety Adviser.
- Ensure that all significant defects are reported using the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Maintain records of Control Commission Checks within its region.
- Advise clubs of, and provide recommendations on, reported non-compliance.
- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on boats and blades.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.
- Provides safety training material on its website, [including training on how to check boats](#).
- Provides courses that include safety.

Further Information

- Safety Alert - Lights on Rowing Boats, britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Lights-on-Rowing-Boats.pdf
- Safety Alert - Check your boat before you go afloat, britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Check-Your-Boat-Before-You-Go-Afloat.pdf
- Boat Safety Checks - <https://youtu.be/jv294UHbj0s>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Correct fitting of a WinTech Quick Release Wing Rigger - britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WinTech-Quick-Release-Wing-Rigger-Fitting-2.pdf
- FISA's Minimum Guidelines for the Safe Practice of Rowing - Section II A Safe Rowing Equipment - worldrowing.com/mm/Document/General/General/10/90/86/Minimum_Guidelines_for_Safe_Rowing_English.pdf
- British Rowing guidance on backstays, <https://www.britishrowing.org/2013/06/a-safety-update-for-rowers-and-coaches/>
- Safety Alert – Backstays, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Safety-Alert-Backstays-.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Do not wear a Dryrobe when afloat, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Safety-Alert-Do-not-wear-a-Dryrobe-when-afloat-March-2022.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Heel Restraints, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Safety-Alert-Heel-Restraints.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Back to Basics, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Safety-Alert-Back-to-Basics-.pdf>

7.2. Transport and Trailers

The club risk assessment can be used to identify the hazards associated with the use of vehicles and trailers by the club. If these risks are overlooked, then the results can be significant.

Expectations

Everyone

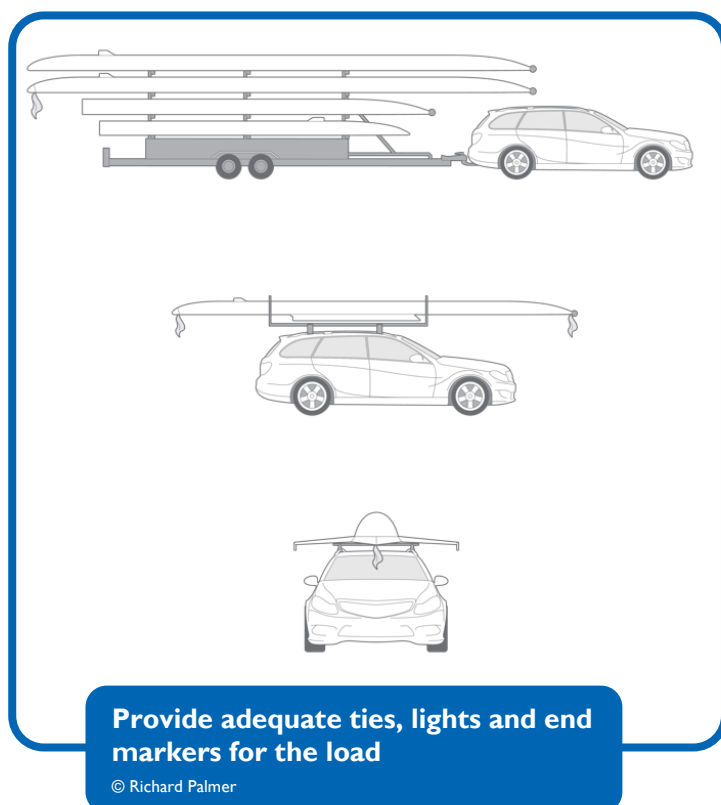
Everyone is expected to:

- Follow the club's guidance on loading the trailer.
- Take care when handling boats and loading a trailer.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that any vehicle or trailer used by the club is maintained in a roadworthy condition. See [Safety Alert – Check your trailer](#).
- Ensure that trailers are correctly labelled with the Maximum Allowed Mass (MAM), tyre pressures and jacking points.
- Confirm that all drivers have the appropriate vehicle licence and insurance for the trailer type, length and load.
- Provide information on towing and loading the trailer (see leaflet – [Guidance for Transportation of Oar Propelled Racing Boats](#)).
- Ensure that the risks associated with loading and trailing boats are included in the club's Risk Assessment and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risk to an acceptable level.
- Provide adequate ties, lights and end markers for the load, ensure that the ties are in good condition.
- Provide spare bulbs, spare wheel, jack and tools for changing a wheel.
- Provide an assistant who can help the driver with navigation, manoeuvring and emergencies.



The value of the boat, and the cost of repair, is much greater than the cost of good straps. It is false economy to save money on straps. There is further advice on load securing [here](#)

Trailer Towing Vehicle Drivers and Minibus Drivers

Drivers are expected to:

- Have the appropriate licence and insurance for the vehicle and trailer .
- Understand the regulations and responsibilities of trailer towing and minibus driving.
- Plan the route so as to avoid areas and times where conditions are likely to be difficult.
- Use towing mirrors if the trailer is wider than the towing vehicle
- Be aware of the reduced speed limits when towing
- Give way to pedestrians as specified in the [Highway Code](#), (see rule 204)
- Obtain assistance from a person outside the vehicle where the space around the trailer is restricted.

- If towing, then before each trip, check:
 - The nose weight of the trailer
 - That the trailer is correctly loaded
 - That the ties are in good condition and that the load is secure
 - The lights, brakes, safety chain and jockey wheel
 - That the towing bracket and its fixings are in good condition
 - The weather forecast and road conditions
- Ensure that the straps used to secure equipment to trailers and roof racks are in good condition and tensioned correctly. Any loose ends should be tied in so that they do not become trapped (e.g. under a wheel) and cause damage.
- Carry the equipment that would be needed to replace a wheel at the roadside, this should include: -
 - Hi Vis vests for all occupants of the vehicle.
 - A method of lifting the trailer to remove and replace wheels.
 - The tools needed to remove and replace the wheel.
 - A replacement wheel with a correctly inflated tyre in good condition.
 - A torch in case of an incident happening in darkness.
 - A robust warning triangle, which stays in place.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Ensure that members know how to load and check the trailer.

Competition

Competition Organisers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Ensure there is easy access and adequate parking for towing vehicles and trailers.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on transport and trailers.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides advice and guidance on the loading and towing of rowing boat trailers.
- 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

- Guidance for the Transportation of Oar Propelled Racing Boats Leaflet - britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TowingGuidance.pdf?ef682d
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- DVLA Driving a Minibus Leaflet - www.gov.uk/driving-a-minibus
- Safety Alert - Trailer oscillations when towing - britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-2014-Trailer-Towing.pdf
- Safety Alert – check your trailer, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Safety-Alert-check-your-trailer.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Check your tow bar, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Safety-Alert-Check-your-Tow-Bar-April-2021.pdf>
- Demonstration of the effects of trailer weight distribution on stability - [7 trailer weight scenarios compared - results may surprise \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7trailerweightscenarioscomparedresults)
- Information on Securing loads - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/securing-loads-on-hgvs-and-goods-vehicles/2-load-securing-the-basics>
- The Highway Code - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code>
- DVSA Guidance on trailer checks - [Tow a trailer or caravan with a car: safety checks - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tow-a-trailer-or-caravan-with-a-car-safety-checks)
- British Standard BS EN12195-2:2001 (Load restraint assemblies on road vehicles. Safety – web lashing made from man-made fibres)
- The Highway Code - <https://www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/>

Advice on towing abroad is available from:

- The Caravan Club - caravanclub.co.uk/overseas-holidays/advice-and-information
- The AA - www.theaa.com/driving-advice

7.3. Safety Aids

Safety aids, such as lifejackets, throw lines and emergency ponchos, can save lives. It is essential that they are readily available and maintained in good condition, and that everyone knows how to use them correctly.

The effectiveness and importance of safety equipment is described in the [Safety Alert - Safety equipment can save your life](#).

Lifejackets

Manual inflation life jackets are only appropriate for anyone who, if they enter the water, is likely to be conscious and capable of actuating them. If they, or the water, is very cold then this could be a problem. If a person panics when they enter the water and tries to swim (rather than actuate the lifejacket) then they are at serious risk.

If a person knows that they are about to enter the water then it is best to inflate the lifejacket before they do so. This will help them to keep their head above the water.

If there is a problem with spray, etc. causing an auto-inflation lifejacket to inflate then consider using a lifejacket with a hydrostatic actuator. These work the same way as an automatic lifejacket (with a dissolving pellet) but the pellet is protected by a case that only lets water in once it is a few centimetres under water. It will not fire unless fully submerged. Both types of auto-inflation lifejackets can be inflated by pulling the toggle.

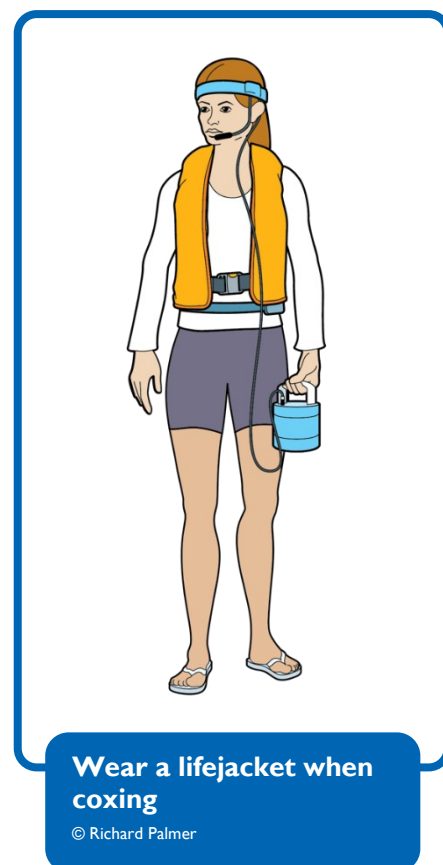
Lifejackets do not last forever. The time after which lifejackets expire depends on their type and usage: foam life jackets typically have a lifespan of 10 years for leisure purposes, while an inflatable lifejacket lifespan is around 5 - 8 years depending on its usage. The carbon dioxide cartridge may have a use-by date depending on the manufacturer. You will find more information [here](#).

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Know how to use the club's safety aids.
- Follow the club's rules on their use.
- Wear a lifejacket when coxing, in a launch or as required by the club or a coach. Coxes in bow-loader boats **should** wear a manual inflation lifejacket.
- Not wear an inflatable lifejacket under any other garment.
- Check the lifejacket before use and ensure that it is fitted correctly. See [Safety Alert - Lifejackets](#).
- Report any safety equipment that is damaged, missing or deployed within the club.
- Wear a lifejacket if:
 - They cannot float or swim.
 - They are juniors who have not completed a capsized drill if a risk assessment determines that this is appropriate.
 - Because of a medical condition, there is a risk that they may become unconscious or immobile whilst afloat.
- Wear or carry a lifejacket if rowing in a gig or other fixed seat boat (coxes should always wear a lifejacket).
- Report any incidents involving safety aids to the club and to British Rowing.



Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Use the Club Risk Assessment and Safety Plan to determine the type and quantity of safety aids (such as lifejackets, throw lines, lifeguard tubes, and emergency ponchos) for the needs and size of the club.
- Provide and maintain safety aids (see [RYA - How to wear a lifejacket correctly](#)).
- Provide training to club members in the use of safety aids including the use of crotch straps on lifejackets.
- Ensure that safety aids are readily available to members and are stored correctly.
- Make lifejackets available to all rowers and ensure that they are worn by people who cannot float or swim.
- Determine whether lifejackets should be worn by juniors who have not completed a capsize drill based on a risk assessment that includes the circumstances and their ability.
- Implement a procedure to manage damaged, missing or deployed safety aids.
- Review the requirements for, and the use of, safety aids and implement any changes in their type or use.
- Check lifejackets for leaks, damage and gas cylinder integrity at regular intervals (at least once a year) and record the results (see [Safety Alert - Lifejackets](#) and [Safety Alert - Check your lifejacket](#)). They should last up to ten years if well looked after. There are references [here](#) and [here](#).
- Provide a boat safety kit for each rowing boat as determined by the risk assessments. See [RowSafe 10.2.1](#) Gig and Other Fixed Seat Rowing Boat Safety Kit.



Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Set an example by following the club's procedures on the use, maintenance and storage of safety aids.
- Train participants in the correct usage of safety aids including the use of crotch straps on lifejackets.
- Make lifejackets available to people who cannot float or swim and participants who are nervous about the water.
- Ensure that the straps on cox's lifejackets cannot become entangled with fittings in the boat.
- Ensure that buoyancy aids and auto inflation lifejackets are not used by coxes in bow loaded boats. Coxes in bow loaded boats should use manual inflation lifejackets.
- Carry a throw line and practise using them, as demonstrated in the British Rowing [Man Overboard and Recovery](#) video.

Competition

Competition Organisers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Provide sufficient lifejackets and other safety aids to officials and those involved in running the competition.
- Ensure that people wearing lifejackets provided by the Competition Organisers know how to fit them correctly, including the use of crotch straps on lifejackets, and know how to use other safety aids.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs and competitions in their region on Safety Aids.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.
- Provides safety training material on its website.
- Provides courses that include safety.

Further Information

- Safety Alert – Lifejackets, [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf)
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)
- Safety Alert - Check your lifejacket, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-check-your-lifejacket.pdf>
- RNLI Guidance on Lifejackets - <https://rnli.org/-/media/rnli/downloads/rnli-guide-to-lifejackets-and-buoyancy-aids.pdf?fd=true>
- Safety Alert - Safety equipment can save your life, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Safety-Equipment-can-save-your-life-1.pdf>
- RYA - How to wear a lifejacket correctly - [youtube.com/watch?v=NNfXMLG5pI4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNfXMLG5pI4)
- British Rowing Man Overboard and Recovery video - youtu.be/G5xQIJGhaAM?t=458 video
- Lifejacket Lifespan - <https://lifejacketsafety.com/how-to-tell-if-a-life-jacket-is-expired/>

7.4. Launches

Launches should be properly maintained and used “within their capabilities”. Some launches are intended as coaching launches but can still be used as a safety launch providing launch drivers and crew understand what to do and providing that the boats are suitable for the conditions in which they are used.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Follow the club’s guidance on using a launch.
- Take care when using a launch.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that any launch, including its motor, used by the club is [maintained in good working order and safe condition](#).
- Ensure that any launch that is not fit for use is labelled and quarantined so that it will not be used until it has been repaired.
- Ensure that the maximum load is known and adhered to.
- Define procedures for recovering rowers.
- Provide information on the safe use of the launch.
- Encourage launch drivers to check their launch prior to use (see [Safety Alert – Launch pre-use checks](#)).
- Ensure that the risks associated with using a launch are included in the club’s Risk Assessment and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risk to an acceptable level.
- Provide a kill cord and safety kit for use in the launch (see [RowSafe 7.4.1](#)).
- Provide spare parts for the maintenance of the launch.

Launch Drivers

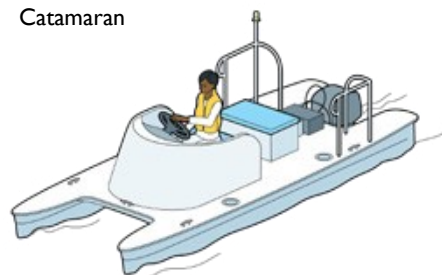
Launch drivers are expected to:

- Wear a [correctly fitted lifejacket](#) whenever afloat and ensure that all the crew of the launch do so.
- Before each use, check that:
 - [The launch](#), including [the motor](#) and the motor controls are in good condition before starting to use it.
 - There is adequate fuel for the outing.
 - **The fuel tank cap is correctly fitted and the vent is open.**
 - The engine is secure and properly mounted.
 - The kill cord mechanism is working correctly, check that the motor stops when the kill cord is removed.
 - The safety kit is on board.
 - If necessary, the lights are working at the required level of brightness.
 - If a radio is carried, it is charged and tuned to the correct channel.
 - The weight distribution and engine trim are such that the launch rides level with the water and that the bow does not rise appreciably when the launch accelerates.
- If a radio is carried, ensure that someone in the launch is competent to use it and knows which channels to use.
- Report any defects or problems.

Aluminium launch



Catamaran



RIB



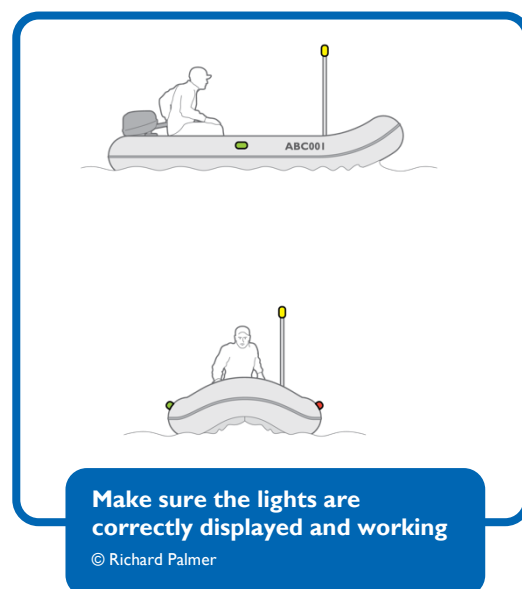
Ensure you are using a launch suitable for the conditions

© Richard Palmer

Competition

Competitions and Competition Organisers are expected to:

- Ensure that any launch used by the competition is in good working order and safe condition.
- Ensure that the maximum load of the launches is known and adhered to.
- Define procedures for recovering rowers.
- Provide information on the safe use of the launches.
- Encourage launch drivers to check their launch prior to use (see [Safety Alert – Launch pre-use checks](#))
- Ensure that the risks associated with using a launch are included in the Competition Risk Assessment and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risk to an acceptable level.
- Provide kill cords and safety kits for use in the launches (see [RowSafe 7.4.1](#)).
- Ensure that there is adequate fuel for the competition.



Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs and competitions in their region on launches.

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.

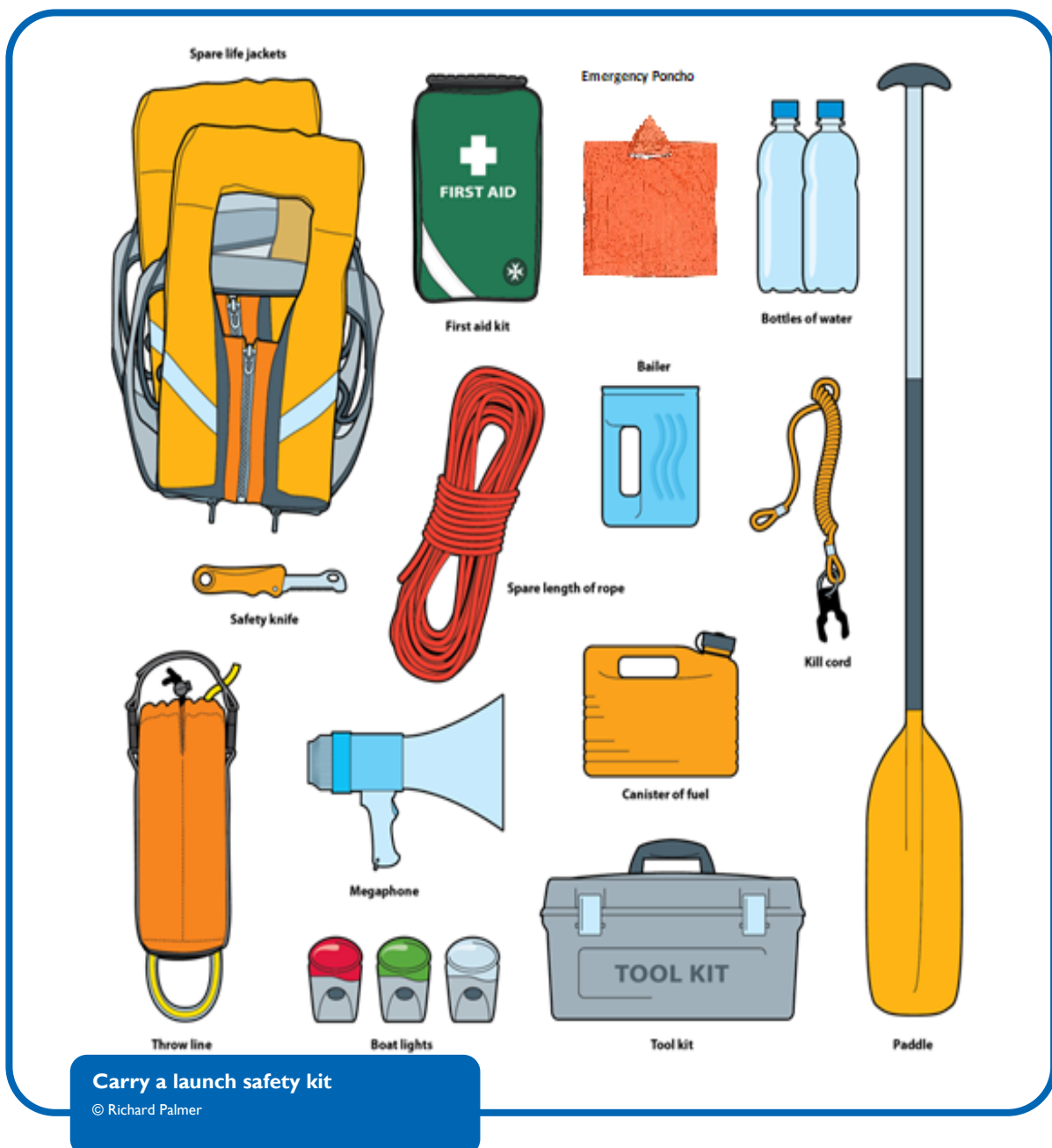
Further Information

- Safety Alert - Outboard Motor Safety Checks - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Outboard-Motor-Safety-Checks.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Outboard-Motor-Safety-Checks.pdf)
- [RowSafe 7.4.1](#) - Launch Safety Kits
- Safety Alert - Lifejackets - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf)
- Safety Alert - Check your lifejacket, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-check-your-lifejacket.pdf>
- RNLI Guidance on Lifejackets - <https://rnli.org/-/media/rnli/downloads/rnli-guide-to-lifejackets-and-buoyancy-aids.pdf>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert – Launch pre-use checks, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Safety-Alert-Launch-pre-use-checks.pdf>
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)

7.4.1. Launch Safety Kits

It is recommended that the following equipment should be included in a Launch Safety Kit.

- A First Aid kit in a waterproof bag, checked monthly.
- A throw line or equivalent grab line.
- A serrated safety knife with rope cutter.
- Enough survival equipment or 'Bivvi bags' for the launch's passenger capacity. (Note: Foil blankets tend to keep cold people cold and are not recommended.) Search the internet for "foil lined emergency poncho UK".
- Sufficient lifejackets for the maximum number of passengers and crew.
- A spare kill-cord for crewman or passenger in case the driver falls overboard.
- A spare length of rope.
- A bailer.
- A paddle.
- Fire extinguisher.



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

- A boarding ladder to help rowers in the water to climb into the boat unaided.
- A toolkit including spares for rowing boats (such as spanners, nuts and washers, and cord).
- A minimum toolkit and spares for the engine.
- An anchor and line appropriate for the water and weather conditions but try to avoid anchoring in a fairway.
- A communications device such as a waterproof VHF radio transceiver or mobile phone in a waterproof pouch, tied to a person and not to the boat.
- A boathook.
- An audio signalling device: air horn, loudhailer or megaphone.
- A pump for the sponsons (buoyancy chambers) plus a spare valve, valve cap, and a repair kit for inflatables or Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIBs).
- Spare fuel.
- Simple handholds on the side of the launch to provide assistance to anyone being rescued or for the driver if they fall overboard.
- Spare lifejackets, spare fuel tank (open water use), and alternative means of propulsion adequate for the expected conditions, in-date flares, maps, navigation aids or GPS system.
- Suitable lights in low visibility conditions.
- Life raft (valise) able to hold the appropriate number of people and suitable for inshore use.
- Rescue tube - an approximately 1 metre long, high-buoyancy foam tube developed for water rescue or other flotation device capable of supporting a casualty in the water.
- Ladder, rope sling, or similar equipment to help when retrieving a casualty from the water into the boat.
- Rescue strop for pulling the casualty up a steep or vertical bank.
- Sea anchor to prevent the launch drifting with the wind; this could be a canvas bucket on a rope.
- Searchlight with a beam strong enough to locate a casualty at night.

8. Health

In general, rowing delivers many health benefits but there are some hazards and risks that **should** be assessed and managed. This chapter explains some of these hazards and risks and provides guidance on how to deal with them.

However, the effectiveness of general guidance is limited and should never be used as a substitute for individual guidance from a medical specialist.

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

- 8.1 [Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia](#)
- 8.2 [Sunburn, Heat Illness and Exhaustion](#)
- 8.3 [First Aid](#)
- 8.4 [Waterborne Infections and Diseases](#)
- 8.5 [Concussion](#)
- 8.6 [Coping with Illness and Diseases](#)
 - 8.6.1 [Common Illnesses](#)
 - 8.6.2 [Chronic Conditions and Diseases](#)
 - 8.6.3 [Asthma](#)
- 8.7 [What To Do If Someone Collapses](#)

There is further health information on the British Rowing website here [Athlete Health - British Rowing](#).

This includes: -

- [Supporting Positive Mental Health - British Rowing](#)
- [Rowing and Backs - British Rowing](#)
- [Rowing and Epilepsy - British Rowing](#)
- [Rowing and Pregnancy - British Rowing](#)
- [Rowing and Water-borne Disease - British Rowing](#)
- [Blister tips for rowers | British Rowing Plus](#)
- RED-S or Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport - [British-Rowing-RED-S-Infographic.pdf \(britishrowing.org\)](#) and
- [British-Rowing-RED-S-Infographic.pdf](#).

8. Health

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

8.1. Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia

No matter how good a floater or swimmer you are, sudden unexpected immersion in cold water can cause an initial cold shock that affects muscular co-ordination and impairs the ability to float or swim. Heat loss from immersion can quickly cause hypothermia. Any of these factors can lead to drowning. Everyone has a responsibility to assess and manage the risk of immersion in cold water and to know what to do if it occurs.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Have studied the effects by completing the British Rowing [Cold Water & Hypothermia](#) online learning module and reading the [Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills](#).
- Know and watch for the symptoms of mild hypothermia (such as complaints of feeling cold and tired, poor comprehension, disorientation, poor concentration, irrational behaviour, violent outbursts and confusion).
- Understand the effects of cold water immersion and hypothermia.
- Be prepared for those effects if immersed in cold water.
- Wear clothing appropriate to the conditions (see [Keep warm](#) and [Rowing Coxing Workshops](#) for those people who are involved in coxing).
- Not wear [Dryrobes](#), denims, jeans or heavy cotton clothing at any time when afloat.
- Not wear a hoodie when rowing or sculling as the thumbs tend to catch in the pocket, or when coxing in a bow-loader as it could become entangled and impede a rapid exit.
- Report incidents to the club and British Rowing.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that the risks of cold-water immersion and hypothermia are included in the club's Risk Assessments.
- Provide members with information about cold water immersion and hypothermia.
- Provide facilities for the initial treatment of hypothermia.
- Include hypothermia in their Emergency Response Plan.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Know and watch for the symptoms of severe hypothermia (such as shivering, pale, blue lips and nails, rapid breathing, wheezing and coughing, fast pulse and slurred speech).
- Know how to respond if they detect any of these symptoms.
- Set an example by always wearing clothing appropriate to the conditions (see [Keep Warm](#)).
- Ensure that their coxes wear clothing appropriate to the conditions.
- Ensure that they are equipped to deal with people with hypothermia.



Wear clothing appropriate to the conditions

© Richard Palmer

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Ensure that the risks of cold water immersion and hypothermia are included in the competition's Risk Assessments.
- Provide officials, umpires, launch drivers, safety boat crews, other personnel and participants with information about cold water immersion and hypothermia.
- If appropriate, provide facilities for the initial treatment of hypothermia.
- If appropriate, include hypothermia in their Emergency Response Plan.

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.
- Provides advice and training materials on cold water immersion and hypothermia.

Further Information

- Cold Water & Hypothermia online learning module - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=165>
- Keep Warm Safety Article - britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Keep-warm.pdf
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Cold-Water-Kills-1.pdf>
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Safety Alert – Do not wear a Dryrobe when afloat, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Safety-Alert-Do-not-wear-a-Dryrobe-when-afloat-March-2022.pdf>
- Cold Water shock - [Professor Mike Tipton on Cold Water Shock \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- The science behind Float to Live - [The Science Behind Float To Live \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).
- Cox Training Handbook - [Classic Rowing Coxing Handbook v1.2.pdf \(rowhow.org\)](https://www.rowhow.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Classic-Rowing-Coxing-Handbook-v1.2.pdf)
- Rowing Coxing Workshops - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/index.php?categoryid=20>
- Classic Coxing Rowing Coxing Workshop - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=102>
 - Fixed Seat Rowing Coxing Workshop - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=30>
 - Coastal Cox/Boat Captain Workshop - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=88>

8.2. Sunburn, Heat Illness and Exhaustion

Prolonged exposure to sun can cause sunburn or skin damage at any time of the year, not just in the summer. The body produces a lot of heat when exercising. When dehydration occurs, body temperatures can rise to levels that cause heat illness (hyperthermia).

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand the effects of hyperthermia (heat illness and heat exhaustion) and sunburn (see [Avoiding Heat Illness](#) in the coaching course material [here](#) and [NHS - Heat exhaustion and heatstroke](#)).
- Be prepared for those effects if exposed to heat or sun. See [Safety Alert – How to stay safe whilst rowing in the sun](#) and [Safety Alert – Avoiding and treating Heat Exhaustion](#).
- Use a high factor sunscreen and wear clothing appropriate to the conditions.
- Carry drinking water and remain hydrated.
- Observe fellow rowers and watch out for signs of hyperthermia or sunburn (see under “Coaches” below).

Club

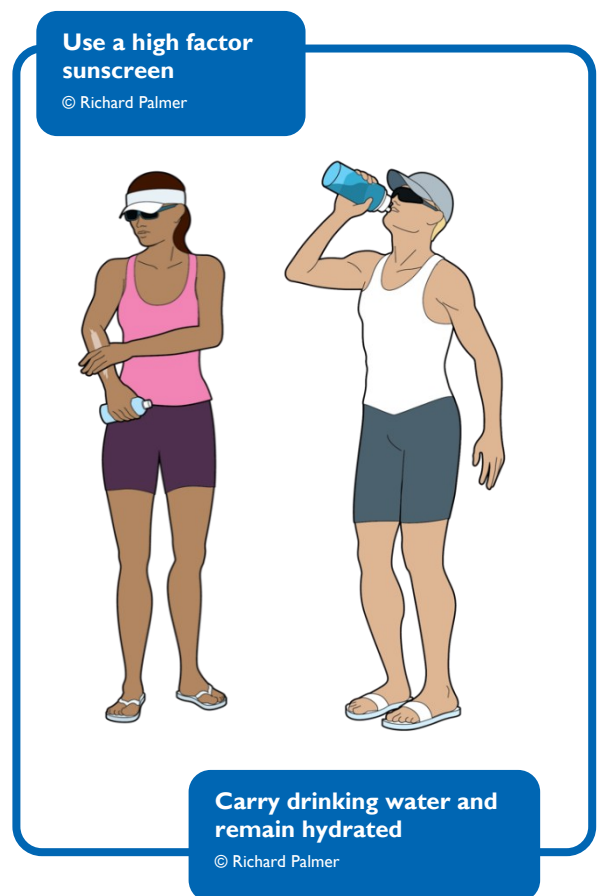
Club Officers are expected to:

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

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Have read [Avoiding Heat Illness](#) and have studied the effects.
- Know and watch for the symptoms of heat exhaustion (such as high levels of fatigue/tiredness, dizziness, nausea/vomiting, chills or shivering, fast weak pulse, clammy cool skin, appearing pale, numbness or tingling in head, neck, back or hands).
- Know and watch for the symptoms of heat illness (such as confusion/lack of mental clarity, inability to hold a conversation, bizarre behaviour, hot, red skin, fainting, headache, rapid strong pulse and sweating). See [Safety Alert – How to stay safe whilst rowing in the sun](#) and [Safety Alert – Avoiding and treating Heat Exhaustion](#).
- Know how to respond if they detect any of these symptoms.
- Set an example by always wearing sunscreen and clothing appropriate to the conditions.
- Ensure that their crews wear sunscreen and clothing appropriate to the conditions.
- Ensure that their crews remain hydrated and take breaks and rest in the shade.
- Ensure that they are equipped to deal with sunburn and heat illness and exhaustion.
- Consider rescheduling outings to cooler parts of the day.



Competition

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 Response Plan.
- Provide First Aid facilities.
- Ensure that sufficient drinking water is available.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides information about the causes, effects and symptoms of sunburn and heat illness in relation to rowing.
- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.
- Provides safety training material on its website.
- Provides courses that include safety.

Further Information

- Coaching Coach course material - Avoiding Heat Illness - https://www.rowhow.org/pluginfile.php/52750/mod_resource/content/6/Avoiding%20heat%20illness%20v2.1.pdf
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- NHS Choices - Heat exhaustion and heatstroke - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/>
- NHS Choices - Heat exhaustion and heatstroke, signs and symptoms - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/-signs-and-symptoms>
- NHS Choices - Heat exhaustion and heatstroke, what to do - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/#things-you-can-try>
- NHS Choices - Heat exhaustion and heatstroke, when to get medical help - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/#when-to-get-medical-help>
- Safety Alert – How to stay safe whilst rowing in the sun, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Safety-Alert-How-to-stay-safe-whilst-rowing-in-the-sun.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Avoiding and treating Heat Exhaustion, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Safety-Alert-Avoiding-and-Treating-Heat-Exhaustion-July-2022-2.pdf>

8.3. First Aid

Many of the provisions identified in the Risk Assessments are means of reducing the probability of a hazardous event occurring, but it is also appropriate to make provisions to reduce the severity of harm should a hazardous event occur. First Aid is one of the most commonly used of those provisions.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Report any injuries to First Aiders or Club Officers.
- Report any deficiencies in First Aid cover or problems summoning emergency assistance to the club.
- Report First Aid and medical incidents to the club and to British Rowing.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Use the Club Risk Assessment to define the requirements for First Aid provision. Factors to be considered include:
 - Location of the club for example, remote or in a built-up area, easy or difficult access.
 - Type and extent of boating area.
 - Potential hazards such as obstructions, weirs, sluices and limited access points.
 - People, for example number of members, age and rowing experience.
 - Hazards in other club facilities such as kitchen or workshop.
 - Travel time to the nearest hospitals with an A&E Department or Minor Injuries Unit and type of cover offered.
 - Details of the service provided by the local NHS ambulance service (this varies from region to region).
 - Availability of other rescue services such as air ambulance and lifeboat.
- Clearly display the information that is needed for a 999 call, including: -
 - The location (e.g. map reference, what3words, postcode).
 - Phone number.
 - Access point.
 - Sending person to meet the Ambulance.
- Include First Aid provision in the Club Emergency Response Plan (see [RowSafe 3.3](#)), brief members on the content and make the plan available.
- Ensure that the club has sufficient First Aiders and that adequate First Aid cover is available during all club activities.
- Make provision for people suffering from mild hypothermia (people with severe hypothermia should be taken to hospital).
- Keep a record of coaches and other members who hold a First Aid qualification and encourage First Aiders to keep their qualification up to date.
- Prominently display a list of qualified First Aiders (with photos if possible).
- Provide sufficient and clearly marked First Aid kits in easily accessible areas of the club premises. Each kit should contain a list of contents.
- Regularly check contents against the list of contents, record and date the inspection and replenish supplies.
- Ensure that all launches carry a First Aid kit and sufficient emergency ponchos for the crews concerned.
- Maintain adequate supplies of First Aid consumables and equipment (including emergency ponchos) in good condition.
- Consider providing Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) technique training to all club members. There is online training material [here](#).
- Consider providing an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) in the club.
- Clubs with AEDs should share information about the locations and access codes with other local clubs

- Clubs with AEDs should ensure that they are maintained in good condition and that they are registered with [the Circuit](#).

Note - The Circuit is the national defibrillator network and provides the NHS ambulance services with vital information about defibrillators across the UK so that in those crucial moments after a cardiac arrest, they can be accessed quickly to help save lives. It also provides information to help members of the public to access an AED. If the Club is not willing to provide its AED for 'public access', then they may not wish to register.

It should be remembered that when opening an AED use for public access:

- There is no guarantee that it will be returned
- If the AED is used, then the club will be responsible for replacing the pads etc.

Coaches

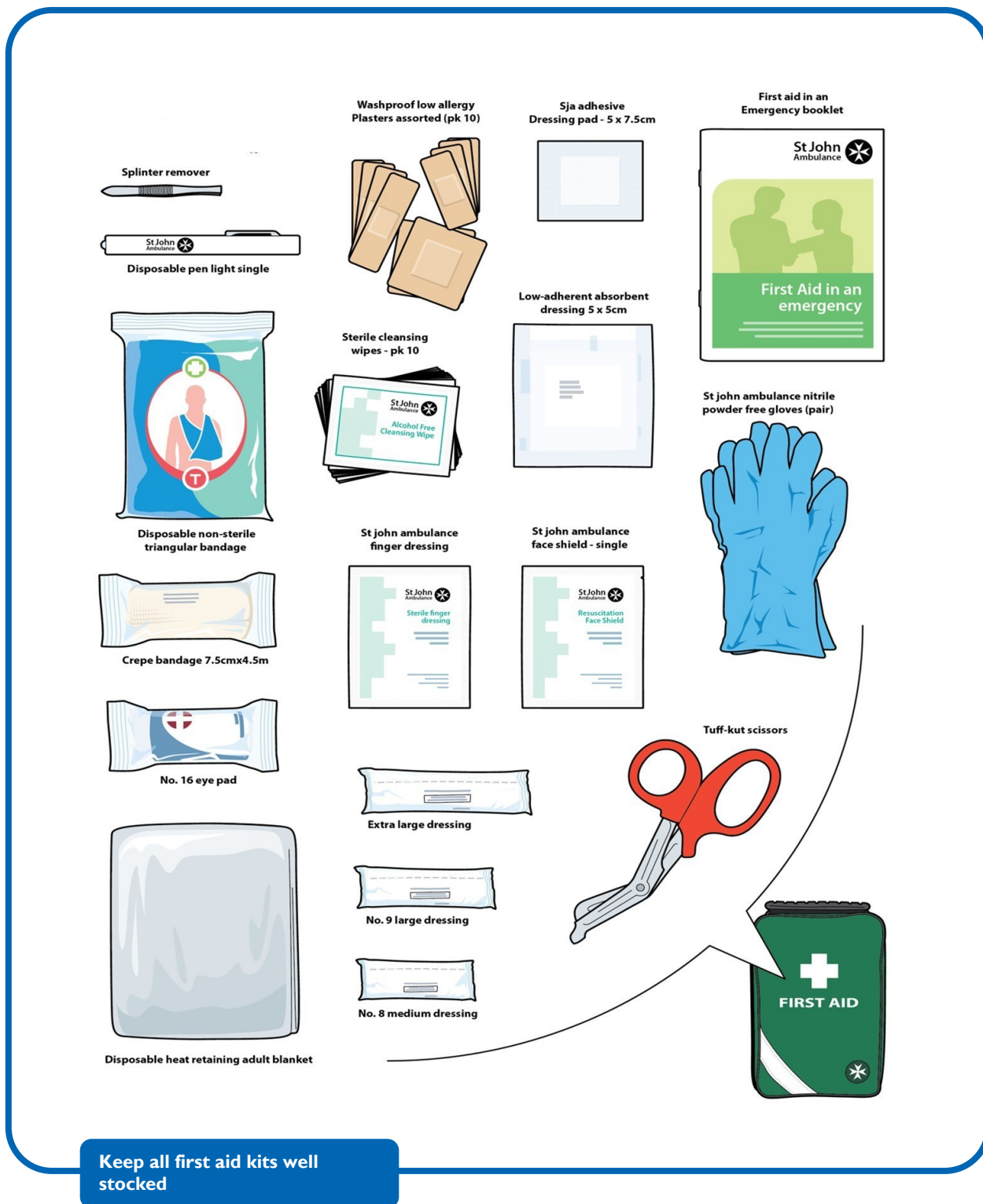
Coaches are expected to:

- Keep their First Aid qualification up to date by attending a First Aid course at least every three years.
- Be competent and confident to deliver Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).
- Encourage members to report First Aid and medical incidents in the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Ensure that rowers know where the First Aid kits are kept and which members are qualified First Aiders.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Use the Competition Risk Assessment to define the requirements for First Aid provision. Factors to be considered include:
 - Location of the competition, for example, remote or in a built-up area, easy or difficult access.
 - Extent of boating areas and type of race such as large head race or short, contained regatta.
 - Potential hazards such as cold or hot weather, capsizes and limited access points.
 - People, for example number of competitors (age and rowing experience), spectators and supporters.
 - Hazards in other competition facilities such as catering.
 - Travel time to the nearest hospitals with an A&E Department or Minor Injuries Unit and type of cover offered.
 - Details of the service provided by the local NHS ambulance service (this varies from region to region).
 - Availability of other rescue services such as air ambulance and lifeboat.
 - First Aid Point(s) - How many and where should they be positioned; how First Aiders will be identified.
- Include First Aid in the Competition Emergency Response Plan (see [RowSafe 4.3](#)), brief participants and make it available to all involved in the competition.
- Ensure that the competition has adequate First Aid cover. The appropriate level of cover may include the appointment of a Medical Officer or the provision of an ambulance or paramedics.
- Make provision for people suffering from mild hypothermia (people with severe hypothermia should be taken to hospital).
- Where First Aid cover is provided by a third party, agree the scope of the cover to be provided.
- Provide information and signage to ensure that competitors and spectators are aware of the location of the First Aid facilities.
- Ensure that all launches carry a First Aid kit and sufficient emergency ponchos for the crews concerned.
- Where possible, undertake a rescue scenario with the rescue crews, marshals and Umpires prior to the start of competition.



Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to competitions in their region on first aid cover.
- Review the First Aid cover as part of the Competition Emergency Response Plan and provide feedback.
- Give, or withhold, permission for the competition to take place.

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.
- Provides advice on First Aid training.
- Provides an [Competition Organisers' Manual](#).

Further Information

- [RowSafe 3.3](#) - Club Emergency Response Plan
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- [RowSafe 4.3](#) - Competition Emergency Response Plan
- Competition Organiser's Manual - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/British-Rowing-Competition-Organisers-Manual-March2024.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Staying Alive, [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Safety-Alert-Staying-Alive-FINAL.pdf?78251f](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Safety-Alert-Staying-Alive-FINAL.pdf?78251f)
- Cardiac Arrest Care in Rowing - [britishrowing.org/2018/05/cardiac-arrest-care/](https://www.britishrowing.org/2018/05/cardiac-arrest-care/)
- A guide to Automated External Defibrillators - https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/AED_Guide_RCUK.pdf
- Safety Alert – Automated External Defibrillators, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Safety-Alert-Automated-External-Defibrillators-1.pdf>
- The Circuit (registration of Defibrillators) - <https://thecircuit.uk/>

Other

- HSE Basic advice on first aid at work - [hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.pdf](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.pdf)
- HSE First aid at work leaflet (See page 2 for First Aid kit contents) - [hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg214.pdf](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg214.pdf)
- Royal Life Saving Society - [rlss.org.uk](https://www.rlss.org.uk)
- British Red Cross - [redcross.org.uk](https://www.redcross.org.uk)
- St John Ambulance - [sja.org.uk](https://www.sja.org.uk)
- There is online training material at <https://www.resus.org.uk/apps/lifesaver/>

St John Ambulance publishes First Aid videos that provide some information on specific subjects. These do not constitute formal training, but they may be of use either as a reminder, or in preparation for more formal training. The videos include: -

- [How to do the Primary Survey](#)
- [How to do CPR on an Adult](#)
- [The Recovery Position](#)
- [How to treat severe bleeding](#)
- [How to treat shock](#)
- [How to treat an asthma attack](#)
- [How to use a Defibrillator \(AED\)](#) 9 years ago
- [What to do if someone has a stroke](#)
- [What to do if someone is choking](#)
- [What to do if someone has a spinal injury](#)
- [How to bandage a sprain](#)

- [What to do if someone is having a diabetic emergency](#)
- [How to help someone who has fainted](#)
- [What to do if someone has a seizure](#)
- [How to treat a fracture and fracture types](#)
- [How to help someone with a head injury](#)
- [How to treat heat stroke](#)
- [How to treat heat exhaustion, signs and symptoms](#)
- [How to treat frostbite](#)
- [How to help someone having a heart attack](#)
- [Hyperventilation First Aid | St John Ambulance](#)

also

- [How to treat drowning and](#)
- [Agonal breathing in cardiac arrest](#)
- [Panic Attacks: How to Help | Mental Health First Aid](#)
- [Panic disorder - NHS](#)

There is also the [life-saver app](#).

8.4. Waterborne Infections and Diseases

Diseases can be caused by waterborne infectious agents such as bacteria or viruses or contracted due to exposure to other contaminants in the water. These can include, for example, algal blooms, jelly fish (at sea), faecal matter and chemical contamination.

The Rivers Trust has issued a Sewage map that shows where the sewerage network discharges treated sewage and overflows of untreated sewage and storm water into rivers in England & Wales in 2023. This is available here [Raw sewage in our rivers | The Rivers Trust](#). The Rivers Trust has also published a report entitled the [State of our Rivers](#).

Water pollution is often worse after heavy rains. According to Meteorological Office projections ([UK and Global extreme events – Heavy rainfall and floods - Met Office](#)) “Climate projections indicate that on average, winters will continue to become wetter and summers drier, though natural variability will mean we will continue to see individual years that don’t follow this trend.”

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Read and understand any information on waterborne infectious agents and contamination provided by the club.
- See their own doctor 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.
- Cover all cuts or grazes with waterproof dressings if the water is contaminated.
- Wash or shower after any significant contact with water from the river, lake, canal or sea especially if they have any exposed cuts or grazes.
- Never drink water from sources such as rivers, lakes, canals or sea.
- Wash hands thoroughly before eating or drinking.
- Clean open wounds, such as blisters or calf abrasions with an anti-bacterial substance.
- If contaminated water has been swallowed, refer to their doctor with full details of the incident.
- Wear suitable footwear when launching or recovering a boat, particularly if it is necessary to wade into the water, to prevent direct contact with the water and protect the feet from cuts and abrasions.
- Wash all equipment after outings to remove any potential contamination, take particular care to wash oar handles.
- [Report incidents](#) to the club and British Rowing.

If you have been splashed by water that could be contaminated, then: -

- Personal hygiene is an important part of the preventative strategy. So, taking a shower, or at least washing hands and face will lower ingestion rates. Washing down boats and oars will also lower the spread of infection.
- This is in addition to skin, blister, cuts, and graze care.
- Observe proper hand hygiene (with or without blisters). Cover blisters, cuts and grazes and treat them so that they heal and do not become infected. If the blisters are red or weeping, do not row until they have healed. If you have blisters make sure that you wash the handle of any blade you have rowed with so as not to pass on infection.
- There is “Guidance on Rowing when the Water Quality is Poor” [here](#) and Guidance on Rowing and Water-borne Disease [here](#)

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Determine the extent to which the waters that they use may be infected with relevant bacteria, viruses or other agents (the Local Authority Environmental Health office and the local Water Authority may be able to help).
- Include these risks in the club's Risk Assessments.
- Provide information (such as posters) to members as appropriate. This information should include:
 - Precautions to be taken to avoid exposure.
 - Early signs and symptoms of any relevant disease so that early medical intervention can be sought.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Be aware of the extent to which their participants are at risk of contracting a disease associated with a waterborne cause.
- Bring information about the risks and appropriate actions to the attention of participants.
- Monitor the behaviour of any persons at risk and ensure that they act appropriately.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Determine the extent to which the waters that they use may be infected with relevant bacteria, viruses or other agents (the Local Authority Environmental Health office and the local Water Authority may be able to help).
- Include these risks in the competition's Risk Assessments.
- Provide information (such as posters) to umpires, officials, launch drivers, safety boat crews, other personnel and participants as appropriate. This information should include:
 - Precautions to be taken to avoid exposure.
 - Early signs and symptoms of any relevant disease so that early medical intervention can be sought.

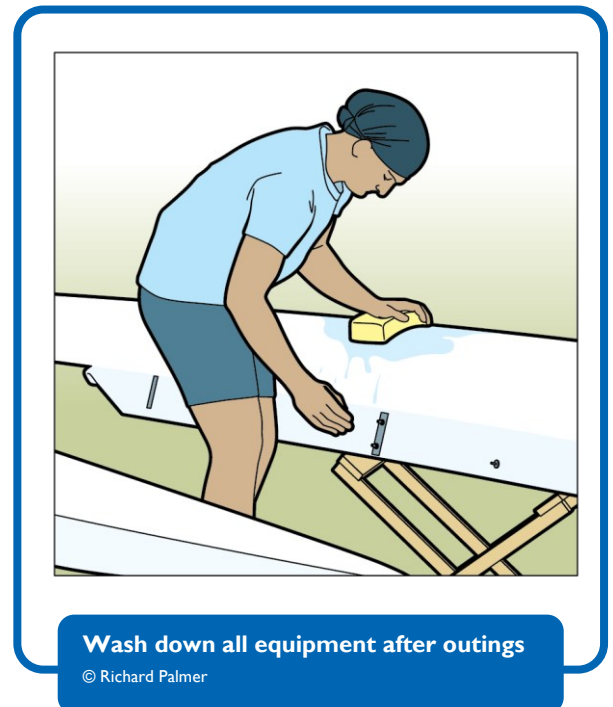
British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides guidance to clubs through RowSafe.
- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.
- Provides safety training material on its website.
- Provides courses that include safety.

Further Information

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Weil's Disease - <https://www.britishrowing.org/athlete-health/rowing-and-water-borne-disease/>
- Guidance on Rowing when Water Quality is Poor - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Guidance-for-Rowing-When-Water-Quality-is-Poor-March-2024.pdf>
- Guidance on Rowing and Water-borne disease - <https://www.britishrowing.org/athlete-health/rowing-and-water-borne-disease/>



8.5. Concussion

Concussion is a traumatic brain injury resulting in a disturbance of brain function. It affects the way a person thinks, feels and remembers things. Loss of consciousness (being 'knocked out') occurs in less than 10% of concussions and is not required to diagnose concussion. However, anyone who loses consciousness because of a head injury has had a concussion.

Concussion does occur in rowing. It is important that it is recognised and that appropriate action is taken. Any blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body which causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion.

Exercising when suffering from concussion can make the condition worse. All sport should be avoided for 7 – 10 days or longer if the concussion is severe. Head injuries sustained outside rowing should be reported to the coach. If in any doubt seek healthcare professional advice and follow it.

New Concussion Guidance was issued by the UK Government in November 2024. This can be found here [uk-concussion-guidelines-for-grassroots-non-elite-sport---november-2024-update-061124084139.pdf](#) and there is a reference to this on the British Rowing website here [Athlete Health - British Rowing](#).

Concussion can affect adults and children differently. Adults tend to have more physical symptoms, such as headaches, balance problems, and fatigue. Children tend to have more behavioural symptoms, such as irritability, drowsiness, and insomnia.

Children often take longer to recover than adults, though many recover in less than two weeks. Some children may remain symptomatic for up to a month or longer.

Children are more likely to get concussions because their brains are still developing and have less myelination, or coating, than adult brains. This makes their nerve fibres more susceptible to acceleration from a hit, and their brains lighter so they can move more easily.

Children are more likely to experience post-traumatic amnesia, which is when they are awake and walking around but can't remember what happened right after the injury. "

We usually think of children, for safeguarding purposes, as being people who have not attained their 18th birthday. In this case, however, where physical development rather than legal processes are involved, the transition is not so clearly defined and the transition from child to adult is progressive rather than instantaneous.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Recognise the signs and symptoms of concussion, (see [NHS - Symptoms of concussion](#)).
- Know how to get help if someone is concussed.
- Take care to avoid head injuries.
- Follow the simple guideline for suspected concussion – “If in doubt, sit them out”.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that their First Aid provision can assist a person with concussion.
- Ensure that their members know how to get help in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure that the boathouse is kept tidy so as to reduce the probability of a head injury or of someone tripping and falling.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Recognise the [signs and symptoms of concussion and know how to help someone who is concussed](#).
- Coach crews to handle boats on land carefully so as to reduce the probability of a head injury.
- Be aware of the Concussion Recognition tool (CRT6) [here](#).
- Recognise the need for a graduated return to activity [here](#) (see page 17) but remember – **If in Doubt, Sit them Out**

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Ensure that their First Aid provision can assist a person with concussion.
- Provide information to participating clubs on how to get help if needed.

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

- NHS Symptoms and Treatment of concussion - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-injury-and-concussion/>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Safety Alert - Head Injuries, www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Safety-Alert-Head-Injuries-2018.pdf
- Concussion Recognition tool (CRT6) - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CRT-6.pdf>
- UK Concussion Guidelines - uk-concussion-guidelines-for-grassroots-non-elite-sport---november-2024-update-061124084139.pdf
- Reference to Concussion on British Rowing website - [Athlete Health - British Rowing](#).

8.6. Coping with Illness and Diseases

People who are not feeling well, recovering from an infection, or suffering from a chronic condition should take care when exercising. It is important to seek medical advice in these situations.

Rowing is a team sport. Rowers should be encouraged to look after their fellow rowers. If they look unwell, then they should be asked how they feel and if there is concern, they should be encouraged to recover or to seek medical advice before they exercise.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Not attend training or competition if they have an infectious illness.
- Inform the club, their coach and other crew members if they are suffering from or recovering from an infectious illness or are feeling unwell.
- Talk to their coach if they have any health concern. Coaches have a 'duty of care'. This includes advising someone not to participate in training or competition when they have a health concern (even minor). Rowing when feeling unwell can result in serious consequences!
- Practise good hygiene (wash hands, disinfect equipment – many gastro-intestinal and upper respiratory tract infections can be prevented by good basic hygiene).
- If unwell then:
 - Refrain from training until they feel they have fully recovered. See [Safety Alert – Returning to fitness after covid](#)
 - Follow medical advice about how much exercise is appropriate.
 - Withdraw from competition.
- Look after other club members - if they look unwell ask them how they are feeling and, if they are not well, encourage them to rest.

If you have been ill then make a graduated return to fitness, like this:-

1. Light exercise with no exertion. It could also include flexibility exercises and technique exercises in a boat.
2. Gentle, aerobic exercise, such as walking or slow jogging or slow paddling, providing the heart rate is not elevated.
3. Moderate intensity aerobic and strength & conditioning exercises. This could be two intervals of 5-minute aerobic exercise followed by rest.
4. Somewhat hard intensity aerobic and strength & conditioning exercise. Only progress to the next stage when fatigue levels are normal at the end of the exercise.
5. Baseline exercise returning to the normal exercise pattern. Only attempt any degree of exertion if you feel comfortable doing so.

If you do not recover completely in a reasonable time, then go back one phase. If it feels uncomfortable then stop. Each phase should take about one week, possibly more. There is more information in a Safety Alert [here](#).

Remember, if you are ill, then training will not make you better, but it could make you much worse.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Encourage members to refrain from training and competing have recovered fully from any illness.
- Avoid putting pressure on member to compete when unwell.
- Make members aware when there is a danger of passing on infectious diseases.
- Provide hand washing/cleansing facilities.
- Provide disinfection materials for cleaning equipment.
- Encourage member to seek and follow medical advice when appropriate.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Check that rowers are fit to row.
- Encourage rowers to refrain from training and competition until they have recovered fully from any illness.
- Avoid putting pressure on rowers to compete when unwell. See [Safety Alert – Returning to fitness after covid](#)
- Take account of rowers' known health issues when training or planning training programmes.

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

- [RowSafe 8.6.1](#) - Common Illness and Diseases
- [RowSafe 8.6.2](#) - Chronic Conditions and Diseases
- [RowSafe 8.6.3](#) – Asthma
- Safety Alert – Returning to fitness after covid - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Safety-Alert-Returning-to-fitness-after-Covid-January-2022.pdf>

8.6.1. Common Illnesses

From time to time most people suffer from common illnesses like gastroenteritis and respiratory disease. Here are some general guidelines:

- If you do not feel well, do not exercise to make yourself feel better.
- If you are unwell and wish to train or compete, you should seek medical advice.
- If you are uncertain, do not train or compete.

Rowing is a team sport - look after your fellow rowers. If they look unwell, ask them if they are feeling well and, if necessary, encourage them not to row. Rowing or training when suffering from a virus infection could not only put the rower at risk but could put others at risk by spreading the virus.

There are two common illnesses that require particular care:

- Gastroenteritis (Diarrhoea and Vomiting), and
- Respiratory disease.

Gastroenteritis

Gastroenteritis is extremely contagious and can be passed on readily and rapidly if adequate precautions are not observed.

People who have gastroenteritis (the symptoms are diarrhoea and vomiting) should avoid mixing with friends and colleagues until they have fully recovered. They should take full hygiene precautions (such as hand washing) to limit cross-infection risks.

It is recommended to avoid exercise immediately following gastroenteritis as this can lead to myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart.

People who have gastroenteritis should:

- Not exercise until 48 hours after all the symptoms have disappeared and their appetite has returned.
- Withdraw from training and competition.
- Practise good hygiene (wash hands, disinfect equipment).
- Not put themselves and others in their crew at risk - be socially aware.
- If their symptoms persist, seek medical advice.

Respiratory Disease - Such as colds and coughs

People who are suffering from respiratory disease such as colds and coughs:

- Should not exercise if they have difficulty breathing when exercising.
- If their symptoms persist, then they should seek medical advice.

Viral illnesses can make the symptoms of asthma worse. Rowers, and others, who use an asthma inhaler may have to submit a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE), if they need to exceed the daily maximum dose. Check the advice on asthma (See [RowSafe 8.6.3](#)) and check medications using [GlobalDro](#).

General Illness

People who are feeling generally unwell should:

- Limit or withdraw from training.
- Consider whether they are fit to row.
- Not return to training until they are fully recovered.
- If they continue to feel unwell, seek medical advice.
- Follow the medical advice given

Remember, if you train or compete when feeling unwell, even from a minor illness, then you will not perform to your best potential and thereby you will let down your rowing colleagues. If you are unwell during training or competition and require emergency medical treatment this will cause serious concern and alarm amongst your colleagues. It may even put your colleagues at risk.

Further Information

- [RowSafe 8.6.3](#) - Asthma
- UK Anti-Doping: www.ukad.org.uk
- Checking Medications: www.globaldro.com

8.6.2. Chronic Conditions and Diseases

Rowing can help people who suffer from a chronic condition or disease to maintain and improve their health. There is more information in [Athlete Health](#).

Rowers may need medical advice to help them to determine how they can safely exercise with their illness. Medical advice is individual and personal. It would be wrong to copy or extrapolate from what other people have been told and to take medicines prescribed for someone else.

Clubs and competitions often ask members and participants if they have any medical issues that may affect their safety and the safety of others. It is not necessary to provide details of any conditions, this information is confidential, but it would be appropriate to share information about what type or extent of activity would be helpful and any that may be harmful.

This will help clubs and coaches to keep rowers safe.

Cardiac Disease

People who suffer from cardiac disease (including hypertension) that may compromise their rowing or training, are advised to seek medical advice from a Cardiac Specialist, Sports Medicine Doctor or Sport Physiotherapist, and to follow this advice. These specialists can advise on how much exercise should be undertaken, the limiting factors and on fitness to row or train.

When exercising, rowers should monitor:

- Their heart rate, and
- The effects of different types of exercise. For example, the reaction to longer steady state exercise compared with short sprint type exercise.

Tolerance to exercise can be built over a period of time.

Some people with heart disease have an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) - a small defibrillator implanted into the chest wall. Rowers with an ICD are not required to disclose this but should consider doing so. It could help if their coach and fellow crew members know what may happen if it self-activates and what, if anything, they should do.

Joint Injury or Illness

Rowers who are suffering from joint injury or illness should seek specialist advice on how to rest and exercise to avoid further injury. This particularly applies to weight training. Although rowing and indoor rowing are not weight bearing exercises, it is still possible to injure joints.

Epilepsy and Other Seizures

It is recommended that rowers with epilepsy, or other seizures and their parents if the rower is under 18, work with their coaches, club officials and event organisers, using the [guidance of the British Rowing Medical Panel](#), along with local and national safety advice, to risk assess and put in place appropriate measures to support a participant in rowing.

The Medical Panel guidance has been put together along with advice and information provided by the [Epilepsy Society](#), but it is important that anyone with epilepsy or other seizures has a discussion with their GP or specialist to better understand how they can manage their condition and take part in rowing safely.

Know your condition – Your Personal Risk Assessment

Epilepsy varies from person to person and so the risks will depend on the nature of their epilepsy.

In Appendix I of the Medical Panel advice there is a list of questions. It is recommended that these are printed out, completed and shared with the club, so they can support the athlete with developing a complete and accurate risk assessment.

Advice for staying safe

Please ensure you declare your medical condition – don't put others in danger who may need to assist or rescue you.

To mitigate any risks associated with having a seizure during rowing we would advise:

- Row with other people in groups.
- Ensure that at least one person who is either in the boat, or in the group knows basic rescue/life saving techniques including capsize, recovery, or man over-board recovery.
- Ensure that at least one person knows about the athlete's epilepsy and how to deal with a situation should a seizure occur.

- Ensure that any emergency medication that may be needed is within reach whilst on the water; this should be in a personal waterproof bag secured in the boat, with the cox, or with a coach in a launch accompanying the crew.
- Wear a buoyancy aid or life jacket. This should be considered where the likelihood of a seizure is high and the likelihood of falling into the water is equally high.
- Ensure there is a communication protocol for getting assistance or contacting the emergency services from the water.
- Wear a medic alert bracelet or necklace.
- Regularly review the personal risk assessment and protocols to account for any updates or changes needed.

To help you produce a personal risk assessment with your club, use the safety information produced by the [Epilepsy Society](#).

Risk Assessment for Clubs and Competitions

Club rowing

It is essential that clubs to carry out a risk assessment prior to someone with epilepsy participating in rowing on land or on the water.

The rower will need to provide the club with a completed Fact Find questionnaire (see Appendix 1 of the [Medical Panel advice](#)) and give consent for the club to use this information in their risk assessment for the individual. The information provided should be comprehensive and current and the risk assessment completed jointly between the club and the rower, with further input from the rower and their GP/medical supervisor where required.

When completed, the club and the individual should use the risk assessment template (see Appendix 2 of the [Medical Panel advice](#)) to work together to document the key risks, the barriers and controls that need to be in place to support the rower when rowing.

The risk assessment will detail all the measures to put in place so that everyone knows the protocols to follow in the event that the rower has a seizure.

Furthermore, if the rower's condition changes, it is important to update the risk assessment so that safety measures can be modified appropriately.

Competition rowing

It is recommended that the club obtains consent from the rower to share this risk assessment with any competition organisers. This will ensure the necessary provisions are in place so that the rower has a safe and enjoyable experience in the competition environment. It may be necessary for the competition organisers to carry out their own risk assessment, especially if the environment is significantly different to the rower's home waters. Rowers may need to seek advice from their coach, club or outdoor centre on any increased risk and further precautions or notifications that may be required.

Asthma

Asthma is common amongst athletes, even elite athletes. The general advice is:

- To take the prescribed inhaler just before exercise (although the initial effect is dilation of the bronchi this can last for three to four hours).
- To always carry the prescribed inhaler in the boat (or close by in the gym) so that symptoms can be treated without delay.
- To warm up and cool down carefully and effectively, especially in hot, dry dusty or 'asthma inducing ambient weather'.
- To minimise exercise with upper respiratory tract infections (such as colds and flu) as this will hasten the onset and make the asthma worse.

Care should be taken to check that the normal use of the inhaler complies with UK Anti-Doping rules. Increased dosing may require a Therapeutic Use Exemption. (see [RowSafe 8.6.3](#)).

Diabetes

There is an article based on an [interview with Sir Steve Redgrave](#). There is more information on the [Diabetes UK website](#) and the [National Health Service website](#).

See also the Safety Alert - [Diabetes and launch driving](#)

Further Information

- Athlete Health - <https://www.britishrowing.org/athlete-health/>
- Rowing and Epilepsy - <https://www.britishrowing.org/athlete-health/rowing-and-epilepsy/>
- Epilepsy Society - <https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/>
- RowSafe [8.6.3](#) - Asthma
- Sir Steve Redgrave on diabetes - bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/8095622.stm
- Diabetes UK - diabetes.org.uk
- NHS - Diabetes - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetes/>
- Safety Alert - Diabetes and launch driving, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Diabetes-and-Launch-Driving.pdf>

8.6.3. Asthma

Asthma is common, affecting 5.4 million people or one in eight people in the UK. It is most common in children, but also affects about a quarter of all elite athletes. Asthma does result in 1,200 people dying per year, but if managed correctly asthma should not be a barrier to a normal life or participation in sport.

The diagnosis of asthma is usually made by the GP and treated with a variety of prescription inhalers – often a blue “reliever” and/or a brown “preventer”. It is important to comply with the medication prescribed and to liaise with healthcare professionals if symptoms persist. It is important to remember that particularly for asthma, prevention is easier than cure.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Recognise the symptoms of an asthma attack.
- Know how to support a person who is suffering from an asthma attack.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Review the information below and communicate it to their members.
- Discuss it with their coaches, particularly coaches of juniors.
- Display relevant information wherever it will be most helpful.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Be aware of exercise induced and seasonal asthma.
- Ensure that all asthmatic rowers carry their inhalers on the water in a dry bag.
- Recognise the symptoms of an asthma attack and the difference between asthma and hyperventilation.
- Be aware of action to take if someone has an [asthma attack](#).
- Understand how to support a person having an asthma attack.
- Know how to access help.

Rowers with Asthma

Rowers with asthma are expected to:

- Carry their relieving inhaler at all times.
- Take the prescribed inhaler just before exercise (although the initial effect is dilation of the bronchi this can last for three to four hours).
- Always carry the prescribed inhaler in the boat (or close by in the gym) so that symptoms can be treated without delay.
- Warm up and cool down carefully and effectively, especially in hot, dry dusty or ‘asthma inducing ambient weather’.
- Minimise exercise with upper respiratory tract infections (such as colds and flu) as this will hasten the onset and make the asthma worse.
- Ensure that coaches and fellow rowers are aware of their condition and how best to manage it.
- Attend regular asthma reviews as advised by their GP.
- Check that their medication complies with [UK Anti-Doping rules](#) and follow the guidelines for applying for a Therapeutic Use Exemption if the dose schedule is exceeded.

Further Information

- WADA - www.wada-ama.org
- Asthma + Lung UK - <https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/conditions/asthma/asthma-attacks>
- St John Ambulance - www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/asthma-attack/
- Asthma + Lung UK – Exercise, physical activity and asthma - <https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/conditions/asthma/asthma-triggers/when-exercise-triggers-your-asthma>
- UK Anti-Doping - www.ukad.org.uk
- Checking Medications - www.globaldro.com
- UK Anti-Doping Rules - <http://www.ukad.org.uk/resources/document/uk-anti-doping-rules>
- Guidelines for applying for a Therapeutic Use Exemption - <https://www.ukad.org.uk/tue-application>
- There is further advice on the British Rowing website here [Rowing with asthma - British Rowing Plus](#).

Recognition Features

- Difficulty in breathing, with trouble exhaling.
- Wheezing as the casualty breathes out.
- Difficulty speaking and whispering.
- Distress and anxiety.
- Coughing.
- Features of hypoxia, such as a grey-blue tinge to the lips, earlobes and nailbeds (cyanosis).

Treatment

Your aims during an asthma attack are to ease the breathing and, if necessary, get medical help.

- You need to keep the casualty calm and reassure them.
- Keep them upright
- Do not leave them alone.
- If they have a blue reliever inhaler, then encourage them to use it. Children may have a spacer device and you should encourage them to use that with their inhaler also. It should relieve the attack within a few minutes.
- You can improvise a spacer device using a polystyrene cup if necessary.
- Encourage the casualty to breathe slowly and deeply.
- Encourage the casualty to sit in a position that they find most comfortable, often leaning forward with arms resting on a table or the back of a chair. Do not lie the casualty down.
- A mild asthma attack should ease within a few minutes but if it doesn't, encourage the casualty to use their inhaler again.
- The casualty may take one or two puffs of their inhaler every two minutes, up to a maximum of 10 puffs.

If this is the first attack, or if the attack is severe and any one of the following occurs:

- The inhaler has no effect.
- The casualty is becoming worse.
- Breathlessness makes talking difficult.
- The casualty is becoming exhausted.

Dial 999 (or 112) for an ambulance.

- Monitor and record the breathing and pulse rate every 10 minutes.

If the patient becomes unresponsive open the airway and check their breathing and be prepared to give emergency aid.

If the symptoms improve quickly then:

- Continue to sit with them until they are feeling completely well and can go back to previous activity.

If the casualty is a child or adult at risk then:

- Contact their parents or carers as appropriate and inform them about the situation.

8.6.4. Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction often involving difficulty breathing, a drop in blood pressure, and skin reactions, that can develop rapidly and requires immediate medical attention.

Symptoms of anaphylaxis happen very quickly.

They usually start within minutes of coming into contact with something a person is allergic to, such as a food, medicine or insect sting.

There is more information here [Anaphylaxis - NHS](#).

People prone to anaphylaxis should carry their Adrenaline Autoinjectors (AAIs); these are designed for self-administration. However, people needing an injection from an AAI may, occasionally, need help to inject themselves. The administration of a single AAI dose may not be sufficient as its benefits may last for typically five to ten minutes, and a second dose may be required. Current guidance from the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is that anyone prescribed an AAI should always carry two of the devices.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Aware of people in the club who may be prone to anaphylaxis.
- Assist a person who needs their help.
- Know how to support a person who is suffering from anaphylaxis.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Review the information below and, where appropriate, communicate it to their members.
- Discuss it with their coaches, particularly coaches of juniors.

Coaches

If the club has one or more member who is prone to anaphylaxis, Coaches are expected to:

- Ensure that rowers prone to anaphylaxis carry their autoinjectors close by.
- When on the water, ensure that rowers prone to anaphylaxis carry their autoinjectors in a dry bag.
- Recognise the symptoms of an anaphylactic episode.
- Understand how to support a person having an anaphylactic episode
- Provide support to a person having an anaphylactic episode.
- Know how to access help.

Rowers prone to Anaphylaxis

Rowers prone to Anaphylaxis are expected to:

- Inform the club and their coaches and crew members that they are prone to anaphylaxis.
- Ensure that coaches and fellow rowers are aware of their condition and how best to manage it.
- Only ingest food and drink if it is known that none of the constituents could cause a reaction.
- Ask other members of the crew not to bring food containing the allergen into the boat.
- Avoid other stimuli that could cause an allergic reaction.
- Always carry their Adrenaline Autoinjectors (AAIs).
- Self-administer their AAI when needed.

Further Information

- NHS Guidance on Anaphylaxis - [Anaphylaxis - NHS](#)
- St John Ambulance - [Anaphylaxis Symptoms & First Aid | St John Ambulance](#)
- Anaphylaxis Symptoms and Action Sheet [Anaphylaxis-Symptoms-and-Action-Sheet-6.pdf](#)
- Information on how to help a person to use their AAI - [How to use your EpiPen - YouTube](#) and [Dr Zoe Demonstrates How to Use an EpiPen | This Morning](#).

Recognition Features

- swelling of the throat and tongue
- difficulty breathing or breathing very fast
- difficulty swallowing, tightness in the throat or a hoarse voice
- wheezing, coughing or noisy breathing
- feeling tired or confused
- feeling faint, dizzy or fainting
- skin that feels cold to the touch
- blue, grey or pale skin, lips or tongue – if the person has brown or black skin, this may be easier to see on the palms of the hands or soles of the feet
- the person may also have a rash that's swollen, raised or itchy.

Treatment

The general advice is: -

“Always give an adrenaline auto-injector if there are ANY signs of anaphylaxis present.

You should administer the person's own AAI if available, if not use the spare AAI. The AAI can be administered through clothes and should be injected into the upper outer thigh in line with the instructions issued for each brand of injector.

IF IN DOUBT, GIVE ADRENALINE

After giving adrenaline **do NOT move the person**. Standing someone up with anaphylaxis can trigger cardiac arrest. Provide reassurance. The person should lie down with their legs raised. **If breathing is difficult, allow the person to sit.**

If someone appears to be having a severe allergic reaction, it is vital to call the emergency services without delay – even if they have already self-administered their own adrenaline injection and this has made them better. A person receiving an adrenaline injection should always be taken to hospital for monitoring afterwards.

ALWAYS DIAL 999 AND REQUEST AN AMBULANCE IF AN AAI IS USED.”

If an AAI has been used afloat, then the crew **should** immediately return to the club or the nearest landing stage and call the emergency services. They **should** NOT continue the outing.

Further information can be found here [Anaphylaxis-Symptoms-and-Action-Sheet-6.pdf](#)

If a person needs help to use their AAI, then follow the instructions on the device. There is more information in the videos here [How to use your EpiPen - YouTube](#) and here [Dr Zoe Demonstrates How to Use an EpiPen | This Morning](#).

If the casualty is a child or adult at risk, then:

- Contact their parents or carers as appropriate and inform them about the situation.

8.6.5. Stroke and Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA)

A Stroke is a medical emergency that requires immediate attention as every minute is vital. If you see or experience or spot any of the signs below, don't wait. Call 999 straight away. A Stroke can be identified as follows: -

The FAST acronym (Face, Arms, Speech, Time) is a test to quickly identify the three most common signs of stroke.

- **Face weakness:** Can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?
- **Arm weakness:** Can the person raise both arms fully and keep them there?
- **Speech problems:** Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say? Is their speech slurred?
- **Time to call 999:** if you see **any one** of these signs.

Remember: Face or Arm or Speech, at the first sign, it's **Time** to call **999**. There is more information here [Stroke signs and symptoms | Stroke Association](#) and here [Stroke Symptoms & First Aid | St John Ambulance](#).

A mini-stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA) is not a trivial event. In the early stages of a TIA, it's not possible to tell whether a person having a TIA or a full stroke. It's important to call 999 immediately and ask for an ambulance if you or someone else has symptoms of a TIA or stroke.

A TIA is a warning sign that a person may be at risk of having a full stroke soon, and an assessment can help doctors determine the best way to reduce the chances of that happening. There is more information here [Transient ischaemic attack \(TIA\) - NHS](#).

If you suspect that a person has suffered a TIA, then please do your best to ensure that they receive immediate medical care. This could save further consequences and even their lives.

Further Information

- Stroke Association Guidance - [Stroke signs and symptoms | Stroke Association](#)
- St John Ambulance Association Guidance - [Stroke Symptoms & First Aid | St John Ambulance](#)
- NHS Guidance on TIAs - [Transient ischaemic attack \(TIA\) - NHS](#)

8.7. What To Do If Someone Collapses

Would you know what to do if someone collapsed and was unresponsive? How can you prepare for this situation?

Someone who has collapsed, is unresponsive and not breathing normally, is likely to have no heartbeat. It is vital to summon help and start chest compressions immediately.

The procedure for all suspected cardiac issues is: -

- If afloat then get the boat to shore immediately and, if possible, remove the casualty from the boat and begin chest compressions.
- Call for help (999 Ambulance) immediately (they will provide advice and send an ambulance).
- If an AED is available, get the AED to the casualty and apply the pads ASAP.
- The AED will diagnose the issue and tell the responders what to do.

There is British Rowing guidance, produced by the Medical Panel, available [here](#). This includes the following:-

“The three key factors in the pre-hospital phase are:

1. Early recognition and a call for help – to prevent cardiac arrest
2. Early CPR (chest compressions) within 20 seconds of the casualty being discovered – to buy time
3. Early defibrillation – to restart the heart”

Clubs are advised to review the Medical Panel guidance, [here](#), and consider the need for an AED to be available in the club.

Advice from the Resuscitation Council UK, [here](#), states that

- “Bystander CPR and early defibrillation remain critical, doubling to quadrupling survival chances, and rescuers are reassured that the risk of harm is very low.” and
- “For every minute that someone’s in cardiac arrest without receiving CPR and having a defibrillator used on them, their chance of survival decreases by 10%. That’s why it’s so important to act immediately”.

The current advice is that on finding someone who is unresponsive,

- Immediately call for help - call out loud and call 999 on speakerphone.
- Whilst waiting for the 999 operator to connect, check for breathing (10 seconds) and
- If not breathing start chest compressions.

It can take 20-30 seconds, or longer, for the rescuer to be put through to the 999 ambulance call taker and it is essential to start chest compressions as soon as possible. The 999 ambulance call taker will also guide the rescuer as to how to perform chest compressions etc.

There is also a statement that “Survival rates for people who had a rhythm that could be treated by a shock from the defibrillator, were 53% following intervention by bystanders.” from the National Institute for Health Research.

AEDs can safely be used in metal boats. The current passes between the pads and the pads are placed on either side of the heart so that the current will pass through the heart. The impact of “leakage”, if any, should not reduce the effect on the casualty and will not harm the person operating the AED. The same applies if the casualty is lying on a wet surface or in a few millimetres of water.

However, AEDs should not normally be carried in launches. They are not designed for this environment and may not function as or when required. An AED on a launch may not be available to others, perhaps on land.

It is important to emphasise that it is the combination of chest compressions and AED that produces success not AED alone. So, it is essential to deliver good chest compressions until an AED can be sourced.

It is also important to understand that heart rhythms associated with cardiac arrest are divided into two groups: shockable rhythms (ventricular fibrillation / pulseless ventricular tachycardia (VF/VT)) and non-shockable rhythms (asystole and pulseless electrical activity (PEA)). The first monitored rhythm is VF/VT in approximately 25% of cardiac arrests, both in- or out-of-hospital. VF/VT will also occur at some stage during resuscitation in about 25% of cardiac arrests with an initial documented rhythm of asystole or PEA. There is more information [here](#).

This is why an AED may instruct users to “continue CPR” and at some point, later will re-analyse the heart rhythm and may then determine that the rhythm is shockable and a shock is needed.

Please remember that, in all circumstances, it is always correct to attempt resuscitation. The chance of survival if resuscitation is not attempted is zero.

A Little more information about CPR

Follow the steps depicted below.

When checking for breathing, do not be misled by breathing sounds, this could be Agonal breathing (a brain stem response to low blood oxygen concentration). There is more information on Agonal breathing [here](#); watch the video.

Please take care because many cardiac arrests look like seizures in their acute phase due to the way the brain reacts to low flow or no flow circulation.

Check that the casualty is breathing **in** and **out**, **regularly**, and **repeatedly**. You should see the chest rise and fall, regularly, again and again, and continue to do so. If you do not see this then start CPR immediately. Performing CPR will do no harm, even if the heart is still beating. Failure to deliver effective CPR will put the casualty's life at risk. There is information on Agonal gasping [here](#).

The purpose of CPR is to maintain blood flow around the body. This will maintain the blood flow to the brain. Lack of blood flow to the brain will cause brain damage and ultimately death. By maintaining blood flow to the brain, you can help the casualty to stay alive.

The casualty should be lying supine (on his or her back) on a hard surface. Deliver CPR by pressing hard and repeatedly on the base of the casualty's sternum at a rate of 100 to 120 compressions per minute. This compression will pump the blood in the heart to the rest of the body. Remember to release this pressure after each compression so that the heart fills with blood ready for the next compression.

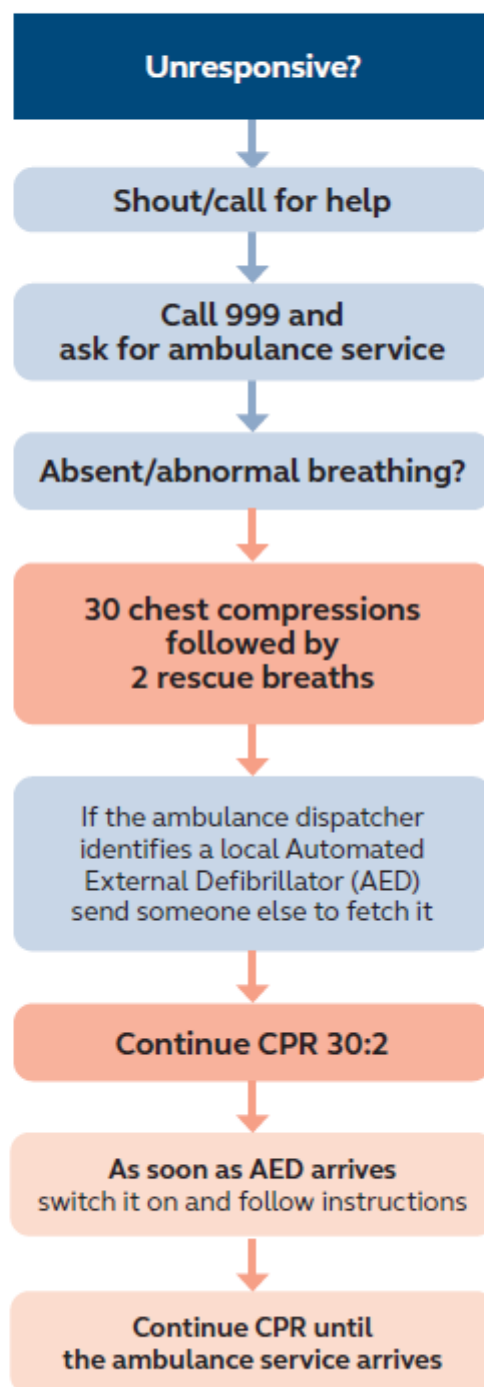
Do not try to deliver CPR in a lightweight rowing boat.

Delivering effective CPR is exhausting and the outcome often depends on the quality of the delivery. It is often best done in relays if several people are available. Make sure that you are trained to do this properly and encourage your friends to do the same.

Cracked or broken ribs may be associated with performing chest compressions. Feeling or hearing ribs cracking should not deter the rescuer from performing chest compressions to the best of their ability – the chest compressions are keeping the casualty alive; the cracked ribs can be managed following a successful resuscitation.

Adult basic life support in community settings

Maintain
personal
safety



Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Read and understand notices displayed in your club showing:
 - How to call 999 for an ambulance and provide directions so that the ambulance can respond to your location quickly and easily.
 - How to perform hands only Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
 - Where to find an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), if there is one nearby.
- Watch the British Heart Foundation (BHF) videos that show [what to do if someone collapses](#) (these videos can also be found by searching YouTube for “cpr vinnie” and “cpr mini vinnie”).
- Use the [BHF RevivR](#) app to learn and practise CPR.
- Complete the [Lifesaver](#) online learning.
- Attend CPR training if it is available and read the Safety Alert on “[What to do if someone collapses in a boat](#)”.
- Study the [Staying Alive Safety Alert](#).
- Be aware that the casualty will need further assessment and advanced medical care and **should** be taken to hospital, even if they appear to have recovered.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Provide detailed information on how to call 999 for an ambulance and their club’s location and access points by road.
- Encourage members to learn what to do if someone collapses.
- Provide training and learning opportunities for resuscitation and First Aid.
- Display information on resuscitation.
- Display a notice on the front door of the club, and elsewhere, saying where it is kept if the club has an AED.
- Display information showing how to retrieve one if the club does not have an AED, and if there is one nearby.
- **Attempting resuscitation can be distressing so** offer support and counselling to anyone who has been present when someone collapsed. Further information is available from [the NHS](#) and help may be available from a General Practitioner, [the NHS](#), [Samaritans](#) and [ChildLine](#).
- **Ensure that any AED that they are responsible for is kept in good condition and that the pads are in date and the battery is replaced when the battery condition indicator shows that this is needed or when it goes out of date. See [Safety-Alert-Automated-External-Defibrillators-1.pdf](#)**

Although AEDs are expensive, they are emergency medical devices and should be readily accessible, and not locked in cupboards. There is often charitable support that enables clubs to acquire them at a reduced cost. (see the Safety Alert [Get Help to buy your own AED](#)).

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Ensure that they have an adequate number of appropriately trained Healthcare Professionals and First Aiders available.
- Have the ability to call 999 and the Emergency Services, especially in areas of poor mobile phone reception.
- Provide detailed information of the competition’s location and access points by road.
- Display a notice saying where it is kept if the competition has an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). It should be made available to the Healthcare Professionals and First Aiders attending the competition.
- Display information showing how one nearby can be retrieved if the competition does not have an AED.
- Ensure that all umpires and boating staff understand the rescue and medical facilities and how to use them.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Set an example by ensuring that they are fully competent to assist with a person who has collapsed.
- Encourage participants to learn how to assist with a person who has collapsed.
- Practise retrieval of **simulated** collapsed rowers from boats.

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

- British Heart Foundation - Hands-only CPR - [bhf.org.uk/heart-health/how-to-save-a-life/hands-only-cpr](https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/how-to-save-a-life/hands-only-cpr)
- BHF RevivR CPR App - <https://www.bhf.org.uk/revivr>
- Safety Alert - Staying alive, [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Safety-Alert-Staying-Alive-FINAL.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Safety-Alert-Staying-Alive-FINAL.pdf)
- Lifesaver online learning at <https://life-saver.org.uk/>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)
- How to call an ambulance to the site (see Calling an ambulance section)
- NHS - Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) - <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/overview/> and NHS – Talking therapies and counselling - <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/nhs-talking-therapies/>
- Samaritans - [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)
- Safety Alert - What to do if someone collapses in a boat, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Safety-Alert-What-to-do-if-a-rower-collapses-in-a-boat.pdf>
- Cardiac arrest care in rowing - <https://www.britishrowing.org/2018/05/cardiac-arrest-care>
- ChildLine - [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)
- Safety Alert – Get help to buy your own AED, [Safety-Alert-Get-help-to-buy-your-own-AED-July-2021.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Safety-Alert-Get-help-to-buy-your-own-AED-July-2021.pdf) ([britishrowing.org](https://www.britishrowing.org))
- British Rowing Medical Panel Guidance, [Athlete Health - British Rowing](https://www.britishrowing.org/athlete-health)
- [Safety-Alert-Automated-External-Defibrillators-1.pdf](#)
- Advanced Life Support Algorithm - [here](#)
- Resuscitation Council UK - [Adult basic life support Guidelines | Resuscitation Council UK](https://www.resus.org.uk/adult-basic-life-support-guidelines)

Procedure

What to do if someone collapses, is unresponsive and not breathing normally

If the casualty is afloat, then: -

- Get the boat to shore immediately and, if possible, remove the casualty from the boat and begin chest compressions.

If you are on your own:

- Check that you are safe and shout for help.
- Start doing chest compressions to the rhythm of “Staying Alive”.
- Call 999.
 - Ask for ambulance
 - Keep the phone line open
 - Put the phone on speaker
- Try to keep doing chest compressions while answering the call centre’s questions.
- Keep doing the chest compressions until help arrives.

If you do not know or are uncertain how to perform chest compressions, then the call centre will take you through the procedure.

If there are two or more persons present:

- Person 1
 - Call 999 and ask for an ambulance
 - Answer the call centre’s questions
 - Leave the phone line open
 - Put the phone on speaker
 - Get the AED if one is available
- Person 2
 - Do chest compressions to the rhythm of “Staying Alive”
- When you have finished talking to the call centre, you can both:
 - Share chest compressions until help arrives
 - Use the AED if available

Automatic External Defibrillators (AED)

If an AED is available:

- Call for help.
- Start chest compressions.
- Get or send someone for the AED.
- When the AED has arrived:
 - Switch on the AED
 - Follow the instructions from the AED while continuing with chest compressions

If CPR or an AED is used then the casualty will need further assessment and advanced medical care and **should** be taken to hospital, even if they appear to have recovered.

Internal Defibrillators

Some people have an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) which activates automatically if their heart stops. People with an ICD, do not have to tell anyone as this is confidential medical information. However, it could help others to help them if they explain what happens if the ICD is activated and what others should do to help.

If someone with an ICD has collapsed and is unresponsive, react as described above. It is safe to do chest compressions and you may see the casualty 'jump' as an internal shock is delivered. Call 999 for an ambulance and apply an AED if available and follow the instructions. It is important to follow routine cardiac arrest procedures and not to assume that the ICD is functioning.

Calling an Ambulance

If you need an ambulance:

- Call 999 or 112. In the UK, the service is identical.
- Ask for Ambulance.
- Stay on the phone.
- Give your phone number when requested in case of accidental disconnection.
- If you are using a mobile phone, make sure you stay where there is a signal.
- You may be asked for the following information:
 - Age and gender of the casualty
 - Medical history (you may not know this)
 - Time of incident
 - What happened
 - Injuries or symptoms of the casualty
 - Vital signs - are they breathing, conscious, bleeding
 - Are you with the casualty?
 - The location of the casualty (post code, what3words, map ref), if on a riverbank, then the nearest road access).
 - What treatment have they received

You will receive advice from the call taker as to how to perform resuscitation, if necessary, or how best to manage the casualty until the emergency services arrive.

You will need to give the emergency services directions to reach the casualty quickly and easily. If the location is difficult to find or does not have a specific address, the emergency services may need more than an address and post code to find it, such as "it has blue gates, it's behind St. Mary's Church". Consider using what3words.

Your club should display posters showing how to contact the emergency services and containing directions. Competition Organisers should ensure that umpires, race officials and other personnel have this information for the competition venue. If possible, the club or Competition Organisers should check these directions with the emergency services to ensure that they can be understood by someone who is not familiar with the location.

8.8. The Health Benefits of Intensive exercise for older adults

Intensive exercise, such as indoor rowing provides several health benefits but also introduces some risks. On balance, we believe that the benefits far outweigh the risks and that, with care, these risks can be managed.

Intense exercise offers significant protective effects for older adults, including: -

- a reduced risk of chronic diseases (heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer),
- improved cognitive function (slowing dementia and cognitive decline),
- enhanced physical function (balance, strength, mobility), and
- better mental health.

These benefits are achieved through various physiological mechanisms that help counteract age-related decline at a cellular and systemic level. There is more detail in below.

Key Protective Effects

- **Cardiovascular Health:** Intense (vigorous) exercise can reverse a significant portion of age-related decline in aerobic power, lowering blood pressure and heart rate, and improving the heart's maximum pumping capacity. It enhances vascular function by improving blood flow and reducing arterial stiffness.
- **Musculoskeletal Strength and Function:** High-intensity and resistance training are particularly effective at building and maintaining muscle mass and strength, which helps prevent sarcopenia (age-related muscle loss) and osteoporosis (bone loss). This, in turn, vastly improves physical function and balance, significantly reducing the risk of falls and related injuries, a leading cause of injury in older adults.
- **Brain Health and Cognition:** Regular, intense physical activity is associated with a lower risk of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, and can slow age-related cognitive decline. Exercise promotes brain health by increasing blood flow to the brain, enhancing neural cell growth (neurogenesis), and upregulating neuroprotective factors like Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF).
- **Metabolic Health:** Intense exercise improves the body's sensitivity to insulin and helps manage blood sugar levels, which lowers the risk of type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome.
- **Immune System Modulation:** Exercise helps regulate the immune system by reducing chronic inflammation, which is often a factor in age-related diseases. It can also boost immune responses, for instance, by increasing the effectiveness of vaccinations.
- **Mental Well-being:** Intense physical activity can significantly improve mood, sleep quality, and self-confidence, while also reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Safety and Recommendations

While the benefits are significant, older adults should approach intense exercise with appropriate precautions:

- **Medical Consultation:** It is important to consult a healthcare provider before starting any new, intense exercise program, especially if you have pre-existing medical conditions.
- **Gradual Progression:** Start with light or moderate activities and gradually increase intensity and duration as fitness improves.
- **Balanced Routine:** A comprehensive program should include a mix of aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and balance/flexibility exercises.
- **Supervision:** Initial supervision by a qualified professional can help ensure correct form and safety, particularly for resistance and high-intensity interval training (HIIT).

If using an indoor rowing machine, then consider: -

- Wearing a heart rate sensor that links to the monitor on the rowing machine so that there is a continuous display of your heart rate.
- Controlling the intensity of the exercise so that your heart rate does not exceed 220 minus your age or whatever algorithm you feel is appropriate
- Only exercising when there is someone else in the house
- Trying to keep the “split” times even through the piece
- Not putting pressure on yourself to improve your personal best
- Completing longer exercises (5k and 10k) and keep the exercise relatively aerobic
- Stopping immediately if the exercise becomes painful

9. Topics Covered in Risk Assessments

The process of undertaking risk assessments can be made simpler by considering the various topics. This section of RowSafe identifies those topics, gives some general guidance and outlines some potential Hazards, Barriers, Hazardous Events and Controls.

Risk Management Plans are a step in developing a Risk Assessment. They list Hazards and possible Hazardous Events, together with Barriers (to reduce the probability of a Hazardous Event occurring) and Controls (to reduce the severity of harm should a Hazardous Event occur).

These terms are explained in the safety of online learning modules on [Safety Basics](#) and [Advanced Risk Assessment](#).

These topics are:

- 9.1 [Weather](#)
- 9.2 [The Local Environment](#)
- 9.3 [The Water](#)
- 9.4 [Other Water Users](#)
- 9.5 [Going Afloat and Landing](#)
- 9.6 [Around the Boathouse](#)
- 9.7 [Faulty, Incorrectly Set and Poorly Maintained Equipment](#)
- 9.8 [Pre-existing Health Conditions and Low Levels of Fitness](#)
- 9.9 [Ocean Rowing Risk Management Plan](#)
- 9.10 [Rowing in Floods](#)
- 9.11 [Indoor Rowing](#)

Further Information

- Safety Basics - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=194>
- Advanced Risk Assessment - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=201>

9. Topics Covered in Risk Assessments

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

9.1. Weather

Rowing activities are affected by the current local conditions. It is important to know about the expected weather conditions at the time of an outdoor activity. These conditions include wind strength and direction, visibility, temperature, and precipitation. These considerations should be incorporated into the Risk Assessment.

Clubs and Competitions should register for [Met Office weather warnings](#).

Please note that in the event of **Lightning** rowers are particularly vulnerable as they are often in wide open spaces where they are the highest thing around.

- If you are on water, get into shelter as quickly as possible; water will transmit strikes from further away. Proximity to water is a common factor in lightning strikes.
- Find shelter inside a large building or a motor vehicle. The inside of a car is safe as lightning will spread over the metal of the vehicle before earthing through the tyres.

Do not shelter beneath tall or isolated trees, one in four people struck by lightning are sheltering under trees. See the [Safety Alert on Lightning](#).

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Learn about local weather peculiarities.
- Be aware of personal limitations, rules and guidelines associated with the weather conditions.
- Assess the weather for the duration and type of outing they are undertaking.
- Respect the individual concerns and capabilities of other crew members if boating in adverse conditions.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Set out rules and guidelines for outings covering:
 - Local weather conditions.
 - Assessment of unsafe rowing conditions by boat type and rowers' abilities to include:
 - Weather, including lightning.
 - Temperature.
 - Persons authorised to allow, restrict or stop boating activities.
- Provide information to members as appropriate.
- Implement a process to inform members what activities are currently restricted.
- Amend Risk Assessments and Safety Plans to take account of any advice or direction provided by local navigation or other relevant water authority relating to local weather conditions.
- Adopt the [30:30 rule on lightning](#). This states that if the flash to bang is 30 seconds or less you should seek shelter. Stay inside this shelter until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder.
- Suspend or curtail boating activities where the conditions are assessed as unsafe.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Learn about local weather peculiarities, and local rules of navigation particularly when visiting unfamiliar venues.
- Assess the weather conditions for the duration and type of outing they are leading.
- Amend outing plans to take account of any updated advice relating to local weather conditions.
- Consider each crew member's personal limitations, limitations of their equipment and safety facilities available.
- Respect the individual concerns and capabilities of all crew members if boating in adverse conditions.

- Ensure that the whole crew is aware of, and understands, the rules and guidelines for the activity being undertaken.
- Ensure that the whole crew, including the coxswain, is suitably dressed and adequately protected for the weather conditions (wet, hot or cold) that they are likely to encounter.
- [Adopt the 30:30 rule on lightning.](#)
- Understand the causes, symptoms and effects of hypothermia and hyperthermia.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Establish a process to inform participants of any activities that are currently restricted.
- Ensure there are facilities for competitors, support staff and officials to cope with the expected weather conditions.
- Monitor the weather conditions leading up to and throughout the competition.
- Provide information to competitors covering:
 - Local weather conditions.
 - Procedure to stop or suspend racing in total or by class of competition.
- Amend Risk Assessments and Safety Plans to take account of any advice or direction provided by local navigation or other relevant water authority relating to local weather conditions.
- Ensure that rules and guidelines are observed.
- Suspend or curtail the competition if conditions are assessed as unsafe.
- Establish a boating schedule that ensures that there are no long periods of exposure to cold or hot weather.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Review incidents in the region.
- Provide advice to clubs and competitions on safety.

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

- Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Cold-Water-Kills-1.pdf>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- The 30:30 rule on lightning - <https://www.rospa.com/leisure-safety/lightning>
- Cold Water and Hypothermia online learning module - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=165>
- Registration for Met Office weather warnings - <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/guide-to-emails>
- Lightning Maps (contains maps tracking lightning) - <https://www.lightningmaps.org/>

Example Risk Management Plan

Hazards associated with the weather

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Hot sunny weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid outings in the middle of the day Adjust activity levels to suit conditions Rest in shade (e.g. under bridges, in the shade of a tree) Wear appropriate clothing (thin, breathable) Use water for cooling 	Hyperthermia (sun stroke)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move into a cooler area, remove outer clothing Use shower with cool, not cold, water or cool in river/lake Seek medical treatment if severe
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sunscreen Avoid outings in the middle of the day Wear appropriate clothing (hat and covered arms, etc.) 	Sunburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use after sun cream Seek medical treatment if severe
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry water and drink regularly 	Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to drink, carry drinking water Seek medical treatment if severe
Cold weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear appropriate clothing (including hats and pogies) Structure activity levels to keep warm Monitor crew comfort (particularly coxes) Shorten outing as needed Use coxless rather than coxed boats 	Hypothermia (see Cold Water and Hypothermia online course and Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move into warmer area and warm gradually Provide warm (not hot) drink Seek medical treatment if severe or if in doubt
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and capsize/man overboard drill Good explanations of cold shock and its short-term effects. 	Cold shock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Rescue training
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid rowing at times or in places where significant ice is expected. 	Ice causing inability to row or boat damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use throw lines and launch to tow boat clear of ice
Strong winds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use larger boats (4x rather than 1x) Use more stable boats Fit stabilisers (adaptive rowing floats) to boats Have mixed crews (Mix juniors/inexperienced rowers with more experienced rowers) Coach good technique 	Capsize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescue with launch Teach capsize drill and buddy rescue technique Use lifejacket or buoyancy aid

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid holding crews in unstable positions 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrict rowing to sheltered areas Have mixed crews (Mix Juniors/inexperienced rowers with more experienced rowers) 	Man overboard from gig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescue with gig Rescue with safety boat Teach man overboard drill Wear lifejacket or buoyancy aid Carry life ring and throwline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid being upwind of hazards (circulation plan?) Keep a good look out Use coxed rather than coxless boats Avoid being close to the downwind bank 	Blown into bank, pontoon, bridge, shallows, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat clear. Carry first aid kit and radio or mobile phone to contact emergency services Have trained first aiders available
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay upwind of the boathouse Use larger, faster boats (4x rather than 1x) Mix Juniors with experienced, fit adults 	Cannot get back to boathouse against the wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a safety boat available for towing Land boat somewhere else and carry it back await improved conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use anchor to hold position Row in sheltered areas 	Drifting in strong winds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry tow rope for being towed to safety
Lightning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid rowing when lightning is present or forecast Get off the water asap if lightning starts Adopt the 30:30 rule on lightning 	Struck by lightning causing burns or electrocution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat with First Aid Call an ambulance and evacuate to hospital
Poor visibility caused by fog or very heavy rain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid rowing far from land when fog is present or forecast Coach scullers and steers persons to keep a good lookout over both left and right shoulders Local knowledge Know and understand the lights and sound signals on navigation marks At sea, avoid rowing in poor visibility 	Collision with the bank or other fixed object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train rowers to check the equipment then (if OK) to walk the boat back into deeper water and row away Train rowers what to do if the equipment is damaged Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) Carry first aid kit and radio or mobile phone to contact emergency services Have trained first aiders available

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid rowing far from land when fog is present or forecast • Coach scullers and steers persons to keep a good lookout over both left and right shoulders and listen out for other boats • Follow rules of the road (river) • Local knowledge • Know and understand the lights and sound signals used by other vessels. • At sea, check for large ship movements with VTS or port control • At sea avoid rowing in poor visibility 	Collision with another boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat • Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) • Carry first aid kit and radio or mobile phone to contact emergency services • Have correctly fitted backstays on the forward port and starboard rigger as these tend to reduce the severity of impacts with the rigger • Have trained first aiders available
Poor visibility caused by fog or very heavy rain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid rowing far from land when fog is present or forecast • Avoid rowing in fog or when fog is forecast 	Inability to find way back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use radio or other means to contact the navigation authority or club • Use navigation lights to make boat easier to find
Poor visibility caused by darkness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid rowing in dark areas • Safety boat in attendance with spotlights • Know and understand the lights and sound signals on navigation marks • Avoid rowing or sculling without a cox in darkness • At sea, avoid rowing in darkness 	Collision with the bank or other fixed object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train rowers to check the equipment then (if OK) to walk the boat back into deeper water and row away • Train rowers what to do if the equipment is damaged • Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat • Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit navigation lights(and check that they are working) • Avoid rowing in dark areas • Safety boat in attendance with spotlights • Know and understand the lights and sound signals used by other vessels • Avoid rowing or sculling without a cox in darkness • At sea, avoid rowing in the darkness 	Collision with another boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry first aid kit and radio or mobile phone to contact emergency services • Have trained first aiders available • Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat • Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) • Carry first aid kit and radio or mobile phone to contact emergency services • Have trained first aiders available

9.2. The Local Environment

Rowing activities are affected by the current local conditions. It is important to understand the local environment, including local hazards and the circulation plan and also to take account of current conditions like temporary hazards and changes to the circulation plan. These considerations should be incorporated into the Risk Assessment.

Rowers can also be inconvenienced, and sometimes put at risk, by the anti-social behaviour of others. If this is likely to occur, then it should be included in the Risk Assessment. See [Safety-Alert-Coping-with-the-behaviour-of-others-June-2023.pdf](#).

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Learn about local hazards, local rules of navigation and navigation marks particularly when visiting unfamiliar venues.
- Be aware of personal limitations and the local conditions, rules and guidelines.
- Respect the individual concerns and capabilities of other crew members if boating in adverse conditions.

Club

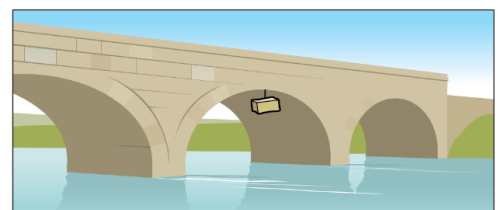
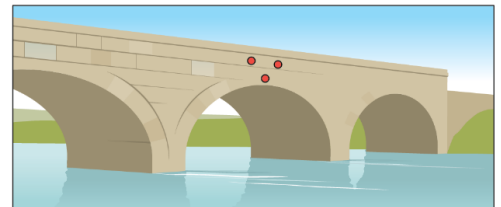
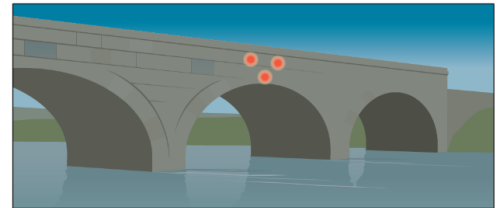
Club Officers are expected to:

- Set out rules and guidelines for outings covering:
 - Local navigation rules.
 - Assessment of unsafe rowing conditions by boat type and rowers' abilities to include:
 - Current/stream and tides and the combination of tidal flows and fluvial flows.
 - Rowing or sculling in the dark or in poor visibility including lighting requirements.
 - Persons authorised to allow, restrict or stop boating activities.
- Provide information to members as appropriate.
- Implement a process to inform members what activities are currently restricted.
- Set up a communication network with the local navigation authority and communicate relevant information to members.
- Agree restrictions on boating activities with other water users.
- Ensure that rules and guidelines are observed.
- Suspend or curtail boating activities where the conditions are assessed as unsafe.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Learn about local hazards, local rules of navigation and navigation marks particularly when visiting unfamiliar venues.
- Consider each crew member's personal limitations, limitations of their equipment and safety facilities available.
- Respect the individual concerns and capabilities of all crew members if boating in adverse conditions.
- Ensure that the whole crew is aware of, and understands, the rules and guidelines for the activity being undertaken.



Learn about rules of navigation

© Richard Palmer

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Establish a process to inform participants of any activities that are currently restricted.
- Provide information to competitors covering local navigation rules.
- Ensure that rules and guidelines are observed.
- Suspend or curtail the competition if conditions are assessed as unsafe.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Facilitate contact between local clubs and navigation authorities in relation to local hazards.
- Review incidents in the region.
- Provide advice to clubs and competitions on safety.

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

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Safety Alert – Coping with the behaviour of others, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Safety-Alert-Coping-with-the-behaviour-of-others-June-2023.pdf>
- Lessons Learned from the Dove Pier Incident - https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Dove_pier_LESSONS_FOR_ROW_PDF-MI.pdf

Example Risk Management Plan

Hazards associated with the local environment

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Bends in river or lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach scullers and steers persons to keep a good lookout over both left and right shoulders Coach good steering Coxed rather than coxless Circulation plan (identify areas where it is not safe to row at speed or to overtake) Lookout on bank or launch Local knowledge 	Collision with bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train rowers to check the equipment then (if OK) to walk the boat back into deeper water and row away Train rowers what to do if the equipment is damaged Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) Carry first aid kit and radio or mobile phone to contact emergency services Have trained first aiders available
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach scullers and steers persons to keep a good lookout over both left and right shoulders Coach good steering Coxed rather than coxless Circulation plan (identify areas where it is not safe to row at speed or to overtake) Follow rules of the road (river) Lookout on bank or launch Local knowledge 	Collision with another boat on the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) Carry first aid kit and radio or mobile phone to contact emergency services Have trained first aiders available
Stationary objects in or near the water e.g. bridges, pontoons, overhanging trees, locks, moored boats, buoys, rocks, shoals, shallows, other submerged objects, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach scullers and steers persons to keep a good lookout over both left and right shoulders Coach good steering Coxed rather than coxless Circulation plan Follow rules of the road (river) Lookout on bank or launch Local knowledge Understand the meaning of local navigation marks (e.g. buoys, etc.) 	Collision with a stationary object on the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) Carry first aid kit and radio or mobile phone to contact emergency services Have trained first aiders available On gigs, carry a tow line to tow the boat to safety Rescue gig crew and tow boat to safety

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above + • Avoid being upstream or upwind of the stationary object. 	Swept or blown into stationary object on the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Rescue boat and throw-lines • Evacuate crew to land • On gigs, carry a tow line to tow the boat to safety • Rescue gig crew and tow boat to safety
Weirs & sluices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that weirs and sluices are marked on local maps • Keep well upstream of warning markers • Keep further clear in strong stream conditions 	Swept over weirs or through sluices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Rescue boat and throwlines • Evacuate crew to land
Steep banks or walls (makes landing difficult) or reeds or overhanging trees extending over a large length of bank.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid areas with steep banks or high walls. • Practise buddy rescue technique (to avoid the need to land) 	Unable to land from boat if capsized, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat • Teach capsize drill and buddy rescue technique • Use lifejacket or buoyancy aid
Reeds or overhanging trees near bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid stopping upwind of reeds or overhanging trees 	Blown or swept into reeds or trees (usually scullers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have safety boat and throw lines available to tow boat clear • Teach other scullers rescue technique
Mud flats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show any mudflats on map • Keep clear of mudflats near low tide 	Running aground and being unable to get off before outgoing tide falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have process to get people off mudflats
Swans or other large birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand Swan behaviour (see Swans and Rowing - British Rowing). • Avoid areas where swans are present 	Collision causing harm to the bird or distress to the rowers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop and assess the situation; if the bird is injured, seek help from a local wildlife rescue immediately and if the bird is killed, report this to Defra. • Provide support for distressed rowers.
Finding a dead body in the water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep everyone, particularly juniors who are not involved in the incident well away. • Call the Emergency Services who will arrange for the body to be removed. 	Distress to rowers and coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for support to rowers and coaches. <p>Membership of British Rowing entitles members to Mental Health Support through the insurance cover. There is more information here Members. There is also information on Mental Health here Supporting Positive Mental Health - British Rowing.</p>

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Presence of people on the water intending to inconvenience or harm rowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate a Buddy system with other rowers • Share information about anti-social events and their location • Avoid areas where anti-social behaviour is likely to happen • Have coaches in launches rather than on the bank. 	Distress or harm to rowers and coaches (caused by appropriate or suggestive speech, excessive wash, obstruction, etc.,)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't REACT • REMOVE yourself from the situation • REPORT to the Navigation Authority, Police, British Rowing, etc. • Offer counselling or support to the people affected (see notes on Mental Health above). • Provide First Aid, etc, to anyone injured.
Presence of people on land intending to inconvenience or harm rowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate a Buddy system with other rowers • Share information about anti-social events and their location • Avoid areas where anti-social behaviour is likely to happen • Avoid rowing under bridges where people congregate. • Try to move out of the range of people throwing objects • Have coaches in launches rather than on the bank. 	Distress or harm to rowers and coaches (caused by appropriate or suggestive speech, thrown or dropped objects, indecent exposure, etc.,)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't REACT • REMOVE yourself from the situation • REPORT to the Navigation Authority, Police, British Rowing, etc. • Offer counselling or support to the people affected (see notes on Mental Health above). • Provide First Aid, etc, to anyone injured.

9.3. The Water

Rowing activities are affected by the current local conditions. It is important to understand the local water conditions, including local hazards and the circulation plan and also to take account of current conditions in regions where flow speed is high. These considerations should be incorporated into the Risk Assessment.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Learn about local hazards such as rough water, fast flowing water, areas of shallow water and water borne hazards, local rules of navigation and navigation marks particularly when visiting unfamiliar venues.
- Be aware of personal limitations and the local conditions, rules and guidelines.
- Respect the individual concerns and capabilities of other crew members if boating in adverse conditions.
- Understand what measures to take to deal with water that is polluted or where blue-green algae or Weil's disease is present (see [RowSafe 8.4](#)).

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Set out rules and guidelines for outings covering:
 - Local navigation rules.
 - Assessment of unsafe rowing conditions by boat type and rowers' abilities to include:
 - Current/stream and tides, and the combination of tidal flows and fluvial flows.
 - Rough water
 - Areas of shallow water
 - Pollution, blue-green algae and Weil's disease
 - Persons authorised to allow, restrict or stop boating activities
- Provide information to members as appropriate.
- Implement a process to inform members what activities are currently restricted.
- Set up a communication network with the local navigation authority and communicate relevant information to members.
- Agree restrictions on boating activities with other water users.
- Ensure that rules and guidelines are observed.
- Suspend or curtail boating activities where the conditions are assessed as unsafe.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Learn about local hazards associated with water conditions, local rules of navigation and navigation marks particularly when visiting unfamiliar venues.
- Consider each crew member's personal limitations, limitations of their equipment and safety facilities available.
- Respect the individual concerns and capabilities of all crew members if boating in adverse conditions.
- Ensure that the whole crew is aware of, and understands, the rules and guidelines for the activity being undertaken.
- Ensure that the crew understands the procedures to be followed if the water is polluted or blue-green algae or Weil's Disease is present.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Establish a process to inform participants of any activities that are currently restricted.
- Provide information to competitors if the water is contaminated.
- Ensure that rules and guidelines are observed.
- Suspend or curtail the competition if conditions are assessed as unsafe.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Review incidents in the region.
- Provide advice to clubs and competitions on safety.

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

- [RowSafe 8.4](#) - Waterborne Infections and Diseases
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Cold Water and Hypothermia online learning module - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=165>
- Information on flow over weirs - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYI67uZkNvQ>
- Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Cold-Water-Kills-1.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Keep clear of Weirs, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Safety-Alert-Keep-clear-of-Weirs-Dec-2019.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Flow over Weirs, [Safety-Alert-Flow-over-Weirs.pdf](#)
- Safety Alert - Blue-Green Algae, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-blue-green-algae.pdf>

Example Risk Management Plan

Hazards associated with the water

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Rough Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use larger boats (4x rather than 1x) • Use more stable boats • Fit stabilisers (adaptive rowing floats) to boats • Have mixed crews (Mix Juniors/ inexperienced rowers with more experienced rowers) • Coach good technique • Avoid holding crews in unstable positions • Restrict rowing to sheltered areas 	Capsize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue with launch • Teach capsize drill and buddy rescue technique • Use Lifejacket or buoyancy aid
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid areas of rough water • Fit wash boards • Use a bailer to prevent water accumulation 	Swamping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat • Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) • Row or tow boat to shore then carry or tow empty boat to boathouse or relaunch and row back • Adequate boat buoyancy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict rowing to sheltered waters • Have mixed crews (Mix juniors/inexperienced rowers with more experienced rowers) 	Man overboard from gig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue with gig • Rescue with safety boat • Teach man overboard drill • Wear lifejacket or buoyancy aid • Carry life ring and throwline • Inflate lifejacket.
Rough Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid rowing in rough water. • Take extra care approaching the shore where the shallowness of water increases the wave height. • Do not allow the gig to become beam-on to the waves. 	Swamping or capsize of a Gig (traditional wooden gigs have very little inherent buoyancy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate a buddy systems and rescue with another gig. • Rescue with a safety boat • If necessary, call the coastguard and request lifeboat support. • Fit boats with buoyancy bags to provide extra buoyancy and stay with the boat until rescued. • Tow the boat back to the shore.
Fast Flowing water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid being upstream of hazards (circulation plan?) • Keep a good look out 	Swept over weir or into bridge, pontoon, shallows, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Rescue boat and throwlines • Evacuate crew to land

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use coxed rather than coxless boats 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay upstream of the boathouse • Use larger, faster boats (4x rather than 1x) • Mix Juniors with experienced, fit adults • On tidal waters, row when the tide is on the flood (coming in) as this tends to counteract the effect of the fluvial flow 	Cannot get back to boathouse against stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a safety boat available for towing • Land boat somewhere else and carry it back await improved conditions
Areas of Shallow water (permanent or tidal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on areas of shallow water • Avoid areas of shallow water hazards (circulation plan?) • Keep a good look out • Use coxed rather than coxless boats • Be aware of the tide times and heights and plan accordingly 	Grounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train rowers to check the equipment then (if OK) to walk the boat back into deeper water and row away • Train rowers what to do if the equipment is damaged
Water-borne hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid areas that are known to be polluted. • Minimise crew contact with polluted water • Wash open wounds, cuts and blisters properly on return to land and seek medical attention 	Pollution (e.g. animal waste)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek medical attention
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid areas where this is expected to be present. • Minimise crew contact with water containing Blue Green Algae 	Blue Green Algae (see Safety Alert - Blue Green Algae)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek medical attention
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid areas where this is expected to be present. • Cover cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings • Wash open wounds, cuts and blisters properly on return to land and seek medical attention • Wash thoroughly after outings 	Weil's disease (Leptospirosis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek medical attention • Coach rowers to understand the symptoms and seek immediate medical treatment.
Very cold water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find an alternative activity ashore. • Use larger boats (4x rather than 1x) • Use more stable boats • Fit stabilisers (adaptive rowing floats) to boats 	Capsize resulting in hypothermia (see Cold Water and Hypothermia online course and Safety Alert - Cold Water Kills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue with launch • Teach capsize drill and buddy rescue technique • Use Lifejacket or buoyancy aid • Provide first aid treatments for hypothermia

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have mixed crews (Mix Juniors/ inexperienced rowers with more experienced rowers) • Coach good technique • Avoid holding crews in unstable positions • Keep rowers close to the clubhouse or close to the rescue boat. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move into warmer area and warm gradually • Provide warm (not hot) drink • Seek medical treatment if severe or if in doubt
Tides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check tide times before going afloat • Avoid having to return against a fast-flowing tide 	Unable to make way against the tide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold position with anchor • Carry tow line • Rescue with motorboat
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check tide times before going afloat • Avoid having to return against a fast-flowing tide • Have a plan for leaving the boat in a secure place 	Unable to return because tide has gone out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land boat and secure in another place, crew walk back • Moor boat and recover crew with safety boat
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the direction of flow past fixed structures (buoys, bridges etc.) • Observe how other crews are navigating and communicate with them about the state of the tide. • Only make changes to your navigation pattern once you are completely sure the tide has turned • Avoid racing or doing pieces when you are unsure of the tide direction • Keep a particularly good lookout 	Confusion about changes in navigation rules at the turn of the tide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop clear of other vessels and wait until the situation becomes clear.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check tide times before going afloat • Avoid having to return against a fast-flowing tide 	Being swept out to sea or past harbour entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold position with anchor • Carry tow line • Rescue with motorboat

9.4. Other Water Users

There may once have been a time when rowing boats were the only boats on the water and rowers could do whatever they wished. If that ever was the case, then it is no more. We now share our waterways with others such as anglers, canoeists, paddle boarders, swimmers, dinghy sailors, motorboat users, etc. We have no more right to use the waterway than they have. We will all have to learn to respect, and cooperate with, each other.

There are times and places when we can no longer use our waterways as racetracks and our coaches can no longer produce wash with impunity, not that they ever could.

It is important to know who else uses the local water, what activities they undertake and the hazards that these may present. These considerations should be incorporated into the Risk Assessment.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Know who uses the local water and the hazards their activities may present, for example anglers on the bank, large or fast boats creating wash.
- Know and understand the [sound signals](#) and [lights](#) used by other vessels.
- Be aware of local navigational rules and guidelines put in place to allow different activities to take place safely.
- Respect the needs of other water users.
- Keep a good lookout to avoid collisions and shout a warning to the crews of other boats if there is a risk of collision but do not rely on shouted warnings.
- Keep a good lookout for swimmers.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Set out rules and guidelines for outings covering:
 - Local navigation rules.
 - [Shared use of the water](#) with other water users.
- Provide information to members as appropriate.
- Implement a process to inform members what other activities are taking place.
- Set up a communication network with the local navigation authority and other water users and communicate relevant information to members.
- Agree restrictions on boating activities with other water users.
- Ensure that rules and guidelines are observed.
- Suspend or curtail boating activities where the conditions are assessed as unsafe.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Know about the activities of other water user and take account of the risks when planning outings.
- Know and understand the [sound signals](#) and [lights](#) used by other vessels.
- Ensure that the whole crew is aware of, and understands, the rules and guidelines for the activity being undertaken and the activities of other water users.
- Keep a good lookout for swimmers and warn their crews if there are any present. Also warn the swimmers of the presence of the rowers.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Coordinate the competition's activities with organisations representing other water users.
- Establish a process to inform participants of the activities of other water users and any activities that are currently restricted.
- Provide information to competitors covering local navigation rules.
- Ensure that rules and guidelines are observed.
- Suspend or curtail the competition if conditions are assessed as unsafe.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Facilitate contact between local clubs and navigation authorities in relation to the shared use of local water.
- Review incidents in the region.
- Provide advice to clubs and competitions on safety.

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

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Canal and River Trust Boaters Handbook - canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/boating/go-boating/a-guide-to-boating/boaters-handbook
- Rowing on the Tideway - <https://activethames.co.uk/rowing>
- Joint guidance for Rowers and Paddlers on shared water - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Guidance-for-Rowers-and-Paddlers.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Coping with the behaviour of others, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Safety-Aler-Coping-with-the-behaviour-of-others-June-2023.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Back to Basics, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Safety-Aler-Back-to-Basics-.pdf>
- Safety Alert – Look out for Swimmers - [Microsoft Word - Safety Alert - look out for swimmers \(KB\)](#)

Example Risk Management Plan

Hazards associated with other water users

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Wash from large or fast boats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid areas where wash is expected Use larger boats (4x rather than 1x) or more stable boats if wash is expected Agreements with other water users to allocate different areas for different activities Coach crews in how to handle wash. Instruction on how to handle wash. 	Capsize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescue with launch Teach capsize drill and buddy rescue technique Use Lifejacket or buoyancy aid
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid areas where wash is expected Agreements with other water users to allocate different areas for different activities Coach crews in how to handle wash. Instruction on how to handle wash. 	Man overboard from gig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescue with gig Rescue with launch Teach man overboard drill Use lifejacket or buoyancy aid Carry life ring and throw line
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid areas where wash is expected Use larger boats (4x rather than 1x) or more stable boats if wash is expected Agreements with other water users to allocate different areas for different activities Coach crews in how to handle wash. Use a bailer to prevent water accumulation. Instruction on how to handle wash. 	Swamping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) Row or tow boat to shore then carry or tow empty boat to boathouse or relaunch and row back Adequate boat buoyancy
Anglers on the bank or in boats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid areas where angling is expected Agreements with angling clubs, etc. different areas or times for different activities Coach crews to be aware of and avoid the hazard 	Entanglement with fishing lines and contact with hooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescue with launch Cut fishing lines First aid treatment
Vandals on the bank or bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid areas where this can be expected Notify the Police to prevent further occurrences 	Stone throwing from vandals on the bank or bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment Mark and quarantine damaged equipment until it is repaired

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Incompetent or ignorant motorboat users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid areas where this can be expected Note the identity of the boat and notify the Navigation Authority to prevent further occurrences 	Collision or swamping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat Teach capsize drill and buddy rescue technique Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) Row or tow boat to shore then carry or tow empty boat to boathouse or relaunch and row back Adequate boat buoyancy
Commercial shipping such as cargo vessels, ferries, naval ships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid shipping channels and other areas where large vessels operate. Check the VTS (Vessel Traffic Service) radio channels for shipping movements and plan outing accordingly. Be prepared to take action to avoid collision. 	Collision or swamping due to wash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat Row or tow boat to shore then carry or tow empty boat to boathouse or relaunch and row back Carry tow rope for towing boat to safety
		Swamping or capsize of a Gig (traditional wooden gigs have very little inherent buoyancy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate a buddy systems and rescue with another gig. Rescue with a safety boat If necessary, call the coastguard and request lifeboat support. Fit boats with buoyancy bags to provide extra buoyancy and stay with the boat until rescued. Tow the boat back to the shore.
Swimmers in the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep a good lookout for swimmers Warn the swimmers of the presence of the rowers. Warn the rowers of the presence of the swimmers Operate a buddy system so that one crew can more easily see swimmers ahead of another crew and warn the other crew (and the swimmer if possible) Carry a communication device (radio or mobile phone in a waterproof case) to warn other crews and coaches of the presence of swimmers. 	Collision with a swimmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescue the swimmer using a launch or provide whatever assistance is appropriate. Administer First Aid Use the communication device to call for help. Call 999 for external help if needed Use the boat to support a conscious swimmer in the water Call for help from other boats, coaches and other swimmers If the swimmer cannot help themselves and no other help is available, then consider entering the water and supporting them using the boat to provide buoyancy

9.5. Going Afloat and Landing

The hazards associated with going afloat and landing, both on land and on water, should be incorporated into the Risk Assessment.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand the local hazards associated with going afloat and landing.
- Take care when handling boats.
- Understand the Circulation Plan for launching and recovery.
- Follow the local procedures and instructions from the cox or coach.
- Wear the correct footwear.
- Take care when handling boats.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Define the procedures for going afloat and landing and communicate to members.
- Define the Circulation Plan for launching and recovery.
- Ensure that there are procedures for quarantining damaged boats and equipment.
- Maintain launching areas in a safe condition.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Coach rowers in the correct procedure for going afloat and landing.
- Coach rowers to take care when handling boats.
- Coach rowers in the Circulation Plan for launching and recovery.
- Ensure that damaged equipment is quarantined.
- Supervise rowers using winches and other similar mechanical equipment.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Include the hazards in the boat launch and recovery area in their Risk Assessments.
- Define the procedures for going afloat and landing and communicate to participating clubs.
- Define the Circulation Plan for launching and recovery.
- Maintain launching areas in a safe condition.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Review incidents in the region.
- Provide advice to clubs and competitions on safety.

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

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Safety Alert – Stay on your feet, www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Safety-Alert-Stay-on-your-feet-January-2022-1.pdf
- Boat manoeuvring on land - [WRRA Coxing - Boat manoeuvring on land \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRRA-Coxing-Boat-manoeuvring-on-land)

Example Risk Management Plan

Hazards associated with going afloat and landing

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Steep banks in launch/recovery area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careful coaching Good control by coach or cox Correct footwear Well defined procedure Extra people (helpers) 	Slipping and falling when lifting or carrying boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment
Steep or irregular steps in launch/recovery area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Slipping or tripping and falling when lifting or carrying boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment
Steep banks in launch/recovery area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Slipping and falling when lifting or carrying boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment
Steep banks in launch/recovery area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Slipping or tripping and falling when lifting or carrying boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment
Slippery or muddy ground in launch/recovery area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Slipping and falling when lifting or carrying boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment
Slippery surface on slipways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above Clean slipway surface Take care not to trap hands or feet 	Slipping, falling or trapping hands and feet when lifting or carrying a boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment
Boat rolling down slipway out of control (including launches)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careful coaching Good control by coach or cox Well defined procedure Extra people (helpers) Have means to control descent of boat (winch, rope etc.) Well maintained equipment (e.g. brakes on trailers). 	Collision with wall Boat falls off slipway Impact with people People are trapped against wall or under boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment Additional medical treatment Mark and quarantine damaged equipment until it is repaired
Manual handling of boats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and implement a safe procedure for boat handling, launch and recovery. Use correct posture when lifting Additional people to move boats onshore and launch and recover 	Musculo-skeletal disorder due to manual handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment Additional medical treatment Mark and quarantine damaged equipment until it is repaired
Strong and variable currents during boat launching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance from other crews or helpers Find a more suitable location 	Injuries and damage due to inability to control a boat in the launch area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment Mark and quarantine damaged equipment until it is repaired

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Strong and variable currents during boat recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan approach (into stream) and include in circulation plan • Use throw lines from land • Find a more suitable location 	Injuries and damage due to inability to control a boat in the recovery area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid treatment • Mark and quarantine damaged equipment until it is repaired

9.6. Around the Boathouse

The hazards in and around the boathouse, including the handling and storage of equipment, should be incorporated into the Risk Assessment.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Keep the boathouse and the surrounding area tidy.
- Use the correct technique when lifting equipment.
- Follow the instructions of the cox or coach.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that appropriate and adequate storage is available for equipment.
- Define a procedure for quarantining equipment.
- Encourage members to keep the boathouse and the surrounding area tidy.
- Ensure that the hazards in and around the boathouse are included in their Risk Assessment, take care to include:
 - Hazards associated with the movement of boats both inside and outside.
 - Hazards associated with the movement of people both inside and outside.
 - Hazards associated with the storage of boats.
 - Hazards associated with other work conducted in or around the boathouse such as boat repair, painting, trailer loading and unloading (include chemical, electrical hazards, and fire).
 - Other people in the vicinity of the boathouse.



Include any hazards in and around the boathouse in the risk assessment

© Richard Palmer

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Coach rowers to keep the boathouse tidy.
- Coach rowers to use the correct technique when lifting equipment.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Include the hazards in and around the boat storage area in their Risk Assessments.
- Communicate appropriate advice to participants or participating clubs.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Review incidents in the region.
- Provide advice to clubs and competitions on safety.

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

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Safety in Club Premises, https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/British_Rowing_Safety_In_Club_Premises_June-2023.pdf

Example Risk Management Plan

Hazards Around the boathouse (including handling boats on land)

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Solid fixed objects (riggers, boats, racking, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear indication of what should go where (housekeeping) • Coaching people to take care in the boathouse • Good control and instruction (coxing) • “Cushioning” the ends of riggers 	Collision of person with fixed object (e.g. walking into rigger)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have first aid kit available • Have trained first aiders available
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping floor clear 	Tripping over object on floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have first aid kit available • Have trained first aiders available
Boats, oars, etc. falling from racks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good control and instruction (coxing) • Fixing objects so that they cannot fall 	Person struck by falling object Damage to falling object or something else as it falls or lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have first aid kit available • Have trained first aiders available • Mark and quarantine damaged equipment until it is repaired • Record in damage log • Repair equipment
Lifting and carrying boats, oars, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach good lifting technique • Assistance from additional people • Good control and instruction (coxing) • Ensure that one person controls all the movements of each boat. 	Strains and Musculo-Skeletal Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid • Rest • Gentle exercise • Physiotherapy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good control and instruction (coxing) • Ensure that one person controls all the movements of each boat. • Keep a good lookout (coach/cox) • Good technique (oars) 	Person struck by object being carried	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid treatment

9.7. Faulty, Incorrectly Set and Poorly Maintained Equipment

It is important to understand that faulty, incorrectly set and poorly maintained equipment can put rowers and others at risk. Care should be taken to ensure that the risks associated with these issues are incorporated into the Risk Assessment.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand how to adjust equipment for their own use.
- Check equipment before going afloat.
- Know how to quarantine defective equipment.
- Not use defective equipment.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Define a procedure for quarantining equipment.
- Ensure that equipment is maintained in good working order.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Coach rowers in adjusting equipment for their own use.
- Coach rowers to check equipment before going afloat.
- Coach rowers to know how to quarantine defective equipment.
- Not allow rowers to use defective equipment.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Define how they intend to check equipment used at the competition.
- Communicate this decision to participants or participating clubs.
- Report any failed boat checks to their region.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Review incidents in the region.
- Provide advice to clubs and competitions on safety.

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

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive

Example Risk Management Plan

Hazards associated with incorrectly set and poorly maintained equipment

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Incorrect stretcher placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check adjustments • Coach rowers to check 	Capsize due to hands going past chest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue with launch • Teach capsize drill and buddy rescue technique • Use Lifejacket or buoyancy aid
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check adjustments • Coach rowers to check 	Musculo-Skeletal Disorders and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid • Rest • Gentle exercise • Physiotherapy
Inappropriate gearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check adjustments • Coach rowers to check 	Musculo-Skeletal Disorders and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid • Rest • Gentle exercise • Physiotherapy
Gate not fastened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check equipment before going afloat • Coach rowers to check equipment 	Capsize due to lost oar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue with safety boat or attempt buddy with another rowing boat.
Steering failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check adjustments • Coach rowers to check 	Inability to steer correctly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat • Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water)
Heel restraints broken or too loose, shoes not securely fixed to the stretcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check equipment before going afloat • Coach rowers to check equipment • Do not go afloat until fixed 	May be trapped in capsized boat by feet caught in shoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescue with safety boat or attempt buddy rescue with another rowing boat.
Seats, shoes or footplates loose or broken or steering failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check equipment before going afloat • Coach rowers to check equipment • Defect/maintenance log • Mark and quarantine faulty equipment 	May struggle to get back to boathouse against stream or wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat • Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) • Carry an anchor • Carry extra clothing, drinking water, radio to call for assistance, etc.

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Steering failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check equipment before going afloat • Coach rowers to check • Defect/maintenance log • Mark and quarantine faulty equipment • Coach coxes and rowers to steer by pressure 	Collision with bank, another boat or a solid object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat • Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) • Carry first aid kit and radio or mobile phone to contact emergency services • Have trained first aiders available
Hatch covers missing or not correctly fitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure covers are all fitted correctly 	Boat may sink if swamped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have safety boat and throw lines available to rescue rowers and recover boat • Use throw lines from the bank to pull the boat into the bank (or shallow water) • Row or tow boat to shore then carry or tow empty boat to boathouse or relaunch and row back

9.8. Pre-existing Health Conditions and Low Levels of Fitness

These considerations should be incorporated into the Risk Assessment.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Discuss any health and fitness concerns with the coach or club.
- Refrain from rowing if they are unwell or not sufficiently fit.
- Refrain from training if they feel unwell or if to do so would be unsafe.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Include rower health and fitness in their Risk Assessment.
- Support rowers who feel that they are unfit or unwell.
- Ensure that no pressure is put on rowers who are unfit or unwell.
- Inform any Competition that they enter if a rower has a pre-existing medical condition that may impact their safety or that of others.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Check that rowers are sufficiently fit and well for the planned activity.
- Support rowers who feel that they are unfit or unwell.
- Ensure that no pressure is put on rowers who are unfit or unwell.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Review incidents in the region.
- Provide advice to clubs and competitions on safety.

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

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- [RowSafe 6.1](#) - People new to rowing
- [RowSafe 8.6](#) - Coping with Illness and Diseases
- [RowSafe 8.6.1](#) - Common Illness and Diseases
- [RowSafe 8.6.2](#) - Chronic Conditions and Diseases
- [RowSafe 8.6.3](#) - Asthma

Example Risk Management Plan

Hazards associated with pre-existing health conditions or low level of fitness

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Rowers with low level of fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand fitness capabilities and work within them Improve fitness levels 	Collapse or illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment Seek Medical attention If necessary, request assistance from ambulance, coastguard or navigation authority
Pre-existing health conditions (See RowSafe 8.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that relevant people know of the condition so that appropriate action can be taken to prevent an incident. 	Medical incident afloat or on land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment Seek Medical attention If necessary, request assistance from ambulance, coastguard or navigation authority
Crew member or sculler with asthma (See RowSafe 8.6.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that an inhaler is carried and used when appropriate Avoid stressful situations Take extra care if person is in a 1x or 2x 	Asthmatic incident afloat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring Casualty ashore First aid treatment Seek Medical attention If necessary, request assistance from coastguard or navigation authority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that an inhaler is carried and used when appropriate Avoid stressful situations 	Asthmatic incident on land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment Seek Medical attention If necessary, request an ambulance
Crew member or sculler with diabetes (See RowSafe 8.6.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that appropriate food and medicines (if necessary) are available Take extra care if person is in a 1x or 2x 	Diabetic incident afloat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring Casualty ashore First aid treatment Seek Medical attention If necessary, request assistance from coastguard or navigation authority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that appropriate food and medicines (if necessary) are carried 	Diabetic incident on land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment Seek Medical attention If necessary, request an ambulance
Crew member or sculler other known disorder (See RowSafe 8.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry appropriate items 	Incident afloat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring Casualty ashore First aid treatment Seek Medical attention If necessary, request assistance from Coastguard or navigation authority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that appropriate items are available 	Incident on land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid treatment Seek Medical attention If necessary, request an ambulance
Flu/viral infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourage rowers from taking exercise when they are ill. 	Disease may spread or worsen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek Medical attention

9.9. Ocean Rowing Risk Management Plan

There is general guidance on Ocean Rowing in [section 10.3](#) of RowSafe.

There are many hazards inherent in Ocean Rowing and this risk management plan deals with those associated with a person falling or being swept overboard and capsizing. It is understood that capsize events are not uncommon events. There is also a brief mention of collisions at sea.

The following guidance is general and should be used with care. For example, there is little advantage in having a throw line on a single seat boat and it may not be practicable to have more than one person on deck at all times on a small boat.

Note 1: Guardrails

Guardrails are fitted on both sides to the deck to help ensure that the members of the crew do not fall overboard. They should consist of taut, strong, webbing securely fixed to the boat at both ends.

The top rail should be fitted as high as practicable and there should be a lower rail or rails, parallel with the top rail, to ensure that nobody falls overboard under the top rail. The rail should be positioned so as not to make it difficult for a person to be recovered back on board.

Note 2: Harnesses, Lifelines, Jackstays

The purpose of the combination of Harnesses, Lifelines and Jackstays is to keep members of the crew connected to the boat in the event of them falling or being swept overboard.

The harness is usually in the form of a substantial belt rated for this application, this will be worn at all times by every member of the crew who is on deck or who is entering or leaving a cabin. If a lifejacket with crotch straps is being worn correctly then its integral harness may be a viable alternative as would a conventional yachting harness.

A lifeline is a line, normally made from strong webbing material with carabiners or similar fasteners at both ends. One end is attached to the harness and the other to a jackstay. It is important that both ends of the lifeline are correctly attached before a crew member leaves a cabin and until they have returned to the cabin. Elasticated lifelines may be preferred as they create less of a tripping hazard. Lifelines should be sufficiently long so that any person swept overboard as a boat capsizes is not held underwater by their lifeline.

Jackstays normally consist of strong webbing material and run along the deck on both sides of the boat. Their ends are securely fixed to the deck and the ends are positioned in such a way that they can easily be reached by a person in the cabin entrance.

Note 3: Lifejackets

The purpose of Lifejackets is to keep people afloat if they enter the water.

Ideally, they should be auto-inflation with hydrostatic actuators, and be equipped with a crotch strap and automatic light. They should have a buoyancy of no less than 150 Newtons.

They should be [fitted correctly](#) and [routinely checked](#).

Note 4: Lights

Red head torches should be worn by each crew member when on deck at night. Their purpose is to help the crew member to see and be seen. Red lights are recommended because they tend to cause little degradation of night vision.

Boats should be equipped with navigation lights. These should be switched on if other vessels are in the vicinity, for example if they can be seen or detected by the AIS and in coastal waters. They may not need to be switched on in full daylight if visibility is good.

Some rowers may, at times, choose not to use navigation lights when well out to sea in order to give them better visibility of oncoming vessels, allow them to see sea conditions better and reduce sea sickness. Not using navigation lights at night exposes rowers to the hazard of a collision and should only be contemplated after careful consideration and cannot be recommended.

Note 5: Drogues, parachute anchors and towed lines

Drogues or parachute anchors are deployed to reduce the downwind drift of the boat and to hold it in a stable direction with respect to the following waves. This will reduce the probability of broaching and capsize.

Broaching occurs when a boat runs quickly down a wave front and turns parallel to the wave front in the trough. The boat is then broadside on to the next wave and at risk of being capsized.

The line used to connect the drogue or parachute anchor to the boat should be securely fixed to a strong-point on the stern of the boat. The length of line (distance between the drogue or parachute anchor) should be as long as practicable.

A towed line is used to provide a crew member who has fallen overboard with a last chance to be recovered into the boat. It should consist of a long floating line with a floating light at the end. It should be deployed whenever the downwind speed of the boat is such that it would be difficult to turn the boat and row upwind towards a casualty in the water.

Further Information

- Safety Alert – Check your lifejacket, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-check-your-lifejacket.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Lifejackets, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf>

Example Risk Management Plan

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Rogue wave in calm or moderate water (see 10.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taut webbing running the length of both sides of the cockpit (see note 1). • Keep decks clear, take care to avoid tripping hazards. • Take great care when moving about on deck, crawl rather than walk and hold on. 	Person falls or is swept overboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of harness and lifeline clipped to a jackstay or other strongpoint (see note 2). • Wear an auto-inflation lifejacket (see note 3).
Failure of (or failure to use) harness and/or lifeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taut webbing running the length of both sides of the cockpit (see note 1). • Check equipment prior to each use. • Keep decks clear, take care to avoid tripping hazards. • Take great care when moving about on deck, crawl rather than walk and hold on. 	Person falls overboard and remains stationary as the boat is swept away (boat not connected to casualty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate recovery to the boat • Have at least two persons on deck • Use throw line or rescue quito to bring person back to the boat. • Tow a buoyant line astern with buoy and floating light at end (see note 5). • Wear a red head torch at night (see note 4). • Wear an auto-inflation lifejacket (see note 3). • Deploy a sea anchor to reduce the downwind drift of the boat (see note 5).
			<p><u>Subsequent rescue if not recovered immediately</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every crew member carries a PLB. • Wear a red head torch at night (see note 4). • Wear an auto-inflation lifejacket (see note 3). • Deploy an auto inflation danbuoy with light. • Use Man Overboard (MoB) facility on GPS to fix position, transmit MAYDAY by VHF • Contact competition organisers to initiate rescue.

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Rough water (see 10.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use drogue to keep boat heading downwind (i.e. at 90 degrees to the waves) (see note 5) • Ensure crew are safe in cabins with hatches closed to prevent water ingress. Ensure that vents are closed if the boat capsizes. 	Capsize causing people to be thrown overboard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Ensure that water ballast tanks or containers are kept full and any heavy items are securely stowed low in the boat to promote self-righting.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that decks are cleared and deck equipment is stowed below deck or lashed securely on deck. 	Capsize causing equipment to be lost overboard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure each crew member is wearing head protection 	Capsize causing head injuries to crew in cabin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat with first aid. • Call race organisers if support or advice is needed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure each crew member is wearing head protection. • Ensure that moveable equipment, etc. is stowed securely. • Ensure that fixed equipment is enclosed. 	Capsize causing injuries due to contact with equipment in a cabin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat with first aid. • Call race organisers if support or advice is needed
Other Shipping in the vicinity when crew is closed up in cabin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Navigation lights are switched on and AIS is transmitting (see note 4). • Monitor AIS and use VHF to warn other shipping of your presence. 	Collision with, or being run down by, other shipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use whatever equipment is available to call for help
Other Shipping in the vicinity at night or visibility is less than “good”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Navigation lights are switched on and AIS is transmitting (see note 4). 	Collision with, or being run down by, other shipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use whatever equipment is available to call for help

9.10. Rowing in floods

From time to time, the area around rowing clubs floods. Under some conditions it may be safe to continue rowing over flooded areas of land but this will require great care. This should only be attempted once a venue specific risk assessment has been completed and used to define the safety rules for this activity.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Learn about the hazards of rowing in floods, and the relevant club safety rules.
- Take care and comply with the rules when rowing in floods.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Complete a venue specific risk assessment and define the related safety rules before allowing this activity to commence.
- Provide information to members as appropriate.
- Agree restrictions on boating activities with other water users.
- Ensure that rules and guidelines are observed.
- Suspend or curtail boating activities where the conditions are assessed as unsafe.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Understand the club rules about rowing in floods.
- Explain these rules to rowers.

Further Information

- Safety Alert, Rowing in floods, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Safety-Alert-Rowing-in-Floods-Nov-2019.pdf>

Example Risk Management Plan

There are five different issues with floods. They are:-

1. The water in flooded rivers tends to move quickly.
2. The water in flooded rivers tends to be turbulent.
3. Stationary objects, such as buoys, in fast moving water are hazardous.
4. The water over flooded land may hide solid objects (e.g. fence posts) slightly below the surface.
5. Flood water is often contaminated with sewage, farm animal waste and other materials, and may contain other debris.

The water in flooded rivers tends to move quickly

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
The speed of the water flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding a land based alternative activity Finding an alternative stretch of water (e.g. a canal) where the water is moving less quickly Starting the outing by rowing upstream so that it is downstream back to the boathouse Using bigger, faster boats (e.g. eights rather than singles) Mixing crews so that Juniors row in boats with stronger, more experienced rowers Staying close to the bank and the inside of bends where the water speed is likely to be a little less 	Inability of rowers to make headway against the flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a launch to rescue the crew and then returning for the boat Landing the boat and carrying it back to the boathouse

The water in flooded rivers tends to be turbulent

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
<p>Turbulence in fast moving water particularly problem downstream of obstructions (e.g. bridges)</p> <p>Turbulence is often just below the surface and invisible from the bank or boat</p> <p>Floating and swimming can be very difficult or impossible due to undertows</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding a land based alternative activity Finding an alternative stretch of water (e.g. a canal) where the water is less turbulent Avoid areas that can be expected to be turbulent Using coxed rather than coxless boats Use larger boats 	<p>Steering and retaining control of boats becomes difficult as turbulence can cause a boat to veer off course surprisingly quickly</p> <p>Singles and pairs in particular can capsize</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a launch to rescue the crew and then returning for the boat Provision of helpers with throw lines on the bank Provision of support by a properly trained and equipped First Aider

Stationary objects, such as buoys, in fast moving water are hazardous

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
<p>The flow of water past anchored stationary objects such as:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moored boats • Buoys (both for navigation and mooring) • Bridges • Pontoon • Weirs and sluices • Floating docks or • Any other obstruction that the water flows past quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a land based alternative activity • Finding an alternative stretch of water (e.g. a canal) where the water is moving less quickly • Revision of the circulation plan to take the obstructions into account • Taking care to avoid the obstructions • Not stopping or turning upstream of an obstruction • Using coxed rather than coxless boats • Having a coach in a launch supervise the outing and provide an extra lookout 	<p>Boats can be swept into a stationary object and perhaps pinned against it or pulled under it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a launch to rescue the crew and then returning for the boat • Provision of helpers with throw lines on the bank • Provision of support by a properly trained and equipped First Aider

The water over flooded land may hide solid objects (e.g. fence posts) slightly below the surface

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
<p>Fixed obstructions just below the water in flooded areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a land alternative activity • Careful navigation and local knowledge to avoid obstructions • Keeping a good look-out for indicators of obstructions • Operating a buddy system 	<p>Collision with a fixed obstruction just below the water in a flooded area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the depth and, if appropriate, carry the boat back to the boathouse • Provision of support by a properly trained and equipped First Aider • Buddy Rescue

Flood water is often contaminated with sewage, farm animal waste and other materials, and may contain other debris

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Flood water contaminated with untreated sewage or with animal urine and faeces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding a land based alternative activity Avoiding or minimising exposure to the water Keeping all cuts and grazes covered with a water-proof dressing Avoid eating when afloat and maintain good hand hygiene 	Serious illness (e.g. Weil's disease) if the water is ingested or enters the body through uncovered cuts or grazes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washing or showering after the outing Seeking medical treatment as soon as any symptoms are noticed
Debris in the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding a land based alternative activity Keeping a good lookout over both left and right shoulders and taking care to avoid the debris Using coxed rather than coxless boats Having a coach in a launch supervise the outing and provide an extra lookout 	Collision with debris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a launch to rescue the crew and then returning for the boat Provision of support by a properly trained and equipped First Aider

9.11. Indoor Rowing

Indoor rowing is usually a low risk activity but it is not risk free. There are serious risks from overexertion and using poor technique. Care is needed to ensure that risks are kept to acceptable levels.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Take care when indoor rowing and follow the rules specified by the club.
- Be aware of the correct indoor rowing technique.
- Stop if it hurts.
- Avoid encouraging others to overexert.
- Control their own training and aim for small incremental improvements see [Safety Alert - Care when Indoor Rowing](#).

Club, School or Gym

Club, School and Gym Officers are expected to:

- Complete a venue specific risk assessment and use it to develop rules for indoor rowing.
- Provide information to members as appropriate.
- Ensure that appropriate provision is made for first aid care.
- Consider the need for Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training.
- Consider the provision of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

Competitions

Competition organisers are expected to:

- Complete a venue specific risk assessment and use it to develop rules for the competition.
- Use the risk assessment to develop the safety plan for the competition.
- Ensure that appropriate provision is made for first aid care.
- Consider the need for Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training.
- Consider the provision of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Coach the correct indoor rowing technique.
- Instruct rowers to stop if it hurts.
- Avoid encouraging rowers to overexert.
- Coach rowers to control their training and aim for small incremental improvements see Safety Alert - Care when Indoor Rowing.

Risk Management Plans are provided for the following activities:

- Indoor Rowing Training or Competition.
- Pre-existing Medical Conditions when Training or Competing.
- Setting up for an Indoor Rowing Competition.
- Transport of Indoor Rowing Machines.
- Storage of Indoor Rowing Machines.
- Assembly and disassembly of Indoor Rowing Machines.

Further Information

- [RowSafe 11.1](#), Indoor Rowing.
- Indoor Rowing Technique, <https://www.britishrowing.org/indoor-rowing/go-row-indoor/how-to-indoor-row/> .
- Safety Alert – take care setting up your C2 rowing machine, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Safety-Alert-take-care-setting-up-your-C2-rowing-machine-1.pdf> .
- Safety Alert - Care when Indoor Rowing, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Safety-Alert-Care-when-Indoor-Rowing-Feb-2020.pdf> .

Indoor Rowing Training or Competition

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Use of poor technique when rowing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Coaching. 	Musculoskeletal injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer First Aid as appropriate. • Possible referral to a Physiotherapist.
Insufficient space between machines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there is adequate space. 	Rower trips and falls over the machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer First Aid
Too many people around the machines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there are not too many people around the machines. 	Rower trips and falls over the machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer First Aid
Rower fails to ensure adequate nutrition before starting exercise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing for participants. 	Rower collapses or feels unwell due to lack of nutrition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid and administration of high glucose food or drink.
Rower fails to ensure adequate hydration before starting exercise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing for participants, provision of drinking water. 	Rower becomes dehydrated and feels ill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aiders or coaches, etc. provide drinking water.
Abnormal Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the temperature is within acceptable ranges for physical exertion. 	Rower becomes hypothermic or hyperthermic when rowing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer First Aid.
Overexertion by rower.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition officials and coaches monitor effort from a distance and intervene as appropriate. 	Collapse, possible cardiac issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid, possibly Life Support (CPR & AED), evacuation to hospital.
Peer pressure from colleagues, coaches etc. causing rowers to overexert.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition Officials and coaches keep people not using ergs away from those that are. 	Overexertion leading to collapse, possible cardiac issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid, possibly Life Support (CPR & AED), evacuation to hospital.
Rowers feel ill and vomit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell rowers to stop if they feel ill. Have buckets or containers to vomit into available. 	Rowers vomit contaminating the machine and causing a slipping hazard on the floor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have materials available to clean the machines and the floor.
Unclean rowing machines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean machines (particularly handles and seat) as deemed appropriate. 	Transmission of viruses and bacteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise symptoms and seek medical advice as appropriate.
Long tops (clothing) catching between seat rollers and the track machine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach people with long tops on to tuck them in. 	Rower pulled backward off seat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer First Aid.
Liquid spill on hard floor (slip hazard).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning up any spills as they happen. 	Slips and falls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer First Aid.
Rower with long hair holding feet during relay races	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that rowers with long hair do not hold feet unless the hair is tied back up 	Hair becomes entangled in the machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut hair to free the rower from the machine

Pre-existing Medical Conditions when Training or Competing

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Rower with epilepsy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell rowers to stop if they feel unwell. 	Rower has an epileptic episode.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid, call for ambulance support if needed. Provide extra space around the machine.
Rower with diabetes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help rowers to be properly prepared Tell rowers to stop if they feel unwell. 	Rower has a diabetic episode.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid, call for ambulance support if needed.
Rower with asthma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use inhaler prior to starting exercise, tell rowers to stop if they feel unwell. 	Rower has an asthmatic episode.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid, call for ambulance support if needed.
Unknown medical issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell rowers to stop if they feel unwell. 	Rower collapses or feels ill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid, call for ambulance support if needed.

Setting up for an Indoor Rowing Competition

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Trip hazard from cabling of race system, extension leads/AV equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tape down cabling where needed and define no go zones. 	Person trips over cable and falls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid.
Electrical equipment in poor working condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule of portable electrical equipment testing of electrical equipment. 	Electric shock or fire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid. Evacuate site.
Water (or aqueous solution) spilled onto electrical equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep water, etc. away from electrical equipment. 	Electric shock or fire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid. Evacuate site.
Other people in the vicinity when equipment is being moved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait for quiet time to move equipment if possible or position equipment before the people arrive. 	Collision between machines or people moving them and other people in the vicinity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid.
Competition volunteers do not understand their responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that event volunteers are fully briefed. 	Various	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid, etc.

Transport of Indoor Rowing Machines

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Loading and unloading machines into vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief the people not familiar with equipment Have sufficient people, some on the vehicle 	Falling from rear of van with equipment in hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid
Equipment moving in a vehicle during transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that load is adequately secured 	Movement of heavy equipment in the event of a harsh braking or a collision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call for help Administer First Aid
Moving equipment up or down stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find another possible route (lift or ramps) or briefing on extra care if no other alternate routes, have sufficient people 	Fall or trip with equipment or Musculoskeletal injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid as appropriate Possible referral to a Physiotherapist

Storage of Indoor Rowing Machines

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Fall of machines stored upright	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If possible split machines in two or store secured to fixed object Keep people clear of the area around upright machines 	Machine(s) topple over hitting a person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid

Assembly and disassembly of Indoor Rowing Machines

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Splitting rowing machines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing for people not familiar with the equipment 	Trapped fingers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid
Movement of seat on the monorail section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing for people not familiar with the equipment 	Trapped fingers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid
Lifting and carrying heavy parts of rowing machines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing for people not familiar with equipment on correct lifting technique 	Musculoskeletal injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid as appropriate Possible referral to a Physiotherapist
Injury due to equipment failure or incorrect assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before use check equipment is in full working order and correctly assembled 	Machine fails during use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer First Aid

10. Rowing on the Sea

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.

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following section:

- 10.1 [Coastal and Inshore Rowing](#)
- 10.2 [Fixed Seat Sea Rowing](#)
 - 10.2.1 [Gig and Other Fixed Seat Boat Safety Kits](#)
- 10.3 [Ocean Rowing](#)
 - 10.3.1 [Ocean Rowing Safety Equipment](#)
- 10.4 [Beach Sprint Risk Management](#)
 - 10.4.1 [Safe People](#)
 - 10.4.2 [Safe Equipment](#)
 - 10.4.3 [Safe Practice](#)
 - 10.4.4 [Daily Risk Assessment](#)
 - 10.4.5 [Risk Rating Calculator](#)

10. Rowing on The Sea

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

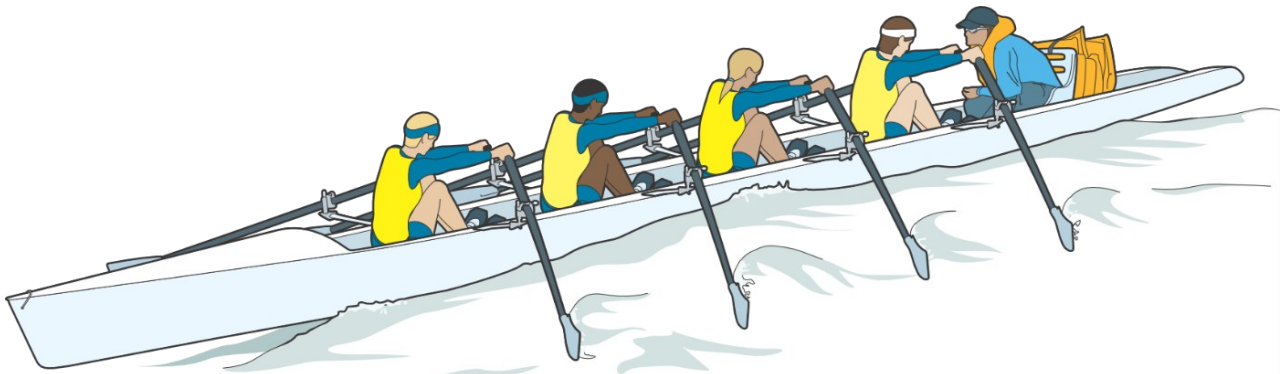
Expectations

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. (Note: - Water actuated auto-inflation lifejackets may be actuated by being splashed. Manual inflation or pressure actuated auto-inflation lifejackets may be preferred.)
- Abide by club rules, local navigation rules and any other rules.
- Row only in the conditions that they can cope with.



Understand the hazards associated with coastal and inshore rowing

© Richard Palmer

Club

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 crews keep a good lookout for swimmers (see [Safety Alert - look out for swimmers](#)).
- 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.

Coxes

Coxes are expected to:

- Wear a lifejacket at all times when afloat
- Ensure that the crew has checked the boat
- Check, prior to each launch, that:
 - Their boats have sufficient buoyancy for the conditions likely to be encountered
- 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.
- Complete the appropriate [online coxing workshop](#).

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).
- Provide coaching to coaches (see [Coastal Cox/Boat Captain Workshop](#)).
- 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](#).

Launch Drivers

Launch drivers are expected to:

- Be competent and hold any qualification required by the host club, navigation authority or venue management.
- 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
- Safety Alert on Lifejackets - britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf
- Safety Alert - check your Lifejacket, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-check-your-lifejacket.pdf>
- Safety Alert - look out for swimmers, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-look-out-for-swimmers.pdf>
- RNLI Guidance on Lifejackets - <https://rnli.org/-/media/rnli/downloads/rnli-guide-to-lifejackets-and-buoyancy-aids.pdf?fd=true>
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- Coastal Rowing – Planning and Resource Guide - [Coastal Rowing: Planning and Resource Guide: Amazon.co.uk: Churchill, Dr Nancy, WA Inc, Coastal Rowing: 9798372781405: Books](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B000APR004)
- Coastal Cox/Boat Captain Workshop - <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=88>

World Rowing is keen to promote and support Coastal Rowing in FISA coastal boats. World Rowing has published a series of videos on YouTube. The links are listed below:-

- [Coaches introduction to Coastal Rowing \[G1.1\] - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Module Online Introduction \(#1\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing SAFE Overview Keynote \(#2\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing SAFE Float Plan & Nav Hazards \(#3\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing SAFE Pre Launch \(#4\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Launching & Landing Keynote \(#5\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rescue Drills Keynote \(#6\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Tech - Phases \(#7\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Tech - Boat Entry \(#8\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Tech - Boat Exit \(#9\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Tech - Race turns \(#10\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Tech - Watership \(#11\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing - Beach Sprint Race Logistics \(#12\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing - Running a selection race for beach sprint \(#13\) - YouTube](#)
- [Beach Start - Coastal Rowing Endurance C2x - YouTube](#)

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.

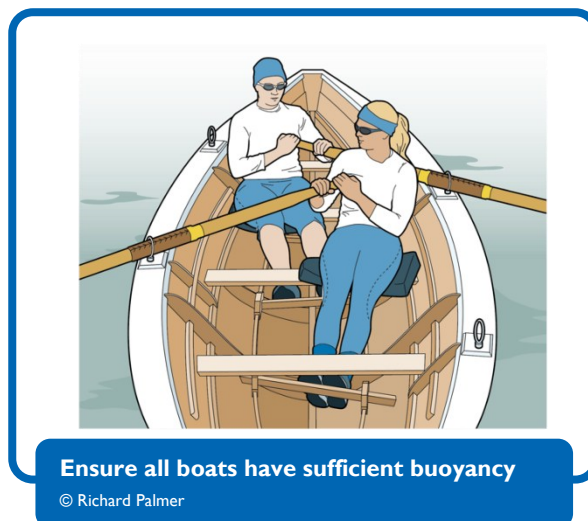
Expectations

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. (Note: - Water actuated auto-inflation lifejackets may be actuated by being splashed. Manual inflation or pressure actuated auto-inflation lifejackets may be preferred.)
- Abide by club rules, local navigation rules and any other rules.



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 keep a good lookout for swimmers (see [Safety Alert - look out for swimmers](#)).
- 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:

- Take command of the boat, although coxes who are juniors should be guided by a senior rower or a coach in the immediate vicinity (e.g. in a launch).
- 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.
- Complete the appropriate [online coxing workshop](#).

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.
- Provide coaching to coxes (see [Fixed Seat Rowing Coxing Workshop](#)).
- 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.



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

© Richard Palmer

Launch Drivers

Launch Drivers are expected to:

- Be competent and hold any qualification required by the host club, navigation authority or venue management.
- 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.

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

- Online Coxing Workshops - [online coxing workshop](#)
- Safety Alert on Lifejackets - [britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf](#)
- Safety Alert - check your Lifejacket, [https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-check-your-lifejacket.pdf](#)
- Safety Alert - look out for swimmers, [https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-look-out-for-swimmers.pdf](#)
- RNLI Guidance on Lifejackets - [https://rnli.org/-/media/rnli/downloads/rnli-guide-to-lifejackets-and-buoyancy-aids.pdf?fd=true](#)
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - [incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/](#)
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive/](#)
- Sound Signals - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkFhf9Cz68c](#)
- Navigation Lights - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-mgZHN7FKA](#)
- Navigation Marks - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYdED6cXtl&index=3&list=PLomvEgt6UAfE45FIqiSpr0_hxXlo-kbnf](#)
- Safety Alert – Manual Lifejackets in Gigs - [https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Safety-Alert-Manual-Lifejackets-in-Gigs-June-2022.pdf](#)
- Fixed Seat Rowing Coxing Workshop - [https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=30](#)

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' or "emergency ponchos" 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, in a waterproof pouch tied to a person and not to the boat, 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

10.3. Ocean Rowing

Ocean rowing in this context refers to long distance rowing in rowing boats constructed to cross oceans.

Ocean rowing is, by its very nature, a high risk activity. It requires extensive safety provisions to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. Anyone considering participating in ocean rowing should carefully consider the risk associated and, in all cases, ensure that appropriate safety provisions are in place.

This guidance is intended to help in that process but only to the extent of the hazards that it covers.

There are many hazards associated with Ocean Rowing but this guidance is limited to the two that are probably of most concern. These are being lost overboard and capsize.

It has been assumed that this activity takes place in warm water. There is advice on rowing on cold water elsewhere in RowSafe.

Anyone who has little or no experience of ocean rowing and who intends to participate is advised to do so in an organised event that comprises a large number of rowing boats and has support available both on land and at sea. Events of this type are usually organised by experienced and competent people. The infrastructure and backup that they provide helps to reduce the level of risk.

The following guidance is general and should be used with care. For example, there is little advantage in having a throw line on a single seat boat and it may not be practicable to have more than one person on deck at all times on a small boat.

There is more information in the generic Risk Management Plan in [9.9 Ocean Rowing Risk Management Plan](#).

People lost overboard

People who fall or are swept overboard risk being lost if they are not recovered quickly. The basic approach to the management of this risk is:

1. Keep people on their boats
 - Stop people from falling overboard using taut webbing rails (not guard wires) as high as practicable
 - Have a second, lower, rail midway between the upper rail and the deck.
 - Rowers should take great care when moving about the boat and keep a firm grip at all times.
2. Rescue anyone who falls or is swept overboard but is still connected to the boat
 - Everyone will use a lifeline at all times when they are on deck.
 - Everyone will wear a secure waist belt or harness; the lifeline will run from a secure attachment on this belt or harness to a jackstay on deck or another strongpoint on deck
 - Lifelines will be attached before anyone leaves the cabin and kept attached to it until they are safely back inside the cabin.
 - In conditions where a lifejacket is needed, then the lifeline should attach to the harness point on the lifejacket. Crotch straps shall be used.
 - The lifeline should be sufficiently long so that if the boat rolls, then anyone on deck is not trapped under water as the boat self-rights.
 - All members of the crew know exactly how to respond if there is a person in the water and crews should have practised man overboard drills extensively.

3. Attempt to rescue anyone who is in the water but not connected to the boat
 - Have a rescue quoit on a thin line (proprietary device) at each end of the deck. A throw bag may be an acceptable alternative.
 - Throw lines (as described above) should be securely mounted on the outer surface of each cabin bulkhead and retained such that they can be accessed without delay but will not be lost accidentally in a storm or in a knockdown.
 - Ensure that all crew members know how to throw a rescue quoit or throw bag, as demonstrated in the British Rowing [Man Overboard and Recovery](#) video.
 - Ensure that all crew members know how to hold a line (with the arms and not just with the hands).
 - Do not keep a loose line on deck, it is difficult to throw from a moving deck and can easily become a tripping hazard or lost overboard.
4. Facilitate the rescue of anyone lost overboard
 - Deploy a drogue or parachute anchor and tow a floating line with a buoy and floating light at the end (encourage the casualty to grab the line and recover them into the boat).
 - Deploy an auto-inflation danbuoy with light.
 - The casualty should activate their PLB (or AIS).
 - Fix position by GPS, transmit MAYDAY by VHF ([see section 2.3](#)).
 - Notify Event organisers.

Surviving knockdowns and capsizes

Ocean rowing boats are designed to be self-righting and have sealed cabins for the protection of the crews. Many are also fitted with drinking water tanks, or spaces for drinking water containers, low in the boat; these act as ballast in rough seas. They should be kept full to expedite self-righting.

Capsizes are relatively common but boats should self-right without delay.

In conditions where a capsize is likely:

- Ensure that the crew is safe in the cabins
- Deploy a drogue or parachute anchor.
- Ensure that the entire crew are sealed in the cabins.
- Ensure that all hatches are closed and watertight.
- Ensure that all vents are closed and watertight in the event of a capsize.
- Ensure that all loose items are stowed.
- Ensure that all crew members are wearing head protection to protect their heads if the boat capsizes.

Expectations

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

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand the hazards associated with ocean rowing (such as weather, shipping, distance from land, etc.) and the barriers and controls to be used (see [Risk Management Plans section 9.9](#)).
- Abide by event rules.

Ocean Rowers

Ocean rowers are expected to:

- Be familiar with the operation of every item of safety and communications equipment carried on board.
- Comply with the requirements of event organisers.
- Carry a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) at all times. A portable Automatic Identification System (AIS) beacon may be preferred but this is only suitable for the crew of multi-seat boats.
- Take great care when moving about on deck, whenever appropriate crawl rather than walk and hold on to the boat.
- Ensure that, where fitted, water ballast tanks or containers are kept full and any heavy items are securely stowed low in the boat full to promote self-righting.

The expectations of ocean rowers are summarised in the table below:

Sea Conditions	Daylight	Night
Calm WMO Sea State Code 0 (Calm) to 2 (Smooth) (Wave height less than 0.5 metres) Low Swell Wind strength force 0 to 2 (less than 6 knots, 3.3m/s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clip on harness before leaving the cabin, unclip only after returning to and safely inside the cabin. • Ensure that decks are kept clear and that there are no tripping hazards. • Ensure that drinking water ballast tanks or containers are full. 	As in daylight, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a red head torch switched on. • Switch on navigation lights.
Moderate WMO Sea State Code 3 (Slight) to 4 (Moderate) (Wave height between 0.5 and 2.5 metres) Moderate Swell Wind strength force 3 or 4 (7 to 16 knots, 3.5 – 8 m/s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clip on harness before leaving the cabin, unclip only after returning to and safely inside the cabin. • Wear auto-inflation lifejacket • Ensure that all hatches and vents are closed and watertight. • Have at least two persons on deck (or whole crew in cabins). • Ensure that drinking water ballast tanks or containers are full. 	As in daylight, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a red head torch switched on. • Switch on navigation lights.
Rough WMO Sea State Code 5 (Rough) or more. (Wave height greater than 2.5 metres) High Swell Wind strength force 5 or more (greater than 16 knots, 8m/s) Note: It may be safe to continue rowing in larger boats, with strong crews in otherwise good conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that decks are cleared and deck equipment is stowed below deck or lashed securely on deck. • Ensure that drinking water ballast tanks or containers are full. • Ensure that any heavy items are securely stowed low in the boat. • Ensure that crew members are all in cabins, hatches closed and secured, vents watertight, helmets on. • Ensure that moveable equipment, etc. is stowed securely. • Ensure that fixed equipment is enclosed. • Monitor AIS and use VHF to warn other shipping of your presence. 	As in daylight, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch on navigation lights.

For further information on Sea State see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_state. Sea state definitions should be used as guidance, the actual conditions, the size of the boat, and the state of the crew, should be used to determine the action to be taken.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.3. Ocean Rowing

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

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

Event Organisers

Event Organisers are expected to:

- Provide detailed safety rules for rowers.
- Provide infrastructure and backup to support rowers.
- Provide event rules that includes:
 - Boat and equipment specifications.
 - Boat and equipment specifications and inspections.
 - Communication rules.
 - Training and competence requirements.
- Provide support facilities at sea directly or through other agencies.
- Liaise with rescue coordination centres.

10.3.1. Ocean Rowing Safety Equipment

The following equipment should be carried on board

- Throw quoit and line or throw bag
- Life raft
- Grab bag
- Lifejacket (one for each person on board and a spare, rearming kits)
- Rated safety harness, or belt, and line (one for each person on board)
- Helmets or other head protection (one for each person on board)
- Safety clothing
- Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) with integral GPS
- Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) (one for each person on board) or Personal AIS on larger boats
- Flares
- Fire extinguisher
- Medical kit
- Signal mirror
- Safety knife
- Automatic Identification System (AIS) Radar transponder
- Satellite telephone
- VHF radio
- Global Positioning by Satellite (GPS) system
- Water maker
- Navigation light
- Suitable power supply
- Deck and shoulder height jackstays
- External grab lines
- Compass
- Suitable food stores
- Suitable cooking device
- Para anchor and drogues
- Bilge pump in each cabin to pump water out of the cabin
- Anchor, chain and warp
- Tool kit
- Spares
- Auto-inflation danbuoy with light
- Long floating line with buoy and floating light at the end ready to trail astern.
- Towing line

10.4. Beach Sprint Risk Management

Aim

The aim of this section is to assist coaches, clubs, organising committees and others with the Risk Management process for beach sprint rowing activities in order to deliver training and events with high standards of safety.

Introduction

The information in this section of RowSafe is presented as four separate elements:

- Safe People,
- Safe Equipment,
- Safe Practice and
- Safe Place.

These are supplemented by sections on: -

- Daily Risk Assessment and
- Risk Rating Calculator

Each element will outline advice and guidance to enable beach sprint rowing activities to be conducted with the lowest reasonably practicable level of risk. It is not the intent of this section to detail the safety procedures to be followed in every possible situation: the range of possible activities, training methods, and variability in training locations is far too wide to keep up to date with change and development in techniques and practices.

Other than stating clearly the specific best practice, it aims to identify the internet links to appropriate national and international safety regulations, codes or advice, that supervising coaches and organisers are advised to use as an aid to conduct safe activities.

In all cases of referenced documents and instructions, the latest published edition at the time of reading is the authoritative source, regardless of whether it is directly referenced in this document. In all cases the latest policies and guidance here and elsewhere in RowSafe take precedence and should be consulted as the primary resource.

10.4.1. Safe People

Categorisation of Rowing Ability

Individual rowing ability is split into three levels which are characterised by the performance statements in the table below: -

Ability Level	Performance
Beginner	Needs tuition in all elements including launching and landing, basic rowing technique, basic sea skills, recognising and managing coastal conditions. Needs support with self-rescue.
Intermediate	Can launch and land with minimal support. Has basic rowing technique in line with the British Rowing technical model. Has basic up wave, down wave, slalom and turning skills. Can recognise a range of coastal conditions and can adapt technique and skill accordingly. Can self-rescue. Competent to compete in local and regional and national competitions.
Advanced	Can launch and land independently. Has advanced rowing technique in line with the British Rowing technical model. Has advanced up wave, down wave, slalom and turning skills and can use those skills to their advantage in race conditions. Can recognise a range of coastal conditions and take tactical advantage of them. Can self-rescue. Competent to compete nationally and internationally.

Training

All organised training is to be directly supervised by a nominated and appropriately qualified or experienced lead coach. The lead coach is responsible for ensuring that all necessary safety requirements are observed in accordance with the Safe Practice section.

The recommended maximum staff to student ratios are outlined below. Qualified coaches may be supported by designated non-qualified assistants, provided their responsibilities are clearly outlined prior to the training session. These are recommended maximum ratios, and may be increased or decreased depending on staff experience and prevailing weather conditions.

Beginner: 1 staff to 6 students

Intermediate: 1 staff to 8 students

Advanced: 1 staff to 12 students

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.1. Safe People

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

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

Competitions

A [Competition Rowing Safety Advisor](#) (CoRSA) should be nominated for competitions. Due to the nature of coastal rowing, the CoRSA should perform the additional responsibilities outlined below.

The additional responsibilities of a CoRSA include:

- To be briefed on the form and scope of the proposed competition.
- Carry out a reconnaissance and a complete full site-Specific Risk Assessment of the competition area to establish the extent of any hazards and the measures necessary to reduce any risks. In addition to the Met Office for weather and the Hydrographical Office (Easy Tide) for tidal information, local authorities should be consulted for tidal, depth, current, hazards to navigation and weather condition information.
- To advise the Race Director and Organising Committee on:
 - The Risk Assessment and the reduction measures.
 - The safety organisation required.
 - The equipment required.
 - The requirement for, and the contents of, safety rules
 - The need for briefing participants and staff and for practising safety drills.
- To establish the availability of resources that may be required, e.g. lifeboats, and how to obtain assistance.
- To act as the single point of contact for the safety support team
- To be responsible to the Race Director and Organising Committee for the safety of personnel and equipment by ensuring that risk reduction measures outlined in the risk assessments are implemented.

Safety Boat Helmsman

It is recommended that safety boat helmsmen hold a minimum qualification of RYA Power Boat Level 2 with experience of operating a power boat on the sea or a recognised equivalent qualification. Safety boat helmsmen should be familiar with the boat used, be aware of the equipment on board, and capable and confident in rescue techniques. The manning of the Safety Boat is to be determined by the lead coach or safety advisor but is never to be fewer than two people.

First Aid Qualifications

Due to the often isolated and remote locations used for training, coaches should hold an in-date First Aid qualification covering Basic Life Support or ensure such a trained and current individual is in the group. First Aid qualifications should include an assessment of the skills required to deal with the hazards associated with coastal rowing and those identified in the Risk Assessment.

10.4.2. Safe Equipment

Safety Boat

A Safety Boat should be reliable, properly maintained, powerful enough to deal with local water and weather conditions, and large enough to accommodate both its crew and personnel rescued from the largest craft under supervision. As a guide, a scale of one safety boat for every six craft on the water is recommended. Outboard Motors should be properly fitted with propeller guards designed for that propeller. The mechanical failure of one safety boat should not compromise the safety of the overall operation.

It is advised that the suitability and limitations of any launch for affecting a rescue of rowers or boats are assessed, and it should not be assumed that rowing coaching launches are suitable coastal rescue boats. It is not a reasonable assumption that 'any launch is better than none' particularly given the challenging conditions posed by operating in the shore break.

Each safety boat operating in coastal waters should be equipped with the appropriate Safety Equipment that should include, but not necessarily be limited to: -

- An anchor and cable made fast to the boat. The cable is to be at least 3 times for chain and 5 to 6 times for rope of the maximum depth of High Water for the area of operation.
- A boat hook.
- A bailer (in addition to any self-bailers).
- Powered boats are to carry a pair of oars or paddles.
- A life ring, Perry buoy or similar type of system to assist in Man Overboard recovery.
- A First Aid kit (held on shore if the size of boat precludes otherwise) and Emergency thermal poncho or blanket.
- A clearly visible marker buoy, line and sinker to mark obstacles or lost equipment.
- A radio with spare batteries (or spare radio). A VHF equipped with DSC is recommended. Mobile telephones in waterproof pouches, are only to be used as a last resort.
- A sharp safety knife for clearing rigging etc.
- A suitable tool kit and basic spares for the outboard motor.
- An air horn or loud hailer with siren function for signalling.
- In addition to the above, all boats used in Category C, D, 6, Inshore waters, and Deep Sea (see MGN 280) are also to carry: at least 2 rocket parachute red flares, 2 orange smoke signals and 3 handheld red flares.

See also [Launch Safety Kits](#).

In the event of a boat capsizing in deep water, the crew should stay with the boat rather than attempt to swim ashore.

Further information

Marine Guidance Note 280 - RIB Design Properties [MGN 280](#)

Merchant Shipping Notice 1827 - Categorisation of Waters [M Notice Template - MSF 5011](#)

RYA Guidance on Propeller Guards [Prop-Guards-Info-Sheet.pdf](#)

RYA Distress Alerting Info Sheet - [Distress-Alerting-Info-Sheet.pdf](#)

Pike, D. (2013). The Complete RIB Manual: The Definitive Guide to Design, Handling and Maintenance . A&C Black. [The Complete RIB Manual: The Definitive Guide to Design, Handling and Maintenance: Dag Pike: Adlard Coles - Bloomsbury](#)

RYA Powerboat Handbook [RYA Powerboat Handbook \(eBook\) | Products](#)

Rowing Boat

Recommended minimum boat standards and safety equipment to be carried for beach sprint and offshore rowing are outlined in the World Rowing Coastal rules. (see [World Rowing Rulebook](#) Rule RC9)

Helmets

Helmets may be worn at any time as a matter of athlete preference, unless otherwise directed by a coach, Rowing Safety Officer, Race Director or event Organising Committee taking account of local conditions. See [Safe Place](#) and [Safe Practice](#) sections for further guidance.

Coastal rowing helmets lack a dedicated safety standard. Helmets are used as secondary functions to their primary purpose, and therefore it is necessary to identify characteristics that reduce secondary risks to the lowest reasonably practicable level.

It is recommended that helmets used for coastal rowing: -

- Be [EN1385](#) approved.
- Be made of strong, lightweight material, e.g. plastic or carbon fibre.
- Cover head, providing ample protection to the forehead, temple and back of the skull.
- Float
- Should not feature a peak, visor or brim.
- Contain prominent and functional drainage holes.
- Must not cover the ears without functional canals to aid hearing.
- Must not be a “one size fits all” design across the model range.

Further information

RYA Helmet Information [Sailing Helmets | Safety Equipment](#)

SLSA Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Project – Surf Sports [slsa-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-project-surf-sports-may2015.pdf](#)

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.2. Safe Equipment

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

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

10.4.3. Safe Practice

Coastal rowing takes place in a flexible and rapidly changing environment; the following advice may be used to supplement that contained elsewhere in RowSafe.

There are three types of risk assessment recommended for use in coastal environments: -

- Specific Risk Assessments,
- Daily Risk Assessments and
- Dynamic Risk Assessments.

Specific Risk Assessments

Specific Risk Assessments used to assess and mitigate site-specific, club, location, or competition risks. They should be completed by a suitably qualified or experienced person in accordance with the guidance provided in [Competition Risk Assessment](#). Importantly, coastal sites can change rapidly as a result of prevailing weather, therefore Specific Risk Assessments should be reviewed regularly and as close to the planned event as possible.

Daily Risk Assessments

Daily Risk Assessments should be used by coaches or activity leaders for typical training activities and are a tool to assist with objectively assessing daily risk. A Daily Risk Assessment should be produced that considers: -

- Coach or leader Ability (IA)
- Coach Familiarity (IF)
- Rowers Ability (SA)
- Environmental Conditions (EC)
- Local Weather (LW)
- Activity Choice (AC)

Records of Daily Risk Assessments should be kept for 3 years. A suggested Daily Risk Assessment form is included in [section 10.4.5](#).

Dynamic Risk Assessment

Dynamic Risk Assessment is the practice of mentally observing, assessing and analysing an activity to identify and remove risk. The process allows individuals to identify a hazard on the spot and make quick decisions regarding safety. Dynamic Risk Assessments should be used in the 'live' environment to support the formal risk assessment process.

A dynamic risk assessment should be carried out if an unexpected hazard arises whilst the activity is underway; this could be as a result of an emergency or change to the activity or surrounding circumstances (for example, a sudden change in the weather conditions), which could increase the risk of injury or illness.

A dynamic risk assessment should be completed when:

- An unexpected hazard arises.
- An emergency situation develops.
- There is a significant change in the activity or surrounding environment or risk reduction measures.
- The activity deviates from the planned parameters (difficulty, duration, procedure).
- Sudden environmental changes occur (e.g. weather).
- A participant's condition changes (e.g. injury, fatigue, medical issue).

The decision-making process should involve rapidly analysing and reviewing the risks and benefits presented by the activity, making a judgement on whether the risks are proportional to any benefits, and selecting an appropriate response. An appropriate response may involve activity modification, the introduction of further risk reduction measures, introduction of personal protective equipment (i.e. helmets), or stopping the activity.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.4. Safe Place

Identifying a safe place or beach to conduct rowing depends on the interaction of several different elements affecting the shore area. The seven most frequently observable characteristics or features include

- wave height,
- wave period,
- wave type,
- surf zone width,
- surface turbulence,
- drift or crosswind, and
- offshore currents (rips).

At any particular time and position along a beach, these characteristics may result in different energy transferred into the rowing area and their effect on participant safety.

These observable characteristics may be assigned a score to produce a Risk Rating, which can be used to assist safety-related decisions such as participants wearing helmets, increasing the number of boat handlers, widening the course, reducing the timetable, or adapting the position and amount of safety boat cover. The primary purpose of calculating a Risk Rating is to provide objective information which can assist competition officials. A Risk Rating can be updated continuously throughout the event as conditions change. However, a Risk Rating may also assist coaches and activity leaders in assessing conditions during training sessions.

The aims of calculating a Risk Rating include:

- To enable activity leaders, coaches, safety advisors, officials and others to be advised of a Risk Rating in a timely and efficient manner.
- To have a consistent process for the evaluation of risk for rowing from a beach.
- To provide decision makers with information to enable them to make informed decisions.
- To provide key prompts associated with safety and risk management.
- To enable activity leaders, coaches, and officials to reduce the level of risk through mitigation.
- To act as a tool for the collection of data that may assist in determining future safety practices.

A [Risk Rating Calculator](#) has been included below.

Further information

[Surf Hazard Rating: A Decision-making System for Application to Competition through the Surf Zone](#)

[MCA beach safety advice](#)

[Managing Beach Safety - GOV.UK](#)

[Waves and Beaches: The Powerful Dynamics of Sea and Coast | Patagonia UK](#)

[How To Read Water: Clues & Patterns from Puddles to the Sea: Amazon.co.uk: Gooley, Tristan: 9781473615229: Books](#)

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.4. Safe Place

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

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

10.4.5. Daily Risk Assessment

Coach or leader Ability (IA)		Coach Familiarity (IF)		Rowers Ability (SA)		Environmental Conditions (EC)		Local Weather (LW)		Activity Choice (AC)		RISK FACTOR	
												Total Score	Risk Grade
1	Expert	1	Current	1	V Competent	1	Comfortable	1	Good	2	Controlled	7 - 15	LOW
3	Very Experienced	3	Familiar	3	Competent	2	Uncomfortable	2	Changeable	5	Difficult	16 - 25	MED
6	Skilled	6	Unfamiliar	6	Inexperienced	4	Demanding	4	Adverse	10	Severe	25 - 45	HIGH
10	Newly Trained	10	Unknown	10	Novice	8	Hostile	8	Extreme	20	Hazardous	46 - 66	V.HIGH

These terms are defined below.

Date	Coach Mobile No	Course / Activity	Scoring Area / Route / Aims						Total Score	Signature						
	Coach:		<table> <tr> <td>IA</td><td>IF</td><td>SA</td><td>EC</td><td>LW</td><td>AC</td></tr> </table>						IA	IF	SA	EC	LW	AC		
IA	IF	SA	EC	LW	AC											
	Mob:		Sign in:													
	Coach:		<table> <tr> <td>IA</td><td>IF</td><td>SA</td><td>EC</td><td>LW</td><td>AC</td></tr> </table>						IA	IF	SA	EC	LW	AC		
IA	IF	SA	EC	LW	AC											
	Mob:		Sign in:													

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.5. Daily Risk Assessment

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

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

	Coach:		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>IA</td> <td>IF</td> <td>SA</td> <td>EC</td> <td>LW</td> <td>AC</td> </tr> </table>	IA	IF	SA	EC	LW	AC		
	IA			IF	SA	EC	LW	AC			
Mob:	Sign in:										
	Coach:		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>IA</td> <td>IF</td> <td>SA</td> <td>EC</td> <td>LW</td> <td>AC</td> </tr> </table>	IA	IF	SA	EC	LW	AC		
	IA			IF	SA	EC	LW	AC			
Mob:	Sign in:										
	Coach:		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>IA</td> <td>IF</td> <td>SA</td> <td>EC</td> <td>LW</td> <td>AC</td> </tr> </table>	IA	IF	SA	EC	LW	AC		
	IA			IF	SA	EC	LW	AC			
Mob:	Sign in:										

A list of participant names should also be kept.

DAILY RISK ASSESSMENT DESCRIPTOR

The following descriptions use a general assessment with the appropriate levels for the daily risk assessment. Instructors, leaders and risk assessors should understand the cumulative effect of risk areas before allocating a final activity choice grade. All coaches or leaders conducting Risk Assessment should be aware of 'downplaying' various subjective and objective difficulties in order to 'reduce' the activity risk. Coaches or leaders should always undertake a sensible and professional approach. Coaches or leaders are also required to carry out continuous risk assessments that may have an impact on the overall initial assessment.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.5. Daily Risk Assessment

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

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

COACH ABILITY (IA)

Points	Code	Description
1	Expert	An Expert instructor or leader is one who has extensive knowledge of the activity with long-term experience of associated risks. An instructor or leader can attain this level by gaining extensive knowledge of the activity and site, but also by recognised qualifications.
3	Very Experienced	A Very Experienced instructor or leader is one who has comprehensive knowledge of the activity with a wide range of experience of associated risks.
6	Skilled	Skilled instructor or leader is one who has broad knowledge of the activity with a varied range of experience of associated risks.
10	Newly Trained	A Newly Trained instructor or leader is one who has recently qualified at any level. Caution is required in adverse conditions or with inexperienced participants.

COACH FAMILIARITY (IF)

Points	Code	Description
1	Current	The coach or leader has current, detailed knowledge of the area. He or she is aware of the potential hazards involved for the particular activity undertaken.
3	Familiar	The coach or leader is familiar with the area, though not extensively. Knowledge of potential hazards, appropriate to the activity is well known.
6	Unfamiliar	The coach or leader has recent transitional knowledge of similar activity areas and potential hazards, but is unfamiliar with the particular chosen location.
10	Unknown	The coach or leader has neither knowledge nor recent transitional knowledge of the particular chosen activity area. Instructor or leaders who are unfamiliar with particular activity areas or have no 'up to date' available information may also fall into this category.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.5. Daily Risk Assessment

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

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

PARTICIPANT ABILITY (SA)

Points	Code	Description
1	Very Competent	A Very Competent participant has the appropriate skills, experience and competency to carry out the particular activity. Must be mature and self-reliant to deal with all potential problems (even without the presence of the coach) and show a high-level 'duty of care'
3	Competent	A Competent participant has both the capability and proficiency to cope with activity diversities and take care of him or herself in almost any situation. The participant must be sensible with a 'duty of care'.
6	Inexperienced	An Inexperienced participant is one who has undertaken the activity before yet potentially lacks proficiency to cope alone. The coach or leader must have previous knowledge of the individual to award a higher level of competency.
10	Novice	A Novice participant is one who is completely new to the activity or unknown to the coach or leader.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS (EC)

Points	Code	Description
1	Comfortable	Comfortable environmental conditions do not hinder the activity. The environment must not produce either a physical or a mental concern for any participant.
2	Uncomfortable	Uncomfortable environmental conditions that may, in various ways, impede activity progress. Participants may feel some mental concerns when learning new skills.
4	Demanding	Demanding environmental conditions may inhibit performance of activity. Participants are likely to demonstrate unease, which could be detrimental to learning. Uncomfortable conditions hampered by poor weather conditions may lead to an increase in environmental dangers. Anxiety of participants may inhibit or reduce their performance.
8	Hostile	Hostile environmental conditions that is likely to inhibit performance of activity. Participants are highly likely to demonstrate increased anxiety, related stress, apprehension or even fear. There may be a risk of objective dangers being uncontrollable.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.5. Daily Risk Assessment

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

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

LOCAL WEATHER (LW)

Points	Code	Description
1	Good	Good: calm weather conditions that do not impede the activity.
2	Changeable	Changeable: weather conditions, such as rain, increased winds or changes in ambient temperature, which may affect the activity.
4	Adverse	Adverse: weather conditions are likely to affect activity. Examples are constant rain, sleet or snow, high winds or large changes in ambient temperature.
8	Extreme	Extreme: weather conditions, will certainly affect the activity and therefore performance of participants. Weather conditions such as storm force winds, torrential rain and extreme changes in ambient temperature.

ACTIVITY CHOICE (AC)

Points	Code	Description
2	Controlled	The instructor or leader is always in control of activity. Occasionally, participants may need to perform tasks unaided. However, the instructor or leader must always be in a position to assist or stop activities.
5	Difficult	The activity has areas of safety that rely on the participant performing previously learnt safety skills, which, if performed incorrectly, may lead to an accident. Difficult activities without an instructor or leader present may rely on participants performing safety tasks.
10	Severe	The activity requires the participant to perform previously learnt safety skills in conditions, which are more hazardous. The perception of 'risk to life and limb' increases and, in some circumstances, may be real. Some potential problems are detrimental changes in weather, increased environmental objectivity and mental factors affecting the performance of participants.
20	Hazardous	The activity may potentially pose a real 'risk to life and limb', which the instructor or leader must carefully control. Participants will rely much more on the advice and support of a coach or leader. Heightened individual and group arousal and distress may dangerously affect the activity. Normally, this level of activity should not be undertaken.

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.5. Daily Risk Assessment

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

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

10.4.6. Risk Rating Calculator

The following factors should be taken into account when calculating the Risk Rating.

Wave Height

Wave height is the difference between the maximum and minimum water surface elevations in front of the breaking position during the passage of one complete wave. Wave height is one of the major generators of water movement at wave-dominated beaches. The wave height is proportional to the energy transferred into the surf zone and thus has a major effect on participant safety. Wave height can be assessed visually, by using weather forecast information from relevant apps or websites, or by accessing local tidal buoy data.

Wave Period

The period is the time between each successive breaking wave. It affects how quickly a competitor can recover stability from one wave to the next. A series of wave fronts with a short period is much more difficult to negotiate than a longer period series, independent of wave height. Wave period can be assessed by counting the number of seconds between each wave as it breaks on the shore.

Wave Type

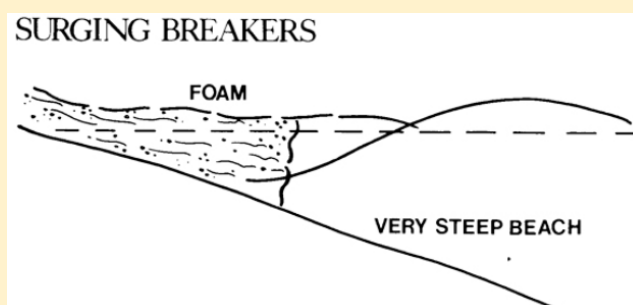
Common wave types include surging, spilling, plunging, and plunging with back-blasting.

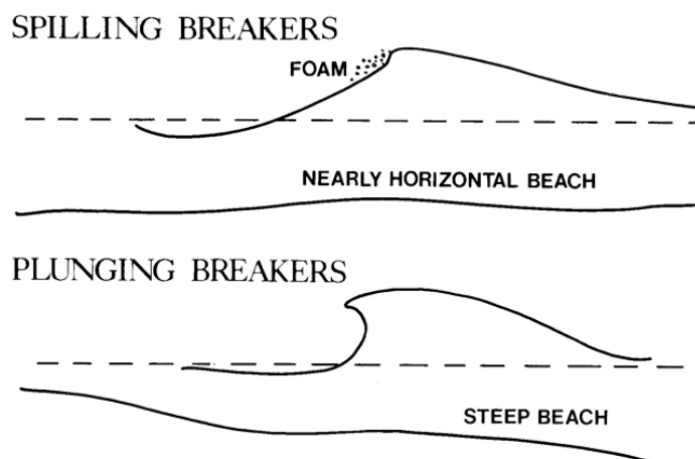
Surging waves provide lower difficulty for rowers. There is more information here [Surging Breakers](#)

Spilling waves dissipate their energy over a relatively large distance. They possess an increased degree of difficulty for rowers. Spilling waves are shown here [#shorts Spilling Waves](#)

Plunging waves dissipate their energy over a very short distance and often occur on steep beaches or near low tide. Consequently, the potential for injury to occur due to this wave type is much higher and is reflected in the higher scale value. Plunging waves are shown here [plunging waves at Pontian](#)

At the upper end are plunging waves that back-blast, which violently expend energy over a very limited space. They may project sand and particles backwards after the wave has broken. This type of wave has the greatest potential for injury.





Surface Turbulence

Surface turbulence is a potential hazard because of its destabilising effect. Surface turbulence is the disturbance effect to the ocean surface caused by either

- cross-wave development due to primary and secondary wave swell interaction,
- wind chop alone, or
- the interaction of cross-waves and wind chop.

Cross-waves form at random angles to the primary swell direction and are due to local storms or reflection of the primary swell by obstructions near the shore.

Wind chop consists of small wavelets or localised roughing up of the water surface due to the combined effects of wind gusts of various speeds and directions.

Surf Zone Width

The surf zone is the distance from the shore over which the waves are breaking. The surf zone width has a major effect on the hazards faced by competitors as they row through it. The width of the surf zone is considered a hazard because of the potential for most other surf features to continually act upon the competitor while traversing it.

The difficulty in avoiding these other hazards increases as the zone width increases. In addition, when an incident requiring rescue operations occurs within this zone, the width is a determining factor in whether the competitor can be rapidly rescued successfully.

During activities taking place in a wide surf zone consideration should be given to the method of rescue between the limit of wadable depth and the inshore operating limit of the safety boat. In a wide breaking surf zone it may be necessary to provide surf-capable rescue methods, such as jet skis, swimmers with rescue boards, etc.

Drift or Crosswinds

Drift and crosswinds (or sideways movement across the beach) concerns the longshore speed of water movement (within the water) or the effect of a strong crosswind (on the water). This feature is hazardous to competitors due to the potential for the boat to drift across the course, either into the other lane or into an area of other water users.

It can also be hazardous while they try to negotiate the broken surf fronts because it causes craft instability and difficulties with participant rescue attempts. There is an increased risk of collision on a course affected by strong drift or crosswinds even when all other elements of risk, such as wave height, are low. Collision risk due to drift or crosswind may be especially high during a processional time trial.

Rip Currents

Outward-flowing movement of water visible on the surface is a rip current. Rip currents increase risks involved in controlling incoming and outgoing craft as the rip nears the wave-breaking region, and may impact possible rescues of competitors.

Other Hazards

Other hazards not associated with wave-breaking, such as

- poor visibility,
- cold water,
- the presence of submerged rocks,
- water pollution,
- man-made obstacles,
- significant rock clusters,
- reefs,
- groynes,
- jetties,
- outflow pipes,
- wrecks,
- floating logs,
- thick seaweed,
- uncontrolled floating craft,
- stinging marine life and
- pot-holes near the edge

Risk Rating Calculator Score

Wave Height					Score
<1 ft	1 – 2 ft	3 – 4 ft	5 – 6 ft	>6ft	
0 - 2	3 – 4	5 – 8	9 – 12	13 - 16	

Wave Type				Score
Surging	Spilling	Plunging	Back Blasting	
2	4	10	18	

Wave Period				Score
>14 s	9 – 14 s	6 – 8 s	<6s	
0	1	2	3	

Surf Zone Width (in metres)									Score
0	0-20	20-40	40-60	60-80	80-100	100-120	120-140	140-160	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.6. Risk Rating Calculator

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

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

Surface Turbulence				Score
No Chop (<5kts)	Light Chop (5-12kts)	Medium Chop (12-25kts)	Large Chop (>25kts)	
0	2	6	10	

Rip Currents				Score
None	Light	Mild	Strong	
0	1	2	3	
Total Risk Rating Score				

Safety Requirements

<10	11-18	19-25	26-30	>30
Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	High	Extreme
Safety boat available with typical ratios No impact on timetable Two boat handlers Helmets optional Continually assess participant ability against conditions Consider collision alert method	Safety boat available on water No impact on timetable Three boat handlers optional Helmets optional Continually assess participant ability against conditions Consider collision alert method	Consider one safety boat on water per lane Three boat handlers required Helmets optional Continually assess participant ability against conditions Consider reduced timetable Consider collision alert method Consider widening course between lanes	Recommend one safety boat per lane with space for all rowers Three boat handlers minimum Helmets required Reduced timetable only for experienced athletes – consider cancellation Implement collision alert method Continually assess participant ability against conditions Consider widening course between lanes.	No water activity

This section was produced with the assistance of the British Rowing Beach Sprint Team gbbeach@britishrowing.org

10.4.6. Risk Rating Calculator

[Click here to go to Contents](#)

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

11. Land Training

Many rowers spend considerable time training on land as part of the physical training for competition or simply as a means of keeping fit. There are specific hazards and risks associated with land training. These are very different from most of the risks associated with being afloat.

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

11.1 [Indoor Rowing](#)

11.2 [Gym Training](#)

11. Land Training

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

11.1. Indoor Rowing

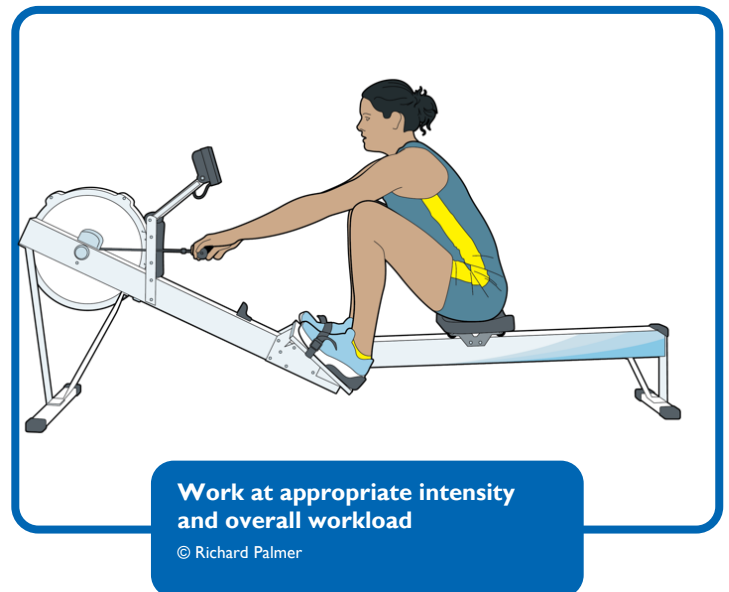
There are risks associated with indoor rowing and these should be assessed and managed in the same way as other risks. It is important that indoor rowers are trained to use rowing machines safely and correctly, and with the correct technique.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Follow rules on the use of rowing machines including:
 - Wearing appropriate clothing.
 - Cleaning of the rowing machine after use.
- Inform the club, school or gym of any reason that they may be at risk due to current or previous illness or injury - and seek medical advice before continuing.
- Warm up appropriately for the activity.
- Check the rowing machine prior to use.
- Report any incidents or defects to the rowing machine.
- Work at appropriate intensity and overall workload.
- Exercise more control to make indoor rowing [an exercise in mental control](#) as well as a physical exercise.
- Ensure that the drag or resistance is [set at the appropriate level](#).



Club, School or Gym

Club, School or Gym Officers are expected to:

- Promote a positive safety culture (see [RowSafe 1.2](#)) for indoor rowing.
- Complete a Risk Assessment for this activity.
- Maintain rowing machines in safe working order and quarantine damaged rowing machines.
- Provide materials for cleaning and disinfecting the rowing machines.
- Ensure that sufficient space is provided between rowing machines.
- Provide appropriate induction sessions for beginners. This should have an emphasis on safe behaviour.
- Provide appropriate notices and instruction on safe use (including clothing, storage and monitor set up) and potential health issues.
- Report all incidents relating to indoor rowing on the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Implement the British Rowing guidelines for the use of [rowing machines by juniors](#) and "[How much and how often?](#)"

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Adequately manage activities of all users and exercise a higher level of care for those persons who present a higher risk - beginners, the elderly, juniors and those with special needs or health problems.
- Know how to deal with specific health-related issues that have been identified.
- Promote safe use of the facility and equipment.
- Check the facility and the equipment is safe to use.
- Train users to use the rowing machines correctly including:
 - Identifying and naming the key parts of the rowing machine.
 - [Setting the rowing machine](#) up and adjusting the damper and feet height.
 - Demonstrating good technique and posture as shown [here](#).
 - Cleaning the rowing machine after use.
- Implement the British Rowing guidelines for the use of [rowing machines by juniors](#) and “[How much and how often?](#)”
- Take care to ensure that their rowers do not overexert themselves or encourage others to do so.
- Ensure that their rowers work at appropriate intensity and overall workload.
- Ensure that the drag or resistance is set at the appropriate level for the rower.
- Ensure that the rowers adopt good posture and correct technique

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees of indoor rowing competitions and other competitions where rowing machines are provided are expected to:

- Complete a Risk Assessment for the competition.
- Ensure that rowing machines are in safe working order and quarantine damaged rowing machines.
- Provide materials for cleaning and disinfecting the rowing machines.
- Provide appropriate notices and instruction on safe use (including clothing, storage and monitor set up) and potential health issues.
- Report all incidents relating to the competition on the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Review competitions/incidents relating to indoor rowing to promote good practice.
- Implement the British Rowing guidelines for the use of [rowing machines by juniors](#) and “[How much and how often?](#)”

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Supervise the running of multi-club indoor rowing competitions in their region.
- Provide support and advice to clubs and competitions in their region.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides advice and guidance on indoor rowing.
- Provides safety guidance 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

- [RowSafe 1.2](#) - Positive safety culture
- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- British Rowing Youth Rowing Guidance - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/British-Rowing-Youth-Rowing-Guidance-2024.pdf>
- Safety Alert - take care setting up your C2 rowing machine, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Safety-Alert-take-care-setting-up-your-C2-rowing-machine-1.pdf>
- British Rowing - How much and how often? - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/How-Much-How-Often-210219.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Care when Indoor Rowing, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Safety-Alert-Care-when-Indoor-Rowing-Feb-2020.pdf>
- Indoor Rowing Technique - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/rower-development/british-rowing-technique/indoor-rowing-technique/>

Indoor Rowing Technique

- British Rowing Indoor Rowing Technique - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/techniques-and-training/indoor-rowing-technique](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/techniques-and-training/indoor-rowing-technique)
- Concept2 Technique videos - concept2.co.uk/indoor-rowers/training/technique-videos
- Concept2 Common Errors - concept2.co.uk/indoor-rowers/training/technique-videos/common-errors
- Concept2 Stretching - <https://www.concept2.nl/en/indoor-rowers/training/tips-and-general-info/stretching>

11.2. Gym Training

Many rowers use gym training to improve their strength and conditioning and to improve their fitness. This form of training can be very beneficial for athletes but there are risks that should be managed.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Not exercise if they feel unwell.
- Ensure that they are fit and healthy enough to perform the exercises that they are attempting, checking with their doctor if they are not sure.
- Exercise keeping their limitations in mind and pushing themselves in a sensible and controlled way.
- Keep the gym clean and tidy so as to reduce the probability of someone tripping and falling
- Avoid standing indoor rowing machines in a vertical position in areas where they can easily be knocked over
- Not loiter around the gym or get in the way.
- Be conscious of other people's needs to access items of equipment.
- Put away equipment when the exercise is complete unless someone else is about to use it.
- Check equipment before use and only use equipment that is in good condition.
- Perform an appropriate warm up before starting training and stretch thoroughly when the exercise is complete.
- Never exercise alone, only exercise if there is someone else in the gym.
- Use good technique, this will provide the maximum benefit from the exercise and avoid injury, use relatively light weights until the technique is established.
- Pay attention and be alert to what is going on around them.
- [Report incidents](#) to the club, school or gym and to British Rowing.

Club, School or Gym

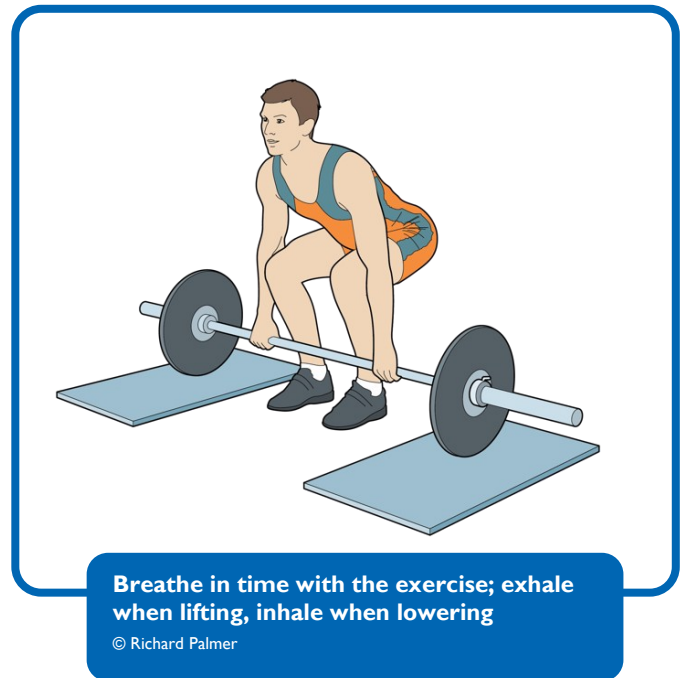
Club, School or Gym Officers are expected to:

- Ensure that materials are provided so that equipment can be kept clean.
- Encourage members to keep the gym tidy so as to reduce the probability of someone tripping and falling
- Ensure that the gym is not overcrowded either with equipment or people.
- Ensure that the equipment is thoroughly checked at appropriate intervals and maintained in good condition.
- Ensure members have access to a full First Aid kit and are aware of where it is kept.
- Ensure a list of current first aiders is displayed prominently in the gym.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Check that their rowers are fit and healthy enough to perform the exercises that they are attempting, discourage rowers from starting an exercise if they feel unwell.
- Encourage rowers to work with a partner when training with weights.
- Ensure that rowers work with spotters when lifting heavy weights.
- Encourage rowers to breathe in time with the exercise; exhale when lifting the weight, inhale when lowering.
- Stop the exercise if a rower becomes unwell.
- Coach rowers to keep their limitations in mind and push themselves in a sensible and controlled way.
- Encourage rowers to keep the gym clean and tidy.
- Discourage rowers from loitering around the gym or getting in the way.
- Encourage rowers to put away equipment when the exercise is complete unless someone else is about to use it.
- Encourage rowers to check equipment before use and only use equipment that is in good condition.
- Encourage rowers to warm up thoroughly before starting training and stretch thoroughly when the exercise is complete.
- Coach rowers to use good technique.
- Encourage rowers to pay attention and be alert to what is going on around them.
- [Report incidents](#) to the club, school or gym and to British Rowing.



Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on gym training.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Provides training in [Strength and Conditioning training for coaches](#).
- Provides safety guidance 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

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Strength and Conditioning Course - britishrowing.org/knowledge/courses-qualifications/coaching/strength-and-conditioning-club-coach
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive

12. Incident Reporting

The purpose of the Incident Reporting system is to learn from incidents and to share that learning to prevent a recurrence. It does not really matter who did what. What does matter is that we understand what happened and have some understanding of why it happened. Please try to avoid any thoughts about fault, blame and guilt; they have no place in Incident Reports.

Paraphrasing "not our fault" is not learning.

Everyone can help to improve safety by reporting incidents on the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#). This confidential reporting system is for everyone; clubs, individuals (members and non-members) and competitions to report an incident or concern.

Incidents that cause harm or damage, however trivial, should be reported as well as those where an injury, health issue or damage has occurred. Near misses should also be reported as these can provide useful information that may help someone to avoid a serious incident.

Please take care to avoid profanities and swear words in Incident Reports. British Rowing has rules on abusive language incorporated into the [Code of Conduct](#).

Please also take care to avoid including people's names particularly those of Juniors. Only use names if you would like to praise or thank someone.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Understand the importance of reporting incidents, including near misses, in which they are involved or that they witness.
- Report incidents on the [Incident Reporting System](#).

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Promote a no-blame culture of reporting all incidents in order to improve safety.
- Encourage club members to report all incidents and near misses using the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Ensure all club members know what types of incidents should be reported and how to use the Incident Reporting System.
- Regularly monitor the Incident Reporting System to gather information on club incidents and use the information to develop safer practices.
- Communicate relevant information from British Rowing [Safety Alerts](#) to members.
- Keep the members informed of relevant incidents and ways in which action **should** be taken to avoid reoccurrence.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Promote a no-blame culture of reporting all incidents in order to improve safety.
- Ensure that rowers understand the importance of reporting incidents, including near misses, in which they are involved or that they witness.
- Encourage rowers to use the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Ensure that rowers act on advice in notices such as British Rowing [Safety Alerts](#).

12. Incident Reporting

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Understand the importance of reporting incidents, including near misses, in which they are involved or that they witness.
- Report incidents that occur at the competition on the British Rowing [Incident Reporting System](#).

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on incident reporting.
- Promote a no-blame culture of reporting all incidents in order to improve safety.
- Discuss any significant incidents within their region and take action as appropriate.
- Liaise with the Honorary Rowing Safety Adviser in taking action on serious incidents.

British Rowing

British Rowing:

- Promotes a no-blame culture of reporting all incidents in order to improve safety.
- Provides an [Incident Reporting System](#).
- Provides a periodic analysis of reported incidents.
- Provides [Safety Alerts](#) and other safety communications.

Further Information

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive
- British Rowing Code of Conduct - [Code of Conduct Safeguarding .docx](#)

13. Auditing

An audit is a periodic, independent, documented, objective assessment of the extent to which an activity or process complies with the stated criteria. In other words, it is a gap analysis that helps an organisation to identify opportunities for improvement.

In rowing we have an annual Safety Audit that each club is required to submit to show that it has complied with the requirements specified in the audit document. This is completed by each club and reviewed and, if acceptable, accepted by the Regional Rowing Safety Adviser (RRSA). Clubs are expected to work with their RRSA to ensure that they have made suitable and sufficient arrangements to keep people safe.

This chapter of RowSafe contains the following sections:

13.1 [Safety Inspections](#)

13. Auditing

DISCLAIMER: 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 user's 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.

13.1. Safety Inspections

Safety Inspections are relatively frequent checks to ensure that the provisions needed to maintain safe operation of a club continue to be effective. Many of these provisions will have been identified in the club's Risk Assessment; they include the barriers that reduce the probability of a hazardous event occurring and the controls that will reduce the severity of its consequences.

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Report any issues or concerns with the club's safety equipment or procedures.
- Assist with Safety Inspections as requested.

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Define the frequency and scope of Safety Inspections.
- Delegate one or several members to undertake the inspections.
- Receive reports on these inspections.
- Consider and act on these reports.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Report any issues or concerns with the club's safety equipment or procedures.
- Assist with Safety Inspections as requested.

Regional Rowing Councils

Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:

- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on Safety Inspections.

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.



Examples of items that could be in a monthly Safety Inspection

Including but not limited to:

- The condition of the boats and blades (see [RowSafe 7.1](#), [Safety Alert - Check your boat before you go afloat](#)).
- The condition of the coaching launch and its engine (see [RowSafe 7.4](#), [Safety Alert - Outboard motor safety checks](#)).
- The condition of gym equipment, (such as indoor rowing machines and weights) (see [RowSafe 11.1](#) & [11.2](#)).
- The condition of any boat trailers (see [RowSafe 7.2](#)).
- The condition of bikes, provided by the club, for use by coaches and others.
- The condition and availability of safety equipment (see [RowSafe 7.3](#) & [7.4.1](#)) such as:
 - Throw lines
 - Lifejackets (see [Safety Alert - Lifejackets](#) and [Safety Alert - Check your Lifejacket](#))
 - First Aid kits (see [RowSafe 8.3](#))
 - Lights used on boats (see [Safety Alert - Lights on rowing boats](#))
- The contents of Safety, and other, notice boards (see [RowSafe 2.1](#)).
- 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. (see section 4 of Safety in Club Premises [here](#))

Further Information

- British Rowing Incident Reporting System - incidentreporting.britishrowing.org
- Safety Alert Archive - [britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive](https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive)
- [RowSafe 7.1](#) - Boats and Blades
- Safety Alert – Check your boat before you go afloat, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-AAlert-Check-Your-Boat-Before-You-Go-Afloat.pdf>
- [RowSafe 7.4](#) - Launches
- Safety Alert – Outboard motor safety checks, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-AAlert-Outboard-Motor-Safety-Checks.pdf>
- [RowSafe 11.1](#) - Indoor Rowing
- [RowSafe 11.2](#) - Gym Training
- [RowSafe 7.2](#) - Transport and Trailers.
- [RowSafe 7.3](#) - Safety Aids
- [RowSafe 7.4.1](#) - Launch Safety Kits
- Safety Alert - Lifejackets, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-AAlert-February-2015-Lifejackets.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Check your lifejacket, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-AAlert-check-your-lifejacket.pdf>
- Safety Alert - Lights on rowing boats, <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-AAlert-Lights-on-Rowing-Boats.pdf>
- [RowSafe 8.3](#) - First Aid
- [RowSafe 2.1](#) - Communication of Safety Information
- Guidance on Safety in Club Premises, https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/British_Rowing_Safety_In_Club_Premises_June-2023.pdf