

NRC Water Safety Plan

Introduction

Almost any sport, and certainly any water sport, involves some risk. In order to ensure that all members of Newport Rowing Club (NRC) can enjoy rowing in safety, and to comply with British Rowing's (BR's) Row Safe Guide, it is necessary for the club to have a Water Safety Plan.

All members and visitors to NRC shall comply with the requirements of the Water Safety Plan and other associated documents which may be in force at the time (as notified by the NRC committee).

Most of the rules and advice contained in this document are based on simple common sense, so with the help of NRC members it should largely enforce itself. If you see any incident which you feel may lead to an accident or injuries, then SAY SOMETHING, do not assume someone else will deal with it. Any serious incidents or breaches of the plan should be reported to a committee member.

Associated Documents

This document supplements the rules and advice given in the document produced by British Rowing.

1. BR Row Safe Guide

<http://www.britishrowing.org/row-safe>

It is accessible through the organization's web site (link above) and you are advised to familiarize yourselves with it. A copy of Row Safe is also available on the Safety Noticeboard at the club.

The following sections expand the generic rules of Row Safe to take on board the local conditions and practices covering the Newport section of the River Medina.

Row Safe also includes very useful information and advice on:

- Cold Water Immersion
- Sunburn & Heat Stress
- Waterborne Diseases

Advice on Cold Water Survival and Hypothermia can also be found at <http://www.leoblockley.org.uk/>.

Accident and Incident Log

If you are involved in an accident (especially if it involves damage or injury) please report it to a committee member or coach and also record it online at <http://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/> where the report will automatically be sent to the Club Water Safety Advisor.

In addition to accidents, any safety related incidents such as capsizes, swamping's, equipment failures and near-misses must also be reported online.

Remember the online incident reporting system is not there to apportion blame; it is there to help us to help you reduce risk and enjoy safer rowing.

First Aid

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The first aid box is located on a shelf just inside the boathouse door (there is also a limited number of supplies in the store cupboard). It is for EMERGENCY USE ONLY. Blisters are an occupational risk for rowers and oarsmen/scullers should bring their own supplies for running repairs to hands etc. The first aid kit will be regularly checked, however if you do use some of the contents please let a committee member or coach know so that it can be restocked as soon as possible.

Emergency Action

The club does not have a telephone.

Emergency telephone numbers are displayed on the noticeboard.

Call **999** in case of an emergency and be prepared to describe the incident and its location.

Insurance and BR (British Rowing) membership

All boats used by members of the club and visitors must carry at least 3rd Party insurance. NRC crew boats are all covered by the club's 3rd Party Insurance. If you borrow a private boat ensure that you are covered with the owner.

The Club does not carry insurance against injury to members while engaged in training or competition on or off the water, and accepts no liability for any injury, however caused. It is your, not the club's, responsibility to ensure that you are adequately covered. BR membership includes personal accident and civil liability insurance cover for members while engaged "in any activity of the insured organization anywhere in the world including direct travel to and from such activity within Great Britain, Northern Island, The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man". It is strongly recommended that club members join BR whether they intend to race or not to take advantage of this scheme.

Rowing after Dusk

Rowing after dusk is not permitted.

Equipment

Your safety is significantly affected by the condition of the equipment you choose to row or scull in. You must make sure that the boat you are going to use is in a safe condition before you go down to the landing stage. Boats that have a missing or defective bow ball, heel restraints or buoyancy compartments shall not be used. Any maintenance problem or damage to a club boat should be reported to the Maintenance Officer and/or a committee member as soon as possible.

Environmental Conditions

Visibility and river conditions can vary rapidly and you must be sure that you are happy with the conditions prior to going on to the water. The wind can quickly cause chop on the Newport reach which can swamp a rowing boat.

The Medina River is tidal and during spring tides the stream conditions can vary rapidly.

A list of approved coaches is displayed in the clubhouse. If a committee member is not confident in their rowing experience to give permission then they must seek advice from a more experienced member or approved coach. Also note that just because certain members are rowing, this does not automatically mean that you are allowed to row – always check with the beach master or approved coach prior to each outing.

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The club will not be held responsible for those members who row without permission.

All those aged 16 or under must have bank/launch support at all times.

A Risk Assessment shall be made prior to EVERY outing, irrespective of conditions. The main criteria to be used are:

- Stream speed.
- Surface conditions, i.e. waves
- Weather conditions, particularly wind/gusts
- Air & water temperature
- Visibility (e.g. mist, fog, blizzard)
- Crew ability
- Steering ability of cox/steersmen
- Other crews on the water and river traffic
- Anglers from bank and boat

If the risk assessment indicates that the stream is at a potentially hazardous level and no one should go onto the river without a safety assessment being made.

If in doubt do not risk it.

Local Navigation Rules

All members of NRC, must abide by the local navigation rules at all times.

- Crews /scullers must avoid all navigation and wreck buoys.
- Crews/scullers must keep to the right of the river.
- Crews/scullers must obey the landing/boating circulation pattern.

Rules of the Landing Stage

While using the landing stage at NRC a certain amount of common sense is required. The landing stage is a first come first served situation. However if two boats need the same space on the landing stage at the same time the crew in the water has priority. It is safer for you to stand on the bank and wait for the other crew to come in than to have the other crew drifting while waiting for you to put your boat in the water.

In busy periods do not adjust at the landing stage (do so prior to getting there or out in the water) and do not leave a boat on station at the landing stage while you swap a crew member or someone goes to the toilet etc. Take the boat out of the water and let others use the stage.

If queuing to come off the water proceed to the far side of the river until the area is clear. Do not wait and block the way for crews proceeding up the river.

All rowers must wear suitable footwear on the foreshore.

Capsize or Swamping

In the event of a capsize or swamping STAY WITH THE BOAT, it will continue to float and will make it easier for a rescuer to spot you. If the stream is taking you towards an obstruction, such a pier or pontoon, try and keep the boat between you and the obstruction so it can provide you with a degree of protection. Hypothermia happens 20 to 30 times faster in water than air, try to get on your boat.

Sculler's, Coxswain's and Crew Responsibilities

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All persons participating in rowing or sculling must be in good health and be able to swim a minimum of 50m in light clothing and shoes.

It is mandatory for ALL coxswains, launch drivers and launch passengers to wear a life jacket when taking to the water. All the club's lifejackets are of the manually inflating type (i.e. they are not automatic) – to inflate pull the toggle at the bottom of the left/right side of the lifejacket. There is a mouthpiece for topping up the air and a whistle to attract attention.

Newport Rowing Club holds regular water safety training for all members to take part in. It is mandatory for all U18's to have to completed the swim test or be booked on the next available swim test session to be eligible to row.

If a parent / guardian has any doubt on a minors swim ability it will be necessary for them to wear a 'new' safety jacket until a swim test proves competency.

Any NRC member who is in any doubt of their fitness to participate in rowing or sculling should check with their GP before taking part in any strenuous activity.

Safety Launch

It is mandatory for all launch drivers and passengers to wear a life jacket when taking to the water.

The launch driver is responsible for making sure that the following items are taken aboard:

- Paddle
- Plastic Tub containing Bailer, Whistle, Knife & Thermal Blankets
- Throw Line
- Anchor
- Buoyancy aid.

Drivers of the launch must be aware of the wash that is created. This is especially relevant when following a crew boat at speed. There is the potential to swamp small boats and make it uncomfortable to row in larger boats. When you approach a crew boat or scull please slowdown in good time so that your wash is minimized. The pontoons either side of the river at the Folly are prone to wash disturbance so slow speed is required here.