SAFETY CODE

Rowing as an outdoor water sport carries inherent risks of personal injury either from a collision, or from drowning as a result of falling into the water. All risks are heightened in cold water. Safe enjoyment of the sport is our aim and personal safety is of paramount importance.

**SAFETY ADVISOR’S RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Safety Advisor shall inform members and coaches about the safety guidelines and obligatory rules, and ensure that notices regarding safety, safety equipment and safety training programs are in place.

The Safety Advisor will ensure that all coaches have current First Aid and Cardio-Pulmonary /AED Resuscitation certification. An AED device is located in the ergometer room on the street side wall.

**LOCAL MANDATORY SAFETY CODE:**

All members of the DRC, coaches, coxswains and all athletes are expected to conform to the safety rules as a condition of their membership. Non-compliance with the safety rules may result in suspension of privileges or membership. Every participant is responsible for knowing and adhering to the Transport Canada regulations that affect boating, especially the Small Vessel Regulations.

**SECTION 1:**

**SAFETY ON THE WATER**

* **All boats must be equipped with PFDs’ and a whistle**. Lights must be in place if rowing before sunrise or at sunset. Larger boats (8+, 4+/ 4X) may have the life jackets in the accompanying coach boat.
* The long narrow, inflatable PFD’s in the boathouse are for Coxswains/Coaches to wear and are not to be used/carried in singles and doubles. Inflatable PFD’s are not allowed for those under the age of 16 years.
* Coaches must wear a Life Jacket or PFD and the “kill cord” when driving the coach boat.

1. **Equipment:** Before going onto the water all boats must be put onto stretchers and checked thoroughly:

* heel ties must be intact and secured so there is no more than 7cm of play
* bowball must be in place
* vents should be closed
* hull intact- and not cracked or damaged
* riggers and foot stretcher parts secure
* fin is intact
* steering mechanism is functional

All equipment must be **signed out in the logbook** before proceeding to the dock and logged back in upon return. Any damage must be recorded and reported on a DRC Incident Report immediately.

1. **Cold Water Rules: When the water temperature is 10 degrees C or below the following Cold Water**

**Rules will be in force.**

* **No private single may go out unless they are accompanied by a buddy. All buddies must always stay within visual contact and/or hailing distance to each other. This applies to EVERYONE. On the water privileges will be revoked for anyone who does not comply.**
* **Club boats must have a safety boat patrolling on the river within sight.**
* **All shells must carry a whistle and a life jacket and be equipped with appropriate lighting.**
* **It is recommended that all single scullers have their own PFD. It must be worn when cold water rules are in effect.**
* **No Junior rowers (under age 18) are to go on the water, at any time, without a coach boat being with them.** It is recommended that big boats (8+s’, 4+s’, or T4X) be used for any new or unsteady rowers until the water temperature rises above 10 degrees.
* Dress appropriately for the weather-in layers-including a hat, tights and long-sleeved shirt, layers can be removed if you heat up.

1. **Dock Protocol:**

* Coaches must ensure athletes launch and exit the dock and boathousewith a high regard for individual and equipment safety. Be aware of and follow the traffic pattern. All crews should move away from the dock in a timely manner.
* Coaches, coxes and crew leaders will ensure that all athletes know how to handle equipment correctly and safely both on and off the water.
* Please follow the boat **Tiering Rules.** Tier 1 boats are to be taken only with Captains and Head Coaches permission.

1. **Fog:**

* No boats shall be allowed on the water if visibility is reduced to less than **500 meters**. If fog sets in during a practice return to the dock slowly and carefully. Use whistle warnings if necessary, to alert others to your position. Know where you are on the river and proceed with caution.

1. **Darkness:**

* Lights must be carried on all boats before dawn and at dusk. White lights are to be carried on the bow of all boats and a red light at the stern. Rowers must wear **a white** or a high visibility coloured shirt to be more visible. NO black, brown or grey shirts allowed.

**6) Traffic Pattern:**

* Launch with the bow of the boat to the south (lake) and follow a rectangular travel pattern at any turn around point to ensure safety. Turns must be done quickly and result in crews ending up on the correct side of the river. Do not stop and rest until you have moved across the river at either end. Keep to the starboard side of the river on the way up to the QEW Bridge and again keep to starboard coming back down toward the Lakeshore Bridge. Exercise extra caution when navigating the big turn at Mineola Rd and at the bridges.
* No unsafe mid-river turns are allowed.
* No side by side racing is permitted.
* Approach to the docks for landing should be made from the north being aware of paddlers and other community boating traffic.
* A map showing the traffic pattern is mounted inside the boathouse. New obstructions will be marked on this course map, as well as on the main bulletin board, as they appear. Rowers are requested to check this map regularly in order to row safely.
* If passing beneath the Lakeshore Bridge and entering the Marina area, be on the lookout for, and take avoiding action if necessary, to avoid commercial and pleasure craft moving or reversing out from their berths. **We do not have the right-of-way, they do**. Stay out of the east side channel that must be used by power craft.
* Beware of canoeists crossing the river directly from their dock to head up-river. All small and large boats must ensure that the paddlers are warned politely and firmly before they are passed. We share a river course and must **respect other users**. Collisions with other water craft (canoes, kayaks, dragon boats, standup paddlers, etc.) must be avoided at all costs.

**7) Bridges & High Water**:

* When water levels are high or the river is in flood, great care should be taken by all boats going under the Railway Bridge. The low spans and their knuckles can be a source of serious head injury, especially for tall athletes.
* Watch for rocks hidden below the surface on both sides of the river.
* Care must be taken to turn well above the Lakeshore Bridge when there is a fast current or windy condition.

**8) Lake Practice or Lake Time Trials:**

* No club boats are to venture beyond the Marina or onto the lake without **coach boat support (1 coach boat per 8 rowers).**
* When on the lake, private singles must always have a buddy boat within visual contact. Always stay close to the shore.
* No lake rowing is permitted under adverse weather conditions.
* Coaches/ rowers must check the weather at [**www.weatheroffice.gc.ca**](http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca)and/or [**www.accuweather.com/canada**](http://www.accuweather.com/canada) before venturing onto the lake.
* Coaches must carry adequate means of communications e.g. radios and/or cell phones to communicate with each other and be able to react to emergency situations when taking crews onto the lake.
* Lake rowing shall only occur in the absence of significant swells and significant water traffic. Steering measures to avoid large boat wakes must be undertaken. Wake cannot be taken head on or damage to the hull may ensue.

**9) Coach Boats:**

* All drivers must carry a valid Pleasure Craft Operators Card.
* Boats must be checked before leaving the dock to ensure there is adequate fuel and safety equipment.
* Each boat must have a **BIG RESCUE BAG – a full rescue bag of 9 pfds, plus blanket, paddle, throw buoy, self-bailer, a whistle, radio/cell phone, and lights.**
* Coaches are to ensure that running lights are functional if going out before sunrise or at dusk.
* Each coach boat must carry enough life jackets for each person in the largest boat that they are following. All coaches must **wear the “kill cord”** at all times, plus either a PFD, a floater suit or a life jacket when in the coach boat.

**10) Coxswain PFDs**:

* A special suspender-style design of inflatable PFD is available for coxswains and must be worn in 8+ and 4+ boats traveling out on to the lake.

**11) Junior Rowers**

* No Junior rowers (under age 18) are to go onto the water until a coach boat and a coach has launched. Tank use or indoor activities must have adult supervision.

**SECTION 2:**

**EMERGENCY ACTIONS AND COMMUNICATION**

**1. On-river emergencies**

* Signal another coach or athlete to obtain the additional support required – including a possible 911 call. Immediately secure the athletes, then the boat in trouble.
* Activate the EAP if needed designating one person to monitor emergency calls and responders. If lives are at risk all other boat traffic should return to the dock and clear their equipment quickly. In cases where radios are available, use them for inter-boat communication and cell phones for dock/911 calls.
* Stay with your boat until help arrives. Buddy up holding arms across the boat or get as much of your body out of the water as possible by draping yourself across the hull of the boat.
* Vital emergency telephone numbers are located at all telephones in the club (above the log book in the boat house).

**2. On-lake emergencies**

* All coaches must carry a cell phone (and/or a radio) for 911 or stranded coach boat emergencies. If multiple boats are on the lake, then the accompanying coaches must be able to communicate by radio with each other.
* Signal other coaches using radio/phone equipment
* Secure the boat and athletes in trouble. Stay with the crew and remove them from the water. – two or three coach boats are required to remove 9 athletes from the water.
* If available, another coach boat must take charge of the fleet and return all boats to the docks. If another coach boat is not available, athletes must gather by the distress situation and return with the rescued athletes.
* The coach in charge at the time, plus the crew involved, must write and submit an Incident Report to the Safety Officer within 24 hours of any incident.
* See Section 5-Missing Person

**3. First Aid Kit and Blankets**

* Located by the phone in the boat bay and in the Pogue Room. The Safety Officer will ensure that this is kept fully stocked. Athletes are not to use the first aid kit for regular blister care.

**4.Hot Weather**

* In extreme hot weather rowers must ensure that they have a hat, and adequate hydration.
* If the heat is severe rowing/ training may be suspended at the discretion of the Head Coach and/or Safety Officer.
* Symptoms of heat exhaustion are headache, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, shallow breathing, weakness, confusion, rapid heart rate. Medical attention should be sought immediately.

**SECTION 3:**

**HAZARD AVOIDANCE AND RULES**

1. **Weather**

* Coaches must check the Environment Canada website for weather updates before venturing onto the river or the lake. There is a weather station in the office. Check [www.weatheroffice.gc.ca](http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca) or [www.accuweather.com/canada](http://www.accuweather.com/canada)
* No boats must be on the water when lightning is present or imminent. If thunder occurs when you are on the water all boats must return to the club and clear the dock as quickly as possible
* Athletes must wear appropriate clothing for cold weather. (Water temperature of 10 degrees C, or below, warrants cold water precautions).
* Visibility in fog conditions must be a minimum of 500 metres. (Safety Section 1:4).

**2. River in Flood**

* Should the river be in flood and/or there is floating debris, boats shall not be launched until water levels stabilize, debris flow subsides, and it is safe to pass under the rail bridge.

**3. River debris**

* All on the water coaches should tag or safely remove any in-river or bank debris that may damage equipment or pose a risk for athletes.
* Please notify the Safety Officer/ Captain of any large or immovable obstructions in order that they can be clearly marked.

**SECTION 4:**

**INCIDENTS ON THE WATER**

* Any incidents that result in damage to equipment and /or persons are to be reported to the Coach in charge and to the Safety Officer immediately.
* Incident report forms must be filled out by the parties involved. Reports are to be found above the log-book in the boat house as well as in the Office. This report is to be given to the Head Coach and the Safety Officer within 24 hours of the incident.
* Damage to any boat must be recorded in the log-book and on the chalk board in the repair bay immediately and reported to the coach on duty. **Athletes involved are not permitted to return to the water until all reports have been submitted and verified**.
* **Any incident that results in injury to athletes/coaches must be reported to Rowing Canada within 24 hours by the Club President and the Safety Officer. This is necessary to ensure insurance coverage**

**Capsize**

Boat Capsizing, injured athletes, damaged boats.

* In the event of a boat capsizing, rowers should stay with their boat, until a coach boat arrives.
* The person designated as in charge should determine if any of the rowers or Coxswains have sustained any injuries. If so, the injured athlete should be helped into the coach boat and the extent/ severity of injuries determined.
* If the injured athlete requires immediate medical assistance 911 should be called and the coach boat and injured athlete should head back to the docks as soon as possible after a second coach boat has arrived to deal with the remaining rowers and capsized boat.
* Depending on the size of the capsized boat and extent of the damage, a single and double can be righted, bailed and the rowers helped into their boat by the coach.
* A four or eight if possible, can be towed to shore and righted there or towed to the docks after the rowers have been taken back. Oars must be secured out of the water whenever a boat is being towed.
* Damage to the boats must be assessed as soon as possible after the athletes are safely out of the water. If possible, the boat should be towed back to the club by the attendant coach boat. If it can’t be towed for some reason the coach boat should stay with the damaged boat as a warning to other boats until more help arrives.

**SECTION 5:**

**MISSING PERSON**

* If an individual goes missing or becomes separated from their crew/ group, the Head Coach or coach on duty is to be informed immediately. Local police are to be contacted via a 911 call if a thorough search of the club area does not locate them. If an individual goes missing on the river or on the lake the lake the Marine Unit must be advised a.s.a.p.