

Broxbourne Rowing Club Safety Policy

Updated December 2024

Introduction

Broxbourne Rowing Club (the Club) has a responsibility to set, implement and review safety policies and procedures for all club members. This policy is central to ensuring safety on and off the water, primarily for members of the Club. It is based on the structure and guidance provided in the British Rowing document Row Safe.

Club Responsibilities

The Club has a responsibility for the safety of its members and for the development of a culture of safety in all activities associated with rowing. The primary responsibility for ensuring safe practice within a club lies with Officers of the Management and Rowing Committees. The Club will appoint a Club Safety Adviser to take the lead in promoting safe practice but such an appointment does not remove the accountability for safety from the Officers of the Management and Rowing Committees of the Club. In this respect every club member has an important part to play but regardless of the appointment of a Safety Adviser, the Officers of the Management and Rowing Committees of the Club are accountable for the provision of adequate safety advice.

Personal Responsibilities

Everyone involved in rowing has a Duty of Care to ensure their actions both on and off the water are conducted in a manner which does not compromise the safety of others. Adults also have a personal responsibility for their own safety.

Water Safety Roles and Responsibilities

The Club has the following water safety roles and responsibilities:

- Set, implement and review safety policies and procedures for all club members
- Assess local risks – update the Club's by-laws (safety plan), produce a risk assessment for activities at the Club, produce a water safety emergency response plan, and communicate this to all members
- Educate and train members in risk assessment and safe practice
- Complete the British Rowing Annual Safety Audit
- Promote reporting of all incidents using the British Rowing on-line system – reviewing the Club's reports to further develop safe practice
- Review safety issues through a permanent committee agenda item
- Appoint a Club Safety Adviser
- Comply with British Rowing Row Safe guidance

Individual members have the following responsibilities:

- Share responsibility with the Club to learn how to manage risk in all their activities at all times and promote a safer rowing culture

- Report all incidents including near misses and potential incidents, which could have resulted in injury or damage to equipment.

The Role of the Club Safety Adviser:

The Club Safety Adviser shall be accountable to the Management Committee and be responsible for all matters regarding Safety. It will be their duty to understand the requirements of the British Rowing Water Safety Code (RowSafe) and advise on their prominent display, their observation and their implementation at all times. They will be responsible for ensuring that all procedures and Club activities will comply with Row Safe.

Risk Management

Safety Notice Board

The Club will have a safety notice board, which will be clearly identified in the clubhouse displaying the following:

- Map of the river course with key emergency service access points
- Location of the first aid kit and safety equipment plus directions to the British Rowing Incident Reporting website
- British Rowing Row Safe posters and related information.
- Safety basics and reminders
- Instruction and procedures to guide members on how to go afloat and what precautions to take.

The Club safety notice board will be maintained and updated by the Safety Adviser with assistance from the Management and Rowing Committee members.

Risk Assessment

The Club will complete risk assessments for key activities that have other risks including:

- Recreational Tours
- Training Camps
- Junior Learn to Row

Copies of the risk assessment will be available on the Club website. Risk assessments will be carried out using the guidance on the British Rowing website. Risk assessments will be reviewed annually, following a significant incident, or change in any relevant legislation or guidance.

Club Safety Policy & Emergency Response Plan

This document, along with the club By-laws, forms the Club Safety Policy & Emergency Response Plan. It has been written in association with British Rowing's Row Safe guidance. This document will be communicated to all club members through the Safety Notice Board, website, update emails, social media and the General Meetings.

Insurance

The Club will carry insurance which covers all rowing activities and members and their interactions with other water users. In particular, the Club will:

- Have adequate public liability insurance including member to member extension.
- When arranging insurance, ensure that all activities and businesses are declared on the policy schedule, e.g. letting premises for functions or use by other clubs.
- Ensure that all events run by the club are covered by club insurance
- Competitions not organised by the Club must have insurance put in place by the organiser for that competition.
- Where a claim is likely to be made against a club or individual, inform the insurers or British Rowing immediately or certainly within seven days of the incident.

Where an incident occurs, the Club will prepare an incident report collecting contemporaneous information and witness statements, including: names, contact details and, if relevant, their roles. Details to be submitted through the British Rowing website, Regional Water Safety Adviser and, if appropriate, to the Club's insurers. The Club will not admit liability following an incident.

Weather and Environment (see Adverse Weather Conditions Guidance)

Weather conditions may change rapidly during the course of a rowing outing. If adverse weather conditions are forecast, all coaches, coxswains, scullers and oarsmen should take the forecast weather conditions into account when planning an outing, and should be prepared to cut short the outing if necessary.

No rowing is to take place during thunderstorms or in the presence of lightning; any boats already afloat should return to land as soon as possible in these conditions. Those affected should not go afloat until at least 30mins has elapsed since the last thunder or lightning event.

Heavy rain, fog or mist and gusts of wind present further problems of which all rowers and coxes must be aware. During conditions where visibility may be severely impaired, no boats should go afloat; those already on the water should row at extreme caution back to the boathouse.

Particular hazards and risks are encountered during cold weather conditions including:

- Ice forming on the watercourse causing damage to boats
- Increased risk of hypothermia/cold water shock in capsize incidents

Particular hazards and risks are encountered during hot weather conditions including:

- Dehydration
- Heat Stroke
- Sunburn

It remains the responsibility of the adult club member to ensure they feel the conditions are safe in which to conduct the chosen activity. If unsure, firstly ask for advice from your coach/Vice-captain. If still in doubt, do not go afloat or undertake the planned activity. Junior VCs and coaches will make the decision for the Junior group.

Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia

The Captain, VCs, coaches and the Safety Adviser as well all members will take account of the risks of cold water immersion when planning outings. Checks will include:

- Local weather forecasts plus local observation immediately before outings to check for temperatures, wind and general forecast.
- Coaches, crews and coxswains will check integrity of key safety features prior to each outing.
- Coaches and crew members will check that crews and coxswains have adequate clothing for the conditions on the day.
- The Club will organise capsize drill training, available for all members.
- Members will be trained in what to do in the event of immersion as part of the induction process.
- All capsizes and cold/hypothermia incidents will be recorded on the British Rowing on-line incident reporting system. They will also be reported and analysed at the next committee meeting to see if lessons can be learned and practice changed.

First Aid

The club will:

- Ensure that first aid materials are available during all club activities in green boxes with a white cross and First Aid written on.
- Encourage any named first aiders to maintain their certification
- Keep a record of members with first aid training and display on Safety Notice Board

Swimming and Capsize Drill Training

The Club will:

- Ensure that all members participating in rowing and coxing are competent and confident in and under water and able to swim at least to the minimum standard (through self-declaration on the membership form), i.e.
- Float unaided for 5 minutes
- swimming at least 50 meters in light clothing (rowing kit)
- treading water for at least two minutes
- swimming under water for at least 5 metres or be able to hold their breathe under water for the equivalent time
- Can apply the 'float to live' principle.
- If they cannot complete any part of the above, they will be required to wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid when rowing).

- Ensure all members know what to do in the event of a capsize or swamping of all boat types
- Ensure a higher level of support for juniors and beginners

The Club will instruct members on safe capsize techniques for all boat types including:

- The need to stay with the boat and use it as a life raft
- Precautions to be adopted to reduce the risk
- The need to get out of the water quickly and on top of the boat to reduce heat loss.
- The effects of water temperature, water conditions and clothing
- The means of summoning assistance and how to plan for this.

Capsize drill training will include:

- Getting on top of the boat
- Lying on top and paddling a boat
- Summoning help
- Buddy rescue
- Recovery using a throw line
- Getting back into the boat

Members are encouraged to adopt the 'Float to Live' principle rather than swim ashore and leave the boat. Adult members declare their own swimming ability. Junior declarations are done by parents and capsize testing.

Equipment

Safety Aids

The Club will provide and adequately maintain

-a minimum of 9 Life Jackets

-a minimum of 9 thermal blankets

- The location of the safety aids will be communicated to all rowers.
- Coaches and coxswains will check that Lifejackets are in good order before each use and report any damage/failure to the Safety Adviser.
- Damaged items will be quarantined and taken out of use until repaired.
- All Lifejackets will be manual inflating, minimum 150N buoyancy and carry the CE mark of approval.
- The Club will ensure that all coxswains must wear Lifejackets on top of all other garments when in the boat.
- Where, because of a medical condition, there is a risk of a prospective participant becoming unconscious, they will not be allowed to take part in water-based activities until a doctor's certificate is obtained.
- Safety equipment will be stored in a place where they can dry out naturally away from a heat source but ready for use in an emergency.
- Junior beginners must wear a buoyancy aid until they have completed a capsize drill/swimming test, and reached a satisfactory level of competence in the boat they are using.
- Adult beginners should be offered the use of a buoyancy aid.

Steering and Navigation (see additional guidance)

The Club will:

- Provide advice and training for those who steer boats
- Ensure steering equipment is maintained as part of boat maintenance
- Display a plan of the river
- Ensure those who steer boats are familiar with the river navigation. Any person steering a boat takes on a highly responsible role and must:
- Communicate effectively with their crew
- Be aware of their position at all times, relative to navigation and other water users
- Maintain a high level of attention, both visibly and aurally in order to be able to assess situations and take action to avoid accidents
- Learn and use concise commands for boat control both on and off the water and be able to use these correctly, clearly and instructively
- Know how to stop the boat safely in an emergency
- When visiting unfamiliar water (at race events or tours), take particular care to read race or tour information with particular regards to local hazards and rules of navigation
- Be conversant with safety and rescue procedures in the case of an accident
- Recognise and respect the needs and limitations of other water users
- Know what to do in the case of an accident or capsize

Coxswains should wear suitable clothing for the weather conditions, which will not hinder movement or increase the risk of drowning (wellies and hoodies are not suitable).

Rowing and in the dark (see additional guidance document)

- Lights must be used: non-flashing, red on the stern white on the bow.
- Only crews, steers and coxes deemed competent and experienced enough by coaches, the Captain and VCs may go afloat in the dark.
- Coaching on the bank is not advised.

Boats and Blades

- The Club will ensure that all equipment used for rowing, sculling, coaching and safety is safe and adequate for its intended purpose and that it does not expose its users to danger.
- The Club will also ensure that this equipment is properly and regularly maintained.
- The Club will instruct participants in the process of equipment checking as part of their induction and at regular intervals to ensure that it is done prior to each outing.
- The Club will confirm with the manufacturer, when purchasing new boats that the boat being supplied complies with British Rowing's requirements on buoyancy. I

- If after risk assessment for a planned activity, it is judged that a boat, new or old has insufficient inherent buoyancy additional buoyancy will be added.
- All boats will have a bow ball fitted and must not go afloat without one.
- Wherever possible, bow riggers will have backstays fitted.
- All boats will have effective heel restraints to prevent the heel from rising higher than the lowest fixed point of the shoe or heel trap.
- Buoyancy compartments will be watertight to ensure effective operation.
- Rudder lines, steering mechanisms, rudder and fin will be secure and in good working order.
- Buttons on oars and sculls will be secure and properly set.
- Damaged equipment will be quarantined by use of a laminated "Boat damaged. Do not use." label which will not be removed until after the equipment has been repaired.

Before each outing the crew, coxswain and coach will check the following:

- Buoyancy compartments, bowball, hatch covers, boat hull integrity
- Riggers, including top nuts, swivels, gates, seats and stretchers are secure and operating freely
- Heel restraints are secure separately on each shoe/heel trap and prevent the heel from rising above the lowest fixed point of the shoe/heel trap.
- Rudder lines, steering mechanisms, rudder and fin are secure and in good working order.
- Buttons on oars and sculls are secure and properly set.

Transport and Trailers

The Club will:

- Ensure that any vehicle or trailer used by the club is maintained in a roadworthy condition
- Ensure the vehicle used for towing is appropriate for the length, load and type of trailer.
- Insure the trailer and club towing vehicle
- Confirm that all drivers have the appropriate vehicle licence, are over 25 and given training for towing a trailer
- Provide all drivers with British Rowing Guidance on towing and loading the trailer
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As a minimum the Club will:

- Ensure that drivers and all members loading the trailer are aware of the correct loading pattern to ensure even loading on the trailer
- Ensure adequate ties in good condition are available
- The Club Equipment Officer will regularly check tyre pressures, including spares.
- Before towing, the driver will check lights, the security of the load, jockey wheel and brakes
- Ensure the trailer carries a spare wheel, tools and jack for changing a wheel.

Drivers should normally carry a passenger to navigate and help with manoeuvring and any emergency

Participants

Beginners

The Club will:

- Ensure that all beginners take part in the Club's induction process, which has emphasis on the safety aspects of rowing, coxing and training;
- Ensure a higher level of duty of care for beginners, juniors and, where applicable, adaptive rowers and vulnerable adults
- Support the principle that safety is everybody's responsibility
- Ensure that health, safety and welfare of the individual is the overriding principle.
- Ensure that all members set an example for beginners to follow.

Before any activity with beginners the following information will be recorded by the Club:

- Swimming ability declaration
- Information concerning medical conditions that could affect safe practice
- Personal contact details for emergency contacts
- Parental or guardian consent given for juniors to participate.
- The Club's induction process will provide basic information of the following topics:
 - Risk assessment and by-laws – what they are and where to find them
 - Local hazards, what they are, how are they controlled
 - Navigation rules, where not to go and reasons for rules.
 - Emergencies, what to do, how to summon help
 - Equipment, function and safety checks to perform before each outing
 - First Aid, who are first aiders and location of first aid box
 - Incident reporting – what needs reporting to whom and why
 - Safety equipment – types, storage, rules on use, inspection, maintenance and location
 - Club Officers: Safety Adviser, Captain, Welfare Officer, etc.
 - Capsize – what to do if it happens to you or someone else
 - Lifejackets and buoyancy aids: types, rules on wearing, how to use, maintenance and location
 - Clothing what to wear and what not to wear and why
 - Cold water immersion and hypothermia – issues, controls and reporting
 - Supervision – when they can and cannot go afloat or train on land and training times, including restrictions for juniors concerning weight training
 - Boat booking and use
 - Adverse Weather Guidance
 - Safety notice board location and contents
 - Personal responsibility for safety.

Juniors

The Club will ensure that:

- A high level of duty of care is promoted for all juniors
- Juniors will be instructed in safe weight training technique before lifting weights and be supervised during weight training sessions.
- Juniors will be instructed in capsized procedures before getting in a boat and learning to row.
- A capsized drill will be organised for juniors.

The Club will record:

- parent, carer, guardian consent to act “in loco parentis” for the administration of emergency first aid, or other medical attention if the need arises
- personal contact details and emergency contacts
- written consent by parent carer or guardian before any activity takes place
- written consent/parental agreement to the Club’s policy with regard to taking photographs or videos.

Indoor Rowing

Within the Club, indoor rowing is used as part of overall training for rowers.

Requirements with regards to general health apply to indoor rowing.

The Club will:

- provide safe and serviceable machines
- Provide induction training for beginners
- Record all incidents regarding the use of indoor rowing machines on the British Rowing incident reporting system.
- Encourage self-recording of performance
- Assess and manage the risks prior to running an activity or event
- Maintain high standards of equipment hygiene by encouraging members to clean machines after each session
- (via coaches) Monitor posture and technique and correct faults as they occur

Monitoring

Incident reporting

The Club will:

- Encourage within the Club the reporting of incidents and near incidents using the British Rowing on-line incident reporting system.
- Ensure that club members are aware of what constitutes an incident or near incident that need reporting and aware of how to report them on-line.

The Committee will:

- Review safety incidents at committee meetings on a monthly basis
- Inform members of actions to be taken to avoid repetition of incidents

Safety Auditing

The Club will ensure that the annual Safety Audit is completed and reported on time to the Regional Safety Advisor through the British Rowing. The Committee will review the findings of the Club's Safety Audit and implement its recommendations as appropriate. The Club will act on any recommendations or non-compliances they or the Regional Water Safety Advisor identify.