

2014

# City of Bristol Rowing Club- Safety Plan



V.0.3

A Butler

3/28/2014



## Introduction

The objective of this Safety Plan is to update and collate all previous City of Bristol Rowing Club safety documents into an accessible format for the club committee, officers and members.

The Club Committee meets quarterly with safety being one of the primary topics discussed. Any safety issues should be brought to the attention of committee members via squad captains or the safety advisor for discussion at the committee meeting.

The Safety Plan has been written to compliment the British Rowing *Row Safe: a guide to good practice in rowing*. It should be made freely available to every user of the club's facilities, and it should be part of the material issued to course participants and new members of whatever level of experience.



## 1. Risk Management

### 1.1. Safety Noticeboard

A summary of the Safety Plan is displayed in the Club Boathouse on the Safety Board, along with visual aids on water safety, life saving and resuscitation procedures.

Also displayed on the Safety Board is information on navigating the Floating Harbour and Feeder Canal, along with the following emergency contact details:

Fire/Ambulance/Police

999/112

Local Hospital departments:

- A&E Bristol Royal Infirmary, Marlborough Street, Bristol, BS2 8HW 0117 923 0000
- A&E Frenchay Hospital, Frenchay Park Road, Bristol, BS16 1LE 0117 3402532
- MIU (Minor Injuries Unit) Southmead Hospital, Monks Park Road, Bristol, BS10 5NB 0117 3235100
- Club Safety Representative – Alex Butler 07515 795560
- Club Captain – Martin Downey 07766 071520
- Harbour Master 0117 903 1484
- Club First Aiders See *Skills Matrix*

### 1.2. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments covering key club activities have been completed and used in the compilation of this Safety Plan. All competitions, training camps, beginner and junior activities are to have individual risk assessments; the latest examples of these can be found *here*.

Any significant new activity undertaken by the club will have the risks assessed before the activity is allowed to take place.

All risk assessments will be reviewed on an annual basis or following a significant incident, change in any relevant legislation or guidance.

Risk assessments will be published on the club website and be available to all members

Risk assessments will be included in the club induction process.



### 1.3. Club Safety Plan

This Safety Plan has been written to compliment the British Rowing *Row Safe: a guide to good practice in rowing*. It is made freely available to every user of the club's facilities, via the club website. It should be part of the material issued to course participants and new members of whatever level of experience.

The primary function of this safety plan is to care for the safety of club members, other water users and the public at large

It is the responsibility of the Safety Advisor to ensure that this Safety Plan is kept up to date, relevant and accessible to all club members.

### 1.4. Competition and Safety Plans

#### Racing at Bristol

A separate Safety Plan and Risk Assessment will be completed for each competitive event organised by CoBRC. The event organiser will compile the documentation with the assistance of the Club Safety Advisor.

Copies of the Safety Documentation will be distributed to all competitors prior to the event and relevant parts briefed to relevant parties at the start of the event. Details will vary according to the competition but may include, for example:

A course briefing for all coxes and steersmen, noting the particular hazards found at Bristol Floating Harbour.

A briefing on emergency arrangements for Umpires and race officials will be conducted at all events.

The normal annual events held by CoBRC include:

- City of Bristol Summer Regatta
- Autumn Head
- Winter Head
- Indoor Rowing Competition

A copy of the latest Safety Plan for recent CoBRC events can be found *here*.



## Racing at other events

Every member of CoBRC has a duty to act safely and comply with all local safety rules when visiting other events. Competitors and coaches should always make sure that they read and understand the host club's safety documentation for the event before taking part.

### **1.5. Insurance**

The club will maintain public liability insurance covering all aspects of club activities, including events and courses. A copy of the insurance certificate will be displayed on the safety notice board.

The club will ensure they go to a reliable and respected insurer in liability insurance.

When a claim is likely to be made against the club, the club will inform its insurers immediately.

As with all insurance you should not admit liability following an accident.

All members must be members of British Rowing in order to be covered by British Rowing insurance scheme.

### **1.6. Training Camps and Training on Unfamiliar Waters**

A separate safety plan and risk assessment should be prepared for any training camp (including travel to and from the location) by the organiser with the assistance of the club safety advisor.

The club should:

- Establish contact details for all participants in case of emergency
- Check insurance is in place

The training camp organiser should:

- Carry out a risk assessment on arrival and amend the Training camp safety plan as necessary
- Ensure welfare provision where required, where juniors are involved the organiser should understand and implement the British Rowing *Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy*
- Check and approve participants planning to attend the training camp
- Ensure an appropriate coach/helper to participant ratio
- Identify any potential hazards at the location
- Check locations circulation pattern, first aid provision, rescue launches and communications
- Check local weather and other up to date safety information with host club
- Establish a system for reporting incidents
- Identify first aid provision and communicate to participants
- Carry out equipment audit before travelling to training camp
- Conduct a post visit review



## Rowing on the River Avon

CoBRC crews are free to access the River Avon via Netham Lock but should be aware that this is the home water of Bristol Ariel Rowing club. All crews must make themselves familiar with any relevant safety information from *Bristol Ariel* before venturing past Netham Lock. Always be courteous to any home crews when paddling on the Avon.

Rowing below the weir at Netham, on the tidal part of the Avon, is particularly hazardous and should be undertaken only with the express permission of the Club Captain and Harbourmaster. A separate Safety Plan and Risk Assessment will be required for this activity.

### 1.7. Weather and Environment

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 lightening; 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 lightening 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 landing stage.

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

- Ice on landing stage & slipway
- 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 CoBRC 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/squad captain. If still in doubt, do not go afloat or undertake the planned activity.



## 1.8. Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia

Immersion hypothermia is the condition caused when the body is immersed in cold or cool water for a prolonged period of time.

To reduce the risk of cold water immersion and hypothermia:

- Ensure appropriate clothing is worn by all crew members, tight fitting to avoid being caught in equipment to reduce risk of immersion and suitably heat retaining to maintain body temperature.
- The club will provide throw lines and thermal blankets. The club will provide regular training in the use of throw lines
- To help you plan your outing in cold weather conditions adopt the “one minute one degree” rule. Allow one minute of rescue time for each degree of water temperature. If the water temperature is 5°C you have 5 minutes to remove someone from the water.
- In cold weather vulnerable club members (beginner and young or small juniors) should wear a personal flotation device
- Competency of the crew should be assessed to reduce risk of immersion
- A buddy system should be adopted in cold weather conditions, especially for scullers.
- As with other medical conditions, treatment should only be given by those having confidence to do so. The first priority should be to obtain professional medical assistance.

A more complete description of the condition, and ways of preventing and treating it, can be found [here](#).

## 1.9. Swimming and Capsize Training

All active rowing members must be in good health and must be able to demonstrate, when asked, that they are confident in and under the water by satisfying the following British Rowing requirements:

- Swim a minimum of 50 metres in light clothing (N.B. This must be regarded as the absolute minimum).
- Tread water for at least 2 minutes.
- Swim underwater for at least 5 metres.

Anyone unable to satisfy the above standards must wear an approved personal flotation device when afloat.



All active rowing members must be trained in the actions to be taken in the event of capsizing as per the British Rowing *Row Safe* guide. This training will be organized and undertaken by experienced club members at regular intervals for all new members.

Swimming ability and capsizing training will be recorded for each member of the club.

## 2. Equipment

### 2.1. Safety Aids

Safety and first aid equipment are to be readily available and maintained at or near the Safety Board in the boathouse. These include:

- First aid box,
- Thermal Blankets or exposure bags
- Life rings/buoys and line/ Buoyancy Aids.

The purchase and maintenance of safety equipment will be managed by the club safety advisor. Any use of safety equipment should be reported via *the repair notification email* so a replacement can be arranged.

All coxes and launch drivers should wear an approved lifejacket or buoyancy aid whilst afloat.

All club life jackets comply with EN393 and each are subject to a periodic thorough inspection and service by an approved supplier. In interim periods the club will check lifejackets for damage, leaks and gas cylinder integrity and the check will be recorded in the maintenance log. All members should carry out a pre-use check and report any faults through *the repair notification email* as detailed in 2.3. Any defective lifejackets and buoyancy aids should not be used and quarantined to prevent use by others in the Quarantine Store

Where, because of a medical issue, there is a risk to a participant of becoming unconscious or immobile an automatic life jacket must be worn.

Lifejackets must be worn correctly in order for it to be effective. When fastened it should be a tight but comfortable fit.

Note that when using "bow loading" boats, coxes should always wear lifejackets with a manual activation and NOT automatic. These jackets are clearly marked in the boathouse; if you are unsure about which jacket to use then please ask.





## 2.2. Steering and Navigation

The Floating Harbour and Feeder Canal represents an interesting and sometimes challenging watercourse to navigate. The harbour area in particular is often used by many different users in a variety of craft. The Harbour Master has overall control of the watercourse; all club members have a duty to comply with the local rules as displayed in the boathouse.

All rowers and scullers must fully acquaint themselves with document *Navigating the Docks* as found on the club website.

When rowing at night or twilight all boats MUST be fitted with lights. The configuration agreed with the Harbourmaster and other harbour users is as follows:

- Two white lights facing forward (bow)
- A single white light facing aft (stern)
- All lights must be steady (not flashing)
- All lights must be of adequate luminosity (ie, not single LED type lights) with sufficient charge in the batteries for the outing.

Club rowing activities will be co-ordinated with those of other local water users to minimise clashes of interest and the possibility of additional hazards arising.

## 2.3. Boats and Blades

It is essential that all equipment used for rowing and coaching is safe and fit for purpose. It is the responsibility of all members of the club to ensure that the equipment that they use is maintained in good order to avoid anyone being put in danger on the water.

In addition to this the club will ensure any boat purchased has sufficient inherent buoyancy and where the buoyancy of a boat is in question the club will provide additional buoyancy.

Before a boat is placed on the water, the crew or sculler should check that it is in safe condition and that the fittings are in good order, in particular:

- Check that all hatches etc are intact and secured.
- Check that the bowball and all heel restraints are present and secure.
- Check that riggers are securely attached and that moving parts (swivels, sliding seats, stretchers) are in working order and not loose.
- Coxes and steersmen must always check that rudder lines, steering gear, rudders and fins are in working order.
- Check that oars and sculls are in good condition; particularly that the button is firm and the shaft is free from damage.



In order to ensure that equipment remains safe, any damage to equipment or failure in a boat should be reported as soon as possible to the maintenance team in person or via the following email address:

[repairs@bristolrowing.co.uk](mailto:repairs@bristolrowing.co.uk)

It is recommended that damaged equipment should be clearly marked so that anyone intending to use the equipment is made aware of the damage.

Clean equipment is far more likely to be safe equipment; and rowers who are made personally responsible for the condition of the boats they use are far more likely to notice and deal with wear and tear to equipment before it becomes potentially dangerous. Regular boat maintenance sessions are organized by the committee; all active members of CoBRC are expected to participate in boat maintenance sessions.

## 2.4. Launches

Launches are maintained and serviced by the maintenance committee; however, before every use the driver should check that the launch has the following basic items of safety equipment and information on board:

- First aid kit
- Throw line
- Life ring
- Space blankets
- Emergency telephone number list (Harbour Master, club captain, emergency services, etc)
- Navigation light
- Paddle
- Lifejacket/buoyancy aids for driver and any passengers
- Minimum tool kit and spares for the engine
- Safety knife with rope cutter
- Length of spare rope
- Boathook
- Audio signalling device
- Spare kill cord for use in the event of driver overboard
- Bailer

It is the aim of the club that all launch drivers should be trained to a minimum of RYA level 2 standard. CoBRC will strive to provide this training to launch drivers in a practicable timescale, taking into account both the time and financial commitments required. In the interim, those not trained to this level will be taught and assessed "in house" by an approved member of the club



before being allowed to operate the club launches. A current list of approved launch drivers can be found in the Member *Skills Matrix*.

## **2.5. Transport and Trailers**

In addition to possessing a valid endorsement for towing on their driving license, approval to tow the CoBRC boat trailers is required by the Club Captain. A list of members currently approved to tow is held in the Member *Skills Matrix*.

As well as complying with the UK (or foreign as appropriate) traffic laws, the BR guide to towing should be referred to when carrying out towing duties. The guide is available via the CoBRC website, *here*.

The club will ensure the trailers are maintained in a roadworthy condition and will insure the trailers.

Before each trip the driver must check the tyres (including spare), lights, projection markers and security of the load. Drivers should always carry a passenger to help with navigation, manoeuvring and any emergency which may arise. The trailer driver must ensure they carry suitable tools and jack for changing a wheel. Always be aware of the dangers of high winds and icy conditions and consult a weather forecast before setting off.



## 3. Participants

### 3.1. All active members

CoBRC has a responsibility to provide adequate instruction to all active members in watermanship and adequate supervision by coaches and experienced rowers to ensure that no-one puts themselves at risk when on the water. This applies particularly to novices, single scullers and juniors.

All rowers and scullers must, before going afloat, record the crew leader's name, boat and expected outing timings on the Outing Board in the boathouse.

Single scullers (apart from beginners who are on the water under supervision) are solely and fully responsible for their own safety, and must follow the appropriate procedures. All single scullers are required to demonstrate that they can carry out a capsize drill and swim test.

While not ideal it is a not always possible to train together as squads or with safety launch cover, some individuals or crews choose to train on the water alone in order to fit rowing into their own personal timetable. This is acceptable as long as those members first seek permission from their squad captain. It is essential that the members are fully conversant with the local waterway rules, the layout of the harbour and in particular the safe emergency landing points located throughout the harbour in case of capsize or other difficulty. This information is contained within the document *Navigating the Docks*.

### 3.2. Beginners

The club runs a structured and well managed adult and junior "Learn to Row" programme including an induction to club policies, including safety and capsize and swim test. The club must be notified of any medical conditions that may affect safety on the water before the "Learn to Row" programme commences.

The club follows the British Rowing epilepsy policy which states that *"Those who suffer from epilepsy should not be allowed on the water when there is a significant risk of further seizures. In line with the DVLA this period of significant risk is defined as within one year following a fit and whilst reducing medication and for six months after stopping it."*

All beginner crews should be supervised by coaches or senior club members and accompanied by a safety launch.

Beginner rowers will be limited to eights and quads with experienced coxes. Other water users should be made aware of the fact beginner crews are out on the water and may not be very manoeuvrable.

A separate condition evaluation should be undertaken before beginners are allowed on the water. Conditions which would be fine for other club members can pose risks to inexperienced crews.

All junior beginners will be required to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) until they have completed a capsize and swim test.

All adult beginners will be offered the use of a PFD



### 3.3. Juniors

The club will ensure all juniors are inducted into the club and safe rowing practice through a planned induction programme.

The club will ensure a higher level of Duty of care is promoted for all juniors. All juniors will have access to a club welfare officer and will be made aware and have access to the club welfare plan. Contact details of the club welfare officer are posted on the juniors information board in the club. The club welfare officer must promote a child-centred approach within the club.

All coaches for junior crews will be CRB checked and all junior crews are to be accompanied on the water by a safety launch. Separate training times at the gym and boat house for seniors and juniors. All members of the club must set a good example for the juniors to follow.

Before any activity takes place the following information must be provided:

- Swimming ability
- Parent or caregivers consent in writing to act in “in loco parentis” for the administration of first aid or other medical attention if the need arises
- Personal contact details for emergency contacts
- Written consent given by a parent or caregiver before any activity takes place
- Written consent by a parent or caregiver before taking photographs or video

Juniors are encouraged to draw up, adapt or adopt their own code of conduct to promote ownership and adherence.

### 3.4. Adaptive Rowing

The club does not currently own any adaptive boats but recognises the step free access to the boat house and landing stage is an advantage to adaptive rowers meaning adaptive members could be part of the clubs future.

In the event of adaptive rowing becoming part of the clubs day to day practice the club will discuss with individuals their needs and aspirations, establish and practise procedures for managing incidents, including capsizes, involving adaptive rowers, check equipment is suitable when adaptations are made and seek advice on equipment that is suitable for adaptive rowing.

The club will conduct a risk assessment and produce an action plan for each individual adaptive athlete, provide a suitable rescue launch and ensure the boat house is fitted with high visibility markings for all pathways.

The club will also encourage a buddy system for athletes with a disability to assist with boating and guiding around the boathouse.

The rower must inform the club about any relevant disability or illness and any known warning signs and seek additional medical advice where appropriate.



### **3.5. Touring, Coastal and Open Water Rowing**

The club does not generally take part in these disciplines. A separate safety plan will be compiled for each as required

### **3.6. Indoor Rowing**

The club owns a number of ergometers. These are currently stored at the Welsh Back gym. All club members will be instructed on safe use of the ergometer and potential health risks associated with strenuous exercise. Any incidents related to indoor rowing machines must be reported on the British rowing incident reporting system.

Due the machines being stored in a public gym all members must comply to local rules within the welsh back gym facility. First aid kits and first aiders (from gym staff) are available at Welsh Back gym.

The club will ensure they provide safe, regularly serviced machines

All members must ensure they maintain a high standard of equipment hygiene, cleaning the handle and machine after use.

All members must ensure they demonstrate good technique on the machine

All damage to machines must be reported (See section 2.3)



## **4. Monitoring**

### **4.1. Incident Reporting**

Rowing is statistically a relatively safe sport; however accidents and incidents involving club members and equipment inevitably occur from time to time. It is important that the club (and the wider rowing community) learns from these. Serious occurrences are very rare but are often preceded by numerous related “near misses”. Therefore any instance where the safety of club members, equipment or members of the public is put at risk should be reported first to the relevant squad captain. In all but the most minor of instances, the squad captain will request that an online British Rowing Incident Form is filled in (this can be done anonymously if required). The data collected from the online forms and/or the squad captains’ reports, as appropriate, will be collated by the Safety Advisor and distributed in the form of a periodic safety bulletin by the Club Captain.

Below is the web address for the BR online incident form:

<https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/>

### **4.2. Safety Auditing**

A British Rowing Water Safety Audit is undertaken annually and reviewed by the committee with recommendations made for any improvements and areas of non compliance.

The results of the audit are submitted to British Rowing and published on the club website to ensure that they are accessible by all members.



## 5. Health

### 5.1. Sunburn, Heat Stroke and Exhaustion

In hot summer months then please look after yourselves and each other with these basic and steps:

- Cover up where possible
- Wear sunscreen
- Avoid long exposure to the sun
- Stay hydrated

### 5.2. First Aid

It is the aspiration of CoBRC that all members should be conversant with life-saving and resuscitation procedures. At the very least, the Club Safety Advisor and all regular club coaches should be trained in first aid. The club aims to offer regular opportunities to members to train in first aid via locally organized workshops and courses.

### 5.3. Water-borne Diseases

The water in Bristol Floating Harbour is rarely free from pollution. If your boat capsizes, try to keep your mouth closed and avoid swallowing water. If you do swallow water, obtain medical advice without delay, even if you do not feel unwell.