



ROYAL CHESTER ROWING CLUB



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SAFETY PLAN

The priority at all times is SAFETY

This safety plan identifies the risks involved in rowing at Royal Chester Rowing Club (RCRC) and outlines the procedures to be adopted by club members and visitors to limit those risks. Contravention of these safety procedures will be taken seriously by the committee.

A copy of this Safety Plan is displayed on the club safety notice board along with the circulation plan. Details are provided to all new members.

1. GENERAL RULES OF THE RIVER

1.1. RCRC operates within the British Rowing 'RowSafe' Guidelines. A file containing full details will be available for review by any member in the clubhouse and online.

1.2 Stay on the correct side of river – The Meadows side when paddling upriver, The Groves/clubhouse side when proceeding downstream. Give a shout to any crew within 2 boat lengths. Do not stop or turn round in the bends of the river, particularly between Heron Bridge pumping station and the reed beds.

1.3 Never row at full pressure past the RCRC and Grosvenor RC landing stages.

1.4 Under NO circumstances must crews venture beyond the Queen's Park suspension footbridge due to the weir downstream.

1.5 In any event, do not row closer than 100m to the weir.

1.6 *The RCRC circulation plan is available to view in the clubhouse and must be complied with at all times, not least to avoid collisions when crossing to the correct side of the river or landing stage.* Also refer to the River Dee Bylaws & Courtesy Code.

1.7 Coxswains must wear an approved lifejacket or buoyancy aid, properly fitted and adjusted. These are provided and maintained by the club.



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1.8 Coxes and steers shall keep a good lookout at all times when afloat. Coxes who cannot see directly ahead should enlist the help of members of their crew

1.9 In the event of capsizing, do not panic - crews must stay with and hold onto their boat. If unable to get back in the boat, pull up onto it clear of water, and wait for assistance from any launch in the area. Otherwise stay with the boat but manoeuvre to a bank area where possible to reach dry land. Try to secure the boat, head to the clubhouse quickly for a warm shower and change into dry clothes.

1.10 Rowing after nightfall is dangerous and not encouraged. If it is necessary, a coach must accompany crews and scullers in a launch. All craft must be properly illuminated. *Refer to RCRC Rules on Winter Rowing and RCRC Procedure for Rowing in the Dark.*

1.11 High visibility waistcoats are recommended to be worn at bow when visibility is less than 50m.

1.12 The wearing of multiple layers, hats, and pogies is encouraged during winter conditions. Coxswains should only boat if they have sufficient warm clothing. In summer, members should also take precautions against sunburn & dehydration.

1.13 All incidents, near misses, or any general safety concerns must be reported to the club safety adviser. This is encouraged by the committee to enable learning, help improve safety practices, and thereby prevent harm to its members.

1.14 All details should be recorded in the club accident book, or sent by email ASAP after the incident to rcrcsafety@gmail.com. The club and its members will use where appropriate the British Rowing online incident reporting system.

2. ROWERS RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Every club member has a duty of care to ensure that their actions both on and off water do not compromise the safety of others. Adults have personal responsibility for their own safety

2.2 It is the responsibility of the rower or parent /carer to ensure that members are competent and fit enough to train on the river without putting themselves at risk. The Committee reserve the right to stop any member from training if they feel that they are not competent.

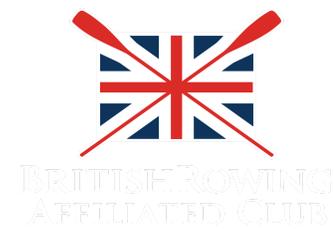
2.3 Rowing members of the club must have the ability to swim at least 50 metres fully clothed.

2.4 Members must know what action to take in event of capsizing or swamping and be aware of the risks of hypothermia.

2.5 A towel and dry change of clothing should always be brought in case of capsizing. Always wash your hands and face after rowing and before eating or drinking. Cuts and scratches should be cleaned thoroughly on returning to the boathouse and a clean dressing applied.



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2.6 Members should note the risk of waterborne infectious diseases such as Weil's disease and seek medical advice without delay if river water is swallowed and symptoms such as vomiting are experienced.

2.7 A capsizing drill will be completed by and recorded for all junior members. Adult members must make themselves aware of correct capsizing procedure.

2.8 The gym area in the clubhouse is potentially dangerous and great care must be taken when using the facility. Loose weights must be cleared away tidily after use. Free weights should not be used unaccompanied. A suitable adult should supervise members under 16 years of age using ergo rowing machines or weights to ensure good posture and technique.

3. BOATS & EQUIPMENT

3.1 Before and after each outing, a safety inspection of the equipment should be carried out by the embarking crews. This includes:

- Heel restraints correct length
- Bow balls fixed
- Buoyancy compartments sealed
- Canvasses not holed
- Rudder lines and general fixings in good order.

3.2 Boats that are unsafe or improperly equipped must not be used unless a suitable repair can be implemented. All damage is to be promptly recorded in the damage log, reported to Captain / Equipment Rep. and marked for repair.

3.3 Squad coaches should encourage boat checks by members and ensure compliance prior to any independent safety checks at competitions.

4. SAFETY LAUNCHES.

4.1 Lifejackets will be worn by all safety launch crew members and passengers.

4.2 Launch drivers must hold a minimum of RYA Level 2 certificates.

4.3 Launch drivers must be at least 18 years old unless accompanied by a responsible adult.

4.4 Launch drivers or passenger must have a mobile phone.



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4.5 Launch drivers should be aware of the cause and effect of excessive wash.

4.6 The launch driver will ensure that a complete rescue kit is being carried. This is to include first aid kit, throw line, thermal blanket, and bailer.

4.7 Rescue times must be minimised recognising the 'One minute – One degree rule'

5. ABNORMAL RIVER & WEATHER CONDITIONS

5.1 The River Dee is subject to the effects of wind, stream and tide. Combinations of abnormal weather or river conditions can occur and the decision on whether to row should take all factors into consideration.

5.2 Decisions regarding suitability of rowing conditions rest firstly with committee members, and secondly with coaches present. Novices or juniors may not be allowed out in certain adverse conditions, but consideration will be given to experience and level of competence of each individual crew. The distance of travel from clubhouse or duration of outing may also be adjusted.

5.3 When the river level is high and above the level of the bank, particular care should be taken when boating or approaching the edge of the landing stage.

5.4 If the landing stage is partly submerged, extreme care must be taken when approaching, since further river level increase may have occurred from time of boating.

5.5 During high tides above 3.6 metres (over the weir), large amounts of debris can litter the river. Crews should be particularly vigilant in these circumstances.

5.6 After a period of heavy rain, the river speed can increase to the point where the less fit, younger or inexperienced crew may find it difficult to make any headway. Care should be exercised when turning by the suspension bridge – allow greater distance to prevent the boat from being swept towards the weir. Look out for any floating debris.

5.7 High winds can cause standing waves to form. Take care since these can increase the risk of capsize, swamping or damage to boats. When rounding corners, crosswinds can cause steering problems from the full force of wind acting along the length of the boat.

5.8 In the event of lightning, use the "RowSafe" '30-30' guidance rule. If the time between seeing lightning and hearing thunder is less than 30 seconds and reducing then immediately leave the river and seek shelter in either club buildings or fully closed vehicles. Only resume outdoor activity 30 minutes after the last lightning / thunder. Be prepared by knowing the weather forecast prior to boating.



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6. COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 Telephones. Coaches, club officials, organisers and parents/carers should ensure they are in possession of a mobile telephone. This applies to all training sessions, outings and club events.

6.2 Emergency Telephone Numbers. Lists are on the notice boards throughout the clubhouse.

7. MEDICAL & FIRST AID

7.1 First Aid kits are situated in the clubhouse and in each launch. All coaches are trained in basic first aid.

7.2 Casualties requiring hospital treatment will be taken to:

The Countess of Chester Hospital A&E, Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1UL, telephone 01244 365000.

7.3 RCRC officials are identified, with contact details, in the clubhouse and on the website. .

8. EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

8.1. Incidents on the water. In the event of a rower being injured, capsizing or becoming ill whilst rowing, the quickest means of rescue and access to the emergency services is by safety launch. The principal vehicular access points close to the river are:

- *The RCRC landing stage and The Groves (CH1 1SD)*
- *Queen's Park (CH4 7AE)*
- *Sandy Lane (CH3 5UL)*
- *A55 Expressway bridge and Eccleston Ferry (CH4 9JE).*

8.2. Emergencies. In an emergency, the safety launches will have priority over all other traffic. Crews should move to the side of the river so as not to hinder the safety launch.

8.3. Evacuation Procedure.

- In the event of the Clubhouse being evacuated due to fire or other major incident, all members and visitors will make their way to the assembly point on Grosvenor Park Terrace.
- A sweep system will be adopted to ensure the building is clear.
- Club members will ensure the access road is clear for stretcher and emergency equipment access.



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- Crews on the water will muster near Grosvenor RC and await clearance before proceeding to disembark at the landing stage.

8.4. The boat shed doors should remain open at all times when members are on the premises to facilitate evacuation in an emergency.

8.5. Security. The last person out of the clubhouse must ensure that all doors are locked and the alarm is set. The clubhouse should also be secured and locked if left unattended whilst members are out on the river.

Cross Reference Documents

RCRC Winter Rowing Rules

RCRC Procedure for Rowing in the Dark

RCRC Boat Circulation Plan

RCRC Activity and Visiting Clubs Risk Assessment

River Dee Bylaws & Courtesy Code:

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/leisure-culture-and-tourism/parks-and-open-spaces/river-dee/river-dee-courtesy-code.pdf>

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/leisure-culture-and-tourism/parks-and-open-spaces/river-dee/river-dee-bylaws.pdf>

Document Control

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