

DERWENT ROWING CLUB WATER SAFETY POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy is to provide all information necessary to ensure that all members of Derwent Rowing Club (DRC) conduct themselves in a safe manner and so allow the Club as a whole to operate in a safe manner. The Club will conform to the requirements of the British Rowing safety code (Row Safe), with which all members should familiarise themselves. The Club will also take further measures relevant to local conditions and hazards.
- 1.2 The water safety policy contributes to a reduction in the chance of damage to individuals and equipment.
- 1.3 The policy does not in any way limit individual responsibility for the outcome of member's actions. All members are responsible for their own safety and that of those around them. This ranges from checking boats before an outing to safe conduct on the water.
- 1.4 All members are responsible for their own health. This means informing the Captain, session coach and/or relevant members of any changes in medical conditions. This includes seemingly minor things such as muscular pain which may be aggravated by rowing so that the coaches can tailor sessions to suit.
- 1.5 All members should be made aware of this policy and encouraged to familiarise themselves with the content alongside that of British rowing policy and guidance. The policy is to be readily available at the Club and on the website.
- 1.6 All members should be aware of the first aid point, just inside the main entrance of the upstairs Clubroom door. Signs displaying this location and the location of the nearest defibrillator on the outside of Derby Rowing Club are located on the boathouse doors. The first aid point also displays emergency numbers and basic first aid pointers.

2 WATER SAFETY OFFICER

- 2.1 The Club elects a Water Safety Officer (WSO) at the SGM. The responsibilities are listed in paragraph 2.1.1 of British Rowing Row Safe. The WSO should be conversant with the requirements of the British Rowing Code and the Club Water Safety Policy and will advise the Committee and Club on necessary actions to ensure compliance.
- 2.2 The WSO duties involve identifying, local risks or hazards and ensuring that appropriate action is taken to reduce or eliminate them.

3 RULES FOR SAFETY

- 3.1 All members must complete the relevant application form and declare any medical conditions. Junior (up to 18 years of age) members must have a parent or guardian's signature on the relevant sections of the application form.
- 3.2 All members must be able to swim 50m in light clothing and complete a Club capsized drill and swim test when organised by the Club.
- 3.3 All members must read the information provided with application forms and come prepared with appropriate clothing for the weather conditions. A change of dry clothing is also highly recommended all year around. See appendix for a summary of suitable clothing.
- 3.4 All members whether land or water training must sign in using the log book, located on the bar. This records the time you went out and what equipment you used (weights, a single scull etc.) Once the session is completed you must sign out.
- 3.5 All members must be aware of the location of the first aid point just inside the main entrance to the Clubroom. Posters on the boathouse doors display the location of the first aid point and nearest defibrillator (Derby Rowing Club outside wall) along with emergency numbers and basic resuscitation techniques.
- 3.6 The Captain will deem a rower competent when they are allocated to the performance group, however hi-vis are compulsory for all juniors and permission must still be sought to row in the dark (see rowing in the dark section)

4 EQUIPMENT

- 4.1 All members are responsible for the care and proper treatment of the equipment they use, from getting it out to putting it away after the outing. Junior members are instructed and assisted by a coach/session manager/volunteer river safety monitor.
- 4.2 Boat allocation is by the Captain or leader of the session.
- 4.3 As part of becoming an experienced rower members should be aware of the risks associated with the outing and be able to assess conditions and complete their own equipment checks. All members are responsible for checking the equipment before the outing paying attention to:
 - The bow ball which should be firmly attached and the fixing screws are to be taped over.
 - The foot stretcher should be firmly attached and the heel restraints are fixed and strong enough prevent the heels lifting above the height of the balls of the feet in the boat in order to allow release in the event of capsized.

- Riggers and gates have nuts which are firmly tightened down.
- Hatches are present and are firmly closed.
- For coxed boats - the steering mechanism works correctly and cox-box works (responsibility of the coxswain)

4.4 All boats are washed after use, using the rinse-sponge-rinse method to prevent water staining and damaging of the hull. This also allows a post-outing inspection for any damage. Only in frosty weather where washing the boats may generate a slip-hazard due to ice is this waived.

4.5 Members are not permitted to swap or change equipment without permission from the Captain or session leader. The Captain should be made aware of any alterations or swapping equipment.

4.6 Equipment swapped before an outing due to damage/breakage should be returned to the original boats after the outing and then an incident form filled out and the Captain informed of the damage.

4.7 Learner, junior and student rowers must wear hi-vis tops for all outings. A number of hi-vis tops are provided by the club. In a crew boat this may be the bow, stroke and cox. This is recommended for all senior members.

5 EQUIPMENT DAMAGE/INCIDENT REPORTING

5.1 Any incidents must be reported and recorded in the accident book by the person/s involved or by a witness/session manager/coach.

5.2 An incident is anything that happens at the Club on or off the water that causes damage to persons or equipment. An incident can also constitute verbal abuse/stone throwing from the bank and damage found on Club premises or equipment.

5.3 In the event of on water incidents (such as collisions, capsizes or any other incident resulting in injury to persons, damage to equipment), these must be reported to British Rowing using the reporting tool on the British rowing website by the Water Safety Officer. The WSO must then also report all reported incidents to the Committee.

5.4 In the event of bank to water incidents of verbal abuse or stone throwing you should not respond, leave the area and the incident should be reported to the Captain or session leader immediately who will take the appropriate action and call the police if necessary.

6 WATER CIRCULATION & HAZARDS

6.1 The circulation pattern, hazards and rules of the river are clearly displayed on a map in the upper boathouse.

6.2 The circulation pattern is to row with the starboard (left-hand side of a rower/sculler sitting in a boat) closest to the bank. This means rowing upstream on the Chester Green (east) bank and downstream on the Darley park (west) bank. At St Marys Bridge the circulation pattern is downstream through the centre arch and upstream through the Chester Green or Bridge Inn arch.

6.3 Major hazards include:

- Leaving the landing stage. Care must be taken to allow adequate time to cross the downstream lane to join the upstream without impeding either downstream rowing crews or upstream rowing ones. Be aware of relative boat speeds and always give yourself time to get across/turn.
- The large bend, care must be taken to keep to the side and not be drawn into mid-river by the current.
- Turning at the top of the river, some larger boats turn slightly earlier in the bay, the water is fast here in high water conditions.
- Overtaking should be done with care by moving into mid-river only when the other side of the river is clear.
- Passing through St Marys Bridge, the arch on Derby side is unsuitable. Use the middle arch downstream only and Bridge inn side upstream only. Care should be taken in high water.
- The sunken Silk Mill island (marked by buoys) should not be rowed over in any circumstances. Some crews turn before the island under the inner ring road bridge, and should be watched out for. Only confident and experienced crews should pass below, keeping to the Silk Mill side downstream and flats side upstream.
- Turning at Exeter Bridge. It is dangerous to turn to close or under the bridge in high water, and there is a weir just beyond.
- Landing should be done with care, both clubs queue on the Chester Green side waiting for an opportunity to cross to their respective landing stages.

6.4 All coxes must wear appropriate clothing and a life jacket. An auto-inflate jacket or buoyancy aid is not suitable for a bow-loader.

6.5 In adverse conditions, including poor weather and high water, the Captain or session leader will conduct a risk assessment and takes the appropriate action, e.g., only experienced juniors on water, or cancellation of water session with land training as a replacement. All other crews must assess the risks and take the advice of the Captain in taking to the water.

6.6 The Environment Agency station data and weather forecasts should be taken into account when deciding whether to go on the water. Recommended river levels are listed below, but care should be taken especially if the river is still rising and so will continue to rise over the duration of the outing. The Environment agency chart will detail whether the water level is rising or falling. In high water levels debris such as trees are common and are hazardous to both boat and crew.

- Water level less than **0.6m** – Suitable for all experience levels including learners.
- Water level greater than **0.6m** – No learners or less experienced rowers
- Water level greater than **0.8m**- No experienced Juniors , but acceptable for experienced seniors and large boats
- Water level greater than 0.9m – No singles, or less experienced doubles. Experienced large boats only depending on debris levels.
- Water level greater than 1.0m – No crews

7 ROWING IN LOW LIGHT OR IN THE DARK

7.1 The Captain or WSO's permission is required to row after dark, and only experienced crews are permitted to row in the dark. Single scullers must be considered competent (performance group) by the Captain at steering and have permission to row in the dark, likewise for the steersperson in a coxless crew boat. In a coxed crew the steers person must be experienced, confident in steering in the dark and approved by the Captain. All crews must be briefed in the hazards of night-time rowing by the Captain or WSO.

7.2 If your outing may end in very low light or in the dark, lights must be affixed before; "it wasn't dark when I went on the water" isn't an excuse!

7.3 Lights affixed to boats must be white for the bow and red for the stern. It is recommended that these are not powerful bike headlights as these blind other crews on the water.

7.4 Night rowing in adverse conditions including extremely cold weather, high winds and heavy rain, thick fog and blizzard conditions is forbidden. Similarly, after dark outings in high water or flood conditions are forbidden. (Crews deemed competent and with permission to go on the water should make their own assessment on the suitability of conditions and if it is safe to go out.)

7.5 Special care should be taken when spinning, allowing enough room if other crews are on the water.

- 7.6 In the event of capsize, stay with the boat and swim to the Club side of the river. Check for injuries and make sure all crew are accounted for, and then attempt to right the boat and row back to the club. If this is not possible then the alarm should be raised. Considering the risk of hypothermia, if necessary the boat should be secured to the bank or left with another crew and the capsized crew should return to the boathouse to get into warm kit, allowing another crew to go and rescue the boat or to go and retrieve it when in dry kit.
- 7.7 The coxswain is in charge of the crew unless another crew leader takes on the roll and associated responsibility. All commands are to be enacted promptly to ensure the safety of the crew and other river users with all crew being mindful of the increased risk during after dark rowing.
- 7.8 In addition to signing into the log book it is recommended that there is someone in the boathouse or that crews tell someone when they go out on the water and report to them that they are back and safe. A mobile phone and waterproof bag are available should a crew wish to take the extra precaution of taking a phone in the boat.
- 7.9 It is recommended that the heating in the changing rooms is turned on before a night outing as night outings are likely to be cold, and in the event of adverse weather that forces the crew off the water, or capsize, the changing rooms will be warm.

8 LANDING STAGE COVER FOR JUNIOR SESSIONS.

- 8.1 There should always be a session manager on the landing stage. This could be the Captain, Vice Captains, Head Junior Coach or other DBS checked member of the senior squad. Their role is to manage the overall session, co-ordinating boats on and off the water and to co-ordinate volunteers assisting with the session.
- 8.2 For the supervision of juniors there must be one person on the dock per 4 juniors on the water of any ability. This can include parent volunteers as supervisors (River Safety Officers) who can assist the more experienced juniors on and off the water, allowing coaches to concentrate on the close supervision of learners e.g. two parent volunteers and a coach can supervise up to 8 experienced juniors and 4 learner/development juniors as a maximum.
- 8.3 The parent volunteers are supervised by the coach or session manager and are organised on the parent volunteer rota, having become a parent member of the Club.
- 8.4 The session manager and volunteers will ensure that the landing stage is equipped with:
- Megaphone
 - Throwline
 - Thermal blankets

Appendix

1. Appropriate clothing-

Light clothing, such as true rowing kit or cycling kit is appropriate.

Baggy shorts/joggers and jeans will get caught in the slides and are heavy if waterlogged in the event of capsize and are so not appropriate.

Hoodies, loose tops and fleecy tops are also not appropriate as you will get thumbs caught in them, which could cause the rower to capsize, and will also get waterlogged.

In the winter a number of lighter layers that can be removed is better than a single heavy layer.

The Captain or session manager has the right to refuse access to the water to anyone in inappropriate clothing.

Revision History

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	October 2015	First Issue

Key British Rowing Supporting Documents

Title	Version	Date
Row Safe	V1	2008
Stay with the Boat		
Cold Water Immersion Guidance		19 March 2009

Derwent Rowing Club Supporting Documents

Title	Version	Date
Training Session Risk Assessment	0.1	October 2015
Incident Reporting Form	0.1	October 2015
Junior Membership Form		
Senior Membership Form		