



Trent Rowing Club

Safety Policy Amendment 8 - 2011

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Safety Policy
Amendment 8 – July 2011

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Section 1 – General

1.01 British Rowing Row Safe: a guide to good practice in rowing

The Club requires all members to comply with the British Rowing publication 'Row Safe: a guide to good practice in rowing', a copy of which is available at the Club. The publication may also be viewed at and downloaded from the British Rowing website www.britishrowing.org

1.02 Supervision

Every river or land training session being undertaken by members under the age of 18 will be supervised by a Competent Person until they reach a level of competence required to train safely alone. Whenever possible river training supervision should be provided from the Safety/Coaching launch, although if for any reason the launch is unavailable crews may be supervised from the river bank. When supervising from the river bank it is recommended that the Competent Person uses a bicycle and that training is restricted to reaches of the river downstream of the Leicester Line railway bridge.

The Competent Person should ensure that at all times they are aware of the location of all crews for whom they are responsible, and they should endeavour to keep the crews within their area of observation.

Competent Persons will be designated by the Club Committee giving regard to experience and local knowledge. Designated competent person's names will be posted on the Club notice board.

A member under the age of 18 who wishes to train without supervision should request permission to do so from the Captain or a designated coach. The member's competence shall be assessed and the member's parents or legal guardians shall be contacted to obtain their permission for the Club to allow the member to train unsupervised. If the member is granted permission to train unsupervised then this should be noted and the Committee and all coaches should be made aware of the arrangement.

Senior members training unaccompanied do so at their own risk and take full responsibility for their own safety. Senior member should only partake in solo outings when they have achieved the required level of competence as defined by the Captain and coaches. It is recommended that senior members undertaking unaccompanied training sessions make arrangements to advise a third party of their intended return time.

Section 2 - River Training

WATER IS A DANGEROUS ELEMENT AND MUST BE RESPECTED NO TRAINING TRIP IS EVER WORTH TAKING RISKS WITH THE SAFETY OF MEMBERS.

2.01 River levels

Our stretch of the River Trent is prone to flooding, predominantly through the winter months but also at any time of the year if heavy rainfall is experienced. During times of flooding dangers may not be apparent when viewing the river at the boathouse. However, the nature of the river further upstream with various bends and variations in width and depth of the river gives rise to turbulence in many places. This may be observed at any time of the year, even with low water levels, and when the river floods the turbulent conditions become far worse.

Turbulence and fast flowing water can make steering and stopping boats extremely difficult greatly increasing the risk of collision with river banks and other craft. Turbulent conditions also cause undercurrents that are extremely hazardous to people who find themselves in the river, and it can become difficult for even strong swimmers to stay afloat leading to a risk of drowning.

Increased water levels also cause quantities of debris to enter the river stream, floating on or just below the surface of the water, giving rise to a risk of damage to equipment. This starts to occur with even just a small increase in water level, and the nature of the debris means that it is extremely difficult to see it from a rowing boat.

The Club's landing stage is the best and quickest reference to our acceptable river level. The "normal" river level at which river training may go ahead is with the water at or below the level of the landing stage. If the water is lapping onto the landing stage then a decision must be made by the competent person in charge of the training session whether river training may go ahead. In making this decision the competent person should particularly consider the following:

- Whether the water level is rising or falling
- Whether there is risk of debris floating at or below the water surface
- Whether the presence of mud on the landing stage poses any risk

If the water level is at or above the bottom of the concrete kerb to the rear of the landing stage then the risk to members and equipment becomes severe. At these levels inexperienced crews shall not use the river, and it is strongly recommended that experienced crews also refrain from river training. Crews considering boating under these conditions should consult one of the Club's competent persons who shall make a decision on whether river training may go ahead. This also applies to borderline conditions, particularly when coupled with other conditions such as wind or fog.

2.02 Weather Conditions

There are a variety of weather conditions which pose risk to members during river training sessions. These include, but are not limited to, high winds, fog, lightning and heavy rain leading to high river levels (see the Club's Flood Awareness and Evacuation Plan in section 4 below). Rowers are encouraged to be 'Weather Watchers' and to plan their outings accordingly. In particular, Competent Persons should make themselves aware of predicted potentially hazardous weather conditions for the time that they are to be in charge of training sessions.

2.02.01 High Winds

When high winds prevail only highly skilled crews and scullers may go onto the water. Exceptionally high winds will make turning upstream of the Burton Bridge particularly dangerous, and in these conditions crews will not be allowed to go onto the water.

On windy days a decision will be made by the Competent Person in charge of the training session on whether river training may take place. This decision must be based on the value of water training in such conditions compared to the risks involved.

2.02.02 Fog

Crews and scullers will not boat in foggy conditions. To determine acceptable conditions the bend in the river beyond Burton Leander RC must be in full view from the landing stage before boating.

2.02.03 Lightning

Participants engaging in water sports are at particular risk of lightning strike during thunder storms. Open spaces, such as fields, rivers or lakes, and locations beneath canopies, small rain shelters, trees, umbrellas, tents and marquees are all considered 'high risk' locations during thunder storms. The risk of lightning strike is further increased by being near to metal or carbon objects such as riggers, boats, blades, trailers, launches, etc.

When lightning is observed it is important to be able to seek 'proper shelter'. Although no place is absolutely safe from lightning some are safer than others and proper shelter can be:

- an enclosed substantial building with electric wiring and plumbing to provide a safe pathway for the current to earth to the ground.
- a fully enclosed metal vehicle with windows shut. This acts as a Faraday cage and guides the lightning around the passengers - mini-buses are an excellent shelter for large groups of people.

It can therefore be seen that 'proper shelter' is not easily available when training on the river in Burton, and that both rowers and coaches are at risk of lightning strike in the event of thunder storms. Therefore, whenever thunder storms are forecast, river training will not be undertaken. If members are already on the water and realise that a thunder storm is approaching/starting they should abide by the following basic recommendations:

- Use the '30 - 30 Rule': when you see lightning, count the time until you hear the thunder. If it is 30 seconds (approx. 10 km away) or less, seek 'proper shelter'.
- If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back-up rule for it being time to seek 'proper shelter'.
- Wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder before leaving shelter.

On average a typical storm moves at about 40 km/h giving approx 15 minutes to seek 'proper shelter'. Therefore, during training sessions when thunder storms are forecast, members are recommended to stay within 15 minute rowing distance of the boathouse.

2.03 Deterioration of conditions during training sessions

In the event of the river level rising considerably, or weather conditions, e.g. fog, wind or thunder storms, deteriorating during a training session, or any combination of these hazards, a decision will be made by the competent person in charge of the training session on the suitability of continuing the session. Should it be decided to discontinue the session all crews will return to the boathouse in line at a steady pace.

2.04 Rowing in the dark

Rowing in the dark is not allowed under any circumstances. Crews and scullers embarking during the evening must consider the length of their trip to ensure that it is completed in light conditions.

2.05 Which side of the river

Crews and scullers in Burton must keep to the coxes left hand side of the river, i.e. Stapenhill side while travelling upstream, Burton side while travelling downstream. This is not as per the national standard, but was adopted to allow crews coming downstream to take the inside of all dangerous bends while allowing slower upstream crews to take a wide sweep in the same situations.

This convention also helps to prevent accidents with embarking crews from the clubs' landing stages.

This rule is not accepted by the Sea Cadet Corps and special care is required if crews opt for racing pace down the Clubhouse straight.

2.06 Safe rowing equipment

Before any 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:

- Check for leaks and damage
- Check that canvasses or decking are free of holes so that maximum buoyancy will be maintained if the boat sinks or capsizes
- Check that bulkhead seals are in position before leaving the shore
- Check that riggers are securely attached and that moving parts (swivels, sliding seats, stretchers etc.) are in working order
- 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 of the blade free from damage

Every boat MUST at all times carry firmly attached to its bows a white rubber bow ball. Boats MUST NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES be used without a bow ball. In the event of an accident, any oarsman or cox coming into collision with the bows of a boat not fitted with a bow ball WILL SUFFER SERIOUS INJURY due to the shape of the boats prow. This requirement is equally important when the boat is off the water.

Any member discovering damaged equipment must ensure:

- that the damage is reported to a responsible Club official
- that the damage is entered into the Damaged Equipment Book
- that damaged equipment is clearly marked so that anyone intending to use the equipment is made aware of the damage.

2.07 Shoes

Heel tags of shoes should always be checked when embarking to ensure quick release in an emergency.

**NEVER FASTEN SHOES TOO TIGHTLY AND
TEST FOR SLIP OUT AT EMBARKATION**

2.08 Safety launch

The Safety Launch is also a coaching vehicle. Whenever possible the launch should be used whenever crews and scullers under 18 years of age are on the water, as detailed in item 1.02 of this Safety Policy - Supervision.

The launch will be equipped with:

- A bailer
- A siren, whistle or similar warning device
- A grab line
- Two thermal blankets
- Two lifebuoys
- A basic first aid kit
- A sharp knife
- Gates and rowing blades for use in case of engine failure

The driver of the safety launch and any passengers should wear lifejackets at all times.

If the safety launch breaks down during a training session then all crews will return to the boathouse in line at a steady pace.

2.09 Swimming

It is a prerequisite of membership that all members shall be able to swim. All participants must be able to demonstrate both competence and confidence in and under the water by:

- Swimming at least 50 metres in light clothing (rowing kit)
- Treading water for at least two minutes
- Swimming under water for at least 5 metres

Participants unable to demonstrate the minimum standard must wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid when on the river.

The Club will arrange periodic swimming tests and capsize drills, and will record each member's swimming ability and capsize training.

2.10 New members

All members joining the Club should first be taught how to scull competently before moving on to other craft. This policy is designed to create watermanship and individual awareness.

When being taught the sculler should use a boat suitable for tuition with a rope firmly attached to the bows until the sculler has reached a level of competence acceptable to the Club Captain or a designated coach. Trips will then be limited to the club stretch (the stretch of water between the Burton Bridge and the first bend upstream), where the sculler can be seen at all times.

Before the sculler is allowed to scull beyond the club stretch of the river they will again be required to prove their increased competence. New scullers will not be permitted to go below the Burton Bridge.

2.11 Capsize

In the event of capsize the sculler or crew must remain with the boat which will become their buoyancy aid. It will then either drift to the safety of the bank or await the arrival of the safety launch.

DO NOT TRY TO SWIM TO THE BANK WITHOUT THE BOAT **REMAIN WITH THE BOAT AND AWAIT SAFETY BY DRIFTING OR RESCUE**

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. The local hospital will know if you are in danger from pollution and will give any treatment that may be necessary.

2.12 Lifejackets and Buoyancy aids

Any person on the river who is not rowing or sculling is required to wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, all coxes, safety launch drivers and coaches or passengers within the safety launch. This requirement shall also extend to any participants who are unable to demonstrate swimming competence in accordance with item 2.09 above.

Coxes required to cox 'front-loader' front coxed boats should receive specific instruction on the use of inflatable lifejackets and on the procedure for escaping the boat in the event of capsize. Specifically, automatic inflation lifejackets MUST NOT be used by coxes in front-loader boats.

Lifejackets and buoyancy aids shall be routinely inspected and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions. Any member who causes an inflatable lifejacket to be inflated, who discovers that an inflatable lifejacket has been inflated, or who discovers that any lifejacket or buoyancy aid has sustained damage, should ensure:

- that the incident is reported to a responsible Club official
- that the incident is entered into the Damaged Equipment Book
- that the used or damaged lifejacket is clearly marked to prevent any other member from attempting to use the lifejacket until it has been re-charged, repaired or replaced.

Section 3 - Land Training

3.01 Circuit training

Circuit training is a competition with oneself. The exercises must be carried out with technical efficiency at all times to mean anything at all. Hurried and incomplete exercises are at best worthless and at worst DANGEROUS. Complete the exercise correctly, the score is irrelevant to other members of your group and simply presents you with a new target.

3.02 Warm up

All members must warm up and complete stretching exercises before imposing a training load.

3.03 Weight training

Whenever weights are being used by Junior members the competent person in charge of the training session must remain present and closely supervise the weight training activities.

In rowing weights are only used for weight training, not weight lifting, and again it is a competition with oneself and must be carried out progressively and in a technically correct manner.

The weight frame is there to avoid the extremes of technique failure occurring, while providing "fall away" safety features which must be in place before training begins.

At all times at least three members must be involved, one lifting and two supporting. Records being kept are a vital ingredient of any weight training routine.

3.04 Running

The conditions in which members engage in road running require special consideration.

- At night, members should wear bright high visibility clothing. Members, particularly juniors, should wear hi-viz tops which are provided by the Club
- In the dark juniors must always run as a pack, in line
- All members should avoid stepping into the road

- In slippery conditions, for example when wet, leafy, snowy or icy, the value of running must be considered and skipping or ergo training offered as a replacement
- Care must be taken when crossing side roads, driveways or other entrances due to the risk of vehicles emerging

Section 4 - Flood Awareness and Evacuation Plan

4.01 Introduction to Flood Awareness & Evacuation Plan

The Trent Rowing Club premises are located within the River Trent flood plain. The Club's landing stage and parts of the bank leading up toward the Boathouse and car park regularly flood and the Club Safety Policy clearly defines the water level at which it is deemed unsafe for Club members to row on the river (section 2.10 above). This regular flooding causes no property damage and minimal risk to members.

Occasionally, under severe flood conditions, flood water has reached a level where it has entered the Boathouse. This has occurred three times since 1975 up to a maximum depth within the building of around 250mm. On these occasions the water level has never yet covered the car park area and access to the property has not been compromised. However, it is not impossible that water levels may rise above this level in the future causing a risk to vehicles parked on the premises.

4.02 Risks associated with flooding

Flooding within the Club Boathouse poses several risks including but not limited to:

- Members within the building could trip over unseen submerged objects within the Boathouse, there is also a risk of drowning should any fall result in unconsciousness
- There is a risk of drowning to young children, although children should be supervised by an adult when on Club premises, particularly in times of flood risk
- There is a risk of contact with contaminated water. This risk does not cease when the water recedes as items submerged will remain damp and potentially contaminated
- Equipment stored on the Boathouse floor may become water damaged
- Paints, oils, cleaning materials and other liquids or chemicals stored within the building may be spilt and enter the water with a risk of pollution

Flooding to the car park area could cause damage to vehicles which, in extreme flooding, could even be washed away with a risk of danger to any occupants. There is also a risk of pollution by fuel, oil or other fluids from the vehicles.

The aim of the Flood Awareness and Evacuation Plan is to minimise the risk from flooding to:

- The Club's members
- Members' vehicles and other property
- The Club's equipment
- The environment

This is achieved by ensuring that members are aware of the risk of flooding, and by implementing adequate and effective warning of flood risk to enable damage prevention measures to be put into place and early evacuation of the Club premises to be carried out.

4.03 Flood level measurement

The Club maintains a water level indicator which is graduated to show the normal river level and various levels above this level. The top graduation is clearly marked as the river level at which the Club premises must be evacuated.

Below this graduation are a number of marks indicating the points at which, if the river level is still rising, there is calculated to be 2 hours, 1 ½ hours, 1 hour, and ½ hour before the river will reach the evacuation level.

Members are encouraged to monitor this level indicator on a day-to-day basis. The indicator also has the Club Safety Policy maximum river level marked to further clarify this level point.

4.04 Areas of Responsibility

The Club Captain and Vice Captains are responsible for identifying when flooding being experienced on the River Trent through the town is in excess of the normal levels expected, indicating that there is a risk of flooding to the Club's premises. These officers are expected to monitor the Environment Agency flood warning website and/or Floodline telephone service (website details and telephone numbers below) and to communicate with each other and other officers of the Club. If the warning for the river reaches a 'Flood Warning' level then the Captain and Vice Captains will take action to contact the Club's Competent Persons and other Officers on an information cascading basis to ensure that all are aware of the Flood Risk.

Once a 'Flood Warning' is in place one or more Competent Persons should visit the Club premises to check the water level. These members will make a decision on whether flooding of the Boathouse is likely and should inform the Captain and Vice Captains of the situation.

When members are occupying the premises, the River Level Indicator and the excessively high water level will serve as good indication of impending flooding. However, it is still imperative that the Captain and Vice Captains are informed of the increasing water levels.

4.05 Evacuation Plan

If the river level approaches the 2 hour warning point and is observed to be still rising:

The Club's Competent Persons should be contacted to be put on warning that an evacuation of the premises may be necessary. Any members present at the premises should also be warned.

If the river level reaches the 2 hour warning point:

As many Competent Persons and other members who are contactable should be called to the Club Premises. These members should be instructed not to park on the premises. At this point the ground floor of the Boathouse should be inspected and any equipment susceptible to damage should be secured and/or removed to higher parts of the building.

Oils, fuel, paints and any other liquids or chemicals within the Boathouse should be moved above danger levels. Fabric items and other absorbent materials should also be moved to prevent them from coming into contact with river water. Any portable electrical equipment within the ground floor of the Boathouse should be disconnected from the electricity supply and, if possible, moved to safe areas within the building.

Members with vehicles parked on the Club premises should be warned that they may be required to move their vehicles from the premises. These members should be instructed not to leave the premises without first removing their vehicles.

If the river level reaches the 1 hour warning point:

All vehicles should be evacuated from the premises. On completion of this evacuation a barrier or tape will be positioned across the Club entrance to prevent other vehicles entering the premises. This barrier will be labelled instructing drivers not to enter the premises.

At this point the Club bar should also be closed as the river side fire exit staircase leads to a pathway which will be liable to flooding. The doors leading from the clubroom and the changing room should be labelled to instruct members that the building may not be exited by these routes.

If the river level reaches the ½ hour warning point:

The ground floor of the Boathouse should be evacuated. The Boathouse doors should be locked and the Boathouse inspected to ensure that no members are still present. The door at the top of the internal staircase should be closed and labelled instructing that members should not enter the Boathouse.

Any members still present on the Club's premises should be advised of the danger of remaining on the premises, and it should be recommended that all members leave the property.

4.06 After flooding

Once flood waters have receded the premises should be inspected for damage and the presence of any pollutants. If any significant pollution is discovered a risk assessment should be carried out to determine whether it is safe and appropriate for Club members to clear the pollution, or whether the Environment Agency should be contacted for advice.

The Boathouse floor should be cleaned at the earliest opportunity to remove any deposited silt.

If any part of the building electrical system appears to have been adversely affected by the flood water then a qualified electrician should be contacted for advice and, if necessary, repairs.

Environment Agency Contact Details:

Floodwatch Website: www.environmentagency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/floodwarning/
Floodline Phoneline: 0845 988 1188 Quickdial Number for Burton upon Trent: 052116
To report pollution: 0800 80 70 60

Section 5 - Trailer Towing

5.01 Authorisation to use the Club Trailer

The boat trailer will only be used with the consent of the management committee. This consent may be given on behalf of the committee by any of the Officers of the Club who should inform the committee of their decision at the next committee meeting.

It must be remembered that the driver of a vehicle carrying boats or towing a trailer is responsible in law for ensuring compliance with all road transport legislation. However, should an infringement occur the Club (usually in the person of the Secretary) may also have to answer charges.

5.02 Licensing and Insurances

Any driver intending to tow the Club Trailer should ensure that their driving licence permits them to drive a towing vehicle.

Any driver intending to tow the Club Trailer should ensure that the insurance policy in place for their vehicle permits the towing of a double axle trailer of the size of Club Trailer. They should also note that any third party damage caused by the towing vehicle, any part of the trailer or any part of any of the boats or other equipment being carried MUST be covered by the insurance policy relating to the towing vehicle. The driver must ensure that the insurance policy in place for the vehicle provides this cover as third party damage IS NOT COVERED BY THE CLUB'S INSURERS.

Any damage caused to the trailer, or any of the Club's boats or equipment being carried on the trailer, that is caused by the driver of the vehicle towing the trailer, as long as the driver has been authorised to tow the trailer in accordance with section 5.01 above, will be covered by the Club's insurance policy.

Any damage caused to equipment not owned by the Club whilst being carried on the trailer must be insured by the owner of the equipment, either by arranging for the equipment to be added to the Club's insurance policy, or by insuring under separate arrangements. Damage to equipment not owned by the Club and not added to the Club's insurance policy IS NOT COVERED BY THE CLUB'S INSURERS.

5.03 ARA Row Safe Document section 2.5 'Transport and Trailers'

This section of the Amateur Rowing Association's Row Safe document has been adopted as the Club's guide to trailer towing for the purposes of this Safety Policy. Any member intending to tow the Club's boat trailer must first familiarise themselves with the contents of this document, and they must also ensure that they comply with all legal requirements. This document is available for viewing or downloading from the ARA website.

