



Athlone Boat Club
Safety Statement 2011/2012

1 Introduction

This Safety Statement is to outline safety issues with regard to rowing in Athlone Boat Club. This is meant as a guide to safe practices and is to be read in conjunction with the risk assessment for the club.

1.1 Reviewing

This Safety Statement is to be reviewed annually by the Safety Officer. In the event of a major incident in rowing being brought to the attention of the club by the Rowing Ireland or some other body, it is up to the Safety Officer to amend this Safety Statement if required.

1.2 Hazards and Risks

The following is a brief outline of some of the hazards and risks encountered by the club during its day-to-day activities.

1.2.a Water Based Training

- Drowning
- Swamping
- Exposure
- Equipment Failure
- Water Pollution
- Waterborne Obstacles
- Currents, Flows
- Collisions

1.2.b Land Based Training

- Injury
- Traffic (road running)

1.2.c Trailers/Towing

- Boats Incorrectly Tied Down
- Loose Objects in Trailer
- Overloaded trailer

2.General Safety

There shall be prominently displayed in the Boathouse a list of vital telephone numbers relating to safety in general. These are:

- EMERGENCY SERVICES – ‘112’ OR ‘999’
- Local doctor
- Local hospital casualty department
- River rescue services
- Club Officers

Safety and First Aid equipment shall be readily available in the Boathouse to include -

First Aid Box (to be fully stocked, contents listed and replaced as used, box contents to be checked monthly).

- Thermal/exposure blankets
- Life buoys and rescue lines/throw-bags
- Life jackets

A plan of the local waterway is to be drawn up and displayed, drawing attention to the applicable navigation rules and any local interpretation required accommodating particular hazards.

3. Equipment

For the safety of all concerned, rowing equipment should be maintained in good order. This is largely the responsibility of the Captain. Particular attention is to be paid to the following:

- Every boat must at all times carry a bow ball.

Heel restraints and “quick-release” mechanisms must be in proper and effective working order in all boats equipped with fitted shoes.
- Check oars and sculls to ensure that “buttons” are secure and properly set.

Buoyancy compartments, bow and stern canvasses, etc., must be checked to ensure that they will function as intended.

3.1 Launches

Launches must be driven by competent persons as specified by the captain of the club. All launch personnel must wear an appropriate lifejacket/buoyancy aid. Maximum of 2 persons per launch when coaching 4s and 8s. It is advisable that each launch has a coach and a driver.

All coaching launches and safety boats shall carry the following safety aids:

- A bailer,

A grab line at least 15m (50ft) long with a large knot tied in one end to assist throwing (ideally a purpose made rescue/heaving line - ‘throw bag’).
- A mobile phone

- Life buoys.
- A basic first aid kit (contents recorded and checked as before).
- A sharp knife in carrying sheath, carried on person.
- Simple handholds fixed to the side of the launch to give help to any person

being rescued and provide self-help should the driver fall overboard.

- Engine cut-out lanyard device.
- Oars.

4. Oarsmen & Scullers

All persons participating in rowing or sculling must be in good health and must make it known to the safety officer if they are unable to swim.

- It is recommended that non swimmers should take swimming lessons
- All persons participating in rowing or sculling must be able to swim 50m and tread water for 5 min in their rowing gear and be instructed in capsize drills.
- In the event of a capsize always stay with the boat, do not attempt to swim.
- The coxswain/steerperson is in charge from the time the boat is removed from its rack until it is replaced. Every crew member is to do as instructed by the coxswain/steerperson without exception.
- All persons participating in rowing or sculling must maintain their rowing equipment in good order and check that it is in a safe condition before use. Any breakages/faults are to be reported to the Captain as soon as possible.
- No night rowing is to be allowed using club equipment by members of the club
- Every outing must be arranged by a coach or other suitably responsible person. The escort can follow in a launch.
- Unescorted Outings- Every unescorted outing must be recorded in a log book and unescorted crews must carry a mobile phone in a waterproof bag. See section on Log Books.
- No unauthorised unescorted outings permitted.
- No unescorted outings permitted in the case of pair and single sculls and all junior crews.
- All oarsmen and scullers must be constantly aware of the rights of others to the free use of the water and extend to them at all times the courtesy they would similarly wish to receive. It is recommended that active members should learn and practice capsize and accident drills. Every opportunity should be taken to learn simple first-aid, life saving and resuscitation techniques.
- Beginners to the sport are not allowed to use equipment without adequate and prior instruction and are not allowed to boat unsupervised.

5. Coxswain

- The coxswain must be aware of all relevant rules of the river before going on the water.
- In the case where Athlone Boat Club is rowing on a river other than the Shannon at Athlone, the coxswain must attend the coxes meeting and obtain the rules of the river and only when he/she is confident that they are known and understood may he/she proceed out on the water with the crew.
- All coxswains shall wear a life jacket (conforming to BS3595 standard) or a buoyancy aid of approved design at all times when on the water. Coxswains in "front-loader" positions must wear life jackets that allow them easy escape from their position.
- The Safety Officer must ensure that an operational lifejacket (greater than 150N) or buoyancy-aid is worn by the coxswain at all times.
- The coxswain must be able to satisfy the safety officer that he/she is capable of swimming and has adequate eyesight and hearing.
- Boat turning is to be only done well upstream of all obstacles and into the wind. This is to give due allowance to the downstream drift of the boat while turning.
- If being overtaken by a faster boat, coxswains must give way and not block the path. If this is not possible, inform the oncoming crew/vessel of your difficulty.
- If overtaking a slower boat, you must advise them you are present and carefully overtake.

6. The Responsibilities of the Coach

A coach shall ensure that every member of the crews being coached follows the appropriate safety procedures at all times, and the coach shall observe them to ensure the crews' safety. In particular, coaches should:

- Be aware of the local Code of Practice.
- Ensure that crews are using safe rowing equipment.

- **Be aware of weather and water conditions** and arrange the outing to avoid any danger.
- Watch out for any hazards the crews may meet. It is often easier for the coach, who is higher above the water than the members of the crew, to see swimmers or similar hazards ahead. Draw the attention of the coxswain or steersman to such hazards and influence any steering decision that has to be made.
- Showing consideration for other water users is very much the responsibility of the coach, both in regard to the coaching launch and to the boats being coached.
- When crews are rowing away from their home water, the coach shall ascertain the local code of practice and, at regattas, any special traffic rules to be observed, and ensure crews fully understand them.
- Coaches should pay particular attention to the coaching of coxswains. Not only is a competent coxswain important to the crew's success; competence is essential for their safety on the water.
- Every coach should know capsize and accident drills and be prepared to assist or rescue any member who is in difficulties is injured, or appears to be suffering from hypothermia or exhaustion.
- It is recommended that every coach shall learn life-saving and resuscitation procedures as set out in the Rowing Ireland basic coaching award
- It is the responsibility of the coach or safety officer to decide whether the weather conditions are suitable for rowing. **IF IN DOUBT, DON'T GO OUT**

FOG- IF YOU CANT SEE PAST CHARLIES ISLAND DO NOT GO OUT.

Coaches of beginners have an extra responsibility. Those who are new to the sport are likely to concentrate on their own rowing to the exclusion of all else, and are thus less likely to be aware of approaching danger. It is very easy for the first crew that gets boated to get into difficulties whilst the coach is supervising further crews getting onto the water. Beginners, whether in crews or sculling boats, should never be allowed on the water unsupervised. Only 1 beginner crew on the water per launch.

7. Water borne diseases

Be aware that there is the possibility of water borne diseases such as Weils diseases, Gastro-intestinal illness and Blue-Green Algae.

8. Transportation

Transportation of boats is a regular occurrence for the club and should be considered a serious hazard.

The role of the club's safety officer is to ensure that all members that transport boats with the club trailer are conversant with the requirements for safe and legal movement of boats by road.

While loading and unloading of boats at the club house on Grace Road extreme care should be practiced and the wearing of high visibility vests is recommended. Also a bollard should be placed at the rear of the trailer so as to divert the oncoming traffic away from those loading the trailer.

The Secretary will ensure that any person driving a vehicle towing the trailer is adequately covered by insurance. He/she must also ensure that the driver holds the correct license.

- The driver must be aware of the max load to be carried on the trailer.
- All boats must be properly tied down with appropriate ties and all ties are to

be checked by the driver of the vehicle before departure. Lights, tyres, mirrors, pitch, brakes and wheel changing equipment must also be checked before departure.

When the trailer is disconnected from the towing vehicle the handbrake must be applied and the boats left tied down until they are to be removed by club members.

The Vehicle Log book kept in the Vehicle should be completed for each journey

9. Safety on the slip

- A lifebuoy is to be kept close to the slip at all times.
- Instructions given by the coach and/or the cox/steer-person on the slip are to be obeyed immediately. The slips are slippery and attention to instructions helps avoid personal injury and damage to equipment.

Make sure that the slips are pushed out to the level of the water so as not to damage the fin when Launching boats.

10. Collision on the river

It is the coxswain and launch driver's responsibility to avoid collision with other boats. This is best done by observing the rules of the river and been familiar with the River map. In the case of a collision, the boat is to head back immediately to the slip, unless otherwise directed by the coach.

11. Clubhouse safety

- It is the Captain responsibility to ensure all bay areas are kept clear of clutter. This is to avoid slips, trips and falls.
- Boats must be kept well pushed in on the racks to avoid riggers protruding unnecessarily.

The Captain will designate which area each boat is to be stored.

All junior members must be supervised by a responsible adult on club premises while awaiting to go on the water.

All petrol must be stored in the bunker when not in use.

12. Log Book

- A log book of all unescorted outings is to be kept at all times by the safety officer in the safety file.
- A responsible member of a crew must contact an authorized person (Captain, Safety Officer) prior to an unescorted outing giving the details required by the log book
- The completed Log Book entry must be given to the Safety Officer in good time so that it may be added to the safety file.
- The authorized persons have the power to forbid any unescorted outings where they see fit.
- The Log Book record is to give an indication of intended duration, direction of outing, boat type, crew names and a crew contact number. This may be of assistance in the event of a mishap.
- Copies of the Log Book are to be readily available in the safety file.

13. HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is a serious concern with any water sport. Avoidance must be the first consideration at all times.

- Hypothermia occurs when the whole of the body has been chilled to a much lower than normal temperature, i.e. below 35°C compared with the normal body temperature of 37°C.

- Dress to beat the cold - Layers of clothing are more effective than one warm garment. The outer layer should be wind and waterproof.
- Do not take or give alcohol in cold conditions. Alcohol accelerates heat loss as well as impairing judgment.
- Be alert to the warning signs of cold both in yourself and others. Exposed arms, legs and head heighten the risk.
- If a person has fallen into cold water their body will lose heat rapidly. To reduce heat loss, keep clothes on except heavy coats or boots which may drag the person down.
- Sudden immersion in cold water can have a shock effect that can disrupt

normal breathing, reducing even a proficient swimmer to incompetence. Confusion and an inability to respond to simple instructions will become evident.

- When hypothermia is suspected your aims must be to prevent the casualty losing more body heat and to re-warm the casualty.
- Send for help. Hypothermia is a medical emergency whether the patient is conscious or unconscious.
- If conscious the victim should be actively re-warmed under careful observation.
- If unconscious the victim must be got to medical aid as soon as possible.

7.1 Symptoms and signs of hypothermia

The following are the most usual symptoms and signs, but all may not be present:

- Unexpected and unreasonable behaviour possibly accompanied by complaints of coldness and tiredness.
- Physical and mental lethargy with failure to understand a question or orders.
- Slurring of speech.
- Violent outburst of unexpected energy and violent language, becoming uncooperative.

- Failure of, or abnormality in, vision.
- Twitching.
- Lack of control of limbs, unsteadiness and complaining of numbness and cramp.
- General shock with pallor and blueness of lips and nails.
- Slow weak pulse, wheezing and coughing.

A very dangerous situation is still present when a person who has been in the water for some time is taken out. Further heat loss must be prevented. The victim should be protected against wind and rain if possible. Re-warming can be carried out by:

- Wrapping the victim in a thermal/exposure blanket.
- Others placing their warm bodies against the victim.
- Giving hot drinks (if conscious).

14. Safety File

- A hard copy of the safety file is to be kept by the Safety Officer. It should include at least the following:
 - Safety Statement
 - Accident Report Forms
 - Log Book
 - Life Jacket Service Record

It is a requirement that all persons using the club facilities are fully paid up members.