



## Warwick Boat Club Rowing Section Safety Plan 2021 – (V1 October 2021)

### 1 Introduction

Warwick Boat Club Rowing Section is committed to the safety of its members and guests. Safety should always be the number one priority for everyone whilst engaging in activities around the boathouse, rowing or travelling with the club to/from events. The aim of this Safety Plan is to ensure that all members and visitors are made aware of the safety requirements of rowing, sculling and related activities at Warwick so that they may participate safely.

The following guidance applies to Club members rowing at Warwick and when operating away from Warwick, except where local safety procedures are issued for the location visited. It also applies to crews visiting Warwick and any other person boating from the premises. It should be read in conjunction with the latest Rowing Section Rules which can be found on the website and on the rowing noticeboard within the Clubhouse.

### 2 Responsibilities

**All members** are personally responsible for and have a duty of care to ensure that their actions, both on and off the water, are conducted in a manner that does not compromise the safety of themselves or others.

**All members** are expected to comply with the requirements of the British Rowing RowSafe Guide, this Safety Plan and any other rules or instructions issued by the Club, in respect of safety. The complete British Rowing RowSafe guide can be found here: [British Rowing Row Safe Guide](#)

**New Members** will be inducted by an experienced member of the Rowing Section. An electronic copy of the section rules, this safety plan and other useful information are made available to new members when they first join and are also available for reference on the website.

Those new to rowing are required to attend a structured Learn-2-Row course before joining the club.

Regular capsizing drills are organised by the club and it is expected that new members attend a session as soon as possible after joining.

### 3 Insurance

The Club insures against damage to its own equipment and also claims against them by third parties (e.g. for negligence). Members with their own boats at the club are required to arrange their own private insurance.

The Club does not provide insurance if a third party decides to sue an individual member. However, if you are a member of British Rowing the subscription fee does provide cover for these circumstances.

### 4 Safety Notice Board

The main safety notice board is located on the back wall of the main boat house. It is used for posting important safety information and club policy documents. The noticeboard lists contact details for Emergency Services and directions to the club. All members should review the board regularly.

An additional small notice board for urgent notices is located on the door to the main boathouse.

### 5 Safety Equipment

Warwick Boat Club provides the following safety equipment.

- **Life Jackets/Buoyancy Aids:** The wearing of a lifejacket or buoyancy aid is compulsory for all coxswains, launch drivers and any passengers on the launch. Life jackets/buoyancy aids must be worn on the top of all other garments when in a boat and manual inflating jackets must only be used by coxswains using front loading/bow coxed boats. The life jackets are stored on hooks on the right-hand wall of the boathouse.
- **Throw Lines (bags):** Any person providing coaching or safety cover from the bank or launch should carry a throw line. The throw lines are stored on hooks on the right-hand wall of the boathouse.
- **Thermal Exposure Blankets and bivvy bags:** stored in the cox box cupboard in the main boathouse.
- **First Aid Boxes:** located in the cox box cupboard in the main boat house and in the main clubhouse.
- **Defibrillator:** located in the main clubhouse

### 6 Taking a Boat on the Water

#### 6.1 Booking Boat and Water Slots

A maximum of 8 boats are allowed on the water during daylight hours. This number reduces to 2 boats after dark. The exception to these rules is any organised nose-to-tail or side-by-side session when there is no limit on the number of boats that can go out.

[Boat Usage Rules and Criteria](#) are issued from time to time by the Rowing Section Committee. A copy of these are displayed on the notice board at the back of the main club house and can also be found on the website.

All boats and water slots must be booked a maximum of 1 week in advance through the Clubspark online booking system.

There are additional restrictions in place for the 80 which may only be used when no other boats are on the water or in an organised side-by-side or reserved session. There are also

additional rules in place for coxless quads/fours which limits use at certain times. These are detailed in club [rules](#).

All crew should log their outing time on the whiteboard on the main clubhouse door. On returning from the outing the details should be wiped off the board. No additional crews may boat if all slots on the outings board are taken.

## **6.2 Warming up & Stretching**

All members are encouraged to warm up and stretch before going on the river (e.g. warm up run) and then stretching when they return to the boat house after the outing. Similar advice applies before/after using ergos, weights or attending circuit training. This regime will minimise injuries like muscle strains. Please ask your coach for advice if unsure of suitable stretches.

## **6.3 Suitable clothing**

It is important that the crew is dressed appropriately for the conditions. In winter members should be aware of the risk of hypothermia, especially when falling into the river. Members should therefore always bring spare clothes and a towel.

Sufficient layers of clothes should be worn to remain warm during the outing. Loose fitting clothes and thick cotton clothes (e.g. rugby shirts and sweatshirts) should be avoided as blades/sculls may catch them. Gloves other than pogies are not advisable but hats are.

## **6.4 Checking the boat**

Before getting into the boat it should be checked closely for damage. Things to check in particular are:

- The bow ball is securely fixed
- Heel restraints are effective
- Hatches are properly secured
- There are no obvious holes in the boat

If there is any doubt concerning the boat's condition a coach or experienced rower should be consulted. In no circumstances should a boat be used if it is damaged or safety features are missing/ineffective.

Any damage must be recorded in the boat damage book and reported to a coach or member of the committee. A yellow "Boat Damaged" sign should be attached to the damaged boat.

## **6.5 Lifting Boats**

Care should be taken by all crews when lifting boats. Ensure:

- there are sufficient people to lift the boat safely.
- everyone is evenly spread along the boat – generally the stronger people should be at the ends and the weaker/smaller ones in the middle.
- you lift with the proper technique – straight back bending the knees.
- walk slowly when carrying the boat – looking out for trip hazards and other members/boats.

## **6.6 Sunburn, Heat Illness and Exhaustion**

Prolonged exposure to sun can cause sunburn or skin damage at any time of the year, not just in the summer. The body produces a lot of heat when exercising. When dehydration occurs, body temperatures can rise to levels that cause heat illness (hyperthermia).

Members are advised to consider weather conditions when rowing and be aware that exposure to the sun even when not noticeably hot can lead to adverse health conditions. Participants should ensure adequate hydration, wear suitable clothing and use sun-block.

## **6.7 Coxes**

The wearing of lifejackets by all coxes is compulsory and anyone new to coxing is instructed in the operation of manually operated gas inflated lifejackets.

If front-loaders are being coxed, care is to be taken to ensure that the lifejacket does not prevent a cox from escaping in the event of a capsize or sinking (automatic inflation life jackets should not be used). The cox is responsible for overall safety of the boat and crew.

Only coxes approved by the Women or Men's Rowing Captain are permitted to cox the 80. Only experienced coxes, with permissions from the Women or Men's Rowing Captain, may cox at night.

## **7 Juniors**

Specific rules, risk assessments and codes of conducts are in place for junior members which should be adhered to at all times. Except for coxing, junior activities may only take place under supervision of one of the Section's recognised Junior Coaches and only during dedicated junior squad sessions. Under certain circumstances, Juniors may be permitted to take part in adult rowing sessions, as either rowers or coxes, by prior arrangement between the Head Junior Coach and a Rowing Captain who will assess the risks and put in place any relevant controls.

## **8 Conduct on the River.**

### **8.1 Circulation Pattern**

Details of the circulation patterns are given in the club rules and are dependent on the type of rowing session taking place. These rowing sessions can be altered at the Women or Men's Rowing Captains' discretion given at least 7 days' notice.

A map of the stretch of the River Avon used by the club is displayed on the front door of the main boathouse and on the safety noticeboard. The map shows hazards, markers and turning points along the river. The map also shows how to leave and return to the landing stage. All members should familiarise themselves with this map.

### **8.2 Navigation**

The correct position for your boat on the river either upstream or downstream is close to the right (bow side) riverbank, although this will not always be possible at narrow points or bends in the river. Seek to stay out of the middle third of the river (this will minimise chances of collisions between 2 boats going in opposite directions).

### **8.3 Priority**

Priority is given at tight bends and bridges to crews travelling downstream. However it should not be assumed that priority will be given. If another craft approaches and appears to be in your path you should call out a warning loud and clear and be prepared to stop.

Crews should take particular care when young and inexperienced (and therefore unpredictable) crews are present on the water.

Crews should also be particularly wary of other river users, particularly canoeists, stand up paddleboarders, sailing boats, pleasure boats and swimmers. Do not assume that non-boat club boats are aware of the rules of the river.

### **8.4 Overtaking**

Great care should be taken when overtaking another boat (rowing or otherwise). Generally overtake (rather than undertake) and check carefully that no other boats are coming the other way. Even if you are in the middle of a "piece" if it is not safe to overtake then slow down until it is.

### **8.5 Behaviour**

Be courteous to other rowers, rivers users, fishermen, and members of the public. There is NO excuse for foul or abusive language.

### **8.6 Turning**

The key turning places are shown on the Plan of the River. Always check the river up and downstream before turning and complete the turn as quickly as possible. Do not turn in front of crews that have arrived at turning points before you without first seeking permission.

Be aware that some crews, particularly singles and novices, may turn at unexpected places.

## **9 Night Rowing**

Night rowing is not encouraged. However, it is recognised that some crews may wish to do this so a number of additional rules and restrictions are in place for any outings that take place after dark:

- No night rowing may take place when the water level has risen above the lower concrete step.
- Boats must be fitted with navigation lights; white at bow and red at stern. And light coloured or reflective clothing should be worn.
- A maximum of two crews are allowed on the river at any one time and both boats must travel up and down the river in procession.
- Coxes must be approved by a Rowing Captain and Novices may only go out in coxed boats and must have the express permission of a Rowing Captain/Captain of Boats.
- No boat is to go above Charter Bridge.
- No outings are permitted by the 80 at night.
- Lone sculling is not permitted.

## **10 Coaching Launch**

A coaching launch is available but can only be used by drivers with a RYA level 2 Powerboating qualification (or higher) and who have been given permission by the club to do so.

All drivers are to wear a lifejacket and have the kill cord connected at all times. The driver is responsible for ensuring that the launch safety kit is present and has the required items.

All launch drivers are to ensure that the launches are handled with consideration to other river users and in accordance with the [British Rowing RowSafe Guide](#).

All launch drivers to carry a mobile phone.

## **11 Dangerous Conditions**

In addition to the guidelines and rules below, members should note that it is the responsibility of individual crews to decide if the river is safe to row. All members should be aware of the local weather forecast when planning outings, particularly when thunderstorms have been predicted.

### **11.1 High water level**

In the event of high water no rowing may take place when the river water level has risen above the upper concrete step.

When the river water level is above the lower concrete step but below the upper concrete step junior athletes and junior coxes are not allowed out and novice crews may only go out if they are experienced and using a coxed boat. The use of the eight is not permitted.

### **11.2 Fog and poor visibility**

No boating should take place if the flagpole cannot be seen from the boathouse.

If visibility is limited, then the yellow jackets located in the boathouse should be worn and boats should be fitted with navigation lights.

### **11.3 High winds**

While the river is relatively sheltered, it is also very narrow and high can winds can cause steering difficulties. High winds also pose a risk when crews are moving boats on land. It is the responsibility of the crews to risk assess the conditions before embarking on an outing.

### **11.4 Thunderstorms and Lightning**

If thunder is heard and/or lightning observed the 30/30 rule must be followed. You must seek shelter if the "Flash-To-Bang" delay (length of time in seconds between a lightning flash and its subsequent thunder), is 30 seconds or less, and then remain under cover until 30 minutes after the final clap of thunder.

Proper shelter means back at the boathouse

Proper shelter IS NOT:

- Open spaces - field, lake or river.
- Underneath any of the bridges.
- Underneath canopies, small rain shelters, trees, umbrellas, tents & marquees.
- Close vicinity to the tallest structure in an area.
- Near metal or carbon objects - riggers, boats, blades, trailers, launches, etc.
- Using electrical appliances or plumbing such as water taps, sinks etc.

## 11.5 Low Temperature

Adopt the 'One minute - One degree rule' to help you plan any rescue time to be within the same number of minutes as the water temperature in degrees C. Practically this means you are unlikely ever to have more than 10 minutes – and considerably less in winter – to usefully get yourself out of the water.

When assessing risk before going out on the water this should be a consideration in planning your route and planning to have suitable rescue at hand.

## 11.6 Emergencies in the Water

In the event of an incident resulting in your immersion:

- Stay with the boat and use it to keep you afloat (unless doing so will put you in greater danger)
- Get on top of the boat and attract attention immediately
- If you have to stay in the water, retain warmth by keeping arms and knees tucked into the body
- Stay calm and breathe deeply
- Do not waste energy by trying to right the boat
- Do not swim away from the boat because your swimming ability in cold conditions is dramatically reduced, the bank is often further away than you think and it wastes energy.

Further information is included in the [British Rowing Safety Alert - Stay with the Boat.](#)

It is important for members and guests to know the emergency procedures to be able to help effectively if you see a capsize. If a capsize is witnessed and someone appears unable to leave the water themselves, they should be assisted by other club members. Emergency services should be contacted via mobile phone (or pay phone located within the club house) and a member delegated to wait for them to arrive and direct them to the appropriate location.

Juniors and beginners should always be supervised by a qualified coach.

## 11.7 Other land hazards

Due to the nature of and venue for rowing there are several potential hazards, which could cause injury or illness. The key risks include:

- **Trip Hazards** - Do not leave equipment, weights, shoes etc on the floor of the boathouse, rafts etc as they form a trip hazard. If you see a potential trip hazard do not ignore it. Please move to a safer position
- **Lifting** - boats are heavy and it is important you adopt the right technique when lifting into and out of the water or a rack - use a straight back and bend your knees.
- **Rowing/Ergo** - the wrong technique can lead to a variety of injuries, but the back is most at risk (the key is the same as lifting - a straight back). If you suffer problems do not ignore ask a coach for advice
- **Weil's Disease** - this is a water borne disease spread by rat (and other animal's) urine. In the course of rowing it is likely you will come into water which has the potential to be infected, therefore good hygiene practices should be observed, hands should be washed after an outing etc. The symptoms of leptospirosis can vary widely from person

to person, although most will experience symptoms that are like influenza (flu). The disease can be fatal. Therefore, if you experience these symptoms and believe that it is possible you have come into contact with infected water you should seek medical attention.

- **Protruding riggers** - the boat house is a dangerous place and it is easy to bang your head on protruding riggers, so beware when lifting and do not run
- **Slipping on rafts/ramps** - note these can be very slippery in frosty/wet weather so walk slowly and do not run.

## 12 Accident Reporting

All members are responsible for reporting all accidents, incidents and near incidents to British Rowing via their [British Rowing Incident Reporting](#).

All incidents should be reported regardless of whether they occur at Warwick or offsite.

Incidents include:

- Collisions with static objects/other boats (irrespective of whether damage to boat or injuries occur)
- Near misses
- Capsizing
- Slipping over on landing stage
- Banging heads on riggers in boathouse
- Strained back from lifting boats
- Injuries sustained using land equipment
- Stone throwing

All accidents and incidents will be reviewed by the Club Rowing Safety Advisor, and these will be discussed at committee level, along with any additional control measures that are deemed necessary to avoid any future repetition.

In addition, any incident where injury or damage to boats occurs should be reported immediately upon landing to the Club Rowing Safety Advisor or a Rowing Captain.

## 13 Security and Personal Safety

Members should ensure that the boat houses are locked prior to leaving and should not share door entry codes with non-members. If you are the only crew on the water the boathouse should be locked during the outing.

Lone rowing should be avoided where possible. Members rowing alone should remember that some stretches of the river are quite isolated and be aware of their personal safety. It is good practice to make another member/friend know you are going out on the water so that the alarm can be raised if you do not return as planned. Lone training with free-weights should also be avoided.

## 14 Land Training

Rowing Machines (ergos) are provided for use of members only and should be used in a responsible way. Posters depicting safe rowing technique are displayed on the back wall of

the main boathouse. If unsure, members should seek guidance from their Rowing Captain or a coach

Members should follow the same preparation procedure (warm-up, inspection) as they would for rowing on water. After use, all equipment should be wiped down and left clean and tidy. Any damage must be recorded in the boat damage book/reported to a member of the committee.

No member should use any weights without prior approval of a Rowing Captain, Squad Co-ordinator or Coach. Weight training alone is not encouraged.

## **15 Boat Transportation**

### **15.1 Drivers**

Only members who have the appropriate licence for the trailer type, length and load may tow club boats on either a club or borrowed trailer. All drivers are to be conversant with the British Rowing code for the Towing of Boat Trailers, a copy of which can be found in the [British Rowing RowSafe Guide](#). It should be noted, the [UK Government is changing licencing rules](#) and towing from 15 November 2021.

The Club's insurance covers the club's trailer and boats whilst being towed. The person towing should ensure that the vehicle is insured to tow.

The person towing should always take a passenger to navigate, assist with manoeuvring etc.

### **15.2 Boat Loading**

Information and diagrams showing the recommended arrangement for loading, including the allowable load projection, is displayed on the safety noticeboard in the boathouse. Further information is available in the [British Rowing RowSafe Guide](#) and on the WBC [website](#).

The driver is to ensure that all boats and equipment are safely secured prior to departure and that the necessary requirements for front/rear projections and lighting are observed.

Scales are available in the filing cabinet in the boat house for nose weight test.

## **16 Rowing at Other Clubs and Locations**

Anyone planning to row elsewhere or attend a regatta/head race should consult with their coach/captain/safety adviser concerning safety issues that may arise. Members shall abide by the rules of rowing in force at the specific venue, or as set out in literature provided at the event.

## **17 Visitors**

These guidelines apply to crews visiting Warwick and any other person boating from the premises.

All visitors must have rowed or sculled before and will need to complete a rowing membership form (ticking the 'visitor' box) prior to using any club equipment. The rowing member must then add the guest to their ClubSpark booking and pay the appropriate visitor fee before going afloat.

It is the responsibility of the club member to ensure that their visitor complies with all club rules and guidelines.

As an exception the Rowing Committee may from time allow a member to bring a guest that has not rowed or sculled before for a one-off taster session.

## **18 Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

British Rowing, and Warwick Boat Club, will issue rules specifically related to COVID-19 restrictions. These should be read in conjunction with other club rules and risk assessments. Where there is conflict (e.g. limitations on people numbers), the information contained within the COVID-19 guidance will take precedence. A copy of the latest Covid-19 guidance and risk assessment can be found on the WBC [website](#).

Emma Mayhew  
WBC Club Rowing Safety Advisor  
October 2021

## **19 APPENDIX A Emergency Action Plan**

### **19.1 In the Event of a Serious Incident**

#### **IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, INCLUDING A CREW MEMBER BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY ILL OR BECOMING UNRESPONSIVE, IMMEDIATELY:**

- Use a mobile phone to dial 999 for emergency assistance.
- Raise the alarm with a launch or with other boats if available.

If you come across someone who is not breathing or breathing erratically, the most important thing is to dial 999 (112 from a mobile) and start CPR to keep the blood flowing around the body. The club owns its own Automated External Defibrillator (AED) but don't interrupt CPR to go and get a defibrillator. If it's possible, send someone else to fetch it.

The AED is situated in the main clubhouse, just outside the gents changing rooms.

### **19.2 Capsize**

The following guidelines should be followed if a capsize occurs:

- If out of your depth and unable to wade ashore, stay with the boat and use it to keep you afloat.
- If the water is cold, get as much of your body out of the water as soon as possible, draping yourself over the upturned hull and try to attract attention immediately.
- If you have to stay in the water, retain warmth by keeping arms and knees tucked into the body.
- Stay calm and breathe deeply.
- Other boats in the vicinity should fetch help or a launch if one is available. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESCUE FROM ANOTHER ROWING SCULL** - you are likely to capsize too, putting more people in the water with no one to get help.

### 19.3 Cold Water Immersion

Cold water immersion is the result of entering cold water from a capsized or fall from the bank etc. It should not be underestimated – IT CAN KILL as breathing and circulation are immediately affected before hypothermia sets in. The effects of the cold water mean that even healthy individuals, who are good swimmers, can still drown within a short period of time, often only a few feet from the bank.

Any of the following may occur after immersion: -

- Cold shock response (the effects of this will pass, so stay calm!!).
- Dry drowning. Cold incapacitation and swim failure.
- Circum-rescue collapse after immersion.

Adopt the “1 minute, 1 degree rule” so you know and can plan a rescue time. Our river averages around 4°C through winter, which means you have 4 minutes of useful time to get out of the water.

### 19.4 Hypothermia

The symptoms of hypothermia depend on how cold the environment is and how long you are exposed for. Severe hypothermia needs urgent medical treatment in hospital. Shivering is a good guide to how severe the condition is. If the person can stop shivering on their own, the hypothermia is mild, but if they cannot stop shivering, it is moderate to severe.

Although hypothermia is defined as occurring when the body temperature drops below 35°C, mild hypothermia can start at higher body temperatures.

### 19.5 Treating hypothermia

As hypothermia can be a life-threatening condition, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Hypothermia is treated by preventing further heat being lost and by gently warming the patient.

If you are treating someone with mild hypothermia, or waiting for medical treatment to arrive, follow the advice below to prevent further loss of heat.

Things to do for hypothermia:

- Move the person indoors, or somewhere warm, as soon as possible.
- Once sheltered, gently remove any wet clothing and dry the person.
- Wrap them in blankets, towels, coats (whatever you have), protecting the head and torso first.
- Your own body heat can help someone with hypothermia. Hug them gently.
- Increase activity if possible, but not to the point where sweating occurs, as that cools the skin down again.
- If possible, give the person warm drinks (but not alcohol) or high energy foods, such as chocolate, to help warm them up.
- Once body temperature has increased, keep the person warm and dry.

It is important to handle anyone that has hypothermia very gently and carefully.

Things you should NOT do: -

- **Don't** warm up an elderly person using a bath, as this may send cold blood from the body's surfaces to the heart or brain too suddenly, causing a stroke or heart attack.

- **Don't** apply direct heat (hot water or a heating pad, for example) to the arms and legs, as this forces cold blood back to the major organs, making the condition worse
- **Don't** give the person alcohol to drink, as this will decrease the body's ability to retain heat.
- **Don't** rub or massage the person's skin, as this can cause the blood vessels to widen and decrease the body's ability to retain heat. In severe cases of hypothermia there is also a risk of heart attack.

### **19.6 STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Do not go out alone in cold (hypothermia is deadly quick at lower temperatures) or poor conditions – always have a rowing buddy.
- Spin after the last rower has gone past so you're always in the sight of someone else.
- Carry a mobile phone in a tethered waterproof bag/container.

Unsupervised rowers should plan their rescue before going afloat and be confident it will work. Other considerations include: -

- Do you need to wear a life jacket?
- How are you going to summon help?

### **19.7 Contact/Telephone Numbers**

All crews are advised to ensure they carry a mobile phone when alone on the water. In an emergency, call 999.

Warwick Hospital has A&E facilities and is less than 1 mile away: -  
 Warwick Hospital  
 Lakin Road  
 Warwick  
 CV34 5BW

The Boat Club Address is: The Warwick Boat Club, Banbury Road, Warwick CV34 5HB  
 Emergency vehicles will need to access the club via the Banbury Road gate