

North Staffs Rowing Club

Club Safety Plan

Introduction

North Staffs Rowing Club is committed to the safety of its members and visitors whilst they are engaged with club related activities. The aim of the safety plan is to ensure that all members and visitors are made aware of the safety requirements of rowing, sculling and related activities so that they may participate safely. This is supplementary to British Rowing's "Row Safe" framework minimum standards.

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 'Row Safe' guide, the club Safety plan and any other instructions issued by the club in respect of safety.

It is essential to understand risks, eliminate risks where practical, identify control measures to mitigate remaining risks, review performance. To this end North Staffs Rowing Club has put in place structures to communicate risk and controls to members, provide suitable equipment and manage activities of Juniors & inexperienced rowers.

Individuals are expected to dress appropriately for the weather conditions, be conspicuous and wear high-visibility clothing at all times when afloat other than when they are required to wear club kit during competitions. They should use the equipment provided properly, understand their capabilities, take responsibility for their own safety and not put others at risk.

Location Background

Rudyard lake is a reservoir approx. 2.5km long and up to 400m wide that feeds the canal system, operated by Rudyard Lake Ltd on behalf of the Canal & Waterways trust (formerly British waterways). There are no weirs or strong current hazards, however water level varies with outflow vs inflow balances, and there are areas of shallows at times. Access from the water is good on the Eastern side and Southern end, however the Western side has areas which are steeply sloping and are distant from road/path access. There are moored boats at the southern end, and at the Sea Scouts base in the North.

Rowing takes place alongside other lake users – sailing, fishing, pleasure boats & craft launched from the public slipway. However, a 4mph speed limit applies to motorised vessels except for safety craft and low wash coaching launches. Sailing club activities are always accompanied by a safety launch.

An anticlockwise circulation pattern operates to keep traffic apart whilst on the lake, however this does not apply to sailing boats and cannot be relied upon with pleasure craft/canoes.

Boats are launched from a floating pontoon landing stage at the south end next to the boat store.

Safety Plan to Manage Risks to an acceptable level.

Approach	Item	Measure
Suitable equipment	Boat Buoyancy	Aim to have all boats with inherent buoyancy - i.e. will stay afloat either whole or in sections if swamped, holed, or broken in two. This will be achieved through: Purchase of boats constructed to meet this requirement. Or Installation of suitable additional buoyancy (modification to create individual sealed compartments or use of buoyancy bags)
	Boat Other	All boats to be fitted with Bow Balls & Heel Restraints meeting British Rowing requirements.
Ability to swim, partake in strenuous activity	Declaration	All individuals who partake in rowing under the supervision of the club to sign a declaration stating their swimming or floating ability and health. In the event that an individual does not meet the swimming or floating criteria then they shall be offered a personal buoyancy aid. In the event there are underlying health issues then the individual is responsible for matching their activity level to that which is suitable and notifying the coaches of any such issues.
Clothing, Algae, Disease, Hygiene, health (inc. eating and staying hydrated), housekeeping, navigation hazards, boat condition, row safe.	Individual Awareness	The Junior and Learn to Row programmes include this awareness at an early stage. For experienced rowers joining the club outside these routes it is assumed that this awareness already exists with the exception of navigation hazards specific to the lake, for which an experienced club member will brief them on before they take responsibility for a boat/crew.
Safe Technique	Boat lifting, Rowing/Sculling, coxing	The Junior and Learn to Row programmes are run by coaches who provide instruction on safe technique. For experienced rowers joining the club outside these routes it is assumed that this awareness already exists with the exception of navigation hazards specific to the lake, and boat lifting/manoeuvring specific to the Boat store/landing stage. An experienced club member will

		brief them on these before they take responsibility for a boat/crew.
Coxswains and Steersmen	Navigation	All coxswains (stern or bow coxed) to wear correct life jacket for type of boat. Cox/steersman is deemed responsible for the overall safety of the boat and crew (unless a novice is under supervision of a coach on the launch) and must be familiar with the circulation pattern, the layout of the lake and local weather conditions and must keep a good lookout at all times. Must be aware of other lake users and are able to avoid potential conflicts. Steers should be encouraged to use head mounted mirrors or similar devices. Complete the online Introduction to Coxing/Steering.
Member Safety	Rowing outside of club sessions	Club members may row unaccompanied if deemed competent subject to the following: Rowing in darkness is not permitted. Preferably row with at least one other boat. Always have a mobile phone in a waterproof case to call for help. Do not row alone if the water temperature is below 4 degrees centigrade.
Assess and Manage risks depending upon conditions	Capsize risk. Cold Water Immersion Collision	Coaches and those taking responsibility for boats/crews are charged with making suitable assessments of: Weather, Water Temperature, Competence of crew & type of outing. Evidence shows that inexperienced persons in 1x, 2x, 2+ are a very high likelihood of capsize, therefore in cold water situations where rescue is unlikely in the 1 minute per degree rule cannot be provided then this is an UNACCEPTABLE RISK situation. If in the opinion of the person taking responsibility some of these conditions are presenting hazards, then they will determine what craft/crew/lake area combinations will be safe and manage the rowing activity within these limits.
Incidents	Recording	Any incident where a person is injured, becomes ill whilst rowing, becomes immersed in the water shall be recorded in the club incident book. In the event that the person requires hospital treatment, or a third party is injured/immersed then this should be

		reported to the club committee and the British rowing online system within 24 hours. This also applies to incidents where boats are damaged or third-party property affected.
Incidents	Emergency Plan	In the event of a serious incident assistance should be sought as soon as practical from the emergency services using 999. The lake ranger should be informed and allowed to manage the incident if they see fit, with club members providing all practical assistance as requested. Emergency details are displayed in the boat store and the lake ranger's office. Please refer to the club's Emergency Response Plan
Coaching Launches	Rescue	Safe Length of time in the water for individuals is highly dependent on water temperature (the 1 minute per degree rule). For crew/craft/conditions combinations where the risk of immersion is deemed more than low and the time to rescue/shore is likely to be higher than the 1min/degree rule, then a launch capable of rescuing the crew should be on the water and able to respond within this time.
Competence	Coaches	For those taking responsibility for a Learn to Row or Junior session then the standard is British Rowing level 2 or equivalent. (they may be assisted by responsible adults who are not qualified coaches)
	Launch drivers	All launch drivers should have had an induction session from the lead coach and ideally have completed a RYA level 2 power boating course. Where this is not possible launch drivers will be supervised by a qualified driver and assessed for competence before being added to the register of approved launch drivers. The wearing of a life jacket/buoyancy aid is compulsory.
	Responsibility for a crew/boat	Committee members or qualified coaches will determine if crews are competent to row unsupervised. For crews under 18 this will include parental awareness of this responsibility.
Review	Plan Review	Safety will be a standing agenda item at committee meetings. The club will have a named water safety officer who will ensure that the club complies with British rowing audit and reporting requirements, periodically reviews safety performance, and recommend any changes to the committee.

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What do I need to do?

Everyone

- Take responsibility for yourself (basic boat checks, hygiene, housekeeping)
- Ensure appropriate clothing is being worn and have the necessary food & drink available.
- Ensure you have read the safety plan.
- Know what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Report any incidents or concerns to coaches or committee members.

Those taking responsibility for a boat/crew outing

- Supervise the handling of the boat from and back to the boathouse.
- Check the conditions & re- assess if they change – if in doubt turn back!
- Be clear who is navigating and what responsibilities they have.
- Check the condition of the boat (shoes, heel restraints, buoyancy, steering, riggers/gates) before leaving the landing stage.
- Ensure any cox is wearing a lifejacket.
- Carry an audible warning device.
- Check the crew are suitably dressed for the conditions.
- No hoodies, Dry robes, Denim, Jeans or heavy cotton should be worn in the boat.
- If the outing is outside normal supervised sessions take a suitable waterproofed communication device with you to call for help should it be needed.
- Ensure all boats and equipment are cleaned thoroughly before being put away.

Coaches

- Aware of Row Safe and where to get detailed guidance.
- Advise rowers on how to take care of their own safety ie food and drink, clothing, sunscreen.
- Encourage rowers to have any medication they need with them.
- Ensure that the safety plan is applied in all the activities you manage.
- Assess the conditions, crews & activities and adapt to keep risks to an acceptable level.
- Satisfy yourself that those who will take responsibility for boat/crew outings are competent to make on the water decisions appropriate to the conditions.
- Give permission for specific crews to have unsupervised outings.
- Take charge of any incident & take photos of damage if appropriate & statements from those involved at the time.
- Record incidents in the club safety book, Escalate any serious incidents to committee members and report these via the British rowing online system within 24 hours.
- Register for Met Office weather warnings.
- Carry an audible warning device.

Water Safety Officer

- Is familiar with Row Safe in detail.
- Ensures that the club complies with British rowing audit and reporting requirements.
- Periodically reviews safety performance and recommend any changes to the committee.
- checks the contents of the first aid kit every month.
- checks the lifejackets every six months.
- provides capsized training every year.
- provides safety briefings and reminders to members.
- holds periodic discussions with other water users.
- information when there are algal blooms.

Committee

- Sign off the safety plan.
- Review in light of serious incidents & annual safety data.
- Ensure there is a water safety officer who is fulfilling their duty.
- Have dialogue with coaches to satisfy themselves that the plan is understood and working.

