



BRITISHROWING

## Safety Alert - Backstays

There have recently been several collisions where rowers have been protected by backstays. The severity of injuries they suffered has been reduced by the backstays absorbing some of the energy at impact and tending to push the boats apart. Impacts with riggers not fitted with backstays tend to cause more serious injuries.

This phenomenon was recognised in 2013 when the following [guidance](#) was issued:-

*“The Sport Committee briefed Council on a number of items relating to safety at the meeting on 11th June. It is vital that all rowers and coaches take responsibility for their equipment and for the safety of themselves and others, so please take a moment to read the latest advice from the Rowing Safety Committee.*

### **Backstay requirements**

*After a collision between two boats training at speed which resulted in serious injury the Rowing Safety Committee has issued the following advice;*

*“The forward port and starboard rigger on all boats, other than single sculls, should be protected by a backstay.”*

RowSafe was updated to include the following expectation in section 7.1, Boats and Blades: -

- *“The forward port and starboard rigger on all boats, other than single sculls, should be protected by a backstay.”*

It is worth reflecting that the Rules of Racing state that: -

### **“5-2-1 RowSafe**

- a. The guidance in RowSafe should be taken account of at all times.*
- b. This applies before, during, and after racing periods, to all competitors and their equipment and to the organising committee and all other officials and helpers. “ and*

### **“7-2-8 Equipment Check**

- a. It is the responsibility of competitors to ensure that their boats are safe and are prepared in accordance with the guidance in RowSafe and are suitable for the crew and conditions in which they are to be used.”*

It should also be remembered that backstays tend to make boats go faster by reducing pin deflection during the drive. They are fitted to Great Britain Rowing Team boats.

**Backstays protect rowers and make the boat go faster, it's win-win.**

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[This Safety Alert is a safety guidance document. Please read our safety message and disclaimer in RowSafe.](#)