

2023 RowSafe Changes

1. Culture and Expectations

1.3 Positive Safety Culture

Leading people to change their behaviour

The leaders of clubs can motivate and encourage their members to develop “safe” behaviour and avoid “at-risk” behaviour. The first step is to understand the importance of behaviour in the causation of incidents. This is shown in the annual Analysis of Incidents; there is a link on the [RowSafe](#) page.

2. Communication

2.2 Make up of Club Induction Pack

Suggested Contents

Safety Information

Provide information on topics such as:

- An invitation to share information that would help the club to ensure that you can row safely (e.g. if you have medical or fitness issues).

2.3. Radio Procedure

Making a Call

Make Your Call

At sea or where communications are difficult it is quite normal to say the station names three times for example **“Falmouth Gig Club, Falmouth Gig Club, Falmouth Gig Club, this is Gig Swift, Swift, Swift, Over.”**

If communication is not clear then you may be asked to spell a name or word. This is what you may hear.

“Station calling Exmouth NCI this is Exmouth NCI. Please spell your vessel's name, Over”

“Exmouth NCI this is the Gig Fury Fury, I spell Foxtrot, Uniform, Romeo, Yankee, Fury. Over”

The [National Coastwatch Institute](#) (Callsign NCI) operates 59 Coastwatch stations around the UK. They can be called on Marine VHF Channel 65 or by phone. There is a list of stations and phone numbers [here](#). The stations will provide local maritime information, current weather conditions and sea state, and radio checks.

Examples of some standard calls

Routine call to a Coastwatch Station

A routine call may be made to the local Coastwatch Station on Maritime VHF Channel 65 by a Gig, or any other vessel, leaving harbour and proceeding to sea if the club's risk assessment, or the local conditions at the time, determine that this is appropriate.

In this example the Gig Troy is about to leave Fowey harbour and proceed to sea and wishes to call Polruan NCI.

Initial call on VHF Channel 65,

“Polruan NCI, Polruan NCI, Polruan NCI this is the Fowey Gig Troy, Troy, Troy. Routine safety traffic, Over.”

“Gig Troy this is Polruan NCI, Over.””

“Polruan NCI this is Troy. I am just leaving Fowey harbour and expect to return within one hour. I have seven persons on board. Over.”

“Troy, this is Polruan NCI. Received. Please call again on your safe return to Fowey. Out.”

3. Club Safety

3.1. Club Risk Assessment

Hazard identification and risk assessment are the basis for planning to maintain and improve safety. These provide clubs with the ability to understand the ways in which harm can be caused, and to specify Barriers to minimise the probability of that harm occurring and specify Controls to minimise the severity of harm should it occur. It puts clubs in control of their risks.

Barriers come into effect before the hazardous event and tend to make it less likely to happen. Barriers identify things that must, or must not, happen and therefore can translate into rules. This all follows from the definitions.

3.2. Club Safety Plans and Safety Rules

Safety Plan is how a club arranges its activities to control hazards and reduce harm.

Clubs should use their Club Risk Assessment to determine the need for plans covering all activities. Clubs are also expected to consider how they keep their premises safe and use their Risk Assessment to determine the need for plans covering electricity and gas checks and building maintenance. There is further information on Safety in Club Premises [here](#).

Safety Rules and Safety Plans stem from the Barriers (to reduce the probability) and Controls (to reduce the severity of harm) in Risk Assessments. In most cases the Safety Plans and Safety Rules are derived from the Barriers and the Emergency Response Plans are derived from the Controls.

Safety Plans can also contain items such as:-

- the need to eat, drink (hydrate), and dress appropriately

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Inform their coaches if they have any pre-existing medical conditions which may impact their safety or that of others.

Club

Safety Plans should include:

- The avoidance of potential conflicts with other water users (could be included in the navigational arrangements).
- Specification of the competence requirements for individuals (including competence in the water, steering, launch driving, coaching etc).
- The assessment of weather and water conditions.
- The use, checking and maintenance of equipment (boats, launches, fixed equipment in the boathouse).

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Carry an audible warning device, such as a whistle, to warn rowers.
- Advise rowers on how to take care of their own safety, for example to wear sunscreen on a hot day or take extra kit on a cold day and eat, drink (hydrate), and dress appropriately.
- Encourage rowers to carry with them any medication that they may need.

- Emphasise the importance of warm-up and good posture to the prevention of injuries. There is more information in the [Rower Development Guide](#) and on [Water Rowing Technique](#).
- Check the condition of any bikes used and take care when carrying throw lines, etc., to ensure that they do not become entangled in the mechanism.
- Take care not to hold crews in the catch position as this is unstable and can lead to a capsized.

Further Information

- Rower Development Guide - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/rower-development/rower-development-guide/>
- Water Rowing Technique - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/rower-development/british-rowing-technique/water-rowing-technique/>

3.3. Club Emergency Response Plan

Club Emergency Response Plans stem from the Risk Assessments. In most cases the Emergency Response Plans are derived from the Controls. In some cases these could be written as Safety Rules (e.g. always have a launch alongside inexperienced scullers). This is just expressing a control as a "must do action".

Expectations

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Encourage rowers to carry an audible warning device, such as a whistle, to use in an emergency.

3.6. Competence in the Water

Further Information

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution has published a series of "how to" videos as follows:-

- How to Teach your Child to Tread Water - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QAjDqzN5Lc>
- How to Teach your Child to Float - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odWm3DeRFIA>
- How to Teach your Child to Signal for Help - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZJlEno0TFk>
- How to Teach your Child a Survival Stroke - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGXVCJP0d6A>

These are intended to show parents how to teach their children but could also be used to teach rowers of any age to improve their competence in the water.

3.7. Capsize and Recovery

Expectations

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Organise Capsize and Recovery training in a local swimming pool or another safe setting to practise:
 - Recovery using a throw line as demonstrated in the British Rowing [Man Overboard and Recovery](#) video.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Encourage rowers to carry an audible warning device, such as a whistle.

Further Information

- British Rowing's Man Overboard and Recovery video - <https://youtu.be/G5xQIJGhaAM?t=458>

3.8. Man Overboard

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Know how to use a throw line, as demonstrated in the British Rowing [Man Overboard and Recovery](#) video.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Coach rowers in the use of a throw line, as demonstrated in the British Rowing [Man Overboard and Recovery](#) video.

4. Competition Safety

4.2. Competition Safety Plans and Safety Rules

Expectations

Participating Clubs

Officers of participating clubs are expected to:

- Inform the organisers if any of their rowers has pre-existing medical conditions that impact their safety or that of others.
- Tell competitors that they must not lie back in the boat at the end of a race, as if they had collapsed (unless they have).

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Encourage participants to eat, drink (hydrate), and dress appropriately.
- Encourage rowers to carry an audible warning device, such as a whistle.

4.3. Competition Emergency Response Plan

Expectations

Competition

Competition Officers and Organising Committees are expected to:

- Provide adequate First Aid cover including provision for people suffering from mild hypothermia (people with severe hypothermia should be taken to hospital). It is recommended that:-
 - Organisers understand that most emergencies in rowing competitions happen on the water – it is therefore critically important to ensure that the safety boats, rescue boats and umpire/official boats are fully briefed on and equipped for an emergency (trauma or medical).
 - Equipment should be adequate to deal with all minor medical incidents but should include an AED (Defibrillator) and all members of the medical team be competent in knowing what equipment is available to them and how to use it.
 - The emergency plan should extend to how and when to call for an ambulance (999 call) including all the details of access to the incident site (address of the competition, etc.) and a contact telephone number.
 - Any competition medical service must be competent enough to deal with any medical emergency until the ambulance arrives. This may be up to 30 minutes. Some large competitions seriously consider whether to have a paramedic ambulance on site (with paramedic attendance, plus equipment and drugs) but remember that the risk level changes if this ambulance leaves site with a life-threatening emergency and may require stopping the competition until it returns.

- The competition does have responsibility for all client groups (rowers, officials, volunteers and spectators) and numbers may require the attendance of an event doctor in addition to a paramedic(s), depending on the level of first aid provision.
- Cardiac resuscitation is at the top end of the risk list and if recognised and handled correctly, can be successful. Fortunately, cardiac arrest (either medical or trauma) is relatively rare in sport and rowing. It is just as important to consider other life-threatening or serious trauma emergencies that are more likely to occur.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Encourage rowers to carry an audible warning device, such as a whistle, for use in an emergency.

4.9. Touring

Expectations

Tour Organiser

Tour Organisers and Organising Committees are expected to:-

- Encourage participants to eat, drink (hydrate), and dress appropriately.

5. Competence

5.1. Steering and Navigation

Expectations

Coxes and Steers

Coxes and steers (including scullers) are expected to:

- Complete the online [Introduction to Coxing/Steering](#)

Further Information - Other

- Introduction to Coxing and Steering - www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=144

5.2 Launch Driving

Expectations

Launch Drivers

Launch drivers are expected to:

- When necessary, instruct rowers in the water to climb on top of their inverted boat to facilitate their recovery into the launch as demonstrated in the [British Rowing Capsize and Recovery video](#).

5.2.1 Recovering a Person from the Water into a Launch

Rowers who capsize are advised to climb on top of their inverted boats, as demonstrated in the [British Rowing Capsize and Recovery video](#). This makes it easier for them to transfer into the launch than it would be if they were in the water.

It helps if the launches carry boarding ladders or strops.

There is a video [here](#) showing three ways to recover a casualty into a rib with two crew members. In all three examples the casualty is facing the launch.

The RNLI train their crews to position the casualty facing away from the launch and have two members of the lifeboat crew lift the casualty over the side of their inflatable boat.

The advice for solid hulled boats such as "tin fish" is for a conscious casualty, stop and turn off outboard engine. The launch may need to deploy an anchor. The Anti-Cavitation plate on the outboard might be helpful as a step to allow a person to self-rescue over the transom.

In all other cases, the launch should provide the casualty with some method of flotation (life-ring), keep the casualty close and in contact and monitor their condition, call nearby vessels and/or 999 for assistance, and if possible, slowly make way to shore/shallows – recognising a moving propeller with a person in the water.

If a person is unconscious and in the water – it is an immediate 999 or VHF Ch 16 MAYDAY call, keep their head above the surface even if recovery onboard is not possible.

These methods will work for single crewed launches. If there are two crew members in the launch then it may be possible to provide more support to the casualty but please remember the stability limitations of the launch. It does not help if the crew and the casualty are on the same side of the launch and this causes the launch to capsize. Entry to the boat over the transom should always be considered.

There are sometimes alternatives to helping the rower to climb into a launch. It is possible to have the rower sit on their inverted boat, or in the water holding onto their boat, and then tow the boat to the bank. This can be done by driving the launch in reverse so as to keep the propeller away from the casualty. This works best when the water is not too cold.

7. Equipment

7.2. Transport and Trailers

Expectations

Trailer Towing Vehicle Drivers and Minibus Drivers

Drivers are expected to:

- Ensure that the straps used to secure equipment to trailers and roof racks are in good condition and tensioned correctly. Any loose ends should be tied in so that they do not become trapped (e.g. under a wheel) and cause damage.

Further Information

- DVLA Requirements for towing in Great Britain Leaflet - assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1077134/inf30-requirements-for-towing-trailers-in-great-britain.pdf
- DVLA Driving a Minibus Leaflet - www.gov.uk/driving-a-minibus

Advice on towing abroad is available from:

- The AA - www.theaa.com/driving-advice

7.3. Safety Aids

Lifejackets

Manual inflation life jackets are only appropriate for anyone who, if they enter the water, is likely to be conscious and capable of actuating them. If they, or the water, is very cold then this could be a problem. If a person panics when they enter the water and tries to swim (rather than actuate the lifejacket) then they are at serious risk.

If a person knows that they are about to enter the water then it is best to inflate the lifejacket before they do so. This will help them to keep their head above the water.

If there is a problem with spray, etc. causing an auto-inflation lifejacket to inflate then consider using a lifejacket with a hydrostatic actuator. These work the same way as an automatic lifejacket (with a dissolving pellet) but the pellet is protected by a case that only lets water in once it is a few centimetres under water. It will not fire unless fully submerged." Both types of auto-inflation lifejackets can be inflated by pulling the toggle.

Expectations

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Ensure that the straps on cox's lifejackets cannot become entangled with fittings in the boat.
- Buoyancy aids are permitted for coxes in stern loaded boats but not in bow loaded boats. Coxes in bow loaded boats must use manual inflation lifejackets. They must not use buoyancy aids or auto inflation lifejackets.
- Carry a throw line and practise using them, as demonstrated in the British Rowing [Man Overboard and Recovery](#) video.

Further Information

- British Rowing Man Overboard and Recovery video - youtu.be/G5xQlJGhaAM?t=458 video

7.4. Launches

7.4.1. Launch Safety Kits

As a result of the risk assessment of the location, water and weather conditions, the following equipment may also be required.

- A communications device such as a waterproof VHF radio transceiver or mobile phone in a waterproof pouch.

8. Health

8.2. Sunburn, Heat Illness and Exhaustion

Expectations

Everyone

Everyone is expected to:

- Be prepared for those effects if exposed to heat or sun. See [Safety Alert – How to stay safe whilst rowing in the sun](#) and [Safety Alert – Avoiding and treating Heat Exhaustion](#).

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Know and watch for the symptoms of heat illness (such as confusion/lack of mental clarity, inability to hold a conversation, bizarre behaviour, hot, red skin, fainting, headache, rapid strong pulse and sweating). See [Safety Alert – How to stay safe whilst rowing in the sun](#) and [Safety Alert – Avoiding and treating Heat Exhaustion](#).

Further Information

- Safety Alert – Avoiding and treating Heat Exhaustion - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Safety-Alert-Avoiding-and-Treating-Heat-Exhaustion-July-2022-2.pdf>

8.6. Coping with Illness and Diseases

Expectations

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Encourage members to refrain from training and competing have recovered fully from any illness.

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Encourage rowers to refrain from training and competition until they have recovered fully from any illness.

8.6.3. Asthma

Expectations

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Be aware action to take if someone has an [asthma attack](#).

Further Information

- Asthma + Lung UK - [Asthma attacks](#) | [Asthma + Lung UK \(asthmaandlung.org.uk\)](#)

8.7. What To Do If Someone Collapses

A Little more information about CPR

Follow the steps depicted above.

When checking for breathing, do not be misled by breathing sounds, this could be Agonal breathing (a brain stem response to low blood oxygen concentration). There is more information on Agonal breathing [here](#); watch the video.







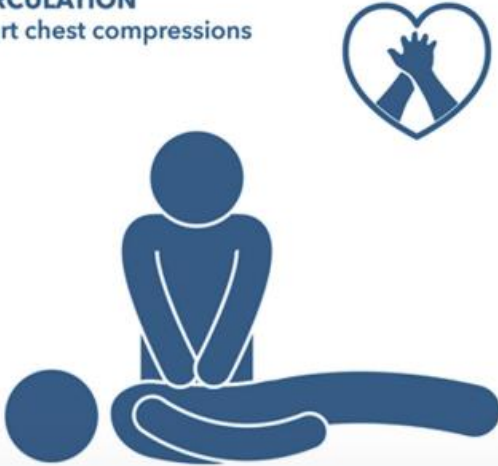
Check that the casualty is breathing **in** and **out, regularly**, and **repeatedly**. You should see the chest rise and fall, regularly, again and again, and continue to do so. If you do not see this then start CPR immediately. Performing CPR will do no harm, even if the heart is still beating. Failure to deliver effective CPR will put the casualty's life at risk. There is information on Agonal gasping [here](#).

The purpose of CPR is to maintain blood flow around the body. This will maintain the blood flow to the brain. Lack of blood flow to the brain will cause brain damage and ultimately death. By maintaining blood flow to the brain you can help the casualty to stay alive.

The casualty should be lying supine (on his or her back) on a hard surface. Deliver CPR by pressing hard and repeatedly on the base of the casualty's sternum at a rate of 100 to 120 compressions per minute. This compression will pump the blood in the heart to the rest of the body. Remember to release this pressure after each compression so that the heart fills with blood ready for the next compression.

Delivering effective CPR is exhausting and the outcome often depends on the quality of the delivery. It is often best done in relays if several people are available. Make sure that you are trained to do this properly and encourage your friends to do the same.

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT STEP-BY-STEP

SEQUENCE/ACTION	TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION
<p>SAFETY</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that you, the victim and any bystanders are safe
<p>RESPONSE Check for a response</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shake the victim gently by the shoulders and ask loudly: <i>"Are you all right?"</i>
<p>AIRWAY Open the airway</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is no response, position the victim on their back • With your hand on the forehead and your fingertips under the point of the chin, gently tilt the victim's head backwards, lifting the chin to open the airway
<p>BREATHING Look, listen and feel for breathing</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look, listen and feel for breathing for no more than 10 seconds • A victim who is barely breathing, or taking infrequent, slow and noisy gasps, is not breathing normally
<p>ABSENT OR ABNORMAL BREATHING Alert emergency services</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If breathing is absent or abnormal, ask a helper to call the emergency services or call them yourself • Stay with the victim if possible • Activate the speaker function or hands-free option on the telephone so that you can start CPR whilst talking to the dispatcher
<p>SEND FOR AED Send someone to get an AED</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send someone to find and bring back an AED if available • If you are on your own, DO NOT leave the victim, but start CPR
<p>CIRCULATION Start chest compressions</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kneel by the side of the victim • Place the heel of one hand in the centre of the victim's chest - this is the lower half of the victim's breastbone (sternum) • Place the heel of your other hand on top of the first hand and interlock your fingers • Keep your arms straight • Position yourself vertically above the victim's chest and press down on the sternum at least 5 cm (but not more than 6 cm) • After each compression, release all the pressure on the chest without losing contact between your hands and the sternum • Repeat at a rate of 100-120 min-1

9. Topics Covered in Risk Assessments

9.8 Pre-existing Health Conditions and Low Levels of Fitness

Expectations

Club

Club Officers are expected to:

- Inform any Competition that they enter if a rower has a pre-existing medical condition that may impact their safety or that of others.

9.11 Indoor Rowing

Expectations

Indoor Rowing Training or Competition

Hazard	Barriers (to reduce the probability)	Hazardous Events	Controls (to reduce the severity of harm)
Overexertion by rower.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competition officials and coaches monitor effort from a distance and intervene as appropriate.	Collapse, possible cardiac issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Aid, possibly Life Support (CPR & AED), evacuation to hospital.
Peer pressure from colleagues, coaches etc. causing rowers to overexert.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competition Officials and coaches keep people not using ergs away from those that are.	Overexertion leading to collapse, possible cardiac issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Aid, possibly Life Support (CPR & AED), evacuation to hospital.

10. Rowing on the Sea

10.1. Coastal and Inshore Rowing

Further Information

World Rowing is keen to promote and support Coastal Rowing in FISA coastal boats. World Rowing has published a series of videos on YouTube. The links are listed below:-

- [Coaches introduction to Coastal Rowing \[G1.1\] - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Module Online Introduction \(#1\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing SAFE Overview Keynote \(#2\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing SAFE Float Plan & Nav Hazards \(#3\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing SAFE Pre Launch \(#4\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Launching & Landing Keynote \(#5\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rescue Drills Keynote \(#6\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Tech - Phases \(#7\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Tech - Boat Entry \(#8\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Tech - Boat Exit \(#9\) - YouTube](#)

- [Coastal Rowing Race Tech - Race turns \(#10\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing Race Tech - Watership \(#11\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing - Beach Sprint Race Logistics \(#12\) - YouTube](#)
- [Coastal Rowing - Running a selection race for beach sprint \(#13\) - YouTube](#)
- [Beach Start - Coastal Rowing Endurance C2x - YouTube](#)

10.2. Fixed Seat Sea Rowing

Further Information

- Safety Alert – Manual Lifejackets in Gigs - <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Safety-Alert-Manual-Lifejackets-in-Gigs-June-2022.pdf>

10.2.1. Gig & Other Fixed Seat Boat Safety Kits

For gigs and other fixed seat rowing boats that are used on the open sea, it is recommended that the following equipment should be included in a Boat Safety kit.

- A communications device such as a waterproof VHF radio transceiver or mobile phone, in a waterproof pouch, fully charged

10.3. Ocean Rowing

People lost overboard

3. Attempt to rescue anyone who is in the water but not connected to the boat
 - Ensure that all crew members know how to throw a rescue quoit or throw bag, as demonstrated in the British Rowing [Man Overboard and Recovery](#) video..

11. Land Training

11.1. Indoor Rowing

Expectations

Coaches

Coaches are expected to:

- Train users to use the rowing machines correctly including:
 - Demonstrating good technique and posture as shown [here](#).

Further Information

- Indoor Rowing Technique - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/rower-development/british-rowing-technique/indoor-rowing-technique/>