

MAIDSTONE INVICTA ROWING CLUB

Safety Statement

Rowing is a sport with a good safety record. However there are risks and these must be minimised by a knowledge and understanding of British Rowing's and Maidstone Invicta Rowing Club's (MIRC) Rules, Safety Policy and procedures.

It is the responsibility of all Members to regularly read the Club's safety notice boards located in the gym. Changes to the club's safety procedures will be notified to all rowing members. The procedures posted here are those currently in force at MIRC.

RowSafe, the British Rowing's guide to good practice in rowing can be found at <http://www.britishrowing.org/taking-part/staying-safe/rowsafe>
MIRC applies the guidelines outlined in RowSafe. The procedures outlined below attempt to enforce these guidelines but also contain additional local procedures and safeguards.

Risk Analysis

MIRC's risk analysis outlines the major risk factors and how MIRC procedures seek to minimise these.

Key Points:

- Hypothermia, drowning and injury through capsize/collision are assessed as the highest risk
- MIRC launches are not safety boats in the Row Safe definition but can play a role in assisting at incidents
- All safety equipment should be regularly checked to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Induction, formal competency requirements and other safeguards (e.g. risk assessment) reduce risk.
- Rowing in the dark at MIRC is forbidden and lights must be fitted if rowing in the dusk.

The following are the areas of risk and actions which should be taken to reduce risk

Training on the Water

All river outings at MIRC must be recorded in the outing book/board (outside the river boathouse/entrance to river) to ensure there is a record of who is on the water.

General river risk is to be assessed by the Director of Rowing or a nominated person using the RED/AMBER/GREEN method (see separate notice).

Land Training

Key Points:

- Do not train when you are ill
- Wear appropriate clothing for the exercise and warm up before strenuous exercise
- Follow the posted safety procedures for any equipment you are using. Report and quarantine any faulty equipment using a “do not use” tag
- If out running at night wear a reflective bib and keep to lighted areas
- Weight training should only be undertaken by those members who have been instructed in the use of the equipment. No one may use weights when they are alone. If free weights are used such as a bar then a spotter must be present to assist.
- All those under 16 cannot land train at MIRC unless supervised by an adult. Those between 16 and 18 should be accompanied by an adult or another squad member

Launch Driving

Key Points:

- Only those holding a RYA powerboat Level 2 certificate or those members who have undertaken training within the club to the required standard can use an MIRC launch
- Ensure launch is fully equipped and in working order before use
- Ensure you have the equipment and fuel to fulfil any recovery plan
- MIRC launches are not safety boats but should play a major part in casualty recovery

Boat Trailer Towing

Key Points:

- All drivers must have the appropriate DVLA license and understand the law relating to towing (post 1998 need category E on license)
- All drivers must have been assessed by another MIRC trailer driver as being competent before their first boat towing journey
- The driver must complete the safety checks outlined in the trailer pack before embarking on a journey
- The driver must check that all boats and other equipment are properly secure
- The driver must be aware of and take a “trailer pack” on each journey
- A passenger is present to aid with any issues that may arise
- Overhanging boats must be indicated with hazard tape and/or lights

General Safety Procedures

The Club is committed to providing a safe environment for the promotion of rowing. The Club aims to implement the BR Row Safe Guide which these procedures supplement. These procedures address safety issues related to both water and land training in the Club.

The Rowing Committee will endorse these procedures, and any subsequent amendments, prior to issue.

Purpose

The purpose of these procedures is to:

- Identify the responsibilities of Club officials and Members with regard to the BR Row Safe Guide, and their responsibilities together with those of Gym Members in the use of land training equipment.
- Provide expansion, where appropriate, to the BR Row Safe Guide guidance notes as applicable to rowing in the Club.

Duty of Care

The BR Row Safe Guide identifies the following:

Rowing Clubs have a duty to:

- Assess and reduce risks involved in their activities – to their members, participants, other water users and to the general public.
- Provide safe premises and equipment (including vehicles and trailers) for their activities on both water and land.
- Provide their membership with guidance and training in safe practices.
- Review their practices and advice to members in the light of experience and guidance from the BR or Regional Rowing Council.

Individual Club Members have a duty to:

- Act in a manner that will not compromise the safety of themselves, Club members, other water users and the general public.
- Assess risks and base their decisions on such assessments.
- Actively respond to their Club's safety rules.
- Be proactive in warning others of impending danger.
- Inform coaches and other crew/Club members of any medical conditions that may present a risk to themselves and/or their crew. In the case of juniors, parents have a duty to advise those in charge.

Responsibilities

Irrespective of the specific responsibilities, it is incumbent upon all members to act in a manner that will not compromise the safety of themselves, club members, other water users and the general public. They should assess the risks of the activity they are undertaking whilst participating in club activities and base their decisions on such assessments. Members should actively respond to these safety procedures and be proactive in warning others of potential hazard. Where there is cause for concern about a safety related issue members should endeavour to raise the issue with an appropriate official of the club. Similarly, if a member has a concern about any aspect of these procedures they should raise the issue with the safety adviser or director of rowing, or if either of those are unavailable with any other member of the Rowing Committee.

Specific responsibilities of Club members and officials with regard to safety are detailed below:

Rowing Committee

The Rowing Committee is to:

- Include safety as a standing agenda item for all its routine meetings and, where appropriate, raise safety matters to the Club Management Committee for its consideration.
- Appoint a member(s), the Launch Handling Adviser(s), who should hold the RYA Level 2 Powerboat Handling Course, to give local instruction in the use of safety / coaching boats.

All Rowing Members

All rowing members are:

- To familiarize themselves with these procedures and the BR Row Safe Guide.
- Required to declare on their membership application form that they are capable of swimming 50m in light clothing and tread water for two minutes (for juniors, their parents/carers are required to make this declaration)
- Required to declare on their membership application form any medical or physical condition which precludes them from rowing, and are to inform their coach and crew members of any condition they may have to deal with in the event of an emergency (for juniors, their parents/carers are required to make this declaration).

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- Expected to undertake an initial swimming test and capsize drill. Failure to do so could result in the Rowing Committee requiring the individual to wear a buoyancy aid whilst rowing.
- Recommended to have a spare change of clothes in case they capsize. This is mandatory for juniors participating in water training.
- Only to use gym equipment if they have completed induction training on that equipment or are certain of their competence in the equipments' use.

Full Rowing Members :

- May use rowing equipment without the supervision of a Club Coach only if they have been authorized by a club coach to row unsupervised. When rowing unsupervised Full Rowing Members are to assume the relevant responsibilities assigned to Club Coaches (see below).

Junior Rowing Members:

- Unless specifically authorised by a Club Coach, may only use rowing equipment under the supervision of a Club Coach (see Supervision of Juniors). Such authorization will apply to specific outings. When rowing unsupervised Junior Rowing Members are to assume the relevant responsibilities assigned to Club Coaches (see below).

Safety Adviser

The Safety Adviser:

- Is to ensure adherence to the general provisions of the BR Row Safe Guide, identified at the following chapters:
 - 1.1: Safety Notice Boards.
 - 1.2: Risk Assessments.
 - 1.3: Club Safety Plans.
 - 1.4: Competition Safety Plans.
 - 1.6: Training Camps & Rowing on Unfamiliar Waters.
 - 1.7: Weather and Environment.
 - 1.8: Cold Water Immersion & Hypothermia.
 - 1.9: Swimming & Capsizing Training.
 - 2.1: Safety Aids.
 - 4.1: Incident reporting.
 - 4.2: Safety Auditing.
 - 5.1: Sunburn, Heat Stroke & Exhaustion.
 - 5.2: First Aid.
 - 5.3: Water-borne Diseases.
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- Is to ensure that the following documents / posters are displayed on, or near, the safety notice board in the club fitness hut:
 - MIRC Risk Assessment
 - BR Row Safe Guide

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- Plan of local waterway
 - Sports Coach UK Code of Conduct
 - BR Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy
 - BR Guidelines on Coach / Participant Ratio
 - EA Waterways Byelaws
 - BR Trailer Drivers Handbook
 - Poster – Resuscitation
 - Poster – Hypothermia
 - List of Safety Contacts*
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- Is to carry out an annual audit of safety in the club to include an annual review of the risk assessments and these procedures and make recommendations, as necessary, to the Rowing Committee.
 - Is to ensure that swimming tests and capsize drills are organised regularly by the Rowing committee (normally at least once per annum or to coincide with any major intake of new junior members).

Director of Rowing

The Director of Rowing, in conjunction with the junior, senior, master's and women's Club Coaches, is to:

- Ensure that new novice and inexperienced junior, senior, master, women's rowing members are allocated a co-ordinator for their supervision.
- Ensure that the issues on the safety induction checklist are briefed to all new members.
- Ensure adherence to the equipment provisions at chapter 2.3 of the BR Row Safe Guide, except for that which relates to pre-outing safety checks.
- Ensure that the Boathouse and Gymnasium are maintained in a tidy state so as to minimize trip hazard, and to ensure that inflammable materials in the Boathouse are retained in closed (and where possible lockable) metal containers.
- Ensure that land training equipment is maintained in good order.

Club Coaches

The Club Coaches are to:

- Conform to the Sports Coach UK Code of Conduct for sports coaches.
- Ensure that during each outing for which they are responsible the provision of the BR Row Safe Guide at paras 2.5.4 and 2.6.1.2 (regarding equipment being in safe working order) are adhered to, and that due regard is given to the BR guidelines on coach / participant ratio.
- Ensure adherence to the procedures (below) appertaining to the supervision of juniors.
- Ensure that a record of crews on the water is maintained in the outings book.
- Ensure that accidents and incidents are recorded on the incident forms (provided on the Safety Notice Board) and forwarded to the Safety Adviser.
- Ensure that damage to equipment is reported to the Boat Master, or recorded in the equipment damage log.

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Coxswains

Coxswains are to:

- Maintain a proper lookout to avoid risk of collision with other river users and river banks, and also to be aware of the need to avoid floating objects.
- Be familiar with the River Medway navigation rules, local hazards and the rights of other river users. When visiting unfamiliar waters, coxswains are to familiarise themselves with local navigation rules and hazards.
- Give clear and concise commands.

When coxswains are being taught under instruction, the above may not necessarily apply.

- Always wear a buoyancy aid.
- Be familiar with accident drills.
- Ensure that they are content to act as coxswain in the prevailing conditions, and should be prepared to decline taking a crew onto the water if they believe they are not competent to do so. (In such situations they will receive the backing of the Safety Adviser and Coach).

Launch Drivers

Launch Drivers are to:

- Have undergone local instruction, by the Launch Handling Adviser, in the handling of the launch, or are to be qualified to RYA Level 2 Powerboat Handling Course.
- Ensure that the launch kit is aboard, and complete.
- Ensure that buoyancy aids are worn by all on board.
- Ensure that adherence to the navigation rules.
- Ensure that sufficient fuel is available for the outing.
- Ensure that the engine cut-out lanyard device is used where it is appropriate to do so.

Trailer Drivers

Trailer Drivers are to be conversant with the requirements for safe and legal movement of boats by road – a copy of the BR Trailer Drivers Handbook is available on the safety notice board.

Supervision of juniors

- Except when specifically authorised, juniors are only to row under the supervision of a Club Coach. The Club Coach is to make an assessment of whether the juniors' experience and capabilities are suited to rowing in the prevailing conditions.
- Due regard is to be given to the Junior Welfare Procedures.
- Supervision of juniors on the water should be either:

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- Such that the Club Coach, or an assistant, is in a position to render assistance should a junior get into difficulty. The following are deemed to constitute such assistance:
 - Accompanied by a safety launch, with associated equipment.
 - Accompanied on the water by a Club Coach, or a sufficiently proficient Full Rowing Member.
 - Accompanied on the bank of the River Medway, provided that the junior(s) are limited to the river by an appropriate person with throw line.
 - Competing in an organized event.

or:

- A group of juniors (each individually judged to be sufficiently competent by the Club Coach that they may provide assistance to a similarly competent junior) rowing as a flotilla under the coach's supervision.

The juniors under an individual's supervision are to be instructed to remain in a flotilla. When accompaniment is by a coach/assistant in a boat rowing together with juniors, due regard is to be taken by the Club Coach of the ability of the other crew members in determining the ability to provide assistance to other juniors that may get into difficulty.

- Juniors may only use gym equipment under the supervision of a Club Coach. Provided that the Club Coach is content with the Junior's abilities, knowledge of the use of the equipment and maturity, such supervision need not be constant, provided the juniors have been given a set training regime. An exception to this is the use of free weights, which may only be used under constant supervision.
- Juniors may cox senior crews without the supervision of a coach. In such circumstances, the stroke is to assume responsibility for the junior coxswain. The stroke is to ensure (in conjunction with Club Coaches, as appropriate) that the coxswain is sufficiently experienced to cox the outing, given the prevailing conditions, and is to ensure that pressure is not exerted on a junior coxswain to undertake an outing if the coxswain believes that he is not competent to do so.

Risks and Actions

The following are the main hazards that coaches and members should be aware, and take account, of when participating in rowing or land training. The risks resultant from these hazards can be minimized by ensuring that:

- All new members are instructed in the proper handling of equipment and are briefed on the hazards (see the safety induction checklist, below).
- The experience and competence of all participants are taken into account when determining the scope of a training session.

Most Significant Risks

The Training Risk Assessment identifies the following hazard conditions to a Moderate Severity of risk which are assessed to be as Low As Reasonable Practicable with no additional controls practicable. Where appropriate, coaches and members should take special care in such conditions to ensure that the crew is competent to cope with them, and should be prepared to cancel an outing if necessary:

- High winds causing loss of control during manoeuvring.
- High winds causing boats to be blown into the river bank or moorings.
- High river flow causing loss of control during manoeuvring
- Heavy / driving rain leading to hypothermia.
- Lightning striking a boat during an outing.
- Poor visibility at dusk leading to collision when crews not equipped for dusk rowing may be caught out.

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- Collision with motor cruisers, canoes, swimmers/triathletes, bridge supports and moorings, and cruisers emerging from Allington and Town moorings.
- Capsize in the vicinity of the Allington and East Farleigh locks/weirs.
- Running in poor visibility conditions.
- When trailing boats:
 - Collision with pedestrians whilst manoeuvring.
 - Loss, or partial loss, of load.
 - Trailer unhitching from vehicle whilst being driven.

Rowing – On Land Aspects

- Boat handling – lifting of heavy weights.
- Boathouse – trip and bump hazards
- Landing stage – slip and trip hazards; boats supported on trestles in windy conditions.
- High winds – unsecured boathouse doors, blowing boats from trestles, loss of control in lifting boats above heads.
- Ice or wild fowl faeces – slipping on landing stage when handling boats; disease, including bird flu.

Rowing – On Water Aspects

- Capsize – particularly during manoeuvring and entry to/ exit from the boat; weeds at bank; limit proximity to weirs.
- Collision – other river users; river borne debris; bridge supports; moorings; wild fowl; anglers equipment; landing stage. Need to warn on-coming crews of potential hazard (including those approaching from behind).
- In the water – water ingestion; other river craft; weeds; sharp objects on the river floor.
- Immersion in water – need to shower; wash hands before eating or drinking.
- High river flow – water-borne debris and steering difficulty, particularly when turning the boat. In strong stream boat in up-stream direction.
- Flooding – can lead to grounding if boat strayed from river's course.
- High winds, especially when combined with high river flow – steering difficulty, particularly when turning the boat and being blown onto river bank. Also potential for boat swamping.
- Dusk/Fog – restricted visibility, steering difficulty.
- Lightning – cease boating on first signs. Do not go on water until at least 30 minutes have elapsed since last evident (30 minute Rule).
- Hot sun – avoid sun burn; hyperthermia.
- Heavy / driving rain, especially in cold conditions – avoid hypothermia.

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- Weirs, at both ends of the usable river – currents, separation distance dependant on river flow, wind. For downstream weir, do not go beyond Malta public house.
- Limited riverside path – limited access for assistance due to moored boats, trees etc..
- Upstream, narrowing and windy river – steering difficulty, and greater difficulty avoiding of other river users. Also, obstructions from over-hanging trees, further narrows usable river.
- Other users (motors boats, including manoeuvring into and out of marinas moorings, canoeists, swimmers/triathletes, anglers and wild fowl) – collision, steering difficulty.
- Damaged or incorrectly adjusted equipment – unexpected response from equipment, particularly when put under pressure. Make equipment checks prior to outings.
- Human error.
- Inexperienced crews – slow or inappropriate reaction to hazardous situations.
- Bankside cyclists/pedestrians

Land Training

- Land training equipment misuse (machines and free-weights).
- Gymnasium congestion – hazard to/from other users.
- Road running – visibility to traffic. Use high visibility vests, especially at night or in mist / fog.

All Training

- Sudden changes in level of exertion (lack of warm up/warm down, stretching) – leading to muscle damage.
- Use correct posture.
- Dehydration – loss of body fluids. Take liquids on outings.
- Hypothermia – inadequate clothing, and/or lack of spare clothing.
- For juniors: lack of regard by coaches for the capacity of the child's immature and growing body to cope with the nature and intensity of the training regime.

Launch Handling

- Crew overboard – mandated buoyancy aids.
- Engine failure, or run out of fuel.

Trailer Usage

- Read BR Trailer Drivers' Handbook.
- Manoeuvring into pedestrians – use of guide(s) at rear.
- Loss, or partial loss, of load – driver to ensure properly secured.
- Trailer unhitching from vehicle whilst being driven.

Navigation

- Rowers are to follow the normal flow pattern for all river users; that is, keep to the right hand side of the river when it is safe and practicable to do so.
- NOTE, Environment Agency Regulations of Navigation do not provide for any priority of manpowered boats over motorised boats.
- Even when a boat has right of way the overriding responsibility is to avoid collision.
- In the vicinity of bridges or sharp bends, a boat going upstream must give way, if necessary, to a vessel going downstream.
- Caution to be exercised when overtaking espically on bends, the overtaking boat to be prepared to give way if necessary.
- Exit from, and entry to, the landing stage should usually follow the normal flow pattern. However, this may be varied where wind and river flow dictate that it is safer to adopt an upstream exit, or entry, provided the level of other traffic on the river allows.
- Due consideration is to be given to other rivers user, both boating and anglers, and to water fowl.
- Do not turn across the bows of oncoming craft and avoid turning near bridges and bends.
- At dusk and in low visibility rowing in coxless boats is prohibited. In such conditions boats are to be equipped with a white light at both front and rear.
- These rules may be varied for organized competitions, for which separate rules are issued.
- Be aware that occasionally motorised boats use sound signals to alert other users of their intended actions. This normally relates to warning of an intended manoeuvre. Whilst it is unreasonable of drivers of motorised boats to expect other river users to understand their signals, they may still do so. In such circumstance members are advised to assume that the motorised boats will carry out an unexpected manoeuvre and should aim to maintain a large separation from the motorised boats until it is clear what its intentions are.

Members Safety Induction Checklist

General

- Awareness of Risk Assessment, Safety Procedure and BR Row Safe Guide, Water Safety Video.
- Awareness of Junior Welfare Procedure, BR Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy

Boathouse and off-water policy

- Rowing boat types
- Equipment terminology
- Boat safety checks: Buoyancy compartments / Security – fin, riggers, swivels, seats, stretchers, shoes / Heel restraints / Bow ball / Hull integrity / Steering mechanism / Oar buttons

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- Boathouse safety equipment
- Crew outing record
- Equipment damage record
- Lifting of boats (in boathouse and into/out of water), including commands, posture, boathouse contact hazards
- Landing stage hazards; slip – ice, water fowl faeces; trip – possible damaged landing stage; disease – bird flu, wash hands
- High winds: unsecured boathouse doors, boats outside on trestles, lifting boats above head

On-water

- Clothing – layers
- Change of clothes
- Warming up, warming down and stretching

- Drink – dehydration
- Entry to/ exit from boat (rowing and sculling)
- Stretcher adjustment
- Rowing commands, need to stay alert and be able to respond quickly to commands
- Rules of Navigation:
 - River traffic circulation; exit from / entry to landing stage
 - No right of way; but overtaking give way if necessary
 - Consideration to other river users – first priority to avoid collisions
 - Turning – avoid: on-coming traffic, near bridges and sharp bends
 - Dusk/fog – only coxed boats with illumination, care towards dusk in other configurations
- Emergency stop
- Capsize drill, swimming requirements
- Immersion, also driving rain and cold, causing hypothermia
- Sun burn and hypothermia (or over-heating)
- Lightning, use of 30 minute rule
- River hazards (in conjunction with map of river):
 - High flow – water-borne debris, manoeuvring and steering. Boat and land in upstream direction.
 - Flood – grounding
 - High winds – steering, manoeuvring, turning, blown onto bank, swamping, recovery to landing stage
 - Dusk/fog – restricted visibility – illumination
 - Weirs – strong currents, separation – particularly in high wind and/or river flows. Malta public house indicates limit of proximity to downstream weir
 - Upstream, narrow and windy river, overhanging branches
 - Other users (motor boats – including sound signals – and marinas including boats emerging from Allington Marina, canoeists,

swimmers/triathletes, anglers and wild fowl). Warn on-coming crews (incl those from the rear)

- Fixed structure hazards: bridge supports, mooring structures
- In water hazards: water ingestion, sharp objects on river bed, other boats, fallen trees, weeds

- Coxing:
 - Buoyancy aid – type, size
 - Exit from front loader – non-automatically inflating buoyancy aid
 - Clothing
 - Commands – on water and on land, anticipation
 - Leaving / approaching landing stage
 - Turning

Land training

- Warming up, warming down and stretching
- Use of equipment – separate induction
- Running – visibility, use of high visibility vests
- Gym – avoid congestion, tidiness, posture, availability of Gym Adviser

Notes

1 All reference to rowing in this document is to be taken to include sculling.

2 The BR Row Safe Guide is separated into a number of Chapters. Reference to specific paragraphs relate to those of the Guide; however, members should also take due regard of the associated guidance notes. A copy is attached to the Safety Notice Board and a further copy is in the Clubroom Policies Binder.

3 If the Rowing Committee is not functioning, this responsibility will rest with the Club Management Committee.

4 UKCC – United Kingdom Coaching Certificate

5 British Weight Lifting Association.

6 All reference to Rowing Members in this document is to be taken to include all classes of membership entitled to row.

7 The Safety Adviser is appointed at the Annual Rowing Member's Meeting.

8 To be replaced by the BR Coach Code of Conduct .

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9 Using the BR safety audit questionnaire and as called for by the BR (normally in December).

10 Junior Organizer – see Junior Welfare Procedures.

11 Club coaches are appointed at the Annual Rowing Member's Meeting, and will holder an BR coaching award to at least Instructor Award standard.

12 The distance that the coach or assistant is from the juniors under supervision should be determined by the prevailing conditions.

13 Refer to EA Waterway Byelaws and associated guidance.

14 The BR Row Safe Guide TO BE CHECKED AGAINST LATEST ISSUE AND AMENDMENTS.