



John M.S. Lecky UBC Boathouse
Safety Handbook for all Varsity, St. George's and Community Programs

Introduction

This handbook outlines the safety policies and procedures to be followed by all rowing and paddling participants partaking in said activities out of the John M.S. Lecky UBC Boathouse. Head Coaches, Dragon Boat Coaches, and team captains are responsible for the safety training and enforcement of these safety policies and procedures within their programs.

Safety Factors

Swimming/Medical Requirements – Rowing Only:

All participants must be able to competently swim 100m, tread water for a minimum of 15 minutes and be able to don a life jacket while in the water. Participants must provide one of the following to prove such competencies:

- Attend a swim test scheduled by Varsity, St. George's or Community Programs
- Certification from a certified swimming instructor on swim school letterhead
- A signed waiver affirming swim standard ability from a parent or guardian

Pleasure Craft Operators Card

All coaches, instructors, participants and volunteers operating a UBC Boathouse coach boat/safety boat must have a valid Canadian Coast Guard Pleasure Craft Operators Card.

All said drivers must:

- Provide a photocopy of their Pleasure Craft Operators Card to the main office for records
- Attend an orientation by a Head Coach or Facility Programs Manager prior to operating the coach boat
- Sign the coach boat orientation form

Water Training

- All participants and program heads will receive comprehensive instruction in safety procedures prior to involvement in rowing or paddling. In addition, all athletes and coaches will attend a review session of rules and safety procedures at the beginning of each their season/program.
- All athletes and coaches will be informed and educated on the river's features including tides, danger spots, obstructions and other safety hazards prior to their involvement in rowing or paddling. This includes information on safe beaching locations in case of an emergency. Athletes and coaches should use the safety map located on the outside of the Don Rix Community Bay as a safety and course reference.
- Each athlete and coach will sign the facilities Safety Handbook Log acknowledging they have read and understand this Safety Handbook and that they will follow the rules laid out within.
- All athletes and coaches will respect the rights of other users, including marine life, of the River and obey the course rules and flow patterns.

Hours of Operation

- Sunrise: Other than the Varsity Rowing Team, no rowing or paddling activities shall commence prior to sunrise or 5:45am (whichever comes first). Exception: December 1st through January 31st no on water rowing or paddling activities prior to 7am. All boats leaving the dock in the dark must be equipped with operating lights. (Varsity rowers practicing before sunrise must be accompanied by a coach boat at all times and must have appropriate lighting on all boats.)
- Sunset: Other than the Varsity Rowing Team, no rowing or paddling activities shall be on the water passed sunset. (Varsity rowers practicing after sunset must be accompanied by a coach boat at all times and must have appropriate lighting on all boats.)

Supervision

UBC Varsity & UBC Novice Rowing:

All crews heading out without a coach boat must ensure they sign in and out of the log book and must ensure there is someone at the UBC Boathouse for the duration of their water session and that that person is aware they are heading out and is committed to being present until they return. Any athlete leaving the dock without a coach boat must have a PFD and whistle on the boat. Exception: If there is no person at the UBC Boathouse during their water session, but there will be another crew or team on the water with a coach boat during the entire session, crews can sign in and out of the log book and arrange to check in and out with the coach boat driver.

St. George's School & Community Rowing:

All crews must be under the supervision of a coach on a coach boat at all times while on the water.

Community Paddling:

March through September – Teams are able to paddle without the supervision of a coach boat during these months.

October – February – Teams operating during these months must have a coach boat with them at all times.

All Varsity, St. George's and Community program athletes must stay in proximity to the coach boat responsible for their supervision.

The maximum allowable coach boat/athlete ratio is 1/18 for experienced crews in a structured program, or 1/9 for less experienced crews in a structured program. This includes passengers in the coach boat. For programs involving minors (under 19 years), the coach boat/athlete ratio is 1/9 regardless of experience. If three or more coach boats are out, then 1/12.

*Dragon boat programs have a coach/athlete ratio of 1/26.

Coaching Requirements

- All Varsity, St. George's and Community Program coaches are required to have and maintain valid Emergency First Aid and CPR C certifications.
- All Varsity, St. George's and Community program coaches are strongly encouraged to have a minimum of a Level 1 Technical Coaching Certification.
- All Varsity, St. George's and Community Program coaches must attend a water rescue and safety review at the beginning of each season and sign the Safety Handbook Log.

Equipment Requirements

Note: All vessels must adhere to the appropriate Transport Canada regulations which are paraphrased below. For further details, please refer to the Safe Boating Guide and Transport Canada boating regulations.

Rowing:

All shells on the water must be deemed to be rowable, seaworthy and will contain the following: navigation light(s) in dark conditions, a sound signaling device, and an inflatable personal floatation device (PFD) or lifejacket at each seat. Alternatively, a PFD or lifejacket for each rower may be stowed in the supervising coach boat(s), as per Transport Canada Regulations (as outlined in the Safe Boaters Guide).

Rowing Shell Navigation Lights:

All vessels leaving the dock in dark conditions must have appropriate lighting as per Transport Canada Regulations. In addition, all rowing shells shall have, at a minimum, a 360 degree white light fixed to the bow of the boat and a flashing red light fixed to the stern.

Paddling:

Dragon boats must be deemed seaworthy.

All paddlers are required to wear an appropriately sized PFD at all times.

Each dragon boat must be equipped with a safety kit containing a throw line and sound signaling device.

Coach Boats:

Coach boats must carry (required under section 16.02 of the Small Vessel regulations to the Canada Shipping Act)

- PFD's of the appropriate size for each crew member on board
- PFD's of appropriate size for each member of the crew of the largest shell being attended
- A bailer or pump
- A buoyant heaving line not less than 15m (49'3") in length
- A sound signaling device or a sound signaling appliance
- A watertight flashlight or three Canadian approved flares of Type A, B or C
- A manual propelling device or anchor
- A class 5BC fire extinguisher if the launch has an inboard engine or a fixed fuel tank
- Navigation lights if operated before sunrise, after sunset or in periods of restricted visibility

The UBC Boathouse also requires all coaches to carry a fully charged cell phone on their person.

Weather restrictions

WHEN IN DOUBT, DON'T GO OUT!

All coaches and athletes must be sensitive to the potential danger from darkness, fog, high winds, ice, cold water, storms or any combination of the above.

Varsity, St. George's, Community Program and Dragon boat coaches are responsible for determining if the conditions are too dangerous to row or paddle due to any of the above

circumstances. No athlete will be required to participate against their judgment should conditions be questionable.

There are no boats allowed on the water for any rowers or paddlers if any of the following are true:

- Temperature is less than 5 degrees Celsius
- White caps are forming on the water
- Thunder or lightning are present
- Visibility is less than 1000m

Flow Pattern

All water users must adhere to the flow patterns specified on the Safety Map located on the outside of the Don Rix Community Bay.

Specifically:

- All novice rowers and paddlers must stay between the Dinsmore (Gilbert St) Bridge and the first set of Blue Doors located at the marina to the North.
- Only experienced rowers and paddlers accompanied by a coach boat are permitted beyond the Gilbert Street Bridge to the South.
- No dragon boats are permitted South of the No. 2 Road Bridge
- Only experienced rowers are permitted beyond the No. 2 Road Bridge and they must be accompanied by a coach boat and follow the flow pattern carefully to ensure they remain out of float plane territory.
- In non-coxed shells, the bow person (or designate) is responsible for safe and courteous steering and shall always maintain an adequate forward lookout, normally accomplished by frequent shoulder checks to both sides.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency Agencies:

For any emergency requiring external assistance CALL 9-1-1 and state:

- Which agency is required (police, ambulance or fire)
- Your name and location – UBC Boathouse, 7277 River Road, Richmond
- A concise description of the situation
- Any need for water rescue

For any emergency requiring the Canadian Coast Guard, call 1-800-567-5111 or 1-250-363-2333. All coaches should have these numbers stored in their cell phones.

The Senior Coach present will assume command in the event of an emergency and will direct and control operations until the arrival of the appropriate authorities. At this time the coach will identify him/herself to the authorities and continue to liaise with authorities and direct other coaching staff accordingly. An emergency call should be placed to the Facility Manager at the first available opportunity.

Extreme Weather Conditions

Should unsafe conditions occur during a water session, all boats are required to proceed immediately to the most accessible and safest location. While this is typically the Boathouse, the Boathouse may not always be the most accessible option. Other accessible options may be a

marina or safe piece of shoreline where athletes can get off the water quickly. PERSONAL SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT AND SUPERSEDES THE SAFETY OF EQUIPMENT.

Rowing:

Once at a safe spot, if it is possible, remove the shell from the water and place it upside down on shore. Athletes should await rescue from that location unless all athletes are uninjured and hypothermia is not a risk. Do not underestimate the presence of shock.

Paddling:

Once at a safe spot, if it is possible, tie the dragon boat in a safe location. Athletes should await rescue from that location unless all athletes are uninjured and hypothermia is not a risk. Do not underestimate the presence of shock.

Signals

Emergency: International Distress Signal – raise and lower outstretched arms repeatedly. Use only for serious trouble. (In a dragon boat, raising paddles overhead signals the same type of serious distress).

- Daylight – sound signaling device
- Darkness – sound signaling device and wave light over head

Boat Mishaps/Survival Procedures

Rowing:

All athletes must remain as calm as possible and the coxswain/bow person should assume command and check every athlete continually until rescued. All athletes should immediately put on any available clothing, then put on the PFD's and secure. The coxswain must immediately signal for help using the signaling device and/or light. If the PFD's are located in the coach boat, they must be distributed and put on immediately. Coach boat drivers should judge wind and tide conditions before tossing PFD's to rowers.

Shell swamped but floating and athletes out of the water: Align the shell to minimize further swamping, then remain upright and in seat awaiting rescue (assume a fetal like position at top of slide). Keep oars stationary and directly perpendicular to the shell.

Shell sinking deeper into water, submerged or capsized: Should a shell fill with water or submerge, and safe harbor is not possible, the following procedures are to be followed:

- The shell should be rolled upside-down to increase buoyancy by trapping as much air as possible. If wind is a factor, roll with the wind. Oars should remain in the oarlocks to increase buoyancy.
- ATHLETES MUST STAY WITH THE SHELL AND NOT ATTEMPT TO SWIM ASHORE. Both the boat and oars usually float and will support the crew. The group shall “buddy up” across the boat with even distribution on either side of the shell (ie. 1&2, 3&4) and huddle towards the middle or high point of the shell. The coxswain must buddy with the seat adjacent pair. Each buddy is responsible for holding onto the other person while they are draped across the shell.

Pairing is essential as it gives added life support to each athlete (each is holding on to the life of another). This facilitates reciprocal communication and positive support. This relationship should be continued until actual rescue, when athletes should be rescued in pairs. This will

prevent premature feeling of relief resulting from rescue contact, and letting go before the rescuers take firm hold of the athletes.

Cold water considerations:

- Minimize movement to preserve body heat (no swimming or treading water). Use the HELP (Heat Escape Lessen Position) or a modified HELP position when buddying up across the overturned shell. (HELP Position: legs curled towards chest and arms around chest in fetal-like position)
- Keep clothes on and put on hat/mitts etc
- Get body as much out of the water as possible by getting on top of boat
- Assume fetal position, if possible. Protect groin/armpits/neck and head as much as possible.

Small boat considerations:

- SMALL BOATS, WHERE POSSIBLE, MUST ROW IN GROUPS. If a partner's shell submerges or capsizes the "buddy" athlete(s) must ensure they are out of danger (back in shell or on shore) before going to get help.
- The smaller the boat the better the relative buoyancy. It is possible to reenter the shell and get ashore if conditions are not serious.
- To re-enter, make sure the oars are perpendicular to the shell and grasp with one hand. Pull yourself up so you are lying across the bow side of the cockpit. Pivot to seat yourself on the runners. Slowly maneuver your legs into position. (Go one at a time in crew boats, but all oars should be perpendicular).

Paddling

Dragon Boat sinking deeper into water submerged:

All athletes must remain as calm as possible and the steersperson should assume command and check every athlete continually until rescued. All athletes should immediately put on any available clothing. The steersperson must immediately signal for help using the signaling device and paddle.

Dragon Boat swamped but still floating:

Dragon boat swamped but floating and athletes out of the water: Align the boat to minimize further swamping, then remain upright and in seat awaiting rescue (assume a fetal like position in the seat). Steers person is to instruct paddling pairs to keep an eye on each other and report to the steers person if problems arise.

Dragon Boat capsized:

- ATHLETES MUST STAY WITH THE BOAT AND NOT ATTEMPT TO SWIM ASHORE. The boat usually floats and will support the crew. Paddlers must stay in constant communication with their seat partner. If able, paddlers can buddy up across the boat holding hands. If not, each paddler shall reach under the boat and hold onto the seat.
- If paddlers become trapped under the boat when it capsizes, they will likely have an air bubble from which to breath. It is imperative that they be helped out from underneath. Their seat partner or nearby and willing paddler needs to go under and

coach them out. All parties must report the status of their seat partner to the steers person immediately.

Cold water considerations:

- Minimize movement to preserve body heat (no swimming or treading water). Use the HELP (Heat Escape Lessen Position) or a modified HELP position when buddying up across the overturned shell.
- Keep clothes on and put on hat/mitts etc
- Get body as much out of the water as possible by getting on top of boat
- Assume fetal position, if possible. Protect groin/armpits/neck and head as much as possible.

Rescue Procedures

Coach Boat capacity:

- The maximum legal capacity of a coach boat shall not be exceeded in a rescue. In extreme conditions those rescued must be taken directly to the shore or the nearest safe spot. Multiple trips may be required to remove all those involved in the accident as quickly and safely as possible.

Approach:

Any accident shall be approached from the leeward side, into the wind, to prevent the coach boat from being pushed onto the shell(s) or dragon boat, and to ensure maximum control.

Assessing the situation:

- The conditions of the people involved and the severity of the circumstances must be assessed quickly.
- Verbal contact with those in the water must be established so that they can be talked through the rescue quickly: tell the people in the water what is going to happen so they know what is going on.
- Those in greatest risk (distress) must be rescued first. Rescue must occur in pairs.
- A head count will be conducted upon the launch's arrival and then repeated upon leaving.

Reporting incidents:

All incidents and accidents, including a capsized shell, swamped shell, first aid administered etc must be reported to the Facility Manager and documented in the Incident Report Book immediately following the incident.

Penalties for Safety Infractions

Safety infractions will be reported to and handled by the Facility Manger.

Safety infractions may result in one or all of the following:

- Persons responsible for infractions required to take an open book exam on the safety procedures included in this handbook and receive a score of 90% or higher.
- A probationary period of up to 3 months whereby any infraction will result in immediate suspension of water privileges.
- Immediate suspension of 1-10 days of all water privileges. Suspensions may be applied to individuals, groups or programs.

- Persistent or continuing infractions may result in permanent suspension of water privileges.
- Any athlete or coach who has been suspended or expelled may file an appeal with the UBC Boathouse Management Committee. Until the appeal is heard, the ruling by the Facility Manger will stand.