

Nanaimo Rowing Club

Safety Policy

November 28, 2011

Nanaimo Rowing Club Safety

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Like many sports there are certain dangers inherent in rowing and on being on the water in general, especially in the winter months when much of the rowing takes place. The Nanaimo Rowing Club (NRC) follows a “Safety First” policy which is in part drawn from the official safety policy of Rowing Canada Aviron and in part from safety guidelines drawn up for Long Lake by the NRC.

This policy was last modified November 28, 2011 and approved by the NRC executive. The policy will be reviewed annually – next review due by June 30, 2022.

2.0 NRC SAFETY POLICY / CODE OF SAFETY

These guidelines set out the minimum rowing safety standards required by Rowing Canada Aviron.

The NRC will post a “Code of Safety”, including rules on:

- Safe rowing equipment
- Boathouse rules
- Oarsperson, sculler, coxswain, and coach responsibilities
- Coach boats and safety boats
- Safety at regattas
- Local safety regulations

A list of emergency telephone numbers will be displayed including:

- Doctor/ambulance/police
- Fire department
- Local hospital casualty department
- Coast guard auxiliary

Safety and first aid equipment will be readily available including:

- First aid kit (fully stocked)
- Thermal blankets/exposure bags
- Life rings/buoyant heaving lines

**THERE WILL BE A FULLY EQUIPPED AND PROPERLY OPERATED
SAFETY BOAT ON THE WATER AT ALL TIMES WHEN ROWERS ARE ON
THE WATER AND ROWING**

The NRC will ensure that all equipment used for rowing and coaching is in good repair.

All rowers will be provided with adequate instruction in on-water safety and rowing technique, plus adequate supervision by coaches and experienced rowers, to ensure that no person boating from the boathouse puts themselves at risk while on the water. Inexperienced coxswains should be allowed out in boats only if accompanied by an experienced coach in a fully equipped coach boat.

The coaching of coxswains and their education in on-water safety will be treated, from a safety aspect, as more important than coaching oarspersons and scullers.

Active steps will be taken to encourage members to become fully conversant with lifesaving and resuscitation procedures by attending training courses and other appropriate means. In particular, it is highly desirable that all coaches have this training.

Rowing activities should be coordinated with other local water users to minimize clashes of interest and the possibility of additional water hazards.

In all cases of accident involving injury to rowers, other than trivial incidents, RCA National Office shall be notified in writing immediately by an officer of the club. This is a contractual obligation under Rowing Canada Aviron's liability insurance policy covering all registered clubs and members.

3.0 SAFE ROWING EQUIPMENT

3.1 Safety and first aid equipment

Safety and first aid equipment should be readily available and include:

- First aid kit – fully stocked and regularly checked (log in Safety Binder)
- Thermal blankets/exposure bags
- Life rings/buoyant heaving lines
- Personal flotation devices (PFD's)

3.2 Rowing shells

Clubs should ensure that all equipment used for rowing and coaching is safe and maintained in good order. Every rowing shell must have:

- A white bow ball
- Heel restraints
- Quick release shoes
- Lights as required by Transport Canada when rowing in reduced light, whether accompanied by a safety vessel or not
- A sound-signalling device, e.g. a whistle attached to the foot stretcher of stroke seat

3.3 Transport Canada's Regulations for Rowing Shells

Rowing shells do not have to carry personal protection equipment, boat safety equipment and distress equipment if:

- competing in a provincially, nationally or internationally sanctioned regatta or competition or engaged in training at the venue at which the regatta or competition is taking place;
- attended by a safety vessel carrying a personal flotation device of the appropriate size for each crew member of the rowing shell, if the safety vessel is only attending one rowing shell; or, if the safety vessel is attending more than one rowing shell, carrying enough personal flotation devices for each person on board the rowing shell with the most persons on board; or,

If not attended by a safety vessel rowing shells are required to carry:

- a personal flotation device of the appropriate size for each crew member;
- a sound-signalling device; and,
- if operated in low light conditions, e.g., after sunset and before sunrise, a 360° white light on the bow and an optional flashing red light on the stern.

4.0 COACH/SAFETY BOAT RULES

In most cases the coach boat is also the safety boat and as such must remain within sight and hearing of the rowers it is accompanying and must carry specific safety equipment.

Coach/safety boats should:

- Be equipped with easily accessible safety equipment in accordance with Transport Canada rules
 - Personal flotation devices as detailed in 3.3

- Buoyant heaving line at least 15 m long
- Manual propelling device
- Bailer or manual bilge pump
- Watertight flashlight
- Sound signalling device
- Navigation lights if operated after sunset, before sunrise or in low light conditions (e.g., fog)
- Be equipped with a first aid kit and thermal blanket.
- Only be operated by a competent operator possessing the Boat Operators Card
- Provide easy entry from the water (e.g. step, ladder or handhold)
- Where equipped with a kill switch, the kill switch must be attached to the operator
- Be properly maintained and must have properly maintained engines since failure, particularly at a critical time, could have serious consequences.

5.0 SAFETY AT REGATTAS

Nanaimo Rowing Club does not presently host any regattas. We do, however, have training days and these are subject to the same requirement for coach/safety boats as all other rowing sessions.

6.0 NANAIMO ROWING CLUB - RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR MEMBERS AND COACHES

6.1 Coaches of participants in on-water activities must:

1. Ensure the safety of all participants and equipment at all times.
2. Access factors that can lead to higher risk during training sessions, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Extreme temperatures
 - b. Cold water
 - c. Weather forecasts
 - d. Visibility
 - e. Ice
 - f. Wind
 - g. Precipitation
 - h. Debris in water
 - i. Athlete experience
 - j. Traffic on the lake (rowing shells, kayaks, power boats, jet skis, etc.)
3. Take special measures to ensure the safety of athletes and equipment in any instance where risk is elevated. These measures may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Holding a mandatory safety meeting before going on the water to inform athletes of the risk(s)
 - b. Ensuring that athletes are aware of club hours of operation: from February 15 to November 15, not be on the water before 6 am and be off the water by official sunset (posted in the clubhouse). From November 16 to

February 14, not be on the water before 7 am and be off the water by official sunset (posted in the clubhouse).

- c. Cancelling a scheduled on-water session.
- d. Limiting the safety boat to athlete ratio to 1:12
- e. Limiting some athletes to large shells (4x, 8+)
- f. Restricting parts of the lake to rowing traffic
- g. Restricting rowing activities of athletes not adequately dressed for the weather
- h. Requiring rowing shells to move as a group on the lake
- i. Other measures as required.

6.1 Participants in on-water activities must:

1. Be able to swim 50 m.
2. Be familiar with the safety procedures dealing with hypothermia and lifesaving techniques.
3. Be aware of the potential dangers of darkness, fog, mist, high winds, ice, cold water, and storms.
4. Know the safe beaching locations, danger spots, obstructions, etc. prior to their involvement in on-water training.
5. Respect the rights of other users of the lake.
6. Be courteous.
7. Be off the water when visibility is less than 200 metres.
8. From February 15 to November 15, not be on the water before 6 am and be off the water by official sunset (posted in the clubhouse).
9. From November 16 to February 14, not be on the water before 7 am and be off the water by official sunset (posted in the clubhouse).
10. Not smoke in or around the boathouse or dock.
11. Always keep the shoreline to the starboard side when rowing.
12. If rowing without an accompanying safety boat, must pass a competency test administered by the head coach.

6.2 Coaches or members responsible for a shell must:

1. Note equipment failures or needed repairs in the logbook.
2. At all times a safety boat must be on the water except for an owner using their own boat or if a rower is over 18 and has all required safety equipment (i.e., PFD, whistle and flashlight if dawn or dusk).

6.3 Coaches should have completed:

1. Level I coaching certification or be under training to acquire such.
2. A current basic First Aid course.
3. Small craft operator training and be in possession of an operator's card.

6.4 Launch and safety boat drivers should:

1. Ensure that one PFD per participant is carried onboard, and that an oar, a bailer, buoyant heaving line, sound device and flashlight are on board.
2. Be in possession of a small craft operator's card.

6.5 Club members must:

1. Not store personal sculls in the boathouse unless cleared by the head coach.

7.0 LONG LAKE SAFETY RULES

1. No boat should be taken out without the express permission of the Head Coach or an assistant coach. However, rowers are responsible for their own safety so boats must be thoroughly checked *before* they go out on the water. Inexperienced rowers and juniors will not proceed on the water without the supervision of a coach. A fully equipped safety boat is available to assist in any emergency. Make sure there is a coach available who knows all emergency procedures, can properly handle the boat and fully utilize its equipment.
2. Always row along the length of the lake closest to the shore on the starboard side of the boat.
3. When overtaking, keep out of the way of the boat you are passing. However, as a courtesy, boats being overtaken should keep closest to the shore allowing easy passage for the overtaking boat.
4. When entering into or exiting from the traffic on the lake, please give way to boats already in the traffic pattern.
5. Turn at the ends of the lake, not in the middle, and if you are resting keep clear of boats in the traffic pattern.
6. Do not row before dawn or after dusk or if the visibility is poor, e.g., foggy.
7. Do not row in hazardous conditions, e.g., if there is ice on the lake or if the water is too rough.
8. Dress appropriately for the weather. Be aware of the hazards of hypothermia and dehydration. Take a bottle of water with you when you row.
9. If you see someone breaking the rules, let them know. We must look out for each other or someone could be badly injured.
10. If you capsize, remember there is a large degree of buoyancy in the boat – use it! If you can, walk ashore and return to the boathouse for help. Remember, the boats are replaceable and we can always get help to recover a boat.
11. Report all damage of NRC boats and equipment to a Coach immediately. Be alert! Keep a good lookout for hazards and other boaters!

8.0 SPECIFIC SAFETY SITUATIONS

8.1 Cold Water Guidelines

Water at or below 15° C is defined as cold water. Colder temperatures cause rapid heat loss and most immersion fatalities result from gasping, hyperventilation, and peripheral cooling. Preparation and prevention are essential in protecting against the effects of cold water immersion.

Guidelines:

1. The Coaches will monitor environmental conditions including water temperatures, wind, precipitation and sea state and issue appropriate warnings and safety directions.
2. All persons shall wear protective clothing appropriate for the weather conditions and their activity level, as far as is possible for the proper rowing motion, with the objective being to keep the body dry and insulate against heat loss. Coaches have the authority to restrict rowing activities of rowers that are not adequately dressed for the weather.
3. When the water temperature is at 10° C or below or when environmental conditions warrant, special safety precautions should be considered such as:
 1. Warning members against going on the water
 2. Advising members to go on the water only if they have PFDs, sound signalling devices, or navigation lights
 3. Advising going on the water only if attended by a safety boat equipped with enough PFDs for the entire crew

Rescue and treatment:

1. The safety of rescuers, as well as the casualty, must be ensured at all times
2. Victims of immersion incidents should be handled gently and placed and maintained in a horizontal position as much as possible
3. The greatest immediate threat is likely to the airway due to aspiration of fluids. Medical observation is recommended as the effects of aspiration can be delayed for hours.
4. The objective is to prevent further heat loss. Remove wet clothing if possible, insulate with available materials and remove to shelter.
5. Pulses in hypothermic casualties are hard to find and should be assessed for up to two minutes at the carotid artery prior to CPR.

8.2 Hot Weather Guidelines

As with cold weather, preparation and prevention are important in protecting against the effects of heat.

Guidelines:

1. All persons should wear protective clothing appropriate for the conditions and their activity.
2. Use of sun block with a high SPF factor.

3. Drink plenty of water before, during and after exposure to hot weather.
4. Address any symptoms of heat stress immediately.

8.3 Visibility

No club equipment will be permitted onto the lake when the visibility is less than 200 m (approximately the width of the lake).