



St Michael's Rowing Club Head of the River Safety Statement

O'Briensbridge – 21st February 2015

Policy

St Michael's Head of the River Committee is committed to running St Michael's Head in a safe manner. The safety of the competitors, spectators and H.O.R. officials is the highest priority of the organising committee and safety will be assured through the implementation of the Safety Plan.

Objectives

The Safety Plan for the H.O.R. has four main objectives:

- To ensure that racing is conducted with due observance of all safety conditions in Rowing Ireland's Rules of Racing
- To manage hazards specific to the O'Briensbridge course
- To provide adequate First Aid and rescue facilities
- To investigate any incidents of a hazardous nature which occur during the Head

The Head Committee has appointed a safety officer who will take overall responsibility for implementation of the Safety Plan.

The safety officer for the day is Pat McInerney - 087-9695093

Responsibility

In accordance with current guidelines, it is the responsibility of each participating Club Committee to ensure the safety of their members while participating. References include The National Safety Council and the Rowing Ireland.

Intent

It is the intention of the Organising Committee to implement its own policy and to provide example to participating clubs by creating a positive Safety Environment during the event.

Method

Safety awareness will be promoted by:

1. Informing all competitors of the event rules in advance through the Rowing Ireland website (www.rowingireland.ie) and Club website (www.smrc.ie)
2. Holding a safety briefing on the morning of the head prior to the first race
3. Appointing slip marshals to ensure boat safety features such as bow balls, hatch covers and heel restraints are in place and coxes are wearing personal floatation devices.
4. Appointing Marshals as required on the slip and water. Marshalls on water will perform both safety and Race Marshall function to ensure safe progress of crews.
5. Providing Limerick Marine Rescue services to supplement the Club Launches

Marshals

Marshals are requested to assist voluntarily in the running of the event by:

1. Providing a presence on the slip and river
2. Marshalling crews on the slip, course and at the start and finish areas
3. Giving information to other river users
4. Assisting crews in the event of equipment failure, collision or an accident

Marshals are concerned with encouraging the safety of: Themselves, competitors, event organisers and other river users.

Hazard Identification

Hazards that may arise include:

- Crews going up to the start or returning from the finish interfering with races in progress
- Crews straying off course
- Crews tripping on oars on the slip
- Crews proceeding beyond the start zone into an area that include falls.

Management of Hazards

- Marshals will be positioned at nominated points on the course and at the start and the finish and will
 - (a) ensure the safe passage of crews to the start zone, and
 - (b) keep the course clear for races in progress
- Instructions will be issued to competitors regarding hazards on the course
- Instructions will be issued to competitors to follow a specific pattern to the start and racing
- Instructions will be issued to competitors to follow the instructions of the marshals
- Safety launches will be available at all times during the Head to assist in all incidents on the course in which the safety of any competitor may be at risk
- Two-way radio communication system will be provided for marshals, race officials and the safety officer to keep them informed of incidents and the movement of boats on the course
- Public address system will be used to advise spectators.
- A rope will be placed across the river above the falls as a safety measure

Crew Safety

It is the responsibility of each participating club to ensure that their competing crews are competent to participate in the grade for which they are entered. On the day, the cox or steer-person must attend the coxes meeting. This meeting will include a safety brief. A map of the river is included in the programme or provided separately. Bow numbers are issued to provide an identification system to marshals. All equipment must comply with Rowing Ireland safety regulations.

Boat Accident Recovery Procedure

1. Approach the recovery location from down-wind when possible
2. Inform other marshals in the area and the Safety Officer immediately so that onshore services can be alerted.
3. After recovery move persons to the nearest of the following locations: Slip area or start area. The ambulance is located in the main event enclosure near the finish for those requiring assistance.

The safety of competitors, event organizers, spectators and other river users is the priority. Abandoned boats or equipment representing a hazard to others should be removed off the racing course.

Incident Reporting

The Safety Officer will maintain a register of all reported incidents where safety is concerned. All such incidents will be investigated in order to identify hazards to be managed in future Heads. All officials will be instructed to report all incidents to the Safety Officer.

First Aid and Medical Services

First Aid personnel will be available in the enclosure for the duration of the Head.

Emergency Services: 999 or 112

Access

Officials will ensure that access roads to the enclosure are kept free for emergency vehicle access

Slipping

All boats competing at the event will use the official slipping area. Boats will be checked to ensure their safety features are in place before they are allowed proceed through the archway to the slip.

Except for crews resident in Castleconnell BC, all crews are required to launch from the enclosure in O'Briens Bridge. This is to minimise slipway congestion in the starting zone at Castleconnell.

Summary

Encouraging Water Safety during the Head of the River Race is an ongoing activity. It is an essential element of all decisions made in the organising of the event. Compliance with the code is a condition of entry and the code will be reviewed annually.