

ROWING IRELAND

SAFETY BULLETIN

Row Safe, Stay Safe

ROWING IRELAND
SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Welcome message from Rowing Ireland Safety Advisory Committee

The sport of rowing should be fun, exhilarating, exhausting and rewarding, importantly it should be safe! Each month through this safety bulletin we hope to educate and inform, rowers, and clubs on subject matter that helps to keep our sport safe. If you have any ideas, or suggestions for inclusion in our new safety bulletin or if you have safety questions to ask please feel free to contact us at clubsupport@rowingireland.ie

Welcome aboard “Row Safe, Stay Safe”.

In this addition we will look at:

- Club Safety Statements,
- Accident report forms,
- World Rowing' Safety
- Covid-19 Protocols Update



Club Safety Statements

**Why do we need one? What should it cover?
How often should it be reviewed? Who should read it?**

Why does our club need to produce a Safety Statement?

- Under the **Safety**, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the employer/ must prepare a **Safety Statement**.
- It is a Rowing Ireland Policy requirement
- It emphasizes to your rowers, coaches, volunteers, employees, and contractors that they must co-operate with health & safety practices.

What should your safety statement cover?

A **Safety Statement** is the basis of how your club manages health and safety.

Three steps to follow;

1. Identify hazards, assess the risks, detail the control measures.
2. Compile the safety statement, include specific aspects of your club activities. It Should contain a health and safety policy, signed by the committee. It should detail the facilities, equipment and arrangements managed by the club to promote, safety, health and welfare in the club.
3. Attach your risk assessments to finalise the document.

Remember to review your safety statement periodically.

All club members, coaches, volunteers, employees, committee and contractors should be familiar with your safety statement and it should be displayed in a prominent position within the club.

The Rowing Ireland safety advisory committee review all the safety statements submitted by rowing clubs as part of the Rowing Ireland affiliation process. The committee has compiled a list of common weaknesses, to help support clubs to maintain stronger club safety statements.

- **Documents unsigned** - *Unsigned documents bare no legal basis and could be deemed null and void if a legal case arose.*
- **No risk assessments attached** - *The whole bases of a safety statement are to show the club carried out risk assessments to, identify hazards, assess the risks and put control measures in place. Without the risk assessments you are unable to show that you have complete this important task.*
- **Regatta safety plans submitted instead of safety statements** - *Safety plans are a very important part of your safety procedures in a club but, they do not give the overall risk management process for the clubs' activities. Safety plans are event specific and we will discuss these in future additions of this safety bulletins.*
- **No control measures mentioned to reduce the risks** - *Identifying the hazards and accessing the risk is not enough, you need to be seen to put control measures in place.*
- **Areas of club activities not included in the statement** - *Remember our sport activities takes place in the gym, in the boat house, in the club house, on the slip, while loading our trailers, when transporting our equipment and on the water, all these areas need to be covered in your club safety statement*
- **Persons responsible** - *We need to identify whose responsibility it is to carry out the control measures. Safety is every club member concern, but we need to identify the person responsible to ensure implementation occurs.*

Over the next several issues we will guide clubs through the process of building a safety statement, starting next month with Hazard Identification.

Link to HSA website:

<https://youtu.be/fQOUQpOuJIU>

Link to Rowing Ireland Safety Statement template:

[Click here](#)

Accident Report Forms

The Safety Advisory committee of Rowing Ireland has found it very difficult to encourage clubs to report accidents and incidents.

Reporting of accidents has been identified as one of the best ways to learn about safety issues and to implement change.

We reached out to our neighbours across the water to try and learn from their experiences in accident reporting. British Rowing have adapted a “No Name No Blame” attitude to incident reporting.

There accident and incident reports are open for anyone to submit online. Rowers, coaches, volunteers, passer-by's, anyone that has witnessed an incident can go on line and report it. They don't look for names and they don't ascertain blame.

The reported incidents are analysed to learn lesson, to test protocols, to educate others and most importantly to make our sport safer.

The Rowing Ireland Safety Advisory Committee wants to encourage and support our clubs to adopt a culture of “Report it, to, Fix it”, throughout Rowing Ireland, within all our clubs and during all our events.

We have set about changing the online accident / incident online report form.

The new accident report form will be easy to use and available for anyone to use.

“Report it, to, Fix it.

No Name, No Blame”

A Rowing Ireland Safety Advisory Committee,
safety initiative.

Why is it important to report incidents?

- We can all learn from others where situations have led to an incident and hopefully not put ourselves in similar situations.
- Clubs can use their reports to identify areas of safety needing attention in their location
- Statistics gathered are important to counter knee jerk reactions to situations. For example, ‘all rowers should wear lifejackets like canoeists and yachtsmen!’
- Only where essential, will reports form the basis of evidence for the club officers or the safety advisory committee to take action if deemed appropriate. There are obvious cases of antisocial behaviour/swearing etc that might require action as well as less obvious cases where reckless actions put lives at risk, which would fit into this category.

Capsize report example

Why do we have to report all capsizes even those which are ‘common’ such as those with novices when first learning to scull?

In the future a Court may well ask the question- “Just how dangerous is this rowing lark? Should we not make all the rowers wear lifejackets as do dingy sailors?”

If we can point out the fact that hundreds if not thousands of capsizes happen each year and that this amount has been happening for years. We can provide the Court with objective data on the number of capsizes that resulted in safe recovery versus those that resulted in serious harm. It is the gathering of this objective data that we seek from this information.

Responsibilities.

Individual person, the club, the coach, competition organisers, club rowing safety advisor, safety advisory committee.

We all have a responsibility to report incidents, we can all learn from them.

“Safety doesn't happen by accident”

World Rowing Safety

World Rowing's Minimum Guidelines for the Safe Practice of Rowing

Introduction

Many accidents take place because uninformed decisions are made before leaving the boathouse. Weather and water conditions, time of day, equipment, and supervision are all critical components that must be considered to have a safe training session.

World Rowing encourages all rowing programs to implement, at a minimum, the following guidelines to help make informed decisions and ensure the safe practice of our sport. The standards below are available to be used as a basis for establishing fundamental guidelines or to supplement existing ones.

The following information was taken from World Rowing link (insert link)

II. Detailed Information

A. Safe Rowing Equipment

For the safety of all concerned, rowing equipment should be maintained in good working order. Particular attention must be paid to the following:

- Every boat must have a ball of not less than 4cm diameter on its bow. Where the construction or nature of the boat is such that the bow is properly protected, or its shape does not represent a hazard then this requirement need not apply.
- Heel restraints and "quick-release" mechanisms must be in proper and effective working order in all boats equipped with fitted shoes.
- For rowing in reduced daylight, boats shall be fitted with lights as required by the local and national waterway authorities. At the least, all boats should have a light forward and aft.

- All oars and sculls should be checked to ensure that "buttons" are secure and properly set.
- Bow and stern compartments should function as individual buoyancy compartments and must be checked to ensure that they will function as intended.
- Boats should meet minimum flotation requirements:

When full of water a boat with the crew seated in the rowing position should float in such a way that the top of the seat is a maximum of 5 cm below the static waterline.

Older boats not designed to meet this requirement may use inflatable buoyancy bags, foam blocks or other materials.

Para Rowing

Para Rowing equipment may have unique features, it is important that club members are familiar with the functioning of these features, so they can react positively in an emergency.

Strapping

Strapping should be made of a material which will not induce pressure marking or chaffing

HANDS must be quick mouth release
TRUNK must be ONE DIRECTION quick release
THIGHS must be ONE DIRECTION quick release

IMPORTANT:

World Rowing recommends that all chest, leg and hand strapping is evaluated for safety by the rower before using on open water.

Covid-19 Update

Republic of Ireland

The Republic of Ireland are currently in Level 5 of the governments Covid-19 Plan. You can see the detailed restrictions on the rowing Ireland website.

- Club House Closed
- Boat House Closed
- Gyms Closed

Individual training can be done from home staying within 5K of your home.

The only exemption from these are for professional elite sports. Elite athletes are considered to be those that are full time members of the high performance squad invited by the HPD and based at the National Rowing Centre.

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Executive have currently implemented the following restrictions. You can see the detailed restrictions on the Rowing Ireland website.

- All rowing facilities indoor and outdoors must close.

Elite athletes can train only between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm.

The Rowing Ireland COVID-19 working group meets every Monday to review the current restrictions. The group liaisons with Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland for interpretation and clarification on all the applied restrictions impacting our sport and our athletes.

Please check the Rowing Ireland website for the latest news on the COVID-19 restrictions.

Coastal & Offshore Rowing Safety

Coastal & Offshore rowing mostly takes place on open water, typically on the sea or on large lakes and estuaries. There are many different types of boats from traditional timber-built Skiffs, Cots, Yawls, Seine to the fiberglass Coastal four and FISAs that race on the sea. They all have very different sea going characteristics and they have their own style of rowing Both Sweep and Scull. Fixed seat and sliding seat but good safety practices should be common to them all

These boats are designed to row safely at sea but they all have their limits as do the rowers in them. Knowing these limits and mitigating the risks involved are the key.

Coastal & Offshore rowers and coxes are expected to:

- Follow the local maritime rules.

Check the weather forecast regularly and wear the appropriate clothing. Keep Hydrated and wear sunscreen when necessary.

Be familiar with local tidal conditions, Shipping lanes, Fishing Areas and submerged obstacles or hazards

- Wear or have within easy reach appropriate lifejackets (cox to wear).

- Know what to do if swamped, capsized or in need of a tow.

The crew captain is expected to:

- Before the outing: assess the risk and ability of the crew for the conditions, do the boat safety checks and complete the sign-out process.

- During the outing: monitor conditions and make decisions on safety, ensure the crew respects all navigation and safety rules.

- After the outing: complete the sign-in process.

All coaches should consider that part of their role is to oversee, teach and instil these safety measures in your rowers and coxes.

Rowing Ireland Safety Advisory Committee

Joe Cantillon, Evan Molloy, Steven Archibald, Robert Dunne, Denis O'Regan, Michael O'Rourke, Sabrina O' Carroll, Michelle Carpenter (RI.CEO), Pat Kiely (Chairperson)