



# ROWING IRELAND SAFETY BULLETIN

Row Safe, Stay Safe

**ROWING IRELAND  
SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MARCH 2021  
ED 2, VOL 1**

Welcome message from Rowing Ireland Safety Advisory Committee

The sport of rowing should be fun, exhilarating, exhausting and rewarding, importantly it should be safe! With each addition of 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](mailto:clubsupport@rowingireland.ie)

**Welcome aboard “Row Safe, Stay Safe”.**

In this edition we will look at:

- Identifying Hazards
- Incident & Accident reporting

## Safety Statements; Identifying Hazards

*To build a comprehensive safety statement you need to start at the beginning. In this safety bulletin we will take you through the process of building a comprehensive rowing club safety statement.*

*In this edition we are going to look at identifying Hazards.*

*Unlike some sports rowing does not have a simple playing field or track, in rowing we have Club houses, boat houses, and gyms. Our sport competes indoors on ergs and outdoors on the water, our equipment must meet the highest standards to keep our athletes safe on the water, the majority without a life jacket. We have boats for our rowers and launches for our coaches. All these factors and more must be taken into account when, "IDENTIFYING HAZARDS".*

### What is a Hazard?

*A Hazard is a source or a situation with the potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill-health, damage to property, damage to the environment, or a combination of these.*

Potential Hazards when rowing:

You can easily break the hazards associated with rowing into two categories

- Water Based
- Land Based

Water Based Hazards while rowing:

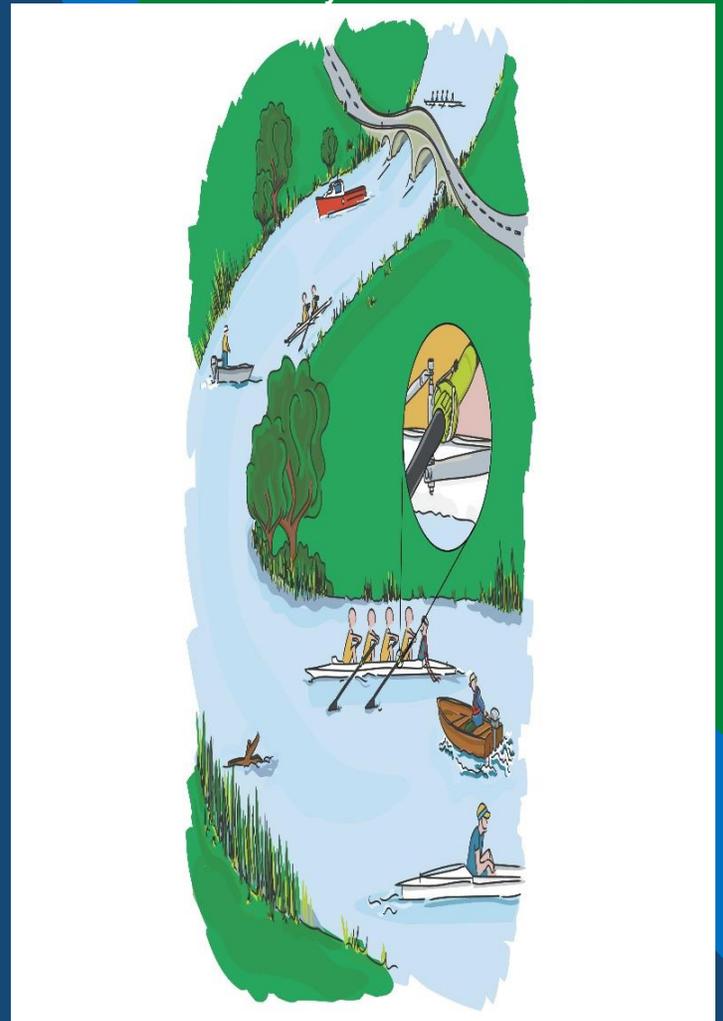
- ❖ Weather
- ❖ The Rowing Environment
- ❖ The Water
- ❖ Water Obstacles
- ❖ Other Water Users
- ❖ Going Afloat and Landing

Land Based Hazards involved with rowing:

- ❖ Lifting and moving boats
- ❖ Gyms, ergs and weight's
- ❖ Slips, trips and falls
- ❖ Loading and unloading of trailers
- ❖ Towing of trailers

It is the responsibility of all clubs to ensure their club manage the risks associated with the hazards encountered while partaking in rowing when training or during competition.

### Hazards Quiz. Can you see the 15 Hazards?



## Hazards continued

This hazard spotting quiz acts as a reminder of the different hazards on the river that we need to be aware of, so if you spotted all ten hazards on the quiz that already shows a good awareness of safety. There were, however, actually fifteen hazards to spot so if you saw all fifteen then that is absolutely brilliant.

So, what were the additional five hazards? Let's start at the top of the picture.

Did you notice the red motor boat, just downstream of the bridge? There are too many collisions between rowing boats and motor launches and failure to comply with navigation rules is far too common.

How about the coach of the pair; not only is he standing up in his launch, and that is an unstable position, but he has also positioned his boat right in the middle of the river near a bend where it is an obstruction to other river users.

Have a look at the coach of the coxed four, is he looking where he is going? We have too many incidents where coaches could have helped crews to avoid problems and do not succeed in doing so.

You may also notice that he too has positioned his boat in the middle of the river when approaching a bend. This is just asking for trouble.

Have a look at the cox in the foreground. Not only is he not correctly dressed for the winter but he is also not wearing a lifejacket. What more do we need to say?

Do not forget that this is a winter scene and the inland waters are much colder than the sea at this time of year.

Let's have a look at the other ones.

1. Two boats are on a collision course on a bend – the coxed four and the pair.
2. The pair is on the wrong side of the river. It is amazing how many times this happens. The three most common causes of rowing boat collisions are: -
  - Failure to adhere to the circulation plan
  - Failure to keep a good lookout, and
  - Doing both of the above at the same time
3. The four's cox is not aware of the floating log in river ahead. This log is easy to see but most are black and float very low in the water.
4. One of the rowers in the four doesn't have their gate done up. You may think that this is too stupid to be true, but it is not. This is the most common identified cause of capsizes. There are several examples on YouTube.
5. Cox's lifejacket – crotch straps not fastened. Crotch straps are vitally important; they stop your lifejacket from coming off over your head when it inflates in the water.
6. The four's coach doesn't have the kill-cord attached in the launch. This is very dangerous and should never happen. There is more information on how to use kill cords [here](#)
7. Trees on bend may be obstructing their view ahead. There have been too many collisions recently where rowers have blamed the owners of trees because their view ahead is restricted. Tree owners should attend to their trees but rowers have a responsibility for themselves and others too. Quite simply, if you cannot see what is coming then take great care and consider going somewhere else.
8. The cox in the foreground is dressed in shorts and t-shirt during this winter scene. Coxes and coaches are most at risk of risk of hypothermia as they do not expend much energy (compared with rowers). It is important that they dress appropriately.
9. The pair's coach in the launch is standing up and driving at the same time. Standing up in a launch when it is moving exposes the driver to the risk of falling as the boat moves and, perhaps, falling into the water. This is best avoided by remaining seated.

*We would like to thank our friends at British Rowing safety for allowing us to reproduce this safety hazard quiz. The safety team at British Rowing continue to provide assistance and are proving to be a great knowledge resource for our own safety team.*

10 Four is turning around upstream of a bridge. This happens too. Being swept sideways by the stream into a bridge, pontoon, buoy, moored boat or other fixed obstruction not only puts the crew in danger but also tends to cause serious damage to boats. This is all so easily avoided.

One last thing. You may feel there is a lack of a bow-ball on the four. If you do, then you could be correct.

It is not difficult to stay safe. All it needs is a little more thought and a little more care.

## HAZARDS IN YOUR GYM

### Categories of Hazards

You should look for hazards which you could expect to cause harm under the conditions particular to your club. The following provides a guide as to the groups of hazards you are looking for.

- Slipping/tripping hazards (e.g. equipment not returned to racks, spilt water not mopped up, children running in the free weight area)
- Fire (e.g. from flammable materials, towels left on hot surfaces, overloading of multi-plugs to power equipment)
- Chemicals (e.g. cleaning fluids left in open cupboards in close proximity to child minding facility)
- Moving parts of machinery (e.g. belts on treadmills, handles on cross trainers, chains on ergs)
- Vehicles (e.g. ensuring car parking for club members with disabilities is kept available for these members or, excessive speed in the car park)
- Biological hazards (e.g. exercise participants not wiping equipment down after use risk spreading Covid -19 and other nasty bugs, control of bleeding when a member is injured)

- Electricity (e.g. Power sockets close to water fountains, power cords partially severed as equipment rolls over them)
- Ergonomic hazards (e.g. heavy free weights left lying on the floor, or machines left fully loaded with weight)
- Social hazards (e.g. alcohol/steroid abuse, eating disorders)
- Psychological (e.g. stress and mental fatigue)

## What is a Significant Hazard?

A hazard that is an **actual or potential cause or source of:**

- Serious harm; or
- Harm (being more than trivial), the severity of whose effects on any person depends (entirely or among other things) on the extent or frequency of the person's exposure to the hazard; or
- Harm that does not usually occur, or usually is not easily detectable, until a significant time after exposure to the hazard

## Hazard Risk Assessment

A hazard risk assessment is a careful examination of what, in your club, could cause harm to people, so that you and your committee can weigh up whether they have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill. The important things you need to decide are whether a hazard is **significant**, and whether you have it covered by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is small. You need to check this when you assess the risks. You can assess the risks using a **Hazard Identification Form**

***In the next edition of this bulletin, we will look at Risk and how you can identify risk using the hazard identification form, how you record the risks and what kind of safety management process we can put in place to manage the risks and keep our fellow club members safe.***

“Safety doesn't happen  
by accident”

A Rowing Ireland Safety Advisory Committee, safety initiative.

## “Report it to Fix it.

30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH LAUNCH DATE FOR

### ROWING IRELAND'S NEW INCIDENT ONLINE REPORT FORM.

**IROW safe**

They happen, we have all seen one, capsize, collision, trip, fall, some minor, some easy fixed, other serious with severe consequences. We all know accidents and near misses happen, do you ever ask why? or how?

In the last two years, there have been 4 incidents reported to the Rowing Ireland Safety Advisory Committee, we know this is not a true reflection of what is really going on in our clubs, our competitions, on our waters.

The Safety Advisory Committee want to change that, starting this month we have introduced a new online incident report form called I.R.O.W. (**IROW safe**)

- I – Incident
- R – Report
- O – Online
- W – Worksite

What is the purpose of an accident report form?

In the event of an **accident** in the club that you or a colleague have seen or has been involved in, you may need to record the **incident**. The **accident report form IROW**, covers the club members involved as well as the coaches and helps identify the reason why. It also helps to track trends in rowing injury and equipment damage so they can then be rectified.

Why is it important to complete accident reports?

**Reporting incidents** is essential since it raises the organisation's awareness about the things that can go wrong so that corrective and preventative actions can be taken promptly. This applies to training indoors, outdoors, on the water, off the water and during all competitions and events.

Why should all incidents and accidents be reported?

**Reporting** an injury helps to ensure safety issues in our clubs can be addressed to reduce the occurrence of injuries or damage to our boats. In the long-term, lack of incident notification and **reporting** does not help promote a safe rowing environment or prevent future rowing **incidents** from occurring.

Who fills in the IROW safe, accident report form?

The online **accident & incident report form IROW** can be filled out by anyone, rower, cox, coach, parent, guardian, passer-by, eye witness, but it should be filled in by someone in your club. It's more important that the details written in the **IROW** form are accurate, rather than **who fills** it out. Ideally, someone with first-hand involvement in the **accident** would write the record

Why should we report near misses?

“A **near miss** is a leading indicator to an accident that, if scrutinized and used correctly, can prevent injuries and damages.” Collecting **near-miss reports** helps create a culture that seeks to identify and control hazards, which will reduce risks and the potential for harm, HSA states.

**Rowing Ireland promotional incentive to clubs to use IROW safe.**

Rowing Ireland will award two coaches/safety launch rescue bags to the two Rowing Ireland affiliated clubs that enter the most reports on the **IROW** system in a twelve-month period starting on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2021.



Bag includes; throwline, whistle, foil blankets cotton blanket, first aid kit, knife, worth over €100.00 each

Launch date for the new **IROW safe** system is the 30<sup>th</sup> of March

Rowing Ireland Safety Advisory  
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