

# Shuswap Association for Rowing and Paddling

## Rowing Safety Guidelines

### People and Prerequisites

**Waiver:** The waiver or acknowledgment of risk on the Rowing Canada Aviron website registration must be signed. In addition, all adult club members and guests must read these guidelines and sign the club's Shuswap Association for Rowing and Paddling Member Waiver before participating in any club activity.

**Minors:** The parents/guardians of a minor aged 18 or under must register their child/ward with Rowing Canada Aviron, and must sign a Shuswap Association for Rowing and Paddling Acknowledgement of Risk, Consent and Limited Liability form prior to the minor participating in a club activity.

**Swim to Survive:** All rowers must have sufficient skills and comfort in the water to complete the Swim to Survive test while wearing a PFD: Roll into deep water, tread water one minute, and swim 50 meters.

**Alcohol/Drugs:** No rower may, prior to entering or while in a club boat, use alcohol or recreational drugs that may affect clear thinking, coordination, and reaction time.

**Health Issues:** Each rower must inform the coach or crew captain of any physical or health issues or medications that may affect their attention or performance in an emergency. The coach/crew captain may decline to sit a rower who, in their sole opinion, may not have the ability to participate safely.

**COVID-19/Other Viruses:** While rowing occurs primarily outdoors, rowers are in relatively close physical relation to each other, are often breathing hard due to exertion, and include some participants who are seniors. Therefore, there are risks associated with the transmission of COVID-19 or other viruses; some that can be mitigated and some that cannot. Stay home if you are sick, make informed decisions for your health, and practise common preventative behaviours to help keep yourself and others safe. Socks must be worn in the rowing shells.

**Issues Arising from Rowing:** A rower who has a question or issue related an activity should address it with the coach/crew captain. If not resolved, then present the issue to the Rowing Director.

### Environment

#### **If in Doubt, Don't go Out!**

**Lightning:** Rowing will be cancelled in the event of a lightning storm forecasted during the rowing period. If on the water when one unexpectedly blows in, the group will row to the nearest safe docking site or shore and get off the water to wait out the storm. If going to shore, remove the boat from the water only if safe to do so. Know the safe beaching sites as labelled on the map in the boathouse.

**Wind/Weather:** Rowing may be cancelled in the event of winds creating whitecaps, cold weather, or conditions that are otherwise unsafe for rowers with the knowledge, skill and experience of those in the crews. The coach/crew captain will make this call, generally with input from the crews; however, any athlete is encouraged to raise concerns about rowing conditions or safety in general, and can do so in an environment where they can expect to be treated respectfully. If rowing in rough weather, row near the shore to get back to the dock or to a safe haven, even if that contradicts the flow pattern. Watch for other boats in this situation and communicate to avoid collisions.

**Cold Water:** Cold water protocol (e.g., early season) requires boats to row between the marina and the end of Canoe Beach (see map). Follow the flow pattern, but stay within 300m of shore in the pattern.

**Air Quality:** Practices and/or outings will proceed as normal when AQHI ratings are 1-3. From AQHI from 4-6, workouts may be modified and athletes encouraged to wear N95 masks with valves. Rowing will be cancelled when the Index (AQHI) is 7 or above, or smoke has made the visibility unsafe.

**Visibility:** Whether caused by fog or smoke, a minimum of 150 meters of unrestricted visibility is required before going out or remaining out. No rowing before sunrise or after sunset.

**In-water Hazards:** Bow seat rower and coxswain are primarily responsible for keeping an eye out for and warning of deadheads or other objects in the water that could damage the boat or cause an upset. Any

rower should speak up if they see a power boat approaching at speed or other hazard the crew navigators may not have seen.

**Safe Docking:** When at a lake that has a dock for launching and landing, wait for the boat to stop and for the bow or coxswains command before grabbing the dock. Exit the boat before removing the oars.

### Personal Equipment

**PFD:** All rowers under age 18 or those who are weak swimmers must wear an appropriately sized Transport Canada approved PFD when on the water in club activities; inflatable preferred. All SRPC rowers are encouraged to wear a PFD at all times when on the water.

**Clothing:** Every rower should be wearing and/or bring in a waterproof container (e.g., drybag in the safety boat), sufficient quantities and types of clothing to remain protected from foreseeable adverse weather. Brightly coloured shirts and caps/hats (if worn) are recommended to improve visibility

**Sun/Heat Protection:** Practise sun protection: **SLIP** on a long-sleeved shirt, **SLAP** on a broad-brimmed hat, **SLOP** sunscreen on uncovered skin, and **WRAP** on sunglasses for eye protection. For heat protection, **SLURP** – i.e., keep well hydrated.

### Group Equipment

**Required Equipment in Rowing Shell:** Every shell going out must have all equipment consistent with Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guidelines:

- One Transport Canada approved PDF worn by each person under age 16 (with PFDs sufficient to outfit the largest crew carried on board the attending safety boat); whistles on one or more PFDs or attached by lanyard to a foot-stretcher in the rowing shell. 4-person boats should have two whistles, the eight should have at least 3.
- One watertight flashlight if the shell is to be used in periods of restricted visibility.

**Safety Boat:** If the safety boat will be serving several crews, they must stay within visual and audible range of the safety boat (e.g., 500 m). A ratio of one safety boat per 8-10 athletes is our objective, particularly for junior or novice rowers.

**Emergency Gear:** Every safety boat will have life jackets, buoy and line, a bailer, thermal blankets (cold water protocol), sound device, and a first aid kit.

**Rowing Shell Check:** It is the responsibility of each rower to check the rowing shells to ensure they are in good condition, have a bow-ball properly affixed and in good condition, have hands-free heel restraints or a functioning single-handed release mechanism for shells with fitted shoes, and that any required group equipment is aboard. Check that there are no missing nuts, bolts or cover plates and that drain plugs (if applicable) are in.

### Training

**Lifting/Carrying Rowing Shells:** Rowing shells can be heavy and care must be taken to ensure there are an adequate number of people, appropriately distributed along each side, to lift and if necessary carry each craft to and from the water and that all involved know the procedures and communications calls.

**Loading/Unloading Rowers:** Support the crew in keeping the boat stable while following the organized system for rowers getting in and out of the shell safely.

**In-craft Communications:** Learn the basic commands the coxswain or bow person uses and follow them.

**Rowing Course Map Adherence:** Follow the established club map but be aware of and avoid other traffic that may or may not be following the traffic pattern. See course map attached.

**Train for all Seats:** Each rower should be given the opportunity to become familiar with rowing in different positions in the shell.

**Capsize Procedures:** Before going out, the coach/crew leader should review procedures for a capsized shell, including identifying specific roles to be taken by each rower.

**Capsize Practise:** Every rower should learn and practise what to do in the event of a capsize; applying the buddy system when in the water and getting themselves in the safety boat. In cold water, rowers should

get as much of their bodies out of the water as possible. Attempt one re-entry. If unsuccessful, apply the "straddle and paddle" technique; flop on top and paddle the shell like a surfboard.

**Swamping:** If waves swamp a rowing shell, bail it out. If the gunwales are submerged, the coach/crew leader may require some rowers to get out until bailing creates enough freeboard for re-entry.

**Safety is Everyone's Responsibility! If you are aware of an issue or concern that may affect the safety of yourself or the group, make it known prior to setting out.**