

Whitman Crew Safety Guide

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1 Introduction

Walt Whitman Crew Boosters, Inc. (“Whitman Crew”) is committed to ensuring the safety of its athletes and coaches, both on the water and on land. Although less risky than contact sports, rowing has rare, but potentially life-threatening risks. On the water, there is risk of injury or drowning when boats capsize or collide. On land, there is risk of injury while transporting shells and oars. While competing at away regattas, there are additional risks of an unfamiliar environment. These risks are important to understand explicitly. Being aware of factors including the weather, rower skill level, tripping hazards, broken equipment, collisions, other moving boats on land and water can mitigate the risk of injury.

To enhance safety for our student athletes and comply with new [US Rowing SafeSport policy requirements](#), Whitman Crew has created a safety policy. Athletes and coaches are expected to read and abide by these safety guidelines. Parents and all members of Whitman Crew are expected to familiarize themselves with these guidelines.

Every athlete is responsible for his or her own safety.

2 Prerequisites

2.1 Coaches

1. Coaches are in charge of athletes during training on land, during practice on the water, and at competitive racing events. The head coach has the highest authority. Coaches will evaluate the severity of any emergency situation and respond as outlined in the section on Emergencies.
2. Whitman Crew coaches have passed background-screening checks conducted through National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI).
3. Coaches are required to complete training offered through the [US Rowing Education and Training Video](http://www.usrowing.org/safety-video/). Video available at: <http://www.usrowing.org/safety-video/>
4. All Whitman Crew coaches carry a District of Columbia (DC) boater's license as sanctioned by the DC Harbor Patrol.

2.2 Athletes

1. All athletes are required to pass a swim test that includes treading water for 5 minutes and putting on a life jacket while in the water. An athlete who has participated in a swim program can provide a letter from a coach to prove competency.
2. Every athlete is required to undergo an evaluation by a licensed physician annually to confirm fitness for participating in the sport.
3. Every athlete must submit all required information:
 - Registration with emergency contact information will be completed online
 - Whitman Crew Waiver will be completed online
 - Pre-participation Physical Evaluation for Athletics (SRS-8) must be completed and signed by medical personnel. A copy of the signed release page must be submitted to the team Registrar.
 - Parent/Athlete Concussion Information Sheet must be reviewed and the waiver accepted online
4. Every athlete must view the US Rowing Safety Video, [Education and Training for Athletes](#). An acknowledgement will be accepted online.
5. Athletes are expected to demonstrate good behavior and conduct themselves with integrity in accordance with all applicable policies as outlined in the [student handbook](#). Use of alcohol and drugs is strictly prohibited.
6. Parents and Rowers are required to certify during online registration that they have read this guide and agree to comply with it (Whitman Crew Safety Certification).

3 Pre-season Training and Preparation

1. Coaches will conduct a safety orientation meeting at the start of the Fall and Spring season for all athletes to review the rules and procedures.

2. Coaches will conduct an orientation briefing with all coxswains.
3. Athletes are expected to be familiar with the common terminology used in rowing.
4. Roster lists of all athletes will be placed in the Whitman Crew shed at Thompson Boat Center (TBC) with emergency contact information and health information on file.
5. There will be a review of the safety kit inventory at TBC at the start of the season. It will be restocked as items are used.

4 Before the Row

4.1 Equipment

Coaches and Athletes should check to make sure that all equipment is functioning properly before rowing.

4.2 Clothing

Athletes should make sure that they have appropriate clothing for the weather conditions: light clothing for hot weather, and layered clothing (base and insulating layers) for cold weather. It is important to have proper head protection from both sun and cold. Sunglasses are helpful to keep out the glare and sunscreen is recommended, especially on sunny days. ***Wear fitted clothing (such as spandex or a uni) to avoid getting caught in seat sliders. DO NOT WEAR COTTON CLOTHING ON THE WATER.*** It is imperative that athletes wear Dri-Fit clothes (made out of polyester, nylon, or newage quick-drying synthetic material) on the water. In cold weather, getting cotton clothing wet is both a miserable experience for the duration of practice and increases the risk of contracting hypothermia.

4.3 Hydration

Every athlete should carry water in a reusable water bottle to stay hydrated during practice and races.

4.4 Warm-ups

Athletes perform warm-ups on land (jogging or running) prior to the start of practice or racing, followed by basic stretching. Water warm-ups are used to gradually build to full intensity.

4.5 Understanding the Traffic Patterns

Athletes are expected to understand the traffic patterns for the Potomac River as outlined in Appendix 1. Potomac River Safety Rules and Maps.

5 Safety on Land and Water

5.1 Dock Safety

1. Follow coaches and coxswain instructions at all times.

2. Walk carefully as the dock may be slippery when wet.
3. No running, horseplay, or rowdy behavior that can cause injury to persons or damage to property
4. No swimming, even to retrieve something that falls into the water if it cannot be reached from the dock.
5. Watch out for boats and equipment being transported on the dock.
6. Carry oars with the blade in front of you. Stack oars out of the way so that they are not a tripping hazard. Watch out for oars and other objects when transporting boats.
7. Do not step through a rigger when getting into or out of a boat.

5.2 General Water Safety

1. Whitman Crew will adopt the safety rules as outlined in the *Safety Rules and Guidelines for the Potomac River* by the Potomac River Safety Committee (see Appendix 1. Potomac River Safety Rules and Maps). The Safety rules include the following:
 - River Traffic Patterns and River Hazards
 - Maps
 - Rowing Before Sunrise or After Sunset
 - Cold Weather/Winter Rowing
 - Inclement Weather
 - Launches & Coaches on the Water
 - Emergency Contacts
2. In the case of inclement weather, coaches rely on weather forecasts and as well as actual observations (depending on the situation) in deciding whether boats will launch.
3. Coaches communicate practice plans with each other before launching.
4. Coxswains will carry a whistle and cell phone in the boat.

5.3 Guidelines for Launches

1. All persons in launches are required to wear a life jacket.
2. A coach in a launch must remain within a distance of 500 meters of the boats under his / her supervision. There should be at least one launch per 2 eight-oared crews.
3. All launches are outfitted in accordance with US Coast Guard and DC Harbor Patrol requirements. Launches will carry the following equipment:
 - 1 First Aid kit
 - 20 Life jackets or Personalized Floatation Devices (PFDs)
 - 20 Space blankets
 - 1 anchor with 100-foot line
 - 100-ft tow line
 - Gas for the launch A megaphone (powered or cheerleader type)

- Signalling device (flares or horn)
 - Paddle
 - Tools
 - Water bailer
 - 50 ft. Safety line
 - Fire extinguisher
4. Athletes will assist coaches in setting up the launch each day with the above equipment.
 5. Coaches will carry cell phones for communication while in the launch. Coaches will have access to phone numbers of other coaches, TBC, coast guard and DC harbor patrol emergency numbers in the launch.

6 Emergencies

1. For weather-related emergencies, all athletes will follow procedures as outlined in Appendix 2. Weather-Related Health Emergencies.

In the event of a capsized boat or person overboard, all athletes will follow procedures as outlined

2. Appendix 3. Capsize Procedures & Person Overboard.

7 Reporting Safety Incidents

1. In the event of a health or safety emergency, the coach will assess the situation's severity and use his / her judgment to determine the plan of action. The coach may notify the following:
 - 911
 - US Coast Guard or DC Harbor Patrol
 - Head coach, if the coach is an assistant coach
 - Parent liaison
 - Whitman Crew President, Vice-President or Board member, or Parent.
2. Phone numbers will be posted at the boathouse for the following:
 - US Coast Guard or DC Harbor Patrol
 - All coaches
 - Whitman Crew President and Vice-President
3. Coaches are the primary respondents to emergencies during practices and races. Assistant coaches will report the following incidents to the head coach.
 - Rower incapacitated during practice for any reason
 - Athlete in the water for any reason
 - Accident involving another crew
 - Accident that damages equipment
 - Accident or dangerous situation involving a commercial craft

4. Medical emergencies or other serious incidents shall be documented in an incident report to Whitman Crew board.
5. Safety-related incidents of any other nature will be reported to the Whitman Crew President and/or Executive Vice-President. There should be a written documentation of the report.

8 Safety Committee

1. A safety committee will be appointed each year.
2. The task for the committee will be to review the safety rules and procedures in this guide, develop and update policies as situations arise and requirements change, and oversee compliance of the policy.
3. Changes to this guide will be communicated to the Whitman Crew community via the Whitman Crew website and SportsEngine emails.

2021-2022 Safety Committee Members:

- Dusan Nikolic, Head Coach
- Robert Shapiro, VP of Assets and Equipment
- Cy Zaneski, At-Large Member

Appendix 1. Potomac River Safety Rules and Maps

The following appendix has been reproduced here with permission from the Potomac River Safety Committee. (Safety Rules).

I. River Traffic Patterns and River Hazards

These are directions for rowers/crews. Paddlers and Kayakers should contact the Washington Canoe Club Aquatics Committee. Users of rental boats should consult the rental agency for information. Notation of river traffic starts at Fletcher's Cove and works progressively downstream. Most information concerns rowing shells. Paddlers are asked to use the river closest to the D.C. shore from Key Bridge to Fletcher's Cove and to use the prescribed traffic pattern downstream. For simplicity US= upstream, and DS= downstream.

Approximately 7000s = 4.5 miles
1000s = .52 miles



1. *DS* Crews must follow the VA shoreline closely at all times. The area is prone to congestion and is narrow.
2. *US* Crews should follow a near straight line from Three Sisters Islands to the Hens and Chickens.

- In the area between the Three Sisters Islands, and the Hens and Chickens, slow moving crews or crews wishing to do drills should slide to the DC side of the river to avoid faster moving traffic going US. However, crews must be aware that the river area 250 meters from the DC shore is used by and the domain of canoes and kayaks.

C. Three Sister's Islands to Key Bridge

1. When passing between the Three Sisters Islands and the VA shore team boats (4's and 8's) should be no more than 3 abreast, smaller boats no more than 4 abreast.
2. *DS* Crews should follow the curve of the VA shore and pick a course through the second arch from starboard of Key Bridge only after passing the Three Sisters Islands.
3. *DS* Exiting Key Bridge, crews should aim for the point of land on Roosevelt Island that is directly opposite Thompson Boat Center at the bend of the river.
4. *US* Crews should go through the 2nd arch from DC on Key Bridge and aim for the Three Sisters Island that sits farthest towards the VA shore. The 1st arch of Key Bridge on the D.C. side is reserved for Potomac Boat Club crews who are landing.
5. *US* After passing through Key Bridge, crews should pick a point just to the port side of the Three Sisters Islands. Crews should work together so that they may pass the islands as closely as possible and still remain out of the path of crews headed downstream.

D. George Washington Race Course—3 Sisters to Thompson Boat Center

When the GW Race course is in place during the mid to late spring, the following rules apply during non-regatta days.

1. *DS* crews should use lanes 2-4 (lane 4 is closest to VA shore) only! No ^[SEP]crew heading *DS* should use lane 1. *US* crews should stay off the course ^[SEP]except when passing around the Three Sisters Islands.
2. Slow moving crews using the course above Key Bridge should give way to faster crews. No crew should stop and impede traffic while on the course.
3. Crews should leave the course and take a standard course on the river once they have reached the upstream end of the "Crew Wall" (where crews have their team color painted).

E. Theodore Roosevelt Bridge

1. *DS* Use the 1st arch directly next to Roosevelt Island.
2. *US* Use arch number 1 or 2 from DC shore. 1 primarily for crews returning to Thompson Boat Center.
 - Once crews enter the bridge they should take course that points them on the "white tower" visible in the Washington Harbor complex.
 - Once at the bend of the river crews should point on the "slanting" building visible in Georgetown and then align themselves to go through the 2nd arch of Key Bridge.

F. T.R. Bridge to Memorial Bridge

1. *DS* Use arch 1 arch to the right of dark gray center arch.
2. *US* Use the 2nd Arch from the DC shore.

G. 14th Street Bridges and Below

1. *DS* Use the arch to the right of the Channel Arch (the one with lights and wood buttressing).
2. Once through the bridges, crews should aim for Haines Point (on the DC shore). However, crews travelling upstream have the right of way.
3. *US* Crews should follow the seawall on the DC shore and pick a line through the bridges that will line them up with the 2nd arch on Memorial Bridge.
4. All crews rowing below 14th street bridge should be aware that crews rowing upstream from the Alexandria Community Boathouse follow a traffic pattern that keeps them along the VA shore even when heading upstream! Be extra aware.

H. Specific River Hazards and the Use of “Little River”

1. The DC side of Fletcher’s Cove is very rocky.
2. There are several rocks about 200 meters before the island that forms the entrance to Fletcher’s Cove.
3. There are many sunken rocks around Hens & Chickens that are visible only at different tides. No crews should ever go to the DC side of these islands!
4. *US* There is a rock on the DC (20 meters) shore approximately 500 meters from Hens & Chickens. It is some times marked with a white buoy.
5. At the Three Sisters Islands there are several rocks that sit just below the surface. One sits directly next to the most upstream island. Upstream of the main islands there are several large rocks that are almost never visible. One is marked by a white, round floating buoy. There are several rocks adjacent to this one. Crews should move a minimum of 25 strokes past this buoyed rock before cutting in to the DC shore (as warranted). Often at low tide there are mud flats around the islands.
- No crew should ever go between the DC shore and the islands! The water is shallow and navigable only by canoe or kayak.
6. There are mud flats with rocks that appear at low tide located on the VA shore just upstream of Key Bridge.
7. There are several submerged rocks and pipes near a rocky outcrop on Roosevelt Island across from Wisconsin Avenue in Georgetown.
8. There is a sunken canal barge approximately 250 meters above Theodore Roosevelt Bridge next to Roosevelt Island. The entire T.R. Islands shoreline is full of sunken debris. Crews should stay around 50 meters off shore.
9. *DS* of T.R. Island is a mud flat at low tide that also contains several sunken rocks.

10. The DC shore between Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and Memorial Bridge (In front of the “stairs”) is often full of snags and debris.
11. The area between the VA shore and Roosevelt Island known as “Little River” is very shallow and contains numerous submerged rocks, rowing in this area is discouraged.

II. Rowing Before Sunrise or After Sunset

Rowing before sunrise or after sunset, when visibility is poor and light levels are low, lighting for all boats is required by law. Each individual shell and launch is required to have its own light. This includes coach launches, racing shells of all sizes, canoes, kayaks, and dragon boats. Lights must be visible when viewed from the bow or stern. A bright red or white light is acceptable. It is recommended that two lights, for bow and stern, be used. Using two lights increases visibility, allowing a user to be seen from all directions. Care should be taken that lights are not obscured by the physical structure of the boat in question or clothing worn by the operator.

In addition, coxswains, and a member of straight (non-coxed) crew should carry a whistle or other noisemaker for audible warnings. Whistles should be used to alert others of imminent danger, or collision.

III. Cold Weather/Winter Rowing

Rowing when the water temperature falls below 50° should be done with great consideration. Hypothermia is a swift and incapacitating killer that strikes when the combination of cold weather and moisture work to decrease body temperature. It can take^[SEP] mere minutes before a full-size adult is incapable of helping themselves once hypothermia has set in. Keep in mind that you don't have to fall in the water to get hypothermia! Cold air temperatures and any moisture on the body (from being splashed, rain, sleet, snow) can lead to hypothermia (see Appendix A). The following measures are suggested when working out on the water in cold weather:

1. Sign out in a log book or let others know you will be on the river and when
2. Four Oar Rule—the boat must have a minimum of 4 oars on the water, or
3. Buddy System—if individuals go out they should do so in pairs.
4. Wear inflatable, compact, life vest or wet suit.
5. Stay closer to shore
6. A noisemaker of some kind should be carried in each shell and be attached in some^[SEP] manner so as not to be lost if the shell capsizes.

However, the only true safety device or practice other than common sense is a support/coaching launch. In the event of an emergency, a well-prepared safety launch can assist the individuals in question and transport them to safety. Even then hypothermia is an^[SEP] issue. All individuals should ask themselves before launching if being on the water is the best and only way to train. See Appendix 2 for information on Hypothermia and other weather-related emergencies.

IV. Inclement Weather:

Coaches should use common sense in the face of inclement weather. Fast currents, high winds, large or heavy amounts of debris, extreme temperatures, lightning storms and fog are all reasons for not

practicing on the water. Crews should not launch if such conditions exist or are seriously threatening. It is highly advised that coaches and scullers listen closely to NOAA weather channels routinely.

Wind: Coaches and rowers should keep in mind that often times it is easy to launch from the dock but much harder to land in windy conditions. This is especially true with novices and small boats. Waves or swells generated by strong winds can quickly swamp a crew. This is especially true in wide parts of the river (i.e. between Memorial Bridge and the 14th Street Bridge or the area just downstream of TBC).

Heavy Rains & Fast Currents: After heavy periods of rain, currents can increase in speed and strength quickly. The river usually will rise over a period of 1-3 days after the cessation of precipitation and recede in about the same amount of time barring further rain. At these times, extreme caution should be taken. Areas for special consideration are around and upstream of the Three Sisters Islands with increasing seriousness as one approaches and passes the Hens and Chicken islands (see river traffic map). It is strongly advised that novice crews be kept below the Hens and Chickens during these times. In all cases the currents can be quite swift and unpredictable due to the depth and topography of the river bottom. Special attention should also be paid to all bridge arches as currents are accelerated as they pass through them. Lastly, with heavy rains and currents on the Potomac come heavy debris in the form of large logs, tires, and water-logged farm animals.

Lightning Storms: Very dangerous. Crews should return immediately to the dock, or proceed immediately to shore if the boathouse is too distant. There does not have to be rain or thunder to have lightning. If the sky begins to look bad, it probably is.

Fog: Obviously limits visibility, but also mutes sounds. If caught in fog it is recommended that crews proceed with extreme caution and appropriately slower speeds in the direction of the boathouse. If the fog is too extreme it may be better to sit still. Be sure to make some noise so that others on the river can be alerted to your presence. Fog is often times thicker upstream of Key Bridge. Do not assume fog that appears to be thinning will continue to do so!

V. Launches & Coaches:

It is important to have a well-equipped and working safety launch whenever working with crews, especially high school and college squads. Coaches should have the necessary training and be certified in first-aid and CPR. Coaches should work to minimize potential accidents and should work in a responsible and prudent fashion.

2. It is the responsibility of any coach boat to provide assistance to any capsized boat—even if from another sport, or a pleasure boat. Coaches are reminded to stop at a safe distance and offer assistance. Approach with caution and in a controlled manner. Be aware of your prop!
3. Coaches should make sure that for each rower or coxswain that they have on hand a record of the following:
 - Name, and date of birth
 - Address
 - Phone Number
 - Name and phone number for relative or other emergency contact

- Height, weight, list of allergies or other important medical information
 - Name of medical insurance provider and insurance number
4. No safety launch, no row! No high school or college crew should be on the water without a safety launch close by. A coach sitting in the coxswain's seat does not count as a safety launch!
 5. Occupants of a coaches' launch should be kept to a minimum. One or two extra people in addition to one coach should be the maximum for a safety launch (14'). Preferably launches should be large enough to hold all members of a given crew in the event of an emergency. 16' foot launches are suggested. "V-hull," or skiff style (Carolina Skiff) are recommended. Aluminum "john boats" are not recommended because of their instability with several passengers and less than stellar poor weather performance.
 6. The coach should be wearing a life jacket or PFD at all times while on the water. In addition each launch should have the following safety items:
 - 1 First Aid kit
 - 20 Life jackets or Personalized Floatation Devices (PFDs)
 - 20 Space blankets
 - 1 anchor with 100-foot line
 - 100-ft tow line
 - Gas for the launch A megaphone (powered or cheerleader type)
 - Signalling device (flares or horn)
 - Paddle
 - Tools
 - Water bailer
 - 50 ft. Safety line
 - Fire extinguisher
 7. Operators of launches should have a uninterrupted 360 degrees view at all times. Use of heavy ballast in the bow of the launch (log, tire with rim, cinder blocks, passenger, etc) can be used to trim the launch so it rides level. Aftermarket outboard motor accessories such as Dole Fins also work well for this purpose. See the section on rowing Before Sunrise/After Sunset for more visibility issues.
 8. Coaches need to be aware of the wake their launch throws. Coaches should do their best to minimize wakes when passing other crews when at all possible. At no time should a launch's wake be allowed to swamp or endanger a shell/canoe/kayak. If a launch needs to pass or maneuver around a crew, the coach should clearly communicate his/her intentions.
 9. There should be a minimum of one coaches' launch for every 2 8's in a given practice.
 10. Each launch should be marked with the name of the owner/organization.

VI. Other on the Water

The following are suggestions and additional rules that should be referenced with all of the above stated material.

1. All shells should be equipped with emergency releases for foot stretchers. This includes heel tiedowns, and quick release laces/velcro.
2. Coaches are advised to purchase a copy of US Rowing's Safety Video, and show it each year to all rowers.
3. Each boat (coach or athlete) has the responsibility for watching where it is going and for avoiding collisions. Boat's without cox must be aware!
4. Once crews have been launched they should row to and wait at a spot specified by the coach that is no more than 500m away from the dock. High school and college crew should not warm-up or row with out a coach's supervision!
 - A common place for crews launching from TBC to stop and wait is the "crew wall" where crews have their colors painted around Wisconsin Avenue in Georgetown.
 - Going downstream crews should wait upstream of Theodore Roosevelt Bridge.
5. Coaches should avoid taking out crews of differing speeds and skill levels. Having several crews spread over 1000-2000m or more may as well not have a coach's safety launch with them. Furthermore the coach cannot adequately supervise or coach crews in this fashion.
6. Likewise to number 5 above, coaches should keep all crews at "racing distance" apart. That is the distance (width) between two crews. Coaches should limit the distance across all crews in a practice to 3 abreast.
7. Coaches must keep their crews on the right side of the river at all times! Please refer to the information concerning traffic patterns for the river.
8. Slow moving crews should yield to faster crews by shifting their course further to the right (starboard) and allowing the over taking crew to pass. Larger shells have right of way over smaller shells due to their decreased maneuverability.
9. Coaches who wish to stop and work with crews should do so only in areas where they are not impeding the flow of traffic. Please refer to the River Traffic Patterns section.
10. Boats should not turn upstream from bridges unless they are at least 500m from the bridge. Swift currents can pull shells into bridge abutments very quickly!
11. Boats wishing to turn should make sure that no other crew is approaching first. Do not cut in front of oncoming crews! Furthermore, crews should make sure to complete their turn only after moving to the other side of the river first, before proceeding in the opposite direction.
12. Crews that are landing on the dock have priority over crews wishing to launch. This is especially true in inclement weather.
13. Landing shells should use all available dock space; they should not wait for the very end of the dock to become open if there is space further up the dock. Crews should endeavor to walk their boat up so that other crews can land unless asked by a coach not to (i.e., another boat is going around them to fill open dock space above them).
14. All boats should take not more than one minute on the dock once the boat has either been placed in the water or has returned from a row. If the boat has serious equipment problems or missing rowers, the shell should be removed from the water. Novice crews are allowed some leeway but should be taught how to function quickly on the dock. Boat and oars come before shoes!

Emergency Contacts

Emergency911

Thompson Boat Center 202-333-9543

Potomac Boat Club..... 202-333-9737 DC Harbor

Police202-727-4582

U.S. Park Police..... emergency number 202-610-7500, non-emergency [202 426-6710](tel:202-426-6710)

GW Hospital202-715-4000

Appendix 2. Weather-Related Health Emergencies

The following appendix has been reproduced here with permission from the Potomac River Safety Committee. (Appendix A, Weather-Related Health Emergencies).

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a condition that occurs when the temperature of the human body is lowered to a dangerous point due to exposure to cold and/or wet conditions. Cold temperatures and wet conditions work together to pull heat away from the body lowering the body's core temperature. Even in mild conditions, the addition of rain or submersion in cold water can sufficiently reduce body warmth to trigger hypothermic conditions in the body. A person's condition can degrade rapidly impairing breathing and coordination making it impossible to swim or keep one's head above water. Emergency action needs to be taken no matter what the level of hypothermia.

Early Hypothermia

Symptoms: rapid shivering, numbness, loss of strength and coordination, semi- conscious.

Action: Maintain open airway. Transfer to a warm environment as soon as possible. Remove wet clothing. Use blankets to help warm individual or if available a warm shower. Warm torso area first. Seek medical attention.

Profound Hypothermia

Symptoms: Person will be pale, stiff, and cold. Unresponsive to stimuli, and possibly unconscious. Little or no cardiac or respiratory activity will be present.

Action: Move or manipulate as gently as possible. Prevent further heat loss, but Do Not attempt to rewarm. Maintain open airway, and activate EMS procedures. Call for emergency help immediately!

Heat-Related Emergencies

Higher temperatures and high humidity can lead to heat-related illnesses that coaches and rowers need to keep in mind. As humidity rises, the body's ability to cool off through sweating is diminished since evaporation is limited. The best way to avoid heat-related injuries is to practice at cooler times of the day: early morning or late afternoon. The body needs time to acclimate to increased temperatures. Intake of fluids is also key and should be encouraged. Dehydration further impairs the

body's ability to cool off. There are two major related heat illnesses to be aware of: Heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat Exhaustion

Early Symptoms: heavy sweating, cramps, tiredness, weakness, malaise, mild decrease in performance.

Action: rest and fluid replacement.

Advanced Symptoms: profuse sweating, uncoordinated muscle movement, impaired judgement, emotional changes.

Action: If there is mild temperature elevation, an ice pack may be used to help cool the body to normal temperatures. Several days rest may be necessary and rehydration is a priority.

Heat Stroke

Symptoms: confusion, nausea, vomiting, seizures. The victim loses consciousness. Body temperature rises as high as 106. Skin is dry and clammy.

Action: Get medical help immediately! Lower body temp by immersing in water, maintain horizontal position of victim. Stop treatment when victim is conscious.

Appendix 3. Capsize Procedures & Person Overboard

The following appendix has been reproduced here with permission from the Potomac River Safety Committee. (Appendix B, Capsize Procedures & Person Overboard).

NOTE: It is the responsibility of any coach boat to provide assistance to any capsized boat-even if from another sport, or a pleasure boat. Coaches are reminded to stop at a safe distance^[SEP] and offer assistance. Approach with caution and in a controlled manner. Be aware of your prop!

All crew members should be fully aware of what actions to take when a crew swamps, flips, or capsizes. In any of these events the crew should remain with the shell! The shell will float (an important reason to close bow and stern ports before going on the water). Furthermore the oars will act as flotation devices. If for some reason the shell sinks below the surface, the shell should be rolled so the bottom is facing the sky, as this traps air underneath the shell and increases buoyancy. At no time should any crew member leave the boat to swim to shore! A short swim can be far longer than it appears due to currents, wind, water temperature, or personal fatigue.

Stay calm. The first thing that should be done in a team boat is for the coxswain or bow person to get a head count, to make sure all rowers are accounted for. The crew, while holding onto the shell, should attempt to get the attention of other crews, or coaches on the water. Wave and make as much noise as is necessary to attract attention. If no crews or launches are on the water nearby, attracting the attention of people on shore is the next step.

If the water and air temperatures are low, then the crew members should move along the shell and huddle together in pairs near the middle of the shell. Effort should be made to keep as much of the body out of the water as possible. This can include draping ones self over the top of the hull. A minimum of movement is key to retaining body heat. Constantly check on crew mates and keep up one on one communication.

To recap procedures:

1. Stay calm.
2. Stay with the shell. 3. Take a head count.
4. Pair up and keep communicating with each other.
5. Attract attention of launches, crews, or people on shore.
6. If need be, roll shell over and drape the body across the hull. (Sinking shell or cold conditions)
7. Wait for help.

There is one other event that should be addressed that is similar to what was mentioned above: man overboard. A violent crab by an oarsmen can throw them out of the boat. In this situation, it is up to the ejected rower to stay below the surface of the water till^[SEP] the shell has passed (this avoids getting hit in the head by a fast moving rigger(s)). The crew should stop rowing and hold water immediately so they can lend assistance. The crew should get the attention of the coaches' launch while the rower treads water. In the event that a launch is not nearby the crew can back up to the rower in question so the rower can use the shell as a flotation device. It is also feasible to pass an oar to the ejected

rower, using the oar as a floatation device. Once removed from the water, the rower should be evaluated to determine if the rower is fit to continue or if a medical emergency is present.

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References

B-CC Crew Safety Policy. Available at:

http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/0ad1d0_dadf871bfe3d4fabb5481724c6d53282.pdf

USRowing Safety Guidelines. Available at: <http://www.usrowing.org/safety-expectations/>

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