Safety Plan supplement and Emergency Action Plan



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# Introduction

Medway Towns Rowing Club (MTRC) is committed to the safety of its members and its guests whilst they are engaged in club related activities. The aim of the MTRC Emergency Action Plan is to ensure that all members and visitors are made aware of their requirements and roles in the event of an emergency. The Plan is supplementary to British Rowing’s RowSafe guidelines.

# Responsibilities

All members are personally responsible for and have a duty of care to ensure that their actions, both on and off the water, are conducted in a manner that does not compromise the safety of themselves or others.

All members are expected to comply with the requirements of the British Rowing, RowSafe Guide, the Club Safety Plan and any other instructions issued by the Club Safety Advisor, in respect of safety.

# General Water Safety Requirements

## Safety Equipment

The Club provides items of safety equipment, which shall be used by its members to accord with the following:

**Life Jackets / Buoyancy Aids:**

The wearing of a lifejacket or buoyancy aid is compulsory for:

• All coxswains.

• All drivers and passengers of any launch used in connection with Club activities.

• All junior members that have not completed and passed a Club organized capsize drill and swim test.

Where participants are adults & have not undertaken a club swim test/capsize drill, lifejackets/buoyancy aids should be offered.

Where, due to a medical condition, members are considered to be at risk of becoming unconscious or immobile, as a result of immersion, an automatic lifejacket must be worn.

**Throw Lines**:

Any person providing coaching or safety cover should understand the deployment of a throw line. All throw lines are in the safety bin / bag within each launch.

**Thermal Exposure Blankets:**

Any person providing coaching or safety cover should equip themselves with sufficient thermal exposure blankets. Thermal exposure blankets are in the safety bags along with first aid kits and throw lines, located in the safety bin / bag within each launch, and with the first aid box located within the Gym.

**First Aid Box:**

First Aid box is located on the Gym wall near to the Kitchen entrance.

## Thunder Storms and Lightning

All members should be aware of the local weather forecast when planning outings, particularly when thunderstorms have been predicted.

If thunder is heard and/or lightning observed before the outing has commenced; individuals and crews must remain at the club.

If thunder is heard and/or lightning observed whilst on the water, individuals and crews must seek proper shelter, this is limited to the M2 Motorway Bridge for rowers upriver of the clubhouse. If safe to do so, individuals and crews should return immediately to the Club; however this has to be with due consideration to the “30-30” rule for lightning. The rule being to count the time taken until you hear the thunder. If it is 30 seconds or less you must seek proper shelter.

If no lightning is visible but thunder is heard; individuals and crews must seek proper shelter.

Individuals and crews must remain at the club or under proper shelter for a minimum period of 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder, before considering it safe to commence the outing.

## Condition of Equipment

Prior to use, all equipment is to be checked to ensure that it is serviceable and appropriate for the purpose for which it is intended. Any damaged or faulty items are to be reported on the repairs board within the Boathouse.

## Incidents and Accidents

All members are responsible for reporting all accidents, incidents and near incidents that they have knowledge of or witness within 24 hours of the event, via the British Rowing online incident reporting system[[1]](#footnote-1), to satisfy the requirements of the British Rowing RowSafe Guide.

In addition to the online system, all members are to bring the incident to the attention of the Safety Advisor, a coach or committee member.

All accidents and incidents will be reviewed by the committee who will agree any additional control measures that are deemed necessary to avoid any future repetition.

Emergency Services are to be contacted by the best means possible as appropriate to any accident or emergency situation.

## Launches

Launches are to be used only by drivers authorised by the Committee or Safety Adviser. All drivers and passengers are to wear self-inflating lifejackets or buoyancy aids. The driver is responsible for ensuring that a safety bag / launch rescue kit is carried. Any items used or missing are to be notified to the Safety Adviser as soon as possible.

All launch drivers are to ensure that the launches are handled with consideration to other river users and in accordance with the British Rowing, Row Safe Guide and the Environment Agency Regulations.

The launches are designed to carry two persons, the driver and the coach. In the event of a capsize recovery operation the maximum number of persons on the launch may exceed two persons in order to safely convey athletes to the bank or boathouse.

## Coxswains and Steersman

In all coxed boats, the coxswain is deemed responsible for the overall safety of the boat and crew. The wearing of lifejackets or buoyancy aids by coxswains is compulsory.

In coxless boats, the person occupying the bow seat or the person controlling the rudder (when fitted) is deemed responsible for the overall safety of the boat and the crew.

The only exception to the foregoing being when the coxswain, or the steersman, is a beginner; in which case responsibility will be transferred to the coach or to the person providing the direct instruction and supervision.

## Coaches

Coaches are to ensure that:

* Crews are aware of the appropriate safety procedures;
* Crews use safe rowing/sculling equipment;
* The outing is conducted appropriate to the prevailing weather and water conditions;
* Consideration is shown to other water users;
* Crews are appropriately dressed for the session;
* The Coach is to be particularly alert for symptoms of hypothermia and heat stroke / dehydration;
* In particular, when coaching young children, the whole crew should be dressed suitably;
* When coaching coxed boats, care must also be taken to ensure that the cox is properly dressed
* Particular attention is paid to the coaching of coxes as their competence is essential to water safety as well as the crew’s success

## Junior Coaching

Although there is government guidance for people working with groups of Children, it is essential in rowing that a separate Risk Assessment is taken for each group of Children and that this is reviewed for each training session.

Participants under the age of 18, even those qualified as coaches, should be supervised by an adult at all times. In line with the national guidance, the level of supervision should take account of the:

• Age and ability of the Children

• Type of training session being undertaken (on land or water)

• Children’s growing independence

• Environment that the session is taking place in

If there is an accident or incident you should ensure there is always someone available to supervise the remaining Children. Coaches working with Children should ensure that they do not work in isolation.

## Circulation Pattern

All members must adhere to the Club designated circulation pattern defined within the club Safety Plan. A copy of the circulation pattern is displayed within the Boathouse.

## Rowing and Sculling at Night

In accordance with the EA rules, all rowing/sculling boats must show lights after sunset. A white light, mounted on the boat to both bow and stern, must be shown. LED lights are permitted. Flashing lights are not to be used as main lights. Lights should not be fixed to the riggers as they can be obscured when negotiating bends and turning.

## Unescorted Outings

Outings by individuals and crews both during and outside of the normal club training sessions are to be noted on the board mounted adjacent to the boat bays. Launch time and direction outing is to be stated along with crew details. Individuals are to ensure that they update the board on return to avoid false alarms.

# OFF-WATER SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

## Lifting of Boats

Coaches and crews are to ensure that every care is taken to prevent injury when lifting boats in and out of the racks and the river. One person is to be in charge of the manoeuver, giving clear instructions before and during the lift.

## Gym

All members are responsible for keeping the gym clean and tidy. After use, every member is responsible for returning all equipment that they have used to its proper location and for cleaning down all items of the equipment that they have utilized.

All members shall be deemed responsible for their own safety whilst using any of the Club’s gym equipment. Should any member have any doubt concerning how to use any item of equipment, or correct technique; they should seek guidance from the Captain or a Coach.

Junior members are not permitted to use any of the gym equipment (weights machine or free weights) unless accompanied by a qualified coach, supervised by a person deemed responsible by the committee, or are exercising in pairs as part of a pre-approved junior session.

## No Smoking Policy

The Club has a No-Smoking policy and smoking is not permitted in any part of the Boathouse. Members are responsible for ensuring that their guests are briefed accordingly.

## Telephones

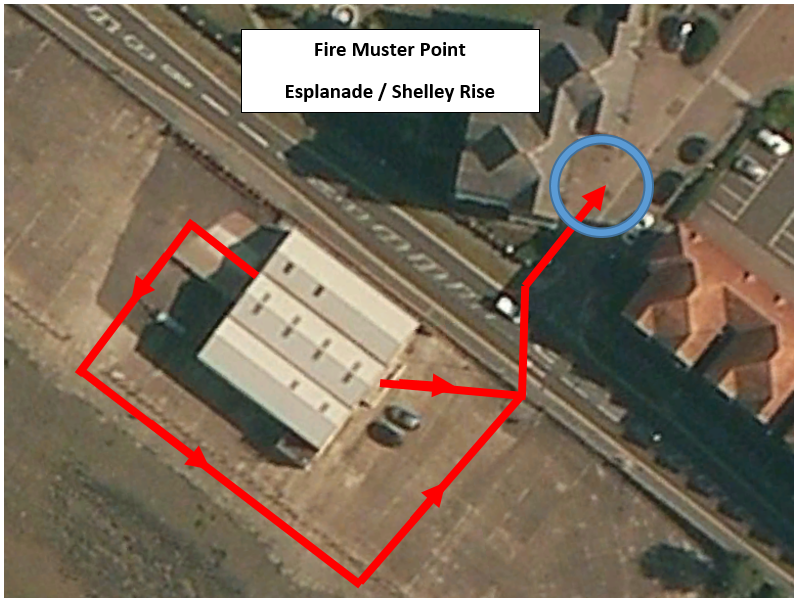
There is no telephone at the club. A list of useful numbers is displayed on the Safety Notice Board within the Gym. Coaches and crew are encouraged to carry a mobile telephone, at all times, when training on the water.

## Kitchen

Users of kitchen appliances are to ensure that care is taken in their use. All appliances are left safe when finished with and work-tops, crockery etc. are to be left in a clean and hygienic state.

## Fire

In the event of a fire the Boathouse is to be evacuated and the designated area up from the junction with Shelley Rise will be used as the muster point. An attempt is to be made to account for individuals, organised by a Committee Member if present. If safe to do so, a nominated member will remain on the slip-way to alert returning crews to any danger. Members are responsible for the safety of their guests.



## Car Park / Boat Launch area

Extreme care is to be taken by all members when using the car park in order to prevent injury to people on foot or carrying boats whose vision may be obscured.

# Boat Transportation

## Drivers

Only individuals authorised by the Club are to tow boat trailers. All drivers are to be conversant with British Rowing and ACPO (Police) guidance for the Transport of Oar Propelled Racing Boats.

## Boat Loading

When crews are travelling to regattas or alternate training locations, the driver is to ensure that all boats and equipment is safely secured prior to departure and that the necessary requirements for rear projections and lighting are observed.

# Feedback

Safety is a standard item on the Committee agenda and is reviewed at every meeting.

If any individual identifies any safety related issue which is not documented, or that they feel others can learn from, please notify the Safety Adviser who can then take the appropriate action.

Emergency

# Emergency Action Plan

## In the event of a capsize

* If out of your depth & unable to wade ashore, hold onto the capsized hull as a buoyancy aid & attempt to swim it to shore.
* If the water is cold, get as much of your body out of the water as soon as possible, draping yourself over the upturned hull (if necessary turning over the hull for this purpose).
* If possible, "buddy-up"; holding on to each other until rescued to provide mutual warmth and support and to help ensure all are accounted for.
* Other boats in the vicinity should fetch help or a launch if one is available. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESCUE FROM ANOTHER ROWING SCULL - you are likely to tip over, putting more people in the water with no one to get help.

## In The Event of A Serious Incident

* In a Medical Emergency, including a Crew Member being taken seriously ill or becoming unresponsive, IMMEDIATELY:
  + Raise the Alarm with a launch or with other boats if available.
  + Use a mobile phone to dial for emergency assistance 999; OR if no mobile phone is available row to the nearest location where a safe landing can be made, get to a telephone, and make a 999 call, indicating the closest access location from the list below:
    - * Club House

The Cyril Baker Boathouse

Esplanade

Rochester ME1 1QL

* + - * Mooring / Jetty before Rochester Bridge

Rochester Cruising Club

10 Esplanade

Rochester ME1 1QN

* + - * Mooring / Jetty before M2 Bridge

Medway Bridge Marina

Manor Lane

Rochester ME1 3HS

* + - * Mooring / Jetty after M2 Bridge (Strood Bank)

Port of Medway Marina

Station Road

Cuxton ME2 1AB

* + - * Ski Boat Jetty (Strood Bank)

River Bank Club House

Station Road

Cuxton ME2 1AB

* + - * Mooring / Jetty near Cement Works (Strood Bank)

Elm Haven Marina

Rochester Road

Halling ME2 1AQ

## Possible serious incidents associated with rowing

The following gives guidance for recognizing and treating possible serious incidents associated with rowing.

### Hypothermia

The symptoms of hypothermia depend on how cold the environment is and how long you are exposed for. Severe hypothermia needs urgent medical treatment in hospital. Shivering is a good guide to how severe the condition is. If the person can stop shivering on their own, the hypothermia is mild, but if they cannot stop shivering, it is moderate to severe.

**Mild cases**

In mild cases, symptoms include:

* shivering,
* feeling cold,
* low energy,
* discomfort at higher temperatures than normal, or
* cold, pale skin.

**Moderate cases**

The symptoms of moderate hypothermia include:

* violent, uncontrollable shivering,
* being unable to think or pay attention,
* confusion (some people don't realise they are affected),
* loss of judgment and reasoning,
* difficulty moving around or stumbling (weakness),
* feeling afraid,
* memory loss,
* fumbling hands and loss of coordination,
* drowsiness,
* slurred speech,
* listlessness and indifference, or
* slow, shallow breathing and a weak pulse.

**Severe cases**

The symptoms of severe hypothermia include:

* loss of control of hands, feet, and limbs,
* uncontrollable shivering that suddenly stops,
* unconsciousness,
* shallow or no breathing,
* weak, irregular or no pulse,
* stiff muscles, and
* dilated pupils.

Although hypothermia is defined as occurring when the body temperature drops below 35°C (95°F), mild hypothermia can start at higher body temperatures.

As the body temperature decreases further, shivering will stop completely. The heart rate will slow and a person will gradually lose consciousness. When unconscious, a person will not appear to have a pulse or be breathing. Emergency assistance should be sought immediately and CPR provided while the person is warmed. CPR is an emergency procedure, consisting of 30 chest compression followed by 2 rescue breaths.

### **Treating hypothermia**

As hypothermia can be a life-threatening condition, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Hypothermia is treated by preventing further heat being lost and by gently warming the patient.

If you are treating someone with mild hypothermia, or waiting for medical treatment to arrive, follow the advice below to prevent further loss of heat.

Things to do for hypothermia:

* Move the person indoors, or somewhere warm, as soon as possible.
* Once sheltered, gently remove any wet clothing and dry the person
* Wrap them in blankets, towels, coats (whatever you have), protecting the head and torso first
* Your own body heat can help someone with hypothermia. Hug them gently
* Increase activity if possible, but not to the point where sweating occurs, as that cools the skin down again
* If possible, give the person warm drinks (but not alcohol) or high energy foods, such as chocolate, to help warm them up
* Once body temperature has increased, keep the person warm and dry

It is important to handle anyone that has hypothermia very gently and carefully.

Things you should NOT do:

* Don't warm up an elderly person using a bath, as this may send cold blood from the body's surfaces to the heart or brain too suddenly, causing a stroke or heart attack;
* Don't apply direct heat (hot water or a heating pad, for example) to the arms and legs, as this forces cold blood back to the major organs, making the condition worse
* Don't give the person alcohol to drink, as this will decrease the body's ability to retain heat
* Don't rub or massage the person’s skin, as this can cause the blood vessels to widen and decrease the body’s ability to retain heat. In severe cases of hypothermia there is also a risk of heart attack

## Near-Drowning

The goal is to safely rescue the victim and begin first aid.

In a near-drowning emergency, the sooner the rescue and first aid begin, the greater the victim's chance of survival. Do not endanger yourself in rescuing the victim during this process.

**Rescue options to reach the drowning victim in the water:**

* Use a Throw Line
* Use a rope with a buoyant object
* Use a long stick
* Bring a boat alongside the victim and tow the victim to shore. Do not haul the victim into the boat because it may cause the boat to capsize, and both of you will be in the water. Cold water may render the victim too hypothermic to grasp objects within their reach or to hold while being pulled to safety
* As a last resort, you can attempt a swimming rescue if you are sufficiently trained in water rescue. Do not attempt a rescue beyond your capabilities. Otherwise, you may harm yourself
  + For a swimming rescue, approach the person from behind while trying to calm the victim as you move closer. A panicked victim can pull you down
  + Grab a piece of clothing or cup a hand or arm under the victim's chin and pull the person face up to shore while providing special care to ensure a straight head-neck-back alignment especially if you think the person has spine injuries

### First aid for a near-drowning victim

The focus of the first aid for a near-drowning victim in the water is to get oxygen into the lungs without aggravating any suspected neck injury.

If the victim's breathing has stopped, give 5 mouth-to-mouth rescue breaths as soon as you safely can. This could mean starting the breathing process in the water.

Once on shore, reassess the victim's breathing and circulation (heartbeat and pulse). If there is breathing and circulation without suspected spine injury, place the person in recovery position (lying on the stomach, arms extended at the shoulder level and bent, head on the side with the leg on the same side drawn up at a right angle to the torso) to keep the airway clear and to allow the swallowed water to drain. If there is no breathing, begin CPR. Continue CPR (30 chest compression followed by 2 rescue breaths) until help arrives or the person revives.

Keep the person warm by removing wet clothing and covering with warm blankets to prevent hypothermia.

Remain with the recovering person until emergency medical personnel have arrived.

**Head injuries and Concussion**

Head injuries can arise from blows to the head as a result of on water collisions or trips / falls within the boat yard.

**Symptoms to look for**

* Loss of consciousness (even for a few seconds)
* Amnesia
* Persistent headaches since injury
* Changes in behavior
* Confusion or drowsiness
* Large bruise or wound to the head or face
* Vision problems
* Reading or writing problems
* Balance problems or difficulty walking
* Loss of power in part of the body
* Clear fluid leaking from the nose or ears

For reference, please use the **Concussion Recognition Tool 5** displayed on the Safety Advisor Board within the Gym (Next to the First Aid Box).

**Things to do for Head Injuries and Concussion**

* Take the casualty to the nearest A&E to be assessed by a Doctor
* Do not let the casualty exercise or drive. Call an ambulance if necessary
* **DO NOT** let the casualty take any drugs or alcohol (unless prescribed medication) until they have been seen by a Paramedic or Doctor

**Phone 999 or 112 for an ambulance if the casualty**

* Remains unconscious after the initial injury
* Is having a seizure or fit
* Has been vomiting since the injury
* Is bleeding from one or both ears

**Afterwards**

Explain to a friend or carer that they need to be monitored for the next 24hrs and within reach of a telephone. If any symptoms appear or their condition deteriorates seek medical advice immediately.

**Returning to sport**

All sport should be avoided for 7 – 10 days or longer if concussion is severe. Head injuries sustained outside of rowing should be reported to a coach. If in doubt seek healthcare professional advice and follow it.

**Scalp wounds**

Some head wounds are caused by walking into riggers. In most cases these result in a scalp wound which is not serious, but they normally bleed profusely and you may need medical treatment to stop the bleeding.

STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS:

•Do not go out rowing alone when the water temperature is below 10 degrees C. Hypothermia is deadly quick at lower temperatures.

•Always row with at least one other boat, or with the coach/safety boat.

•Always have your mobile phone with you if there is no coach boat, so that you can call 999 for help. Keep it in a zip-loc bag - then it won't sink!

## 

## Key Locations & Telephone Numbers

All crews are advised to ensure they carry a mobile phone when on the water.

In an emergency call **999**. Otherwise NHS Direct **111**.

Nearest Hospital with A&E facilities

Medway Maritime Hospital   
Windmill Road,  
Gillingham

ME7 5PA

Tel:01634 830000

Nearest NHS Walk in facilities

Gravesham Community Hospital  
Bath Street  
Gravesend  
Kent  
DA11 0DG

Tel: 01474 360500Open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Sunday.

1. <http://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/?q=incidentreporting> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)