

2023-24

Monmouth Rowing Club-Safety Plan



V1 CCL

M Miller

12/03/2023



Introduction

The objective of this document is to provide a single reference point for readers to access Monmouth Rowing Club's [the Club] Safety Policy.

This Safety Plan is an update to the document prepared in 2020. This document supersedes any other documentation or advice previously issued by the club. All statements contained within are correct as of the date of issue.

The club may issue further safety rules and guidance that address specific circumstances in alternative formats. These are to be given equal standing to this document.

The Club Committee meets regularly with safety being one of the primary topics discussed. Any safety issues should be brought to the attention of committee members via squad captains or the safety advisor for discussion at the committee meeting.

The Safety Plan has been written to compliment the British Rowing *Row Safe: Safety advice for rowers, clubs, and competitors*. It shall be made freely available to every user of the club's facilities, and it will be part of the induction material sign posted to course participants and new members of whatever level of experience, it will be accessed via the Club website [<https://www.monmouthrc.org.uk/copy-of-members-area-2>].

This document relates to the club's policy on boating activities. Building safety is managed by the Facilities Manager overseen by the Chair of the rowing club. The Register of Statutory Requirements is maintained on the club's cloud account.



1. Risk Management

1.1. Safety page on website/Noticeboard

A summary of the Safety Plan is displayed in the Club Entrance on the Safety Board, along with visual aids on water safety, life saving and resuscitation procedures.

Also displayed on the Safety Board is information on navigating the river along with the following emergency contact details:

Fire/Ambulance/Police 999/112

Local Hospital departments:

- A&E The Grange University Hospital, Caerleon Rd, Llanfrechfa, Cwmbran NP44 8YN
01873 732732
- A&E Hereford County Hospital
01432 355444
- A and E The Royal Gwent Hospital Cardiff Rd, Newport NP20 2UB
01633 234234
- NHS direct Wales
111/ 08454647
- Club Safety Representative – Mary Miller
07879413595
- Club Chair – Dan Cowton
07733 364394
- Club First Aiders
 - James Allison
07855 429853
 - Alex Butler
07515 795560
 - Mary Miller
07879 413595
 - Julia Cowton
07966 390324
 - Liz Newman
07771 423637
 - Dan Cowton
07733 364394

Safety updates and notices are posted to the safety page on the club's website.

1.2. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments covering key Club activities have been completed and used in the compilation of this Safety Plan. All competitions, training camps, beginner and junior activities are to have individual risk assessments.

Any significant new activity undertaken by the Club will have the risks assessed before the activity is allowed to take place.

All risk assessments will be reviewed on an annual basis or following a significant incident, change in any relevant legislation or guidance. This includes, but is not restricted to, reopening the club following enforced closure [e.g. following significant flooding, extended closure due to Covid 19].

Risk assessments will be published on the Club website and be available to all members



Risk assessments will be included in the Club induction process.

1.3. Club Safety Plan

This Safety Plan has been written to compliment the British Rowing *Row Safe: Safety advice for rowers, clubs and competitions*. It is made freely available to every user of the Club's facilities, via the Club website. It should be part of the material issued to course participants and new members of whatever level of experience.

The primary function of this safety plan is to care for the safety of club members, other water users and the public at large.

It is the responsibility of the Club Committee and Safety Advisor to ensure that this Safety Plan is kept up to date, relevant and accessible to all Club members.

1.4. Competition Safety Plans

Racing at Monmouth

A separate Safety Plan and Risk Assessment will be completed for each competitive event organised by Monmouth Rowing Club. The event organiser will compile the documentation with the assistance of the Club Safety Advisor.

Copies of the Safety Documentation will be distributed to all crew organisers [competitors will be directed to the event details on the Club website] prior to the event, and relevant parts briefed to relevant parties at the start of the event. Details will vary according to the competition but may include, for example:

- A course briefing for all coxes and steersmen, noting the particular hazards found at Monmouth Rowing club and the relevant stretch of the Wye
- Emergency arrangements
- Access to shelter and potable water

A briefing on the event safety plan for Umpires and race officials will be conducted at all events.

The normal annual events held by MRC include:

- Monmouth Rowing Club Regatta & Sprint
- Autumn Head of the River
- Winter Head of the River

A copy of the latest Safety Plan for recent MRC events can be found on the Club website



Racing at other events

Every member of MRC has a duty to act safely and comply with all local safety rules when visiting other events. Competitors and coaches should always make sure that they read and understand the host club's safety documentation for the event before taking part.

1.5. Insurance

The Club will maintain public liability insurance covering all aspects of Club activities, including events. A copy of the insurance certificate will be displayed on the Club safety notice board.

The Club will ensure it contracts with a reliable and respected insurer in public liability insurance.

When a claim is likely to be made against the Club, the Club will inform its insurers immediately.

As with all insurance you should not admit liability following an accident.

All members that intend to compete must be members of British Rowing in order to be covered by British Rowing insurance scheme. Coaches should be members of British Rowing to help ensure ongoing Continued Professional Development.

1.6. Training Camps and Training on Unfamiliar Waters

A separate safety plan and risk assessment should be prepared for any training camp (including travel to and from the location) by the organiser with the assistance of the Club safety advisor.

The club should:

- Establish contact details for all participants in case of emergency
- Check insurance is in place

The training camp organiser should:

- Read any existing risk assessments for the venue and seek advice from regular users
- Carry out a risk assessment on arrival and amend the Training camp safety plan as necessary
- Ensure welfare provision where required, where juniors are involved the organiser should understand and implement the British Rowing *Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy*
- Check and approve participants planning to attend the training camp
- Ensure an appropriate coach/helper to participant ratio
- Identify any potential hazards at the location



- Check locations circulation pattern, first aid provision, rescue launches and communications
- Check local weather and other up to date safety information with host club
- Establish a system for reporting incidents
- Identify first aid provision and communicate to participants
- Carry out equipment audit before travelling to training camp
- Conduct a post visit review

Navigation

Rowing on the River Wye

The Wye is navigable by fine boats between Wye Bridge and Hadnock cottages during normal summer river levels (approximately 2.5km). This may be extended to below Symonds Yat rapids (approximately 8km) subject to sufficient depth of water, usually during winter months. The circulation pattern is opposite to that found on most UK watercourses, with boats passing starboard to starboard on the normal stretch. This means that boats going upstream keep to the boat house side of the river where downstream boats keep to the Hadnock side. A map of the navigable section of the Wye at Monmouth, including circulation patterns and known hazards, is included as an appendix to this safety plan and also displayed in the boathouse.

Navigation is not possible downstream of Wye Bridge; the bridge constitutes a significant hazard and all boats should turn well upstream. During normal flow crews should be turned before passing the Monmouth School boat house. During times of higher river flow rate crews should turn upstream of the clubhouse.

Coxing and Steering

Most rowing accidents result from steering and navigation errors. Steering and coxing are skills that require a level of competency. The club encourages all rowers to develop this competency through a mixture of coaching from qualified coaches and guidance from experienced steers and coxes. Rowers are encouraged to ask for assistance to develop their skills in this regard.

The difficulty in both coxing and steering varies with conditions. Wind, poor visibility, weed and traffic can all make steering more difficult. Coxes and steers are responsible for assessing the conditions with regard to their own level of competency and deciding whether or not an outing should proceed.

Before each outing the cox/steer should check:

- Conditions;
- Steering equipment
- Communication equipment (for coxes)

Coxes and steers are expected to:

- Wear a lifejacket when coxing



- Maintain a good lookout throughout the outing
- Steer in accordance with the navigation plan and rules;
- Communicate effectively with the crew
- Pay attention to and be aware of any hazards
- Report any change in hazards
- Know how to stop a boat quickly and safely, and practise this regularly
- Recognise the rights and needs of other water users; anglers, kayakers, SUPs and swimmers

1.7. Weather and Environment

Weather conditions may change rapidly during the course of a rowing outing. If adverse weather conditions are forecast all coaches, coxswains, scullers and oarsmen should take the forecast weather conditions into account when planning an outing, and should be prepared to cut short the outing if necessary.

No rowing is to take place during thunderstorms or in the presence of lightning; any boats already afloat should return to land as soon as possible in these conditions. Those affected should not go afloat until at least 30mins has elapsed since the last thunder or lightning event.

Heavy rain, fog or mist and gusts of wind present further problems of which all rowers and coxes must be aware. During conditions where visibility may be severely impaired, no boats shall go afloat if you are unable to see the pumping station; those already on the water should row at extreme caution back to the landing stage.

Evening rowing requires the bow person to wear a hi viz jacket/tabard; with lights on stern and bow of the boat.

Go/no go System

The Wye is subject to large variations in height and flow rate, particularly during the winter months. A “go/no go” system is in place, covering environmental factors affecting safe rowing conditions. Any aspect deemed a “no go” will stop all rowing. Restrictions to rowing will be in place as follows:

- No rowing will be permitted when water levels are on or above the step with the red stripe – where no red stripe is visible
- When water levels are above the orange stripe rowing is only by experienced crews in large – 4 crew members+ boats
- Rowing will not be permitted when significant debris is visible in the water
- Only experienced rowers are permitted to row in wind conditions in excess of force 5 on the Beaufort scale.

In all circumstances crews should consider the safety aspects of an outing and should not row if there is any doubt expressed by any crew member. Some conditions, in addition to those listed above, may dictate that a particular level of crew experience is required to boat. A list of experienced Club



members, deemed qualified to make these decisions by the committee, is displayed on the safety notice board.

Extreme temperatures

Particular hazards and risks are encountered during cold weather conditions including:

- Ice on landing stage & steps and boathouse ramp
- Ice forming on the watercourse causing damage to boats
- Increased risk of hypothermia/cold water shock in capsize incidents
- Increased risk of hypothermia for coxes

Particular hazards and risks are encountered during hot weather conditions including:

- Dehydration
- Heat Stroke
- Sunburn

It remains the responsibility of the MRC member to ensure they feel the conditions are safe in which to conduct the chosen activity. If unsure, firstly ask for advice from your coach/squad captain. If still in doubt, do not go afloat or undertake the planned activity.

1.8. Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia

Immersion hypothermia is the condition caused when the body is immersed in cold or cool water for a prolonged period of time.

To reduce the risk of cold water immersion and hypothermia:

- Ensure appropriate clothing is worn by all crew members, tight fitting to avoid being caught in equipment to reduce risk of immersion and suitably heat retaining to maintain body temperature.
- The Club will provide throw lines and thermal blankets. The Club will provide regular training in the use of throw lines
- To help you plan your outing in cold weather conditions adopt the “one minute one degree” rule. Allow one minute of rescue time for each degree of water temperature. If the water temperature is 5°C you have 5 minutes to remove someone from the water.
- In cold weather vulnerable club members (beginner and young or small juniors, elderly or frail members) should wear a personal flotation device
- Competency of the crew should be assessed to reduce risk of immersion
- A buddy system should be adopted in cold weather conditions, especially for scullers.
- As with other medical conditions, treatment should only be given by those having confidence to do so. The first priority should be to obtain professional medical assistance.



A more complete description of the condition, and ways of preventing and treating it, can be found on the Safety page of the Club website

1.9. Manual Handling

Rowing involves considerable lifting and manoeuvring of boats and other equipment, much of which is typically heavy and awkward. At Monmouth there is a steep slope into and out of the boat house and a set of concrete steps to the river to negotiate. All involved in handling should be mindful of the potential hazards. In the case of carrying boats crews should be organised in such a way as to minimise risks of injury. This may require working counter to the normal practice of carrying boats in seat order. Suitable footwear should be worn to minimise the potential for slipping or tripping.

1.10. Swimming and Capsize Training

All active rowing members must be in good health and must be able to demonstrate, when asked, that they are confident in and under the water by satisfying the following British Rowing requirements. Anyone joining the Club has to sign to say they are capable of the following;

- Swim a minimum of 50 metres in light clothing (N.B. This must be regarded as the absolute minimum).
- Tread water for at least 2 minutes.
- Swim underwater for at least 5 metres.

Anyone unable to satisfy the above standards must wear an approved personal flotation device when afloat.

All active rowing members must be trained in the actions to be taken in the event of capsize as per the British Rowing *Row Safe* guide. This training will be carried out by a level 2 club coach or above at regular intervals for all new members.

Swimming ability and capsize training will be recorded for each member of the Club.

1.11. Communication

Despite being located within a sizeable town, the navigable stretch of the river is located in an area with intermittent pedestrian and boat traffic for significant periods of time. This means that it will be difficult to summon help in the event of an incident. The Club recommends all crews ensure that a mobile phone is onboard, especially if the outing is outside normal Club sessions; and that as well as completing the online booking system, crew members inform at least one other person of their plans.

2. Equipment

2.1. Safety Aids



Safety and first aid equipment are to be readily available and maintained at or near the Safety Board in the boathouse. These include:

- First aid box,
- Thermal Blankets or exposure bags
- Life rings/buoys and line/ Buoyancy Aids
- AED is located in the emergency Red Box in the Boat House near the tap.

The purchase and maintenance of safety equipment will be managed by the Club safety advisor. Any use of safety equipment should be reported via *the repair notification email* so a replacement can be arranged.

All coxes and launch drivers should wear an approved lifejacket or buoyancy aid whilst afloat.

All club life jackets comply with EN393 and each are subject to a periodic thorough inspection and service by an approved supplier. In interim periods the Club will check lifejackets for damage, leaks and gas cylinder integrity and the check will be recorded in the maintenance log. All members should carry out a pre-use check and report any faults through *the repair notification email* as detailed in 2.3. Any defective lifejackets and buoyancy aids should not be used. They will either be repaired or disposed of.

Where, because of a medical issue, there is a risk to a participant of becoming unconscious or immobile an automatic life jacket must be worn.

Lifejackets must be worn correctly in order for it to be effective. When fastened it should be a tight but comfortable fit.

Note that when using “bow loading” boats, coxes should always wear lifejackets with a manual activation and NOT automatic. These jackets are clearly marked in the boathouse; if you are unsure about which jacket to use then please ask.

2.2. Steering and Navigation

When rowing at night or twilight all boats MUST be fitted with lights. The configuration is as follows:

- one white light facing forward (bow)
- A single red light facing aft (stern)
- All lights must be steady (not flashing)
- All lights must be of adequate luminosity (ie, not single LED type lights) with sufficient charge in the batteries for the outing.

Club rowing activities will be co-ordinated with those of other local water users to minimise clashes of interest and the possibility of additional hazards arising.



2.3. Boats and Blades

It is essential that all equipment used for rowing and coaching is safe and fit for purpose. It is the responsibility of all members of the Club to ensure that the equipment that they use is maintained in good order to avoid anyone being put in danger on the water.

In addition to this the Club will ensure any boat purchased has sufficient inherent buoyancy and where the buoyancy of a boat is in question the Club will provide additional buoyancy.

Before a boat is placed on the water, the crew or sculler should check that it is in safe condition and that the fittings are in good order, in particular:

- Check that all hatches and bungs are intact and secured.
- Check that the bowball and all heel restraints are present and secure.
- Check that riggers are securely attached and that moving parts (swivels, sliding seats, stretchers) are in working order and not loose.
- Coxes and steersmen must always check that rudder lines, steering gear, rudders and fins are in working order.
- Check that oars and sculls are in good condition; particularly that the button is firm and the shaft is free from damage.

In order to ensure that equipment remains safe, any damage to equipment or failure in a boat should be reported as soon as possible to the maintenance team via the website damage reporting system

It is recommended that damaged equipment should be clearly marked so that anyone intending to use the equipment is made aware of the damage.

Clean equipment is far more likely to be safe equipment; and rowers who are made personally responsible for the condition of the boats they use are far more likely to notice and deal with wear and tear to equipment before it becomes potentially dangerous. Regular boat maintenance sessions are organized by the committee; all active members of MRC are expected to participate in boat maintenance sessions.

All boats are to be washed following an outing. Additional requirements may be advised when the committee deems fit, for e.g. following the Covid 19 pandemic, additional washing of boats and blades will be required.

Full details on boat checking are set out in the BR Rowsafe document.

2.4. Launches

Launches are maintained and serviced by the committee; however, before every use the driver should check that the launch has the following basic items of safety equipment and information on board:



- First aid kit
- Throw line
- Space blankets
- Navigation light
- Paddle
- Lifejacket/buoyancy aids for driver and any passengers
- Safety knife with rope cutter
- Spare kill cord for use in the event of driver overboard
- Bailer
- Fuel

It is the policy of the Club that all launch drivers should be trained to a minimum of RYA level 2 standard. MRC will strive to provide this training to launch drivers in a practicable timescale, taking into account both the time and financial commitments required. In the interim, those not trained to this level will be taught and assessed “in house” by an approved member of the club before being allowed to operate the club launches. A current list of approved launch drivers can be found in the Membership database.

Fuel for the launches is kept in the fire safe box at the back of the boathouse. No fuel is to be left outside this box. Refuelling should always take place outside.

2.5. Transport and Trailers

In addition to possessing a valid endorsement for towing on their driving license, approval to tow the MRC boat trailers is required by the Club Chair. A list of members currently approved to tow is held in the Member *Skills Matrix*.

As well as complying with the UK (or foreign as appropriate) traffic laws, the BR guide to towing should be referred to when carrying out towing duties. The guide is available via the MRC website.

The Club will ensure the trailers are maintained in a roadworthy condition and will insure the trailers.

Before each trip the driver must check the tyres (including spare), lights, bearings, brake cable, breakaway cable, projection markers, the security of the load and that the jockey wheel is secured appropriately.. Drivers should always carry a passenger to help with navigation, manoeuvring and any emergency which may arise. The trailer driver must ensure they carry suitable tools and jack for changing a wheel. Always be aware of the dangers of high winds and icy conditions and consult a weather forecast before setting off.



3. Participants

3.1. All active members

MRC has a responsibility to provide adequate instruction to all active members in watermanship, and adequate supervision by coaches and experienced rowers to ensure that no-one puts themselves at risk when on the water. This applies particularly to novices, single scullers and juniors.

All rowers and scullers must, before going afloat, record the crew leader's name, boat and expected outing timings on the boat bookings database on the website.

Single scullers (apart from beginners who are on the water under supervision) are solely and fully responsible for their own safety, and must follow the appropriate procedures. All single scullers are advised to ensure that they know how to recover from a capsize and should and that they are able to meet the minimum standard with respect to swimming.

While not ideal it is a not always possible to train together as squads or with safety launch cover, some individuals or crews choose to train on the water alone in order to fit rowing into their own personal timetable. This is acceptable as long as those members first seek confirmation that they are sufficiently competent from their squad captain. It is essential that the members are fully conversant with the local waterway rules, MRC encourage single scullers to buddy up if sculling outside normal rowing times, especially during more challenging conditions.

3.2. Medical declaration

It is important that all participants are medically fit to row. The Club must be notified of any medical conditions that may affect safety on the water.

The club follows the British Rowing epilepsy policy which states that *"Those who suffer from epilepsy should not be allowed on the water when there is a significant risk of further seizures. In line with the DVLA this period of significant risk is defined as within one year following a fit and whilst reducing medication and for six months after stopping it."*

3.3. Beginners

The Club runs a structured and well managed adult and junior "Learn to Row" programme including an induction to club policies, including safety and capsize and swim test.

All beginner crews should be supervised by qualified coaches. The coach will risk assess the conditions when determining what boats should be used and safety launch provision. Other water users should be made aware of the fact beginner crews are out on the water and may not be very manoeuvrable.

All junior beginners will be required to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) until they have completed a capsize and swim test.



All adult beginners will be offered the use of a PFD

3.4. Juniors

The Club will ensure all juniors are inducted into the Club and safe rowing practice through a planned induction programme.

The Club will ensure a higher level of Duty of Care is promoted for all juniors. All juniors will have access to a club welfare officer and will be made aware and have access to the club welfare plan. Contact details of the Club welfare officer are posted on the juniors information board in the Club. The Club welfare officer must promote a child-centred approach within the Club.

All coaches for junior crews will be DBS checked with references taken up and must also be a British Rowing qualified coach. All junior crews are to be accompanied on the water by a safety launch. There will be separate changing and toilet spaces for seniors and juniors when on site at the same time. All members of the Club must set a good example for the juniors to follow.

Before any activity takes place the following information must be provided:

- Swimming ability
- Parent or caregivers consent in writing to act in "*in loco parentis*" for the administration of first aid or other medical attention if the need arises
- Personal contact details for emergency contacts
- Written consent given by a parent or caregiver before any activity takes place
- Written consent by a parent or caregiver before taking photographs or video

Juniors are encouraged to draw up, adapt or adopt their own code of conduct to promote ownership and adherence.

3.5. Adaptive Rowing

The Club does not currently own any adaptive boats and currently cannot provide step free access to the clubhouse or water.

In the event of adaptive rowing becoming part of the Club's day to day practice the Club will discuss with individuals their needs and aspirations, establish and practise procedures for managing incidents, including capsizes, involving adaptive rowers, check equipment is suitable when adaptations are made and seek advice on equipment that is suitable for adaptive rowing.

The Club will conduct a risk assessment and produce an action plan for each individual adaptive athlete, provide a suitable rescue launch and ensure the boat house is fitted with high visibility markings for all pathways.

The Club will also encourage a buddy system for athletes with a disability to assist with boating and guiding around the boathouse.



The rower must inform the Club about any relevant disability or illness and any known warning signs and seek additional medical advice where appropriate.

3.6. Touring, Coastal and Open Water Rowing

The Club does not generally take part in these disciplines. A separate safety plan will be compiled for each as required

3.7. Indoor Rowing

The Club owns a number of ergometers. These are currently stored in the gym, and from time to time in the clubhouse.

All Club members will be instructed on safe use of the ergometer and potential health risks associated with strenuous exercise. Any incidents related to indoor rowing machines must be reported on the British rowing incident reporting system.

The Club will ensure they provide safe, regularly serviced machines

All members must ensure they maintain a high standard of equipment hygiene, cleaning the handle and machine after use.

All members must ensure they demonstrate good technique on the machine

All damage to machines must be reported (See section 2.3)

4. Monitoring

4.1. Incident Reporting

Rowing is statistically a relatively safe sport; however, accidents and incidents involving Club members and equipment inevitably occur from time to time. It is important that the Club (and the wider rowing community) learns from these. Serious occurrences are very rare but are often preceded by numerous related “near misses”. Therefore, any instance where the safety of Club members, equipment or members of the public is put at risk should be reported first to the relevant squad captain. In all but the most minor of instances, the squad captain will request that an online British Rowing Incident Form is filled in (this can be done anonymously if required). The data collected from the online forms and/or the squad captains’ reports, as appropriate, will be collated by the Safety Advisor and distributed in the form of a periodic safety bulletin by the Club Captain.

Below is the web address for the BR online incident form:

<https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/>



4.2. Safety Auditing

A British Rowing Water Safety Audit is undertaken annually and reviewed by the committee with recommendations made for any improvements and areas of non-compliance.

The results of the audit are submitted to Welsh Rowing, and published on the Club website to ensure that they are accessible by all members.



5. Health

5.1. First Aid

It is the aspiration of MRC that all members should be conversant with life-saving and resuscitation procedures. At the very least, the Club Safety Advisor and all regular Club coaches should be trained in first aid. The Club aims to offer regular opportunities to members to train in first aid via locally organized workshops and courses.

5.2. Water-borne Diseases

Historically the Wye has been a comparatively clean river, however recent years have seen an increase in the levels of pollutants that can cause sickness and cases of stomach related problems after immersion have been reported. As such, it is advised that, if your boat capsizes, you try to keep your mouth closed and avoid swallowing water. If you do swallow water, obtain medical advice without delay, even if you do not feel unwell.

While there are very few cases reported, there is a risk of waterborne diseases, Leptospirosis (Weil's disease) being the most common. If you exhibit flu like symptoms post immersion, seek medical attention stating close contact with water.

5.3. Sunburn, Heat Stroke and Exhaustion

In hot summer months then please look after yourself and each other with these basic and steps:

- Cover up where possible
- Wear a cap/hat
- Wear sunscreen
- Avoid long exposure to the sun
- Stay hydrated



Monmouth Rowing Club-Safety Plan

2023