

Safety Notes for NRC AGM 2010

Safety Audits and Club Incident Report Summaries

Audits for 2010-11 are due by the end of the year. Please remember that you can not affiliate to British Rowing if you have not completed your audit. That would mean that you will not be able to race in BR events.

There is still a problem getting reports from the Incident Reporting system but most incidents continue to be capsizes and collisions, with the latter being responsible for almost all injuries.

I will help anyone who is struggling with the system at the Club Development Conference in January.

Recent Incidents in the Region

The majority of incidents are capsizes. Please report all capsizes to help with statistical analysis, but a capsize should only be considered serious if there was some unforeseen difficulty in getting the athlete safely to shore.

Some more serious local incidents have learning points.

- Following a collision in summer 2009, one of the scullers went for a medical examination in the spring of 2010 and found serious damage to the lower back requiring surgery to fuse two vertebrae. Don't ignore an injury and report the incident immediately.
- A crew lay down in the boat after a race, one caught a crab and the boat capsized. Because the crew was lying down, the heel restraints did not work properly and the crew had to be rescued.
- An eight hit a kayak from behind causing significant damage. This is a problem we need to be aware of, nobody was looking in the direction that would have avoided the collision and the cox's vision was obscured by the crew.
- A sculler fell ill and fell out of the boat; the heel restraints didn't work and the sculler had to be assisted by a safety boat. This might have been due to tight shoes or long heel restraints.
- Two eights collided 2 hours after a regatta ended. The visiting crew was on the wrong side of the river. Ensure you know local rules on strange rivers and, if you have guests at your club, ensure that visitors know any local rules on our rivers.
- A bottle was thrown at a crew. Report such incidents to the police; the police can take no action if they don't know of the incident.
- A collision occurred at a known turning area. Crews turning in the middle of the river must look for gaps in the traffic before turning, but crews rowing through should be careful on such stretches. Novice crews, especially eights, can take a long time to turn.

Kill Cords

In Cornwall in August, a father and son were seriously injured when they fell out of their boat, which circled and ran over them twice. The father had severe head injuries and the son severe leg injuries caused by the propeller. If the kill cord had been attached to the driver, not wrapped around the steering column, the engine would have stopped as soon as the driver fell overboard.

Boat Condition

There are still far too many boats going to regattas in a poor state with loose bow balls, inadequate heel restraints etc. Control Commission is entitled to disqualify boats presented in an unsafe condition. Safety in training is also compromised by badly maintained boats.

Boat Numbering

For some time, boats going on the Thames have required an ID plate, e.g. TYN151. Since April 2010 all boats are required to have one; please take action to put these numbers on all club and private boats. From April 2011, it will be in the Rules of Racing and you will not be able to race without one.

Trailers

Clubs should keep their trailers, and boat ties, in good working order. Bear in mind that your trailer insurance may be invalidated if you do not have proof of adequate servicing. Also, following a recent incident, please check that boats are secured laterally so that they cannot slip off the end of the bars. Most new trailers have lugs or rings which prevent the boat or the strap from slipping off the end of the bar, but some older de Graaff trailers do not.

New Rowers

Universities and schools have several new rowers starting now. Please start teaching them about safety as soon as you start teaching them how to row.

John Mulholland
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