

Safety Report for NRC Executive April 2019

Safety Audits

All the region's racing clubs have completed their Safety Audits. Several questions have been answered "to address"; please address these questions. Answering these questions and taking any measures that result from thinking about them will make your club safer in the future.

Incident Reports

Please keep submitting reports, they help us avoid repeating the same mistakes. All clubs should report incidents; they are not a sign of an unsafe club but rather of a club that takes safety seriously.

The contents of Incident Reports are confidential and covered by Data Protection Regulations. They may be sent by British Rowing to insurance companies for assessment of the overall risks of the sport of rowing. They are not to be sent to insurance companies to support claims against other rowers, events or clubs; this would be a breach of GDPR.

Heel Restraints

The new rules introduced in April 2019 allow the heel to lift until the shoe is horizontal. I still strongly recommend that heel restraints should not allow the heel to lift more than 50mm, and certainly no more than 70mm. Control Commission at regattas cannot refuse permission to boat if the heel restraints meet the rules, but that does not mean that the boat is safe.

I would ask that all regional umpires strongly recommend that heel restraints are no longer than 70 mm. Clubs should ensure that their heel restraints are kept as short as possible for the safety of their members; very few rowers (probably fewer than 1%, or less than one in an average club) should need heel restraints longer than 70 mm.

I will investigate whether events can impose a local rule reducing the maximum heel lift.

Collisions

Collisions are still the main cause of injuries and boat damage; I would like to take this paragraph out of my reports, but I can't until we stop crashing into each other. All crews should keep to their proper course and look around approximately every five strokes to ensure that there is nothing in their way. Also, if a crew is approaching you, call a warning; don't just sit quietly waiting to be hit.

Seeing

The cox, sitting in the stern of the boat, cannot easily see what is straight ahead; in these circumstances, bow should look ahead frequently to warn the cox of impending danger.

Being Seen

Crews should not try to hide on the water! It is sensible to have single scullers and the bow rower in crew boats wearing high-visibility tops when on the water. White is usually as good as yellow, particularly at night under yellow street lighting.

If you want further information on any of the above, please contact me.

John Mulholland
Regional Rowing Safety Advisor
British Rowing Northern Region
e-mail: john.rrsa@jdmulholland.plus.com