

# Olympia Area Rowing Safety Program

(last update: September 2005)

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## I. Prerequisites

### A. Head Coaches

Must meet minimum qualifications, assistant/volunteer coaches are strongly encouraged to acquire qualifications:

1. USRA Level 1 certificate or equivalent
2. Current First Aid/CPR certification (retraining required every 2 years)
3. Boating Safety course certification (US Power Squadron, USCG, WA State Parks)

### B. Rowers

Must complete the following before entering boats on the water:

1. Signed and returned USRA Liability Waiver
2. Medical Emergency Contact Form
3. Float Test:
  - a. for sweeps: Documentation of completed float test (tread water or float 10 minutes in workout clothes)
  - b. for scullers: Documentation of completed float test (tread water or float 10 minutes in workout clothes) or swim test (swim 50 yards without pausing). In addition, completion of flip test with a single shell (flip out of single, reboard)

### C. All Novice Rowers

The USRA Safety Video "*Ready All, Row*" is to be viewed by all novice rowers before rowing on the water.

### D. Audit

Review of the club safety program by all club rowers will be documented and kept on file by head coaches.

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## II. Sweep Boat Safety

### A. On Land

Before getting into boats, all Novice Classes will undergo at least one hour of instruction on moving shells while on land:

- a) carrying boats from the boathouse to the water
- b) setting boats in the water properly
- c) carrying boats back and carefully racking them.

This will help ensure safe methods of carrying, as well as preventing damage to the equipment. This also reinforces the club's commitment to safety protocols.

Coaches will periodically review safe boat carrying with rowers, especially if rowers become lax.

### B. On the Water

1. Coaches will always supervise rowing activities from a motored launch/boat that is capable of water rescue of rowers if there is an accident. Coach-to-rower ratio maximum 1:16 (plus coxes). All boats must remain within visual distance of the coach launch. The coach will use his/her judgment about exceptions to this rule, based on conditions of the water, weather, and experience of the coxswain.
2. Boats will not enter the water or will head in immediately in the event of :
  - a) whitecaps
  - b) any threat of electrical storm
  - c) any forecasted gale storm
3. Boats may be on the water only during daylight hours, and during dusk and dawn provided boat lights meeting USCG specifications are used.
4. Boats will follow the posted traffic pattern (always stay to right). Coxwains, single scullers and the bow seat in coxless boats will watch vigilantly for oncoming boat traffic and other obstructions.
5. Coach launches must always carry:
  - a) Enough lifejackets so that there is one for every rower and coxswain on the water, as well as the coach and rowers in the launch.
  - b) First Aid Kit and Launch Safety Bag (must meet USCG & USRA requirements).
  - c) Tool box with spare rowing equipment parts.
  - d) Fire extinguisher
  - e) Paddles for use in the event of mechanical problems.
  - f) Communication equipment for reporting emergency (cell phone/marine band radio).
6. Coaches will sign out boats in the club's logbook. In addition, coaches will use the team white boards to indicate which rowers are on the water at each practice or club event.

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## III. Sculling Boat Safety

### **Safety requirements for scullers:**

- A. Successfully complete a sculling clinic and/or be checked out by a designated club sculling certifier before being allowed access to club equipment.
- B. Scullers must sign out in the club's logbook before rowing. Be sure to notice which, if any, other boats are already signed out and on the water.
- C. Check equipment for breakage or wear before going out. Tag defective equipment with ribbon and log it in the equipment log at the login station as soon it is noticed. Never row equipment which has been tagged for repair.
- D. Have a personal flotation device and whistle on board. They need not be worn but must be readily available. This is a requirement for club owned shells and a recommendation for private shells.
- E. Scullers shall be responsible for their own safety. The club encourages rowing with a buddy and staying near shore.
- F. Learn and conform to traffic patterns. Be alert and always be aware of where you are heading.
- G. Wash club boats upon returning to the dock. Be sure to note any problems you notice with your boat in the equipment log. Tag boats that should not be rowed prior to repair.
- H. Sign in the log book. Enter notation if you've seen any new obstructions on the water that other rowers should made aware of.
- I. Scullers under the age of 18 may use club equipment only under the supervision of a coach/instructor or rowing club parent.

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## IV. In the Event of Emergency

### A. Chain of Command

1. In class and clinic situations, the coach is in charge. All coxswains and rowers must follow the directions of the coach.
2. If there is a health or safety emergency on the water the coach will use his or her judgment and notify :
  - a) Call 9-1-1 using a cell phone.  
Or use a marine band radio:  
Channel 65 -Between 8am-6pm Port of Olympia Swantown Marina  
Channel 16 -Olympia Police & Harbor Patrol boater distress channel  
The nearest pay phone to the dock is at the end of the boat turn-around cul de sac, under the awning. Be sure to note your nearest dock location to responders (example: West bay marina, DNR dock, priest point park, Swantown Marina...etc.)
  - b) Parent, kin or designated emergency contact of rower(s) in distress. Forms with numbers are in the black file box inside the Boathouse.
  - c) Club President, Vice President or Captain within 2 hours.
  - d) Other coaches (if equipment is broken)

### B. Documentation

1. All medical or first aid emergencies during club activities will be reported to the Club President, **Vice President or Captain** within 2 hours.
2. All serious incidents (youth disciplinary, boat collision, near miss or medical first aid) will be documented on the OAR Incident Report form and provided to an OAR board member within 48 hours of the incident.
3. In the event of medical treatment due to a rowing accident during a club activity, the Coach shall fill out a US Rowing Case Report from K&K Insurance Group, Inc. and provide to the Club President within 48 hours of the incident.

Phone Numbers:

Title	Name	Phone Number(s)
President	Stewart Johnston	(360) 480-9412
Vice President	Jim Bertolini	(360) 943-5580
Captain	Peter Plimpton	(360)459-8405

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## V. Equipment Maintenance

**Properly functioning, well maintained equipment is essential to the safety of rowers.**

- A. The Club Captain will identify to coaches which boats are available to which crews, as well as which boats are available to which single scullers.
  
- B. As part of all training courses, and periodically during the course of the season, the Coach will remind rowers and coxswains: If equipment is broken, do not use it. Stop Rowing. Rowing with broken equipment will further damage the equipment. Rowers are responsible as they enter the boat to check bolts, rigging, top nuts, foot stretchers, etc. for proper functioning. They are encouraged to check periodically during the workout that everything is in working order.
  
- C. Each Coach is responsible for any breakage that occurs under his or her instruction. This means the Coach must either fix the breakage, find out how to fix it or document the repairs needed on the coaches message board in the OAR boathouse. The Club Rigger is available to teach repair methods.
  
- D. Cleanliness
  - 1. Boats, oars and riggers are to be rinsed off with a hose after each practice.
  - 2. Boats, oars, and oar handles are to be washed with a soapy solution periodically.
  - 3. Thoroughly clean and bandage all cuts and blisters before touching equipment.
  - 4. Wash hands thoroughly after handling wet boats.
  
- E. Chemical Storage

Gasoline, oil and boat maintenance chemicals are to be stored in flammable chemical locker located outside of the blue boat box within the club facility.