



BRITISHROWING

# HRSA Monthly Report

November 2020

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TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

## RowSafe 2020

The 2020 edition of RowSafe has been published and can be found [here](#). A presentation summarising the changes is available [here](#).

## Incident Reports in November

There was a serious incident in the dark in which a 4+ collided with an underwater obstruction; this broke a blade and damaged a rigger. The boat was then swept into a large moored boat the hull snapped causing all 5 of the crew to enter the water. Some of the rowers were swept downstream but all the rowers and the cox were subsequently rescued by coaching launches from several clubs. The rowers and cox were not injured but the boat was probably written off. It is only a matter of good fortune that nobody suffered more severe effects for being immersed in cold water.

A 2x in a group started rowing without looking ahead and hit the stern of a 1x causing boat damage. Rowers should be encouraged to keep a good lookout at all times.

There were two incidents which involved head on collisions involving a boat that was overtaking another boat and a boat travelling in the opposite direction. A more careful lookout and the ability to perform an emergency stop would help to avoid collisions and reduce the severity of harm that they can cause.

As we start to return to rowing it may be helpful to invite rowers to review the [Collision Avoidance](#) and [Emergency Stop](#) videos.

## Working with Coastal Rowing WA Inc

Advice and support continue to be provided to Coastal Rowing in Western Australia. An additional Zoom meeting was held to review progress and discuss any further information or advice. This was prior to them developing their safety documentation. As a result, they have developed and introduced safety training. This has been both in the classroom and on the water. They tell me that it has been a tremendous team builder. People are “thinking” safety and are enthusiastic about doing what needs to happen to make sure they are safe.

They have also tried buddy rescue; this was a real hit and brand new to Australia. It made so much sense.

The organisation’s application to become an Associated Organisation within British Rowing has been approved. Information on this is included in their Newsletter and they are clearly very proud to be involved with British Rowing in this way.

Coastal Rowing WA has produced a detailed risk management and safety plan. This will be reviewed and feedback will be provided.

## Support for another Rowing NGB

There was an enquiry from the Chairman of the NGB's Safety Committee who wanted to know how the British Rowing rules requiring clubs to report incidents were worded. He thought that in British Rowing it is compulsory for clubs to report certain level incidents.

It was explained that this is now a matter of culture rather than a matter of rules. The simple answer is that we do not need rules. It has become part of the culture that people report incidents. We do everything we can to encourage reporting. We take care to thank reporters if I comment on their reports. We give prizes (certificates signed by our Chairman and me) to the clubs that report the most incidents each year. We explain that completing an incident report is an opportunity to make a positive contribution to rowing safety. We keep reports anonymous; we will share the lessons learned but do not mention the names of any people or clubs.

We do have rules. Section 11 of the [British Rowing Regulations](#) deals with Safety and contains the following:-

*11.5. Clubs must:*

*11.5.1. Ensure a positive safety culture;*

*11.5.7. Complete the British Rowing Annual Safety Audit and implement any recommendations made as a result of this Audit;*

*11.5.9. Encourage Club members to be accountable for safety and report all incidents;*

I mentioned the Safety Audit because it is the one thing that clubs are required to do. Failure to complete the audit to the satisfaction of the Regional Rowing Safety Adviser results in a club not being able to enter competitions. This is as strict as it gets in safety.

Everyone knows about the need to complete audits but the vast majority are not aware of the details of the British Rowing Regulations. They just do what they should do because they know that it is the right thing to do. They report incidents because they recognise that this is the correct thing to do and they know that no blame or punishment will result.

We receive a little over 2000 Incident Reports each year. I cannot tell how many incidents really occur but believe that this is at least a representative sample. The majority involve little or no harm but some are more worrying. I include lessons learned from incidents in my monthly reports and we complete and publish an [annual analysis](#). Both of these actions demonstrate how much we value the reporting of incidents. This too is positive feedback to encourage reporting.

The big question is how should you start. For us it is easy because we have been doing this for years. For you it is not so easy because you are starting from scratch. Reporting is all about learning and not about blame. For example, we discourage the inclusion of names and certainly do not want signatures.

In my view what you need is a system that is:-

- easy to use
- quick and efficient
- not challenging or threatening
- computer based - can be completed on a hand held device
- available to anyone, member or not
- can be completed anonymously and
- asks only for information that the reporter has

## **Capsize and Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia training**

There has been some discussion about the importance of this training.

I explained that each year we have about one thousand reported capsizes, although there may be many more that are not reported. In nearly all cases the harm to rowers is limited to them becoming cold and wet. This is not an accident, it happens because rowers are well prepared and know how to react when they capsize. They are also told what to expect when immersed in cold water and what they should do to survive the experience.

The Capsize Drill and the Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia training are vitally important to ensure the safety of rowers. Rowers rely on their coaches to ensure that they know what to do if they capsize. It is important that coaches are competent to deliver this advice and to prepare their rowers for this eventuality.

This training was delivered to learner coaches at the start of their Coach Education. The feedback we have confirms that they found this face to face course informative and enjoyable. They felt that it prepared them to lead capsize training for rowers in their clubs as specified in section 3.7 of RowSafe. The face to face course is the best way I know to deliver this training.

We now have the online learning Capsize modules for Rowers, and for Coaches and Club Officials, available on RowHow. This is a valuable resource and an adequate substitute for the face to face course at a time when it is not possible to deliver that mode of training. In my view the Capsize Drill training for coaches should be a prerequisite for all level 2 coaches (both Session Coach and Club Coach). The same applies to the Man-overboard training for fixed seat coaches. The Cold Water Immersion and Hypothermia training should continue to be a prerequisite for coaches at both these levels.

## **Rower suffers a seizure afloat**

There was an incident in which an adaptive rower in a 2x suffered a seizure afloat after a race. He fell into the water and was rescued by his doubles partner who entered the water to keep his head above the water. He was then rescued by a launch.

It was subsequently found that the rower has epilepsy. He has been decreasing his medication over the last year. His doctor has determined that his medication will now be increased back up to his previous levels.

The club will be reminded of the Medical Panel Guidance on [Rowing and Epilepsy](#).

## **Information about incidents**

There was a request for information about incidents at nearby clubs.

It was explained that Incident Reports are confidential and that each month I provide anonymous summaries of reports that provide learning opportunities. The annual analysis of reported incidents is available [here](#).

## **Emergency Response Plan & Emergency Action Plan**

There was some confusion as one of these terms is used in RowSafe and the other is used in the Safety Audit. I confirmed that these are two slightly different names for the same thing. It is the contents of the plan that are important, not its name.

## **The Safety Audit deadline**

There was a suggestion that the deadline for completing the Safety Audit because clubs were not able to access their clubhouses and boathouses.

My view was that we should not change the dates for the following reasons.

1. There is little or no need to visit the club in order to complete the audit. The CRSA should know the answers to all the questions, or be able to find them in his or her records or by contacting other members of the club.
2. The lockdown may not end on 2 December. I know that the government is under pressure for it to do so but if the infection numbers continue to grow in spite of the lockdown, and the science indicates that the lockdown should be prolonged, then it may be extended.
3. If the club is not able to complete the audit by the due date then it still has the opportunity to discuss any problems that it has with its RRSA who can agree an extension.

Just as a reminder, the closing date for the submission of the 2020 Safety Audit was the 29<sup>th</sup> November with clubs being suspended from competition from 3<sup>rd</sup> December if they fail to meet this deadline.

## **Rowing at times when there are few other people around**

There have been times when streams have been flowing strongly and rowers have been afloat in isolation. Rowers should be aware that if they do get into difficulties when there are few people on the water and on the bank then there is unlikely to anyone available to help them or even to call for help. Please invite rowers to think carefully before they go afloat when there are few people around and if there are warnings from navigation authorities, etc., then please treat them with respect.

## **Advice on Covid Safety**

There have been several conversations in which British Rowing was unfairly blamed for preventing people from rowing due to the contents of the advice on Managing Covid-19. It was explained that the restrictions were imposed by the government as a matter of law. British Rowing was simply publishing this advice in a form that could easily be understood by rowers.

The legal requirements are contained within [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(England\) \(No. 4\) Regulations 2020](#). The most relevant regulations are presented in Appendix I.

## Appendix 1 Covid Regulations

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 4) Regulations 2020 came into effect on 5 November 2020 and expired at the end of the period of 28 days beginning with the day on which they come into force. They expired on 2 December 2020. They contained the following:

*Requirement to close premises and businesses*

16.—(1) A person responsible for carrying on a restricted business, or providing a restricted service, must cease to carry on that business or provide that service.

(2) Where a restricted business or restricted service forms, or is provided as, part of a larger business and that larger business is not itself a restricted business, the person responsible for carrying on the larger business complies with the requirement in paragraph (1) by closing down the restricted business or by ceasing to provide the restricted service.

(3) The requirement in paragraph (1)—

(a) does not apply to any facilities provided in criminal justice accommodation, and

(b) is subject to the exceptions in regulation 17(6) and (8).

(4) In this regulation “restricted business” and “restricted service” means a business or service which—

(a) is of a kind specified in Part 2 of the Schedule, or

(b) is carried on from, or provided at, premises of a kind specified in Part 2 of the Schedule.

If we look at Part 2 of the Schedule we find that this includes:-

### PART 2

*Other businesses*

24. Outdoor sports centres or amenities, including water sports, stables, shooting and archery venues, golf courses, driving ranges, outdoor gyms, outdoor swimming pools, water parks and aquaparks.

As I understand it, a rowing club can be regarded as a business, for the purposes of these regulations.

But

17 -(6) Regulation 16(1) does not prevent the use of—

(f) indoor gyms, fitness studios, indoor sports facilities and other indoor leisure centres for supervised activities for children;

(g) indoor gyms, fitness studios, indoor swimming pools, indoor sports courts and other indoor leisure centres and outdoor sports courts and swimming pools by schools or providers for post-16 education or training (as defined in paragraph 1(8)(e) of Schedule 17 to the Coronavirus Act 2020);