

Risk Assessment: Water Safety

Introduction

In order to minimise potential risks, competitors and their coaches should familiarise themselves with the Competitors Safety Plan, in particular the Competitors' Responsibility Section.

Risks on the water

The following are considered to be the main risks on the water:

- Capsize - particularly during manoeuvring and entry to/ exit from the boat; weeds at bank; limit proximity to weir.
- Capsize in cold water (below 15 degrees Centigrade) – The temperature of the water should be measured prior to the outing. If immersed the person should be rescued (taken out of the water) using the 'One Minute, One Degree' rule. e.g. 10 minutes to rescue at 10 degrees Centigrade, 5 minutes at 5 degrees.
- Collision - other river users; river borne debris; bridge supports; moorings; wild fowl; anglers equipment; landing stage. Need to warn on-coming crews of potential hazard (including those approaching from behind).
- In the water - water ingestion; other river craft; weeds; sharp objects on the river floor.
- Immersion in water - need to shower; wash hands before eating or drinking.
- High river flow - water-borne debris and steering difficulty, particularly when turning the boat. In strong stream boat in up-stream direction.
- Flooding - can lead to grounding if boat strayed from river's course.
- High winds, especially when combined with high river flow - steering difficulty, particularly when turning the boat and being blown onto river bank. Also potential for boat swamping.
- Night/fog - restricted visibility, steering difficulty.
- Lightning - cease boating on first signs. Do not go on water until at least 30 minutes have elapsed since last evident (30 minute Rule).
- Hot sun - avoid sun burn; hyperthermia.
- Heavy / driving rain, especially in cold conditions - avoid hypothermia.
- Weirs, at both ends of the usable river - currents, separation distance dependant on river flow, wind. For downstream weir, do not go beyond white strip on concrete bank.
- Limited riverside path - limited access for assistance.
- Upstream, narrowing and windy river - steering difficulty, and greater difficulty avoiding of other river users. Also, obstructions from over-hanging trees, further narrows usable river.
- Other users (motors boats, including manoeuvring into and out of marinas, canoeists, dragon boats, swimmers/triathletes, anglers and wild fowl) - collision, steering difficulty.
- Damaged or incorrectly adjusted equipment - unexpected response from equipment, particularly when put under pressure. Make equipment checks prior to outings.
- Human error.
- Inexperienced crews - slow or inappropriate reaction to hazardous situations.

Risk Management

Safety Boats

Safety boats will be in use:

- **Safety Boat 1** – above the start in the marshalling area (to cover the single/junior scullers who are often out of sight of the start marshals).
- **Safety Boat 2** – beyond the Start between Coneygeare Bridge and the upstream end of St Neots Marina.
- **Safety Boat 3** – opposite St Neots Rowing Club in a position to cover the middle portion of the course, and to steer wayward boats back to the correct (right-hand) side of the river.
- **Safety Boat 4** – upstream from Crosshall Marina near to St Neots Golf Club.
- **Safety Boat 5** – downstream end of Crosshall Marina.

Safety boats will be in position 30 minutes before the start of racing until 10 minutes after the last division of the day. All safety boats have radios to communicate with Race Control and each other.

Race Monitors

Race Monitors will be in position at various points along the course to advise competitors of any hazards they may encounter. They will be positioned as follows:

- 7 upstream of the Start to advise crews of where they should position themselves prior to racing (assisted by Safety Boat 1).
- 2 on Coneygeare Bridge – one facing upstream, one facing downstream
- 2 on Town Bridge – one facing upstream, one facing downstream
- 1 on the Regatta Field opposite Ouse Valley Marina
- 1 on the Common Corner
- 1 on the Common opposite St Neots Golf Club
- 4 downstream of the Finish to advise crews of where they should position themselves after crossing the Finish line.

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St Neots Rowing Club

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