



BRITISHROWING

HRSA Monthly Report

September 2020

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TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

Incident Reports in September

A sculler capsized and had difficulty removing his feet from the shoes until he was assisted by a coach in a launch. It was subsequently found that his boat had no heel restraints at all and that the shoes, were too small for his feet. The sculler is reported to have understood what heel restraints are and what they do. He had been briefed before the session; this briefing had emphasised the need to check heel restraints. Every year the analysis of reported incidents shows that safety depends on behaviour. This time the sculler was lucky, let's hope he learns from this experience. I also hope that others learn from this experience. Always check, never assume.

There was an incident on a canal where a boat was contaminated by a "black scum that stank of fuel". This was reported to the local office of the Canal and River Trust who were not able to trace the source. Pollution incidents can also be reported to the Environment Agency Incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 (24-hour service), there is more information [here](#).

Three people were seen in a coaching launch not wearing life jackets. The crew were challenged, and the response was 'we don't have to wear them'. (This is the first time I have heard of anyone saying this.) This is ludicrous; a lifejacket is not a fashion item; it is worn to save lives. It is also selfish; if you do not wear one then you are exposing yourself to risk and also putting others at physical and emotional risk.

In another incident, a cox was reported to be not wearing a lifejacket. It is difficult to imagine an excuse for this.

In September there were many head-on collisions in the middle of rivers and canals. The causes include overtaking, moving out to pass an obstruction, inability to steer accurately, lack of attention, etc. The other common feature of all these incidents was not keeping a good lookout ahead. In some cases, the rowers' injuries were lessened by the presence of backstays. The bending of backstays during impacts tends to absorb much of the impact energy (this is known as plastic deformation) and tends to reduce the harm or injury caused by the collision. Please remember that RowSafe advises that backstays are fitted to the front two riggers on each side of all boats bigger than 1xs.



A moment's inattention can cause weeks of pain. A rower using weights pulled the 10kg off the bar, forgetting the 5kg was still on, it fell on his foot. This resulted in a big toe being broken in two places. This will require 3-4 Weeks immobilisation with the foot in a supportive shoe. This could have been avoided by a little more care.

There were at least five incidents of anti-social behaviour mostly involving youths throwing objects and spitting at rowers. Some incidents were reported to the Police by phoning 101. This is the recommended procedure.

Wind Damages boats

Boats were blown off outside racking by strong and gusty winds. The top boat was only held in place by the stern section becoming wedged into steel bar of the blade rack on an adjoining building, resulting into large gash and impact hole

The boat below was holed by a rigger pin falling onto it.



Boats blew off due to their being racked incorrectly in following ways:

- Positioned too close to the outside edge of the rack leaving too little room for the boat tie to be secure
- some boat ties were not actually around the rack, just looped around the boat
- some ties not tightened fully
- some ties tightened were tightened when crooked, this enabled them to work loose
- some ties had straps fed in the wrong side of the buckle preventing teeth from 'holding' tension
- one boat was positioned sitting on a backstay, which prevented it being fully on the rack

Some of these problems are shown in the photos below:-



In another incident, at another club, a boat was damaged when it was blown off trestles. Please pay attention when racking boats. It is not difficult to get it right and the consequences can be serious when it is done incorrectly.

Capsize Drill online learning modules now on RowHow

In the August report it was explained that there will be two modules one for rowers and another for coaches. The “Capsize Training for Rowers” and the “Capsize Training for Coaches and Club Officials” modules are both available on RowHow [here](#). Certificates are available to people who complete a course.

RowHow is available to all British Rowing members and all members can complete these two courses. To access RowHow simply click on “Sign In” at the top of the British Rowing website homepage and then click on RowHow in the drop-down menu. When you visit for the first time you will be asked to register.

Risk Assessment training

The revision of the “Safety Basics – Understanding and Managing Risk” online module is complete and it is available on RowHow [here](#).

Comments have been made on the latest version of the revision to the Advanced Risk Assessment training and it is hoped that this will be published soon. Please remember that RowSafe defines the expectation that all Club Rowing safety Advisers and all Competition Rowing Safety Advisers complete this training.

Annual Rowing Safety Audit

Someone wrote to me to say that the date on the Safety Audit was still 2019. It later transpired that he had been using an obsolete link. Please take care to use the link that was included in the recent email to you. Please do not use the link that you “bookmarked” last year.

Just as a reminder, the audit is now open, the closing date is 29 November and any clubs that have not had their audit accepted by 3rd December will be suspended. “Suspension” in this context means that they will not be able to enter British Rowing Affiliated competitions.

If your club has any problems completing the audit in time, or needs help to do so, then please contact your RRSA. There is contact information [here](#).

Working with Coastal Rowing WA Inc

Advice and support continue to be provided to Coastal Rowing in Western Australia.

In September, advice was provided on:-

- Launch driving qualifications and the New Zealand Rowing Safety Boat Operators qualification, there is more on this information [here](#). This is intended for launch drivers to enable them to rescue rowing boats.
- The capsized drill online learning modules
- Risk Assessment and the online training modules
- Approaches to safety
- The importance of behaviour in safety as shown by the annual analysis of Incident Reports

Many of these topics were discussed in a Zoom teleconference.

This support and advice were highly valued. So much so that two of the members of Coastal Rowing WA have become individual members of British Rowing and the organisation is considering applying to become a British Rowing “Associated Organisation”.

Lightning

Last month I provided a Safety Alert on Lightning. Someone wrote to say that during the Olympics, in the event of lightning, crews would be instructed to leave blades and boats during a lightning storm as the carbon fibre is a super conductor and could add to the risk.

This is quite correct; it is similar to the concern about carbon fibre fishing rods. If the rowers get into shelter as quickly as possible then they should be safe.

Kayaks and Stand Up Paddle Boards

There was an incident in which kayakers were reported to be using both sides of the river and there have previously been incidents where Stand Up Paddleboarders did not appear to understand the navigation rules. In a previous report I invited rowers to politely explain this to them.

In previous correspondence with colleagues at British Canoeing and the British Stand Up Paddleboard Association both explained that navigation rules are included in their training. However, the number of people who ask for training is relatively small, and these are sports where many participants are not members of their National governing Body.

I have since written again asking both of these associations to include something on navigation rules in their newsletters to members.

Please continue to explain the navigation rules to SUP users and canoeists who do not appear to understand them. Please do so in a gentle, kind and friendly manner. They, like us, simply want to have fun afloat.

Covid App QR code poster

There was a request for information about the desirability of posting the NHS Test and Trace poster in boathouses. The response referred to the then recently issued British Rowing Guidance and was:-

At our club we have created and printed a QR code and will display it inside the boathouse (we do not have a clubhouse) at each entrance. This is very straightforward. We wanted it to be inside so that any passing numpty would not be able to scan it and confuse the test and trace system.

This is covered in a recent British Rowing guidance for clubs where it says:-

“From 24 September, clubs are required to display an official NHS QR code to support NHS Test and Trace. This should be provided alongside an alternative method for members to provide contact details for this purpose. You can [read more about these requirements here](#) and [create your QR code here](#). We are seeking further clarification with regards whether different areas of the club (e.g. club bar) should display separate QR codes.”

Covid Rules

There was a question about whether a rower is required to self-isolate if someone in their crew tested positive for the virus. Her concern was that she would only be paid during absence from work if she had an official notification from NHS Test and Trace. The response was based on quoting the guidance, as follows:-

Opt-in

To help ensure that members have understood the risks and mitigation measures your club has put in place, it is recommended that you ask members to actively opt-in to re-joining activities. This is particularly important with activities which carry a higher risk of viral transmission for example: rowing in crew boats and coxing.

British Rowing advises clubs to keep a record of the opt-in from members which could include confirmation that they accept the code of behaviour related to coronavirus. For junior rowers and adults at risk, it is important that this written opt-in comes from their appropriate parent, guardian or carer, however, you may also wish to get the confirmation from the junior or adult at risk to ensure their understanding of the guidelines your club has put in place.

Code of behaviour

Your plans to mitigate the risk around coronavirus will only work effectively if everyone in your club follows the guidelines you put in place. Your club should develop an appropriate code of conduct that members are asked to agree to when opting into the new arrangements. You should keep a record of these agreements.

Test and trace

In the case of a member testing positive for COVID-19, you may be asked to help identify contacts of that person for the purpose of NHS test and trace. Your club should maintain a log of who has attended the club at different times within the last 21 days to help facilitate this.

To help minimise potential inadvertent transmission of the virus to a large number of people, you may want to consider limiting mixing of different groups of people at the club and forming 'training groups' that are consistent. "

I think that if the club defines its rules such that anyone who has been in contact with a person who subsequently tests positive will self-isolate then they should do so. Someone, probably the club, should report this contact to NHS Test and Trace so that they can assess the level of contact and make the request official. In this way there should not be an issue with the exposed persons' employers.

If the member is not contacted by NHS Test and Trace after a few days, then they should seek further medical advice from either NHS or their GP.

National Water Safety Forum Newsletter

The National Water Safety Forum (NWSF) is primarily focussed on drowning prevention. Its aim is to reduce accidental drowning fatalities in the UK by 50% by 2026, and reduce risk amongst the highest risk populations, groups and communities. (About half the drownings in the UK are suicide, the remainder are accidental).

Its current targets are that:

- Every child should have the opportunity to learn to swim and receive water safety education at primary school and where required at Key Stage 3
- Every community with water risks should have a community-level risk assessment and water safety plan
- To better understand water-related self-harm
- Increase awareness of everyday risks in, on and around the water
- All recreational activity organisations should have a clear strategic risk assessment and plans that address key risks.

The NWSF also maintains The Water Incident Database (WAID), the key aims of which are to:

- provide insights into levels of risk, enabling meaningful comparisons with activities outside the water sector, and the determination of risk acceptability;
- supersede the uncoordinated efforts of organisations trying to establish national trends based on limited data of uncertain quality;
- produce much higher quality evidence;
- maximise value and minimise aggregate cost of data collection

The latest newsletter is available [here](#).

Keeping University Beginners Safe

There has been a discussion with the rowing coordinator at a large university about the coaching of beginner rowers during the Covid pandemic. This subject was addressed during the recent British Rowing webinar entitled Return to Rowing: University Beginners and in the Managing a Beginner Programme – Guidance for University Clubs available [here](#). The webinar can be accessed [here](#).

The important issues are to:-

- Remember that Public Health is the Number One Priority
- Base crews around university household groups (people who live together)
- Keep crews stable, avoid swapping people from crew to crew
- If there is a University Covid advice team then seek and follow their advice.
- Be aware that the situation can change rapidly and keep aware of changes to national and local restrictions.

Advice on a Training weekend at another club

A club asked for advice as it was considering having a weekend of training for an eight and a four with our friends across at another club about 50 miles away. just to break up the monotony of training. There will not be a competition, just a weekend of training alongside different boats on a different piece of water, just the two clubs involved.

The initial plan is to travel over with our boats on Saturday, avoiding public transport where necessary. We wouldn't need general access to the rowing club, just to the toilets (and changing rooms in an emergency). The boats would remain on the trailer overnight, the club will take its own food, and not mix in groups larger than six between outings or when briefing / debriefing and so forth.

The response was:-

If you were going to a training camp, then I do not think that you would have any but the normal concerns (Covid security when traveling and when staying away from home, eating, etc.). I do not think that the situation is significantly different if you go to another club and row alongside crews from that club **providing** that you observe all the social distancing and disinfection measures as described below, and do not share equipment or facilities.

Obviously there should be no socialising with the members of the other club and your coach should not travel in the same launch as anyone from the other club. You need to maintain your social "bubble" and it is difficult to maintain distance in a launch especially if anyone is shouting. Face coverings will not really be sufficient. Launch operation is covered in the guidance.

Simply, if you have safe, effective procedures at your club and you replicate them at the host club then all should be well.