

# Olympia Area Rowing Safety Guidelines

## General

These guidelines establish a minimum safety standard:

- All Club members are expected to make an effort to promote safe and responsible rowing.
- Club assumes no responsibility, either expressed or implied, for the personal safety or welfare of any person.
- These guidelines are made to teach and help members and their guests be responsible for their own safety. You are responsible to correctly assess your ability to row safely under the existing weather, water, and traffic conditions any time you go out on the water in a boat launched from the OAR dock.
- Each member acknowledges they have read the safety guidelines upon membership renewal.

## Coaches and Launch Drivers

All coaches, and launch drivers without an accompanying coach, must provide evidence of the satisfactory completion of the following prior to driving a launch at any practice:

- Thorough familiarity with the OAR Safety Guidelines and the OAR Safe Sport Policies.
- Documentation of completed float test – tread water or float for 10 minutes in workout clothing (passed every 5 years).
- CPR/First Aid Certification (retraining required every two years).
- Launch training.
- Boating Safety course certification (US Power Squadron, USCG, WA State Parks).
- Review of the US Rowing Safety Video (annually).
- Review of the traffic pattern rules (annually).
- Signed and returned Olympia Area Rowing Waiver.

At the beginning of each season, coaches and launch drivers will review the medical forms of any team they are coaching.

All coaches working with juniors will pass a background check before being permitted to coach.

At the beginning of each on-water season, Junior coaches will provide a safety briefing to the Junior rowers.

## Rowers & Coxswains

**All rowers and coxswains** must complete the following before entering boats on the water:

- Signed U.S. Rowing Association Liability Waiver on-line.
- Signed and returned Olympia Area Rowing Waiver.
- Medical Emergency Contact form on file with OAR and updated as needed.
- Documentation of completed float test – tread water or float for 10 minutes in workout clothing (passed every 5 years).

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- Review of the posted traffic patterns (Junior rowers at the beginning of each season, Masters rowers at the beginning of the Spring Season with the coach of the program).
- Viewing of the U.S. Rowing Association Safety Video "Ready All, Row" (All novices before rowing on the water, Junior rowers at the beginning of each season, Masters rowers endeavor to watch annually).
- Review of the OAR Safety Guidelines and OAR Safe Sport Policies

### **Non-Member Guests** must complete the following:

- Signed and returned U.S. Rowing Association Liability Waiver.
- Signed and returned Olympia Area Rowing Waiver.
- Obtain approval from the Captain.
- Review and agree to adhere to the OAR Safety Guidelines.

## Safety for Sweep and Sculling Coached Sessions

**On Land** - Before taking out boats, all novice classes will undergo at least one hour of instruction on moving /carrying shells while on land:

- Carrying boats from the boathouse to the water.
- Setting boats into the water properly.
- Carrying boats back to boathouse and carefully racking them.

**On the Water** – All coached sessions will conform the following guidelines:

- Coaches/launch-drivers will always supervise rowing activities from a motorized launch/boat that is capable of water rescue of rowers if there is an accident.
- Coaches/launch-drivers must carry a cell phone and have the other coaches cell phone numbers available.
- The Coach-to-rower ratio maximum is 1:16 (not including coxswains).
- All boats must remain within visual distance of the launch. A Coach may use his/her judgment about exceptions to this rule, based on conditions of the water, weather, and experience of the rowers and/or coxswains.
- All singles and doubles must have personal flotation devices on board. They need not be worn, but must be readily available.
- Boats will not enter the water, will head in immediately, or will head to the nearest point of safety, in the event of:
  - Whitecaps.
  - Any threat of an electrical storm.
  - A small craft advisory.
  - Fog (see fog safety guidelines).
- Boats may only be on the water during daylight hours, and during dusk and dawn provided that boat lights, which meet USCG specifications, are used.
- Boats and launches will follow the posted traffic patterns.
- Coxswains, single scullers, and the bow seat in boats without coxswains will watch vigilantly for oncoming boat traffic and other obstacles and not rely on the coach / launch driver to steer for them.
- Coxswains will dress appropriately for the weather conditions and water temperatures.

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- Launches will adhere to no-wake zones, and be aware of their wake when passing crews on the water.

### **Safety Launches** - Launches must always carry:

- Enough life jackets for each rower and coxswain on the water, including the coach and passengers in the launch.
- First aid kit and launch safety bag (must meet USCG & USRA requirements).
- Toolbox with spare rowing equipment parts.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Paddles for use in the event of mechanical problems with the launch.
- Communication equipment for reporting emergency (cell phone/marine band radio).
- Emergency contact numbers, including the cell phone numbers of coaches / launch drivers.

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.

### **Safety Guidelines for Scullers (un-coached)**

To take out private or club sculling boats without an accompanying safety launch, scullers must:

- Successfully complete a sculling clinic and/or be checked out by the Captain or the Captain's designated sculling certifier.
- Sign out boats in the club's logbook before rowing. Be sure to notice if other rowers are already signed out and are out on the water.
- Check equipment for breakage or wear before going out. Tag defective equipment with red or yellow caution tape and log it in the equipment logbook and note it in the sign out logbook at the station as soon as possible. Never row equipment, which has been tagged for repair.
- Boats will not enter the water or will head in immediately in the event of:
  - Whitecaps.
  - Any threat of an electrical storm.
  - A small craft advisory.
  - Fog (see fog safety guidelines).
- Boats may only be on the water during daylight hours, and during dusk and dawn provided that boat lights, which meet USCG specifications, are used.
- If you flip a boat, note this in the sign out logbook, so the equipment may be checked for damage.
- If you flip a racing single, attempt to climb back into the boat on the water; if you cannot, then get your body on top of the boat to use it for floatation, or, if you can, swim to the closest shore or dock.
- Have a personal flotation device on board. They need not be worn, but must be readily available. This is required for all club owned and private singles and doubles.
- Learn and conform to traffic patterns. Be alert and always be aware of where you are heading
- Wash club boats upon returning to the dock. Be sure to note any problems with your boat in the equipment logbook. Tag boats that shouldn't be rowed prior to repair.
- Enter notation in the logbook of any new obstructions on the water that other rowers should be made aware of.

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- If under the age of 18, scullers may use club equipment only under the supervision of a coach/instructor or club member parent who is certified to row.
- Quad sculling boats may not be used without an accompanying safety launch unless the steersperson has been certified by the Captain of Boats as qualified to do so.

The club encourages rowing with a buddy and staying near shore, and recommends using a waterproof case for a cell phone.

### In the Event of Emergency

#### Chain of Command

- In class and clinic situations, the coach is in charge. All coxswains and rowers must follow the directions of the coach.
- On the water, if the coach is not present, the coxswain or bow rower is responsible for the safety of the crew and boat.
- If at a regatta, on-water referees, judges and safety officials may also give direction to a coxswain or crew.

#### Process

- If you feel that you need non-emergency assistance on the water, call the Port of Olympia at 360-528-8049.
- If there is a health or safety emergency on the water or at the boathouse, the coach will use his/her judgment to:
  - Call 911 using a cell phone (this is the preferred method for calling for help).
  - Use Marine band radio:
    - Channel 65 Port of Olympia Swantown Marina 8am – 6pm.
    - Channel 16 Olympia Police & Harbor Patrol boater distress.
  - Call using a pay phone - the nearest pay phone to the dock is at the end of the boat turn-around cul-de-sac, under the awning.
  - If on the water, be sure to note your nearest dock location to responders (i.e. – Swantown Marina, Priest Point Park, West Bay Maria, DNR facility, etc.).
- In the event of a health or safety emergency call, coaches will:
  - Contact the parent, or designated emergency contact of rower(s) in distress. Forms with contact info are in the black file box inside the boathouse.
  - Follow the documentation process below.
  - Contact other coaches if equipment is broken.

#### Documentation

- All medical or first aid emergencies during club activities will be reported to the club President, Vice President or club Captain within two hours.
- All serious incidents (youth disciplinary actions, 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.

## **Olympia Area Rowing Safety Guidelines**

- 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 give it to the club President within 48 hours of the incident