

SAFETY GUIDELINES- OREGON ASSOCIATION OF ROWERS

REVISED 2018

I. INTRODUCTION

These Safety Guidelines are to help educate members of the club regarding their responsibility for their own safety at all times. Also see the OAR Policies and Procedures Manual for additional information.

- All OAR members are expected to promote safe and responsible rowing and comply with these Guidelines.
- Each member is responsible to carefully assess their ability to row safely under the existing weather, water and traffic conditions each time they launch and row.
- OAR assumes no responsibility, either expressed or implied, for the personal safety or welfare of any person participating in an OAR activity.
- See the Personal Flotation Device Guideline (page 6) for a summary of safe on-water practices and the use of PFD's.

ROWERS AND COXSWAINS ARE REQUIRED TO:

- Have either attended one of the periodic Safety Fairs or to have completed the Safety Quiz available on the website under the Join OAR page. This is a condition of membership, in addition to the Swim/Float Test.
- Be familiar with the US Rowing Association Safety Video "Ready All, Row" and this OAR Safety Guidelines document and to review these as necessary.
- Be knowledgeable of the posted and alternate traffic patterns. Be aware of permanent hazards such as tree stumps, bridge abutments and buoys, as well as changing hazards such as debris and other watercraft.

COXSWAINS ARE REQUIRED TO:

- Dress appropriately for weather conditions and water temperatures and to wear a Coast Guard approved flotation device. This may be one of the inflatable PFD's or one of the red flotation suits.
- Carry an airhorn for emergency use and an orange flag (placed under the bow seat) to use to indicate a rower in the water and as a signal for assistance.
- Carry a spare lifejacket and a "Coxswain Bag" containing tools (7/16" wrench, adjustable wrench, Phillips screwdriver), spare parts (nuts, washers, spacers), shoelaces for tie-downs, tape (electrical & athletic), bandages.

II. COACHED SESSIONS

ON LAND:

Before launching rowers and coxswains are to verify:

- Secure shoe tie-downs.
- Secure rigging of seat, rails and oar locks.
- Proper function of the cox box, sound system, and airhorn (if applicable).
- Secure skag and functioning steering mechanism.
- At least one member of the boat should have a cell phone in a secured waterproof pouch.
- Designated rower to sign out the boat with rowers' names and the name of the boat on the logbook.

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ON WATER:

All sessions will conform to the following guidelines:

- Follow this general launch plan:
 1. Coach is ready to launch from, or be nearby, the dock before rowing shells launch.
 2. All boats meet near the “angel” (steel triangle shaped structure on the dam) before proceeding across the dam or as otherwise directed by the coach.
- Coaches/launch drivers will supervise rowing practices from a motorized launch that is capable of water rescue of rowers if there is an accident.
- All boats are to remain within a safe, close distance of the launch. Coaches may use their discretion about exceptions to this rule based on conditions of the water, weather, and experience of the rowers and/or coxswains.
- Boats shall not enter the water or are to head back to the dock or other safe location in the event of:
 - o Whitecaps in lake area where rowing
 - o Any threat of an electrical storm
 - o Fog rendering visibility to less than 100 yards.
- Boats on the water during low light conditions must use boat lights which meet USCG specifications.
- Coxswains, single scullers, and the bow seat in boats without a coxswain will watch vigilantly for oncoming boat traffic and other obstacles and should not rely on the coach/launch driver to steer for them.

III. UN-COACHED SESSIONS:

Rowers and coxswains will comply with all applicable rules for coached sessions as well as the following:

- To row in any boat in an un-coached session (i.e. single or team boat), successfully pass and comply with the requirements of the OAR “Flip Test” (see page 5).
- Members may only use those boats (singles and team boats) for which they are coach authorized. Members are to initiate outreach to the coach to secure authorization.
- Authorization and Flip Test status is posted on the public “Flip Test Roster” in the boathouse and on the Members’ page of the website. The roster also indicates positions for which each rower is coach authorized (e.g. bow seat).
- Practicing un-coached in a racing lineup, or similarly arranged un-coached practice, does not relieve any rower from complying with these requirements.
- Stay close to shore and watch for water hazards.
- After each row, inspect the boat for damage. Report any damage in the logbook and on the white board in the boathouse, as well as notifying the equipment committee, and completing *an Incident Report* (available in the boathouse).
- Note any hazards or obstructions encountered in the logbook for other rowers to see.

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IV. COACHES AND LAUNCH DRIVERS

- Coaches, launch drivers, and anyone riding in the launch are required to wear USCG approved PFD.
- All launch drivers are to comply with the Policies and Procedures Manual Attachment B.
- Coaches are to ensure the coxswains are wearing an approved PFD or flotation suit.
- At the beginning of each practice, coaches are to provide a brief safety message (e.g. highlights of expected rowing conditions, expected hazards, planned changes to the traffic pattern, and reminders to check equipment).
- Driver will have an approved Boaters Card.
- Drivers will adhere to speed limits, no-wake zones and be aware of their wake when passing crews on the water.
- Drivers will attach the Kill Switch Tether firmly to their clothing while the transmission is in gear so that the engine will shut off immediately should the driver fall.
- Each launch will carry:
 - o Kippy Liddle bag
 - o Boat entry ladder
 - o Toolbox with spare rowing equipment and parts
 - o USCG approved fire extinguisher
 - o Paddles for use in the event of mechanical problems with the motor.

V. IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

CHAIN OF COMMAND

- In coached sessions, the coach is in charge. All coxswains and rowers must follow the directions of the coach on water and on land.
- If the coach is not present, the coxswain or the bow seat (in uncoxed boats) is responsible for directions concerning the safety of the crew and boat.
- If at a regatta, the on-water referees, judges, and safety officials may also give directions to the coxswain or crew.

PROCESS

- For emergency assistance:
 - o Call 911. Report the location of the incident and the nature of the emergency.
 - o Once at the boathouse, as needed, access and call the emergency contacts of rowers involved. This information is available from the Members File Notebook in the boathouse.
 - o Report the incident to the OAR president and the coach within two hours.
 - o Document the incident using the *Incident Report Form* within 48 hours. Copies of this form are in the notebook in the boathouse.

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- For non-emergency assistance:
 - o Call the coach, wave the orange flag, wave your arms, blow your whistle or use the airhorn.
 - o Document the incident using the *Incident Report Form* within 48 hours. Copies of this form are in the notebook in the boathouse.
- ALL emergency and non-routine matters are to be reported according to the above protocols (including, but not limited to: flipped boats, substantive boat/oar damage).

IF YOU FLIP A BOAT

- If wearing a PFD, determine if you should inflate it (for manual inflatable PFD's).
- Determine if a coach/launch is nearby and can provide assistance.
- Attempt to right the boat, re-enter and row to the nearest dock or shore. If not able to re-enter the boat, get flat on top of the overturned boat to use it for flotation and to minimize heat loss. Hand paddle or kick towards the dock or shore.
- If you cannot get in or on top of the boat, inflate your PFD.
- Stay with the boat in almost every situation and signal for assistance.

IF YOU ARE SWEEPED OUT OF A BOAT (e.g. catching a crab)

- Remain submerged until the boat has passed overhead to avoid being hit by an oar or rigger.
- The coxswain or bow rower should ascertain if a PFD needs to be thrown to the rower.
- Signal the coach or launch if available.
- If possible, the crew should back the boat adjacent to the rower and assist with re-entry.
- If the rower is unable to re-enter the boat, the coach/safety launch should get the rower into the launch.
- If the rower cannot re-enter the boat and/or a launch is not nearby, the rower should get as much of their body across the hull and out of the water as possible while awaiting assistance.

IF YOU ARE IN A SWAMPED BOAT

- Signal the coach/safety launch.
- Do not exit the boat. All boats at OAR are able to stay afloat when swamped.
- If not wearing a PFD, put it on now if available.
- If there is not a coach or safety launch nearby, row to the nearest shore or dock. A swamped boat must be rowed slowly and with care.

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VI. FLIP/RE-ENTRY and HULL FLOAT TEST

SUMMARY

- To row in any boat (club or private) during an un-coached row, OAR members are required to pass a “Flip/Re-entry” or “Get on the Hull” Test and demonstrate knowledge of current OAR Safety Guidelines. The test is conducted in one of the club singles.
- Alternatively, a rower may row un-coached by signing and complying with the OAR “Agreement to Wear PFD” document and with coach authorization.
- Coach authorization for particular boats, as a subsequent step, is required.
- Successful completion of the Test is required at a minimum of once every three years.
- All members are encouraged to take the Test, even if they do not row un-coached.

TEST: FLIP AND RE-ENTRY or GET ON THE HULL

- The test is to be conducted in one of the older club singles. Private boat owners are encouraged to test in their own boat, but may test in a club boat similar to other members.
- **TEST A: RE-ENTRY INTO A SINGLE WITHIN 10 MINUTES**
 1. Rower to flip from the boat into the water. If the boat doesn’t actually turn upside down, the rower is roll it upside down. (10 minutes start at this point)
 2. Rower to demonstrate the ability to right-side the boat.
 3. Secure the oars and re-enter the boat in position to row. Rower may use “hoist over the gunwale” method or “harbor seal on the deck” method. See the videos on the Safety page for more details.
 4. Secure feet. Demonstrate a few strokes. (10 minutes end)
- **TEST B: FLOAT AND STRADDLE THE HULL OF AN OVERTURNED BOAT WITHIN 10 MINUTES**
 1. Rower to flip into the water. If the boat doesn’t actually turn upside down, the rower it is to turn the boat to the upside-down position. (10 minutes start at this point)
 2. Demonstrate ability to get your body out of the water by reaching and climbing across the hull.
 3. Demonstrate the ability to straddle the boat in a sitting position, wave and blow the whistle which is attached to the rigging, and then hand paddle the boat for a few strokes. (10 minutes end)

BACKGROUND

The test will be conducted by OAR coaches in collaboration with the Safety Committee which is also responsible for administrative oversight and tracking. The test will be administered at Dexter Lake during warm water season (60+F). The test will be given as frequently as is reasonable in response to members’ needs and schedules. While the test is conducted in singles, all rowers who row un-coached are required to have passed the test or sign and comply with the “Agreement to Wear PFD” document. Any rower who is unsuccessful at completing at least the Straddle the Hull test in the 10 minute time allotment must wear an inflatable PFD at un-coached sessions.

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Upon successful completion of the test, members are also responsible to obtain coach permission to row at any time un-coached. Such authorization is by both boat class (1, 2x, 4x, 4+, 8+) and seat type (e.g. to bow a double or quad un-coached requires authorization). While authorization does not need to be renewed, the coach may withdraw authorization at any time should this be in the best interest of the individual rower, the club equipment, and the membership.

VII. PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE (PFD) GUIDELINE FOR ALL MEMBERS

Water/Air Temperature:	COLDER Water < 50F and/or Air < 40F	WARMER Water >50f and Air >50F
Coached Row	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coxswains & coaches required to wear PFD or approved flotation. - Recommend all rowers wear an inflatable PFD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coxswains & coaches required to wear PFD or approved flotation. - Recommend small boat rowers wear or carry an inflatable PFD.
Un-coached row	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unless Flip Test current, rower required to wear inflatable PFD. - Inflatable PFD recommended for all rowers. - PFD required for coxswain. - Observe "4 oars" rule. - Carry cell phone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unless Flip Test current, rower required to wear inflatable PFD. - Inflatable PFD recommended for all rowers. - PFD required for coxswain. - Observe "4 oars" rule. - Carry cell phone

Notes:

- PFDs are to be approved US Coast Guard Type III vest or inflatable vest or belt pack.
- Manually inflatable vests are preferred by most rowers. Rowers are responsible for purchase and maintenance of their own inflatable PFD for use at un-coached rows.
- Water and Air temperature are determined from established links from the OAR website.
- Coxswains are to wear one of the inflatable PFD vests or one of the red flotation suits which are both USCG approved. Note: The older yellow flotation suits are not USCG approved and should be worn with an additional PFD.
- A small boat is defined as 1x, 2x and 2-. Team boat is defined as 4x, 4+, 4- and 8+.
- "4 Oars" rule means at least four oars be on the water together. (e.g. singles or pairs with another boat). It is always safest to have at least two boats rowing together. **ROW WITH A BUDDY!**