

# AGECROFT ROWING CLUB

## SAFETY PLAN



October 2022

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The safety plan provides information and guidance on how to use the facilities at Agecroft Rowing Club safely and how to keep safe whilst enjoying the sport of rowing. This plan is compiled following a series of risk assessments based on the activities at Agecroft Rowing Club and is updated in light of current good practice, following incidents and changes to the club or its activities. A review is to be undertaken at least annually.

Agecroft actively promotes safety, and this plan outlines the requirements that all members, other water and gym users must adhere to when using the facilities. The plan states the methods in which the clubs' activities are undertaken to ensure they are done so safely.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Agecroft Rowing Club has a responsibility for the safety of its members and that of the public. The club actively promotes a good safety culture by adopting the minimum standards of safe practice within the BR Row Safe Guide. A copy of the guide is held in the club office and is available to download from the BR website<sup>1</sup>. All members should make themselves familiar with this plan and the BR safety guide.

Any member/non-member/crew using our facilities or rowing from the landing stage opposite the club must adhere to this plan.

All club members are responsible for their own health and safety, and for the safety of other club members and members of the public who may be affected by their actions. All club members have a Duty of Care and must always act responsibly and must comply with this plan.

Breaches of the BR Row Safe Guide/Club Safety Plan should be reported to the Club Captain, Club Chairman, Safety Officer or another member of the committee.

**All** incidents, including potential incidents which have or could have resulted in an injury – known as “Near Misses” - are required to be entered onto the BR online incident log. They should also be reported to the Safety Officer/Club Captain.

## **SWIMMING ABILITY**

All rowers, coxes and launch drivers must be in good health and must be able and confident to swim a minimum of 50 metres, under water for a minimum of 5 meters and tread water for at least 2 minutes in light clothing. A declaration to this effect on the club membership form must be signed and returned to the club membership secretary upon joining.

Any member of the committee or coach will have the authority to prevent anyone from going afloat whom they believe cannot swim.

All juniors must wear a life jacket until they have completed a swim and capsize test and have completed a competency test that includes the following.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/>

1. Getting into and out of the boat unaided.
2. Moving the sculling boat off from and back onto the landing stage unaided.
3. Sculling through a series of obstacles that require the sculler to move the boat both forward and backwards.
4. Sculling around the inner bay stopping only long enough to turn the boat around for a distance of 2000 metres.
5. Backing the scull onto a stake boat/landing stage.

Coxes and Launch Drivers must wear a life jacket at all times whilst on the water.

Coxes in front loaders should only use manual inflating life jackets.

Coxes who are required to carry weight in races should ensure that the weight is not attached to them.

Life jackets can be worn by beginner adult rowers, if they so choose.

## **JUNIOR ROWING**

A junior is defined as a rower who is under 18 years of age, but competent members over 15 years of age may be treated as adult rowers and afforded a reduced level of supervision. Advice should be sought from the Club Welfare Officer.

A competent adult senior member must supervise junior rowers.

Before any rowing activity is undertaken or a photograph/video is undertaken, written consent must be gained from the junior's parent or carer. Written consent must be gained to act 'in loco parentis' for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical attention of the need arises.

## **LEARNING TO ROW**

All beginners must receive an induction programme from the Club Captain or Coach, which takes the athlete and crew through the requirements within this plan and includes:

- a clear explanation of the local hazards
- navigation rules of the river
- how to lift, carry and handle boats and equipment
- what to do in an emergency and how to report an incident.

A club membership form must be complete and the declaration on swimming abilities signed.

Due to an increased risk of capsizing whilst learning to row, all beginner crews must be accompanied by a safety launch.

## **IN THE EVENT OF A CAPSIZE**

Stay calm and breathe deeply.

The hull of the boat should be used as a buoyancy aid to assist in getting back to dry land.

If you are unable to get back into the boat, you should aim to get as much of your torso out of the water and onto the upturned boat as soon as possible and await the arrival of the safety launch. Be patient and attract attention immediately. If possible, kick your legs to move the boat towards the bank. Do not try to swim the last few yards. Wait until you can stand up safely.

Leaving the boat and swimming to the bank should be a last resort. Being able to swim in a warm swimming baths is completely different to swimming in a cold river.

*Your body loses heat up to 30 times quicker in cold water than air, up to twice this amount if swimming. No matter how good a swimmer you are, unexpected immersion in cold water can lead to shock, and heat loss from immersion can quickly cause hypothermia.*

On return to the boathouse, all wet crew members should have a warm shower as soon as possible to help increase his or her body temperature.

If hypothermia is suspected the person should be actively re-warmed using clothing, thermal blankets, and hot drinks whilst appropriate medical help is sought.

## **HYGIENE**

A towel and a dry change of clothing should always be brought in case of an occasional capsized.

Always wash your hands after rowing, particularly before eating and drinking.

Cuts and scratches should be cleaned thoroughly upon returning to the boathouse and a clean dressing applied.

A first aid kit is held within the club office, should it be required. All incidents requiring first aid must be logged within the incident logbook held next to first box in the kitchen.

## **LAUNCHES**

No member may drive the launch until they have successfully completed a RYA Level 2 Powerboat Handling Course. Such courses are run by The Watersports Centre and can be booked by the Club Captain. Launch Drivers should maintain competency through practising boat handling and rescue techniques on a regular basis.

All our launches must undergo and pass an annual inspection. Without this certificate the launch can not go on the water.

No rower may go out in the main river/outer bay without a safety launch on the water.

Only one launch can be used on the river section of our water. The banks of our water are square solid walls, resulting lots of bounce. If we have multiple launches on the river nobody has a decent row. A second launch can be use in the main bay for juniors or beginners.

No junior may go out in the inner bays without a safety launch on the water or the bank being manned by a senior rower or coach.

Every launch is equipped with an BR safety bag that contains a first aid kit, knife, life jacket, thermal blanket, and throwline. In addition to this each launch must have the following:

- an anchor with at least 30-foot of rope attached
- a horn
- a bailing device
- a paddle
- a fire extinguisher.

Launch drivers should ensure before leaving the dock that they have enough fuel for that session.

All launch drivers must wear and attach a kill-cord to the start switch. All launch occupants must wear a life jacket. The launch driver is required to report immediately all mechanical failures, defects with the use, storage, and handling of the launch to the Club Captain or Maintenance Officer.

The maximum load of the launch must be considered when planning safety cover and should not be exceeded under any conditions.

## **FUEL STORAGE**

Partially full launch tanks and petrol canisters are required to be stored in the yellow flame proof cabinet when not in use. The cabinet must be always kept locked and secure. Ensure that the lid/air inlet on the fuel tank or canister is kept closed when not in use to prevent petrol vapour escaping. Even if the tank or canister is empty, ensure the lid/air inlet is kept closed as petrol vapour can still seep out. Petrol vapour is highly flammable.

No more than 50 litres of petrol and other highly flammable liquids is permitted to be stored within the boat house at any one time.

The use of naked flames or equipment that would give rise to a spark is not permitted within the vicinity of the petrol store. Sources of ignition are not permitted to be brought into the boathouse or through the external side gate.

## **REFUELLING**

The launch fuel containers should be refilled directly from the fuel pump at the petrol station. Refilling from other containers results in contamination of the fuel and damage to the launch engines. The clubs pays for the fuel used in our launches

## **BOAT STEERING/COXING**

Any person steering a boat must communicate effectively with the crew and adhere to the navigation rules of the river to ensure the safety of the crew at all times. Be aware of the position of other boats on the river, to avoid collisions and subsequent damage to the boat or injury to the crew. Look out for debris on the river and Anglers or other river users, to avoid an incident. Before moving from a stationary position coxes should ask bow if it's clear ahead of them.

## **NAVIGATIONAL RULES OF THE RIVER IRWELL**

Power boats and rowing boats must adhere to the navigational rules in place on the River Irwell. These include:

- on boating, crews/scullers should follow the bank to the 20 marker. Crews can go directly to the far bank by the shortest route (i.e. straight across) and then turn and proceed upstream on the far bank, if do this you need to check that as you cross the racing line it is safe to do so.
- keeping on the right-hand side of the river (starboard of the boat close to the bank)
- when being overtaken, keeping right to allow the overtaking craft on your left (port side).
- All crews returning to the landing stages should do so from the 17 marker. This gives you a clear viewing point to the landing stages.

## **EQUIPMENT SAFETY**

We have a modern high-quality fleet of boats that are kept in good working order. Unfortunately, these boats are designed to move smoothly through the water and do not take kindly to impact with other objects or any other type of abuse. It is therefore important that regular checks are made on the equipment you are using.

Before putting boats on the water, the following checks should be made.

- That you have permission from one of the captains to use that boat and blades.
- That your crew is not overweight for that boat.
- That the shell has no holes or cracks that will allow water into the boat.
- That all the watertight sections are sealed.
- That all nuts and bolts are tight.
- That the Bow ball is securely fitted - bolted on, not held on with tape. Check that there are no cracks or splits.
- That the buoyancy compartments, seals, hatch covers, boat hull and ventilation bungs are secure and watertight.
- That heel restraints are in good condition and are not frayed. That they can not be raised beyond the base of your footplate.

- That your rudder cables are free and have full movement. Check that your connectors are tight, and the cable is not frayed.
- That your rudder and fin are securely attached and are not bent or damaged.
- That Oars and Scull buttons are secure and properly set.

We carry a reasonable number of spares in the workshop, so most minor repairs can be done on the spot. If this is not the case, you should inform one of the captains.

Never remove one part from another boat to repair your boat. This causes more problems long-term than it solves short-term.

All boats should be washed and cleaned before going back on the rack. This is often the best time to find out if the boat has suffered any damage during the outing. The only exception to this is if the air temp is freezing or below. This is to avoid us creating an icy surface in front of the boathouse.

If the boat is damaged and the repair can not be done immediately then you should remove one rigger from the boat and inform one of the captains or maintenance person. The removed rigger should be locked in the storeroom until the repair has been completed. If the boat is damaged through impact or collision during the outing must be recorded within the incident log book held on the notice board.

The above also applies to any private boat stored or used at the club or on the waters used by the club.

All private boats must be insured by their owners.

## **FIRST AID**

First aid equipment can be found both in the club office/kitchen area and in the first aid room by the entrance to the Watersports Centre.

First aid kits are also carried in all the launches.

A list of first aiders will be kept on the club notice board.

A defibrillator is available in the first aid room and only trained persons are permitted to use this equipment.

## **WEIGHTS AND TRAINING ROOM**

The weights and training room is a potentially dangerous area and great care should be taken when using the facilities provided.

Do not lift weight until you have been instructed in the safe and correct technique for weightlifting.

Loose weights must be cleared away tidily after use.

Do not use free weights unaccompanied. Use spotters.

Warm up for at least 15 minutes before lifting weights. Never lift weights cold. Remember to take care of your back. Do not lift heavy weights whilst injured. If injured seek medical advice.

A responsible adult must accompany any junior members in the weights and training room.

Runners should put their names and time out and expected return time on the white board by the gym exit door. This will hopefully ensure that you do not get locked out of the building. You should of course remove your name upon return.

The club recommends that you do not run outside on your own.

## **SMOKING**

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building. This includes the boat bays.

## **RULES FOR THE MAIN RIVER AND OUTER BAY**

Before boating, the Club Captain, Club, Safety Advisor or BR Coach must assess if the wind and water conditions are suitable for rowing. This decision is final.

Permission must be gained to use the river from the Eastham lockkeeper (formally Latchford), 0151 327 4438, before any crew goes onto the water. The last crew off the water needs to ring Eastham to inform that all the rowing boats are off the water. It is the responsibility of the person who unlocks the boat bay and later locks up to ensure that Eastham has been informed.

No crew may boat until the Launch is on the river and manned.

Upon boating, crews/scullers should follow the Salford bank to the 20 marker before crossing to the Trafford bank to head to Manchester. Crews can proceed straight across from the landing stage to the far bank (the Old Trafford bank) by the shortest route, then turn left and proceed upstream on the far bank, towards the metro station. Crews doing this should make sure that its safe to cross the racing lane. (Please see the diagrams in the boat house for launching and docking routes.)

Crews returning to the boathouse do so from the 17 marker. Big white building.

Always keep TO THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF THE RIVER. That is the cox's right, with bow/starboard-side nearest the bank. Try and leave the middle empty.

When overtaking the faster crew is responsible for collision avoidance. The overtaking crew should move to the middle having checked that it is safe to do so. As soon as you have room to do so you must return to the right-hand side of the river.

You should not attempt to overtake going through the arches of a bridge with a centre arch or on the bend by Woden Street footbridge (the Green Footbridge).



Crews should not stop or overtake in the narrows between the Sam Platts and the Trafford Road Bridge or within 50 metres of each. Crews should move swiftly through this area and not use this area for warm up exercises.

Crews should not stop anywhere on the river unless they can be seen by other crews approaching for at least 100 metres in either direction. If you do stop, pull into the side out of the way.

The furthest point up-stream is the Victoria Bridge Street Bridge (the brick bridge near Manchester Cathedral). However, a fast current and the bridge itself, makes it difficult to turn here. It remains more practical and safer to turn under the Lowry Hotel Footbridge 100 metres prior to this.

The furthest point down-stream of the river is the 20 marker. No crew is permitted to go beyond this point.

Members should show respect to the other river/bay users and take care not to become tangled in an Anglers fishing line.

Do not turn in front of other crews.

If you're new to the water familiarise yourself with the river and any hazards by looking on the large map of the course in the main club training room. The hazards are marked in orange.

### **ADDITIONAL RULES FOR THE INNER BAYS**

Unlike the main river you should **KEEP TO YOUR LEFT IN THE INNER BAYS**. That is the cox's left, with stroke/port-side nearest the bank.

In using the inner bay permission must be sought from the Club Captain and the Watersports Centre.

Do not use the inner bays when in use by swimmers. If other activities are being undertaken in the inner bays, permission to use must be gained from the Watersports Centre.

No crew may boat within the inner bay without the Club Captain or Coach being informed. Only an experienced crew can go out unsupervised within the inner bay. Beginner crews or a single scull should not boat without the bank being manned or a launch on the water to assist rescue.

The inner bays are susceptible to algae blooms, during the spring/summer months and at such times this water is dangerous to health. Do not use the inner bays at such times. Permission at any time to use the inner bays is required to be sought from the Club Captain and Watersports Centre.

If you're new to inner bays familiarise yourself with the bay and the positioning of buoys, extruding structures, bridges and any other hazards.

No rowing in the inner bays in the dark without the permission of the Club Captain or if unable to contact the Club Captain permission can be given by the Club Chairman or BR Coach. (See Night Rowing rules.)

## **EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

There are phones in all the offices. The nearest public phone is just by the entrance to the car park.

Emergency Phone Numbers:

Police	0161 872 5050
Hospital	0161 789 7373
Emergency Service for Police, Ambulance or Fire Brigade	999
Stephen Hitchen	07767817176

The nearest hospital is Hope Hospital, Stott Lane, Salford – on the right at J2 on M602.

## **CLOTHING**

Always bring plenty of kit, even if you are only planning for one outing. There are lots of ways to get wet in our sport; rain, capsize, damage to equipment, lifting the boat after washing, even sweat or perspiration.

Wear multiple layers of light close-fitting clothing that will not get caught on equipment and will help to trap a layer of air/water, thus reducing heat loss. A layer of breathable but waterproof fabric will be much more efficient at trapping a layer of air/water. 50% of heat loss is from the head. A waterproof hood stowed in a garment collar, which can be quickly pulled out with one hand, would be of benefit.

Make sure you have secure zip pockets for any valuables you may be carrying. Items get lost in the water very quickly.

Scullers should wear bright tops.

No hoodies

In the summer you should look to wear sunglasses, a cap and sunscreen to protect from the sun/glare off the water.

## **HEALTH**

Protect yourself from sunburn, heat stroke and exhaustion by wearing suitable clothing, high factor sun block and keeping hydrated throughout the training session on or off the water.

If you feel ill during or after training inform a First Aider, Coach or Club Captain. Seek medical assistance.

The river environment contains many fauna species that may cause water-borne infections if inhaled or ingested. Likely infections include Leptospirosis (Weil's Disease), Cyanobacteria (Blue-Green Algae), Gastro-intestinal illness and Hepatitis A.

To prevent disease always wash hands before eating and drinking. Always use the shower facilities within the Watersports Centre after capsizing and if significantly wet. Do not splash river water onto your face or body to cool down. Never drink water from the river. Cover cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings.

Keep oar handles clean and wash down after use when contaminated with blood.

## **FOOD AND DRINK**

You should always take a drink of some kind on the water with you. Avoid alcohol and caffeine the night before training. Those under the influence of alcohol or drugs are not permitted to boat. In both the winter and summer months it is important to keep hydrated.

Never share water bottles. This is the fastest way to spread germs throughout the crew. Keep your water bottle clean.

It is important that the body is fed as soon as possible after exercise. You should make sure that you have food with you to eat as soon as possible after each outing or training session.

In using the kitchen, ensure it is left in a clean state. All cups, plates and cutlery must be washed and put away after use.

## **NIGHT ROWING: MAIN RIVER & OUTER BAYS**

Rowing in the dark is defined as rowing between streetlights on to streetlights off. No boats should be on the river after streetlights on without fully complying with these rules:

1. **Safety is the first priority** and is the responsibility of the launch driver to ensure that all the rules are adhered to and everyone acts in a safe and responsible manner at all times.
2. Only one group of boats will go out in any one session.
3. Each group must stay together and be accompanied by a launch at all times. If a crew is late for an outing and the others have boated, you must not boat late and try to catch up. You should ring the launch driver, inform him/her you are waiting at the stage for the group to return there in due course and then you join them. These rules are aimed at ensuring all crews and accompanying launch stay together and also move in the same direction.
4. ALL boats and launches must satisfy the BR code for rowing in the dark at all times i.e. launch must have a visible 360 degree white light mounted approx. amidships, rowing boats must have 2 suitable white lights, mounted bow and stern. These lights must have sufficient range and battery power. Small flashing lights are unacceptable. The club has a stock of suitable lights.
5. ALL oarsmen should wear light coloured tops to aid visibility. Coxes must wear a lifejacket.

6. ALL launch drivers must carry a mobile phone. The number must be written on the white board in bay 3. Launch drivers must sign in/out with numbers of boat each session. All launch drivers must use a kill-cord.
7. Obviously, we must check in with Eastham before/after outing as normal.
8. **NO ROWING IN THE DARK ON MATCH NIGHTS** due to the likely presence of the Lady Catherine.
9. Only experience crews will be allowed out in the dark.
  
10. All crews wishing to row in the dark must inform the Club Captain beforehand or if uncontactable, Stephen Hitchen.
11. Specific nights will be designated for groups to row – along the lines of gym usage.
12. Rowing in the dark is to improve the performance of our top crews; it is not an opportunity to go for a paddle.
13. ALL crews wishing to row in the dark must get the Club Captains specific permission or Club Safety officer.

### **NIGHT ROWING: INNER BAY**

Never boat without ensuring somebody knows you are going out. Record name, boat and time out on the white board by boat bay door. Remember to remove upon your return.

You should wear light coloured clothing.

All boats must have suitable white lights mounted on the bow and stern.

Only experienced crews may go out at night.

No single crew may go out in the dark unless accompanied by a coach.

Unlike the main river you should **KEEP TO YOUR LEFT** in the inner bays.

Crews travelling down the canal to Dock 8 need turn left into the bay taking great care coming out of the canal.

### **FIRE SAFETY**

It is strongly recommended that members familiarise themselves with the location of fire extinguishers, fire alarms and escape routes.

The methods of leaving our building in the event of a fire are.

#### **Upstairs**

1. The main Agecroft entrance/exit door base in by the coach's office in the corner of the gym.
2. The Watersports upstairs emergency exit based at the far end of the Watersports office corridor, on the right-hand side.

3. The backdoor of the Watersports centre. Based on the ground floor at the bottom of the stairs.

### **Boat Bays**

1. The main entrance/exit door by the workshop.
2. The small door in the eights bay.

Keep fire doors shut and fire escape routes clear at all times.

*If you discover a fire:*

- First raise alarm by activating the nearest break glass box.
- From outside the building dial 999 to call the fire brigade.
- Only tackle the fire with one of the fire extinguishers if you can do so without personal risk.
- Leave the building by the nearest emergency exit.
- Do not use the lift.
- Do not go back into the building until the fire services have given the all clear.
- The assembly point is by the round Safety Tower just outside the front of the club.

### **BOAT BAYS**

Keep the isle clear.

Unused riggers should be placed on racks in the eight's or pairs bay.

Trestles should be stored against the end walls.

When lifting boats on/off racks make sure that there are enough people to move the boat safely.

Take care-moving in/out of the boat bays. Protruding riggers can be dangerous.

Before going afloat put trestle, launches and trailer away. Then close the bay doors.

### **LANDING STAGES AND FRONT OF BUILDING**

Do not block the access to either of the landing stages. Do not leave blades on the steps.

Between outings boats should be stored as close to our building as possible.

Do not block the front of the boat club; leave plenty of room for the Watersports Centre to gain access to the inner bays - their boating area.

Boat trolleys should be put back in the boat bays before you boat. Do not leave any equipment in front of the boat house in a manner that would place a trip risk to the public. Ensure all boats are secure at all times; particular care is required in windy weather.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

This is a working document and will be adjusted, as we become aware of new hazards. Any member who thinks that we need to add/change this document should contact the Club Captain or the Safety Officer.

For further information on rowing safety visit the BR website<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/>.