Agecroft Head - Launch Drivers' Aide Memoire

AIMS

The primary aim of all rescue launch drivers is the safety of all river users within their area of responsibility, for the duration of the Head Race.

If the launch is being used in secondary duties, such as any umpiring, marshalling or coaching tasks, then these tasks must come second to the primary objective of safeguarding crews. Launch drivers must not neglect their own safety whilst performing these duties.

**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of rescue launch drivers are to:

* Provide rescue facilities to the Agecroft Head rowing race, usually for a specified length of the course or marshalling areas, as shown on the Course Map and described at the Umpires & Marshals Briefing.
* Recover capsized rowers without worsening their condition.
* Transport any injured rowers to medical attention as quickly as is safe.
* Ensure that they do not themselves become an accident victim.
* Listen to your radio to respond to requests for help, and use it to tell Race Control, umpires, marshals and other launch drivers if you need help, or are carrying out a rescue.

**ALL LAUNCH DRIVERS**

* Must hold a RYA Level 2 Powerboat Handling Certificate.
* Must wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid while afloat, as must any launch crew.
* Should practice boat handling skills and rescue techniques regularly in the club environment.
* Ideally should hold a recognised qualification in First Aid, or have crew who are a First Aider, because the rescue boat may be the first on the scene of an accident
* Must (or their crew must) familiarise themselves with the Radio Protocol Ref: Row Safe Section 2.1, monitor the radio, as you may be called to an incident by Race Control, a race official, or to assist another rescue launch.
* Ensure the launch is **not** used for ferrying.
* Must be aware of the Emergency Evacuation Point (s)

**ALL LAUNCHES**

* Must be stable.
* Must be quick and manoeuvrable.
* Must be designed so as not to create an excess wash.
* Must be big enough to carry wet or injured rowers back to the boathouse quickly and safely.
* Must be properly equipped (See BR Rowsafe 7.4.1.)
* Should be well maintained.
* Must be fitted with a "kill-cord" if powered by an outboard engine, so that the engine is stopped if driver & boat part company. **The 'kill cord' must always be used by the driver.**

RECOVERY OF PEOPLE FROM THE WATER

(see next page)

**RECOVERY OF PEOPLE FROM THE WATER**

Launch drivers must work with their crew person to effect a rescue, and take the following precautions when recovering a rower from the water:

* **Only** use high-speed manoeuvres when making the approach to the scene of trouble, or when recovering rescued or injured rowers to either medical assistance or a safe place.
* Provide for the safety of other river users, if you are proceeding to (or from) the scene of an incident at high speed. Use the horn, klaxon or other audible warning device (loudhailers usually have sirens) to alert other craft. Give way if that is a safer course of action.
* Make the final approach to a rower in the water **carefully, at low speed**, and preferably bow-first, so you can weigh up the situation, and to avoid alarming the person (or people) in the water.
* If there are several rowers in the water, give priority to any injured or vulnerable rowers. Use the radio to request another rescue launch if there are too many people in the water for your launch to rescue.
* Approach from downstream (or into the wind) as appropriate, to maintain control over launch speed and steering. DO NOT REVERSE towards a person in the water, as your propellor is a danger to them.
* Radio to Race Control that you are **at the scene** of the incident. Tell them the location, how many casualties, and if you need help. *They can take action to assist your situation (eg. by warning crews, stopping the race or calling an ambulance).*
* Talk calmly and clearly to the person in the water. (A crew person in the bow of the launch may be in the best position to do this). Make sure the person in the water understands what **you** intend to do, and what you want **them** to do.
* When bringing the rower aboard, TURN OFF THE ENGINE (eg. by pulling the kill cord) so that no injury can be inflicted by propeller blades. IT IS NOT SAFE just to leave the gear lever in neutral, as it is easy to knock it into gear when pulling the rower on board. If the speed of the current or other hazards make this precaution dangerous, then use the anchor to hold the launch in position.
* Should the rower require urgent First Aid treatment, provide First Aid before moving off.
* Radio to Race Control that you are **returning to landing stage**, how many casualties, if an ambulance is needed, and for another rescue launch to cover your section of the river while you are away. You may need to ask for another launch to recover a damaged or abandoned racing boat, while you recover its crew.

**WHEN AFLOAT**

* Keep a good lookout at all times.
* Don't overload your boat.
* Obey speed limits.
* Keep to the right (starboard side) in rivers.
* When crossing a channel, cross quickly at right angles.
* Think how your wash will affect others.
* Look out for deteriorating weather conditions.