

# ST. JOHN'S ROWING CLUB

Operational and Safety Plan

Updated September 2022

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## Definitions

Athlete: includes rowers, scullers and coxswains.

Member: Any person who has maintained good standing in the St. John's Rowing Club.

Inexperienced rower: any athlete who has not been deemed a competent rower by the Head Coach. Includes Learn to Row athletes and recent LTR graduates.

Safety Director: This position is elected (or acclaimed) to the board by the membership.

Program Coordinator: a paid position appointed by the Board of Directors.

Head Coach: a paid position appointed by the Board of Directors.

Other Club Officials: from time to time the Board of Directors may appoint officials to carry on specific duties.

### 1. The Operational and Safety Plan - What is it?

- 1.1. The SJRC's Operational and Safety Plan is a comprehensive system of safety-related policies, rules, requirements, practices and procedures governing the activities of the St. John's Rowing Club and all its members.
- 1.2. This Operational and Safety Plan Manual sets out the various components of the Operational and Safety Plan. It is important to remember, however, that the Operational and Safety Plan is more than just a set of written policies, rules, and requirements. The Operational and Safety Plan includes ACTIONS: on-going safety instructions and education; safety precautions that must be taken every day; and safety procedures that must be carried out in specific situations.

### 2. SJRC Waiver and Assumption of Risk

- 2.1. By registering for a program offered by the St. John's Rowing Club I hereby agree to waive all rights to bring action or suit against the St. John's Rowing Club, Rowing Newfoundland and Rowing Canada Aviron and its officers, members and employees for any injury to my person, or loss of, or damage to my property or equipment due to any cause whatsoever, including negligence, breach of contract, or breach of statutory or other duty of care, arising in my participation in any of the club activities, including, but not limited to, rowing on Quidi Vidi Lake, and use of the Boathouse or other training facilities, unless such loss, injury or damage is a result of gross negligence or intentional injury. I acknowledge and freely accept all risks, dangers, and hazards associated with performing an open water sport, including the possibility of personal injury, death or property damage. I agree to voluntarily assume all risks, dangers, and hazards that may be connected with the sport of rowing, including the possibility of personal injury, death, or property damage.

3. Goals of the Operational and Safety Plan

- 3.1. To protect the lives, health and safety of all Club Members and all those who may be affected by the activities of the club.
- 3.2. To promote safety awareness and safe actions.
- 3.3. To eliminate hazards and unsafe actions, and to prevent accidents and injuries.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the St. John's Rowing Club shall:

- Ensure that an effective Operational and Safety Plan is in place.
- Appoint or otherwise select a Safety Director.
- Ensure an Operational and Safety Plan is in place that will ensure that Safety Director, other directors, coaches, staff members, and others understand their responsibilities.
- Decide on appropriate corrective action (if any) in cases where any of the safety rules, regulations or procedures has been contravened.
- Take every reasonable precaution to provide a safe environment for Club Members and those who may be affected by the activities of the Club.

4.2. Responsibilities of the Safety Director

The Safety Director shall:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the Operational and Safety Plan and shall propose changes to ineffective sections of the Operational and Safety Plan to the Board of Directors.
- Ensure that the boathouse is properly equipped with a copy of the Club's Operational and Safety Plan, and that appropriate safety-related information (including emergency telephone numbers, main safety rules, plan of the local water and navigation pattern) is posted in a prominent location in the boathouse.
- Ensure that Coaches, coxswains and all others who have safety related responsibilities understand their responsibilities.
- Monitor adherence to the Club's safety rules, regulations and requirements.
- Take every reasonable precaution to provide a safe environment to protect the lives, health and safety of Club members, staff, volunteers and those who may be affected by the activities of the Club.

#### 4.3. Responsibilities of the Program Coordinator

The Program Coordinator shall:

- Be familiar with the Operational and Safety Plan
- Monitor compliance with the SJRC Operational and Safety Plan by athletes, coaches and staff.
- In the case of non-compliance, 1. First instance. Give verbal direction to the member(s) on how to correct their behaviour. 2. Second instance. Give a second verbal warning and note the date and time of the warning in the Log Book, and have the member(s) initial the entry. 3. Third instance. Notify the Safety Director by email of the incident and record it in the Log Book. In the case of a contravention of the SJRC Operational and Safety Plan that threatens the safety of other members or SJRC equipment, notify the Safety Director immediately.

#### 4.4. General Responsibilities of Coaches

In addition to the specific responsibilities as set out herein, coaches and staff members shall:

- Take all reasonable measures to provide a safe environment, and take every reasonable precaution to protect the lives, health and safety of Club members and those who may be affected by the activities of the Club.
- Be thoroughly familiar with and obey all safety rules, regulations and requirements.
- Provide effective safety training, instruction and education to athletes in their charge, and ensure that all crew members are properly trained in emergency procedures.
- Ensure the safety boats in their charge are properly equipped (See section 15 - Safety Boats and Equipment)
- Provide effective safety supervision of the crews and athletes for which they are responsible (See Section 19 - On-the-Water Safety Precautions and Procedures)
- Respond effectively to any emergency, and immediately implement appropriate procedures to deal with such an emergency (See Section 20 - Emergency Procedures)
- Take all necessary measures to facilitate the provision of required medical aid.
- The Program Director and Head Coach shall be the sole authorities for assessing whether an athlete is competent in the position of coxswain. Only competent coxswains shall be permitted in charge of the boat.

#### 4.5. Responsibilities of Athletes

An athlete shall:

- Be familiar with and obey all safety rules, regulations and requirements.
- Perform proper stretching and warm up exercises before any workout.
- Wear proper visible clothing, sun block, etc., appropriate to the season, weather, and lighting conditions.
- Obey all instructions of coaches, Club officials (including Program Director) and coxswains.

### 5. HAZARDS AND RISKS

5.1. Although rowing is a relatively safe sport, there is, due to its nature, the potential for accidents, injury and even death. It is essential for all club members to be aware of the hazards and risks associated with the sport of rowing, in order that the risks can be minimized.

#### 5.2. Weather and Meteorological Hazards

- Heat
- Cold
- Darkness
- Fog
- Wind
- Lightning
- Hail

#### 5.3. Hazards on the Water

- Waves, wakes, swells
- Buoys and course markers
- Recreational boats and swimmers
- Logs and other floating debris
- The shore
- Other rowing shells and their oars

#### 5.4. Hazards on the Shore

- Objects in and around the boathouse
- Pedestrians
- Slippery surfaces (e.g., grass, dock)

#### 5.5. Risks

- Drowning (without doubt, this is the most serious risk of all)
- Collisions with objects on the water (especially other rowing shells - a very serious risk)
- Being in a shell that capsizes
- Hypothermia
- Collisions off the water (in the boathouse, on land, on the dock), causing knocks, scrapes and cuts

- Dehydration, cramps
  - Heat-related conditions (e.g., sunburn, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke)
  - Soft tissue injuries (e.g., muscle pulls, strains, tears)
- 5.6. COLD WATER RESTRICTIONS
- The risks of hypothermia and drowning are considerably higher when the temperature of the water is below 15C. Consequently, special cold-water rules are in effect from October 15 to June 15 inclusive. (See Section 9.3 - Navigation Pattern and Section 14 - Safety Boat Supervision). The Safety Director and Program Director may impose the cold-water rules earlier than October 15 or after June 15 if the water temperature is below 15C, and may suspend the cold-water rules after October 15 or before June 15 if the water temperature is above 15C.

## 6. SAFETY TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- 6.1. Safety education is a required component of:
- Information packages to new members
  - Learn to Row programs
  - Basic training for coaches and staff members
  - Safety boat operation
- 6.2. All coaches, staff members, and participants in SJRC programs are expected to read and understand the St. John's Rowing Club Operational and Safety Plan
- 6.3. The safety instruction referred to in section 6.1 shall include training in emergency procedures (see Section 20 - Emergency Procedures).
- 6.4. All coaches are encouraged to obtain technical coaching through Rowing Canada or Rowing Newfoundland. As a minimum, coaches are required to review the SJRC Boathouse Staff Manual.
- 6.5. All coaches and staff members are encouraged to obtain First Aid and CPR certification.

## 7. SWIMMING AND INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1. Every athlete over the age of 17 must attest in writing that he/she is able to pass the SJRC swim test, which consists of swimming 50 meters without stopping, treading water for 3 minutes, and putting on a life jacket while treading water. Athletes who are 17 years of age or less must have the swim form completed by a certified lifeguard ([https://sjrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SJRC\\_SwimTestForm-2021\\_later.pdf](https://sjrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SJRC_SwimTestForm-2021_later.pdf)).
- 7.2. Every participant in SJRC programs who is 18 years of age or older must date and sign the Club's Release, Waiver and Assumptions of Risk form.

- 7.3. The parent or legal guardian of a participant in SJRC programs who is under 18 must sign and date the Club's Release, Waiver and Assumptions of Risk form.
- 7.4. No person shall be permitted to participate in SJRC programs who has not paid the required membership fee necessary to ensure proper liability insurance coverage.
8. POSTED INFORMATION
- 8.1. The following information shall be posted in a prominent location in the boathouse:
- A copy of this Operational and Safety Plan Manual
  - Emergency Action Plan
  - Main safety rules
  - Plan of the local water showing danger spots, safe havens, safe beaching locations, and proper navigation pattern.
  - Information on hypothermia and hyperthermia
9. PLAN OF THE LOCAL WATER AND NAVIGATION PATTERN
- 9.1. The plan of the local water shall show the following Danger Spots:
- Boat traffic at start kegs
  - Boat traffic at long course finish kegs
  - Fixed seat dock
  - Buoys and markers at various locations
- 9.2. Launching and Docking Pattern
- The green buoys are the markers for our safety zone. When exiting the dock, try to make your boat turn/pivot to follow the direction of flow pattern while within this safety zone.
- 9.3. Navigation Pattern - See Appendix for Diagram
- All shells should row around the lake in a counter-clockwise direction, staying as close to the shore as possible.
  - All shells should yield to the faster boat by letting them row past on the right side.
  - Take extra caution near the start, short course, and long course kegs (as indicated on map).
  - SJRC boats are permitted to enter the gut, provided they are cautious around the land narrowing by #5 keg.



10. GENERAL RULES

- 10.1. Every member shall be familiar with and shall obey all safety rules, regulations and requirements.
- 10.2. No smoking or vaping is permitted on Club premises nor in or around the Club boats.
- 10.3. Alcohol is prohibited on Club premises and when using any club equipment such as safety boats, vehicles, rowing shells, etc.
- 10.4. All members must respect the rights of others who use the lake and must be courteous to them at all times.
- 10.5. Listen, without talking, when the coach, coxswain, or bowperson is speaking. Obey your coach, coxswain, bowperson, and Club officials. If you have a concern or questions about your coach or coxswain's instructions, obey first, question later.

11. BOATHOUSE RULES

- 11.1. The Club shall keep, in a readily accessible location in the boathouse, a properly stocked first aid kit and thermal blankets.
- 11.2. All members shall contribute towards keeping all areas of the boathouse clean, tidy, organized and secure.
- 11.3. All members shall cooperate to guard the security of the boathouse, equipment and other property; to ensure that equipment is properly put away and that, when leaving the boathouse unattended, all doors are closed and locked. Notify a Club official immediately if you discover a security problem, loss of or damage to property, etc.
- 11.4. Do not run or engage in horseplay in the boathouse or around shells or oars.

12. EQUIPMENT RULES

- 12.1. When carrying a shell, remember that your visibility is restricted. Be alert for pedestrians and other obstacles. Make sure that the bow, stern and riggers of your shell stay clear of other objects.
- 12.2. Take care of your back. Bend at the knees when lifting objects (boats, motors, etc.)
- 12.3. Always lift with the correct number of people for a given boat, which is equal to the number of seats in the boat (e.g., 4 people to lift a quad)
- 12.4. When carrying oars, carry them at arms' length (never on your shoulders), with blades ahead of you.
- 12.5. When laying an oar on the ground, lay it down with the concave surface of the blade up. Do not lean the oar against a wall, bench, fence, or other object. Keep oars in a safe place, away from pedestrian or other traffic.
- 12.6. Return all equipment to its proper place after every row.
- 12.7. Promptly report broken, damaged or lost equipment to a coach, staff member or Club official.

- 12.8. Except by authority of the Head Coach or Program Director, parts and equipment must not be moved from one boat to another.

13. VISIBILITY AND UNSAFE ROWING CONDITIONS

- 13.1. No shell shall be taken out on the water in extreme conditions or when conditions are unsafe, including but not limited to the following situations:
- In very high winds (racing shells should not be taken out on the water when there are whitecaps)
  - In hail
  - In fog, or during a snowfall, where visibility is less than 500 meters or such that land reference points cannot be seen at all times
  - In very rough water
  - If a severe weather warning has been issued for the St. John's area
  - Within ½ hour after any observed lightning strike over Quidi Vidi Lake or the immediate vicinity
- 13.2. Before any boat goes out on the water, the Program Director and available coaches will consult among themselves and decide jointly
- If the rowing session will proceed or will be canceled due to inclement weather; and
  - If the rowing session is to proceed, the distance which boats will travel (i.e., half laps or full laps)
  - The decision of the Program Director and available coaches shall be final, and all athletes shall comply with such decision
- 13.3. Any boat on the water before dawn or after sunset shall be equipped with a functioning light. In the case of a rowing shell, the light may be either a bow-mounted light or a head lamp worn by one of the rowers.

14. SAFETY BOAT SUPERVISION AND SINGLE REQUIREMENTS

- 14.1. Except as set out in Section 14.2 (Safety for Singles), no shell shall go out on the water unless accompanied by a safety boat properly equipped and operated by a certified operator as set out in Section 15 (Safety Boats and Equipment).
- 14.2. Safety for Singles

Singles may be taken out on the water without a safety boat provided:

- Conditions are safe
- Boats are equipped with one life jacket or PFD, a buoyant heaving line at least 15 meters in length and a sound-signaling device (e.g., whistle, air horn, etc.)
- Singles unaccompanied by a safety boat shall stay in close proximity to the shore at all times
- Singles shall not go out on the water without a safety boat when the oarspersons are less than 18 years of age or are inexperienced.

15. SAFETY BOATS AND REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

- 15.1. All coaches and safety boat drivers shall receive appropriate instruction in the operation of the safety boat.
- 15.2. No person shall operate a safety boat who does not have a valid pleasure craft operator card and safety boat operation training proving operator competency.
- 15.3. When operating a safety boat, a coach or safety boat driver must carry their pleasure craft operator card on their person.
- 15.4. Before operating a safety boat, the coach or safety boat driver shall ensure that the boat is in good repair, the outboard engine is in good running condition, and the fuel tank has sufficient fuel.
- 15.5. If there is an incident with the safety boat engine and/or it is suspected that the engine may have malfunctioned, the operator should not try to start the engine and should immediately contact the Program Coordinator, Safety Director, and President/Vice President.
- 15.6. If the operator is on the water at the time of the malfunction, they should return to dock using paddles, contact the aforementioned personnel and leave a message on the motor to notify other users it is out of service pending inspection.
- 15.7. Before going out on the water, the coach or safety boat driver shall ensure that the safety boat is properly equipped with the following:
  - 4 personal floatation devices (PFDs)
  - At least one paddle
  - A bailer
  - A boarding assistance device (gunwale ladder or boarding rope)
  - A buoyant heaving line at least 15 meters long
  - A first aid kit
  - A sound signaling device
  - A watertight flashlight
  - A thermal blanket
  - A 7/16 in wrench and spare hardware
  - A working mobile phone for emergency calls
- 15.8. Before operating the safety boat, the driver must review the safety boat checklist located inside the safety boat and follow the start up steps.
- 15.9. Safety boat emergency stop key “kill switch” must be removed from the motor until the driver is in position to operate
- 15.10. Safety boat ‘kill switch’ must always be attached first to the operator then the motor prior to the start of any boat operation efforts.
- 15.11. After a rowing session, if the safety boat is no longer needed, the coach or safety boat driver shall ensure that all equipment is returned and properly stored in the boathouse.

16. BEFORE GOING OUT ON THE WATER - RESPONSIBILITIES OF ATHLETES

- 16.1. All athletes should perform proper stretching and aerobic exercises before any workout.
- 16.2. Athletes must wear proper clothing appropriate to the season, weather and lighting conditions, and should bring a water bottle on board to prevent dehydration. High visibility attire is recommended.
- 16.3. Athletes should carefully check their shell, oars, riggers, oarlocks, seats, foot stops, bow balls, vent covers, etc., to ensure that all equipment is in good condition and that the shell is appropriate to be rowed.

17. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ATHLETES, COXSWAIN & DESIGNATED PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE CREW

- 17.1. Before going out on water, each crew shall select a Designated Person In Charge of the crew. Unless otherwise agreed, where the crew has a coxswain, the coxswain shall act as the Designated Person In Charge, and if the crew does not have a coxswain, the bowperson shall act as the Designated Person In Charge. It is the responsibility of the Designated Person In Charge to:
  - Ensure the crew follows proper navigation pattern
  - Ensure the crew checks to make sure that the shell and other equipment (e.g., oars, seats, foot stops, quick-shoe-release mechanisms, bow ball, riggers, etc.) are in good condition and that vent covers are tightly closed.
  - Coxswains shall ensure that crew members have performed proper stretching exercises and have proper clothing, water bottle, sunscreen and/or hats, as appropriate.
  - Ensure that the crew stays within safe proximity to the shore and within sight, hailing and rescue distance of a safety boat.
  - Coordinate emergency procedures in case of emergency
  - Promptly report any accident, injury or equipment damage or malfunction to a coach, staff member or Club official.
- 17.2. All athletes shall comply with all decisions of the coaches, Program Coordinator, and other Club officials including but not limited to decisions regarding allocation of boats and oars, weather conditions, canceled rows, launching and docking instructions, direction of travel, etc.
- 17.3. No shell should be brought to the dock unless the shell and the entire crew are ready to launch.

18. BEFORE GOING OUT ON THE WATER - RESPONSIBILITIES OF COACHES AND SAFETY BOAT DRIVERS

- 18.1. The Program Coordinator and available coaches will consult with one another to determine if weather conditions allow rowing and, if so, to decide what the length of travel will be (See Section 13 - Visibility and Unsafe Conditions).
- 18.2. Before going out on water, coaches and safety boat drivers will consult with one another to determine which crews each of them will be responsible for on the water.
- 18.3. The coach or safety boat driver should talk to the crews under their charge to ensure that they have proper clothing and fluids for the outing and weather conditions, to ensure that the shell and equipment are in good operating condition, and to communicate such things as direction of travel, nature and duration of the workout, special hazards and safety requirements, etc.
- 18.4. Before operating a safety boat, every coach and safety boat driver shall carry on their person a valid pleasure craft operator license and a whistle.
- 18.5. Before getting in the safety boat, the coach or safety boat driver shall ensure that it is properly equipped (See section 15 - Safety Boats and Equipment), the outboard engine is in good running condition, and the fuel tank has at least ¼ tank of fuel.
- 18.6. While cold-water rules are in effect (Oct. 15-June 15), coaches and safety boat drivers shall ensure that at least one safety boat is on the water and running before any shell on the water leaves the dock, and at least one safety boat is on the water and running until the last shell has docked.

19. ON-THE-WATER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND PROCEDURES

- 19.1. In all circumstances (including race situations), athletes shall take all necessary precautions to prevent and avoid accidents, injury, mishap, collision or equipment contact with any solid object.
- 19.2. A rowing shell shall at all times be under the control of the crew's Designated Person In Charge (see Section 17.1), who shall ensure that the crew follows proper navigation pattern and complies with all safety requirements and precautions.
- 19.3. Every occupant of a safety boat shall wear a PFD. While operating a safety boat, a coach or safety boat driver shall keep the engine's kill-switch cord attached to their person at all times.
- 19.4. Do not overload the safety boat. Exception when rescuing people, the safety boat should include no more than three people including the coach and safety boat driver.
- 19.5. A coach or safety boat driver shall endeavour to stay at all times within safe distance of the rowing shells under their supervision. "Safe distance" means within visual and hailing distance and, when cold-water rules are in effect (Oct. 15-June 15), within 100 meters of shells as much as possible.

- 19.6. Rowing shells shall stay within close proximity to the shore at all times. While cold-water rules are in effect (Oct. 15-June 15), shells shall stay within 100 meters of shore. If two or more shells are under the supervision or a single safety boat, the shells must stay close to one another.
- 19.7. Unless otherwise authorized by a coach, inexperienced rowers shall stay between the start and long course finish kegs.
- 19.8. A coach or safety boat driver should be on the lookout for hazards such as floating logs, buoys, other boats, etc., and shall warn crews and other coaches/safety boat drivers of these hazards. Do not assume that the coxswain or rowers can see them.
- 19.9. When coaching a crew or crews from a safety boat, a coach should, as much as possible, position their safety boat between the crew(s) and the shore so that, when talking to crew(s), they are facing away from the shore.
- 19.10. Coaches and safety boat drivers should slow down when driving in the vicinity of or passing rowing shells, so as to minimize the wake.
- 19.11. Coaches and safety boat drivers shall ensure that crews and safety boats follow the proper navigation pattern and stay within safe proximity to the shore and (where appropriate) within sight, hailing and rescue distance of a safety boat; take all reasonable measures to minimize hazards; keep track of all boats on the water; and ensure that all rowing shells return safely to the dock.
- 19.12. A coach or safety boat driver should always be on the lookout for shells or athletes that may be in distress or need assistance, including situations involving equipment failure, injury or collision, or where a shell capsizes, beaches, swamps or submerges. In any such situation, proceed to the scene as quickly as possible and implement emergency and rescue procedures in accordance with Sections 19 and 20.
- 19.13. While cold-water rules are in effect (Oct. 15-June 15), at least one safety boat shall remain running on the water until the last shell has docked.

20. Emergency Procedures

20.1. The following signals issued on a sound-signaling device (whistle or horn) from the safety boat to the shore signify as follows:

- ONE BLAST: instructs all crews to return to the dock
- TWO BLASTS: instructs crews to go as close to the shore as possible and await further instructions
- THREE BLASTS: distress signal. A boat is in distress.
- REPEATING SHORT BLOWS: a boat is in need of assistance but not in distress.

\*\*\*BLASTS: long and clear 2-3 seconds per blast

\*\*\*BLOWS: Short repeating 1 second blasts

\*\*If repeating blasts wait 5 seconds between sets

- 20.2. If weather and/or water conditions become dangerous, or if two blasts are heard from a sound-signaling device, crews should proceed to the nearest safe haven on the shoreline that offers best protection from the elements.
- 20.3. If extreme weather conditions develop (e.g., lightning, hail, gale-force winds), crews should proceed to the nearest safe beaching location. The crews should remove the shell from the water, place it upside down (on the riggers) out of the wind if possible, and await rescue.
- 20.4. If a shell capsizes, beaches or submerges, all crew members must stay with the shell and do not attempt to swim to shore. If wind is a factor, roll with the wind, Oars should remain in the oarlocks to increase buoyancy.
  - The coxswain or Designated Person In Charge of the crew shall instruct rowers to count up from bow to ensure that all crew members are present and accounted for.
  - Minimize movement to preserve body heat. Except as necessary to remain afloat, refrain from swimming or treading water. Use the overturned shell for floatation and conserve heat in vulnerable areas such as groin and armpits.
  - Keep clothes on. Put on hats, mitts, etc. if available
  - Use the whistle attached to the bow seat's footing to notify the safety boat. Repeating short blows for attention, 3 long blasts for distress.
  - The smaller the boat, the better the relative buoyancy. If conditions are not severe, it is possible to re-enter a single or double and row to shore. To enter, make sure that all oars are perpendicular to the shell. Pull yourself up so that you are lying across the bow end of the cockpit. Slowly pivot, roll and maneuver to seat yourself on the runners. In crew shells, enter one at a time.

## 21. RESCUE PROCEDURES

- 21.1. As soon as you become aware that a shell or an athlete may be in distress or may need assistance, proceed to the scene as quickly as possible. If you see that a shell has capsized, beached, or submerged, attempt to alert other coaches and/or safety boat drivers either by using an electronic communications device (i.e., radio, cellphone) or by issuing a distress signal (three blasts) on a sound-signaling device (whistle or air horn) if a situation arises.
- 21.2. If a second rowing shell flips while another is still receiving assistance, a coach or safety boat operator should call the operator of the second safety boat if available to respond to the second flipped boat. If a second safety boat is not available, the boat should proceed with the rescues one at a time as quickly and safely as possible. If cold-water conditions are in effect, and/or a serious incident is suspected and it is not possible to rescue both boats in a timely manner, the coach or safety boat operator should call 9-1-1 for assistance.

21.3. Assessing the situation

- Upon arriving at the scene, the coach or safety boat driver shall quickly assess the situation and the severity of the circumstances, including the condition of the athletes.

21.4. Approach

- A coach or safety boat driver shall approach the scene of an accident from the leeward side, into the wind, to prevent the launch from being pushed onto the disabled shell or people in the water, and to ensure maximum control.
- Establish verbal contact with those in the water as soon as possible so they can be talked through the rescue quickly. Tell them what is going to happen so they know what is going on. Keep talking to them in a calm and reassuring tone throughout the rescue. Ask for frequent feedback on their condition. Call 9-1-1 immediately for severe accidents, if the athletes appear to require medical care, or if additional assistance will be needed.
- Distribute PFDs to the athletes in the water as required.
- Ask if all athletes are present and accounted for, and if anyone is injured or in distress. Conduct a head count upon arriving at the scene and each time you return after leaving the scene.
- Those in greatest distress or at greatest risk must be rescued first. Rescue should occur in pairs. This will prevent an athlete from letting go before being rescued.
- If appropriate in the circumstances (especially if athletes are cold and/or exhausted), throw a line, securely attached to the safety boat at one end, to the athletes in the water, one by one, and help to pull them in.
- Make sure the **engine is switched off**. Instruct athletes to come to the stern of the boat one at a time to enter. Provide assistance as required. Ensure rescued athletes are seated near the bow before directing the next athlete to enter the boat.
- Safety Boat Capacity

The maximum legal capacity of a safety boat shall not be exceeded at any time, except on occasion during a rescue (see Section 19.4 for details). The maximum capacity of the safety boat will be labeled and visible on each safety boat. As many trips are to be taken as are required to move to safety all those involved in the accident as quickly and safely as possible.

If the safety boat reaches its maximum capacity before all athletes have been removed from the water, explain calmly to the athletes still in the water that it is necessary for you to drive the already rescued athletes to shore but that you will return very soon to rescue the remaining athletes. Proceed to



the dock and allow the rescued athletes to disembark. Give them directions to the nearest assistance, as appropriate. Then return to the shell to rescue the remaining athletes. Upon arriving back at the scene, do another head count and re-assess the situation including the athletes' conditions. Repeat the rescue procedures until all athletes have been rescued.

- Once all athletes have been rescued and are safe, coordinate with other coaches and/or safety boat drivers to recover the shell, oars and any other articles at the scene.

## 22. HYPOTHERMIA

22.1. Information on hypothermia shall be readily available in a prominent location at the boathouse. All coaches and athletes must have a thorough familiarity with this information.

22.2. Hypothermia is the lowering of deep body temperature which can place the body in a state of shock.

### 22.3. Moderate hypothermia

Subject is shivering, conscious or semiconscious, may appear disoriented, and has some respiratory and cardiac function. Act as follows:

- Maintain an airway
- Transfer to a warm environment as soon as possible
- Remove wet clothing and begin to warm the neck, head and trunk, avoiding extremities.
- Ensure that the subject avoids fluid intake.
- Transfer to medical care as soon as possible.

### 22.4. Profound hypothermia

Subject is most likely unconscious and appears deathlike. There is little or no cardio-respiratory function. Act as follows:

- **IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IS REQUIRED! CALL AN AMBULANCE!**
- **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REWARM.**
- If the subject is breathing, do not apply external chest compression, as this may trigger ventricular fibrillation.
- Maintain an airway.
- If breathing stops, perform artificial respiration (CPR) at a rate of ½ normal breathing.
- Avoid physically manipulating the subject. Carotid pulse monitoring must be gentle to avoid triggering reflexes that may cause ventricular fibrillation.

Other sources of information:

Rowing Canada Aviron Safety Video - available for immediate viewing online!

The RCA Safety Video has been produced to promote and demonstrate safe practices for rowers. The Chapters cover:

- At the boathouse
- Getting ready
- On the water
- Returning to land

This video is now available online at: <https://rowingcanada.org/rca-safety-video-survey/>

An Additional Chapter (5) for Coaches, outlines a coaches key areas of responsibility with respect to rower safety. This is available for download here:

<https://rowingcanada.org/rca-safety-video-survey/>

