

## Capital Rowing Club Safety Manual

Updated: March 2024

Point of Contact: [safety@capitalrowing.org](mailto:safety@capitalrowing.org)



### Purpose

These safety policies are intended to increase the level of safety for Capital Rowing Club (CRC) members. All CRC members are responsible for knowing and adhering to these policies. CRC strives to foster a collective awareness of the priority importance of safety with regard to risks, liabilities, and the enjoyment of the sport of rowing – SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.

### Safety Committee

The Safety Committee is comprised of at least five members, consisting of the club VP of Operations, Safety Chair, Director of Coaches, Junior Program Head Coach, and at least one representative designated by the CRC Board of Directors. The Safety Committee is responsible for the establishment, at minimum an annual review, updating, and enforcement of the safety policies described herein this policy. The Safety Committee reports to the VP of Operations.

### Annual Safety Requirements for ALL CRC Members and Coaches

1. Review this Safety Manual and the CRC Athlete Protection Policy
2. Review USRowing Safety Video
3. Review CRC Sculling and Small Boat Manual (Scullers only)
4. Sign USRowing Waiver
5. Complete SafeSport training
6. Swimming and medical physical requirements are met

These must be completed and documented in iCrew before the athlete's first row. Athletes who have not completed these requirements will be blocked from participation in iCrew.

## Emergency Numbers

Coaches must have the DC Harbor Patrol phone number saved in their cell phone contacts. It is recommended that athletes do the same, as well as list an emergency contact number.

1. Dial 9-1-1 for Emergencies Ashore!
2. Contact DC Harbor Patrol for all Emergencies Afloat! Dial 202.727.4582 or use VHF Channel 16
3. Contact other Coaches on the water for assistance (CRC uses VHF Channel 72, Bishop Ireton uses VHF Channel 71, DC Strokes uses VHF Channel 73)
4. After an incident, report to either the VP of Operations, the Head of Coaching, or the President (in that order). Current numbers are on the Emergency Action Plan.

## Chain of Command

The senior coach present will assume command in the event of an emergency and will direct and control operations until the arrival of appropriate authorities. At that time, this coach will identify themselves to the authorities and continue to liaise with authorities and direct Capital RC personnel accordingly. If other than the Program Head Coach, the senior coach present will be indicated in the session workout plan (in iCrew).

Inexperienced operators or improperly equipped individuals will not be allowed on the water during an emergency situation.

## SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

### ALL MEMBERS

- All members must prioritize safety - for themselves and other members. Adhering to safety best practices and identifying, calling out and reporting any unsafe conditions present is the responsibility of every member.
- Familiarize themselves with all the contents of this safety manual and any other additional rules, safety guidelines and notices Capital RC provides.
- Follow all of the Capital RC and Anacostia River rules, at all times.

- Follow the instructions of Capital RC coaching staff, coxswains and Safety Committee.
- All new rowers and coaches in Capital rowing programs will receive written instruction in safety procedures prior to involvement in rowing. In addition, all rowers and coaches will attend a review session of rules and safety procedures at the commencement of their season/program and acknowledge their completion of the USRowing video and Safety Manual in iCrew before their first row.
- All new rowers training in Capital RC rowing programs will be informed and made aware of the river's features including safe beaching locations, danger spots, obstructions and other safety hazards, prior to their involvement in rowing.

#### **SAFETY COMMITTEE AND COACHES**

- Ensure a culture of safety within Capital RC and ensure all members make safety their first priority.
- Hold annual safety meetings with all participants.
- Have all members view the USRowing safety video, "Rowing Safety" prior to rowing with Capital.
- Maintain rowing equipment with safety in mind, unsafe equipment should be communicated by submitting a damage report in iCrew, informing a coach and/or Program Rep, and removed from use. Unsafe equipment should also be marked "Do Not Use" prominently on display for everyone's awareness until the damage is addressed and the VP of Operations determines it is suitable for use.
- Post local safety rules and traffic patterns at the compound.
- Provide copies of safety rules available on the web site.
- Provide access to electronic copies of the safety rules and emergency procedures.
- Provide working, reliable safety equipment such as radios, megaphones, noisemakers, flotation devices, fully equipped coxswain lanyards (whistle, spacers, wing nuts, multi-tool, washers) etc.
- Establish and discuss the Emergency Action Plan to be followed in the event of an emergency. All coaches and rowers should know what to expect and how to respond.
- Ensure that Coaches are certified in CPR, AED, and First Aid.
- Ensure the CRC remains a member organization of USRowing to receive copies of current publications and safety information.
- On the water, the Coach to sweep rower ratio shall never exceed 1:27 for experienced masters rowers and 1:19 for Novice and Junior rowers.

- On the water, the Coach to sculling boat ratio should never exceed 1:10 for experienced scullers, or 1:6 for novice scullers.
- On the water, the Coach to Adaptive boat ratio shall never exceed 1:4 (boats may contain up to 2 rowers)

## **ROWERS**

### **Physical Conditioning/Health**

- Capital RC recommends that new or returning rowers should consult a physician before starting any form of exercise, including rowing.
- The rower should notify their respective program coach and coxswains if they have any medical condition, disability or anything that could impair their participation in our sport or requires accommodation or attention. Examples include but are not limited to asthma, epilepsy, hypertension or hearing or visual impairment.
- All members with special medical/health conditions shall take precautionary medications in the boat with you while rowing (e.g. asthma inhalers).
- Effective with the Fall 2024 season, rowers must demonstrate proficiency in swimming (be able to swim for at least on length of the pool, at least 25 yards/25 meters, float or tread water for 10 minutes, and be able to put on a life preserver while in the water); if not, they must wear a personal flotation device (which Capital RC will provide).

## **COXSWAINS AND SCULLERS**

- All coxswains (including rowers who occasionally cox during practices) must:
  - Wear a PFD while on the water. This allows for their protection and for one PFD in the shell in case of emergency.
- All coxswains (including rowers who occasionally cox during practices) and scullers must:
  - Learn the hazards and traffic patterns of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers.
  - Stay clear of bridge abutments, barges and other man-made or natural obstacles. Do not stop or turn near any such obstacles, leaving at least 100' clearance and ensuring you are clearly visible to other river traffic.
  - Make frequent checks on both sides of the boat and to the rear and listen for other river traffic.

- Understand and follow the **Capital RC Waterway Traffic Patterns** (see section below)

## **INSURANCE**

Capital Rowing Club - Vehicle insurance cards must be with Transportation Captain for any and all team travel, this includes but is not limited to trailer and tow vehicle and large passenger vans. The Club Treasurer owns the insurance process and will provide.

## **MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Members must provide the following information in their iCrew profile (in the “Emergency Contact and More” section) for participation in club activities such as practice and regattas:

- Emergency Contact Information
- Known Medical Conditions, Disabilities and Allergies that affect participation in our sport\*

\*If applicable, athletes should personally make their coaches aware of any known medical conditions or allergies that may affect rowing.

## **INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

The boathouse is a high-traffic area, and the equipment is frequently used. Good hygiene and cleaning practices can ensure everyone stays safe and healthy, including:

- If you feel unwell or have fever, coughing or other symptoms, do not come to the boathouse.
- If you have a cut or wound, clean and bandage it immediately.
- Wash hands with soap and water frequently.
- Wash boats and equipment with soap and water after each use.

## **EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE**

The equipment will be maintained in the best possible way to ensure athlete safety and water safety as well as to ensure the prevention of injuries to the rowers. Any and all damage must be reported to the head coach, program rep, and VP of Operations as soon as possible, so the damage can be fixed immediately and logged in iCrew's Damage Report function in a timely manner. Failure to report and correct issues with the equipment could risk athlete safety and is unacceptable.

A fall and spring safety audit will be conducted by the Safety Chair and/or VP of Operations. This will include the safety and workability of all team rowing equipment, as well as an inventory of all safety equipment in launches as well as at the boathouse. Any needed equipment or repairs will be done as needed.

## **Rowing Cancellation**

The President, Vice President of Operations and coaches have final say on whether conditions are safe for rowing for all members using Capital RC equipment.

The senior coach of each program present at the time in consultation with the other Head program coaches present and the present members of the Safety Committee will make all final decisions about appropriate rowing weather conditions. All coaches will use their best judgment to ensure the safety of the rowers, themselves and all Capital RC equipment. Independent Rowers are responsible for assessing conditions before and during their outings, and using their best judgment to ensure their own safety.

No crew coaches or independent rowers will launch during these National Weather Service Advisories: Severe Thunderstorm Warning or Tornado Warning. Extreme care shall be exercised during these advisories: Severe Thunderstorm Watch, Tornado Watch, Small Craft Advisory; Gale Warning, Storm Warning, Hurricane Warning, Tropical Storm Warning, Special Marine Warning, and Coastal Flood Warnings. A complete list of National Weather Service Advisories can be found at [Weather.Gov here](#), and current advisories can be found [here](#).

No boats shall launch with lightning active within 10 miles of the practice area or with whitecap waves present.

No boats shall launch if the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge is not visible from the ACBA Bob Day Flagpole (this is a distance of approximately 300 yards).

Boats shall return to shore as quickly as practicable if any of these conditions arise during the outing.

### **Usage of Club Rowing Equipment**

Racing shells are designed to be used in protected waters under ideal conditions and under the supervision of an experienced coach.

Sculling boats can only be used in accordance with the Capital RC Sculling and Small Boats Manual.

### **First Aid Equipment at ACBA**

ACBA maintains certain First Aid equipment for the site, all in the “Erg Room in the Small Tent

- An Automated External Defibrillator, and
- An extensive First Aid Kit

Coaches should ensure that the Plaza-side door to the Erg Room is always open during coached practices to enable access to the AED and First Aid kit.

### **Rowing Shell Equipment**

All boats must be equipped with the following:

- Bow balls
- Quick-release shoes with Velcro closure and heel tie-downs.
- A sound making device (i.e. horns or whistles).
- Shells being rowed in the dark must be equipped with bow (green/red) and stern (white) lights. CoxlessBoats (singles, doubles, pairs, quads) must also have a body-worn white light facing the stern (stroke seat) and flashing light facing the bow (bow seat). Capital RC is testing having sweep boats’ bow seat wearing a body-worn light facing the bow.

- Flotation Devices (carried in the coaching launch)

The rowing shells and some of the individual oars have been designed to provide flotation. (Note that adjustable handle oars do not provide flotation). They are not Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs). They are only emergency flotation devices. The Safety Committee recommends that all unaccompanied boats carry Coast Guard approved PFDs. A copy of the Coast Guard Regulations concerning PFDs in rowing shells is available upon request from USRowing.

## **Safety/Coaching Launch**

### **USAGE**

The safety/coaching launch provides safety supervision when rowing and support assistance in an emergency situation.

Shells should stay “within hail” distance of their safety launch.

Number of passengers in the launch should not exceed the limit for that particular boat.

Passengers/Rowers in Safety launches must be limited to one (1), with the exception of Launch One, which may have two (2) passengers. Launches are provided for safety and coaching only. In the event of an emergency additional passengers in the launch could represent extra shuttling time between the land and the rowers in the water, therefore this situation should be avoided.

The launch driver has the responsibility to ensure the safe operation of the launch in compliance with local and federal laws. When possible, use a trained person as the driver to allow the coach to focus attention on rowers.

All Capital RC coaches in launches, as well as any rowers, guests or other passengers in a launch are required to wear a PFD. There will be no exceptions.

### **TRAINING**

The driver must be trained in the proper use and operation of the powerboat through the CRC Launch Orientation process, to include:



- Having a boating safety certification (license) from DC or one of the 50 states. Classes are offered through DC Harbor Patrol and the Boat US website at <https://www.boat-ed.com/districtofcolumbia/>.
- Completing a CRC Launch Orientation with the VP of Operations or the Head of Coaching.

The driver must know how to have rowers enter the coaching launch from the water. Rowers in the water should be approached from the leeward side, keeping outboard propellers away from any victims. Turn off the engine as soon as contact is made. Avoid overloading.

Capital RC members who have completed the orientation will be made members of the Launch Drivers “team” in iCrew. All Capital RC Coaches will complete this orientation as part of their Coaching Orientation.

#### EQUIPMENT

- Affix lights to all launches for use before sunrise or after dark.
- Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) \*\*
- Towing line
- Bailer/hand pump
- Radio (and cellular phone if available)
- Megaphone
- Safety Ladder (prioritize available ladders for CARP and Sculling program use)
- Safety Box
  - Launch Registration
  - Tool kit \*
  - First aid kit
  - Emergency blankets in a water tight container
  - Flashlight
  - Signal horn
  - Rescue whistle
  - Lifeline
  - Boat fire extinguisher
  - Safety knife
  - Emergency Action Plan with Phone Numbers and River Egress Point Addresses

\*The tool kit should also contain wrenches, screwdrivers, appropriate nuts, tape, washers, a small folding knife, and other materials needed to make small repairs.

\*\*Ensure that the launch carries a flotation device for all on board plus one for each rower on the water.

## **Safety Communication Equipment**

### **MEGAPHONES**

Capital RC provides battery operated megaphones to support program safety. The Club will provide megaphones such that one coach from each program on the water at a given time has access to one. While some coaches may choose to provide their own megaphone, Club equipment may be used by the senior coach in order to communicate safety commands to all boats under their supervision.

### **TWO-WAY RADIOS**

Capital RC provides two-way VHF radios for Safety use (and may also be used for practice coordination). The VHF radios are provided so at the push of a button all Coaches on the water for Capital RC can be notified in case of emergency, communicate with commercial and recreational craft, and contact Harbor Patrol.

When two or more coaches are on the water, each coach is responsible for maintaining contact with the other coach regarding safety, weather and location time as required.

CRC Coaches should use channel 72 for intra-club communications. Harbor Patrol monitors VHF channels 16 and 17, and recommends channel 17 for emergencies. Bishop Ireton uses Channel 71, and DC Strokes uses Channel 73.

### **BACKUP CELLULAR PHONES**

Coaches are encouraged to carry personal cell phones while on the water for back-up communications to other coaches and access to current weather information.

## **Emergency Action Plan (Maps / Directions / Phone Numbers)**

The Emergency Action Plan (EAP) will be posted on the CRC Website, in the boathouse and CRC Cage, and carried in each launch Safety Box.

The EAP will include address to the boathouse and safe river egress points, emergency phone numbers (Fire/Rescue (911), Harbor Patrol, President, VP of Operations, and Head of Coaching.

### **Club Practice Course Map**

Capital RC rowing map can be found at [www.capitalrowing.org](http://www.capitalrowing.org) under “Resources-Safety-Maps&Videos”, and is posted in the boathouse at the entrance to Bay 3.

### **General Waterway Traffic Rules**

The U.S. Coast Guard has developed right-of-way rules. Vessels with the least maneuverability have the right-of-way, but should always play it safe and take action to avoid all other types of boats. All members should familiarize themselves with shallow water, stumps, rocks, buoys, seasonal problems and landmarks.

Stay clear of bridge abutments and other man-made or natural obstacles. Do not negotiate a turn near such an obstacle. No turns should be made within several boat lengths of any bridge abutments. Rowers and launches should clear bridges and abutments by 100 feet before stopping.

Be courteous to others on the water. Be aware of powerboats, sailboats and other watercraft and treat them with respect.

### **Capital RC Waterway Traffic Patterns**

#### **GENERAL RULES**

Stay to your starboard shore. Veer from starboard lane to avoid sandbars or other obstacles only after checking carefully for oncoming boat traffic.

Be alert at all times for oncoming traffic that may be outside of the normal traffic pattern when avoiding sandbars or other obstacles.

Right of way goes to less maneuverable boats; scullers must yield to eights and fours. Rowing shells must yield to sailboats.

Avoid turns near bridge abutments or other obstacles that block lines of sight.

Boats shove off and approach the dock for landing while moving downstream. Reference the ACBA dock policy for further details on proper dock etiquette.

The coxswain or single sculler should make frequent checks on both sides and listen for oncoming traffic.

#### LAUNCHING/LANDING AREA

Before launching and after landing, place all oars clear of the dock

All Capital RC rowers shall follow the [ACBA Dock Traffic Policy](#).

After launching, paddle downstream through the downstream Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge before either stopping to get tied in, or before turning to go upstream. Scullers may cross before Pennsylvania Avenue only during high tide and with permission from the senior coach (within coached programs).

Incoming (docking) crews have right-of-way over launching crew.

When launching and docking, always use the most downstream section of available dock space and walk the boat down as space opens up.

Boats may not turn in front of or between the docks.

When other crews are waiting for dock space, tie in and adjust foot stretchers on the water.

#### TRAFFIC PATTERN

Rules for Navigating Bridge Arches for Downstream and Upstream Traffic: (Arches are numbered below starting from the Capitol Hill/west side of the river.)

#### **Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge (South Capitol Street) Bridge**

- Three Arches

- Downstream: West Side of Arch #2 (Use with caution! This is the navigational channel) or Arch #1
- Upstream: Arch #3 or East Side of Arch #2
- Look for updates in the future!

### **11th Street Bridge**

- Five Arches
- Downstream: Arch #2
- Upstream: Arch #4
- Do not use Arch #3 (in the navigational channel, unless directed by a coach)

### **Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge**

- Six Arches
- Downstream: Arch #2
- Upstream: Arches #5 and #6 (be careful of upstream sandbar)
- Do not use Arches #1, and #3;
- Use Arch #4 with caution and a coach's supervision

### **Railroad Bridge**

- One Arch
- Exercise caution
- Only proceed through an arch after checking for traffic from other direction (provide audible warning if line-of-site is not available)
- Shells traveling with the current have the right of way.

### **East Capitol Street Bridge**

- Five Arches
- Downstream: West side of Arch #2, Arch #1 in a pinch
- Upstream: Arch #3 and East side of Arch #2

## **Benning Road & Metro Bridge**

- Two Arches (Follow arches on road bridge, not metro bridge)
- Downstream: Arch #1
- Upstream: Arch #2
- Be careful of docking posts, sharp turn on upstream side of bridge, Metro bridge pylons, and paddling dock on the Southeast Side of the Bridge

## **AMTRAK/MARC Bridge**

- Four Arches
- Downstream: Arch #1, West side of Arch #2
- Upstream: East side of Arch #2 (Arch #3 at high tide)
- Arch #2 is a narrow 2 way arch, exercise caution!

## **New York Avenue Bridge**

- Four Arches
- Downstream: Arch #2
- Upstream: Arch #3
- Arches #1 and #4 are not passable

## **Weather Conditions**

### **GENERAL**

All members should be aware of weather conditions. Check for gathering clouds, changes in wind speed and direction, temperature changes or other boats returning home before heading out.

Tide Schedules for Washington, DC can be found on the Capital Rowing Club website under Resources>Safety or at <https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/map/index.shtml?id=8594900>. Consult an online weather resource for the most up-to-date weather forecast information.

All National Weather Service advisories will be given the utmost consideration before any crews are launched for practice.

No crew coaches or independent rowers will launch during these National Weather Service Advisories: Severe Thunderstorm Warning and Tornado Warning. Extreme care shall be exercised during these advisories: Severe Thunderstorm Watch, Tornado Watch, Small Craft Advisory; Gale Warning, Storm Warning, Hurricane Warning, Tropical Storm Warning, Special Marine Warning, and Coastal Flood Warnings. . A complete list of National Weather Service Advisories can be found at Weather.Gov [here](#), and current advisories can be found [here](#).

No boats shall launch with lightning active within 10 miles of the practice area, or with whitecap waves present.

No boats shall launch if the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge is not visible from the ACBA Bob Day Flagpole (this is a distance of approximately 300 yards).

Boats shall return to shore as quickly as practicable if any of these conditions arise during the outing.

#### TIDES AND RIVER LEVEL

Be aware of the river level. Low river levels reveal submerged hazards such as sandbars and logs. High river levels increase the speed of the currents, especially near constrictions such as between bridge abutments. Special care should be taken with the CSX bridge both for currents in the narrow opening and because very high tides may prevent passage under the low bridge.

#### WIND

Do not row in high-wind or white-caps under any circumstances. Winds above 15 mph are clearly cause for concern, although it is the water condition that is the most important factor. Waves form based on wind speed over the water, so wind blowing against the current direction can cause whitecaps with winds below 15 mph. On windy days, be sure to understand current direction and know how the current will change during your outing.

## FOG

Do not row in fog when visibility is less than 300 yards (If you cannot see the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge from the Bob Day Flagpole).

## LIGHTNING

No boats shall launch during a Severe Thunderstorm Warning or with lightning active within 10 miles of the practice area. Boats shall return to shore as quickly as practicable if lightning is observed during the outing. Mobile Apps such as Weather Bug and My Lightning Tracker are great resources for current lightning locations.

## HOT AND COLD WEATHER

Use your judgment about rowing in hot or cold weather.

### Hot Weather

Rowing in hot weather with warm temperatures, sun exposure or high humidity poses a challenge to your body's regulation system. If sweat is excessive and fluids are not continually replaced, dehydration, heat exhaustion or heat stroke may occur. Acclimating to exercising in hot weather through gradually increased exposure is key to being able to tolerate heat.

The National Weather Service's heat index incorporates relative humidity with air temperature to measure what temperatures "feel like" (see the [Heat Index Chart](#)) The NWS heat index categories are based on how the heat and humidity will affect a healthy individual:

- Heat index of 80°F-90°F: Prolonged exposure or physical activity could lead to fatigue and "caution" is advised.
- Heat index of 90°F-103°F: A person can experience heat stroke, heat cramps, or heat exhaustion and "extreme caution" is recommended.
- Heat index of 103°F/105°F-124°F (depending on location): On "danger" days, a person is likely to experience heat cramps or heat exhaustion, and heat stroke becomes possible.
- Heat index of 125°F: On "extreme danger" days, heat stroke is highly likely.



## Cold Weather

Rowing in cold weather poses potential danger for hypothermia when the water temperature is below 80 degrees and very dangerous when below 50 degrees.

Club singles, doubles and pairs may not be taken out without a coach if the water temperature is below 50 degrees. Private boat owners row in these conditions at their own risk, and should consider the following additional safety measures: ensure at least 'four oars' (two boats or a double) are on the water; wear an inflatable PFD or wet suit, and row upstream where the water is shallower and narrower to improve your chances of returning to shore.

## DARKNESS

One of the greatest dangers while rowing is collision caused by limited vision or carelessness. Great care should be taken when rowing in darkness or near-darkness. Take extra care to look and listen. Minimize conversation. Be careful not to get too close to shore or known hazards. Only row in familiar waters under these conditions.

Shells being rowed in the dark (before sunrise or after sunset) must be equipped with bow (green/red) and stern (white) lights. For the bow lights, the green light shall show to starboard, and the red light to port. Coxless Boats (singles, doubles, pairs, quads) must also have a body-worn white light facing the stern (stroke seat) and flashing light facing the bow (bow seat). Capital RC is testing having sweep boats' bow seat wearing a body-worn light facing the bow.

It is strongly encouraged in low visibility conditions such as darkness, rain, fog etc. single scullers and bow seats wear reflective or Hi Visibility clothing.

Carry a sound-making device, such as a whistle or horn.

Please notify the VP of Operations through the damage report log if lights are not working.

## **WATER TEMPERATURE**

Water temperature should always be monitored.

Current Water Temperature and other weather observations can be found through the National Weather Service Buoy WASD2, which is located at the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers near Haynes Point. Use the “Buoy Data” mobile application, or go to [https://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station\\_page.php?station=wasd2](https://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station_page.php?station=wasd2)

Water temperatures below 50 degrees Fahrenheit are considered extremely dangerous.

## **DEBRIS**

The Anacostia River is tidal and therefore may have fast-moving water at times that brings debris upstream or downstream, particularly after a storm. Logs, branches or other obstacles may be partially or fully submerged. Coaches, coxswains and rowers should use caution when rowing after a storm and avoid debris as much as possible for the safety of the rowers and equipment. Coaches should consider the amount of debris present on the course when evaluating safe rowing conditions. Coaches and coxswains should take great care when rowing through heavy debris, and should call “weigh enough, check it down” in cases where large debris is at risk of colliding with the boat or oars. Coaches and coxswains should row at paddle pressure (or by 4s/pairs) when navigating unavoidable debris. Rowers should also call “weigh enough, check it down” if they see or encounter debris before coaches or coxswains can make the call.

## **WATER QUALITY**

One third of the District of Columbia is served by a Combined Sewer System (CSC), which conveys both sanitary sewage and storm water in one piping system. During periods of significant rainfall (above 1”), the capacity of a combined sewer may be exceeded. When this occurs, regulators are designed to let the excess flow, which is a mixture of stormwater and sanitary wastes, be discharged directly into the District's rivers and creeks. This excess flow is called combined sewer overflow or CSO, and it affects the Anacostia where we row. Potentially harmful substances may also be present in these discharges. The public is advised to stay away from any sewer pipe discharge. For small rainfalls, the effects of CSOs typically last less than 24 hours. For larger rainfalls, greater than 1" of rain, the effects of CSOs on water quality can last up to three days. DC Water has installed a series of CSO Event Indicator Lights to notify river users of CSO events. One is located at ACBA on the shore at the West end of the

site. There are others at DC Water's Skimmer Boat Yard Facility and CSO 019 Tunnel Overflow Structure (south of RFK Stadium). A red light will be illuminated during a CSO occurrence and a yellow light will be illuminated for 24 hours after CSO has stopped. There is more information here: <https://www.dewater.com/css>

## **AIR QUALITY**

Poor Air Quality can adversely affect athletes training at high intensities, and air quality in DC can be poor, especially in the summer months. The U.S. Air Quality Index (AQI) is the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) index for reporting air quality. An AQI in the Red Zone (150-200) is "Unhealthy", and some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects. An AQI in the Purple Zone (201-300) is "Very Unhealthy". This is a "Health Alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone."

There is more information about the AQI here: <https://www.airnow.gov/aqi/aqi-basics/>

Current AQI information is available here: <https://www.airnow.gov>

## **Logbook**

On-the-Water Log: All small boats going out without must record their outing, including their departure and return times using the iCrew On-the-Water Log. Small boat members must list a monitor who knows when they are out on the water, when they will return and how to activate an emergency response, including calling DC Harbor Patrol (202-727-4582). See additional information in the Sculling and Small Boats Manual.

## **Swimming Test**

Effective through Spring Season 2024:

All rowers must self attest that they know how to swim.

Adults must certify by signing the appropriate document in iCrew that they are able to swim. This certification indicates that they are able to pass a swimming test equivalent to treading water for ten minutes and swimming 25 yards. If a rower cannot swim, they will be provided with and required to wear a PFD on the dock and in the boat.

## Effective beginning with Fall Season 2024

All members of Capital Rowing Club are required to pass a swim test to participate in on the water rowing, with the following exceptions:

- Guest Rowing, Learn to Row, Introduction to Team Rowing, “Your Team Learn to Row” participants. Note: With the exception of Guest rower, all of these participants will be trained on how to put on and wear a PFD, will be asked for a verbal attestation on swimming, and provided PFDs as needed.
- Rowing with a personal flotation device (PFD)
- CARP athletes (requirements and processes are being researched)

Athletes who are uncertified are required to wear a PFD on the water at all times. Capital Rowing Club will provide the PFDs to members as needed.

The swim test will be conducted by 1 or more lifeguards, ensuring that CRC members can complete the following tasks:

1. Swim at least 1 length of the pool 25 yards or 25 meters
2. Be mostly stationary in the water for 10 minutes (e.g. treading water or floating without support)
3. Put on a PFD while in the water

Swim Test certifications will be good for masters rowers for five years, including the year of certification and the four subsequent rowing years, and for the year of certification for Capital Juniors. All swim test certifications will expire on December 31st.

Members who are not able to participate in a CRC Hosted Swim Test have the option of obtaining a Swim Test Certification from a certified lifeguard using the CRC Lifeguard Certification Swim Test Form. CRC has identified pools where this is possible (see “Local Resources” below), and these will be posted on the CRC Website along with the Certification Form.

## **Clothing**

### **GENERAL**

Clothing should be flexible, form fitting and appropriate for athletics. Loose or baggy clothing that can get caught in the slides of the seat or hooked by an oar or other parts of the boat should not be worn.

Clothing should be appropriate for the weather conditions. Reflective or Hi Visibility is strongly encouraged in low visibility.

Clothing should not prevent the rower from swimming in the event of an emergency.

Expensive jewelry and accessories that can be lost or caught on equipment should not be worn.

Socks shall be worn in club equipment.

#### **COLD WEATHER**

Wearing several layers of clothing works best.

Polypropylene in cold weather is best next to the skin. It wicks moisture away from your skin.

Wool is the next best material in cold weather, since it also dries from the inside out.

Wearing a hat in cold weather is advisable. Heat is lost very fast from the head.

A windproof jacket / wind shirt helps to reduce wind chill.

#### **HOT WEATHER**

Light clothing cotton or preferably quick-drying synthetics like cool max.

Use layers. Long sleeves and UPF material may help avoid sunburn.

Hats or visors are advised.

#### **Safety Checklist**

- Each person is 100% responsible for the whole boat and 100% accountable for his or her own oar, rigging, foot- stretchers, seat and slides. Check to make sure that all equipment is functioning properly before leaving the dock.
- If you aren't sure, ASK!
- Nuts on the rigging are tight, and the position of your foot stretchers and the smoothness of your slide are acceptable.
- Forward end of the slide is blunt and will not gouge your calves.

- Rowers in front and behind you have sufficient room to complete their stroke.
- Wear socks.
- Seat fits your body. Adjust with seat pads or a different seat.
- Oar is the proper size.
- Rigging is not too high.
- Clothing cannot become tangled in your moving seat or oar handle.
- Proper safety devices on board.

## **Terminology**

Before ever getting into a shell on the water, a rower must understand the following terminology: bow, stern, port, starboard, “Weigh enough,” “Ready to row?,” “Row!,” “Port (or starboard) to row/starboard (or port) to back!,” “Tie in,” “Untie,” “Stop!,” the stroke, bow person, seat numbers in between, and which seat number he or she is in that day. The term “Stop!” should be used only when talking to a specific crew in a race. When a coxswain or coach wants a crew to stop immediately, the proper term is “Weigh enough! Hold water!”

## **Warm Up**

Land warm-up should become part of your training ritual. Before rowing, get your body up to the proper intensity by taking three minutes before you touch the boat to get your body warmed up by jogging, jumping rope or running in place. Follow that workout with seven minutes of basic stretching.

Water warm-up should be used to gradually and safely build you up to full intensity. An example would be building up gradually from no pressure “arms and back”, “1/4 slide”, “1/2 slide,” “full slide”, then adding pressure until proper workout intensity is reached.

## **ON THE WATER**

### **SAFETY IN THE BOAT**

- Rowers in multi person shells should always be quiet and attentive to the Coxswain, Bow Seat (coxless boats), Coach or Program Representative.

- All Capital RC members must comply with instructions given by Capital RC coaches and program representatives.
- Oarlocks should be kept locked until everyone is out of the shell.
- Sweep rowers should be aware of their side (port/starboard), position in boat (stern/bow) and seat number, and respond to calls accordingly.
- At least one hand should be kept on the oar at all times while on the water.
- Turn on lights if you will be rowing before sunrise or after sunset.
- Close bow and stern hatches.

## ADDITIONAL SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COXED BOATS

### COXSWAINS

The coxswain is in command of the boat at all times, and should be given complete attention and respect. In a coxless boat, this responsibility falls to the person in the bow seat (and this section should be read as such). The primary job of the coxswain is to safely guide the boat by steering the boat and commanding the crew.

The coxswain is responsible for following the traffic pattern at all times. The coxswain is responsible for being aware of, and avoiding other traffic, which may or may not be following the traffic pattern. All coxswains must wear a PFD while on the water.

Before new coxswains go on the river in a Capital RC boat, they must be aware of the traffic patterns and Capital safety guidelines and be handed or shown a copy of the river traffic pattern, which is located at <http://www.capitalrowing.org/crcwp/about/map/> and posted in Bay 3 of the Anacostia Community Boathouse. If they have never been on the Anacostia River, it is recommended that they participate in coxswain training sessions in a program or as offered by Capital RC.

The program head coach has final authority to determine whether it is appropriate and safe for a new coxswain to take a Capital boat out on the water. Coaches of all programs must inform the Program Representative before sending a new coxswain out in a boat.

As in many programs, rowers at Capital are often needed to cox a practice. Before coxing, all rowers must become familiar with the river traffic pattern. New rowers must complete appropriate coxswain training, which will be led within coached programs at the coaches' discretion.

## **CREWS**

Members of a crew should not talk while the boat is moving: it makes it harder to hear commands and distracts the coxswain from their primary job: the safe guidance of the boat.

Any rower who sees a hazard that they believe the coxswain does not see should notify the coxswain immediately.

If any rower hears thunder or sees lightning, he or she should notify the coach immediately. The sound of thunder is usually masked by the noise of the engine.

## **WEATHER CONDITIONS**

### **GENERAL**

Be aware of changing weather conditions. Watch for gathering clouds, changes in wind speed and direction, temperature changes or other boats returning home. If on the river, be aware of the tide and check the current direction (look for floating objects or kelp).

### **WIND**

If sudden winds come up, return to the boathouse if the trip is safe, or take the boat to the nearest shore and wait for the winds to calm.

### **FOG**

When fog is present -if standing on the plaza and Pennsylvania Ave Bridge is not visible. DO NOT row.

If fog sets in while on the water, move slowly and be prepared to stop quickly. In situations of poor visibility, use a sound-making device (horn, whistle) to advise other boats of your location. When in fog use the following:

Shells: at intervals of not more than two minutes, one prolonged blast, followed by two short blasts.



Power launches: making way through the water one long blast at least every two minutes.

Power launches underway, but stopped in the water: two long blasts with two seconds between blasts, every two minutes.

#### **LIGHTNING**

If you are on the water and see lightning, hear thunder or notice your hair standing on end with static electricity, head for the nearest shore. If the storm is not yet upon you, follow close to the shoreline and quickly return to the boat house. If the storm is upon you, take your boat ashore and wait for the storm to pass.

#### **RIVER CONDITIONS**

Be aware of the river conditions, including debris, logs, sand bars during low tide, and water quality conditions (<https://www.dewater.com/css>). Coaches are responsible for judging the safety of river conditions, particularly after a storm or significant tide. Everyone, including coaches, coxswains and rowers should be vigilant for any obstacles and immediately call “weigh enough” when encountering significant debris. Coaches may use their judgment to modify practice if water quality is low.

#### **RUNNING AGROUND**

If you have run aground on a sandbar, stop rowing immediately at your coxswain’s command.

The coxswain should try backing out if the boat is not too far up on a sandbar. If you have become too stuck on the sandbar to back off if it, rowers will have to get out one by one on the sandbar until the boat becomes light enough to push off of the sandbar.

Rowers assisting from the water in pushing the boat off the sandbar should try to remain on shallow ground, being careful of sudden drop-offs. The rowers should then carefully get back into the shell and return the boat to the boathouse.

Once back on land, the hull of the shell should be carefully checked for damage.

#### **LOST SKEG**

If a shell has lost a skeg while on the water, the rowers must return to the dock immediately. The incident must be reported to the VP for Operations and a Damage Report must be created in iCrew. The equipment should be removed from use and have a visible sign indicating Do Not Use until the skeg is replaced.

#### **BROKEN EQUIPMENT**

Rowers must not take out any equipment that is considered broken. Any damaged equipment should be reported immediately via iCrew's Damage Report function.. Damage Reports must include Equipment type and item name (i.e. Hull name), date reported, a detailed description of the damage or issue (including a check box if major damage), location of damage (i.e. "4 seat" or "bow ball"), and name of reporter. Any rower may report damage through iCrew's Damage Report, but it is the responsibility of the senior coach during the incident and the program rep (as applicable) to ensure the damage report is entered correctly and completely. Damaged equipment that is not safe to row should be marked with a visible sign ("Do Not Use") on the hull to prevent inadvertent use.

#### **CRABS**

All significant crabs should be reported to the VP for Operations in writing using iCrew's Damage Report function (list boat and seat number).

#### **WAKES/WAVES**

If approaching wakes are higher than the gunwale, the shell should be turned parallel to the wake to avoid having parts of the shell unsupported by the water. It is possible to split a shell under these conditions. Rowers should stop rowing and lean away from the approaching wake, with oar(s) on the wake side lifted slightly. Coxswains should make appropriate calls to ensure the safety of crew and equipment in wake conditions.

If wakes are lower than the gunwale and widely spaced, continue to row without a course adjustment. Closely spaced wakes that are lower than the gunwale may be taken at a 90 degree angle with the bow directly toward them.

Turning in waves is tricky; allow plenty of room, energy and time.

**NO WAKE** buoys. You may wish to take the bow number (registration) of any boat violating these rules and report the incident to the DC Harbor Patrol.

## EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

### GENERAL

Under no circumstances should a rower in the water leave his floating boat. Even if a swamped boat is within a swimming distance from the shore, the rower should swim the boat to the shore. Do not leave your floatation, even if you consider yourself a strong swimmer.

In an emergency condition, the first action to perform is stopping the boat. Someone should give the command “Weigh enough, hold water!” Don’t ask questions; just respond immediately by stopping all forward body movement. Square the blades in the water to bring the boat to a halt.

Use these distress signals to communicate to other boats: blow a whistle, wave the arms or a shirt above your head or raise one oar in the air.

### CALLING FOR HELP

For life threatening emergencies while on the water, contact DC Harbor Patrol at 202-727-4582 or VHF Channel 16 for immediate response. DC Harbor Patrol will coordinate with other emergency services for further aid.

For emergencies ashore, dial 911.

For other assistance, coaches should use the CRC VHF Radios to contact other coaches for assistance. CRC will use VHF Channel 72 for intra club communications.

### INCIDENT REPORTING

An [Incident Report](#) must be completed in iCrew if any of the following occurred:

- Person(s) overboard or swamped
- Any personal injury
- Any collision
- Major damage to equipment
- Miscellaneous

The Incident Report function in iCrew must include a Summary title (what happened), date and time of incident, detailed description of the incident, cause of incident, location of the incident, program and session information (if coached session), involved club members, their injury status, whether they entered the water, the member's position, any non-club members involved, shell(s) involved, damage details, water and weather conditions, first aid and/or emergency actions taken, involvement of any non-club vessels, corrective actions taken, and suggested action to avoid in the future. The senior coach at a coached session, or individual rower in an independent session is required to complete the incident report.

#### **ROWER OVERBOARD**

Immediate command "Weigh enough, hold water!"

Oars with adjustable handles do not provide flotation.

The launch picks up the person and determines if the rower returns to the shell. Another rower may be required to enter the water to assist with first aid.

#### **ROWER INJURED**

Immediate command "Weigh enough!" Signal launch if first aid is needed.

#### **SHELL DAMAGED AND NOT SINKING**

Immediate command "Weigh enough!" Make adjustments or signal launch for assistance.

#### **SHELL SWAMPED**

A shell is swamped when the interior water reaches the gunwales. For eight and four-oar person shells, if rowers stay in the boat, the flotation ends may cause the boat to break apart.

If the shell is swamped or taking on excessive water, with rescue imminent:

Immediate command, "Weigh enough!"

Coxswain directs rowers to untie, signal launch and unloads rowers by pairs – starting in the middle of the boat – as soon as possible in order to avoid damage to the boat.

Pairs should form “buddies” and keep watch on each other. The coxswain should buddy with the stern pair.

If rescue is not imminent, take the following steps:

Remove oars or place them parallel to the shell. All persons should move to the two ends of the shell (it is dangerous to roll a shell when near riggers)

Then roll the boat to form a more stable floatation platform so rowers can either lie on top of the hull or buddies can hold onto each other across the hull

Do not attempt to roll the boat if rescue is on the way. Remember that body heat loss occurs 25 times faster in water.

A launch can shuttle rowers to the nearest shore. Be careful not to overload launch.

One and Two person shells are designed to support their rower’s weight even when swamped. Rower should seek launch assistance in bailing (removing water) before proceeding, or proceed to the nearest dock or shore to get as much water out of the boat as possible.

When the boat has been brought to shore, remove the oars. If the ends of the shell have filled with water, they must be drained before the boat can be removed from the water. Remove the shell carefully to avoid injury or damage. A boat full of water is very heavy, so try bailing first, then roll it slowly and remove it from the water.

#### **SHELL CAPSIZED**

Immediate command “Untie!” This rarely happens except in small boats. Be sure that all rowers and coxswains are accounted for. Stay with boat until assistance arrives!

Procedures for righting and re-entering a capsized single scull can be found in the Sculling and Small Boats manual, along with procedures for assisting other scullers in re-entering their single. Scullers who have not been trained in these procedures should

not row without a coach or sculling buddy (at a minimum). Fatigue and hypothermia can set in quickly in the water. While getting back in the boat is preferred, paddling to shore is an acceptable alternative. If the temperature is cold, lying across the boat out of the water as much as possible is important as body heat loss occurs 25 times faster in the water.

#### **SHELL DAMAGED AND SINKING**

Immediate command “Untie!” Get out of the boat and follow the same procedures as for a swamped shell. Do not leave a floating boat. Hold onto your oar and use it as a floatation device if boat sinks.

#### **ANOTHER BOAT IN DISTRESS**

If a distress signal is seen and insufficient assistance is near that craft, maneuver your shell to the distressed boat. Attempt to summon other launches or stable boats with a distress signal. Assist in any way that does not jeopardize the lives in your boat.

#### **Cold Weather**

##### **HYPOTHERMIA**

##### **General**

Occurs when a victim is subjected to cold temperatures, cold water, ice or snow. There is a potential danger for hypothermia when the water temperature is below 80 degrees and very dangerous when below 50 degrees. Call 911 (or channel 16 on VHF Radio).

If the victim is conscious, warm him or her by removing wet clothing and wrapping in warm blankets (Rub them and give warm liquids – no alcohol).

Warm them with warm blankets or the body heat of another person. Prevent the victim from losing more body heat. Do not warm extremities (see below).

If the victim is not breathing and there is no pulse, clear the air passage and begin mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing and external heart massage (CPR) IMMEDIATELY. Once you begin CPR, do not stop until medical assistance is obtained.

Don't give up. Drowning victims may look dead. Their skin is blue and cold to the touch. There is no detectable heartbeat or breathing. The eyes are fixed and dilated, and there is no other sign of life. However, if the water was cold, there is still a good chance of survival. Even in a near-drowning, individuals must always be assessed by a medical provider.

Symptoms: Feet cold, turn bluish and shiver first, followed by numbness, apathy, lethargy, disorientation and loss of mental capacity

Action if cold and shivering:

- Get out of the water quickly, even on top of a capsized boat. Heat loss is 25 times greater when in the water.
- Huddle with others.
- Drown-proofing (dead man's float) is not an acceptable survival technique. Keep as much of the body as possible out of the water.
- Move to shelter quickly; remove wet clothing and warm body. In mild hypothermic conditions, warm in a shower, tub or with warm blankets.
- Do not give any liquids to drink; treat for shock.
- Continue to warm and always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.
- Action if cold and shivering has stopped:
- Treat as above but **DO NOT WARM EXTREMITIES!** If the victim is no longer shivering, the torso must be warmed first to avoid circulating cold blood to the heart. This can kill.
- Wrap the victim in a blanket and apply heat to underarms and groin area; wrap again in a separate blanket. Wrap each arm and leg separately to prevent warming.
- Hot packs should not be placed directly on the victim. A thick layer should be used to protect the victim's skin from this heat source. If hot packs are not available, place the victim in a sleeping bag with a warm person.
- Administer artificial respiration and CPR if necessary. Always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.

### **Cold Water Immersion**

Be aware that in very cold water, people have survived as long as one hour under water. Recover a victim immediately and even though there may be no signs of life, begin CPR efforts until medical assistance is obtained.

When air is below 40° and/or water below 50°, keep launch within 100 yards of all shells. In these conditions, hypothermia can set in quickly.

Try to keep your head out of the water. Swimmers will retain heat best if they remain huddled with others and wear a life jacket. The body cools rapidly when swimming in water < 50°F. Remain as motionless as possible. Stay with your boat even if land appears within easy reaches; holding still in the water is preferable to swimming. Physical ability is hampered and judgment is impaired in cold water.

Use the Heat Escape Lessening Position (HELP). Help or Huddle procedure can cover areas of high heat loss and lead to increase survival time. Both methods resulted in nearly 50% increases in predicted survival time (see drawings).

“Buddy up” so that all rowers are in groups of two or three. This partnership provides a way to monitor each person and to support or assist one another in a time of emergency.

Get out of the water and onto an oar or overturned shell if you can.

## **HOT WEATHER**

### **Hyperthermia**

Occurs when there is an increase in body temperature, usually when the air temperature is above 76 degrees, and the victim is exposed to sun and heat in combination with a decrease in fluids. It may occur when a) sweat cannot easily evaporate; b) the body is being heated by the environment; c) water loss from sweat and respiration is not replaced and dehydration occurs. The following serious conditions may result:

### **Dehydration**

Drink water before, during and after practice. Be fully hydrated before exercise (your urine should be clear). During exercise, fluid intake should match fluid loss. Rehydrate following exercise.

Carry drinking water in the boat when rowing.

Limit your time in the sun, wear a hat, and use sunscreen. Wear lightweight clothing.



Plan activity level consistent with the degree of heat, amount of sun exposure or humidity.

Do not take “salt tablets”. Consumption of sodium salt increases potassium loss. Moderate potassium depletion will cause weakness and fatigue while severe depletion can result in fatal heart irregularities.

### **Heat Exhaustion**

Symptoms: Throbbing headache, nausea, cool skin, chills, sweaty, pale, rapid pulse. Impending heat exhaustion or heat stroke may not present all of these signs, Decreased athletic performance and deterioration of muscle coordination can also be indicators.

Action: Drink water, shade from sun, and treat for shock.

### **Heat Stroke**

Symptoms: Heat Stroke is life threatening – behavior changes, unconsciousness, hot but not sweaty, flushed warm skin and rapid pounding pulse.

Action: Douse with cool water, shade from sun, fan, ensure that the airway is open, and always get medical assistance as soon as possible.

## **AFTER THE ROW**

### **COOL DOWN**

Paddle-down at the end of your workout. It is important to your health that you don't race up to the dock. Once the boat and oars are stored, it is important to go through basic stretching exercises to heal any unnoticed sprains or strains that began during your row, thus eliminating soreness and unnecessary pain.

### **INCIDENT/DAMAGE REPORTS**

Report any damage that may be required through the Damage Report function provided in iCrew (correcting maintenance issues on the spot if possible). Report any incidents that may have occurred in the Incident Report function provided in iCrew

If that crew/sculler's log indicates that you are the last one in, turn off lights and close doors.

Wash hands (suggested)

Return all equipment to its proper place.