

Brockport Community Rowing, Inc.

Safety Manual

Safety is the number one priority for all participants, coxswains and coaches. Know the rules, but blind adherence does not replace exercising sound judgment in any given situation.

Basic Safety

All program participants and single scullers must familiarize themselves with this manual and any other safety notices BCR makes available.

General Safety Guidelines

- Conduct yourself safely and responsibly at all times.
- All BCR program participants and members are required to sign a Liability Waiver and acknowledge reading the BCR Code of Conduct each year.
- Follow the instructions of BCR coaches and coxswains at all times.
- Running inside the boathouse or on the docks is strictly prohibited.
- Swimming off the docs or shore is prohibited.
- Each rower and sculler is responsible for being aware of weather conditions and possible safety hazards. Just because the docks are open doesn't mean it is safe to row. Assess all conditions that may affect safety and act accordingly.
- All knives (over 4") and firearms are prohibited.
- Be alert to unsafe or suspicious conditions or conduct in the boat, on the waterways, and on village premises at The Boathouse at Commissary Park.
- No boat will be operated by anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Coaches may prohibit participation if a participant appears to be under the influence.
- Any boat going out is required to record their rowing activity prior to rowing in the log book located within the BCR Boathouse.
- All BCR program participants and members must watch the US Rowing safety video annually. Scullers should also watch the US Rowing video describing how to recover from flipping.
- Do Not give out the boathouse lock code to anyone.
- Be sure boathouse doors are closed and locked and that the boathouse lights are off before exiting the facility.
- Launch gas cans and supply tanks should be stored in the flame-resistant cabinets at the boathouse.
- Dress for the weather – layers, hat, sunglasses, water, socks and footwear.

Emergency Help

In any emergency your first step should be to call for help.

- Yell for help. Do not assume people can see you or recognize that you are in an emergency situation.
- Wave hands, a shirt or even an oar in the air to signal distress.
- Call 9-1-1. Give the street address of your location if possible or a landmark.
- The boathouse address is 308 Holley Street.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

- Severe weather/wind/thunderstorms: all participants and coaches should remain inside the enclosure of the boathouse facilities.
- 9-1-1 should be called in case of an emergency. The address of the boathouse is The Boathouse at Commissary Park, 308 Holley Street, Brockport, New York 14420.
- In case of fire or other threat in the building, move out of the building using the door furthest away from the threat and proceed to the safest assembly point (south end of Bicentennial Bridge or entrance to parking lot D).
- In case of fire in the vicinity of the building immediately move away from the fire and proceed to the safest assembly point (south end of Bicentennial Bridge or entrance to parking lot D).
- In case of other threats, lock yourself in the boathouse or run to escape.
- When all participants and staff reach the designated rally point, the staff should take note and identify that all participants and staff are accounted for.

Emergency Extraction Points

- Concrete ramp (boat dock) at San Souci Park, Clarkson, New York.
- Side of the canal where there is rock and not walls.

Use of Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

- Any boaters under 12 years of age must wear a PFD.
- Coaching launches must carry PFDs for every member of the crews they are responsible for and for each person in the launch.
- It is recommended that unaccompanied shells carry a PFD for each member of the crew.
- Rowing shells are designed for flotation, but your boat is not a PFD; it is an emergency flotation device. Oars will float for a short time but are not a reliable flotation device.

Swimming Requirements

- All rowers must be able to swim 25 yards.
- A personal flotation device (PFD) must be worn by any participant who cannot swim 25 yards.

Medical and Fitness Requirements

- Consult a physician before starting any form of exercise program.
- Notify your coach if you have any medical conditions that could impair your ability to row or that could require special attention.
- Take precautionary medications in the boat with you while rowing (e.g., asthma inhalers, epi pens, etc.).

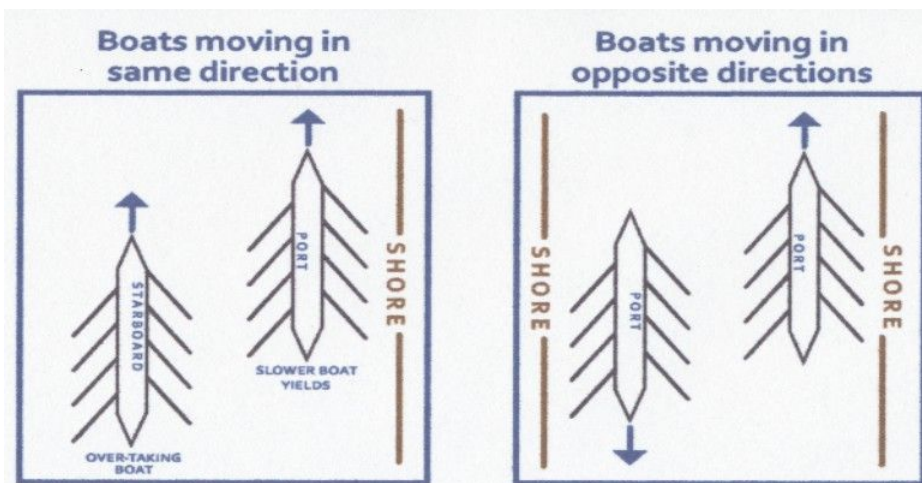
Rowing Terminology

Every rower must learn and understand the following terminology:

- Weigh enough!
- Hold water!
- Check it down
- Bow, stern
- Back it
- Port, starboard
- Spin
- Seat number, bow seat, stroke seat

Erie Canal Traffic Patterns

- All boats should launch and land with the bow facing the pedestrian bridge and canal gate.
- Stay to the starboard side of the canal at all times.
- Overtaking boats shall pass on the port side of boats being overtaken. Boats being overtaken shall yield to shore.
- Boats approaching in opposite directions shall pass port to port.



After launching, paddle upstream under the north side of the canal gate and pedestrian bridge before turning to face downstream.

- When launching multiple boats the first boat should use the most upstream section of available dock space.
- Priority on the dock is given to boats docking, especially in adverse weather conditions.
- Do not spin between the dock and the canal gate and pedestrian bridge.
- If the canal is busy with other boats, stage your shell
- Do not leave boats unattended on the dock.
- Launches must be operated at a rate of speed that will not endanger the life or property of any person. They must maintain a slow speed when operated within 100 meters of the dock.

Weather and Water Conditions

Waves and Wakes and Debris

Waves and choppy conditions are generated by wind, currents, or wakes from passing boats.

- If an approaching wake is higher than the gunwale, the shell should be turned parallel to the wake to avoid having part 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 oars on the wake side lifted slightly.
- If the wake is lower than the gunwale and widely spaced, continue to row without a course adjustment. Deep and closely spaced wakes that are lower than the gunwale may be taken at a 90-degree angle with the bow directly pointed into them.
- When turning in choppy conditions, allow plenty of room between other boats, shore and obstacles.
- In the spring and in times of heavy rain there may be excessive debris in the water which can cause significant damage to equipment and could cause capsizing or injury.

Weather Conditions

BCR coaches have the final say on whether conditions are safe for practice on the water for all rowers. Private scullers row at their own discretion but should be aware of the following:

- Check the forecast before going out on the water.
- Watch for gathering clouds.
- Watch for changes in wind speed and direction.
- Watch for temperature changes.

Wind

Rowers must be aware of wind speed and direction and the challenges it can create both on the water and on land.

- Be aware that winds from the opposite direction of the canal current create more chop and difficult rowing conditions.
- Be especially careful carrying boats in windy conditions. If possible, carry with more than the usual number of rowers. Single scullers should not attempt to carry a boat solo in heavy winds or gusts.
- If sudden winds come up, return to the boathouse if it's safe or row to the nearest shore and wait for it to calm down. Try to minimize equipment damage, but remember, you are more valuable than the boat.

Fog

Do not row in fog unless your visibility is at least 100 yards. Be sure to know land reference points. **If fog sets in while you are on the water:**

- Move slowly and be prepared to stop quickly.
- Advise other boats of your location with a whistle or by shouting.
- Follow the shoreline back to the boathouse (shoreline should always be on your starboard side).

Lightning

Lightning is extremely dangerous. Never head out to row if you hear thunder or see lightning. After the last clap of thunder, wait 30 minutes before heading out on the water.

- If any rower hears thunder during coached programs, he or she should notify the coach immediately.
- Head for the boathouse if it's nearby (leave your boat with the oars on it on the dock if lightning is close).
- If the storm is upon you, go under a bridge if one is close by.
- If you are far from the boathouse or a bridge, take your boat ashore and wait for the storm to pass.

Cold Air and/or Cold Water Temperatures

Cold air temperatures and/or cold water temperatures can be particularly hazardous to rowers by increasing the risk of hypothermia, frostbite and death.

Singles, doubles and pairs are at risk because of the greater risk of capsize and should not go out without a safety launch unless the combined air/water temperature is greater than 90° F. Use the sculling log sign out including time, direction and boat.

Additional Safety Guidelines for Coxed Boats

- All coxed boats require a safety/coaching launch unless prior approval from the Head Coach has been given.
- Participants in coached programs should, unless specifically instructed otherwise, make an effort to remain in sight of the coach.
- The primary job of the coxswain is to safely guide the boat by steering and commanding the crew.
- A rower who sees a hazard on water or land that they believe the coxswain doesn't see should notify the coxswain immediately.
- Coxswains must follow traffic patterns at all times.
- The coxswain is responsible for being aware of and avoiding other traffic – whether or not other boats are following proper traffic patterns.

Additional Safety Guidelines for Scullers

- New sculling members or novice scullers must complete an orientation with the Head Coach or a representative of the coaching staff designated to do so.
- New sculling members or novice scullers must be approved by the Head Coach to row without a safety launch and/or coach.
- BCR reserves the right to require new, sculling members to enroll in an instructional sculling program prior to sculling independently.
- Private sculling instruction may only be conducted by approved BCR or BCR guest coaches.
- Rowing with a buddy is recommended whenever possible, especially in cold or inclement weather.
- No rower under the age of 14 is permitted to row without an accompanying adult.
- It is highly recommended that unaccompanied scullers carry a PFD.
- All rowers are required to log out and back in using the logbook located in the boathouse. Log your name, the time (both in and out) and which direction you plan to row.
- Scullers should carry a whistle and a cell phone in a waterproof case or pouch. Be sure to attach them to the boat so they don't sink in case of capsizing.
- Know how to properly move a boat to and from the boathouse independently or with a partner. Do not attempt to move a boat solo unless you can do so competently and without bumping into anything (other boats/riggers, the floor, racks etc.).

Equipment and Lights

Equipment

Each person is 100% responsible for the whole boat and 100% accountable for their own oar, rigging, foot stretchers, seat and slide. Check to make sure that all equipment is functioning properly before leaving the dock. If you aren't sure, ASK! The coxswain should remind rowers to check equipment. Check the following:

- Nuts on the rigging are tight.
- Position of your foot stretchers are acceptable and tightened.
- Height of oarlock(s) are properly positioned (poppers).
- Heel ties on the shoes are tied.
- Make sure the bow ball is securely attached.
- Clean and dry boats before placing on racks.

Property or equipment damage, collision with other boars and equipment maintenance required must be reported immediately to the Head Coach. Complete the Equipment Damage Report in the logbook located in the BCR Boathouse. Any shell not in usable condition should be brightly marked with a sign saying "BROKEN – DO NOT ROW" to prevent anyone from taking the shell out before it is repaired.

Use of Boat Lights Before Sunrise and After Sunset

- All boats are required by NYS navigation laws to display a white stern light and a red/green (port/starboard) bow light from dusk to dawn.
- Scullers should wear a white headlamp if they do not have a white stern light.
- BCR provides lights for sweep and scull programs.
- Private scullers should provide their own lights.

Launch Safety Equipment

Launches must carry all equipment required by Federal and State Regulations and comply with Safe Boating Practices, including:

- A Personal Flotation Device (PFD) for the operator to wear and for each member of the accompanied rowing boat.
- Throw-able rescue device with line.
- Lights before sunrise and after sunset (white on stern, red/green on bow).
- Noise making device capable of producing a blast for two or more seconds. A mouth whistle is sufficient (for launch operator and also for coxswain).
- Attached anchor with 50 feet or more of anchor line.
- At least one oar or paddle.

- Valid registration.
- Operator NYS Safe Boating Certificate.
- Tool kit.
- First Aid kit (emergency blankets, ice packs, bandages and other similar first aid gear).
- Fire Extinguisher.
- Flashlight.
- Flare
- Direct communication option with coxswain (marine radio, portable phone, etc.) and coach knowledge of a predetermined safety response plan, which would include the necessary communications with local ambulance and rescue personnel should they be needed.

Clothing

General Suggestions

- Avoid baggy shorts and shirts. They can get caught in the wheels on the seat and hands can get tangled in them while rowing.
- Bright-colored, high-visibility clothing is strongly encouraged.
- High quality sunglasses are recommended.
- Wear secure footwear for safety on land. Flip flops are a tripping hazard, fall off easily and are highly discouraged.

Clothing for Hot Weather

- Wear light-colored clothing of natural or synthetic fibers designed to aid in heat reduction
- Wear a cap for sun protection and to reduce glare.

Clothing for Cold Weather

One of the biggest mistakes made when rowing in cold weather is dressing too warmly Exercise generates heat and the evaporation of sweat can cause heat loss from your body.

- Dress in layers that you can remove as soon as you start to sweat and then put back on as needed.
- First, put on a thin layer of synthetic, wicking material.
- Avoid cotton which stays wet and won't insulate.
- Next, add a layer of fleece or wool for insulation.
- Lastly, add a waterproof, breathable outer layer.

Incident Reports

All occurrences of injury must be reported immediately to the Head Coach. Complete an incident report even if the person refuses treatment. Incident reports are in the logbook located in the GRC Boathouse.

Emergency Situations and Warning Signs

Warm Weather Rowing: Heat Related Illness

During intense exercise, muscle activity increases internal heat production 15 to 20 times more than at resting levels.

Condition	Signs	Treatment
Heat Cramps	Muscle cramps Spasms	Rest in a cool place Drink a sports drink or water
Heat Fatigue	Weak, dizzy, headache Rapid pulse, lowered BP, sweating	Stop rowing Apply ice packs to groin and armpits Drink a sports drink or water
Heat Exhaustion	Heat fatigue symptoms Mental confusion Dehydration Sweating	Hospitalization IV fluids Aggressive cooling measures
Heat Stroke	Body temp rises over 104 degrees Disorientation Loss of coordination Hot dry skin Loss of consciousness	Hospitalization IV fluids Aggressive cooling measures

Factors that increase the risk of hyperthermia include:

- Air temperature
- Humidity
- Exercise intensity and duration
- Body size and shape
- Fitness level
- Amount of fluids consumed

The severity of heat illness progresses from the mild stages of heat cramps and heat fatigue through more serious heat exhaustion to heat stroke, which can be fatal.

Prevention of Heat Related Illnesses

- When possible, row in the morning or evening when it's cooler
- Drink plenty of fluids (especially sports drinks) before, during and after practice.

- Wear a cap and wet it when in high heat and/or humidity.
- Avoid retaining heat by wearing light-colored clothing of a natural or synthetic fiber designed to aid in heat reduction.
- Acclimatize yourself slowly to exercising in the heat.
- Limit duration of high intensity work in high heat and humidity.

Cold Weather Rowing – Hypothermia and Frostbite

Hypothermia can occur when a person is subjected to cold temperatures, cold water, ice or snow. Hypothermia can develop even when the temperature is above freezing.

It is a serious condition which can cause death. There is potential for hypothermia if people are submerged in water below 80°F. Water temperatures below 50°F are extremely dangerous. Hypothermia can even occur with air temperatures in the 60's, particularly if rowers are wet, exhausted, and exposed for long periods of time.

Always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.

Frostbite

Frostbite occurs most commonly on exposed skin, such as cheeks, nose and ears, but it can also occur on hands and feet.

Hypothermia	Skin cool/cold to touch Drowsiness Confusion Numbness Lethargy	Get out of cold Remove wet clothing Warm the person (clothing, blankets, your body, heat packs)
Extreme Hypothermia	Pale or bluish skin No shivering Stiff and cold Unresponsive Shallow or no breathing Little or no pulse	Get out of cold Remove wet clothing Warm the person (clothing, blankets, your body, heat packs) Call 911 Start CPR if necessary Do not rewarm the extremities
Frostbite	Numbness Loss of feeling Stinging or burning sensation	Slowly warm the affected area Do not rub affected area

Person Overboard – Capsize – Swamped Boat – Collisions

Never Leave the Boat!

- Even if it is swamped or capsized, the boat will stay afloat.
- Abandoned, submerged or partially submerged boats are difficult for other crews and boats to see. Be sure to call out.

Person Overboard

- The most common reason to fall out of a rowing shell is as a result of an ejector crab (the oar gets stuck in the water and pushes the rower out of the boat).
- Immediately yell: “Weigh enough, hold water!”
- Keep in mind that the rower may be injured from the force of the oar and may require someone to provide immediate assistance.

Shell Capsized

- Capsizing is extremely common in small boats (single, double or pair) and much less likely in larger boats.
- Scullers should familiarize themselves and practice righting a boat and re-entering from the water.
- Larger boats (fours, eights) and small boats (if you are tired, cold or unclear how to re-enter a boat) should be swum to shore. Once you are in sufficiently shallow water to stand, right the boat and get in.

- When righted, rowing shells generally have sufficient flotation to be rowed. Many are designed so that much of the water will spill out immediately. Larger boats will need to be bailed out before being rowed.

Swamped Boat

- If the shell fills with water and you are in a new model boat the flotation compartments will keep the boat afloat and rowers should remain in the boat until help arrives
- If you are in an older boat and the shell fills with water to the gunwales, the boat will still float but may break apart if the rowers remain in the shell. Take the following steps if help is not at hand or on the way:
 - Yell, "Weigh enough!"
 - Untie shoes.
 - Rowers should buddy-up in pairs. Coxswain should buddy with the stern pair.
 - One at a time, the rowers should slip into the water, keeping hold of the boat for flotation.
 - Remove the oars, or place them parallel to the hull. Loose oars will not only impede flipping the boat over, but they can pose a hazard. Don't let oars float away.
 - Move to the end of the boat so as to avoid falling riggers and oars when you roll the boat over.
 - Roll the boat over so it is upside down
 - Once the boat is rolled, rowers may grasp hands across the boat.
 - Swim or push the boat to the side of the canal where there is not a wall.

Collisions

In case of collision stop and assess boat damage:

- Is anyone in either boat injured?
- Is the boat damaged? If so, is it taking on water? If so, proceed immediately to shore or the nearest dock.

If a person is injured, consider the following:

- Is there a coaching launch nearby? Someone should immediately try and flag down or hail for assistance
- Does the person require immediate first aid?
- Is anyone in the boat qualified to administer aid?
- If there isn't a launch nearby, and the injury requires quick attention, where is the closest help. Some of the possibilities for getting assistance include;
 - Cell phone. Know the extraction points on the canal so you can give an address to 9-1-1.
 - Passersby on the canal may be able to assist.

- Strong West is located on West Avenue on the north side of the canal, north of Smith Street.
- If the temperature is cold, lying across the boat, with as much of the body out of the water as possible is important. Loss of body heat occurs 25 times faster in the water.
- Swim the boat to shore if at all possible.

Infractions of This Safety Manual

Any breach of the Policies and Procedures will result in a reminder of the appropriate rule. If there is a blatant disregard for the Policies and Procedures or an incident which raises serious safety concerns, the BCR Safety Committee or Head Coach shall ask for a meeting with the involved party(ies) to review the facts and discuss what happened and how future such incidents can be avoided. The Safety Committee will submit a summary report to the BCR Board within two (2) weeks of this meeting. The Board may:

- Modify the BCR Guidelines.
- Suspend or revoke status (member, coach, coxswain).
- Withdraw use privileges to BCR equipment and/or facilities.
- In the case of high school and college programs, give notice of the matter to the program's board, athletic director, or other appropriate persons.

The person(s) and/or organization concerned shall be given notice of any such recommendation prior to the Board meeting at which it will be considered.

Acknowledgement

This safety manual is based on the one generated by Genesee Rowing Club. It was so comprehensive and well done that we have adapted it to our use by adding things unique to BCR and eliminating some items not relevant to our group.