



Maine Coast Rowing Association Safety Guidelines

(updated May 2022)

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MCRA Basic Safety Guidelines

Rowing carries with it some inherent risks. Each person is responsible for their own safety and rowing is ALWAYS at one's own risk; no set of Safety Guidelines or Rules can be created to address all hazardous situations, and neither MCRA nor its Board of Directors can completely assure the safety of individual rowers. MCRA assumes no responsibility, either express or implied, for the personal safety or welfare of any person. These guidelines and rules are made to teach and guide participants and their guests as they take responsibility for their own safety.

Each participant has an obligation to assess her or his ability to row safely under the existing weather, river, and vessel traffic conditions when participating in MCRA activities. Each is also responsible for knowing her or his own health status and, if appropriate, seeking medical assessment and following medical advice. Safe behavior, good manners and sportsmanship are always expected on the water, at the dock, and in and around the boat storage area. Unsafe or inappropriate behavior may result in a participant being expelled from MCRA and its programs without refund and refused further participation in MCRA.

As with any policy, all conceivable situations cannot be anticipated. These guidelines merely provide the rowing safety recommendations for participants with MCRA.

To participate in MCRA activities or use MCRA equipment all participants must:

- Pay membership and /or program fees.
- Become a US Rowing Basic Member (renewable annually) and sign the on-line waiver annually.
- If there are any questions about health, fitness, or medical status, obtain clearance to participate by a medical professional before participating in any MCRA activity.
- All youths (under 18) who are participating in MCRA programs must complete a swim test under the supervision of a lifeguard.
 - The test must include:
 - Swimming at least 50 meters wearing light clothing
 - Treading water for at least five minutes
 - Putting on a life jacket in the water
 - Instead of the swim test, participants may furnish evidence of passing supervised testing that has demonstrated swimming ability such as:
 - SCUBA certification
 - Red Cross swimming certifications
 - Documentation of having passed a swim test at another rowing club
- Adults must sign the swim test certification form and return it to rowbrunswick@gmail.com

- Anyone who does not meet MCRA swimming requirements must always wear a life preserver when in a boat or on the water.
- New participants must complete a safety and equipment care orientation with a coach and watch the [US Rowing Safety Video](#)

Launching and Landing Procedures

Traffic pattern:

**Downstream on the Brunswick side of a river channel,
Upstream on the Topsham side of a river channel.**

The boatyard gate must be locked when no MCRA member is in or near the boatyard. The cable does not need to be locked while on the water, only when the last person leaves or if you're not sure if anyone is on the water. On the water is not considered near the boatyard.

Boats in slings outside the boatyard storage area must be kept off the river walk and boat ramp.

Preparation

Before getting hands on a boat, please be sure you have already:

- **If you are rowing unaccompanied it is strongly recommended that you have a life preserver and cell phone with you. You can find life preservers in the shed.**
- Checked the weather and river flow; be aware of special precautions that may be needed when it is cold (see *Risk and Hazard Guidelines*, below)
- checked the repair log to make sure you are not taking out a shell that has damage or needs to be repaired before being used.
- Check the shell, oars, and their hardware before taking oars down to the boat ramp or getting "hands on" to take the shell to the water.
- 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! Check the following:
 - That nuts on the rigging are tight, position of your foot stretchers and the smoothness of your slide are acceptable.
 - That the forward end of the slide is blunt and will not gouge your calves.
 - That the persons in front and behind you have sufficient room for their complete stroke.
 - That the heel ties on your shoes are tied and in good condition.
 - That your seat fits your body.
 - That your oar handle is properly sized.
 - That your oarlock height is proper.
 - That your clothing cannot become tangled in your seat or oar handle.
 - That you have proper safety devices on board your rowing shell.

- Rowers are encouraged take a boat out of the racks and put it hull down in slings before going down to the ramp. Each rower can then adjust foot stretchers and make sure all bolts are snug and everything appears to be in working order.
- Are aware of whether you need to be accompanied by a safety/coaching launch or Captain
- When handling boats and oars, members must be aware of the length of the boats and oars and avoid striking people and objects.
 - Members must be sure to look up and down the river walk before crossing the path and exercise care to assure that incidents with pedestrians or bicyclists do not occur.
 - Taking equipment down to the water, put out the “Caution” sign.
 - Before carrying equipment across the path, yell “Heads Up! Boat Crossing!” to alert people in the area.
 - Yell to alert anyone who is approaching to make sure they see you and the equipment.

Launching:

- Move the magnet with your name or the boats name to the OUT/on the water side of the board
- Please wear shoes or foot protection since there is broken glass around the launch area, on the ramp, and in the mud.
- Cox boxes and any other electronics should be tested and confirmed to be in good working order before embarking on a row.
- Crews and coxswains should remain vigilant and aware of any obstacles that might impede progress to or from the dock (riggers on boats on racks, lifts, slings, other crews waiting in line, fence posts, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.)
- All crew members are required to help carry boats to and from the water:
 1. Take oars down to the water **before** carrying the boat down. Please treat the oars with care. Oars are fragile if mishandled. Oars and sculls should be taken down to the water immediately before taking the boat down. Do not leave unattended blades where they will be in the way of other boats trying to launch.
 2. Finally, carry the rowing shell from the equipment storage area to the water.
- Etiquette calls for rowers to clear the launching area from the dock as quickly as possible. Be considerate of others, and PLAN to get the boat in the water and launched quickly.
 - If you discover breakage or missing equipment, take your boat out of the water, and put it in slings.
 - Once the shell is in the water, immediately obtain oars.
 - At least one member of a crew should hold the boat while others collect oars.

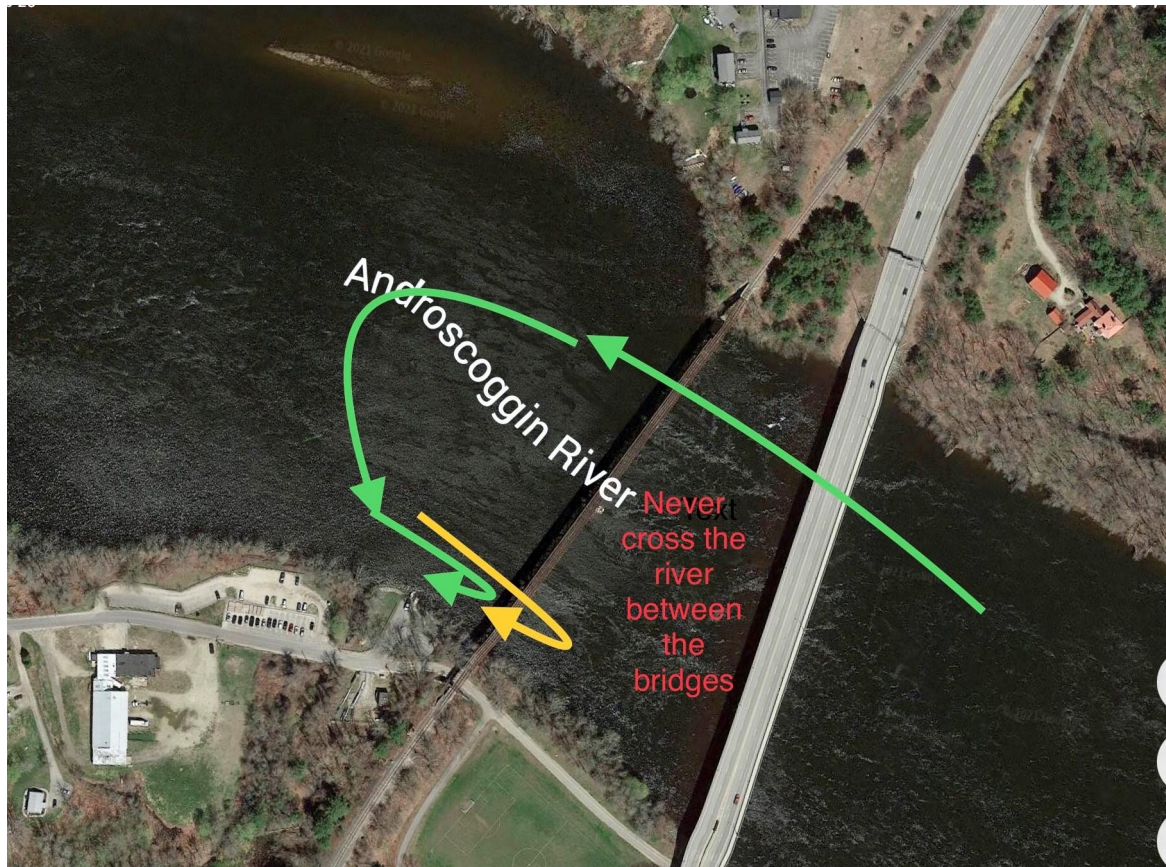
- Make sure all oars are in their oarlocks, oars are extended so the collars are in contact with the oarlocks, blades are flat on the water, and people are holding onto oar handles before anyone gets in the boat.
 - You may step **ONLY** on the foot plate. Never step on the tracks or let your feet touch the hull.
- Count down as soon as everyone is in the boat. If there are others waiting to use the dock, push off the dock before tying in, adjusting foot stretchers, etc. You can adjust and tie in on the water
- When launching, be aware that the current will probably be sweeping you towards the bridge abutments. Take appropriate action and get clear of them as soon as possible. Keep an eye out for other boats or river traffic.

Never, ever rest a boat hull down on the ground. Ever. Really. Never.

On the Water:

- Please follow traffic patterns (upstream on the Topsham side of the river channels, downstream on the Brunswick side)
 - Right-of way rules have been developed by the USCG. Vessels with the least maneuverability have the right-of way, but always play it safe and take action to avoid all other types of boats. The maneuverability rule can be confusing. For example, a sailboat without wind has the right-of way, but a sailboat with wind must give right-of way to the shell.
 - If you must move to the center of the river overtake another boat or avoid a snag:
 - Keep an eye out for boats going in the other direction
 - Move back to the correct side of the channel as soon as you can
- If you are being overtaken, the overtaking boat has the right of way. Move to the shore or out of the way of the boat overtaking you, depending on circumstances.
- If you see a boat in distress, do something unless it would put you in danger. Ask if they need help, call for help, etc.
- If there are “blind” boats on the water (boats without a coxswain) assume that they don’t see you. If they are near or if they are heading towards you yell to make sure they are aware of you (e.g., “Heads up, sculler!” “Take a look, sculler!”)
- If you notice another shell approaching you, yell “Heads Up!” to them to make sure they see you.
- Never, ever turn a boat around just upstream of a bridge or other obstacle if there is a significant current

Landing Pattern:



- Getting out of the boat:
 - The coxswain should be the first person out of the boat and then should coordinate exiting of the rowers.
 - Oars should not be pulled in until all rowers have exited the boat.
- Putting a boat away:
 - Wipe the boat down with a reasonably clean towel
 - Make sure the oars' sleeves and collars are clean
 - Visually inspect the boat for signs of damage or wear which need repair. If you find any damage (regardless of who caused it or if it's just built-up wear and tear) write a note on the Repair Log
 - Report any incidents, collisions, new hazards, or dangerous encounters you may have had in the Incident Log. Please also log any negative or problematic interactions with the public.

- Return the magnet with your name or the boats name to the IN/off the water side of the board
- Lock the equipment storage area gate.

Risk and Hazard Guidelines

Members are encouraged to carry charged cell phones in waterproof cases, whistles, or air horns to summon help in an emergency.

- In the event rescue assistance is required: Use your cell phone to contact emergency personnel or the safety/coaching launch depending on severity and urgency.

General Health:

- Participants are advised to consult with a physician before participating in rowing or attempting to move or carry MCRA equipment.

Accompaniment by a safety/coaching launch:

- All Learn-to-Row boats must be accompanied by a safety/coaching launch.
- All boats must be with 100 yards of a safety/coaching launch if the water or air temperatures temperature is low or if conditions are marginal

Weather:

- A good guideline used by many rowing clubs is the “Rule of 100”: if the water temperature is below 50 degrees or if the combined water and air temperature is below 100 degrees Fahrenheit, then
 - Inexperienced rowers or scullers are not allowed on the water without a coaching launch.
 - Experienced rowers and scullers must follow the “4 oar” rule (no boats on the water with fewer than 4 oars (or buddy system with singles).
- If either the air or water temperature is below 40 degrees, extreme precautions such as drysuits, pontoons, and/or life preservers worn while rowing, and additional safety/coaching launch precautions are *strongly* urged.
 - Anyone who does go out must be within 100 yards of a safety/coaching launch.
 - Drysuits and/or auto-inflating life preservers are recommended for rowers, coxswains, and people in the safety/coaching launch.
- Rowing is not allowed if ice is present.

Wind/Whitecaps:

- No boats are allowed out when whitecaps are present. If there are winds over 12mph extreme caution is advised even if there are no whitecaps, since a change in the tide may result in water flowing against the wind and conditions worsening significantly.

Thunder and Lightning:

- NEVER launch a boat when there is a possibility of lightning, or you hear thunder. Rowers must wait 30 minutes after thunder and lightning completely stops before launching a boat.
- If lightning is sighted while you are already on the water, you must return to the launching area IMMEDIATELY and wait for conditions to improve. Proceed as cautiously as possible to return quickly to the dock.
- In extreme conditions it may be necessary to go to the nearest accessible shoreline to safely wait out a storm.

Fog:

- If you can't see 100 yards or see to the opposite side of the river you are strongly advised not to go out.
- If you are caught out in fog during a practice proceed slowly, following the riverbank while making noise and looking out for boats and obstructions.
- All boats must use appropriate navigation lights in fog. In addition, safety launches must sound a long tone on a horn or whistle every two minutes when operating in fog.

Rain:

- Severe rain can result in strong, fast, unpredictable currents, and large amounts of dangerous debris in the water for several days after the rain has stopped.

Rowing before sunrise or after sunset:

- Rowing before sunrise and after sunset is not permitted.
- If a boat or safety/coaching launch will be out before sunrise, after sunset, or in limited visibility situations, Coast Guard compliant safety lights must be used at bow and stern. Rowers and safety/coaching launch drivers should follow applicable boating regulations.

Obstacles:

- Broken Glass and Fishhooks in the Launching Area: Be aware that there may be broken glass or fishhooks where we launch. So far, our experience has been that it is less likely for there to be broken glass on the ramp itself. However, it only takes one person breaking a bottle for that to change without notice.

Slippery footing:

- In early spring/late fall, even when the temperature is above freezing, frost/ice may be present on the ramp and dock, making them treacherous. Algae may also affix to the ramp and make the walking surface slippery. When on foot descending the ramp, slow down to anticipate a potentially slippery surface, especially when carrying a shell.

Floating Debris:

- Things like logs and branches of varying size can cause considerable damage. They sometimes float just under the surface of the water, so coaches, scullers, rowers, and

coxswains need to pay considerable attention to spotting them and steering clear. Debris tends to be more prevalent after rain and during and after high flows.

Snags and Deadheads:

- Deadheads are what happens when a free-floating log becomes mired in the riverbed, usually with one end pointing up toward (and sometimes through) the surface of the water. These can be very difficult to see and extremely damaging to boats. They can also occur almost anywhere in the river - near shore or in the middle of the channel. Coaches, scullers, rowers, and coxswains need to watch closely for them and remember that even if only a small branch protrudes above the water surface, larger structure may be just below the water surface and could cause boat damage and rower danger.
- Mark any new snags on the map of the river that is posted on the MCRA Bulletin Board in the equipment area

Bridges:

- Never turn a boat around just upstream of or under a bridge. The current can push a stopped or turning boat into a bridge piling. If you are upstream from a bridge, make sure you are a safe distance from it and be sure to factor in the speed of the current and the experience of those rowing.

Going Through the Narrows:

- The Narrows tend to have strong, swirling currents and areas where there are rocks just under the surface.
- Learn to Row and Novice rowers, scullers, and coxswains are not allowed to take boats through the Narrows and must stay upstream of the power lines by the narrows. Participants must be earn a "Captain" designation before taking a boat through the Narrows.
- Even Captains should not go through the Narrows if the current is more than moderately strong. Even under ideal conditions, be aware of hidden rocks, currents, and the possibility that the tides may change while you are on the far side of the Narrows.

Other Watercraft:

- Wakes from power boats:
 - If 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 wakes are 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 toward them.

- We share the river with motorboats, canoes, kayaks, etc. Keep an eye out to avoid running into them; yell or signal with a whistle if they don't see you.
- Be friendly, even if someone isn't friendly to you. All incidents must be reported in the Incident Log.
- Please be considerate of others and leave fishermen in boats or on the shore plenty of room.

Tide and Water Current:

The section of the Androscoggin River that MCRA rows runs from the Frank J. Woods Bridge/ Sea Dog restaurant to the entrance to [Merrymeeting Bay](#) (at the old Bay Bridge).

The river in this section has several influences that effect the direction and flow of the water.

- The *tidal influence* is from the Kennebec River entering and exiting the bay at Chops Point in Bath. Due to the distance from the Kennebec River the **tide at Brunswick comes in for 4 hours and ebbs for 8 hours**. There are many tide apps for your phone, but some rowers find the Tides Near Me app (Apple/Android) easy to use. (look for Brunswick, Androscoggin River)
- The *river flow influence* from the Androscoggin River upstream of MCRA also has a significant influence over the safety of the water we row on. The [nearest river flow measurements](#) are taken in Auburn, Maine. Flow here has ranged from 135,000 to 340 cfs (cubic feet per second). Rowers can obtain a [river flow forecast](#).

Typically, MCRA programs will row when the river flow is below 12,000 cfs. It's very important for all rowers to check the [current river flow](#) before launching.

Know the river flow and tide cycle before you row!

Spring rowing may begin in early May or as late as mid-June depending on the melting snowpack and rain.

During the rowing season a heavy rain will take MCRA off the water while we wait for the river levels to go down.

Awareness of Tide and Strong/Fast Current:

- Tide:
 - This stretch of the Androscoggin is affected both by river flow and the tide. Because of this combination it takes about 8 hours for the tide to go out and only 4 hours for it to come in
 - The water level can change 4-5 feet between low and high tide, affecting current and exposing rocks, snags, and sandbars
- Current:
 - During spring or after heavy rain, the river may have a deceptively fast current. Coaches, scullers, and coxswains should allow for additional stopping distance

- prior to any bridge or other hazards. Be particularly careful to go far upstream from hazards such as bridge abutments before turning.
- If the current is moderately strong it is recommended that only Experienced Rowers with strong skills and confidence row without a safety/coaching launch present and that they not go near or through the narrows. It is also recommended that only shells with four or more oars (no singles or pairs) be rowed to reduce the chance of capsizing.
 - If the river level is high or the current is very strong rowing is not recommended. Even highly experienced rowers are urged to exercise extreme caution and reconsider plans to row.
 - Current and flow will vary with the tide, but the following guidelines should be considered in arriving at a decision on whether to launch:
 - People with considerable expertise are strongly urged not to row if flow rates are over 16,000cfs
 - People with moderate expertise are urged to exercise great caution and consider not rowing if the flow rate is above 12,000cfs
 - Learn to Row classes typically will not launch if the flow is above 10,000cfs

Low Water Levels:

- Our stretch of the Androscoggin is tidal. Always be alert to changing tides and the fact that as the tide goes out new hazards or snags may appear, currents may change or strengthen, and water conditions may deteriorate if the tide is flowing against the wind.
- At low water rocks, sandbars and mud flats appear in some areas and some channels, such as those on the Topsham side of Cow Island and some passages through the Narrows become too shallow for rowing.

Try to minimize equipment damage but remember that you are more valuable than the boat.

Guidelines for Managing Emergencies

The risks during any rowing session can change unpredictably and can significantly increase by one or more hazardous conditions interacting. For example, the wind and waves that are merely a challenge on a warm summer day can add up to a significant danger if combined with cold weather and a broken oarlock. Other factors that affect the risk level include the physical conditioning of the rowers, their rowing skill, expertise in the shell type being rowed, and whether they are being supervised by a safety/coaching launch.

Each participant is responsible for considering the following policies and risk factors when deciding if rowing is reasonably prudent at any time and under the given circumstances. It is the responsibility of each person to use responsible judgment, follow MCRA policies, and assess the

current risk factors and make adjustments to rowing plans (including not going on the river) in order to manage the risks.

If the boat swamps, flips, or capsizes,

- STAY WITH THE BOAT
- If you're in a team boat, take a headcount.
- Signal nearby people for help (yell, wave both arms) if there are injuries or if you or others are in having difficulties (or, if there are significant injuries or danger call 911)
- If the water is cold, climb on the hull and straddle it as best you can, lying on your stomach. Then paddle it to shore. ("Straddle and paddle.")
- If it's warm water, you can either straddle and paddle or, staying with the boat, swim it to shore
- Once you get to the shore, empty the water from the boat and you're off!
- Did we mention how important it is to stay with the boat?

If caught unexpectedly in hazardous conditions,

- Row back to the dock if possible
- If you can't make it back to the dock, row to the shore and get out of the make your way back to the launch area. You can pull the boat up on the shore to secure it, but your safety takes priority over the equipment always

If someone is in the water and needs help:

- The best options are to (1) **reach** for them from the shore or from a boat or (2) **throw** them a buoy with a line, or a floating object.
- Be cautious if you decide to **row** to someone who is in distress/drowning. They may grab your oar or the boat, resulting in you flipping.
- Swimming out to someone can be very dangerous and can result in a double drowning. Do not try it unless you are a trained lifeguard.

Ask permission before rendering assistance or providing first aid. For first aid, provide care only within the limits of formal training you have completed.

**Please always be courteous to others on the water
(even if someone isn't courteous to you).**

No boat may be launched if the weather or water conditions are dangerous or threatening. MCRA officers, board members, or coaches may make a binding "No Rowing" decision any time they feel it is warranted. If no MCRA officer, board member, captain, or coach is present, then people considering rowing are responsible for assessing their abilities and experience, current conditions, and other risk factors before launching.

If in doubt about whether something is safe, it probably isn't.

Emergency Conditions

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

If it is necessary to stop immediately, someone should give the command, “Weigh ‘enough! Hold water!”! Don’t ask questions, just respond immediately by stopping all forward movement. Square the blades in the water and bring the boat to a halt.

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

- Man overboard - Immediate command “Weigh ‘enough! Hold water!” If the safety/coaching launch can get to the victim first, allow the launch to rescue the victim. If the safety/coaching launch is not in the immediate vicinity, back the shell to the victim and have him/her hang onto the shell until the launch arrives. Another rower may have to enter the water to assist if the victim is injured.
- Rower injured - Immediate command “Weigh ‘enough! Hold water!” Signal safety/coaching launch if first aid is needed.
- Shell damaged but afloat and not taking on water - Immediate command “Weigh ‘enough! Hold water!” Make adjustments or signal safety/coaching launch for assistance.
- Shell swamped - Immediate command “Weigh ‘enough! Hold water!” A shell is swamped when the interior water reaches the gunwales.
 - Coxswain directs rowers to untie. If conditions or stress on the hull put the boat at risk of breaking apart, the coxswain should call rowers by seat number and have them carefully, but quickly, slip overboard and hold on to the boat
 - If the boat is taking on excessive water, signal the safety/coaching launch and, once it arrives, unload rowers by pairs. Pairs should form “buddies” and keep watch of each other. The cox should buddy with the stern pair.
 - If rescue is not imminent and it is not possible to paddle the boat to shore, take the following steps:
 - Remove oars and 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 flotation platform so rowers can either lie on top of the hull or buddies can hold onto each other across the hull.
 - Remember that body heat loss occurs 25 times faster in the water.
 - Do not attempt to roll the boat if rescue is on the way.

- A safety/coaching launch can shuttle rowers to the nearest shore. Be careful not to exceed the launch's capacity, especially in rough conditions.
- When the boat has been brought to the 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. Lift the shell carefully to avoid injury or damage. A boat full of water is very heavy, so try bailing first, then roll the boat slowly and lift it from the water.
- Singles should be rowed with a buddy boat or safety/coaching launch whenever possible. Entering the shell directly from the water may cause splashboard damage so consider swimming the boat to shore or using the "straddle and paddle" approach (i.e., lie on the stern deck or the upturned hull and paddle the boat to shore with your hands). In very cold weather you may lie on the stern deck of your buddy's boat so that s/he can row you to shore. The loss of muscle control can occur very quickly and dramatically in cold water. The stern deck rescue may be your only option.
- Shell capsized - Immediate command "untie!" This rarely happens except in small boats. Be sure that all rowers and, especially, the cox are accounted for. Stay with the boat until assistance arrives.
- Shell broken and sinking - Immediate command "untie!" Get out of the boat and follow the same procedures as for a swamped shell. Do not leave the boat if it is afloat, even if it is swamped. Swim the boat to shore if safety/coaching launch is not immediately available to rescue you.
- Another boat in distress - If a distress signal is seen and insufficient assistance is near that craft, maneuver your shell to the distressed shell. Ask if you can render assistance, so long as doing so does not jeopardize the lives in your shell.

If you wish to aid someone who is having medical difficulties:

you MUST ask the person for their permission first if they are conscious

you MUST make sure that actions you take are within the limits of your training and ability

Please protect yourself from others' blood or bodily fluids by wearing medical gloves or, if necessary, using a breathing barrier, safety glasses, and a mask

Cold weather:

- **COLD SHOCK** is a significant risk when rowing on water colder than 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Recent research has shown that cold shock is more of a risk than hypothermia, can incapacitate even good swimmers, and can lead to drowning within 3 to 5 minutes. The cold shock reaction to sudden immersion in cold water is an involuntary response (a gasping inhalation followed by hyperventilation) that can make it difficult or impossible to hold one's breath under water, get into a life jacket or to get back into a boat.

- **HYPOTHERMIA** occurs when more heat escapes from your body than your body can produce. It is a serious condition that can be life threatening. Hypothermia in rowers is typically caused by a combination of moisture (from capsizing, swamping, backsplash, rain or sweat) combined with prolonged exposure to cold (either remaining immersed in cold water or wearing wet clothing in cold air, particularly if the air is moving over the body.) To avoid hypothermia, avoid becoming wet when the weather is cold by avoiding situations where there is a chance of capsizing or swamping (row a larger more stable boat or choose not to row), wearing multiple layers of synthetic clothing topped by a breathable but water-resistant shell to repel rain and splashing, and keeping a warm hat available. Add or remove the hat and layers as necessary to remain warm but avoid excessive sweating. Clothing specifically designed to keep the user warm while immersed in cold water (wetsuits, dry suits, etc.) may enable rowers to more safely row in cold conditions.

There is potential danger for hypothermia when the water temperature is below 80 degrees and very dangerous when the water temperature is below 50 degrees. Symptoms include feeling cold, turning bluish and shivering, and 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 the 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 out of the water as possible.
 - Move to shelter quickly, remove wet clothing and re-warm body. In mild hypothermia conditions, re-warm in a shower, tub or with warm blankets.
 - Do not give any liquids to drink, treat for shock.
 - Continue to re-warm and always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.
- **Action if cold and shivering has stopped:**
 - **Call 911**
 - Treat as above but DO NOT RE-WARM EXTREMITIES! If victim is no longer shivering, the torso must be re-warmed to avoid circulation of cold blood to the heart. This can kill. Wrap the victim in a warm blanket and apply heat to under arms and groin area; wrap again in a separate blanket. Wrap each arm and leg separately to prevent rapid re-circulation of blood to the heart. Hot packs should not be placed directly on the victim, a thin layer should be used to protect the victim from burning. If possible, 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.

Hot Weather:

- **HYPERTHERMIA** (heat exhaustion and heat stroke) occurs when there is an increase in body temperature. It occurs when sweat cannot evaporate (air is humid or rower is

overdressed), the body is being heated by the environment (air temperatures usually over 75F and/or exposure to strong sun), and dehydration results from insufficient body fluid replenishment. Heat stroke, the more severe phase of hyperthermia, can be fatal. See the USRowing Safety Bulletin to learn about hyperthermia symptoms and first aid.

- Heat exhaustion - signs are throbbing headache, nausea, cool skin, chills, sweaty, and rapid pulse. Action - drink water, shade from sun, and treat for shock.
- Heat Stroke is **life threatening**. **Call 911**. -- signs are behavior changes, unconsciousness, hot but not sweaty, flushed warm skin and rapid pulse. Action- douse with cool water, shade from sun, fan, ensure the airway is open, always get medical assistance as soon as possible.

To avoid these problems in hot and humid weather:

- a. Maintain a high fluid level. Drink water in the hours leading to practice, before leaving the dock and frequently while on the water. Take an individual plastic water bottle for easy access.
- b. Avoid sunburn by using sunscreen, with a sweatband or breathable hat to keep lotion out of eyes.
- c. Wear light clothing.
- d. Remain in the shade when off the water.
- e. Plan activity level consistent with the degree of heat and humidity.

Non-Trivial Accident Response

- If you are competent to assist and it is appropriate to the situation, you can do so as long as it would not endanger you or those you are with
- Immediately call 911 to get a response team to the scene as soon as possible if:
 - Someone who is injured requires treatment beyond first aid.
 - Someone is at risk for hypothermia or hyperthermia during a practice session.
 - If a boat capsizes or is involved in a collision:
- Count heads.
 - Respond to any rower in distress.
 - Get rowers as far out of the water as possible either onto a safety/coaching launch or onto a shell.
 - Move the group to the river walk or shore (rarely more than 75 feet to the river side) and get them out of the water – coaches and rowers should know the river and know where exit points are.
- Follow procedures for righting a shell and getting back into the boat.
 - Damaged/unrowable shells: secure the shell by a rigger and return later to retrieve it.
- Do not overload the safety/coaching launch. Shuttle rowers to shore, if necessary

- In the event of a “non-trivial” accident (collision, damage to the boat, rower in the water, injury requiring treatment beyond first aid, EMT personnel called to the scene, etc.):
 - After the immediate danger is over, the accident must be reported as soon as possible to an MCRA board member or representative.
 - Within two hours, the coach (or in the event of an uncoached boat, the cox or designated rower) must submit a written report to the specified members of the MCRA Board and/or Safety Committee.
 - The Board and/or Safety Committee should investigate the accident, determine whether penalties should be recommended and assess whether policies and procedures should be revised.