

# Peterborough Rowing Club Safety Policy

Updated: March 4, 2024

Through all programs the Peterborough Rowing Club provides a broad range of opportunities for individuals to row on one of the most beautiful waterways anywhere.

The most important object of these programs is to have individuals' row safely. No rowing program, no matter how important its other goals, is worth neglecting an athlete's health or wellbeing. Rowing safely is also a matter of respect for fellow athletes and other users of the Trent-Severn Waterway, a National Historic Site.

## 1. Safety Advisor

The PRC Board will appoint a Safety Advisor to assist with the development, review, and enforcement of the policy.

## 2. Traffic Circulation and Local Codes

The PRC rowing environment is bounded to the north by the entrance to lock 22 of the Trent-Severn Waterway, and to the south by the Peterborough Lift Lock. A map of the local water showing traffic circulation pattern, local rules of use, hazards, and safe landing sites is posted in the centre bay of the boat house. Hazards include: the Nassau Mills Dam; the flood gate north of Nassau Mills bridge, river current and shallows near Lock 22; deadheads in areas away from local circulation pattern; aquatic vegetation adjacent to and in the main channel; and several bends and navigation aids.

Any quad or coxless/straight four that does not have a dedicated coach/safety boat travelling with them is not permitted to travel south of the overhead hydro wires located between "the wall" and Parkhill Road Bridge.

Boats must launch heading north and dock heading south. The rationale for this is due to the location of the boat house on the course and associated visibility. After launching and checking boat traffic for safety, boats must cross the Otonabee River aiming for the Trent University Athletics Centre on a northwesterly course, avoiding as much as possible the current associated with the dam. It is the responsibility of rowers and coaches crossing the river to watch out for, and to yield to, boats that are already on the water. On the river portion of the course boats must head upstream (north) on the west side of the river and can turn at the Trent University sign or past the Trent library (Stairs at Champlain). Do not turn between the Trent University sign and Champlain stairs. Travel downstream (south) on the east side of the river. On the Trent Canal portion of the course boats head south on the west side of the canal and return north towards PRC on the east side of the canal. At all times a good lookout must be maintained as we share the course with other pleasure craft on the Trent-Severn Waterway. If boats wish to dock directly from the canal, they must pass north to the Trent sign before turning around carefully to approach the dock.

**During Swift Water Rules** boats must launch heading south and dock heading north directly from the canal. They must immediately head down the canal after launching and must not row on the river portion of the course. Upon returning to the dock, if it is occupied, they must wait south of the orange marker on the canal wall until an accessible slot becomes clear.

### **3. Safety Boats**

All boats and motors must be kept in good working condition. All motors equipped with a kill switch must be attached to the operator unless circumstances require otherwise. When on the water in darkness or moderate fog, boats must have navigation lights consisting of white stern lights and red/green bow lights. Each boat must have a stern handhold to provide for easy entry from the water. Coach and safety boats must carry the following safety equipment as required by law: bailer, whistle, 15 metre buoyant heaving line, working flashlight (if before sunrise or after sunset) and paddle. These items will be stored in a container with the lifejackets. Coach and safety boats must be equipped with sufficient PFDs for each person aboard the rowing shell with the most persons aboard that the boat is attending and one working cell phone. Coach and safety boat operators must wear PFDs while on the water.

Guests and those with a purpose related to the training or club business are welcome in the coach or safety boat, wearing a PFD. Dogs and children under 6 years old must not be in the boat while the coach or safety boat operator is responsible for crews.

### **4. Rowing Shell Safety Equipment**

Shells must have a whistle in bow seat or attached to the bow rower. Each shell must have a bow ball of 4 cm diameter or greater, heel restraints, tightened bolts, proper rigging and vents closed. Shells must also carry PFDs unless accompanied by a coach/safety boat.

### **5. Responsibilities of Those Using the Club**

#### **5.1. Rowers and Coxswains**

Rowers and coxswains must:

- Be registered with RCA.
- Demonstrate their level of rowing competency to a coach or club staff member when first going on the water.
- Be familiar with the local traffic pattern and boat operations
- Be aware of weather conditions and apply appropriate judgement
- Have reviewed/seen the RCA Safety course. [CAC RCA \(rowingcanada.org\)](http://CACRCA(rowingcanada.org))
- All rowers under the age of 18 must pass a swim test consisting of being capable of swimming 50 m in light clothing, treading water for 1 minute and completing a disoriented entry. Adults must declare their capability to pass a swim test. Adults who cannot pass the swim test must wear a PFD when on the water. Non swimmers are responsible to supply their own PFD. All members are encouraged to take the swim test when possible.

If accompanied by a coach or safety boat rowers and coxswains are responsible for staying with their accompanying coach/safety boat.

If unaccompanied by a coach or safety boat rowers or coxswains must sign in and out on the PRC whiteboard.

## 5.2. Coaches

Coaches are responsible for boats in their charge. They must:

- Be registered with RCA.
- Possess a valid Pleasure Craft Operator Card.
- Have reviewed/seen the RCA Safety course. [CAC RCA \(rowingcanada.org\)](http://CACRCA(rowingcanada.org))
- Be aware of how to get a rower out of the water and safely into the coach/safety boat.
- Help enforce compliance of the Traffic Patterns.
- Be aware of the forecast weather and evaluate the environmental conditions before deciding whether it is safe for rowers to go out on the water, considering the rowers' capabilities.

## 5.3. Safety Boat Operators

Safety Boat Operators must:

- Be registered with RCA member
- Possess a valid Pleasure Craft Operator Card.
- Have reviewed/seen the RCA Safety course. [CAC RCA \(rowingcanada.org\)](http://CACRCA(rowingcanada.org))
- Possess a valid Pleasure Craft Operator Card.
- Be aware of how to get a rower out of the water and safely into the coach/safety boat.
- Help enforce compliance of the Traffic Patterns.

## 6. Accident/Rescue Procedures

In case of accident, rowers are generally instructed to stay with the boat rather than attempt to swim to safety. The boat, unless seriously damaged, can be used as a buoyancy aid. Rowers must take direction from the coach/safety boat in attendance. If there is no coach/safety boat within proximity to the boat, the rowers must either get back into the boat or swim with the boat to shore.

## 7. Incident reporting – Safety incident

An "incident" includes any event or occurrence that results in personal or equipment damage or that makes someone feel unsafe. This always includes collisions on the water and personal injury but can also include near misses or accidents or events on land or in the boat house. After an incident all rowers, coxswains, and coaches present are required to each send an email to [peterborough.rowing.club@gmail.com](mailto:peterborough.rowing.club@gmail.com) summarizing the incident. The subject of the email is to be identified as "Safety Incident". This normally consists of a short, bullet-point or equivalent email containing the pertinent facts and is required within 48 hours of the incident. The email will be directed to the members of the Safety Committee and the Head Coach who will review the incident and follow up as required.

## **8. Adverse Weather Conditions**

Coaches and rowers are responsible for determining when weather conditions prevent boats from going on the water. These conditions include wind, waves, fog, and lightning/thunderstorms. In the case of thunderstorms, rowers must not head out if they see lightning, hear thunder or if Environment Canada has a Severe Thunderstorm Warning for the Peterborough-Kawartha Lakes area. Rowers must wait 30 minutes after the last lightening or thunder before going out on the water. If adverse weather conditions appear while boats are on the water, crews must return to the boathouse or seek shelter on the nearest shoreline until the weather has cleared, depending upon the specific conditions. If in doubt, do not go out. If caught on the water in a storm head immediately to the closest safe haven or shoreline. Designated safe havens include:

- a) The steps at Champlain College at Trent University
- b) the point south of the buoy-to-buoy area on the west shore,
- c) the boat launch south of the wall on the east shore
- d) boat launch north of Parkhill bridge on the east bank
- e) lift locks dock on west side.
- f) or another safe shoreline

### **8.1. Swift Water Rules**

The Head Coach or designate will determine when Swift Water Rules apply, and a sign will be posted advising of these conditions. These rules apply until the Head Coach or designate has removed the sign.

### **8.2. Cold Water Rules**

Cold Water Rules apply from 16 October through 15 May of each year, which coincide with the period when water temperatures in the Otonabee River have historically been below 15 degrees Celsius. If conditions warrant, the head coach or designate may alter these dates. Under cold-water conditions, rowers must be particularly mindful of the hazards on the course and the proximity of the shoreline. All crew boats (pairs, fours, quads and eights) must be accompanied by a coach/safety boat that keeps all the shells of which they have charge in their sight at all times. Singles and doubles may row without a coach/safety boat provided that they row with a "buddy" boat(s) and maintain visual contact at all times.

It is up to the coach's discretion whether they allow additional boats to join them during training. Coach/safety boats must leave the docks and return to the docks with any shells under their supervision. As always, rowers in boats unaccompanied by a coach/safety boat must carry PFDs.

### **8.3. Hot Weather**

Under hot weather conditions (Humidex value  $\geq 30$ ) rowers must be mindful of the adverse effects and strive to maintain adequate hydration and sun protection.

## 9. Rowing Before Sunrise and After Sunset

Rowing in the dark can be especially hazardous. No club rowing is to occur earlier than 1 hour before sunrise and all boats must return to the dock by sunset. Shells being used within 30 minutes of sunrise or sunset must have visible navigation lights consisting of a white stern light and a red/green bow light.

Given the structured environment of Trent University Rowing, PRC has arrived at the following protocol based on considering both the hazards of rowing in the dark and the need to minimize collisions on the course.

**From October 1**, during the TURC rowing season:

- Land conditioning and coaching will occur before the on-water session begins.
- **Novice coxed crews only**, with a dedicated coach boat (one on one) within 25m, shall launch and dock in one flight, launching between **6:20-6:30 am**
- **JV/Varsity and non-coxed novice crews** with an accompanying coach boat (will avoid supervising more than 3 boats) shall launch and dock in a second flight, launching between **6:40-6:50 am**
- The flights are launched at different times to mitigate the risk of collisions.
- The only exceptions to these times are delays due to safety considerations, such as stormy weather.

## 10. Boathouse Rules

The gasoline shed must have its door unlocked and opened at the beginning of a session at least 5 minutes prior to entering to discharge any fumes that may have accumulated. Docks are to be kept clear of tripping hazards like shoes, clothes, water bottles and oars. The boathouse must have a working telephone. Emergency Response telephone numbers must be posted adjacent to the telephone including club telephone number and boathouse address. Traffic flow pattern map, safety policy, First Aid Kit(s) and blankets are to be in bay 3 and must be accessible.