

# WARRINGTON ROWING CLUB

## SAFETY PLAN



*The priority at all times is SAFETY*

This safety plan identifies the risks involved in rowing at Warrington Rowing Club (WTN) and outlines the procedures to be adopted by club members and visitors to limit those risks. Contravention of these safety procedures will be taken seriously by the committee. A copy of this **Safety Plan** is displayed on the club safety notice board along with the waterway plan. Details are provided to all new members.

### 1. GENERAL RULES OF THE RIVER

1. WTN operates to the British Rowing 'Row Safe' Guidelines. A file containing full details is available for review by any member in the clubhouse.
2. **Stay on correct side of river** - Victoria Park side when going upriver, club house side when coming downriver. Give a shout to any crew within 2 boat lengths. Do not stop in the bends of the river.
3. Never row at full pressure past the landing stage or through the arches of Kingsway Bridge.
4. Under **NO** circumstances must crews venture further downstream than the black and white footbridge (**Howley Suspension Footbridge**) as this is the limit of our permitted water and there is a weir downstream. Any equipment swept below the footbridge must be **abandoned**.
5. Do not row closer than 100m to the **Woolston Weir**.
6. **Coxswains** must wear an approved **lifejacket** or **buoyancy aid**, properly fitted and adjusted. These are provided and maintained by the club.
7. In the event of **capsize**, do not panic - crews must stay with and hold onto their boat. If unable to get back in the boat, pull up onto it clear of water, and wait for assistance from any launch in the area. Otherwise stay with boat but manoeuvre to bank area where possible to egress to dry land. Try to secure boat, head to clubhouse quickly for warm shower and change into dry clothes.
8. Rowing after **nightfall** is dangerous and not encouraged. If it is necessary, a coach must accompany crews and scullers in a launch. All craft must be properly illuminated.
9. **High visibility** waistcoats are available in the club house and recommended to be worn at bow when visibility is less than 50m.
10. The wearing of **multiple layers, hats, and pogies** is encouraged during winter conditions. Coxswains should only boat if they have sufficient warm clothing. In summer members should also take precautions against sunburn & dehydration.
11. All **incidents, near misses**, or any general safety concerns **must be reported** to the club water safety officer. This is encouraged by the committee to enable learning, help improve safety practices, and thereby prevent harm to its members. All details should be recorded on club incident form, or sent by e-mail ASAP after the incident to [safety@warringtonrowing.org.uk](mailto:safety@warringtonrowing.org.uk). The club and its members will use where appropriate the British Rowing on-line incident reporting system.

## 2. ROWERS RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Every club member has a **duty of care** to ensure that their actions both on and off water does not compromise the safety of others. Adults have personal responsibility for their own safety
2. It is the responsibility of the Rower or Parent / Carer to ensure that members are **competent and fit** enough to train on the river without putting themselves at risk. The Committee reserve the right to stop any member from training if they feel that they are not competent.
3. Rowing members of the club must have the **ability to swim** at least 50 metres in rowing kit, tread water for min 2 minutes, and swim underwater for at least 5 meters.
4. Members must know what action to take in event of capsize or swamping and be aware of the risks of **hypothermia**.
5. A towel and dry change of clothing should always be brought in case of capsize. Always wash your hands and face after rowing and before eating or drinking. Cuts and scratches should be cleaned thoroughly on returning to the boathouse and a clean dressing applied.
6. A **Capsize drill** will be completed by and recorded for all junior members. Adult members must make themselves aware of correct capsize procedure.
7. The **weights room** is a potentially dangerous area and great care must be taken when using the facility. Loose weights must be cleared away tidily after use. Free weights should not be used unaccompanied. A suitably qualified adult (e.g. level 2 coaching award) must accompany members under 16 years of age using Ergo rowing machines or using weights.

## 3. BOATS & EQUIPMENT

1. Before and after each outing, a **safety inspection of the equipment** should be carried out by the embarking crews. This includes checks that heel restraints are correct length, bow balls fixed, buoyancy compartments sealed, canvasses not holed, rudder lines and general fixings in good order.
2. Boats that are **unsafe or improperly equipped** must not be used unless a suitable repair can be implemented. All damage is to be promptly recorded in the damage log, reported to Captain / Equipment Rep. and marked for repair.
3. Squad coaches should **encourage boat checks** by members and ensure compliance prior to any independent safety checks at competitions.

## 4. SAFETY LAUNCHES.

1. **Lifejackets** will be worn by all safety launch crew members and passengers.
2. The **launch drivers** will hold a **minimum of RYA Level II** certificates.
3. Launch drivers or passenger must have a **mobile phone**.
4. The launch driver will ensure that a complete rescue kit is being carried. This is to include **first aid kit, throw line, thermal blanket, and bailer**.
5. Rescue times must be minimised recognising **'One minute - One degree rule'**

## 5. ABNORMAL RIVER & WEATHER CONDITIONS

1. The River Mersey is subject to the effects of wind, stream and, occasionally, tide. **Combinations of abnormal weather or river conditions** can occur and the decision on whether to row should take all factors into consideration.
2. **Decisions** regarding suitability of rowing conditions rest firstly with committee members, and secondly with coaches present. Novices or juniors may not be allowed out in certain adverse conditions, but consideration will be given to experience and level of competence of each individual crew. The distance of travel from club house or duration of outing may also be adjusted.
3. When the river level is high and above the landing stage **wellies** should be worn and care taken when approaching the edge of the landing stage.
4. If the landing stage is fully submerged the head room under the **pipe bridge** upstream may be restricted. Extreme care must be taken when approaching it since further river level increase may have occurred from time of boating.
5. If the **launch jetty** adjacent to the landing stage is **submerged** then **NO** boats are allowed onto the river.
6. During **high tides** (which come over the weir height) large amounts of **debris** can litter the river. It is recommended not to boat until 30 minutes after level has returned to normal. Large debris should be removed or pushed to side of river using the launch.
7. After a period of **heavy rain**, the **river speed** can increase to the point where the less fit, younger or inexperienced crew may find it difficult to make any headway. The stream can be particularly strong on the far side of the river and through the far arch of the **Kingsway Bridge**. Care should be exercised when turning upstream of the bridge - allow greater distance to prevent boat from being swept down onto the central support. Look out for any floating debris.
8. **High winds** can cause **standing waves** to form - particularly under Kingsway Bridge. Take care since these can increase the risk of capsize, swamping or damage to boats. When rounding corners **crosswinds** can cause **steering problems** from the full force of wind acting along the length of the boat.
9. In the event of **lightning** use the Row Safe '30-30' guidance rule. If the time between seeing lightning and hearing thunder is less than 30 seconds and reducing then immediately leave the river and seek shelter in either club buildings or fully closed vehicles. Only resume outdoor activity 30mins after last lightning / thunder. Be prepared by knowing weather forecast prior to boating.

## 6. COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Telephones.** A telephone, (for incoming and 999 calls only), situated in the clubroom, is available to summon Emergency Services if required. The telephone number for the clubhouse is **01925 242631**.
2. **Public Telephone.** The nearest telephone kiosk to the boathouse is outside the 'Late Shop' on Kingsway South, approximately 200 yards over Kingsway Bridge on the right-hand side. There is another telephone kiosk at the end of Howley Lane, furthest from the boathouse. Coaches and officials at club events should carry mobile phones.
3. **Emergency Telephone Numbers.** Lists are on the notice boards throughout the clubhouse.

## 7. MEDICAL & FIRST AID

1. The **Club Welfare Officer** is identified, with contact details, in the entrance to the boathouse.
2. **First Aid** kits are situated in the club house and in each launch. All coaches are trained in basic first aid.
3. **Accidents and Emergencies** requiring hospital treatment will be taken to Warrington Hospital, Lovely Lane, Warrington WA5 1QG.

## 8. EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

1. **Incidents on the water.** In the event of a rower being injured, capsizing or becoming ill whilst rowing, the quickest means of rescue and access to the emergency services is by safety launch. The only vehicular access points close to the river are at the club house landing stage (Howley Lane - WA1 2DN) or Mersey Walk (WA4 1SU).
2. **Emergencies.** In an emergency, the safety launches will have priority over all other traffic. Crews should move to the side of the river so as not to hinder the safety launch.
3. **Evacuation Procedure.** In the event of the Club House being evacuated due to fire or other major incident, all members and visitors will make their way to the assembly point by the launch jetty. Club members will ensure the access road is clear for emergency vehicles. Crews on the water will muster near Kingsway Bridge and await clearance before proceeding to disembark at the landing stage.
4. **Local Problems.** Previously rowers have had unwanted attention from local hooligans in the form of verbal abuse, or sticks, stones being thrown. Do not retaliate - move swiftly out of range to opposite side of river. Report incident to police and club officials.
5. **Security.** The last person out of the clubhouse must ensure that all the fire doors and shutters are secured and locked. The clubhouse should also be secured and locked if left unattended while out on river.