



MKRC Safety Policy

MKRC has a responsibility for the safety of all members of the club and for the development of a culture of safety in activities associated with rowing. The primary responsibility for ensuring safe practice within the club lies with the Committee and their appointed Safety Officer. However, everyone involved in the club has a duty of care to ensure their actions both on and off the water are conducted in a manner which does not compromise the safety of others. Adults also have a personal responsibility for their own safety.

Safety Noticeboard

Key safety information is to be found on the Safety Noticeboard which is located on the car park side wall of the bay area, to the left of the doors. It displays vital safety information including:

- The name of the Safety Officer and how to contact him/her
- A list of members with a current First Aid Certificate
- Vital telephone numbers relating to safety in general
- A plan of the lake with the circulation pattern marked
- Instructions on safe boat handling
- British Rowing life-saving and resuscitation procedures
- British Rowing cold water immersion procedures

First Aid

There are two First Aid boxes specifically for club use. One is located at the back of the bay area and the other is located in the top club locker with the green padlock. If someone has been immersed in cold water, refer to the procedures on the Safety Notice board. However, please note they should first be dried and warmed with a blanket. Only once the casualty has warmed up should you use the thermal exposure blankets. These blankets are designed to maintain body temperature not increase it. If it is not possible to warm-up the casualty, use your own body warmth to do so, if appropriate i.e. not if a minor is involved or if the casualty or you object. A list of emergency contacts for members, nominated at the time of membership renewal, can be found in the club locker with the green padlock.

Insurance

MKRC has comprehensive insurance to cover personal injury to members on and off the water and personal injury and damage to property or third parties. A copy of the club insurance can be obtained from the club Treasurer. The club is also insured to tow equipment to and from events and training camps. A copy of this insurance is displayed on the club noticeboard and a copy must be held in the towing vehicle.

Navigation

A map of the circulation pattern of Caldecotte Lake is displayed on the Safety Notice Board, and a copy can be found in the club handbook. MKRC have shared water time with the Sailing Club and Canoe Club during some sessions, and consideration must be given to those users of the lake and facilities. Wind craft have priority over rowing, over motor.

For those acting as coxswain or steersperson at regattas, head races and training camps, please ensure you read the safety document that is issued before each of these events, and familiarise yourself with the local navigation rules.

Incident Log

An accident log is maintained on-line at British Rowing for all accidents and incidents involving MKRC, giving time, place and nature of accident, injuries/damages sustained and names and addresses of witnesses. If you are involved in any accident/incident, it is your responsibility to complete this log on-line at the British Rowing <https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/>. Please speak to the Safety Officer or any member of the Committee if you are unsure of how to do this.

Weather

Every club session, the most senior club members should review the conditions and decide if it is safe for each crew to go out in the current conditions. The rules and guidelines below will help with this. Crews can be rearranged to make them safer if necessary, but if it is still unsafe they must not go out.

Additionally, each individual must also assess the conditions and be responsible for their own safety. If any individual in a crew feels it is not safe to go out, then that crew must not go out, and other crew members must not unduly pressurise that individual to change their mind.

The order of seniority for making weather condition-related decisions is Club Captain, Squad Captains, Safety Officer, Committee Members, all other club members.

If conditions change during a session such that any crew member feels it is not safe to continue, that crew must come in as soon as they safely can.

When there is any doubt about whether it is safe for a crew to row or not, err on the side of caution. **If in doubt, don't go out.**

Fog

Coxes and steerspeople must be able to see far enough to safely navigate the lake and avoid other crews.

As a hard limit, if the other side of the lake cannot be seen from the clubhouse then no crews must go out.

Lightning

Lightning can be very dangerous on an open lake. Follow the 30-30 rule. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear the thunder. If it is 30 seconds (approx. 10 km away) or less, seek

'proper shelter'. If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back-up rule for it being time to seek 'proper shelter'. Wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder before leaving shelter.

Ice

Crews must not row if there is ice on the lake that is likely to prevent crew members swimming to safety in the event of a capsize, or that is likely to damage a boat.

Wind

Whether it is safe to row in high winds varies hugely depending upon the wind speed, direction, steersperson competence, crew competence and on the size and type of boat.

As a rough guide, less competent crews will start to struggle when wind gusts exceed 10-15mph.

As a hard limit, no crews must go out if wind gusts exceed 25mph.

Summer Weather

During the summer months, members are advised to wear adequate sun protection in the form of sun bloc and appropriate clothing, and have sufficient water to prevent dehydration during their planned outing.

Also during summer, blue/green algae is quite often present in the lake. The Parks Trust notifies us when this occurs, and we in turn will notify members. There is a poster relating to this issue in each of the changing rooms.

Equipment

Maintenance

For the safety of all concerned, rowing equipment should be maintained in good order. Prior to every outing, the following checks must be made:

- Every boat must at all times carry firmly attached to its bows a white ball of not less than 4cm diameter made of rubber or material of similar consistency. Where the construction or nature of the boat is such that the bow is properly protected or its shape does not present a hazard then this requirement need not apply.
- Heel restraints and "quick-release" mechanisms must be in proper and effective working order in all boats equipped with fitted shoes.
- For evening outings, rowing after sunset, boats shall be fitted with lights as required by the "Rules for Mariners" published by the Department of Transport.
- Check oars and sculls to ensure that "buttons" are secure and properly set.
- Buoyancy compartments, bow and stern canvasses, etc., must be checked to ensure that they will function as intended.
- Riggers must be firmly attached and fixings checked
- Seats and slides must be working correctly
- All club boats should carry a whistle, and it is recommended that privately owned boats do so too

Members progressing from a Learn to Row course will be assessed that they can complete these tasks and demonstrate their understanding of the circulation pattern, before progressing to the Development squad. Experienced rowers, new to the club, must also demonstrate this competency.

Pontoons

There are four jetties/pontoons available for use. Two fixed, which belong to the sailing club and are to be used for 4+ and 8+ boats, and two floating pontoons for small boats and 4x/4+/- . It is possible to boat from either side of the pontoons, but ensure that you boat as quickly as possible to allow other members to use the facility, and give consideration to those already at the pontoon. Do not leave blades lying around on the pontoons as these are a trip hazard. Blades should be put next to the banked hedges and kept away from the public footpath where possible while manoeuvring boats, but in any event should be taken back to the club house as quickly as possible. If it is not possible to place the blades in the racks immediately, they should be placed in the area marked with yellow paint, adjacent to the club house.

During the winter months, the pontoons can be icy and therefore hazardous when carrying boats and blades. There is a bag of salt/grit in the bay area to be used in these situations. If you are one of the first people present at the club, check the pontoons and apply the grit. Do not assume someone else will do it. If you use the last of the grit, please let the Maintenance Manager or Safety Officer know.

Concept 2 Rowing Machines & Fitness Equipment

Your relevant Captain will instruct you on the correct use of these machines, and any other fitness equipment located in the bay area. Members must declare if they have any existing illness or injury and may be asked to obtain a health check from their GP prior to using the equipment, or participating in circuit sessions during winter training. Prior to using the equipment, make sure you have made the necessary adjustments as directed by the Captains before use, and that the machines are seated firmly on the platform. Clean equipment after use with the wet-wipes available. From time to time you will be asked to perform 2k tests to gauge your progress, and this information will be recorded by the relevant squad Captain.

Emergency Equipment

Emergency throw lines are located on the bay doors and in the seat of the launch. Use of these is practiced at the capsizing drills.

Safety for the Individual

All active rowers and scullers shall:

- Satisfy their Medical Officer that they are in good health, and attend a capsizing drill organised by the club. Participation in this drill will enable the member to demonstrate competence and confidence in the water by swimming at least 50 metres in light clothing, tread water for at least 2 minutes, and swim under water for at least 5 metres. Anyone unable to demonstrate this must wear a PFD (personal floatation device) when on the water.
- Comply with the British Rowing Row Safe Code of Practice <http://www.britishrowing.org/upload/files/RowSafe/Complete-v1.pdf> . Single scullers (apart from beginners on the water under supervision) are responsible for their own safety and actions.
- Acquaint themselves fully with and obey rules of navigation both local and statutory.
- Log every water training session in the Outings Log on the back of the bay doors to ensure the safety of all scullers and crews.

- Log every capsize incident and any accident that occurs during a club activity, whether on water or on land, on-line at British Rowing.
- Maintain their rowing equipment in good order and check that it is in a safe condition before use.
- Ensure that beginners to the sport are not allowed to use equipment without adequate and prior instruction and are not allowed to boat unsupervised.
- Be constantly aware of the rights of others to the free use of the water and extend to them at all times the courtesy they would similarly wish to receive.
- Every opportunity should be taken to learn simple first aid, life saving and resuscitation techniques.

Development and Learn to Row sessions must always be run with the Safety Launch on the water, and it is the responsibility of the Development Captain to ensure this is in place for each session.

It is possible for any boat to capsize, or become swamped during poor weather conditions, but capsizes are more likely in small boats (singles and doubles/pairs). Before setting out in a small boat, consider the weather conditions i.e. water temperature, waves and wind, and think about your own ability to cope in the event of a capsize. Not every water session has the support of the safety launch, and even with the launch on the water, if you capsize on the north lake you may be in the water for quite a few minutes before you can attract someone's attention. Furthermore, the sides of the north lake are quite steep and it is not easy to climb out unaided. Therefore, unless you are an experienced rower, if you are in a small boat you are advised to restrict your outing to the south lake. Anyone who feels they are at reasonable risk of a capsize must wear light-coloured or preferably high-vis clothing so that other rowers will be able to see if they have capsized from a distance.

Capsize

If you are in a boat that capsizes, please observe the following:

- Stay with your boat as it acts as a buoyancy aid
- Get as much of your body out of the water onto the upturned hull as possible
- Attract help by using the whistle
- Wait for the safety launch or another crew to help you
- Only attempt to right the boat and get back in if you are confident/able to do so and you are not at risk of cold shock; you can become fatigued very quickly while doing this

Please see the Row Safe Cold Water Immersion Guidance document on the Safety Notice Board or access the document at

<http://www.britishrowing.org/sites/default/files/publications/ColdWaterImmersionGuidance-19Mar09.pdf> . Details of how to perform a rescue can be found in the Emergency Action Plan.

Responsibilities of Steersperson and Coxswain

Steering a boat, in training or in a race is a highly responsible role, very often entrusted to young and inexperienced coxswains or rowers with little or no experience of steering. This role must be taken very seriously as all persons steering a boat are responsible for the crew in their charge.

Steersperson

The steersperson is responsible for the actions of the boat being steered. Commands have to be given and discipline exerted. The following represents the knowledge that the steersperson must develop. A Steersperson must be able to:

- Learn and use simple commands for boat control both on and off the water. Use them correctly, clearly and instinctively. Understand the basic commands and signals of other river users.
- Understand and carry out all safety procedures and regulations applicable to the water they use, especially those relating to right of way, powerboats, sailing craft, etc.
- Understand and observe local navigation rules of the river or water.
- On unfamiliar water, become acquainted with local regulations and practices and of the existence, nature and location of particular hazards before going afloat.
- Be conversant with safety and rescue procedures in the case of an accident
- Recognise and respect the rights and needs of other water users, especially anglers.
- Watch out for swimmers at all times.
- Watch out for unexpected floating objects.
- Know and have practised capsize drills.
- Satisfied their Captain that they are competent to steer.
- It is the steersperson's responsibility to log the boat and crew, time out and return on the outings log sheet for coxless boats. These sheets are located on the bay doors.
- It is the steersperson's responsibility to record any damages, defects or issues with the boat on the outings log sheet, and to take steps to rectify the problem themselves if they have the necessary skills, or with the help of someone more experienced. If unable to do so, they must contact the Maintenance Manager and inform them of the problem.
- Development Members and those not used to steering will be given tuition by a senior Member on how to steer and navigate Caldecotte safely.

Coxswains

Coxswains should comply with all of the above as well as the following:

- Every coxswain shall be able to swim and to demonstrate that ability when called upon by the Safety Officer.
- All coxswains shall wear a lifejacket (conforming to 853595 standard) or buoyancy aid of approved design, when on the water both in training and in competition. Where coxswains are located in the bows of boats, care must be taken in the choice of lifejacket to ensure that the coxswain is not restricted when exiting from the boat.
- All coxswains shall be able to satisfy their Safety Officer that they are in good health with adequate vision and sound hearing. No one who is subject to epileptic fits or blackouts shall steer a boat. In cases of doubt, medical advice should be obtained.
- Suitable dress must be worn for the prevailing conditions. Particular care should be taken to ensure warmth around the head, neck and lower back, wrists and ankles and the clothing should be water and windproof. Water resistant outer gloves are recommended, but bulky and heavy clothing and "Wellington" type boots are to be avoided.
- Be aware of the dangers and symptoms of hypothermia.
- Voice projection and radio communication equipment, when carried in the boat must be securely fixed to the boat, not the coxswain. Similarly, in competition, dead weights when required must not be attached to the coxswain.
- It is the coxswain's responsibility to log the boat and crew, time out and return on the outings log sheet for coxed boats. These sheets are located on the bay doors.

- It is the coxswain's responsibility to record any damages, defects or issues with the boat on the outings log sheet, and to take steps to rectify the problem themselves if they have the necessary skills, or with the help of someone more experienced. If unable to do so, they must contact the Maintenance Manager and inform them of the problem.

Launch Drivers

Please see separate document/link

Emergency Action Plan

Please see separate document/link

Boat Handling Safety

Please see separate document/link

Premises Safety

Please see separate document/link

New Members

All new members to MKRC, either graduating from Learn to Row or experienced rowers, must have the following:

- Access to the handbook
- An induction to the club including safety briefing from the relevant Captain and/or Safety Officer
- Their safety knowledge assessed by the relevant Captain/Safety Officer