



MKRC Safety Policy

MKRC has a responsibility for the safety of all members and for the development of a culture of safety in rowing related activities. The safety policy describes what members should do to make an incident less likely to happen

All members have a duty of care to ensure their actions are conducted in a manner which does not compromise the safety of others. Adults also have a personal responsibility for their own safety.

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1. Safety Noticeboard

Located in the bay area, to the left of the doors. Displays:

- Name of Safety Officer and how to contact
- List of members with a First Aid Certificate
- Plan of the lake with the circulation pattern
- Instructions on safe boat handling
- What to do if you end up in COLD water
- Impact of cold-water immersion

2. First Aid

First Aid boxes: One on the shelf in the bay and one in the launch bag in the top club locker.

Emergency contacts for members: In the club locker, in the main club room. Also shows existing medical conditions / allergies and should be given to paramedics.

3. 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. The club is also insured to tow equipment to and from events and training camps. A copy of this insurance must be held in the towing vehicle.

4. Navigation

A map of the lake circulation pattern is on the Safety Notice Board and in the Members Handbook. During water time shared with the Sailing Club and Canoe Club, wind craft have priority over rowing, over motor.

Coxes and steerspeople at regattas, head races and training camps, should read the safety document issued before each event and familiarise themselves with local navigation rules.

5. Incident Log

British Rowing maintain a log of all incidents at affiliated clubs. If you are involved in an incident, it is your responsibility to complete the log at <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.

6. Weather If in doubt, don't go out!

For club sessions, senior members should review the conditions and decide if it is safe for each crew to go on the water. Order of seniority for decision making: Club Captain, Squad Captains, Safety Officer, Committee Members. Crews can be rearranged to make them safer.

Additionally, everyone must individually assess the conditions and be responsible for their own safety. If an individual in a crew feels it is unsafe to go out, the crew must not go out, and other crew members must not unduly pressurise that individual to change their mind. If conditions change during a session such that anyone feels it is not safe to continue, that crew must come in as soon as they safely can.

Fog: Coxes and steerspeople must be able to see far enough to safely navigate the lake. As a hard limit, if the other side of the lake cannot be seen from the clubhouse then no crews must go out.

Lightning: Follow the 30-30 rule: when you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If it is 30 seconds or less, seek 'proper shelter'. If you can't see the lightning and just hear thunder, seek 'proper shelter'. Wait a minimum 30 mins after the last lightning/thunder before leaving shelter.

If already on the water, return to land as soon as possible. Row safely and don't panic.

Ice: Crews must not row if there is ice on the lake 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: wear adequate sun protection and have sufficient water to prevent dehydration during an outing. You will be notified if blue/green algae is present in the lake.

7. Equipment

Maintenance:

Prior to every outing, the following checks must be made:

- A rubber bow ball is firmly attached to the bow
- Heel restraints and shoe "quick-release" mechanisms are in working order
- For rowing after sunset, boats shall be fitted with lights. High visibility / white tops to be worn
- Oar collars are secure
- Buoyancy hatches are closed. Bow and stern canvasses functioning as intended.
- Riggers firmly attached
- Seats and slides working correctly
- All club singles & doubles should carry a whistle. Recommended also for privately owned boats

Members from a LTR course will be assessed on knowledge of these checks and the circulation pattern, before progressing to Development. Experienced rowers new to the club must also demonstrate this knowledge.

Pontoons

- Three floating pontoons for use by 1x, 2x/-, 4x/+/- and one fixed jetty for 8+ boats.
- Boat as quickly as possible and consider those already at the pontoon.
- Blades should be placed on / next to the banked hedges away from the public footpath and taken back to the boathouse as soon as possible. Do not leave on the pontoon as they present a trip hazard
- If the pontoons are icy, apply the salt / grit from the bag in the bay area

Throw Lines: Located on the bay doors and in the seat of the launch. Use is practiced at the capsize drills.

Concept 2 Rowing Machines & Fitness Equipment

- You must be fit and well and declare any existing illness or injury before using any of the equipment
- Do not use any equipment without having received instruction on correct use
- Use of any equipment outside of club sessions is at your own risk
- We recommend that you do not exercise alone
- When using weights make sure the floor area is clear of obstacles and is not slippery
- When finished, make sure equipment is wiped down and correctly stored

8. Safety for the Individual

PUT SAFETY FIRST and:

- Be in a good state of health and capable of strenuous physical activity
- Attend a capsize drill organised by the club soon after joining unless you've attended one at another Rowing Club. Thereafter, watch BR Capsize & Recovery video every 2-3 years, as prompted by the club Safety Officer.
- **Be aware of WHAT TO DO in the event of FALLING IN THE WATER** – page 5

- **Be aware of the IMPACT of COLD-WATER IMMERSION** – page 6
- Be able to swim. Otherwise, wear a flotation device when on the water.
- Follow the circulation pattern and be courteous to others using the lake
- Log water training sessions in the Outings Log in the boathouse
- Comply with BR Row safe Practice: <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/201110-RowSafe2020.pdf>
- **If you feel at risk of capsize:**
 - Stay on the South Lake, which is closer to the clubhouse.
 - Stay close to the bank
 - Wear light-coloured, preferably high-vis clothing
 - Wear a buoyancy aid / life jacket
 - Consider weather conditions, water temperature and your ability to cope in the event of a capsize

No one should single scull alone in a club boat. Members with their own boats and those having use of a club boat during Shared Use Time, go out at their own risk and are responsible for their own safety and actions.

Dedicated Development and Learn to Row sessions must always be run with the Safety Launch on the water.

9. Responsibilities of Steersperson and Cox

Steering a boat is a highly responsible role. You must be able to:

- Use simple commands correctly and clearly for boat control both on and off the water.
- Understand the lake circulation pattern and the right of way of powerboats and sailing craft etc.
- On unfamiliar water, become familiar with local regulations and any particular hazards
- Be familiar 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 and unexpected floating objects.
- Know and have practised capsize drills.
- Log the boat and crew, time out and return on the Outings log sheet in the Boathouse.
- Record any damages or issues with the boat on the outings log sheet & inform the Maintenance Leader

Coxes must in addition:

- Be able to swim
- Wear a lifejacket / buoyancy aid. For bow loaders, select one that doesn't restrict exiting the boat.
- Be in good health with adequate vision and hearing. Must not be subject to epileptic fits or blackouts
- Wear clothing that is water and windproof, ensuring warmth around the head, neck and lower back, wrists and ankles. Avoid bulky heavy clothing and Wellington type boots.
- Be aware of the dangers and symptoms of hypothermia.
- Test equipment to ensure that all crew can hear commands. In the event of equipment failure, judge whether it is safe to row without a cox box.
- Fix cox boxes to the boat, not themselves. In competition, not attach dead weights to themselves.

10. New Members

All new members must have:

- Access to the handbook (from Membership Secretary at time of joining)
- An induction to the club including safety briefing from the Safety Officer or designate
- Their safety knowledge assessed by the Safety Officer or designate

Separate Policies describe Boat Handling Safety and Premises Safety

What to do if you Fall in the Water

1. STAY AFLOAT

Avoid submersion of your head and face

2. STAY CALM

Know that the effects of cold shock will pass.

3. STAY WITH THE BOAT

If rescue is likely, stay with the boat. It is your life raft

Use the whistle to call for help

4. GET OUT OF THE WATER.

Get as much of your body as possible out of the water by:

- Lying across the upturned hull
- Climbing back into the boat **IF** confident (stand on rigger to right boat)
- Lying across the hull of a rescue boat

5. STRADDLE AND PADDLE

If there is no-one to rescue you, with your torso over the upturned hull, paddle the boat with your arms to the nearest point of safety.

6. DON'T SWIM

- DO NOT decide to swim, even a relatively short distance - this would result in further rapid HEAT LOSS
- When in the water you may underestimate the distance

7. If you are separated from your boat, remain as still as possible to conserve heat.

Impact of Cold Water Immersion

SHOCK



- GASPING for breath
- HYPERVENTILATION as heart rate increases

INCAPACITATION



- LIMBS, HANDS and FEET feel numb affecting coordination
- COORDINATION affected
- Swimming would result in further rapid HEAT LOSS

Mild HYPOTHERMIA



- Blue lips & nails
- Rapid breathing, wheezing or coughing
- Poor comprehension & concentration
- Disorientation & confusion
- Slurred speech

Severe to Moderate HYPOTHERMIA

- Shivering stops
- Slow & shallow breathing
- Lack of responsiveness

MKRC Emergency Response Plan

Emergency First Aid

- List of first aiders displayed on the main club noticeboard and safety noticeboard.
- In the event of a cardiac arrest, a Defibrillator is available in the main clubroom, with instructions on use.

Serious incident / medical emergency:

Contact the emergency services on 999. Direct them to:

Milton Keynes Rowing Club, Off Monellan Grove, MK7 8BH

N.B. Send someone to the top of the driveway to meet emergency vehicles.

Emergency contacts for members:

Available in the club locker with the green padlock, in the main club room. The list also shows existing medical conditions and allergies, which should be given to paramedics.

Capsize, Collision, Swamping

(i) Rescue using the launch

- Prioritise rescue of individuals from the water (launch can hold 11 people)
- If more than one rescue trip is necessary, ensure adequate buoyancy for those waiting behind
- Wrap the casualty in the blanket stored in the seat of the launch
- Retrieve the boat and blades at the same time if possible, to remove the hazard

(ii) Rescue by another crew

- Perform a 'buddy rescue' from an 8+, 4+, 4-, 4x by getting the casualty on the canvas and rowing to safety
- If the casualty cannot get on to the canvas of the rescue boat, position the rescue boat next to the casualty and tow them to the pontoon
- Do not perform a buddy rescue from a 1x, 2- or 2x (except a very experienced 2x)

(iii) Once on land DO NOT leave the person alone

If the person is NOT showing signs of Hypothermia

- Guide them to changing rooms and switch on the shower
- Provide a warm drink
- Ensure dry warm clothing is available
- Once they are warmer, a thermal exposure blanket may be used to retain warmth

If the person IS showing signs of Hypothermia

- Guide them to changing rooms, remove wet clothing and dry and switch on the shower
- Wrap in blankets, towels or clothing, protecting head and torso first
- DO NOT warm using a shower or by applying direct heat
- Shared body heat can help – hug gently if appropriate
- Once they are warmer, a thermal exposure blanket may be used to retain warmth
- Handle anyone with hypothermia gently
- **IF SIGNS of HYPOTHERMIA continue, seek immediate medical attention**
- In the **HOURS AFTERWARDS**, a drop in blood pressure can lead to collapse or heart failure and any inhaled water can damage the lungs. It is vital, therefore, to keep a close watch on individuals