

MRA Safety Rules for Participants

Rowing Safety 101

Whether you have been rowing for 3 days or 30 years, you must still continue to learn rowing safety at all times. Hopefully you will read this article to reiterate safety information you already know and practice, and you may even learn something new that may benefit you or one of your peers if an emergency arises.

Check the weather report:

- Temperature, precipitation, and wind can be major hazards on the water if you are not properly prepared. Always dress appropriately on the water.
- Wear layers of clothing in cold weather so you can add and take off clothing to stay at a comfortable temperature
- In rainy weather, water resistant clothing is recommended. You can even wear a raincoat or poncho to stay extra dry.
- In hot weather make sure to bring more water than normal, to help protect against dehydration. Sunglasses may also be worn in sunny weather to avoid the glare on the water.

Observe water conditions:

- It may be a beautiful rowing day, but yesterday it might have been raining heavily. Assessing the currents, river flow, and amount of debris in the water is important to rowing safety.

Inspect boat equipment:

- Before each row, make sure to look over your boat carefully for any damage. Do not row damaged equipment.
- Rowers should also take extreme care to follow safety rules on the water. It is very important for rowers to stay alert at all times in the water for debris, as well as for others on the water to avoid collisions.

Know the water traffic patterns:

- Water traffic patterns are used in order to keep all water users safe. Each body of water has different patterns due to different types of dangers in the area. It is important to know where to cross under bridges, where currents may be stronger, how to avoid shipping lanes etc.

Abide by special situation rules

- Make sure to follow special safety instructions in bad weather/ darkness situations. Never row when the water is closed to rowing, and always use a safety light when rowing in the dark.
- Having the appropriate safety equipment handy at all times can help many dangerous situations. It is extremely important to have safety kits in all boathouses and launches. A well-stocked first aid kit will be very useful for small injuries or to begin medical treatment on serious injuries. (However, it is very important for emergency

treatment to be performed by someone who is properly trained!) In addition to a medical kit, a Boathouse should have an emergency phone number list displayed in several places to make emergency calls quick and easy.

- Boathouses should have a fully stocked first aid kit in an accessible place. Some important items to include are:
 - a selection of different sized waterproof adhesive medical tape
 - different sized sterile bandages
 - eye pads
 - triangle bandages
 - safety pins
 - disposable gloves
 - a good pair of scissors
 - crepe bandages
 - tweezers
 - non- alcoholic wound wipes
 - adhesive tape
 - a face mask, or face shield
 - notepad/ writing utensil/ tag
- Launch safety kits are also an important safety measure to abide by. All launches should have a kit with a basic first aid kit as well as:
 - a bailer, or for inflatable launches, an inflation pump and valve
 - Signaling devices (must be able to attract attention from at least 200 meters.)
Sound signals work well, but visual signals may also be helpful in certain situations so it is advised to keep both on board.
 - Knife
 - Paddle
 - Anchor with line
 - Engine cut-out cord (kill cord)
 - Throw line
 - Life rings/ life jackets for everyone in the launch
 - Blankets
 - Simple boat repair kit

Following the basic rowing safety tips will not only keep you safer, but it will also help protect our rowing community from accidents. Rowing is only a dangerous sport when people are careless!