

# Norwalk River Rowing Program Safety Notes

This is an extract of some training information and emergency procedures for informational purposes only.

**Access to Facility-**Rowers may not come to the boathouse during unauthorized/ non practice hours without the prior approval of a coach.

**Equipment Handling-** The coxswain will be in charge and a coach will supervise when a crew is handling a shell and other equipment. At all times athletes must safely handle shells and other equipment to prevent injuries to themselves and their teammates and to prevent damage.

**Training-** NRRA follows a training program which helps to prevent injuries from occurring. Athletes must be aware that is a distinct difference between (a) soreness in joints and muscle attributed to training and between (b) dull and sharp pains which may be signs or minor injuries or potentially serious injuries. The athlete must report the onset of any dull or sharp pains to their coach and their parents. Any injuries no matter how minor must be communicated to the coach.

**Weather Conditions-** Athletes must come to practice rain or shine. Exceptions will be dangerous transportation and driving conditions such as a snowstorm, sleet, or unusually wet conditions.

**Swim Test-** All rowers including coxswains must take and pass the approved swim test in the presence of coach or manager before rowing. At a minimum the test will be 5 minutes treading water and demonstration that the athlete knows a basic survival stroke.

**Safety Video-** All athletes are required to watch the US Rowing Safety video before rowing and at least annually there after.

**Drugs and Tobacco Products.** There is a zero tolerance policy for possession or use of alcohol, drugs, chemicals, steroids, tobacco, or controlled substances. Any suspicions involving their use will be investigated, and any violations will result in appropriate disciplinary action including removal from the team . Medication prescribed by physician must be in a dispensed container with proper label and close information. Parents must inform the coach of all prescribed medications.

**Personal Items-** All rowing bags, backpacks, and personal items will be stored in the appropriate areas or at the coach discretion.

**Personal Vehicles** are to be parked in the upper lot and are expected to be locked when on the premises. When arriving or departing for practice, athletes will drive slowly and respectfully. Moodys Lane is very, narrow and extreme caution should be used when driving on Moodys lane.

## Traveling Safety Plan

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**Emergency Folder:** An emergency folder containing the medical information and waivers for each youth participant as well as contact phone numbers for parents and coaches must be brought on each trip.

**Travelling:** Before departing from any location, a headcount must be taken to assure all participants are accounted for. This is done by a coach or a chaperon who has accepted that responsibility and has a written list of participants.

## Emergency Procedures

### Stay Close to Your Coach

Your coach's launch has been outfitted with safety equipment. On the Norwalk River, rules of safety and etiquette require that rowers should take care to remain within sight of the coaching launch unless specifically otherwise instructed, even if this means stopping and waiting or even turning around and finding the coach.

### Never Leave the Boat!

1. If you are close to shore and a strong swimmer, swim WITH THE BOAT to shore.
2. Even if it is swamped or capsized, the boat will remain floating.
3. A submerged or partially submerged boat is a hazard to other crews.

### "Weigh enough! Hold water!"

1. If you hear these commands, immediately square the blades and drag them against the water.
2. Do it no matter who gives the command - they might see something you don't!
3. Act first! Don't look around - hold water and then see why.

### Call for Help

In any emergency situation your first step should be to call for help.

1. Yell for help, don't assume people can see you or recognize that you are in an emergency situation.
2. Wave both hands in the air.
3. Wave a shirt or even an oar to signal distress.
4. When possible stay within hailing distance of safety launch.
5. Your coach should have a cell phone, ask them to call for help if needed.

### Person overboard

1. Immediately yell: weigh enough, hold water!"
2. The most common reason to fall out of a rowing shell is as the result of a serious crab. Keep in mind that the rower may be injured from the force of the oar. He or she may require someone to enter the water and provide immediate assistance.

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3. If a coaching launch is nearby hail it immediately.
4. Some oars may be used as an floatation aid, though oars with adjustable handles do fill with water. If possible use the rower's actual oar. Remember that the oars provide stability to the shell and take care not to cause the shell to flip as you undo the oarlock.
5. Take care not to injure the person in the water as you send the oar towards them.

## Collisions

In case of collision stop and assess:

1. Is anyone in either boat injured?
2. Is the boat damaged? If so is it taking on water? If so, proceed immediately to shore or the nearest dock.

If a person is injured consider the following:

1. Is there a coaching launch nearby? Someone should immediately try and flag down or hail for assistance.
2. Does the person require immediate first aid?
3. Is anyone in the boat qualifies to administer aid? If there is no launch nearby, and the injury requires attention, where is the closest help? This may depend on where you are on the river and what time of day it is.

## Shell Swamped

If the shell fills with water to the gunwales, the boat will still float but may break apart if the rowers remain in the shell. Take the following steps if help is not at hand or on the way:

1. Yell "weigh enough!"
2. Untie your shoes.
3. Rowers should buddy up. Coxswain should buddy up with stern pair.
4. From the center of the boat, one at a time, the rowers should slip into the water, keeping hold of the boat for floatation.
5. Remove the oars, or place them parallel to the hull. Loose oars will not only impede flipping it back over they might become dangerous. If you take them out be careful not to let them float away. You won't get home without them.
6. Move to the end of the boat so as to avoid falling riggers and oars when you roll the boat over.
7. Roll the boat over.
8. Swim the boat to shore.

Once the boat is rolled, rowers may grasp hands across the boat. If the temperature is cold, lying across the boat out of the water as much as possible is important as body heat loss occurs 25 times faster in the water.

## Shell Capsized

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Capsizing is extremely likely in a small boat (single, double, or pair) and much less likely in a larger boat. Logbook rowers should familiarize themselves with the procedure to right a boat and re-enter from the water. CRI will be offering a clinic in getting back in the boat. Larger boats (fours, eights) or any boat if you are tired cold, or unclear on re-entry procedures should be swum to shore. Once you are in sufficiently shallow water to stand you may right the boat and get in. In any event do not leave the boat! Even upside down or swamped the boat will not sink.

A single or double, when righted, will generally have sufficient flotation to be rowed. Many such boats are designed so much of the water will spill out immediately. Larger boats will need to be bailed out before being rowed. Remember that water is heavy and a boat full of water may break apart if you aren't careful.

To right a capsized boat you must

1. Immediately make sure all rowers and Coxswain are accounted for.
2. If you are in a team boat: buddy up with the coxswain. Grasp hands across the boat.
3. Swim the boat to shallow water or shore before attempting to right the shell.
4. Get control of the oars. Loose oars will not only impede flipping it back over they might become dangerous. Either put them parallel to the hull or take them out. If you take them out be careful not to let them float away, you won't get home without them.
5. Fatigue and Hypothermia can set in quickly in the water. If the water temperature is cold, lying across the boat out of the water as much as possible is important as body heat loss occurs 25 times faster in the water.
6. Re-entry from deep water is a complicated procedure that should only be tried if you are familiar with the procedure or are supervised by a coach.