



Leeds Rowing Club
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Leeds Rowing Club/ UOLBC: Risk Assessment
Knothrop Fall Lock to Fishpond Lock
Version: 2022-2023

This risk assessment will be a 'live' document and subject to regular (at least annual) review by the club Water Safety Officer and at club committee meetings. The assessment will be updated as required considering analysis of reported incidents and emerging risks. All club members must be familiar with this document.

Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility and although coaches will routinely carry out risk assessments all club members need to review potential hazards and possible safety controls and take responsibly for the safety of themselves and others.

Hazard	Description	Risk Level	Control Measures	Final Risk
General				
Club member awareness	Rowers unaware of safety rules	H	New members must be offered an induction session that covers the key points of this risk assessment, the circulation pattern, the water environment generally, potential risks and how to mitigate them. Clubs to have mechanisms in place to ensure standards and procedures are enforced and reviewed regularly. Clubs to hold regular safety briefings.	L
The Water Environment				
Water	Water levels are subject to change particularly after rainfall. Floodgates and floodlocks are closed prior to expected high water levels	M	Map of navigation is available and all club members required to be familiar with it. Circulation pattern published and adhered to. All boats to keep to the right/ starboard side of the canal (when facing direction of travel ie `bow side`) All boats to slow down before bends and overtaking forbidden on bends Club Safety Code reviewed and updated regularly. Club members required to adhere to it and to British Rowing `Row Safe` guidelines. All members informed of potential hazards and action to be taken in event of accident. All Club members required to be able to swim (or wear appropriate buoyancy aid) and club holds regular swim tests and capsize drills for members.	L
Deep Water	The water is deep in places and can be expected to be greater than standing depth particularly around the lock areas			
Silt	The canal bed is formed of silt which may in places be deep			
Poor Water Visibility	Visibility below water will be limited			
Debris	Debris maybe present on and below the water surface			
Underwater Obstructions	Underwater obstructions maybe present creating potential for underwater entrapment and injury			
Automated Machinery	Locks and sluices are mechanised and can operate without warning			
Locks	Lock chambers do not have edge protection. Lock walls are high with deep water, access to and from locks is via lock ladders			

Weirs	There is an overflow weir on canal just upstream from Fishpond Lock, protected by a weir boom to prevent access by vessels		<p>Throw lines available in the event of a person in the water (carried by coaches). First Aid Kit and Thermal blankets are available in the boathouse and in launch bags and are checked regularly</p> <p>Rowing boats and safety launches not to be within 50m of the two locks and the overflow weir – boundaries will be marked on the map of the waterway at the boathouse as will bends and other hazards.</p> <p>Rowing boats will not normally access locks. If club wishes to row beyond a lock the boat will be removed from the water and carried around the lock, or special arrangements made with lock keepers.</p> <p>Coaches/Coxes will carry mobile phones (waterproof pouches available) to contact each other encase of emergency. Safety Launch will be available but see comment below re capsizes.</p> <p>Swimming in canal forbidden.</p> <p>Coxes alert to floating debris and underwater hazards – can be removed by safety launch or reported to Canal and River Trust.</p>	
Vegetation	<p>In places vegetation may overhang the canal, restrict access and egress from the canal and restrict sight lines. This is a particular problem in the summer months.</p> <p>Areas of water are covered in pond weed in summer which restrict rowing and are a capsizes risk</p>	<p>L</p> <p>M</p>	<p>Coxes and Crews to be alert to this possible navigation hazard and report and incidents to club for dissemination to all members.</p> <p>Annual inspection takes place and low hanging branches removed.</p> <p>Rowers are made aware of the risks and to paddle with care over these areas</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>

Canal Banks	The canal banks vary in type and construction. And can be steep/vertical	L	No need for coaches or crew to access or leave water away from boathouse unless capsized. Either coaches will assist with throw lines or Safety Launch will retrieve crew – see comment about capsized below.	L
Limited sight lines	In places sight lines can be restricted particularly at bridges and close to bends and moorings	M	See plan of navigation. Crews required to familiarise themselves with plan and adhere to circulation pattern.	L
Fixed Structures	Bridges, Locks or protruding walls can be a hazard that leads to collision.	M	All steers persons aware of navigation and fixed hazards on the water. No rowers to be allowed through locks in a rowing boat, without a separate risk assessment and discussion with CRT and club committee	L
Other Water Users				
Pleasure Craft	Pleasure craft use the waterway and create wash and displace water. They should observe a strict 6mph speed limit	H	All crews to be alert for pleasure craft and to be aware of their limited manoeuvrability Strict observance of the circulation pattern Should pleasure craft not be following circulation patterns or speed limits rowers should tuck into the bank and sit the boat to balance on waves and avoid collision. Any incidents should be reported. In low visibility bow and cox to wear hi-vis clothing.	M
Freight Traffic	Freight vessels require deep water particularly when loaded and will therefore remain in the deep channel and may be unable to pass other canal users port to port. Freight vessels create a large bow wave and wash. Water displacement will be much greater than standard leisure vessels and will affect other craft.	H	All crews to be alert for freight craft and to be aware of their limited manoeuvrability and the possibility that they may not be able to keep to one side of the canal Strict observance of the circulation pattern, all crews to halt if they see a large vessel approaching and if safe, turn and row away from barge. Freight barges must not be overtaken. In low visibility bow and cox to wear hi-vis clothing.	M

	Freight craft generally operate between 06:00 - 21:00 Monday to Friday and 06:00-12:00 Saturday but can operate at other times day or night by prior arrangement with Canal & River Trust.		All freight vessels can be contacted on marine band VHF radio on channel 74 when on the canal system.	
Other manual powered craft	Other manual powered craft such as kayaks maybe present on the canal and could be a hazard	M	Must be vigilant in sticking to the circulation pattern and aware that some water users may be in smaller boats and harder to see.	L
Fishermen	Fisherman may be hard to see on the bank and have lines out into the water which blades can get caught on.	L	Keep a look out on the banks for fishermen. If fishermen are seen move closer to the middle of the canal whilst being aware for other water users and following circulation.	L
Weather				
Temperature	Cold, Ice, Snow, cold may be exacerbated by wind speed Sun, Heat	H	Coaches must carry out a risk assessment of temperature and likely wind chill factor before all outings and consult with crews. Crews must wear appropriate clothing – see below In inclement weather coaches will consider halting outings or restricting the length of outings to a maximum of, for example, of 40 minutes if rowing is permitted. In some weather conditions, it may be possible to allow experienced crews to row but restrict coxed crews, inexperienced scullers, and juniors. The safety launch must be out if anyone is to row/ scull in very cold or windy weather. Coaches must ensure crew have water bottles available and use sun block	L
Wind	High winds may cause capsized if boats become inundated with water, may increase risk of collision by blowing boats off course	H	Coaches must carry out a risk assessment of wind speeds and will ban rowing if they believe rowing is unsafe.	L

Electrical Storms	Canal is large stretch of open water – risk of lightning strike.	M	30/30 rule will be invoked. If thunder follows lightning by less than 30 seconds, then rowing will be suspended and begin 30 minutes after last such occurrence.	L
Light/ Visibility	Rowing is unsafe in the dark Fog can limit visibility increasing the risk of collisions.	H	Strict rules about the timing of outings. Members may not row in the dark either early in the morning before sunrise, or in the evenings after dusk – under any circumstances When there is fog must be able to clearly see 250m ahead, at the new boathouse this is approximately from the pontoon to bridge, if visibility is less then will not boat.	L
Rowing Activities				
Collision	With other rowing boats With bank, buoys, fixed obstructions or floating debris	M	Basic competence of coxswains and steersmen. Knowledge of navigation, map available with hazards marked. Strict adherence to circulation pattern. Crews being overtaken must give way to faster crews by moving to the right/ starboard side of the canal (when facing direction of travel ie `bow side`) See actions for Capsize below. All incidents to be reported to British Rowing. Bow Balls must be present and secure	L
Moored Boats	Rowing boats cause a nuisance to moored craft.	H	Crews to row half crew and go to dead slow from 100m before moored craft to 100m after. Launches to go dead slow from 100m before moored craft to 100m after. No hailing of boats, use of cox boxes, unless in emergency, before 9am	L

Congestion in Boathouse area	Risk of collision as greatest concentration of boats as crews go out and return – both on land and on water.	H	Strict adherence to circulation pattern on water. Coxes or strokes in charge of boats on land	L
Increase in usage	Membership growth and/ or new activity (eg schools) may lead to too many rowers on the water.	M	Management of session times and numbers rowing by close communication between clubs.	L
Boat capsize, sinking or boat unrowable	Rowers and coxes in water, risk of shock Hypothermia and drowning	M	<p>Safety code clear about what to do in event of capsize – must stay with boat and swim with boat to bank. Boats will normally remain buoyant. Coxes required to wear lifejackets. All club members required to be able to swim or wear appropriate buoyancy aid. Shoe types allow quick escape from boat. Heel restraints must be present and to regulation. Scullers instructed in Capsize Drill. Coaches will carry throwlines, All coxes and coaches to carry mobile phones. Lead coaches with level 2 certificate to have a current first aid qualification. The club has a Safety Launch but with 4-5km of water it will not always be in the right place. In the event of capsize crews will follow standard safety procedure and stay with the boat as it will float, but swim with the boat to the bank. Coaches will be able to call safety launch with walkie talkie/ mobile if required, but may also be able to help crew leave water with throwlines. Crew members may be able to help themselves if this will be safest Hatches must be present on boats to prevent swamping, on older style boats without compartments buoyancy bags must be inflated. Juniors should go out in ‘flotillas’ wherever possible so that scullers are never too far from other more stable</p>	L

			<p>boats, and quads/ fours on junior outings should carry throw lines as well as the coach.</p> <p>Inexperienced scullers (in coaches' judgement) to stay within sight of boathouse.</p> <p>Single scullers are not allowed to take a single out on their own unless they have been deemed sufficiently skilled by the Head of Rowing.</p> <p>All incidents to be reported to British Rowing.</p>	
Inappropriate rowing activity	Performing tasks not suitable for the individual needs of those participating – inappropriate type, intensity or volume of activity	L	<p>Coach's responsibility. Adherence to British Rowing guidance on 'How much, How often' for Juniors.</p> <p>LRC rules on timing and organisation of sessions – see BR Safety Code</p>	L
Inappropriate coaching activity	Coach not assessing or informing participants of hazards and risks. Inappropriate coach participant ratios	L	<p>Lead coaches must be qualified or being trained. Not all crews need coaches for every outing. Experienced crews can row without a coach and inexperienced crews may row with an experienced cox.</p> <p>Decisions about who may row without coaches present to be made by Head of Rowing and/ or coaches.</p>	L
Adaptive Rowing	Where rowers with disabilities may have individual needs to reduce risks.	M	<p>All rowers must inform the coach of any disability which may need to be adapted for whether it be through equipment or coaching communication.</p> <p>Rowers within the LTA classification may row inclusively within crew boats ensuring coaching needs are met. Those with visual impairment must be suitably guided around on land and water.</p> <p>Rowers within the TA and AS classification must use equipment that meets the FISA regulations.</p> <p>To ensure safe rowing or people with disabilities a BR trained classifier must indicate suitable classification, preference to formally classify when possible.</p>	L

			<p>Be aware that for some boat types and disabilities the boats may not move as fast so reduced wind levels and flow rates must be considered.</p> <p>Where getting into the boat requires transferring on the floor a transfer surface must be used to reduce risks from being on a cold and potentially wet floor.</p> <p>Where rowers do not use all limbs, or have reduced circulation, consider reducing session times when cold, they might not be aware getting cold.</p>	
Untrained volunteer coaches in a launch	Volunteer coaches who do not have adequate training using a launch, increasing risk of crash or collision to bank or boat.	M	Train all volunteer coaches until Head of Rowing is satisfied with the ability of the coach using a launch.	L
Wash from launches	Wash from coaches in launches can cause boats to be unsteady and potentially capsize.	L	Ensure all launches on the water remain at an idle speed from at least 100m before passing any boat (moored or moving) and to not steer immediately in front of crews.	L
Equipment Failure				
Inappropriate/ Unsuitable clothing	Risk of hypothermia if cold, sunburn if hot and potential problems if clothes catch on equipment or on capsize.	M	Coaches will assess whether participants are adequately clothed for the conditions and prevent those inadequately clothed from rowing. Multiple layers of light clothing are best for cold weather.	L
		M	Cover up to avoid sunburn in hot weather. Avoid loose fitting clothes that could catch oars or get stuck in the slide Avoid bulky fleeces and quilted tops that can absorb water and become very heavy when wet, and clothes that restrict movement when rowing like denim jeans or tops, and hoodies with front pouches/ pockets.	L

	<p>Crew members with long hair are at risk of becoming entangled in riggers in et event of capsize.</p> <p>Risk from use of in/ over ear personal audio devices/headphones that restrict the ability to hear and may snag in equipment.</p>	M	<p>All crew members with long hair are strongly advised to either tie hair firmly in a bun or wear a tight hat to contain hair.</p> <p>Rowers are not allowed to row with such equipment.</p> <p>Coaches may use video and recording equipment, coxes may use cox box related equipment and carry mobile phones/ walkie talkies for safety purposes</p>	L
Inappropriate/ Unsuitable equipment	<p>Failure of equipment may lead to accidents on the water or on land (if trestles collapse).</p> <p>Routine checklist should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cracked/ damaged hull • Bowball • Hatches • Heel restraints • Slides and seats • Riggers, topnuts, swivels and gates • Steering mechanisms • Collars on blades 	M	<p>All boats to be checked before use and any potential problems reported to the coach and addressed before the boat is taken out. See check list opposite for basic minimum.</p> <p>Any damage or equipment failure to be reported.</p> <p>All incidents to be reported to British Rowing.</p> <p>In case of para-rowing within TA & AS classification strapping, support and floats must be present and within FISA regulation</p>	L
Safety Launch Failure	Essential for crew rescue if accident/incident	M	<p>Ensure launch bag is properly stocked (See BR Row Safe guidance) and in launch.</p> <p>Ensure pair of paddles in launch.</p> <p>Petrol tank full and strapped into launch, not loose.</p>	L
Health				
Biological Contamination	Leptospirosis other waterborne pathogens and contaminated needles may be present.	M	<p>Cover all wounds with waterproof dressings</p> <p>Wash any new cuts, broken blisters with clean water</p> <p>Wear suitable footwear when launching boats</p> <p>Avoid contact with river/ canal water, mud etc., especially swallowing and in the mouth, nose and eyes</p> <p>Do not splash face or boats fittings with river water</p> <p>Wash/shower after race/capsize</p>	L

			<p>Wash hands before handling food and drink</p> <p>Wash damp kit immediately</p> <p>Weil's disease (Leptospirosis) is rare but serious. The first stages are flu-like symptoms in 2 to 20 days: if these appear, report to your doctor</p>	
Medical Emergency	Urgent and/or major treatment required	M	<p>Procedure for calling Emergency Services in place and known by all coaches and crews and set out on Club Safety Notice Board. All Coaches trained in basic CPR. First Aid Kit and Defibrillator at boathouse. See Safety Notice Board.</p> <p>Safety Launch to be deployed if needed</p>	L
Illness or injury	Treatment required, Possible emergency	M	<p>Procedure for calling Emergency Services in place and known by all coaches and crews and set out on Club Safety Notice Board. All Coaches trained in basic CPR. First Aid Kit at boathouse. See Safety Notice Board</p> <p>Safety Launch will be available but see comment about capsizing above.</p> <p>Declaration of relevant existing illness a requirement of membership and coaches informed, with consent of rower</p>	L
Infectious disease	Illness transmitted between athletes and coaches within the club.	M	<p>Clubs should encourage their members to comply with the Government's vaccination regime where possible. All those with symptoms of Covid or any other flu like symptoms should remain at home for 7 days before attending rowing and only then if symptom free.</p>	L
Inadequate first aid kit	First aid kit supplies run down or out of date and injuries cannot be treated effectively on site.	M	<p>Annual audit undertaken of First Aid kits, and supplies maintained at suitable levels.</p>	L
Land Based Hazards				
Slips Trips & Falls	Pontoons and launching areas may be wet or icy.	H	<p>All crew members instructed in safe handling of boats. Coxes in charge of coxed boats, Stroke in charge of</p>	M

	The canal banks in places are steep and uneven, access may be difficult.		uncoxed boats. Throwlines available in case of fall into water. First Aid Kit available. Coaches instructed not to approach too close to edge of bank.	L
Petrol	In portable metal tanks for safety launch – risk of fire	L	Petrol tank strapped to floor of launch when in use and in locked metal cabinet when not in use.	L
Anti-Social Behaviour	Anti-social behaviour may be experienced at various locations along the river, canal and associated structures.	M	Coaches and coxes to be alert and aware. All incidents to be reported to Club Committee. Call police or community liaison officer if required	L
Falling Objects	Objects can be dropped or thrown from bridges	M	Coaches and coxes to be alert and aware. All incidents to be reported to Club Committee. Call police or community liaison officer if required	L
Dogs in water	May cause accident/ collision/ capsize	L	Notice to public to keep dogs on lead in boathouse area	L
Other users on canal side	Various people use the navigation paths and bridges including walkers, runners, cyclists and anglers	L	Access to boat launching areas around boathouse restricted with members of public not allowed. Coaches cycling along towpath warned to be aware of potential risk to other users.	L
Towpath and riverside vegetation	Invasive and toxic plants including Giant Hogweed may be found on canal banks. Vegetation over hanging towpaths may be a problem in rural areas and in summer	L	Coaches cycling along towpath warned to be aware of potential risk to other users. Incidents to be reported to club for dissemination to all coaches.	L
Access & Egress	The canal banks vary in type and construction. Canal banks can be vertical; freeboard will vary and can be expected to be in excess of 0.5m	L	No need for coaches or crew to access or leave water away from boathouse unless capsize. Either coaches will assist with throw lines or Safety Launch will retrieve crew – see comment about capsize above.	L