

# Ardingly Rowing Club Water Safety Plan

## Introduction

Almost any sport, and certainly any water sport, involves some risk. In order to ensure that all members of Ardingly Rowing Club (ARC) and associated schools can enjoy rowing in safety, and to comply with British Rowing's (BR's) Row Safe Guide, it is necessary for the club to have a Water Safety Plan.

All members and visitors to ARC must comply with the requirements of the Water Safety Plan and other associated documents which may be in force at the time (as notified by the ARC committee).

Most of the rules and advice contained in this document are based on simple common sense, so with the help of ARC members it should largely enforce itself. If you see any incident which you feel may lead to an accident or injuries, then SAY SOMETHING; do not assume someone else will deal with it. Any serious incidents or breaches of the plan should be reported to a committee member.

## Associated Document

This document supplements the rules and advice issued by British Rowing in the Row Safe Guide which is accessible through the BR website <http://www.britishrowing.org/row-safe> and you are advised to familiarise yourselves with it.

The following sections expand the generic rules of Row Safe to take on board the local conditions and practices covering Ardingly Reservoir.

Row Safe also includes very useful information and advice on:

- Cold Water Immersion
- Sunburn & Heat Stress
- Waterborne Diseases

Advice on Cold Water Survival and Hypothermia can also be found at <http://www.leoblockley.org.uk/>

## Accident and Incident Log

If you are involved in an accident (especially if it involves damage or injury) please report it to a committee member or coach and also record it online at <http://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/> within 24 hours and the report will automatically be sent to the Club Water Safety Advisor.

In addition to accidents, any safety related incidents such as capsizes, swampings, equipment failures and near-misses must also be reported online.

Remember the online incident reporting system is not there to apportion blame; it is there to help us to help you reduce risk and enjoy safer rowing.

## First Aid

The first aid box is located in the Activity Centre Office (there is also a limited number of supplies in the boat bags). It is for EMERGENCY USE ONLY. Blisters are an occupational risk for rowers and oarsmen/scullers should bring their own supplies for running repairs to hands etc. The first aid kit will be regularly checked, however if you do use some of the contents please let a member of the Activity Centre staff know so that it can be restocked as soon as possible.

## Emergency Action

Emergency telephone numbers are displayed on the notice board. Be aware that some mobile phone signals are very weak in the boathouse/pontoon area so it may be necessary to move towards the dam to get an adequate signal. Otherwise the nearest telephone is at the Activity Centre Office or if that is not available, at the cottages next to the pumping station.

Call 999 (or other number advised by your mobile phone provider in case of emergency) and be prepared to describe the incident and its location. Information on this is given in the Emergency Action Plan.

## Insurance and BR membership

All boats used by members of the club and visitors must carry at least 3<sup>rd</sup> Party insurance. ARC boats are all covered by the club's 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Insurance. If you borrow a private boat ensure that you are covered with the owner. The Club does not carry insurance against injury to members while engaged in training or competition on or off the water, and accepts no liability for any injury, however caused. It is your, not the club's responsibility to ensure that you are adequately covered.

At the time of this document, BR membership includes personal accident and civil liability insurance cover for members while engaged “in any activity of the insured organisation anywhere in the world including direct travel to and from such activity within Great Britain, Northern Island, The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man”. It is strongly recommended that club members join BR whether they intend to race or not to take advantage of this scheme.

### **Rowing after Dusk**

Rowing after dusk is not permitted.

### **Visibility**

The bow person of a crew boat should at all times wear a white or brightly coloured top. This is doubly important in poor visibility and in such conditions single scullers are also strongly recommended to wear white or brightly coloured tops. Remember, you are small, close to the water and very hard to see. Rowers may also choose to fit white lights for use in poor visibility.

### **Equipment**

Your safety is significantly affected by the condition of the equipment you choose to row or scull in. You must make sure that the boat you are going to use is in a safe condition before you go down to the pontoon. Boats that have a missing or defective bow ball, heel restraints or buoyancy compartments must not be used. Any maintenance problem or damage to a club boat should be reported to Bob Taylor or David Clark as soon as possible and a “Do Not use” notice hung on it immediately.

### **Environmental Conditions**

Visibility and water conditions can vary rapidly and you must be sure that you are happy with the conditions prior to going on to the water. A north east wind is always very difficult and extreme care should be taken when the wind is coming from that direction.

It is the responsibility of the senior member present at the start of an outing to decide if it is safe to boat and any special conditions required for that particular outing. For the avoidance of doubt a “senior member” can be defined as any of an approved coach, Chairman, Captain, Water Safety Adviser or other committee member. If the committee member is not confident in their rowing experience to give permission then they must seek advice from a more experienced member or approved coach. The Club will not be held responsible for those members who row without this permission.

All those aged 16 or under must have launch support at all times.

A Risk Assessment shall be made prior to EVERY outing, irrespective of conditions. The main criteria to be used are:

- Weather conditions, particularly wind/gusts & especially if north easterly
- Air & water temperature
- Visibility (e.g. mist, fog, blizzard)
- Crew ability
- Steering ability of cox/steersmen
- Other crews and customers of the Activity Centre on the water
- Stream speed (visual)

In periods of cold weather or low water temperature no outings should take place without launch cover. A red and green disc system will operate to make clear when this order is current. The relevant disc will be mounted on the reservoir end of the notice board.



No sculling without launch support



Launch support not essential for current conditions

In order to provide some flexibility to senior rowers in winter, the following exception may be considered. If a coach is taking an outing as a cox, following the above risk assessment he/she should make a judgement on the suitability of the session. In the event of an outing happening without a coach present on a launch, no single sculling must take place. In the case of doubles, fours and quads, an experienced/senior member of the group present will be responsible for this assessment. In the event of a disagreement the outing should be abandoned. Where more than one boat is on the water for an unaccompanied session, every effort should be made to be in reasonably close contact to facilitate a rescue or give assistance if required.

**If in doubt do not risk it.**

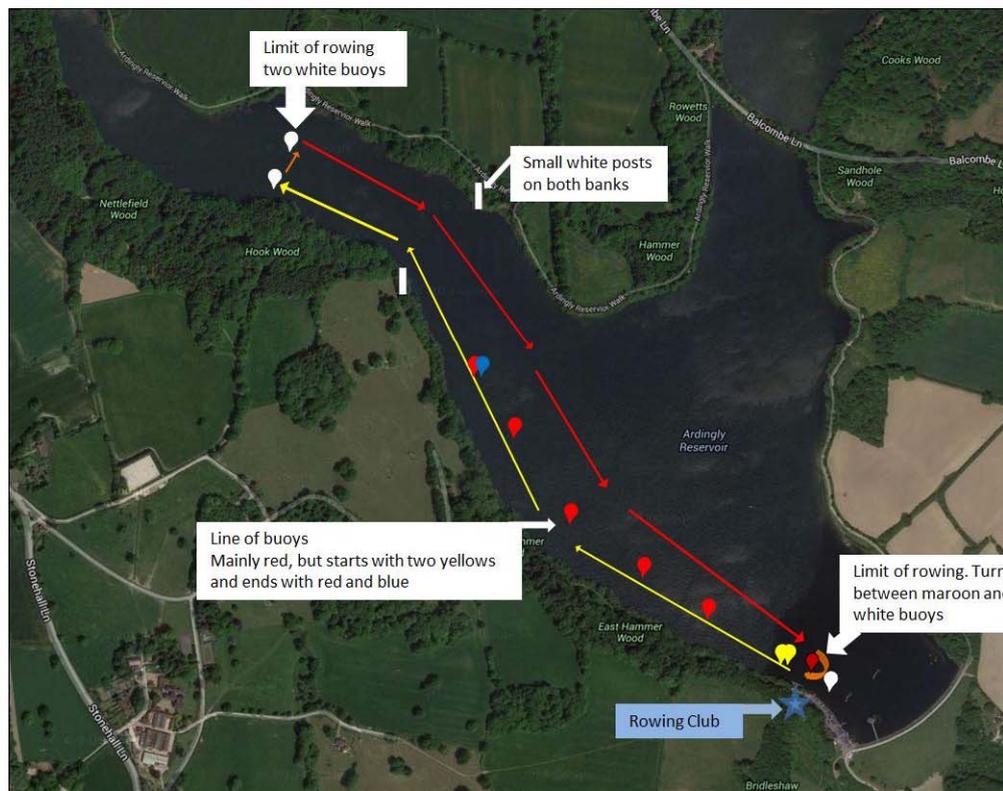
## **Local Navigation Rules**

All members of ARC and their guests must abide by the local navigation rules at all times:

- All crews/scullers shall keep close to the bank on the way up the reservoir, inside (west of) the buoys and further out, east of the buoys, but close to them on the way back. You should not be the far side (east) of the centre line of the reservoir unless specifically instructed to do so by a coach.
- **All boats (Club and Private) must turn opposite our pontoon.** There is a maroon buoy almost opposite it and a bit further down on our side of the reservoir is a white buoy and if you turn between these 2 buoys this will enable you to turn and go back up the reservoir. The large black one is still there and you could use this as an alternative.
- An exception can be made for senior crews (i.e. not juniors and development squad) ONLY if there are no other boats (including moored dinghies) on the water AND the crews are accompanied by a coach on a safety launch, subject to a risk assessment by that coach. Otherwise rowing boats must stay in the rowing lanes as above. *Note – water usage may change during an outing coaches and crews must be aware of this and change their routes to suit the circumstances at the time.*
- You must take extreme care when turning and starting your run back up the reservoir keeping a close lookout for other boats on the water and boats leaving the pontoon.
- In summer the Triathlon Club use the rowing lane early on a Saturday morning and at this time only coach led sessions will take place and the coaches have separate instructions for these occasions. No other rowers should be on the water at this time.
- Overtaking can only be done on the left (slower crews near to the bank).
- Crews/scullers going up the reservoir have right of way at all times.
- Give way to all other craft and windsurfers on the reservoir.
- No crews/scullers are permitted to pass the two white buoys approx. 200 metres into the Balcombe Arm. Turn before the buoys and do not use them as a roundabout.
- Until given clearance by a Club coach, novice and junior scullers are not permitted to scull up the Balcombe arm above the white posts close to the reed beds.
- *We must draw to your attention the continuous need to be aware of what's happening elsewhere on the reservoir before and during the outing. **Stay alert.***
- See circulation plan below:

# Ardingly RC Standard Circulation

(NOT to be used when Mid –Sussex Triathlon Club have swimmers in rowing lane)



## Rules of the Pontoon

While using the pontoon at ARC a certain amount of common sense is required. The pontoon is a first come first served situation. However if two boats need the same space on the pontoon at the same time the crew on the water has priority. It is safer for you to stand on the bank and wait for the other crew to come in than to have the other crew drifting while waiting for you to put your boat in the water.

Do not adjust at the pontoon (do so prior to getting there or out on the water) and do not leave a boat on station at the pontoon while you swap a crew member or someone goes to the toilet etc. Take the boat out of the water and let others use the space. To avoid unnecessary damage to boats, all incoming boats should be backed onto the pontoon into the prevailing wind.

## Capsize or Swamping

In the event of a capsize or swamping STAY WITH THE BOAT, it will continue to float and will make it easier for a rescuer to spot you. Try and get as much of your body as you can out of the water by sitting on the upturned hull if necessary. Ensure you have read the section on this in the Row Safe Guide and have understood the poster on the Notice board and the BR website so that you know what to do should it happen to you.

## Sculler's, Coxswain's and Crew Responsibilities

All persons participating in rowing or sculling must be in good health and be able to swim a minimum of 100m in light clothing. Any ARC member who is in any doubt of their fitness to participate in rowing or sculling should check with their GP before taking part in any strenuous activity.

It is mandatory for ALL coxswains, launch drivers and launch passengers to wear a buoyancy aid when taking to the water. The Club provides a number of buoyancy aids for the use of coxswains, launch drivers etc. They must be correctly fastened at all times. Coxswains should not wear wellington boots in the boat and should not stand up in the boat whilst it is on the reservoir.

Prior to going on the water each crew should nominate one member to be in charge who will have full responsibility for the safety of the crew and the boat from the time it leaves the boathouse until it returns. Normally this will be the coxswain. If he/she is inexperienced in may be better to have another more experienced crew member take charge.

The Club holds regular swim tests for all members to take part in. It is mandatory for all U18"s to complete the swim test and they are expected to attend the next session once notified of the details. If a parent / guardian has any doubt on a minors swimming ability it will be necessary for them to wear a Buoyancy aid until a swim test proves competency.

### **Launches**

It is mandatory for all launch drivers and passengers to wear a buoyancy aid when taking to the water. Before a launch is taken out, the driver is responsible for making sure that the following items are taken aboard:

Mobile Phone	Spare PFD's
First Aid Kit in launch bag	Spare Kill chord
Throw line	Audio signalling device (whistle)
Minimum toolkit	Bailer
Knife	Paddle
Foil blankets (enough for each rower likely to need rescuing	Length of spare rope

Drivers of the launch must be aware of the wash that is created. This is especially relevant when following a crew boat at speed. There is the potential to swamp small boats and make it uncomfortable to row even in larger boats. When you approach any other craft please slow down in good time so that your wash is minimised.

### **Common Sense**

Scullers are advised not to go out alone, and NOT after dark. If you choose to do so then make sure someone knows you are out and when you are expected to return.

# Emergency Procedures

If an incident or accident happens on the water or on the shore:

Get the casualty out of danger, e.g. into a launch, as quickly and safely as possible without endangering yourself

Give first aid (ABC) and treat for Hypothermia – even in summer. THIS IS A LIFE THREATENING CONDITION. Be aware of the signs and symptoms.

If appropriate call the emergency services (999 or the number appropriate to your mobile providers system) on your mobile phone and know what service you need e.g. Police, Ambulance, Fire or Coastguard.

You are likely to be asked for:

Location: Post code is RH17 6SQ

The Area it's required: e.g. Top of the reservoir dam by the Wooden Activity Centre

Phone number of caller

Age & sex of patient and type of injury

Whether conscious or breathing

If in water or out of water

Are there traumatic injuries

Can you get a mobile phone by the patient?

Inform the Activity Centre on 01444 892549 or urgently and they will be able to help with rescue and first aid.

If on the water, aim to drive as fast as is safe back to the Activity Centre pontoon (for walking wounded mainly) or if the situation is serious to the ramp and run the launch up the ramp by the Activity Centre Office (beware of grounding the engine's propeller).

Draw attention of any people on our pontoon and nearby and get them to go to the Activity Centre pontoon or ramp to help.

If someone needs to be taken to hospital make sure they are accompanied and that relatives/next of kin are informed.

*Please note that any incident or "near" incident that involves injury to a Club member or any other person, collision, capsizing, damage to property or equipment, swamping or other safety related issue should be reported via the Online Incident Reporting System at [www.britishrowing.org](http://www.britishrowing.org) and follow the links. This is not so as to apportion blame, but to take any remedial action that can, if possible, prevent such an incident occurring again.*