

South Bend Community Rowing

SAFETY MANUAL

FEBRUARY 2020

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Purpose	4
Document	4
Mission	4
General Rules	4
Club Responsibility for this Document	4
Member Responsibility for this Document	4
Member Requirements	5
Swim & Safety Waiver	5
Adherence to this guide / responsibility for this information	5
Physical condition & preparedness	5
Member Classifications	6
Coxswain	6
Novice Coxswain	6
Sculler	6
Masters Rower	6
Novice Rower	6
Coach	6
Launch Driver	7
Member Logbook & Maintenance	7
Logbook Requirements	7
Boat Maintenance	7
Boathouse & Dock Maintenance	7
On the Water	8
Weather, Water, & Visibility Conditions	8
Weather Conditions	8
Water Conditions	8
Visibility (Light) Conditions	8
Traffic Pattern & Right-of-Way	9
Rowing: Sculling and Sweep Boats	9
Role of the Rower	9
Role of the Coxswain	9
Escorted Rows	9

Unescorted Rows - Sweep Boats (Pairs, Fours & Eights)	10
Unescorted Rows - Sculling (Singles, Doubles & Quads)	10
Boat Lights	11
Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)	11
Launches	11
Rowing Terminology	12
Emergency Conditions & Procedures	12
First Aid Provisions	12
Damaged Shell/Equipment	12
On-Water Injuries	12
Man-Overboard	12
Swamping	12
Capsizing	13
Further Information	13
US Rowing	13
Swim Test	13
Health Conditions	14
Hypothermia	14
Hyperthermia	14
Acknowledgement	16

1. Purpose

1.1. Document

This document is written to provide general guidelines for safely conducting club activities while supporting the mission of South Bend Community Rowing (the club).

1.2. Mission

The mission of South Bend Community Rowing is to promote the amateur sport of rowing to the local community, including training for participation in competitive events, recreation, and fitness.

2. General Rules

2.1. Club Responsibility for this Document

The club provides the document to its members as both a list of expectations and as a reference source to promote safe club operation. The club has the following responsibilities pertaining to this document:

1. To provide this document to each member
2. To appoint a club safety officer who will be responsible for maintaining, updating, and interpreting this document
3. To appoint a club safety committee to review and update the document annually
4. To consider member suggestions and requests when reviewing the document
5. To provide interpretation of the document in the event of questions
 - a. The order of precedence for document interpretation is as follows: Club Safety Officer/Committee, then the Club President, then the Club Vice President.

2.2. Member Responsibility for this Document

As a condition of their membership, each member is expected to read this document, to sign the acknowledgment page upon completion, and to follow the guidelines and expectations set forth. However, this document is not meant as an all-inclusive treatment of rowing safety or water safety, as all possible situations and types of rowing cannot be covered in such a brief forum. As such, in addition to reading this document, the member is expected to also:

1. Be aware of and accountable for their personal abilities and limitations.
2. Utilize good judgment and be aware of their equipment and surroundings
3. Constantly adapt and learn as needed to maintain member safety for everyone

3. Member Requirements

3.1. Swim & Safety Waiver

Prior to participation in club activities, each member must have the following documents on file with the club:

1. Current, signed waiver (Release of Liability)
2. Current, signed swimming affirmation

All rowers and launch operators are required to affirm their ability to swim as indicated on the liability waiver form. It is recommended that everyone pass the swim test, however, each member has the right to waive the test by signing the swimming affirmation document.

3.2. Adherence to this guide / responsibility for this information

Club membership requires that all participants become familiar with the information in this document, and will be held responsible for adhering to the information contained within. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Emergency protocols
2. Coxing practices & rowing terminology
3. Traffic pattern & right-of-way
4. Weather-related precautions

Each member is also advised to become familiar with the launch usage guidelines, the US Rowing Safety Video, and the Coast Guard boating regulations pertaining to the St. Joseph River.

3.3. Physical condition & preparedness

Each club member is responsible for their own physical conditioning and preparedness for participation in club activities. However, the club provides the following recommendations as a starting point. When in doubt, consult with club leadership.

1. Consult a physician before starting any form of exercise program.
2. Conditioning should be part of any rowing program. Take it upon yourself to seek professional training advice to ensure your body is balanced and prepared for rowing and/or paddling.
3. Land warm-up and/or stretching prior to rowing is always recommended.
4. Each boat is encouraged to do an on-water warm-up at the beginning of their row. This should be used to gradually build from light pressure up to full intensity.
5. Paddle-down at the end of your workout, or perform a cool-down when off the water, after the equipment is put away properly.

3.4. Member Classifications

Membership classification is the club's way of ensuring that each member is able to participate in club activities safely. Each classification carries different responsibilities and requirements. Members can maintain any combination of classifications, once recognized by the club.

3.4.1. Coxswain

A coxswain is a club member who has demonstrated mastery of rowing terminology and coxswain commands, the fundamentals of the sport, and is capable of maintaining a safe rowing environment for his/her crew at all times while correctly steering & coxing a rowing shell.

3.4.2. Novice Coxswain

A Novice Coxswain is a club member who is learning the rowing terminology and coxswain commands, the layout of the river, steering technique, and/or the fundamentals of rowing.

3.4.3. Sculler

A Sculler is a club member who has demonstrated mastery of rowing terminology and coxswain commands, the fundamentals of the sport, and is capable of assisting other rowers/coxswains in maintaining a safe rowing environment. Furthermore, this member has demonstrated his/her ability to scull with proper technique, move a single shell to and from the water unassisted, and reenter a flipped single.

3.4.4. Masters Rower

A Masters Rower is a club member who has demonstrated mastery of rowing terminology and coxswain commands, the fundamentals of the sport, and is capable of assisting other rowers/coxswains in maintaining a safe rowing environment.

3.4.5. Novice Rower

For the purposes of SBCR, a Novice Rower is a club member who has adequately completed the Learn To Row curriculum and is still in their first year of rowing with the club. Note that USRowing also has a specific designation of Novices for regatta purposes.

3.4.6. Coach

SBCR coaches are designated by the Executive Committee each season. The primary responsibility of coaches is to oversee the safe operation of the SBCR boathouse and crews through proper instruction of rowing technique and best practices. Coaches are responsible for coordinating practices, training plans, and lineups in a consistent manner.

Coaches are also responsible for providing technical feedback to rowers, supervising practices on the water, and evaluating rowers abilities with respect to readiness for Masters practice sessions and regattas.

3.4.7. Launch Driver

A Launch Driver is a club member who is a coach, sculler, coxswain, or rower who has been certified by club leadership to operate a launch while supervising a boat or crew on the river. To be certified, a launch driver must demonstrate knowledge of the river, navigational rules, coxswain commands, and the safety requirements and emergency procedures outlined in this document. The individual must also be an adult and possess a valid state-issued driver's license.

4. Member Logbook & Maintenance

4.1. Logbook Requirements

Each sculler, coxswain, and launch driver must sign out his/her boat, shell, or launch in the equipment log prior to launching. Each must also sign in upon return. Log entries require:

1. Date & Time of Launch
2. Equipment Used (Shell / Boat / Launch / Oar Set)
3. Name (Coxswain / Operator)
4. Actual Return Time
5. Needed repairs or relevant comments

4.2. Boat Maintenance

Each member is responsible for continuously monitoring the equipment for safety, functionality, and needed maintenance. Check to make sure that all equipment is functioning properly before leaving the dock. If you are unsure, ask the coxswain, coach, or owner! The following is not all-inclusive, but provides a starting recommendation:

1. Rowers - Oar handle and blade, Oarlock, rigging, foot stretcher positions, heel ties, nuts/bolts, seat and slide functionality, and ensuring that your clothing cannot become tangled in your seat or oar handle.
2. Coxswains - Boat lights, phone, cox box, microphone, boat speakers
3. Launch Drivers - Fuel level, propeller, hull integrity, river level, PFDs

4.3. Boathouse & Dock Maintenance

Each member is responsible for the care of the boathouse and dock as well. This includes cleaning up the boathouse area, ensuring the boathouse is locked when not in use, maintaining boathouse/storage organization, and cleaning the dock as required.

5. On the Water

5.1. Weather, Water, & Visibility Conditions

The following guidelines cover weather conditions that may be faced on the water. If there is any question on the safety of launching, err on the side of caution and stay on the shore until it is clearly safe.

5.1.1. Weather Conditions

1. Stay off or exit water immediately if an electrical storm is in the area (within 20 miles). Prior to launching any boat/shell, at least 30 min must pass since the last visible lightning. In the event of lightning spotted while on the water, the boat/shell must immediately start back to the dock in a safe manner. If necessary, take the boat to the nearest dock.
2. Do not row in whitecaps or sustained upriver/downriver (see note) winds of 15 mph or higher under any circumstances.
 - a. Note: The portion of the St. Joseph River used by the club is well-sheltered from crosswinds by the river banks. As always, exercise caution while considering the crew's ability prior to launching.
3. In windy conditions, prior to launching, the sculler or coxswain must observe the wind direction and be confident in their ability to safely navigate the river.
4. If sudden winds come up, return to the boathouse if the trip is safe, or take the boat to the nearest shore and wait for the winds to calm.
5. Try to minimize equipment damage, but remember you are more valuable than a boat.
6. Do not row in fog unless your visibility to shore is at least 100 yards. Be sure to have land reference points. If fog sets in while you are on the water, move slowly, and be prepared to stop quickly. Use a sound making device (coxbox, horn, or whistle) to advise other boats of your location as you take your boat to the dock.

5.1.2. Water Conditions

The St. Joseph River current conditions and water level can vary greatly. Prior to each row, the water conditions should be evaluated. If there are any concerns about the ability to navigate safely, either due to current or due to obstacles in the water, the outing should be postponed.

5.1.3. Visibility (Light) Conditions

The greatest danger while rowing is a collision caused by limited vision or carelessness. The use of bow & stern lights on all rowing shells is required per Section 5.4. Great care should be taken when rowing in darkness or near-darkness, considering these suggestions:

- Take extra care to look and listen.

- Minimize conversation.
- Be careful not to get too close to shore or known hazards. Only row in familiar waters while rowing at dusk, dawn, or in the dark.
- Reflective clothing is recommended for all rows, but not required.

5.2. Traffic Pattern & Right-of-Way

The traffic pattern on the St. Joe River is a left hand pattern and should be followed unless deviation is needed to avoid an unsafe condition or possible collision. All boats and shells must stay on the port-side half of the river at all times. The only exceptions allowed will be: a) for experienced coxswains when passing other boats, and b) powered launches driven by an authorized launch driver.

1. Never stop under a bridge.
2. Stay clear of bridge abutments and other man-made or natural obstacles. Do not negotiate a turn near such an obstacle.
3. Members must be constantly looking for and aware of other boat traffic.
4. Take precautions to avoid collisions and be courteous to boats that have less maneuverability or ability to stop quickly. Be aware of power boats.
5. Treat all other boats with respect.
6. Share the water with fishing boats and avoid their lines.
7. Boats shove off and approach the dock for landing while moving into the current. This maintains the left hand pattern on the river.
8. Familiarize yourself with water hazards, seasonal problems, and landmarks.

5.3. Rowing: Sculling and Sweep Boats

5.3.1. Role of the Rower

Rowers in multi-person shells should always be quiet and attentive to the coxswain or coach. The rowers must always be ready to respond to the commands of the coxswain and coach, and communicate necessary information back to the coxswain/coach when needed.

5.3.2. Role of the Coxswain

The primary responsibility of the coxswain is the safety of the crew. The coxswain must be aware of the conditions at all times, watching for changing weather, other boats, waves and wakes. He/she is responsible for maintaining a safe course at all times. The coxswain must also maintain control of the boat and crew at all times, verbally issuing the commands needed to safely navigate the boat through the course and workout.

5.3.3. Escorted Rows

An escorted row occurs whenever a launch is used to oversee and follow along with a crew during their row.

1. Everyone on launch must wear a PFD
2. Limited talking – only for the safe and orderly operation of the boat. Everyone must be able to focus on cox's commands and coach's direction
3. Novice boats are highly recommended to use an experienced stern pair and coxswain whenever possible.
4. Boats must have a working bow light and a stern light, as outlined in this safety manual.
5. No sculling boats may cross under the Howard Park pedestrian bridge NW of the dock, to avoid any unnecessary risks associated with the local river current & nearby dam.

5.3.4. Unescorted Rows - Sweep Boats (Pairs, Fours & Eights)

1. Under no circumstances should athletes who are minors be allowed alone or left unsupervised on the water.
2. Coxed Fours (4+) & Eights (8+): Water temperature >50F, combined air & water 60F, minimum.
3. Straight Sweep Boats (2- & 4-): Water Temp >50F, combined air and water 75F, minimum.
4. All rowers must be experienced and comfortable with rowing in the current conditions.
5. Cox must be listed as an experienced cox by the Club.
6. Boats must have a working bow light and a stern light, as outlined in this safety manual.
7. Coxswain must have a working cox box and headset, and must verify that it works with the shell before leaving the dock.
8. Coxswain must carry a waterproofed cell phone with sufficient battery life for at least 2x the intended duration of rowing.

5.3.5. Unescorted Rows - Sculling (Singles, Doubles & Quads)

Only members recognized as scullers by the club are allowed to be on the water in an unescorted single or double.

1. Sculling boats: Water Temp >50F, combined air and water 75F, minimum unless cold water gear (wetsuit) is in use.
2. Quads follow the same rules as unescorted sweep boats, and must designate one rower to fill the role of coxswain during the row.
3. Singles & Doubles: Participants must be recognized as scullers by the club, as well as experienced and comfortable with rowing in the current conditions.
4. Boats must have a working bow light and a stern light, as outlined in this safety manual.
5. No sculling boats may cross under the Howard Park pedestrian bridge NW of the dock, to avoid any unnecessary risks associated with the local river current & nearby dam.

5.4. Boat Lights

All boats, including the rowing launch, sweep shells, and sculling shells, must have a working bow light and a stern light. The lights must be turned on if the boat will be on the water earlier than 20 minutes before sunrise or later than 20 minutes after sunset, as well as in any other low-light conditions. The required lights are an all-around white light on the stern of each rowing shell, and a red (port) & green (starboard) bow light.

5.5. Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

The club recommends all unaccompanied boat occupants to wear Coast Guard approved PFDs. Generally, Type III and V PFD's, worn deflated, are suitable for unescorted rows.

Rowing shells are exempt from having PFD's aboard for all occupants. Federal regulation 33 CFR 175.17 provides exemption from the Coast Guard requirement. Rowing shells have been designed for emergency flotation. However, neither your boat nor oars are classified as a Personal Flotation Device (PFD).

There must be a PFD on board the launch for each rower & coxswain.

5.6. Launches

The use of a launch provides safety and supervision when rowing, as well as support assistance in an emergency. The club requires the following for anyone who is operating a launch:

1. The driver must be trained in the proper use and operation of the powerboat, and recognized as a Launch Driver by the club.
2. The Launch Driver must carry a waterproofed cell phone with sufficient battery life for at least 2x the intended duration of rowing.
3. The launch must always carry the boat registration documents.
4. Emergency supplies in the launch should include a paddle, whistle, first aid kit, fire extinguisher, river map, list of phone numbers, night lights and tool kit appropriate to the boats being escorted.
5. Everyone in the launch must wear a PFD at all times.
6. The launch must carry one PDF for each person rowing under the coach's care.
7. The launch driver must wear the safety/kill switch cord, if provided, in accordance with the motor manufacturer's literature.
8. The launch driver may not escort more than three (3) boats at any time. All boats escorted must remain in the launch driver's line of sight at all times.

6. Rowing Terminology

Each rower and coxswain is responsible for understanding the basic rowing and coxing terminology prior to participation. This is essential for safety and coordination during practice, including both moving the boat safely on land and navigating safely on the water.

7. Emergency Conditions & Procedures

7.1. First Aid Provisions

The club will maintain a basic first aid kit to cover minor injuries. In the event of any significant injury, contact local emergency providers as required.

7.2. Damaged Shell/Equipment

If the shell or boat becomes damaged but is afloat and not taking on water, or if a piece of equipment becomes damaged, return to the dock without using the damaged equipment.

7.3. On-Water Injuries

If a member becomes injured on the water, but is stable, return to dock as fast as possible, while monitoring the injured member for any changes. If the injured member needs immediate assistance, look for the closest dock or shore where the rower can be safely removed from the shell to receive care. The coxswain or coach must contact emergency services as soon as possible.

7.4. Man-Overboard

If a member falls out of the boat or shell for any reason, any other members must immediately stop the boat. If a launch can get to the victim first, allow the launch to rescue the victim. If the launch is not in the immediate vicinity, back the shell or boat to the victim and have him/her hang onto the shell until either a launch arrives or the rower is able to re-enter the shell. If necessary, another rower may have to enter the water to assist if the victim is injured.

Launch drivers should know how to have rowers enter the coaching launch from the water. Approach from the leeward side (down current, downwind), keeping the outboard propeller away from any victims. Turn off the engine as soon as contact is made. Avoid overloading.

7.5. Swamping

If a shell or boat takes on enough water, it may become swamped. A shell is swamped when the interior water reaches the gunwales. If your shell/boat has sealed compartments (for example,

under each rower's bench, or in the ends of a kayak) it will stay afloat and the rowers should stay in the shell/boat. If the boat will not remain floating while occupied, follow these steps:

1. Each member should carefully, but quickly, slip overboard, holding onto the shell.
2. If a launch is present, they should call for rescue in an orderly manner. A launch can shuttle rowers to the nearest shore. Be careful not to overload the launch.
3. If rescue is not imminent, take the following steps:
 - a. Remove oars and place them parallel to the shell. All persons should move to the two ends of the shell. It is dangerous to roll a shell when near riggers.
 - b. Then roll the boat to form a more stable flotation platform so rowers can either lie on top of the hull or buddies can hold onto each other across the hull.
 - c. Together, move the boat nearer to the shore until the rowers can safely exit the water together.
4. When the boat has been brought to the shore, remove the oars. If the ends of the shell have filled with water, they must be drained before the boat can be removed from the water. Lift the shell carefully to avoid injury or damage. A boat full of water is very heavy, so try bailing first, then roll the boat slowly and lift it from the water.

7.6. Capsizing

If the shell or boat capsizes, the members must immediately un-tie and come to the surface, holding onto the shell/boat. Be sure that all rowers and cox are accounted for. Stay with the boat until assistance arrives. Under no circumstances should a rower in the water leave his/her shell. Even if a swamped boat is within a swimmable distance from the shore, the rower should swim the boat to the shore. So do not leave your flotation even if you consider yourself a strong swimmer.

8. Further Information

8.1. US Rowing

Much of this information is similar to the information provided by US Rowing.

1. For further information: <http://www.usrowing.org/safety-expectations/>.
2. USRowing Safety Video: www.usrowing.org/safety-video/.
3. Further guidelines: <http://archive.usrowing.org/safety/safetyguidelines>.

8.2. Swim Test

The club highly recommends each member complete a swim test to ensure their own safety. Contact a club officer for more information regarding the swim test.

8.3. Health Conditions

8.3.1. Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when a victim is subject to cold temperatures, cold water, ice or snow. There is potential danger for hypothermia when the water temperature is below 80 degrees and very dangerous when the water temperature is below 50 degrees. Symptoms include feeling cold, turn bluish and shivering, and followed by numbness, apathy, lethargy, disorientation and loss of mental capacity.

1. Action if cold and shivering:
 - a. a. Get out of the water quickly, even on top of the capsized boat. Heat loss is 25 times greater when in the water.
 - b. Huddle with others
 - c. Drown-proofing (dead man's float) is not an acceptable survival technique. Keep as much of the body out of the water as possible.
 - d. Move to shelter quickly, remove wet clothing and re-warm body. In mild hypothermia conditions, re-warm in a shower, tub or with warm blankets.
 - e. Do not give any liquids to drink, treat for shock.
 - f. Continue to re-warm and always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.
2. Action if cold and shivering has stopped:
 - a. Treat as above but DO NOT RE-WARM EXTREMITIES! If victim is no longer shivering, the torso must be re-warmed to avoid circulation of cold blood to the heart. This can kill. Wrap the victim in a warm blanket and apply heat to under arms and groin area; wrap again in a separate blanket. Wrap each arm and leg separately to prevent rapid re-circulation of blood to the heart. Hot packs should not be placed directly on the victim; a thin layer should be used to protect the victim from burning. If possible, place the victim in a sleeping bag with a warm person.
 - b. Administer artificial respiration and CPR if necessary. Always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.
3. Cold water immersion — Be aware that in very cold water people have survived as long as one hour underwater. Recover a victim immediately and even though there may be no sign of life, administer CPR efforts until medical assistance is obtained.

8.3.2. Hyperthermia

Hyperthermia occurs when there is an increase in body temperature, usually when the air temperature is above 76 degrees, and the victim is exposed to sun and heat in combination with a decrease in fluids. It may occur when a) sweat cannot easily evaporate; b) the body is being heated by the environment; c) water loss from sweat and respiration is not replaced and dehydration occurs. Two serious conditions may result:

1. Heat exhaustion – signs are throbbing headache, nausea, cool skin, chills, sweaty, and pale pulse. Action – drink water, shade from sun, and treat for shock.
2. Heat Stroke is life threatening — signs are behavior changes, unconsciousness, hot but not sweaty, flushed warm skin and rapid pulse. Action- douse with cool water, shade from sun, fan, ensure the airway is open, always get medical assistance as soon as possible

To avoid these problems in hot and humid weather:

1. Maintain a high fluid level. Drink water before leaving the dock and frequently while on the water.
2. Avoid sunburn by using sunscreen
3. Wear light clothing.
4. Remain in the shade when off the water.
5. Plan activity level consistent with the degree of heat and humidity.

9. Acknowledgement

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have been provided the current version of the South Bend Community Rowing Safety Manual, that I have read through and understood the Safety Manual, and that I agree to follow the rules and guidelines contained within.

Print Name

Signature

Date