



SAFETY PLAN

Rev: 1
2023



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Introduction

Somerset Community Rowing Club (SCRC) is committed to the safety of its members and guests. Safety is always the number one priority for everyone whilst engaging in activities around the boathouse, rowing or travelling with the club to/from events.

The aim of this plan is to ensure care for the club members, other water users and the public at large by identifying potential risks and to ensure plans are in place to limit those risks.

Responsibilities

All members are personally responsible for and have a duty of care to ensure that their actions, both on and off the water, are conducted in a manner that does not compromise the safety of themselves or others.

All members are expected to comply with the requirements of the British Rowing RowSafe Guide, this Safety Plan and any other instructions issued by the Club in respect of safety.

The complete British Rowing RowSafe guide can be found here: -
<https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/>

River Safety

All members should familiarize themselves with the map (appendix B) of the stretches of river we row on. The map shows the hazards to watch out for when rowing.

The local navigation rules apply, so all boats should **proceed down the right** side of the river in the direction of travel. No one boat has the right of way, so be aware and be prepared to give way or stop suddenly. If you see an oncoming boat straying into your path – shout out to make them aware.

Always make sure it is safe to turn and then do so as quickly as possible.

Rowing and Sculling at Night

All boats must show lights after sunset. A white light, mounted on the boat to both bow and stern must be shown. LED lights are permitted. **Flashing lights should not to be used as main lights.** Lights should **not** be fixed to the riggers as they can be obscured when negotiating bends and turning.



Coxswains

In all coxed boats, the coxswain is deemed responsible for the overall safety of the boat and crew.

In coxless boats, the person occupying the bow seat or the person controlling the rudder (when fitted) is deemed responsible for the overall safety of the boat and the crew.

The only exception to the above being when the coxswain is a beginner in which case responsibility will be transferred to the coach or to the person providing the direct instruction and supervision.

Coaches

Coaches are to ensure that: -

- Crews are aware of the appropriate safety procedures.
- Crews use safe rowing/sculling equipment.
- The outing is conducted appropriate to the prevailing weather and water conditions. Colder conditions need more consideration if Rowability athletes are planning outings.
- Consideration is shown to other water users.
- Crews are appropriately dressed for the session.
- The coach is to be particularly alert for symptoms of hypothermia and heat stroke/dehydration.
- In particular, when coaching young children, the whole crew should be dressed suitably.
- When coaching coxed boats, care must also be taken to ensure that the cox is properly dressed.
- Particular attention is paid to the coaching of coxes as their competence is essential to water safety as well as the crew's success.
- When coaching from the bank a throw line and loud hailer is taken when appropriate.

Safety Equipment

SCRC provides the following safety equipment: -

Life Jackets / Buoyancy Aids: -

- Where participants are not members and so have not declared they can swim to the sufficient standard, lifejackets/buoyancy aids should be offered.
- Rowability athletes should wear a lifejacket if a capsizing drill has not been completed within the last 2 years.

Somerset Community Rowing Club, Land at Huish Bridge, Huish Bridge Road, Huish Episcopi, Langport Somerset, TA10 9HQ

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Throw Lines (bags): -

Any person providing coaching or safety cover from the bank *should carry a throw line.*

A demonstration on deploying, re-packing and other info can be found here: -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zJOL40GOtc>

First Aid Boxes

The First Aid box is located in the oar trailer.

River Conditions

Other River Users

There will almost always be other users of the river whatever time of day or year. Swimmers sometimes will be towing floats and if so are more visible, but they may not be. Dogs are frequently in the river. Paddleboarders and kayakers also use this stretch of the River Parrett regularly. Review the general conditions prior to each session for any particular hazards and modify your session and behavior accordingly. The rowing boats will be the fastest boats on the water but must be vigilant and ready to stop as required. The primary area of concern is from the boatyard through to Town Bridge at the west end of Langport. Upstream of the boatyard and downstream of Langport the river traffic is generally much reduced.



Flood conditions

During winter and spring the River Parrett will be in flood condition on several occasions. In these conditions the water level is high, flow is fast and the definition of the river is different. Rowing can only take place in these conditions after agreement with the coach, and should only use the upstream section of the river between the boatyard and Muchelney bridge.

Wet conditions

During wet conditions, and especially during winter, the river banks will be muddy and soft. Rubber boots are recommended and all rowers should take extra care on the banks and also on the pontoon with muddy boots.

Dry conditions

During extended dry periods the river banks can become unstable as they dry out, especially where erosion can occur. Always take care on areas of the river bank where reinforcements are not in place as the river bank structure is likely to change.

Ice conditions

The downstream section of the River can have sections of ice during prolonged cold periods of weather. When rowing in cold weather review specific hazards with the coach (probability of ice, emergency contact, clothing) prior to session. Do not attempt to row through ice formations on the river.

Weed

In summer the River Parrett can be severely affected by weed. The coaches will determine if the each section is rowable or not. Do not attempt to row through weed on the River.

Fishermen

Fishermen fish along the River during permitted times of the year. Be aware of any lines out in the river and try to steer around them if it is safe to do so otherwise stop and wait. Report any issues encountered to a committee member.



River birds

Some swans can be very aggressive during nesting and when the young are on the river. Try to pass wide around swans if it is safe to do so. Report any incidents to a committee member so other river users can be made aware.

Be aware that through the year there will be ducklings and cygnets (among others) on the river. Be vigilant for these and share any sightings so that other river users can also be aware and make appropriate allowance.

Weather

All members should be aware of the local weather forecast when planning outings, particularly when thunderstorms have been predicted.

Thunder

If **thunder** is heard and/or lightning observed before the outing has commenced, individuals and crews must not launch.

Rowers already out on the water, coaches/helpers on the bank or coaches planning on putting crews out should use the '**30 - 30 Rule**'. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear the thunder.

- If it is 30 seconds (approx. 10 km away) or less, seek 'proper shelter' – see below.
- If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back-up rule for it being time to seek 'proper shelter' – see below.
- Wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder before leaving shelter.

Proper shelter **IS NOT**: -

- Open spaces - field, lake or river.
- Underneath canopies, small rain shelters, trees, umbrellas, tents & marquees.
- Close vicinity to the tallest structure in an area.
- Near metal or carbon objects - riggers, boats, blades, trailers, launches, etc.
- Using electrical appliances or plumbing such as water taps, sinks etc.



Fog

Fog may sit over the river at certain times of the year. Permission to row in these conditions should be determined by the coach. Visibility needs to be at least 200m and lights need to be used.

Equipment

Prior to use, **all equipment** is to be checked to ensure that it is serviceable and appropriate for the purpose for which it is intended. Do not use a boat that is marked as not for use. If a boat is not fit for use after an outing, notify the coach immediately so other people know.

Always fit hatches before an outing. The boat will not be buoyant if they are missing. This means the boat could sink if it was to capsize.



Fig 1: Fitting buoyancy hatch.

In the unlikely event of your boat capsizing do not leave the boat – use it as your buoyancy and wait for help to arrive.



Always remove hatches after an outing when the boat is placed on the rack. This allows any moisture to dry out when the boat is on the rack.

Always check the bow ball before an outing. Never use a boat that has a missing or damaged bow ball.



Fig 2: Checking the bow ball is secure.

Always check the shoes and heel restraints. Never use a boat that has faulty heel restraints.



Fig 3: Checking that the heel restraints are connected.

Always check the boat for any damage e.g. the shell for holes, make sure the fin is not bent.

If the boat shows signs of wear and tear or damage notify the coach and ensure the boat is fit for use.

Report any damage you find to the coach. **Do NOT** borrow parts from one boat to repair another.



Incident Reporting

All members are responsible for reporting all accidents, incidents and near incidents that they have knowledge of or witness within 24 hours of the event, via the British Rowing online incident reporting system to satisfy the requirements of the British Rowing RowSafe Guide.

A link to the incident reporting system can be found here: -

<http://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/?q=incidentreporting>

In addition to the online system, members are to bring the incident to the attention of the Safety Officer, their coach or any other committee member.

All accidents and incidents will be reviewed by the Safety Officer and these will be discussed at committee level along with any additional control measures that are deemed necessary to avoid any future repetition.

Emergency Services are to be contacted by the best means possible as appropriate to any accident or emergency situation.

Off Water Safety

Boat care and handling

Rowing boats are delicate pieces of equipment and must be treated as such.

When lifting a boat that is the right way up e.g. Off the water, always hold an internal structural part of the boat with one hand and support the shell of the boat with the other. Never hold the seat, seat rails or any other part of the boat.

When carrying the boat watch the riggers. Be aware of where the bow and stern are too, especially when turning.

Be aware of slippery conditions in the boatyard, on the steps and pontoon particularly in winter when they can be icy.

Never drop or throw anything into a boat e.g. drinks bottle. This could easily punch a hole into the shell.



When getting into or out of a boat, always stand on the part designed to be stood on (structural). Never stand on the shell of the boat as you are likely to damage it.



Fig 4: Getting into the boat

Never leave a boat that is on the water at the pontoon unattended as it could be easily carried away by the river's current.

Always ensure that if the boat is placed on trestles/slides, it is placed correctly.

Be aware that in windy conditions, boats can get blown off trestles/slides – so make sure that they are secured.



Boat Transportation

Drivers

Only individuals authorized by the Club are to tow the trailers. All drivers are to be conversant with the British Rowing code for the Towing of Boat Trailers, a copy of which can be found here:

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<http://www.britishrowing.org/sites/default/files/rowsafe/2-5-Transport%26Trailers-v1.pdf>

Boat Loading

The driver is to ensure that all boats and equipment are safely secured prior to departure and that the necessary requirements for front/rear projections and lighting are observed.



Appendix A: Emergency Action Plan

In The Event of A Serious Incident/Cardiac Arrest

IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, INCLUDING A CREW MEMBER BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY ILL OR BECOMING UNRESPONSIVE, IMMEDIATELY: -

- o Use a mobile phone to dial **999** or **112** for emergency assistance.
- o Raise the alarm with other boats or coach if available.

If you come across someone who is not breathing or breathing erratically, the most important thing is to dial **999** or **112 from a mobile** and **start CPR** to keep the blood flowing around the body. The club does not own its own Automated External Defibrillator (AED) – the nearest to the boatyard is at **Huish Leisure TA10 9SS** but don't interrupt CPR to go and get a defibrillator. If it's possible, send someone else to fetch it.

- o The AED is situated on the right of the entrance door to Huish Leisure.





Capsize

The following guidelines should be followed if a capsize occurs: -

- If out of your depth and unable to wade ashore, **stay with the boat** and use it to keep you afloat.
- If the water is cold, get as much of your body out of the water as soon as possible, draping yourself over the upturned hull and try to attract attention immediately.
- If you have to stay in the water, retain warmth by keeping arms and knees tucked into the body.
- Stay calm and breathe deeply.

Other boats in the vicinity should fetch help. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESCUE FROM ANOTHER ROWING SCULL - you are likely to capsize too, putting more people in the water with no one to get help.

Cold Water Immersion

Cold water immersion is the result of entering cold water from a capsize or fall from the bank etc. It should not be underestimated – **IT CAN KILL** as breathing and circulation are immediately affected before hypothermia sets in. The effects of the cold water mean that even healthy individuals, who are good swimmers, can still drown within a short period of time, often only a few feet from the bank.

Any of the following may occur after immersion: -

- Cold shock response (the effects of this will pass, so stay calm!!).
- Dry drowning.
- Cold incapacitation and swim failure.
- Circum-rescue collapse after immersion.
- Adopt the “1 minute, 1 degree rule” so you know and can plan a rescue time. **The water temperature may be low during winter**, which means you only have a few minutes of useful time to get out of the water.



Hypothermia

The symptoms of hypothermia depend on how cold the environment is and how long you are exposed for. Severe hypothermia needs urgent medical treatment in hospital. Shivering is a good guide to how severe the condition is. If the person can stop shivering on their own, the hypothermia is mild, but if they cannot stop shivering, it is moderate to severe.

Although hypothermia is defined as occurring when the body temperature drops below 35°C, mild hypothermia can start at higher body temperatures.

Treating hypothermia

As hypothermia can be a life-threatening condition, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Hypothermia is treated by preventing further heat being lost and by gently warming the patient.

If you are treating someone with mild hypothermia, or waiting for medical treatment to arrive, follow the advice below to prevent further loss of heat.

Things to do for hypothermia: -

- Move the person indoors, or somewhere warm, as soon as possible.
- Once sheltered, gently remove any wet clothing and dry the person.
- Wrap them in blankets, towels, coats (whatever you have), protecting the head and torso first.
- Your own body heat can help someone with hypothermia. Hug them gently.
- Increase activity, if possible, but not to the point where sweating occurs, as that cools the skin down again.
- If possible, give the person warm drinks (but not alcohol) or high energy foods, such as chocolate, to help warm them up.
- Once body temperature has increased, keep the person warm and dry.



It is important to handle anyone that has hypothermia very gently and carefully.

Things you should **NOT** do: -

- Don't warm up an elderly person using a bath, as this may send cold blood from the body's surfaces to the heart or brain too suddenly, causing a stroke or heart attack.
- Don't apply direct heat (hot water or a heating pad, for example) to the arms and legs, as this forces cold blood back to the major organs, making the condition worse
- Don't give the person alcohol to drink, as this will decrease the body's ability to retain heat.
- Don't rub or massage the person's skin, as this can cause the blood vessels to widen and decrease the body's ability to retain heat. In severe cases of hypothermia there is also a risk of heart attack.

STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do not go out alone in cold (hypothermia is deadly quick at lower temperatures) or poor conditions – always have a rowing buddy.
- No rowing in the dark without supervision.
- Carry a mobile phone in a tethered waterproof bag/container.

Unsupervised rowers should plan their rescue before going afloat and be confident it will work.

Other considerations include: -

- Do you need to wear a life jacket?
- How are you going to summon help?



Contact/Telephone Numbers

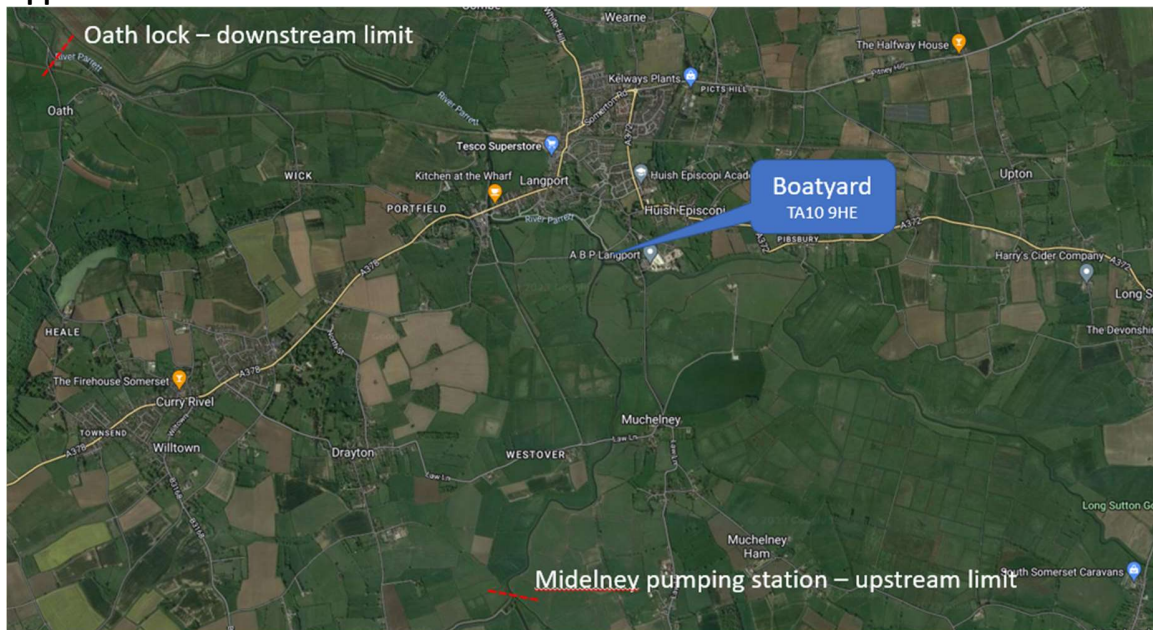
All crews are advised to ensure they carry a mobile phone when on the water.
In an emergency, call **999 (112 from a mobile)**.

Yeovil Hospital is the nearest and has A&E facilities. It is 30 minutes drive away.
Higher Kingston, Yeovil BA21 4AT
Phone 01935 475122

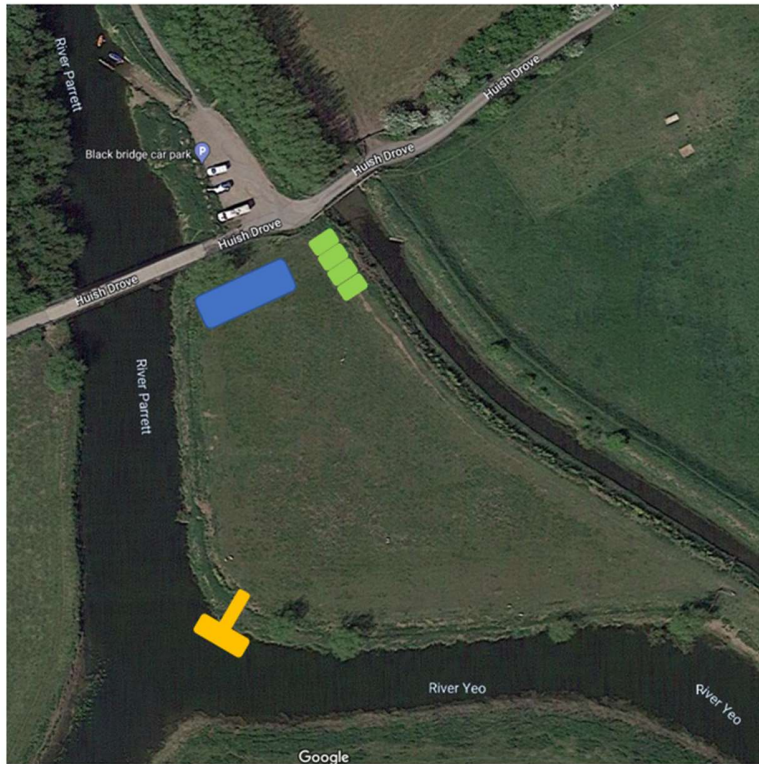
Langport Surgery is at TA10 9RH but is only open 08:00-18:30 weekdays and is closed weekends.
Phone 01458 250464



Appendix B: River Plan



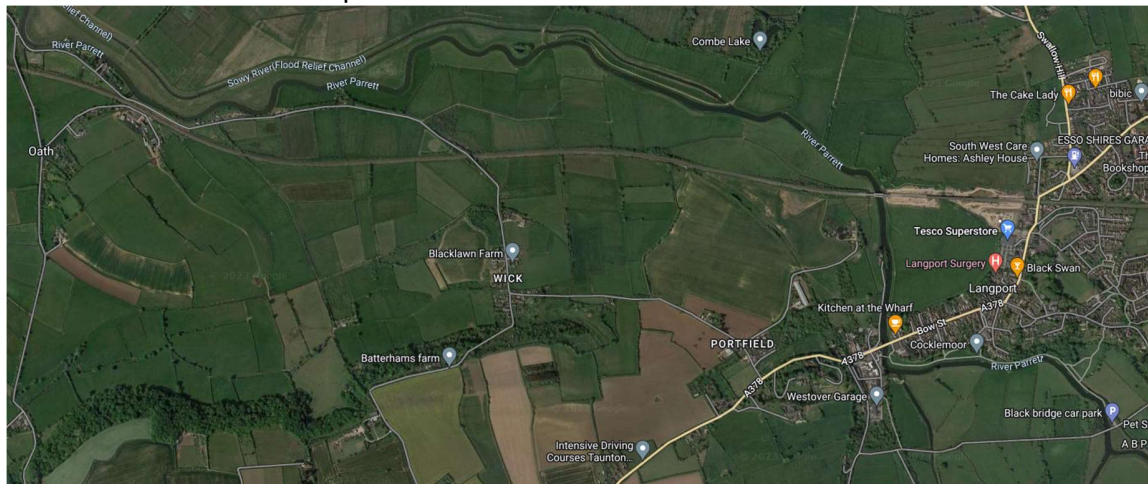
Boatyard plan



-  Boat and equipment storage
-  Pontoon
-  Parking



River Parrett downstream plan



Langport area



Hazards;

- 1 – Black Bridge – obstacles at surface during low water, height restriction during high water. Assess conditions prior to launch, review with coach
- 2 – Slipway (and public pontoon during summer months) – swimmers, paddleboarders, kayakers launching and exiting river. Pass slowly and be vigilant.

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3 – Cocklemoor (and public pontoon during summer months) – swimmers, paddleboarders, kayakers who may be unaware of your approach – pass slowly and be ready to stop.

4 – Town Bridge (and pedestrian bridge and pontoon) – paddleboarders, kayakers, jumpers from the bridge into the river. Be vigilant and pass through the central arch of the bridge only.
River Parrett upstream plan



Hazards;

5 – River narrowed on a tight corner by a tree in the river. Also on the corner are the walls of a former bridge – pass slowly and be vigilant.

If turning at Muchelney Bridge, turn on the downstream side in case of any unexpected difficulties.