



Ontario Adventure Rowing

adventurerow.ca

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Safety Manual

This manual outlines the safety policies and procedures to be followed by participants in events run by the Ontario Adventure Rowing Association (OAR)

Rowing is a safe sport when conducted with due consideration for the risks inherently associated with any outdoor water sport.

It is an individual's responsibility for assessing their personal skills and for the outcome of their decisions and actions.

– Rowing Canada

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- Two-page handout covering plan and procedures	

Before You May Row

Safety awareness and safe actions are everyone's responsibility. Participation in rowing and sculling involves some risks including, but not limited to, dangers associated with water and hypothermia, and risks of accident and injury. Every member assumes all such risks. At every event organized by OAR, all participants are required to sign a waiver before going on the water.

As part of the liability waiver, rowers must acknowledge their swimming competence and sculling experience. Anyone who cannot swim is advised to wear a Transport Canada approved personal flotation device (pfd) while on the water.

1. Planning and Eligibility to Participate

The tour organizer must apply for sanctioning from Row Canada. Sanctioning requires that a safety plan, a map of the proposed route, and the addresses of the launch and landing sites. A reconnaissance of the route, by land or water, using good maps, should be undertaken prior to proposing the event

Eligibility: Members, Affiliated Members, and Guests

Access to OAR events is limited to individual members of OAR, members in-good standing of OAR member clubs, and to rowers who have paid a one-event, one-time guest fee and are already insured through RCA or USRA. Rowers under 18 may not row unless accompanied by a coach boat.

Tour Participants

All tour organizers must submit a list of tour participants to an OAR registrar 6 days before the event. This is to allow the registrar to verify that they are insured with RCA, through one of the three conditions listed in “Who Can Row.” If the rower does not meet these conditions, the tour organizer must remove them from the event unless the rower undertakes to complete the requirements for one of the conditions above *prior* to the event.

Use of OAR/Club Equipment

OAR/Club equipment (boats, oars, lifejackets, etc.) can only be used with the permission of the event organizer.

2. Safety Equipment

Crews must ensure the boat they are rowing has the required safety equipment.

Rowing Boats

Every rowing boat shall contain:

- Certified lifejacket for every crew member
- Bailing vessel
- Working flashlight
- Sound signaling device (whistle)
- Rope (15m with buoy)
- Cell phone
- First Aid Kit including thermal foil blanket

If locks are part of the route, the boat must have two lock hooks.

Motorized Coach Boat

If a coach boat is accompanying rowing boats for safety, they shall include:

- Life jackets for the driver, and any passengers
- Bailing vessel
- Flashlight
- Sound signaling device
- Tow line
- Sufficient petrol
- Cell phone

Safety boat operators must have a valid Pleasure Craft Operator's Card (PCOC) on their person.

Lights

Navigation lights help prevent collisions by making your rowing shell and its direction of travel more visible to others. The navigation lights on other vessels can help you tell the direction they are moving or whether they are at anchor or engaged in some other activity. Navigation lights for rowing are only required if you operate the boat after sunset, before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility (e.g. light fog).

Based on Transport Canada rules for sailboats over 7m, your boat should be equipped with three visible coloured lights:

- On your bow you should have a steady green light on the starboard side and a steady red light on the port side
- On your stern you should have a steady white light

Tour organizers must provide their own lighting for the boat when anticipating rowing in poor visibility. It is crews' responsibility to ensure that the lights on their boat are working and are on when on the water in low light conditions.

3. Environmental and Weather Conditions

Local weather conditions must always be monitored. No boat shall be taken out in extreme weather conditions. These include:

- Heavy fog
- High winds
- Persistent white caps
- When lightning is present or imminent

Rowing is permitted in light fog IF the opposite shore can be seen from the launch there is at least 100 m visibility and the forecast indicates that conditions should improve. If fog develops

when you are already on the water, and conditions permit, return to the launch. If conditions do not permit returning to launch, hover close to shore, blowing your whistle periodically. Wait until you have sufficient visibility to return to land.

The ability to row in strong winds is related to boat size and crew experience. Use good judgement. If on the water, and the waves increase in size such that water is entering the boat (if using touring boats), return to the launch, or quickly seek a leeward (side sheltered from the wind) shore.

If you hear thunder or see lightning and you are on the water, immediately row to the nearest shore and get out of the boat. If you are on land and hear thunder or see lightning, you must wait 30 minutes before going out on the water.

Each crew is required by law to operate your boat in a safe and courteous manner. Use common sense, take responsibility for your actions, and consider the above factors along with amount of traffic and distance from shore.

4. Air Quality

Poor air quality can have a negative effect on human health. The risk and impact can be greater for people engaging in strenuous activity such as rowing. We recommend that everyone pays close attention to the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) in considering what activities to participate in. The Index is a scale of 1-10+, going with 10 being the poorest quality air. When consulting the AQHI, it is recommended that you take note of the accompanying health messages the government publishes for level and take into consideration your own health/medical history. It is not recommended to perform strenuous activities, such as rowing, in AQHI conditions 7 and above.

Some tips to consider:

- The Index is usually lower in the morning so while early morning rows may be fine, day long tours and events need to be carefully considered.
- Monitor the AQHI closely in the event area throughout your day for changes, as well as reviewing the forecast and planning future activities accordingly.
- Discuss with any partners ahead of time the plan should Air Quality become an issue, similar to other weather-related events.

5. Cold Water Rules

The risk of drowning and hypothermia are greater when the temperature of the water is below 15 degrees Celsius (°C). The tour organizer is responsible for monitoring water temperatures in the spring and fall and making rowers aware that there is a risk of hypothermia if a capsize occurs. The safety provisos include keeping the boats close to shore, the requirements of a

buddy system, the carriage of whistles and pfd's for rowers, and ensuring all crews acknowledge each other and maintain a maximum distance from one another.

The “Buddy System” (Between 10°C and 15°C)

When water temperature is greater than 10°C BUT less than 15°C, experienced rowers, as defined by 3 or more years of recent rowing experience and proficient oarsmanship may row without a motorized safety boat. However, the crew must be composed in its entirety by experienced rowers and must be accompanied by another boat of experienced rowers (buddy system).

Accompanied Rowing (Below 10°C)

When water temperature is less than 10°C all rowers must be accompanied by a motorized safety boat. Touring boats must remain within 50 metres of the safety boat

6. Low Light Conditions

Low light conditions include mornings before sunrise and evenings after sunset. All shells on the water in low light conditions must have a bow and stern light which give 360-degree visibility to signal their presence to others, as outlined in Section 2.

Rowing Canada recommends not going out more than 30 minutes before official sunrise, and to return no later than 30 minutes after official sunset.

7. Incident Reports

An incident report should be completed for all incidents that occur on a tour

Incidents which normally require an incident report include:

- Someone falling in the water
- Any injury acquired during the event, including during loading/unloading the trailers and during rigging/derigging
- Equipment damage (inclusive of boat collisions or capsizing).

The incident itself should be reported immediately to the event organizer. The organizer will provide an incident report to the involved party to be completed and returned to the organizer. A scan will be sent to admin@adventurerow.ca and filed by the Secretary and added to the next board meeting for discussion.

Incident reports are available on the website, adventurerow.ca, under the “Organizers” tab.

8. Damage to Equipment

Any damage to OAR/Club equipment must be reported to tour organizer so that they may inform our Equipment Manager.

9. Emergency Action Plan

The purpose of the emergency action plan (EAP) is to get professional help to injured participants as quickly and safely as possible. Unless you have had specialized training in first aid, leave such care to professionals.

Before boats are launched, the crew must decide who is the 'Captain' and who is the 'Call Person'. Though the organiser is the overall lead for the tour, the captain is responsible for each boat and must coach the coxie if required. The coxie gives instructions about navigation. If this hierarchy is not respected then a boat could be in chaos with the coxie besieged with multiple and conflicting orders as well as boats going off in different directions, perhaps into danger. Touring boats must always be within sight of at least one other touring boat.

It is important to note that all participants must be familiar with the Emergency Action Plan, and may be called upon to take the role of either the Captain or the Call Person. Each boat must carry a cell phone with the number of the cell phones in each of the other boats. The person carrying the cell phone is the designated Call Person and must be aware of their duties in agreeing to carry the phone.

Priority 1 – Life Safety

Priority 2 - Stabilize the Situation (ensure all are safe & danger has passed)

Priority 3 – Property Preservation (boats/oars etc.)

DIAL 9-1-1 FOR ALL MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURE - EMS IS TO BE CONTACTED IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS OCCUR:

- Victim is not breathing or was not breathing
- Victim is bleeding profusely
- Victim lost consciousness for any period of time
- Injuries occur to back, neck or head
- There is a major trauma to a limb
- Victim suffers cold water emergency (hypothermia)
- Serious assault with or without a weapon
- Fire
- Any other situation at the discretion of the Captain

EMERGENCY ADDRESS

Launch, Lunch, and Landing site addresses should be included on the navigation maps given to coxes.

If an emergency landing is required, then the cell phone in the boat should be used to find the nearest road access and its address.

AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT

Emergency Phone: Use cell phone in boat

First Aid Supplies:

Located in the boat bag, held by the cox.

Touring boats normally carry the following items: To be used as required

- Life jackets (PFD) for all members of the crew
- Emergency Blanket
- Tow line
- Whistle
- Bailing bucket

ON WATER EMERGENCY SITUATION

What to do in an emergency situation such as a flipped boat in cold water:

- Make noise to gather the attention of others to come help (Whistle)
- Stay with the boat, tell the crew to don their PDF
- If there is a safety boat, get rowers into the boat and take them to dock or nearest dry land

- Once out of the water: If hypothermia is a concern athletes should remove clothing and be wrapped in emergency blanket(s); find dry warm clothes if possible.
- Do not concern yourself with the boat and equipment until all rowers are safe.

GETTING ROWERS INTO A SAFETY BOAT

- **MOTOR MUST BE OFF**
- If athlete is strong enough to climb in on their own, they can do so from the side at the stern as it is lowest in the water. You should be on the opposite side of the boat to counterbalance the weight distribution.
- If athlete needs assistance, then the bow is a smart place to do this as the weight of the motor will help to counter balance the weight distribution.
- If you have someone else in the boat with you, have them help athletes out of the water and use yourself to balance weight in the boat to keep it from tipping over.

Roles & Responsibilities

CHARGE PERSON = BOAT CAPTAIN

The Captain must always be at least 18 years of age. The Captain should have specific training in the care of injuries but it is important to remember that the purpose of the Emergency Action Plan is to get professional help to the victim(s) as quickly as possible. The Captain must take control and assess the situation:

- Checks for danger to self and others; monitors for possible danger to patient, themselves and others.
- Assess the injury to determine what assistance is needed.
- Notify the Call Person if EMS is needed and to briefly describe the injury.
- Observe the participant for any changes in their condition and reassure and remain with the patient until professional help arrives

The Captain must instruct all bystanders in their duties and to not to interfere with the injured participant, or the Call Person. The Captain must insure that the participant is not moved unless needed, or decide how to move the participant if absolutely necessary.

CALL PERSON

The Call Person is an individual designated by the Captain to contact the appropriate emergency service agencies in the event of an emergency. This person must be able to provide required information to emergency services personnel clearly and effectively:

- A statement that a medical emergency exists.
- The nature of the medical emergency.
- The exact location on the injured participant(s).
- The best access route to that location.
- The telephone number from which you are calling.
- The ETA of the emergency service must be requested and remains on the line until EMS has arrived.