

HRSA Monthly Report

March 2018

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Incident Reports

Incident reports were reviewed (other than those of simple capsizes). Comments were made on a few and some were forwarded to others for information. Incident Reports that describe medical treatment beyond first aid and those that describe medical issues are routinely shared with the Honorary Medical Adviser and, where appropriate, his advice is conveyed to the people involved.

On 4th March a coach from the American School In London BC noticed a sculler capsize on the Tideway at Putney. She used her launch to rescue the sculler by stopping just shy of the sculler, cutting the engine and letting her boat drift onto her launch. She then pulled the sculler from the water and gave her a safety blanket and told her to sit on the floor of the launch with her back toward her so she would be sheltered from the wind. She then took the sculler back to her club. A note of thanks and appreciation will be sent to the coach involved.

There was an incident on 22nd March in which a man jumped off Barnes bridge apparently in an attempt to commit suicide. He was rescued by a coach from Westminster School BC and taken to a nearby slipway and handed over to Team Keane coaches. These coaches then convinced him to accompany them to Charing Cross Hospital and gave him a change of clothes. He was taken to A & E and checked in with nurses. The incident was reported to the police officer at the hospital. Notes of thanks and appreciation will be sent to the coaches involved.

There was an incident on a river near the south coast in which two coastal coxed fours and a coaching launch were swept into a tree (and perhaps then into a bridge) and one boat, and then the other boat, and a coaching launch capsized. There were 11 people (the coach, and four rowers and a cox from each rowing boat) in the water, many of whom who made their own way to the bank and climbed out. This occurred in a residential area and there were several calls to the emergency services who made a massive, multi-agency response. All the casualties were taken to the local hospital and it is understood that there were no long term injuries but 11 people were cold and wet, and probably frightened. At the time, the river was flowing quickly.

This incident was reported by local internet news services and widely commented on in social media. There have been several other incidents where relatively insignificant events have had their consequences magnified by fast flowing water. A Safety Alert entitled "Don't be swept into danger" has been issued and a copy is included with this report.

In one incident a launch that had become stuck on an obstruction by fast flowing water was capsized when a well-meaning river user pulled on a rope that was attached too high on its superstructure.

RowSafe

The 2018 update should be issued in early April. The updates have been defined and provided to the communications team. A revised text has been produced and this has been checked, a few opportunities for improvement have been identified and feedback has been provided.

These updates address the opportunities for improvement identified by users and others, incorporate the Safety Alerts issued in the last year and extend the scope of RowSafe to include Ocean Rowing.

The most notable small changes are:-

- Coxes and steers shall keep a good lookout at all times when afloat. Coxes who cannot see directly ahead should enlist the help of members of their crew.
- The forward port and starboard rigger on all boats, other than single sculls, should be protected by a backstay.
- Launch drivers must be at least 18 years old unless accompanied by a responsible adult,
- Event organisers are expected to look after the welfare of umpires and other officials
- Ensure that all beginner juniors use sculls with appropriate spoon size, blade length and handle size.
- In head races during cold weather endeavour to ensure that waiting areas prior to the start are beyond, rather than alongside, the course so that rowers have an opportunity to keep moving and thereby keep warm.
- Coaches are expected to ensure, when indoor rowing, that the rowers adopt good posture and use the correct technique.

Work with the Cornish Pilot Gig Association (CPGA)

Safety advice was presented to three gig clubs in the Portishead area on 21st March. This was based on the presentation made just prior to the CPGA AGM. The safety arrangements of one of the clubs was also be reviewed and feedback provided.

A visit was made to Lyme Regis Gig Club on 14th March to discuss further developments in the Gig Cox Training material. The material has been further developed and provided to the club for comment.

There was a comment from a member of a gig club. The comment was “*as well as the Cox wearing a life jacket, I think you should recommend that life jackets are carried on-board for all the crew. Conditions at sea / estuary can change quickly, the sea is very cold most of the year and help may take time to reach you. A life jacket can be put on quickly if necessary in bad weather if you have them on-board.*” The response was “I doubt if RowSafe will ever be perfect and it is only by people like you suggesting improvements that we will make it better, thanks. You are quite right, the sea can change quickly and it is never very warm. If you have a look at section 10.2.1 of RowSafe you will see that lifejackets are included in the list of recommended equipment in the safety kit of boats used on the open sea. If your risk assessment, or your experience of rowing, tells you that you should carry them when in the estuary then please do so.”

Defective new throwlines

It was recently reported that a new throwline failed in a swimming pool demonstration when it was under very little load. The broken line was examined and it appears that it was made up of two pieces of rope 'welded' together. The line failed at the welded joint.

The club had recently bought six of these throw lines, all of the same type (Riber Throw Rope 15m x 8mm) all purchased in past three months. The other five lines were examined visually and one was found to contain a welded joint which failed when subject to a firm pull.

This problem has been discussed with the supplier who has confirmed that he has taken reasonable steps to check his remaining stock, ensure that new stock is thoroughly checked and to contact people and distributors who have recently purchased this products (from this and previous batches). There is further information at the company's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=riber%20products%20ltd>. It includes this:-





IMPORTANT MESSAGE

PLEASE READ IF YOU HAVE
RECENTLY PURCHASED A
THROW ROPE

It has recently come to our attention that a customer has received a throw rope which was not continuous and was in fact two ropes welded together. We are investigating how this could have slipped through our strict quality control procedures.

Whilst we investigate the issue we can assure you that additional quality control procedures have been put in place so that this issue can never arise in the future and you can once again buy with confidence.

We have not been asked by anyone to raise this issue with you, we do it to be open and honest with our customers and after learning of this 24 hours ago we felt it important to ensure our customers are safe.

We ask any customer who has one of our throw ropes to:

- A) Inspect their throw ropes to ensure that there are no flaws in the rope.
- B) If there is any doubt or question over the product you have received from us then please contact us immediately so we can arrange a refund or replacement.

We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience. Customer safety is our primary concern and whilst this appears to be an isolated incident relating to a specific batch, we endeavour to be straightforward in our communication with our customers and to resolve all issues promptly.

PLEASE CONTACT
info@riberproducts.com
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

With thanks to Mr Alec Glover for the original report and to Mr Daniel Hunter of Riber Products Limited, for his co-operation.

Advice to the University of Worcester

Safety Management and Safety Leadership training was presented to members of the Rowing club and their coach on 4th March.

Extensive advice has been provided on issues including the qualifications needed by coaches to ensure that rowing activities are conducted safely. This is summarised in Appendix 1.

A visit to the University was made on 20th March to discuss rowing safety with the Director of Sport Partnerships and Community Engagement and her colleagues. The University has an Institute of Sport and Exercise Science and offers degree courses in sports coaching; it is keen to develop best practice standards for the management of all its sports and share those with other universities.

Topics discussed included:-

- Swim tests and capsize drills and the associated records,
- Training for coxes and banksmen
- Pre-launch and post-outing procedures (see Appendix 2)

Further information has been provided.

The University has asked for assistance in defining competence levels for coxes and specifying the extent to which coxes can operate based on their assessed level of competence. Information has been provided on the Coxing/Steering Certificate Level 1 award. This is the training that is intended to be presented by a club and has places to insert the Club's own local material. More material e.g. tutor notes, certificate etc. is available on RowHow at <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=102>. It has also been provided with information on the separate online learning course in RowHow, "Introduction to Coxing/Steering", at <https://www.rowhow.org/course/view.php?id=144>.

The safety elements of both of these packages can be replaced by the online risk assessment and risk management modules. Coxes may also be invited to complete the hypothermia module. This training is intended for people who are new to coxing. Clubs already have people who are perfectly competent coxes and there would be little to be gained by requiring them to complete this training.

The University requested assistance with the independent assessment of their new coxes, Andrea agreed to provide this. I have agreed to review and, if appropriate, endorse the rowing safety management information.

North of England Head

There was some discussion of the appropriateness of holding this event as cold and windy weather was forecast. Advice was provided by telephone and by the RRSA. The organisers subsequently decided to cancel the event.

Defibrillators

A club is considering installing a defibrillator and asked for advice. This request was referred to the Honorary Medical Adviser who replied saying:-

There are many different models with a wide variety of prices.

- *My advice would be to purchase a simple device - PhysioControl CR+, Ipad SPI Semiautomatic, Zoll AEDPlus, Phillips Heartstart FRX, HeartSine 360p. They vary quite a bit in price and but you should be able to get one on a reasonable deal.*
- *I would advise that you keep it in a cabinet to save it getting dusty. If the cabinet is outside then you will need one that withstands the weather and is tamper proof (usually has a numeric lock which the boat house have the number for or London Ambulance will also release the number for a 999 cardiac arrest call. Probably inside the boat house in the entry hall would be the best position (safe, secure but accessible). The cabinet does not need any power supply.*
- *Training can be easily added to Basic Life Support training. They are very simple machines - if you remove it from the cabinet and press the on button it will tell you what to do.*
- *British Rowing will not be supporting purchase or installation.*

Look on the internet for the best deal or see if UL have any manufacturer contacts that will offer a discount. I have recently used "aedefib.com" and found them very helpful and offering a good price (but limited models).

Actions immediately following a capsized

It has been suggested that rowers who capsize into cold water should wait for up to one minute rather than try to exit the water immediately. The question was should we be telling rowers to wait for the effects of the cold water shock to subside before righting the boat and trying to get back in?

The response was that advising people to get out of the water, as quickly as they can, is appropriate. It would help rowers to know that when they first enter cold water they will feel terrible (high pulse rate, rapid uncontrolled breathing, panic, etc.) but after a short time they will feel better. It is after that short time, typically a matter of 10 to 30 seconds, that they can start to think about rescue and climbing out of the water.

It rowers know this then they will be able, more easily, to get through the difficult initial experience being confident that they will soon feel better. We train coaches to tell their rowers about this.

During a capsized it is important that the rower maintains contact with the boat. They cannot afford to relax for a minute and try to float, it is imperative that they hold onto their boat, it is their life-raft. A person in the water will move with the water but an empty boat will be moved by the wind. If rowers relax and let go of the boat then the rower and the boat will move apart. They will lose their life-raft.

We do not recommend that rowers right their boat and try to get into it. It may be different on the sea but inland this can be dangerous. If they fail a couple of times then they are in a much worse situation than when they started, having expended so much energy for no benefit. We recommend that they to climb onto the upturned hull and paddle it to safety or wait there to be rescued.

Accessing Online learning modules

There have been some reports of difficulties in accessing the “free” versions of the online learning modules. The advice provided in response is included in Appendix 3. There has also been some comments that the use of Adobe Flash Player (required to display the online material) can be harmful to computers.

Lifejackets

Another lifejacket has been found that may be an adequate replacement for the Getek lifejacket that is no longer available. This is the Ocean Safety Kru Sport Pro. It is available in various models and appears to be suitable for rowers and scullers. There is more information at <https://www.oceansafety.com/product-range/lifejackets/product/kru-sport-pro-iso> .



Other Advice

The following requests for information were received.

- *RowSafe only makes reference to life jackets and not buoyancy aids. Is this because it is recommended to use only life jackets? The simple answer is yes, we do not recommend buoyancy aids as they do not provide much buoyancy and will not normally turn an unconscious person onto their back and support their face above the water. Also, inflatable lifejackets are not bulky, prior to inflation, and tend to be more convenient.*
- *The BR insurers for club organised races makes reference to 'BR Water Safety Guidelines'. I have been able to find 'BR Water Safety Code' which has an ARA logo. Are these the same document? And has BR RowSafe superseded this old ARA document? Or do we have to follow both? The response was I think that this confusion is due of a failure of the insurers to keep up to date with our guidance or, maybe, a failure of someone to tell them that the name and content has changed. My understanding is that all the previous versions have been withdrawn and are no longer valid. They have been replaced by RowSafe 2017 and this is about to be replaced by RowSafe 2018.*
- *One of our coxes recently broke her ankle and is wearing an air-cast boot. Are you able to clarify what the rules would be with regards to her being allowed to cox or to travel in a coaching launch, please? The response was we do not have any rules for this as it is not possible to be specific in situations where there are so many variables and unknowns.*

I think your best course of action would be to ask your cox to seek advice from the medical team that is treating her. You should provide a fairly detailed description of the activities that she is hoping to do so that they can assess the impact that this will have on her recovery. Assume that they know nothing about rowing. It is possible that activities that are inadvisable now may become possible as her recovery continues, this is a dynamic situation so it may be appropriate to ask again in a few weeks' time.

Please do not forget the non-medical aspects such as how can she keep her foot warm and dry and how well will she be able to cope in the event of an incident. Clearly it would be essential that she wears a properly maintained lifejacket as the boot would affect her overall buoyancy.

- *There was a request for information on the location of the Risk Assessment template. This can be found by clicking the "resources" tab in the Advanced Risk Assessment online course (at <https://www.rowhow.org/free/riskassessment/advanced/>) or directly from the Safety page (at <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/>).*
- *There was a request that can be summarised as "What type of lifejacket should I wear when umpiring on inland rivers (including the Tideway)? The response was that as an umpire, most types of lifejackets would be suitable but I think that you would be well advised to wear a I50 Newton, automatic inflation lifejacket complete with a crotch strap, these are essential. Follow this link and you will see why <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDxIC6d6JFU> Have a look at the Safety Alerts on lifejackets and checking lifejackets (both were attached). You may choose to avoid having a red lifejacket when umpiring, crews may confuse it for a red flag. The RNLI guidance on lifejackets was also attached.*

Appendix I – qualifications needed by coaches to ensure that rowing activities are conducted safely

The question was:-

1. *What would be the minimum qualification you would expect a Head Coach to hold in a Rowing Club similar to the University of Worcester Rowing Club scenario where they are the only person holding a qualification? In other words, they are not supported by other qualified Coaches and ...*
2. *...how might this differ if there were other Coaches with qualifications?*
3. *Also, is there a requirement to undertake any additional qualifications or other CPD training courses?*

The response was:-

This is quite difficult because although we have an education and qualification scheme for coaches, we do not mandate the qualification level needed for any club activities. We still have many coaches with years of experience and no qualifications.

I think that it is better to consider competence than qualification and I use the simple HSE definition that a competent person is one who, by virtue of his or her experience, education and training is able to perform the specified task to the required standard. There are many very experienced and competent coaches who have no qualifications.

We have five levels of coaching qualification, these are:-

- Rowing Leader (designed for 16-18 year olds to work under the supervision of an adult coach)
- Level 2 Session Coach (trained to plan and deliver one session at a time)
- Level 2 Club Coach (trained to plan and deliver six linked sessions)
- Level 3 Senior Club Coach (trained to plan and deliver a one year development plan) and
- Level 4 Advanced Coach (trained to design, implement and evaluate long term specialist programs)

Coaches at both Levels 2 and above are able to work unsupervised.

Level 2 Club Coaches are required to complete a Capsize and Recovery course (or Man Overboard course for fixed seat sea rowers). This course also addresses other issues, such as Hypothermia and includes practical exercises usually in a swimming pool. The video used for capsizing and recovery is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcPE8-gENLo> and the hypothermia online module is at https://www.rowhow.org/free/cold_water_course_latest_version/. Please let me know if you have any difficulty accessing these. (There is also a requirement to complete the Safety Basics on-line course and training in Safeguarding and Protecting Children.)

The answer to Q1 What is the minimum qualification you would expect for a Head Coach.

The primary responsibility of any coach is to ensure the safety and welfare of the people they coach. There are no specifications in British Rowing so what follows is simply my opinion and solely relates to safety.

On most inland rivers I would expect an experienced crew with an experienced cox to be self-sufficient. They would not need a coach in attendance, they probably would not need a bank rider either (this would depend on local conditions, such as the extent and type of

other river traffic and presence of hazards (bends, bridges, etc.)). All of this could be determined by their risk assessment.

The situation is different for crews with inexperienced coxes. It is the ability of the cox that is important. It is a bit like driving a car, good drivers see hazardous situations developing and act accordingly, less good drivers are surprised by things that they think happened suddenly. Inexperienced coxes need support, this may come from an experienced crew but it is better to come from a coach in attendance. With care a coach can supervise more than one boat providing he or she is in contact with (i.e. reasonably close to) all of them.

The short answer to the direct question is a Level 2 Club Coach but do not forget the comment about competence.

Q2, What is the effect of having other coaches?

There are reasons why this can be more onerous and reasons why it can be less. Having more people to supervise rowers unloads the primary coach a little but this only helps if there are many inexperienced crews and coxes afloat at the same time.

More experienced or better qualified coaches tend to mentor less experienced coaches and this takes some time. However, in a town like Worcester, where there are several rowing clubs, this can be a shared activity.

In essence, having more coaches does not impact in the competence requirements for the primary coach.

Q3 What about Continuing Professional Development (CPD)?

The coaches' Code of Conduct (see <https://www.britishrowing.org/code-of-conduct/>) contains the following: -

Coaches should look to continually develop their practices

Coaches should:

- *accept that improvements in their coaching can always be made*
- *gain qualifications at a level appropriate to their coaching context*
- *follow a programme of continuous professional development*
- *engage in self-analysis and reflective practice to identify areas for personal improvement*
- *practise in an open and transparent fashion that encourages other coaches to contribute to or learn from their knowledge and experience*
- *contribute to the development of coaching by sharing knowledge and ideas with others*
- *contribute to initiatives to promote the standards and quality of coaching and coaches*
- *learn about issues in the sport that might affect coaches or participants*
- *learn about the role of rowing in current local, regional and national initiatives.*

All of this is expected but not enforced, we do not go round checking up on people, it is just a matter of their own professional standards.

Appendix 2 - Pre-launch and post-outing procedures

Prior to launch the coach (or in his absence, the cox) should:-

- ensure that each member of the crew is fit and well, and ready for the outing ahead
- ensure that crew members have appropriate clothing for the conditions and have adequate supplies of drinking water
- discuss and agree the objectives and structure of the outing with the crew
- check the conditions and the state of the crew and determine whether it is safe to continue with the outing as planned, modify plans as appropriate
- ensure that every member of the crew has completed an appropriate warm-up
- supervise the crew in taking the boat safely from the racking and placing it on trestles,
- check that the boat and blades are safe to use (or supervise the crew in making these checks)
- supervise the crew in placing the boat on the water and entering the boat

There is further information on boat checking in a Safety Alert at <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Check-Your-Boat-Before-You-Go-Afloat.pdf> and a video on boat checking at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-52ajVjzkl&feature=youtu.be> .

After each outing the coach (or in his absence, the cox) should:-

- supervise the crew exiting the boat, removing the boat from the water and placing the boat on trestles
- ensure that crews put on extra clothing as appropriate
- check that the crew have no injuries following the outing
- supervise the crew doing stretching exercises
- supervise the crew washing the boat
- check for any damage acquired during the outing (if the boat or blades are damaged to the extent that they have become unsafe to use then they should be quarantined so that they will not be used again until repaired)
- supervise the boat being placed back on the racking

Quarantining a boat normally consists of labelling it to indicate that it is damaged and recording this damage in the club log book and noting it on a white board or similar. Typically red/white tape would be tied to the damaged part.

Appendix 3 – Guide to accessing online learning material

Before opening this course, we recommend the following:

Browser:

- Chrome (recommended)
- Fully updated version of Firefox
- Internet Explorer 9.0

Please note: If you are using Internet Explorer 11 there is a known problem with resizing the window and the course won't display properly. Please press **F11** on your keyboard twice to display the course correctly.

Flash Player

Needs to be installed (<http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>).

If you are using Internet Explorer 11 please ensure that you have Flash Player 10 or higher installed.

If you are using Google Chrome as a browser (recommended) please see the following website for instructions: <https://goo.gl/I4InRd> on how to enable flash and add the following exception as per the instructions: <https://www.rowhow.org>

Before opening this course, we recommend the following: