



**Aberdeen  
Inter-Company Row**

**Safety Plan**



## Aberdeen Inter-Company Row – Safety Plan

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## Aberdeen Inter-Company Row – Safety Plan

### INTRODUCTION

Aberdeen Boat Club (ABC) was founded in 1865 and will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2015. Throughout its history it has been one of Scotland's most successful rowing clubs, in membership numbers, participation, and competitive achievement and the quality and range of the club's facilities.

There is no higher priority for the club than the safety of its members and other users of the facilities and river. The start of a ten year project to increase participation makes it vital the club has a clear safety plan; so newcomers to the sport are aware of the risks and the correct response to them.

This document outlines the risks associated with rowing at ABC and the procedures put in place to reduce the likelihood and severity of any incidents.



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### HAZARD ANALYSIS & RISK CONTROL

Risks are classified by the likelihood of them happening and the severity of the harm if they happen; by understanding the risks we are able to design ways of reducing the likelihood and/or severity. The following classification matrix is used by British Rowing (see Section 1.2 of [Row Safe: a guide to good practice in rowing](#)) and we use the same terminology.

Likelihood of harm	Severity of harm		
	Slight harm (1)	Moderate harm (2)	Extreme harm (3)
Very unlikely (1)	Very low risk	Low risk	Low risk
Unlikely (2)	Low risk	Medium risk	Medium risk
Likely (3)	Medium risk	Medium risk	High risk
Very likely (4)	Medium risk	High risk	Very high risk

Category of risk	Evaluation of acceptability
Very low risk	Acceptable
Low risk	Risks that should be reduced so that they are acceptable – if reasonably practical to do so.
Medium risk	
High risk	
Very high risk	Unacceptable

Examples of categories for likelihood of harm and severity of harm

Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely
There would be <b>frequent opportunities</b> that people will be exposed to the identified hazards.	It is <b>probable</b> that people will be exposed to the identified hazards.	It is <b>possible</b> that people could be exposed to the hazards.	It would be a <b>remote chance</b> of individuals being exposed to the identified hazards.

	Slight harm	Moderate harm	Extreme harm
	Cuts, abrasion – first aid treatment, superficial equipment damage	Medical treatment required, slight equipment damage	Fatality or major injury, major equipment damage



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The following risks have been identified, along with the controlling measures needed to reduce these risks to an acceptable level.

Activity	Hazard	Initial Risk		Control Measures		Residual Risk	
		Likelihood	Severity	Prevention	Mitigation	Likelihood	Severity
General	Adverse weather or water conditions threatening cancellation of the entire event	2	1	Inter-Company Regatta is scheduled in mid Summer to increase likelihood of good weather. Long daylight hours good if weather affects schedule.	Regatta Committee will monitor situation in the days leading up to the event and, if appropriate, post daily updates on ABC website and give crews as much notice as possible.	1	1
	Adverse wind or water conditions causing problems during racing.	2	1	Inter-Company Regatta is scheduled in mid Summer to increase likelihood of good weather. Long daylight hours good if weather affects schedule.	Consider cancellation, rescheduling of race programme, shortening the course. Consider following races with a safety launch.	1	1
	Umpire or other official tripping or slipping whilst performing their allocated duties	1	1	Allocated duties usually undertaken from safe locations.	Any official at risk of immersion must be provided with a lifejacket and must wear it.	1	1
	Unclear responsibilities and/or communication	3	1	Assign clear roles and responsibilities. Regatta Control, umpires, marshals, launches issued with radios on same frequency. PA to keep competitors and spectators informed.		1	1
Boat handling	Damage to boats or injury to persons in boat house	2	1	Crews respond to commands of qualified cox. Boat house floor kept clear of tripping hazards. Boat in rack above chocked to raise riggers.	Lifting done by whole crew, spreading load and removing single point of failure.	1	1
	Damage to boats or injury to persons in boat handling area pre- or post row	2	1	Crews respond to commands of qualified cox. Boat handling area kept clear of tripping hazards. Boat marshalls controlling spectators.	Lifting done by whole crew, spreading load and removing single point of failure.	1	1
Launching and retrieving boats	Slipping or falling on shore or in water whilst launching boats	2	1	Crews respond to commands of qualified cox. Steps, shore and jetties kept clear of tripping hazards. Boat Marshall to monitor and supervise. Jetties manned throughout the day by experienced support staff ensuring secure boat entry by race crews. Crews swap in and out of boats, minimising lifting and carrying.	Lifting done by whole crew, spreading load and removing single point of failure.	1	1
Rowing	Capsizing of a boat	1	2	Training provided to crew on how to avoid getting into a capsize.	Training provided to crew on the drill if capsize happens. 1) Stay with the boat. 2) Perform headcount. 3) Communicate with each other and nearest	1	1



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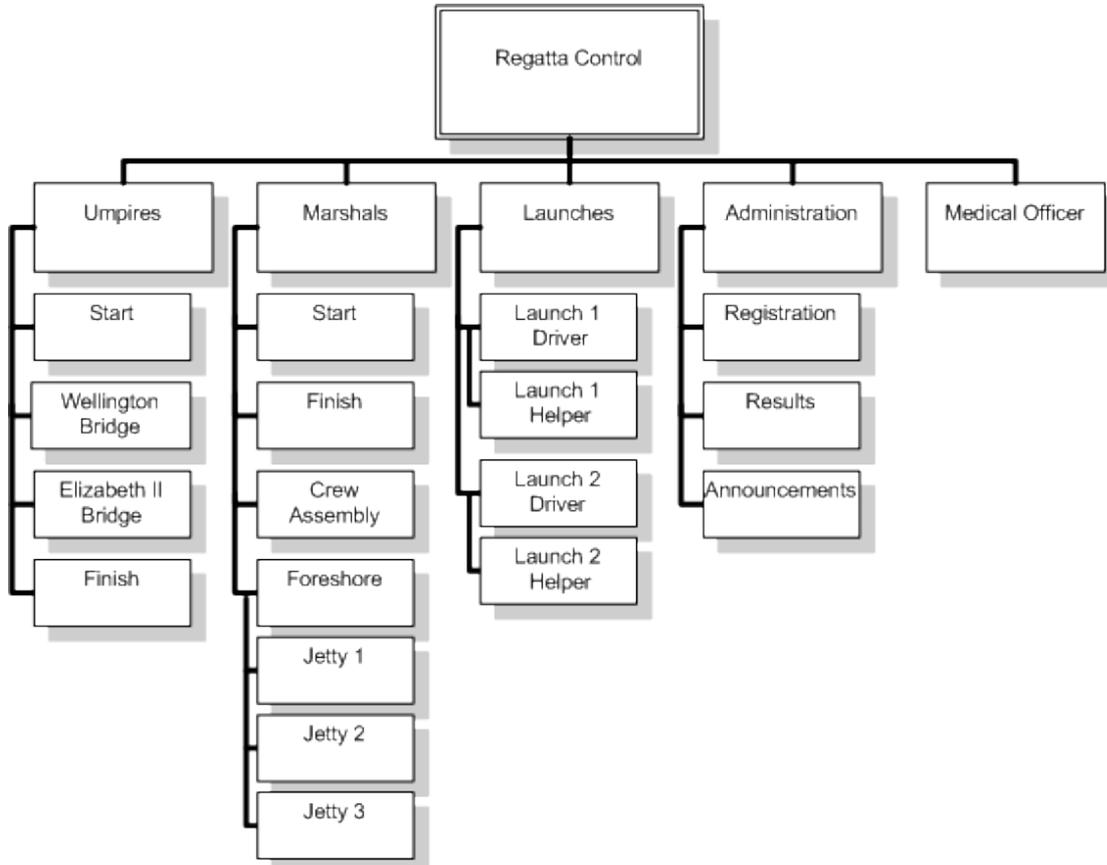
					umpire or marshal. Regatta Control follows the enclosed "Procedure in Case of Capsize".		
	Boat Collision (whilst racing)	2	2	All racing is marshalled and run to avoid collisions from start through to finish of the 500m course. Coxes are qualified and instructed to keep a safe distance for competitive racing at pre-race briefing. Infringements of the rules of racing can result in disqualification of the crew therefore there is no incentive for a crew to do anything but race cleanly against the opposition.	If boats collide, crews and coxes are required to put safety ahead of the race. First aid boxes are at the boat house and in the launches. Boats are visually inspected to ensure no damage that further threatens the crew exists. If it does then Regatta Control will follow the same procedure as for capsized. All boat damage is logged and monitored within the club as standard procedure.	1	1
	Boat Collision (whilst manoeuvring.)	2	1	Coxes are aware that low speed collisions can take place, especially in the restricted low water times; particularly manoeuvring for the start line and on return to the jetties. Controls are in place with the Starter calling crews up from above the start. Control at the jetties and sufficiency of coxes ensures there should not be a rush. Care is also required heading upstream to the start and a pre-race briefing is conducted to emphasise this and reiterate the standard river circulation (see the enclosed "Rules of the River").	If boats collide, safety is the priority and coxes and crews will disengage with care to minimise injury and damage. First aid boxes are at the boat house and in the launches. Boats are visually inspected to ensure no damage that further threatens the crew exists. If it does then Regatta Control will follow the same procedure as for capsized. All boat damage is logged and monitored within the club as standard procedure.	1	1
Illness	Sudden illness in a competitor, official or spectator.	1	2		Any person can call regatta control for help or advice. The presence of the Medical Officer reduces the risk of the severity escalating. In the case of serious acute illness, dialling 999 is also appropriate.	1	1
	Individual Competitor's Health	2	2	All crews questioned for pre-existing medical conditions and made aware that they are to engage in physical activities in a hostile environment. All crew members declare themselves fit to undertake such activity Medical Officer made aware of any pre-existing medical condition. All crews have followed the training sessions given by the coxes	Any person can call regatta control for help or advice. The presence of the Medical Officer reduces the risk of the severity escalating. In the case of serious acute illness, dialling 999 is also appropriate.	1	1
	Waterborne diseases	1	2	Information provided on waterborne diseases, with preventative measures.	Information provided on symptoms and advice to seek medical care.	1	1



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### ORGANISATION

The Aberdeen Inter-Company Row requires the following organisation and roles.





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### RULES OF THE RIVER

The following rules of the river must be followed by all coxes and steerers on the River Dee.

#### Tides

Always consult the tide table prior to booking an outing and assess the restricted times.

Low Tide Height	Restriction
> 1.3m	Unrestricted
1.2m – 1.3m	No rowing for 1 hour either side of low tide
0.5m – 1.2m	No rowing for 1.5 hours either side of low tide
< 0.5m	No rowing for 2 hours either side of low tide

#### Prevailing Conditions

Prior to boating, assess the prevailing wind direction and strength, the stream conditions and whether the tide is rising or falling. If any one of the above conditions is judged to be excessive for the competence of the crew and/or cox, the outing should be cancelled.

When uncertain, seek advice from an experienced member of the club. Conditions can vary along the river and can change with the tide. Coxes should be constantly aware of changing conditions.

When rowing at night or in impaired visibility, assessment of the conditions needs to be more stringent than during the day.

#### Equipment Check

Prior to an outing, coxes or crew are responsible for checking the following items: the bow ball is fitted correctly; the heel restraints are in place; the buoyancy compartments are watertight. Coxes must wear a buoyancy aid or life jacket; an inflatable life jacket must be worn if using a bow loader.

#### Course

Coxes and crew should be familiar with the River Circulation Map as posted in the boathouse.

Boats proceeding **upstream** should be on the **boathouse (South)** side of the river.

Boats proceeding **downstream** should be on the **city (North)** side of the river.

Stay near the bank and avoid the centre of the river unless overtaking another boat.

#### Turning

On stopping to change direction, crews and scullers must move immediately to the opposite side of the river, preferably by performing a U-turn ie the first ninety degree turn, then row across the river followed by the second ninety degree turn.

Boats must not turn on the spot where they stop rowing as this will place them on the wrong side of the river and directly in the path of oncoming boats.



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Coxes and steerers should be aware of the effect of wind and tide when turning boats upstream of a bridge. Always allow plenty of room to manoeuvre the boat. On completion of the turn, always row clear of the bridge.

### **Bridges**

#### Victoria Bridge

Travel downstream of this bridge is forbidden, except in an emergency situation or under instruction from race marshals. Boats travelling through the bridge must turn immediately and progress upstream through the second arch on the boathouse side of the river.

#### Queen Elizabeth II Bridge

Boats should generally proceed through the central span, following normal river circulation rules.

#### Railway Bridge

Arches are numbered from Riverside Drive and painted on the upstream side of the bridge piers. Boats proceeding upstream should use arches 4 or 5. Boats proceeding downstream should use arch 2. Arch 3 should only be used in an emergency.

When three bricks or more are visible above the water line on the vertical part of the main piers, boats must not proceed through and upstream of the bridge.

#### King George VI Bridge

Boats proceeding upstream should use the main (South) arch. Boats proceeding downstream should use the city (North) arch.

When one brick or more is visible above the water line on the vertical part of the central pier, boats must not proceed through and upstream of the bridge.

#### Bridge of Dee

No club boats are permitted above the Bridge of Dee.



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### PROCEDURE IN CASE OF CAPSIZE

The following procedure is to be used during the Aberdeen Inter-Company Row.

#### **Regatta Control:**

The whole course, including marshalling areas at the start and finish, is under observation by Umpires and Marshals equipped with radios. The observer of a capsized boat uses their radio to notify Regatta Control, situated in the Aberdeen Boat Club boathouse. All radios are on the same frequency.

#### **Safety Launches:**

There will be two launches available during the regatta. At least one will be on the water at any time. Each launch will be manned by two competent crew - one driver, one helper - wearing lifejackets. The launch drivers are responsible for ensuring there is enough fuel.

#### **Procedure:**

The following steps will be taken:

##### Regatta Control

- Alerts the launch drivers and directs them to the incident. If one launch is not on the water, it will mobilise immediately.
- Alerts the Start Umpire to hold races until further notice.
- Alerts the Medical Officer.
- Makes a simple announcement on the PA to inform spectators.
- Requests updates from the Umpire(s), Marshal(s) or launch(es) as required and directs information as appropriate.
- Informs all Umpires and Marshals when the incident is completely cleared and launches are available again for racing to proceed.

Escalation to the emergency services (Coast Guard, Police, Ambulance) will be at the discretion of Regatta Control in conjunction with the Medical Officer.

##### Launch driver

- Proceeds immediately to the capsized boat.
- Must have the circuit break around his/her foot.
- Avoids escalation by
  - controlling speed to avoid washing down other crews.
  - being aware of the people in the water near the propeller, cut engine if in doubt.
- Evacuate the whole crew before taking care of the boat.
  - Avoid leaving one person on his/her own.
  - Give moral support to the crew.

##### Medical Officer

- Takes control of the incident at shore point.
- Organises reception party: personnel, immersion suits, first aid kit.
- Informs Regatta Control if the emergency services are required.

##### **Boat Marshals**

- Control spectators and assist with personnel and the capsized boat coming ashore.



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### QUALIFICATION OF COXES

With the demographics of Aberdeen Boat Club, it is essential to encourage members to qualify as coxes. This needs to be followed through, by teaching members the basics; instilling a sense of responsibility for the safety of the crew and equipment in their charge; monitoring their progress and providing feedback.

Coxes need to be members of Aberdeen Boat Club and hold a current Scottish Rowing License. In the case of experienced coxes holding a current rowing license, permission to cox prior to membership will be at the discretion of the club President, Captain or Safety Officer. Anyone new to coxing on the River Dee must follow the steps below.

#### Initial

The “Aberdeen Boat Club Safety Induction” will be conducted by an experienced, qualified cox, with reference to the ABC safety notice board. The following will be covered:

- A description of the river and its hazards.
- The rules of the river - circulation, bridges, turning etc.
- The primary role of a cox – safety, steering, instruction.
- The club’s boats and safety equipment.
- Emergency response, including knowledge of issues related to capsize and cold water immersion.
- The Damage Log and Incident Report Form.

On completion, and before any session on the water, one of the club President, Captain or Safety Officer must be informed and agree to the next step.

#### Basic

Practical instruction should be given in:

- The rules and the hazards of the River Dee
- Controlling the crew
- Launching and retrieval
- Steering
- Turning
- Emergency stop

These should be conducted in good weather and stream conditions, in a coxed four, with all members of the crew having rowed for at least a year. An experienced rower and qualified cox must occupy the stroke seat to provide instruction.

When stroke believes the trainee cox demonstrates basic competence and has steered upstream of the King George VI Bridge, they will discuss with one of the club President, Captain or Safety Officer and agree to the next step.

#### Probationary

The club encourages members willing to cox to rapidly progress their competence and confidence. New coxes, or those unfamiliar with the River Dee, will enter a probationary period.

During probation the crew must have an experienced rower and qualified cox in the stroke seat and at least 50% of bow and stroke side rowers must have more than six months rowing experience unless a launch is present.

Practical experience should be gained in a variety of daytime conditions and levels of tide; but cox and crew should be especially aware of the ability of the cox when assessing the weather and stream.

A decision on qualification will be based on the cox consistently demonstrating their ability to:



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- Put safety first - aware of the conditions of the day, the crew and other river users
- Make clear commands using standard terminology, on the water and onshore
- Position and turn the boat according to the rules of the river and steer a smooth course
- Competently steer through the bridges, at race pace, travelling upstream and downstream
- Competently leave and land at the steps and jetty.

The stroke should take the responsibility of providing regular feedback to the cox and to appraise one of the club President, Captain or Safety Officer of progress.

Based on the above ongoing discussion, two of the Officers will agree when the cox has qualified along with any conditions attached to the qualification. Their name will be added to the list of qualified day time coxes on the noticeboard.

### **Night Time**

Regular coxes will be encouraged to qualify for night time coxing. Having demonstrated their capability in daylight they will attend a Night Coxing / Steering Assessment and pass the test to the satisfaction of the instructor.

Coxes with limited experience may have conditions attached to their qualification, allowing them to cox boats with experienced crew members for example.

Only coxes and steerers approved by any two of the Captain, President and Safety Officer, may take boats out after dark.

A full list of ABC members authorised to cox and/or steer at night will be posted on the ABC notice board and updated regularly.



### QUALIFICATION OF LAUNCH DRIVERS

The launches are the property of The Committee of the Dee. The following Launch Drivers' Assessment Guide is provided by them and no Aberdeen Boat Club member is to use the launches unless qualified by The Committee of the Dee.

All potential drivers will be assessed on some or all of the following topics.

#### **Part 1 Prior to launching**

- Main parts of the launch
- Safety features of the boat
- Safety equipment associated with the launch
- Integrity of the launch

#### **Part 2 Launching**

- Removing the launch from the boathouse and launching correctly
- Correct starting procedure and simple fault diagnosis
- Correct stopping procedure
- Courteous behaviour towards other river users
- An ability to control and drive launch

#### **Part 3 Returning launch to boathouse**

- Disembarking from launch and placing on trailer
- Checking launch and engine for any signs of damage incurred during your outing



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### **RULES FOR LAUNCH DRIVERS**

The following rules govern the use of the launches of The Committee of the Dee.

- The launches may only be used by authorised drivers and for coaching/emergency use only
- All drivers/coaches must wear lifejackets
- All launch drivers/coaches must wear wellies while using launches
- No launch is allowed on the water after the hours of darkness (see definition of [Night Rowing](#)) unless in emergency
- No launch is allowed on the water one hour either side of low tide
- Great care must be taken while embarking/disembarking from the shore to ensure the launch does not ground on the river bottom
- The launches are to be left in a clean and serviceable condition
- Any damage sustained to the launch while it is in your control has to be reported to The Committee of the Dee



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### WATERBORNE DISEASES

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) are not aware of any waterborne diseases in the River Dee but rowers from Aberdeen Boat Club compete on many other stretches of water throughout the UK. Whilst the risks of contracting any disease are very small, the severity can be serious.

To help reduce the risk of contracting waterborne diseases, the following advice is given for all river users.

- Never drink water from a river or lake
- Only drink from your own water bottle
- Always shower after contact with the water
- Wash hands thoroughly and shower if necessary before eating or drinking
- Cover cuts and abrasions (including blisters) with waterproof dressings
- Wear suitable footwear when launching or retrieving a boat,
- Avoid immersion in, or contact with, water, particularly if there is an algal scum or bloom
- If contaminated water has been swallowed, consult a doctor
- Hose down all equipment after outings to remove any potential contamination.

Further information can be found in Section 5.3 of [Row Safe: a guide to good practice in rowing](#) written by British Rowing.



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### INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Please use this form, as completely as possible, to report any safety related incident, collision or capsized. The incident may have resulted in injury or damage, or just been a near miss or hazardous situation; the aim is to learn from all incidents and work at reducing the risk and severity of loss. Use additional forms if necessary. Please ensure that the form is sent to the Safety Officer.

#### Reporter

Name	
Contact number	
Contact email address	
Club	
Official capacity (if any) or role	

#### Time and Location of Incident

Date (dd/mm/yy)	
Time (24hr)	
Location	

#### Involved Parties

Cox, steerer or coach	Boat name	Boat type	Club or third party

**Description of Incident** – please be as detailed as possible: weather, stream and tide conditions, visibility, position on the river, communication, lights & whites, rowing pressure, avoiding actions; use a diagram if it helps.

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**Injuries** – please list any injuries sustained, by whom, who treated them and where.

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**Damage** – please list any damage to boats or property.

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Is any damage to boats recorded in the log?	
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**Additional comments** – please add any further comments or information you think could be useful e.g. witness addresses.

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**Suggestions for action** – please note any actions which you believe will help reduce the risk of a repeat of this incident.

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**Signature**

	Date:
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**Safety Officer follow up** – please note any actions taken as a result of this incident.

Action	Assigned to	Date completed