



BRITISH ROWING

# HRSA Monthly Report

November 2018

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TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

## Incident Reports

### A hidden danger revealed

*During a capsize of a girls J14 bow loaded 4x+, the cox's lifejacket straps became entangled with the metal bracket of the head rest and this prevented her from getting free from the boat. The coach jumped into the shallow water to rescue her*

*The club has removed all the headrests from its bow loaded 4+s and replaced them with foam pipe lagging as shown below.*



Before

After

These are two descriptions of the same incident

*The coach was driving the launch at full speed. Due to a lack of ballast in the front of the boat the raised bow obstructed his view. He was unable to see ahead and could not see the mast of the PLA launch. The PLA alerted him with a siren and brought his attention to his incorrect positioning, he then apologised. A meeting between the coach and safety officer discussed his personal awareness of his position on the river, attention to driving and other vessels over coaching, and the correct use of adequate ballast in the launch when going out alone.*

*This is taken from the PLA report. I noticed a coach Boat on a collision course with us. I was unable to alter my course any further to starboard due to now being abreast of a pier. The coach Boat was engaged in coaching an 8 that he was accompanying. The bow was above his sight line so even if he had of looked ahead he would have of probably only seen our mast. He was probably doing around 10 knots. It was late into the ebb tide, so he was on the wrong side of the river. He finally came over quickly when hearing our siren. **I spoke to the coach and stressed coaching does not take priority over looking ahead.** He took this on board and raised his hand in an apologetic manor.*

It is important to think about safety all the time, not just when on the water.

*I slipped on a wooden landing stage and landed awkwardly. I have fractured my fibula just above my right ankle. I will be of the water for 6-8 weeks and unable to drive or walk my dogs. I need to use crutches to travel to and from work in the City, this is challenging.*

A tragedy averted, just.

*The current took a beginner 4x- between two boats at the end of Dove Pier. The coach manoeuvred his launch to support the boat, and prevent it from capsizing, so that the crew could climb out onto one of the boats moored to the pier. They were assisted by the residents of the house boats. The RNLI was called and assisted with the recovery of the boat.*

*Anyone not aware of the hazards posed by Dove pier can find out more [here](#).*

Some collisions happen in other places, it is not just on the water.

*The Coach was cycling slowly along the towpath supervising two experienced scullers, one a few lengths in front of the other. When the coach turned to look at the rear sculler he collided with a post in the middle of the footpath and fell off his bike sustaining minor injury to his thigh. When he got home he noticed the bruising and swelling and used ice packs and anti-inflammatory to treat it.*

Coaches are responsible for their own safety too and should set a good example for their crews.

*A Coach observed (in a launch) returning from an outing. He did not have a lifejacket and the kill cord was not attached to his body. The coach was asked if he was aware of lack of lifejacket. He had forgotten. He was asked whether he was aware of the need for the kill cord to be attached to his body. He was but did not offer an explanation as to why it was not connected. The potential consequences of this at-risk behaviour were explained using the example of Michael Hill.*

Sometimes all the planning and training works perfectly

*A junior sculler capsized when returning to the landing stage. He tried to get back into the boat but could not, so he climbed on top of the capsized boat and started to paddle it back to the landing stage. Another junior sculler used a throw line to help pull him in. The both acted in the way they had been trained.*

## Backstays

There was some discussion at a recent Regional Council AGM about the need to fit backstays on the riggers, on each side of the boat, nearest to the bow. These are intended to protect rowers in the event of a head on collision. This was explained in detail in last month's report.

It is worth remembering that the recommendation on backstays is not new it was published in 2013 (see <https://www.britishrowing.org/2013/06/a-safety-update-for-rowers-and-coaches/> ).

## Work with the CPGA

An Incident Report was forwarded to the CPGA Rowing Safety Advisor. This report contained little information but it appears that the incident involved someone's foot being injured by a gig trailer. If so, this is the second gig trailer incident in recent months and a Safety Alert may be written.

## Head on collisions

There have recently been many collisions where boats travelling in opposite directions have clashed. Some of these have, as expected, resulted in painful bruising. Incident reports show a worrying trend of lack of care and attention.

Various factors have been cited as explanations for these incidents, these include: -

- Poor navigation lights on other boats (see below)
- The position of the sun in the sky (see below)
- The collision happened suddenly (or the collision was unexpected as nobody was looking)
- It was dark (see below)
- The other boat was in the cox's "blind spot" (see below)
- The river was busy (so take extra care)
- The collision happened in the middle of the river (what were you doing rowing there?)

These incidents could have been avoided if crews had: -

- Kept an adequate lookout
- Looked ahead frequently
- Travelled at a speed such that they could stop in the distance that they could see to be clear
- Practised Emergency stops
- (in dusk or darkness) Ensured that their lights are adequate and working correctly
- Worn sunglasses if expecting to be rowing towards the sun when it is low in the sky
- Worn hi-vis clothing (or white in darkness) above the waist, particularly in the bow.

It is important that crews learn to manage the conditions rather than blame them.

We should be trying harder to avoid personal injuries and damage like this.

Section 5.1 of RowSafe says: -"Coxes and steers (including scullers) are expected to:

- Keep a good lookout at all times when afloat. Coxes who cannot see directly ahead should enlist the help of members of their crew."

**If whoever is responsible for steering does not know what is directly ahead then the boat should stop.**



## RowSafe 2019

The 2019 edition of RowSafe should be issued next April. The following topics have been identified as potential updates: -

- Remove the picture of a 2x without backstays on bow's riggers
- Specifying the buoyancy requirements for lifejackets used in Ocean Rowing
- Add something on competence to compete safely at a regatta
- Add something on releasing a prosthesis from a stretcher (or from the athlete).
- Add something on boat launching plans for events to reduce prolonged exposure to heat and cold
- The need to explain that CRSAs are not responsible for Rowing Safety but are expected to give advice.
- Add a section on Coxing to Chapter 5 – Competence
- Add something about coxes in bow loaders not getting their lifejacket straps caught (see above)
- Add something about coxless rowing and sculling in the dark.

Please let me know ( [safety@britishrowing.org](mailto:safety@britishrowing.org) ) if you have any comments on any of these or if you would like to make any further suggestions

## Drone Guidance

The following new additions have been made to the Drone guidance (thanks Rachel) based on changes to the legal requirements. The key items are: -

- It is now legislation that no small unmanned aircraft (regardless of weight) can fly higher than 400 feet, i.e. 120 metres
- There are now flight restrictions around protected aerodromes – “no small unmanned aircraft can fly closer than 1 km to the boundary of a protected aerodrome without first checking you have permission to do so”. Definitions have been included in the document

The updated Drone Guidance can be found at [https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Drone-Guidelines\\_as-of\\_16.10.17.pdf](https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Drone-Guidelines_as-of_16.10.17.pdf)

## Throwlines

The British Standards Institution has constituted a panel to develop a new British Standard. The first meeting of the panel will be on 17<sup>th</sup> January and I have been authorised to represent British Rowing.

## Support for Calcutta Rowing Club

Training was provided on 22<sup>nd</sup> November to about 50 members of the Calcutta RC and the nearby Lake RC on Safety and Coaching. Most of the people present were Junior rowers but there was also a strong contingent of coaches. All reported that they could understand English.

Both Clubs row on the Rabindra Sarovar Lake in Kolkata; this is about 900 meters long; the width varies from about 200 metres to 500 metres and there are two small islands in the lake. The club encourages young people from all backgrounds to learn to row and practice rowing. Outings start 6 am and can continue till 9:00 am. There are more outings in the evenings and at weekends.

The safety training consisted of a review of the UK incident analysis and the extent to which that matches rowers' experience in Kolkata (it does) followed by videos showing: -

- The consequences of not looking ahead
- The consequences of a sculling gate not being correctly fastened
- How to check a boat prior to launch
- An introduction to the key steps in the capsize and recovery process
- Straddle and Paddle and
- Buddy Rescue

The need to adhere to the circulation plan was also emphasised by reference to a photograph of the club's circulation plan. There is one fixed to one of the boathouse doors.

The coaching training included: -

- The importance of beginner rowers adopting the correct technique
- The importance of every rower knowing what the technique is
- The Rower Development Guide
- Warm up, cool down and stretching

The presentation was well received, and the feedback was generous.

## Coaching Safe Behaviour

Over 90% of reported serious incidents, those not including Simple Capsizes, are caused by at-risk behaviour, these incidents could have been avoided if people behaved safely. Earlier this year the National Rowing Safety Committee requested that a paper stressing the need for coaches to coach safe behaviour by rowers be included in the training material for Level 2 Coaching Courses.

Andrea has prepared a draft and this is included with this report. If you have any comments or suggestions on this advice, please email [safety@britishrowing.org](mailto:safety@britishrowing.org).

## Work with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)

There have been several meetings with staff of the MCA in relation to the new Intended Pleasure Vessel (IPV) Code and the recommendations made to the MCA and British Rowing in the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) report on an Ocean Rowing fatality.

A joint statement on the Ocean Rowing recommendations was produced and has been provided to the MAIB, in the form of a letter from the MCA. This covers the actions that have been completed and explains why it is not reasonable to expect further action (the statement can be found a separate file accompanying this report). It is hoped that the MAIB will accept that the actions are complete to the extent possible.

Part 2 of the new Intended Pleasure Vessel Code is a simplification of the requirements for boats that support races at sea. In general, there are no legal requirements for Pleasure Vessels other than complying with the COLREGs

The term "at sea" means pretty well what it says. There is a long and detailed definition of UK Categorised Waters in [Merchant Shipping Notice \(MSN\) 1837](#) and at sea effectively means to seaward of all of these categorised waters. For example, the Category D limit of the river Thames is defined as "in winter within a line from Colne Point to Whitstable and in summer within a line from Clacton Pier to Reculvers"; "at sea" means beyond these lines.

This new code does not impact on the use of a "Pleasure Vessel". This is a vessel that, at the time, is being "used only for the sport or pleasure of the owner or the immediate family or friends of the owner". (In our world, the owner could be a person or a club.) The same boat could be a Pleasure Vessel at one point in time and not at another time (when it could become an Intended Pleasure Vessel). It all depends on how it is being used.

The code may apply if you borrow a boat. It may be a "Pleasure Vessel" when the owner is using it but may cease to be a Pleasure Vessel when someone else is using it. It depends whether, at the time it is being used, it is used only for the sport or pleasure of the owner.

The code applies to those vessels that are not "coded" for commercial use and that are not being used as pleasure vessels at the time.

There is a detailed explanation, provided by the MCA, in Appendix I.

When reading these notes please bear in mind that compliance with the code is relatively simple. All that is required is an assessment of the vessel and its equipment against a clearly defined specification and the completion of a declaration (filling in a form). The declaration should be kept but there is no general requirement to submit it to anyone unless specifically requested to do so.

Some of this may help us to the extent that the definition of Pleasure Vessel, in Maritime Law, is not influenced by any payment to the person using the vessel. In other words, having a paid coach driving the vessel does not mean that the vessel is no longer a Pleasure Vessel.

## Weil's Disease

It is understood that a canoeist has recently contracted Weill's disease. A Safety Alert has been issued that largely reproduces the medical advice on the British Rowing website. A copy is included with this report.

## First Aid qualifications for Health Professionals and others

Q. What is the BR criteria for a first aider? Some of our members are GPs and nurses and other NHS staff, others are public sector workers and teachers who learn CPR but not first aid.

We have a paramedic who has trained first aiders in the past and still could now but couldn't issue certificates.

A British Rowing does not specify requirements for the qualifications of First Aiders. It would be difficult to do so as the requirements would vary with the level of risk at different clubs.

The most important issue is that people rendering aid should be competent. Health care professionals (doctors, nurses, paramedics, etc.) are responsible people who are perfectly capable of assessing their own capabilities and assessing their own training needs. Quite simply, if a medical professional tells you that they are competent to render first aid then believe them.

This was discussed with the Honorary Medical Advisor who explained the requirements of the various medical professional bodies and the need for health professionals to declare the areas of competence and not operate outside those areas. Dr Zideman also expressed his view that: -

*"In relation to courses; my own viewpoint is that I would only accept a certified course for healthcare professional qualifications, unless he was undertaking a refresher course and was willing to issue a letter (certificate) stating who had been trained, in what and when (with an end date). For lay persons, it depends on what role they are undertaking. If they are designated First Aiders (e.g.: for a club) then they must have undergone a validated first aid training certificate (as recommended by HSE) and renew it at regular intervals. If they are performing a supplementary first aid role, a local course would probably be sufficient but again there should be a 'certification' letter to cover any legal aspects."*

Just as a matter of interest, some people think that they may be exposing themselves to a civil law liability by helping someone in need. They are not providing they act responsibly. This is addressed in the [Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Act 2015](#), which is consistent with the Common Law of England.



## Night Rowing

Q Will I be able to 'decorate' my boat in Christmas lights so long as they are a different colour from the regulation lights which will also be on a boat and not flashing where they shouldn't be?

The location would be on the Thames between Chiswick and Putney (or shorter distances if it is deemed safer!)

A As far as I can tell, the more lights you have then the more conspicuous you will be, and this will tend to make the outing safer. Please try to prevent bright lights from shining in the crew's faces as it is important to maintain their night vision. Navigation lights generally point away from the crew.

## Coaching Ratios

Q. Does British Rowing offer any guidance with regards to coaching ratios on the water? (The question came from a University sports administrator)

A We do not make recommendations on coaching ratios as it would be virtually impossible to do so.

The extent of coaching needed depends on many things. From a safety point of view, it depends on the hazards that the crew is exposed to, in the specific conditions at the time, and the ability of the crew to cope with those hazards. In other words, it depends on the specific risk assessment for the outing.

The same logic applies to coaching. Some crews need the constant assistance of a coach, some need less help, and some need no help at all. As a rule, beginner crews tend to need more help and more expert crews tend to need less help. People who row for fun, rather than in preparation for races, also tend to need less help.

If you have any doubt, then please ask the coaches involved as they are more aware than I can be of the specific issues at your venue and the needs of their rowers. They are trained to make these judgements.

## Appendix I – MCA Statement on the Intended Pleasure Vessel Code

“If you run a rowing race at sea and use someone’s powerboat or sailing yacht as a safety boat, committee boat, or marshalling boat to support the race then you need to know about the regulations that may apply to that boat. If the support boat for your race is a Kayak, Canoe, Jet-ski, or Surf-ski then the regulations do not apply. If the support boat is a powerboat or sailing yacht of any size and the race is at sea, then the regulations may apply but there are some checks you need to make.

The regulations, which have been in place since 1998, require that if the powerboat or sailing yacht that you use is in use outside the Pleasure Vessel definition then it officially becomes a “commercial” use and the powerboat or sailing yacht needs to comply with commercial Codes of Practice.

The Pleasure Vessel definition doesn’t rely only on money changing hands so anyone using a powerboat or sailing yacht needs to check the definition and whether it applies to them.

The regulations do not stop an individual boat owner using their own powerboat or sailing yacht to support a race at sea if at the time it is used only for their sport or pleasure, or the sport or pleasure of their immediate family or friends, as long as it is on a free voyage or excursion.

For powerboats and sailing yachts which are used outside of the Pleasure Vessel definition (for example, if the boat’s owner loans it to the race organisers and then has no association with its use) then the MCA has created a very simple Code of Practice called the Intended Pleasure Vessel (IPV) Code to allow people to easily comply with the regulations. The IPV Code can only be used if the boat is not already commercially certificated because it applies to boats which would normally be a Pleasure Vessel but go to sea to support a race for no more than 10 race events per year.

To comply with the Code all use of the race support boat must be within 3nm of a safe haven and within UK territorial waters. Any use outside of the scope of the Code and outside of the Pleasure Vessel definition must be fully coded to either the [Blue](#), [Yellow](#), [Red](#) Code or [Marine Guidance Note \(MGN\) 280](#) which are the MCA’s commercial standards.

The simple approach applied by the IPV Code is that a small amount of equipment is carried, the owner and the operator agree to its use under the Code and then sign a self-declaration certificate. No survey is required. The full description of what is to be carried and checked is listed and described in Section 6 of Part 2 to the IPV Code.

The regulations (and the Code) apply to powerboats and sailing yachts supporting any racing activity at sea if it’s outside of the Pleasure Vessel definition and for no more than 10 events per year so it’s not just applicable to rowing races. The idea is that the IPV Code facilitates use of powerboats and sailing yachts inside the existing regulatory framework. It’s not an attempt to create new regulations and it’s not a reaction to a safety concern.

The IPV Code can be used from January 2019 and will help rowing race organisers make sure that the support boats used comply with the existing regulations. The support boat Operator is required by the Code to have a safety management system in place but this is only a simple document to highlight how the Code is met and how the support boat will be used safely.

Any questions on the IPV Code or the regulations mentioned in this notice can be directed to [pleasurevessels@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:pleasurevessels@mcga.gov.uk) or Tel: 02038172465.”