



HRSA Monthly Report

February 2019

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TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

Serious Incident in Limerick

There was an incident in Limerick, in the Republic of Ireland, which resulted in the capsizing of a junior 4x+ containing four girls and one boy.

It was reported in newspaper articles that a 12 year old girl, with very long hair, was trapped in the capsized boat because her hair had become entangled in a rigger.

She was rescued by the crew of a launch from a Limerick Fire and Rescue Service that was patrolling in the area. The crew had to cut her hair in order to free her from the boat.

First aid was provided by the crew including the provision of CPR in the Rescue Boat. The remainder of the rowing crew was rescued by another boat.

She was taken to hospital and treated in Intensive Care. It is understood that she is showing some response to her favourite music. The latest news (as of 28/2/2019) is that she remains in a “very serious condition” in hospital and her family is maintaining a bedside vigil.

It is understood that the Irish Police and the Irish Marine Casualty Investigation Board are investigating this incident.

It is not prudent to provide safety advice until the results of these investigations are known. However, any rower with long hair may find it helpful to wear their hair in a “bun” or “top knot” as shown in the photo opposite. This style has the additional advantage of keeping the hair under control and out of the way so that it does not obstruct the rower’s vision.



Is it safe or fair to run an event

There was some concern that adverse weather at the beginning of the month would expose participants to excessive risk so the following guidance was issued very rapidly by e-mail. This guidance can be found in Appendix I and has been incorporated into the 2019 update to RowSafe.

Incident Reports in February

There are still too many collisions due to crews rowing on the wrong side, or in the middle, of a river and not keeping an adequate lookout. In one, a 2- was rowing in the middle or on the wrong side of the river and collided with an 8+ on a corner. The collision caused a rower in the 2- to suffer facial injuries. He went to A&E where a fractured jaw and muscle damage was suspected.

A rower on the tow path near a club was struck by a passing cyclist, the fall caused a broken wrist and the rower is expected to be in plaster for six weeks.

It should be remembered that some collisions cause significant injuries.

In one incident there was a head on collision between a 2- and a 4x, blades were broken and the 2- capsized. One of the rowers in the 2- pulled her shoe off the footplate and needed to be helped to remove her foot from the shoe. The shoe was still connected to the boat by the heel restraint.

Rowers are advised to check that their shoes are correctly fitted in the boat.

In two separate incidents caused by cold weather, a cox was shivering and felt faint when getting out of a boat and a launch driver became unsteady and fell when getting out of a launch. People who are not exercising should be encouraged to wear appropriate clothing and coaches should ensure that outings are not protracted in cold and adverse weather.

A boat was damaged when being towed on a trailer through a congested and crowded area at an event. Event organisers are advised to ensure that there is adequate space to manoeuvre trailers.

Approaching another event, a vehicle towing a boat trailer missed the entrance so did a 180 degree turn at the next roundabout. Three boats were damaged when they hit a lamppost.

A 4x capsized when the crew were at front stops. It is clear from reviewing Incident Reports that being stationary at front stops, especially if blades are square, is a common cause of capsizing in 4s and 4xs. It is best to avoid holding crews in this position.

A coach, from another club, rescued an inexperienced yet unaccompanied 2x and its crew that had been swept into Dove Pier and capsized.

RowSafe 2019 updates

The 2019 updates have been defined, documented and provided to the Head of Communications in good time for RowSafe to be updated and the updated version to be published in April.

Many of the updates are relatively simple and have resulted from:-

- The addition of references to Safety Alerts issued in the past year
- The correction of non-functioning hyperlinks
- The addition of more hyperlinks
- The inclusion of medical advice issued in the last year
- Lessons learned from incidents reported in the last year and
- Suggestions received

It is planned to produce a summary of these updates for publication in due course.

The text of the summary of RowSafe for the 2019 Almanack has been approved. This is based on the 2018 version of RowSafe.

Member of the public rescued by rowers

A member of the public had been drinking and was in the water when an eight arrived. She appeared to be trying to commit suicide. She was assisted to the bank by the crew and given a jacket. A coach called the emergency services who were on the scene within 5 minutes. The woman was taken away.

The woman was assisted by rowers from Hatfield College BC and St Cuthbert's Society BC (Durham). It is understood that the Chairman has written to the clubs to thank them for their efforts.

Incident in Aberdeen

There was an incident in which a J14 4x capsized, it is understood that this was widely publicised in newspapers in Scotland. The crew acted in an exemplary manner. They climbed onto the hull of their boat and were rescued by the harbour pilot. The RNLI and HMCG aided in their rescue and a doctor was lowered from a helicopter.

This incident is the subject of further investigation.

Safety Alert - What to do if a rower collapses in a boat

A Safety Alert has been prepared, in collaboration with the Honorary Medical Adviser, and is included with this report. This was written to document and share the lessons learned in the incident at Henley that was described in last month's report.

A copy of this Safety Alert is included with this report and can be found at <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Safety-Alert-What-to-do-if-a-rower-collapses-in-a-boat.pdf>.

Rowers need to eat

It was reported that a junior rower felt unwell following indoor rowing (felt light headed, possibly going to faint) - he was laid on the floor, with his legs elevated and, after about half an hour he felt a little better. His father took him home.

He had not had any breakfast before he came training and also a family member was ill with a stomach upset.

Rowers are advised to ensure that they have taken adequate nourishment before rowing or training. If feeling unwell do not row or train (see [RowSafe](#) section 8.6).

RYA SafeTrx

The Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) have recently joined forces to reveal RYA SafeTrx as HM Coastguard's new official voluntary safety identification scheme.

The SafeTrx app is designed to improve safety at sea and potentially cut vital minutes off the time taken to pinpoint a casualty's location. It monitors your boat journeys and alerts designated emergency contacts should you fail to arrive on time. There is more information at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hm-coastguard-adopts-rya-safetrx-as-new-safety-id-scheme>.

Is a buoyancy aid needed by someone wearing a Floatation Suit?

It is not possible to give a definitive answer in all circumstances; it depends on the make and type of floatation suit used. The buoyancy provided by my floatation suit (jacket and trousers = 83 N; jacket alone = 62 N) was compared with that of a typical buoyancy aid (50 N).

Providing the belt on the jacket is fastened and the water surface is relatively flat (like a river rather than the sea) then there is no need to wear a buoyancy aid in addition to the floatation suit. There is more detail in Appendix 2.

Safety Pins in First Aid kits

The Honorary Medical Adviser, Dr David Zideman, has written to explain the new British Standard for the composition of workplace First Aid kits. He explained that:-

- Safety pins are no longer included with the kits, to reduce the risk of needle stick injuries, while the number of tape rolls has been increased in the medium and large kits.
- The number of medium dressings has been reduced while the number of large dressings has been increased.

The advice on safety pins has been incorporated into the update to RowSafe by editing the diagram.

Online Safety and Risk Assessment Training Modules

Club and Event Rowing Safety Advisers are expected to have completed the Advanced Risk Assessment module (see RowSafe 3.4 and 4.4). There has been some difficulty in accessing the Safety Training Modules. The following guidance has been provided:-

Click on the link on the website. If the module loads but is blank then :

- *click on the symbol just to the left of the address, this may be an "i" or a padlock*
- *in the dropdown list, you should find Flash, click on the dropdown list and select "Allow"*
- *if you then refresh the screen you will probably find that it is still does not work*
- *go back to the original link, click it again, hopefully it will now work*

There may be some work undertaken soon to update the modules so that they will run under new software. The content of the first module, renamed “Safety Basics – Understanding Risk” has been reviewed and opportunities for simplification and improvement have been identified and documented. The content of the Intermediate and Advanced modules is considered to be appropriate.

Drone Guidance

The legal requirements covering the flying of unmanned aircraft (including Drones) have changed and the British Rowing guidance will be updated and reissued soon, and included with the next monthly report.

The key immediate changes are that:-

- It is now illegal to fly a small unmanned aircraft (regardless of weight) higher than 400 feet (120m)
- There are now flight restrictions around protected aerodromes - "no small unmanned aircraft can fly closer than 1km to the boundary of a protected aerodrome without first checking you have permission to do so".

It is also very difficult to interpret the wordy descriptions of Flight Restriction Zones (FRZs) for different types of airdromes. However there are very useful maps at <https://dronesafe.uk/restrictions/> . This shows a map of the UK that outlines the Flight Restriction Zones around each "protected airdrome". It is easy to zoom in and produce local maps.

Eastern Region Sharing Good Practice day

The Eastern Region is planning to host a Sharing Good Practice day for fixed seat coaches and rowers near Steeple on the Dengie peninsula in Essex on Saturday 27th April. This will include both coaching afloat and discussions on land. For further information please contact Jacqueline Barnard (jac.barnard@btinternet.com).

We have offered to lead discussions on any (but not all) of the following:-

- what happens to a fixed seat boat if it is swamped and man overboard recovery
- calling for help, how to use a radio (with practical) and including distress working
- the importance of behaviour in relation to safety
- Risk Management and the fixed seat version of the card game
- lifejackets, and the importance of correct fitting and checking condition
- Safety Leadership and Leadership skills
- seamanship, COLREGs, buoys, waves, tides, weather, etc.
- cold water immersion and hypothermia
- knot tying

Appendix 1 - Is it safe or fair to run an event

In the week before your event please consider whether it would be safe or fair to run it. Please consider the weather forecast and its implications on:-

- travel to the event
- trailer towing
- parking of cars, towing vehicles and trailers
- unloading trailers at the event
- moving people and boats on land at the event
- walking in the launch area
- launching
- rowing to the start
- waiting on the water
- racing
- recovery of boats and people onto the land
- loading of boats onto trailers
- travel home

Please remember that it is dangerous to tow trailers in icy or very windy conditions. The risks during transit to and from an event are more serious than those at the event. Please do not ask people to put themselves at risk.

The presence of ice on the water, or in the launch or recovery areas, and the presence of slippery conditions on land should also be taken into account. Do not expose people to these risks. Please also consider the strength of the stream and the water conditions generally.

It is neither fair or safe to expect people, especially juniors, to wait on the water for extended periods. If it is too cold for people to be waiting on the water then consider whether the event should take place. Sometimes waiting on the water can be the result of an unplanned incident, please take this into account too.

Please also consider the welfare of officials, coaches, spectators, etc. You have a duty to care for them too.

Do not leave it too late. An early decision to postpone or cancel will be much appreciated. It means that clubs will not need to load their trailers and gives people time to find something else that they can usefully do on the day of the event.

Whilst the financial implications of cancelling an event can be significant it is also worth taking into account the goodwill that an early decision will deliver. Also, people will remember the negative experiences they have had travelling to events that were cancelled late and be less keen to travel there again. The same applies to events that were not cancelled but should have been.

Appendix 2 - The buoyancy provided by Floatation suits

It is assumed that he is wearing a FLADEN flotation suit, like mine. The buoyancy that mine provides, and similar ones in other sizes, is recorded on a label inside the jacket. This is probably typical or a bit better than most. If it is yellow and blue then it is probably FLADEN, these are very good, not excessively expensive and readily available.

I have separate jacket and chest high trousers (salopettes), the alternative style is a combination (like a bulky boiler suit). Mine is extra-large (XL) and the buoyancy provided by the jacket alone is 62 Newtons and that of the jacket and trousers together is 83 Newtons. The standard buoyancy of a buoyancy aid is 50 Newtons. Most lifejackets provide 150 Newtons of buoyancy

There are a couple of problems. If the jacket was not fastened, or at least if the belt was not fastened correctly, then it would not work well as a buoyancy aid. In the water it would just flap around and get in the way. If he was wearing trousers and an unfastened jacket then there is a danger that his legs would be held on the surface and that his head would not.

Flotation suits are incredibly warm and if the weather is mild then it would be tempting not to fasten the jacket fully. If the belt was fastened then that would be probably be sufficient.

If he was wearing trousers and a correctly fitted jacket then he would float horizontally on the surface of the water, a bit like lying on a lilo. Being horizontal on the water is a problem at sea as waves would wash over the victim's head and he would eventually drown. It should not be a problem at on an inland river.

We did a test in a pool. In this case the test subject was wearing my flotation suit and an automatic lifejacket. He jumped into the pool and the lifejacket inflated. Very soon he was lying on the water surface and floating so high that the lifejacket was out of the water and not contributing to his buoyancy. In this scenario the lifejacket was useless. Please see the photo opposite taken from a video of the test.

