



BRITISHROWING

HRSA Monthly Report

October 2021

Stephen Worley

TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

The Incident in Ireland

In February 2019, a 4x+ capsized and was held against a bridge like structure, in Limerick, Ireland. A 12 year old girl rower was held underwater for some minutes as her long hair was entangled in a rigger. She was subsequently rescued and taken to hospital.

It is understood that she was not expected to survive. She did survive and is still recovering. She is now able to walk and talk, and is going to school.

The Irish Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB) has recently issued its report. This can be downloaded [here](#). The report is long (144 pages) and is difficult to read. An anonymous and very abbreviated summary is provided in Appendices to this report, as follows:-

Appendix 1 – The sequence of events during the Incident.

Appendix 2 - Recommendations for Rowing Ireland and Current Practices of British Rowing

Appendix 3 - Recommendations for the Rowing Club in Ireland and the corresponding references in RowSafe

Appendix 4 - Information previously shared in Monthly Reports

The “Weir”

The term “Weir” is repeatedly used in the report; it is better to think of this as a bridge. It was used between 1940 and 1978 to monitor the number of salmon passing upstream, and to catch some for commercial purposes. It has been disused for almost four decades."

There are photos on the internet of a broken boat alongside the weir. The Coach reported that the boat remained intact during the incident but was damaged later in an attempt to lift the swamped boat from the water using ropes.



Thomond Weir - Downstream View (south side).

Use of Personal Floatation Devices

There is a legal requirement in Ireland for people afloat to wear Personal Floatation Devices. However, there is an exemption for people in “Olympic Style Rowing Boats”.

The availability of a knife

The Coach was not carrying a knife and one was not included in his safety kit. This kit was limited to an engine kill cord, one lifebuoy attached by a 3 m rope to the boat, two paddles and the PFD worn by the Coach.

At the time of the incident the Rowing Ireland Safety Manual did not include a knife or equivalent in its list of equipment. The Coach is a former member of the Irish Naval Reserve for five to six years and had completed their Gemini (Inflatable Boat) Coxswain Course. It is standard practice for safety knives to be carried in safety boats. This is included, for example, in RYA Powerboat training.

The Irish Government Code of Practice, however, specifies a list of the equipment that should be carried in safety boats supporting Olympic style rowing boats. This list includes a knife.

Issues to be considered

The first question to be considered is with all our Rowing Safety training, guidance and advice could this happen here? In my view it could.

Was it “reasonably foreseeable” that a rower would be trapped underwater by the entanglement of her hair in a rigger? In my view it was not before this incident but it is now.

Actions here since the Incident

Support has been, and continues to be, provided to Rowing Ireland.

Legal liability of coaches

It is understood that at least two of the rowers involved in this incident, or their representatives, will initiate legal action to secure compensation. If successful, the cost of meeting these claims could be very significant.

Anyone who coaches here should be aware that Coach Membership of British Rowing includes the benefit of professional indemnity insurance to a limit of £10,000,000.

Coach Membership is available to anyone with a British Rowing coaching qualification. Clubs can also endorse any of their unpaid coaches so that they will be eligible for Coach Membership of British Rowing. The application should be by a member of the club Committee and made by completing the form [here](#).

Incident Reports in October

Navigating the gap between an obstruction and a mooring

A junior 4x attempted to navigate the gap between a mooring buoy and a pier in a strong tide. There was a large boat moored to the Pier.



The crew started the turn a little early, and the unexpectedly strong stream pushed them towards the yellow buoy, the rowers then panicked and stopped rowing, so they drifted faster onto the buoy.

The 4x hit the buoy and the crew was told to remain calm and keep hold of their oars. The coach tried to use her launch to push the boat off the buoy. The boat then started capsizing. Three members of the crew jumped into the water and held on to the boat from the upstream side.

The coach radioed for help from other coaches and someone phoned for the RNLI. The crew was recovered into various coaching launches. The lifeboat provided assistance to land the crew and returned to recover the boat and oars

It helps if the crew try to keep to the upstream side of gaps like these and have the confidence to move quickly through the gap.

There are several similarities between this incident and the one in Ireland described above. Fortunately the differences resulted in the consequences being much less serious, the main differences were:-

- None of the crews' hair was entangled in the riggers
- There were other coaching launches in the vicinity and RNLI support nearby
- The members of the crew were a few years older and
- It happened in October when the water is warm and not in February when it is cold

Stay away from weirs

- A Junior 4x+ was dragged into the bank just above a weir. The outing occurred under red / yellow board conditions following a risk assessment and an adjustment of the outing plan to reflect the risk assessment. Each boat was accompanied by an experienced coach and there was an adult support person positioned at the weir.
- Two of the 4x+s passed close to weir. The upstream crew was pushed towards the bank by the stream. The coach pushed the boat out by pushing on a scull and the support person at the weir used a boat hook to keep the boat away from the weir.
- There were no consequences but the potential seriousness of the incident will cause the club to review its red / yellow board procedures in fast flow conditions.
- Please take care to stay away from the upstream (and the downstream) side of weirs. There is a Safety Alert – Keep clear of weirs [here](#).

There were several **interactions with motor boats**. For example:-

- two narrow boats were both on the wrong side of the river, the nearest one has just rounded a bend at some speed, and the rowing boat had just avoided colliding with it
- a small motorboat went past us and accelerated creating large wash, we took on water and were unable to continue
- a narrowboat took a straight line course, around a blind bend and was on the wrong side of the river, the person steering could not see the 2x until they shouted



- double moored boats caused an obstruction leading to a collision
- a barge navigating in the centre of the waterway caused boats to take evasive action
- collision with a canal boat on the wrong side of the river
- a narrowboat drove through a division of a head race
- a rental cruiser, that appeared to have no one at the helm, rounded a corner on the wrong side and collided with a 2-. Stroke leapt overboard and bow was thrown over by the impact. It is remarkable that both rowers survived with only cuts and bruises.

Please take great care in around motor boats; do not assume that you have been seen.

Be careful where you put your feet

A novice rower stepped into the bottom of the boat, causing a rupture in the hull beside the spine, about 15cm long. This began immediately to flood the boat. Please do not assume that new rowers know what you know. Help them.

Do not swim with the boat

There were several capsizes where crews swam the boat to the bank. Please only do this if the boat is close to the bank and it is safe to do so. It is better to climb on top of the inverted boat and use your hands to paddle to the shore.

Check your lights

There was a collision as a result of the lights on an 8+ failing. Please check your lights before each outing as you check your boat and check them from time to time when rowing.

The concept of fault and blame

In reports on two separate incidents, crews were accused of being at fault for an incident and damage to people and equipment. They were said to be in the wrong place on the river. The concept of "fault" and "blame" is not helpful. Everyone involved should consider what they could have done to prevent the incident from happening or reduce the severity of its consequences and what will they do in future. Just because a boat is in the correct place on the river, particularly if the river at that point is narrow, does not absolve anyone of the duty to keep a good look out.

Check your outboard

A coach restarted a launch engine in gear causing the launch to ride up on the front stay of the quad and across two blades. Stroke realised what was about to happen and jumped out. He was picked up by another launch within 30 seconds. The Coach involved has stopped coaching as his confidence has been lost.

Pay attention

An 8+ was rowing at high-speed on the wrong side of the river with no lookout or bank party. Another 8+ eased well upstream of them and tucked into the bank to let them pass. The cox was not paying attention, did not see the stationary crew, and collided head-on at full speed with it. Several rowers were hit by blades, including one with extensive injuries to her arm who will be unable to row for an at least three weeks due to extensive soft tissue damage. Other rowers were hit but suffered only minor injuries.

Please keep the boathouse tidy

A rower slipped on blades that had been left on the floor under the racks when racking a boat. This resulted in £550 worth of damage to the boat.

Death of a rower with epilepsy

Leo Lehner, aged 15, drowned on Monday 11 October after apparently suffering a seizure and falling over the side of a boat while rowing with his high school team in Dayton, Ohio. Leo's father told police that Leo "had a long history of epilepsy and had seizures 'during his most calm moments.'" He reportedly was not wearing a PFD.

British Rowing has very clear guidance on rowers with epilepsy, this can be found in section 8.6.2 of [RowSafe](#) and on the website [here](#). We take great care to provide clear guidance so that clubs and rowers can assess and manage the risks and keep people with epilepsy safe.

Land Training

There was a request for advice on solo land training because section 11.1 of [RowSafe](#) on Indoor Rowing does not specify that rowers should never train alone whereas section 11.2 on Gym Training does.

The response was that it is just about impossible to cover everything in RowSafe. This is really a matter for your risk assessment.

Indoor rowing and land training are different. Land training often involves the use of weights, there may be hazards associated with land training that are not present when indoor rowing.

People often exercise alone at home on rowing machines.

Think what would happen if someone at the club did collapse and there was nobody there to help them or even to call for help. Think about the welfare of the rowers and the harm to the reputation of the club. Please do not rely on what is, or is not, in RowSafe, we are just trying to provide appropriate advice and guidance.

Safety Alert - Stay with the boat

A Safety Alert has been prepared, issued, and is included with this report. This emphasises the need for rowers to stay with the boat if they find themselves in the water or swamped. It follows from the double fatality in March at Iowa State University when a 4+ capsized or was swamped and the crew decided to swim to the bank. Some people are confident swimmers but please remember that the ability to swim in a nice warm pool is not a good indication of the ability to swim in the cold deep water of a river or lake.

Please understand that the Capsize drill still contains a reference to the "Swim Test". It is good if rowers can swim but we do not ever want them to have to swim. We need to keep the swim test in context. The following appears in the online capsize drill training:-

"Ideally, everyone taking part in rowing should be able to:

- *Swim at least 50 metres in light clothing (rowing kit).*
- *Tread water for at least two minutes.*
- *Swim under water for at least five metres.*

The purpose of the swim test

The Purpose of the swim test is to ensure that rowers feel confident in the water.

We want them to be able to swim but we do not want them to have to swim.

It should be recognised that the ability to swim in a pool does not guarantee the ability to swim in cold, exposed waters."

Please note the use of the word "**Ideally**".

If people cannot swim then that does not mean that they cannot row but, if they are not confident in the water, unaided, and they cannot float then they may have to wear a buoyancy aid afloat until they can. The RNLI [Respect the Water](#) campaign makes it clear that people who fall into deep water are advised to float rather than swim.

It is still my view that it is not essential for people to be able to swim in order for them to be able to row safely. I do not want to have to tell anyone that "if you cannot swim then you cannot row".

Yes you can - how can we help?

Last month, I described the situation at a club that had some issues when two teenagers who have food allergies wanted to join the club and row. Each of the juniors carries an EpiPen so that, in the highly unlikely event they should need it, they can administer it themselves. The report containing this information was sent to the club. The governance team has also provided support.

The club has reassessed the risk and decided that, with some extra provisions, the boys can row, starting after half term.

Capsize Drill

There was a question relating to the boat type used for capsize drills. A coach asked if there is any regulation about capsize drill in relation to fine boats. *Our L2R takes place in stable boats. Progression groups would expect to move into fine boats. The club runs a capsize drill roughly every six months. Can I progress novice rowers into fine boats if they haven't completed a capsize drill?*

We have guidance but not much regulation on safety. It is up to each club, based on its risk assessment, to decide what is appropriate to each member. There is no distinction between adults and children in this respect. I would suggest that rowers wear buoyancy aids until they have learned what to do if they capsize. There is information for coaches and rowers (separately) on the Capsize Drill in RowHow [here](#).

There was another request for help for new rowers who are not yet members and do not have access to the capsize training in RowHow although they do have access to the Capsize and Recovery video [here](#) on YouTube. It was explained that online safety training is available to non-members. The links on the website no longer work. To access the training, your members will need to create a profile, this is free. You can find instructions to do this in the HRSA Monthly Report for April in Appendix I [here](#).

The ability to swim when rowing on the sea

Someone wrote to say that we are in total agreement that being a good swimmer does not ensure complete safety, but for sea rowers, being able to swim well is perhaps more important than for river rowers, as they have to address tides, currents and weather effects, especially wind. Rowers are aware, of course, of the risks involved in sea rowing and do not row in very rough weather, though again, this doesn't ensure 100% safety.

The club's capsize drill involved putting a life jacket on in the sea. One member, a good swimmer, did her drill in fairly realistic, but manageable, conditions. Once she had capsized, the tide carried her boat quite swiftly away from her and she had to work hard to get to it, despite the fact it was held by its painter by a club member onshore.

My view here is that the requirement is the ability not to panic if pitched into deep water. All that is needed is to grab hold of the boat and keep hold then, once you have control of your breathing, etc, climb back onto the boat and wait for rescue. This is not as easy as it sounds in the sea so some swimming ability would be useful. If the rowers are not so confident then they should use a personal floatation device.

The application of maritime safety law

I explained last month that the Department for Transport (DfT) has issued a consultation document on new legislation to strengthen enforcement of the dangerous use of recreational and personal watercraft on the sea and in harbours. This is available [here](#). The impact of the suggested changes on rowing, rowing clubs and rowers has been discussed at a high level in British Rowing and it was concluded that this change will be beneficial to rowers in that it will tend to reduce some of the risks due to the unsafe use of speedboats and jet-skis. The regulatory burden directly on rowers and clubs should be minimal. British Rowing will not provide feedback to the DfT.

Should Rowing boats give way to sailing boats?

There was a question about whether rowing boats should give way to sailing boats. The response was that in the PLA "Rowing and paddling on the Tidal Thames" it says, on page 57:-

"For the purposes of Byelaw 27 and Col Reg Rules 9 and 18, rowing and paddled boats must act as power-driven vessels and must keep out of the way of all the types of vessels listed. They must also give priority to vessels such as (but not limited to) Class V Passenger vessels, tugs and tows, large Dutch barges and sailing boats (unless the sailing boat is crossing the fairway)."

The situation off the Tideway is less clear but sailors will generally expect rowing boats to give way as they will see them as "vessels under power".

Coastal Rowing Safety and RYA Safe Trx

Someone asked "Now that British Rowing is promoting coastal rowing, what action have you taken to promote safety on coastal waters. In particular, I think of the RYA app that covers the safety of their members at sea, RYA Safe Trx. However, if coastal rowers wish to use this app then they have to be members of the RYA. Does BR have an affiliation with the RYA to allow BR members to use this app for free, without having to become a full member of the RYA? If not, why not?"

The response was that I found this on the internet in response to a search for "do I have to be a RYA member to use safetrx". This information is [here](#).

"Official app of the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) – RYA SafeTrx allows you to register your vessel and plan and track your trip on your smartphone. This app is freely available to anyone, **you do not need to be an RYA member**. It is free to download and there is no charge to use it."

Chapter 10 of [RowSafe](#) deals with Rowing on the Sea. This chapter contains additional information applicable to various types of sea rowing. Section 10.1 deals with Coastal and Inshore Rowing. The general advice in the remainder of RowSafe is also applicable to coastal rowing.

In Coastal Rowing, together with all other types of rowing, risk assessment is used to identify the actions and provisions needed to ensure that the planned activity can be completed safely. Risk Assessments are venue specific and vary according to where you row which is why we expect each club to do its own risk assessment. In some cases it may not be possible to ensure safety and the risk assessment will then indicate that the planned activity should not be undertaken and a different activity should be defined and assessed.

Mention of backstays in Incident Reports

There have been several Incident Reports where the person submitting the report did not know whether their boat was fitted with backstays in the leading positions, in one case this person reporting was a member of the crew. Comments were made asking for this information to be added and it was added. If you report an collision then please check whether your boat has backstays and include this information in the report.

2021 Safety Audit

This year's audit was discussed at a National Rowing Safety Committee meeting at which the Regional Rowing Safety Advisers decided that they would no longer accept responses that a topic was "to address" if that topic had been in that state for some years. Clubs do not need to be perfect but do need to have shown some improvement since last year. RRSAs will not approve audits for clubs that have not done anything since last year to address issues.

Wearing Hi-vis over a buoyancy aid

Someone asked about wearing a hi vis jacket on top of a buoyancy aid when coxing. It had been suggested that this is a valid question and worth sharing with a wider audience. It was understood lifejackets must be the outermost garment worn. If someone is wearing a buoyancy aid it seems reasonable that a hi vis waterproof could be worn on top as it will make the person easier to spot on the water. The clubs buoyancy aids are bright red but the area covered by a hi vis jacket is larger and might make a greater visual impact.

I replied is correct that I would prefer coxes to wear lifejackets rather than buoyancy aids because they provide about three times greater buoyancy and coxes can need this when they are dressed to keep warm. You were right to say that nothing should be worn over a lifejacket.

If coxes wear (non-inflatable) buoyancy aids then it should do no harm if they wear hi-vis clothing over the buoyancy aid.

Advanced Risk Assessment Training

The advanced risk assessment training has been revised and the final review has been completed. The new version can be found [here](#).

Rower Development Guide

The rower development guide uses quizzes to impart and check knowledge on several topics including safety. The safety quizzes are largely based on RowSafe. Some assistance has been provided in checking the quizzes and it is hoped that this will be completed early in November.

Trailer Stability videos

Trailer stability when towing is largely dependent on the distribution of the weight on the trailer. This is demonstrated in two videos [here](#) and [here](#). It should also be noted that stability decreases with increasing vehicle speed and that it is better when going uphill and on dry roads. Towing [speed limits](#) were presented in last month's report.

There is a Safety Alert on Trailer Towing [here](#).

Towing driving licence requirements are about to change

Last month I described the changed to licence requirements for drivers towing trailers that government has announced that it will introduce in autumn 2021. These new rules will come into effect from 15 November 2021. Further information [here](#).

Newsletter Article

Each month I write an article for the website. A short version appears in the Membership Newsletter and there is sometimes a link to a longer version on the News area of the website. The longer version can be found [here](#) and is reproduced below.

Full version

The end of summer.

It is no longer summer, the nights are drawing in and there is not much time for an outing afloat in daylight after work. The clocks will change in a few weeks (on Sunday 31 October) and so it will be dark early in the evening.

Look on the bright side, early morning outings will still be possible for a few weeks.

So what can we do if we want to row in the dark? How can we prepare?

This is the time to get ready so that the kit will be available and in good working order when we need it. It is time to find the lights that we fit to the boat and check them;

Do they still work?

Have we got enough of them?

Do we need more batteries?

Please remember that lights on boats are not there so that we can see where we are going. They are there so that others can see us and tell where we are going, and we can see where they are going.

However, we will only see other boats if we look for them. We need to keep an even better lookout when it is dark.

The other thing that helps is to wear white above the waist when it is dark. This is equivalent to wearing hi-vis in daylight; it simply makes it easier for others to see us.

Not only will there be less daylight, it will also get colder. This is not a big problem for rowers who are working hard and generating their own heat. However, it is a hazard that coxes and coaches have to manage. If you cox or coach then make sure that you dress for the conditions.

Short Version

The nights are drawing in and there is not much time for an outing afloat in daylight after work. It is time to get the boat lights ready so that they will be in good working order when we need them.

Lights on boats are there so that others can see us. Keep an even better lookout when it is dark. It also helps to wear white above the waist.

Not only will there be less daylight but it will also get colder. This is a hazard that coxes and coaches have to manage. Dress for the conditions.

Appendix 1 - The Sequence of events during the Incident in Ireland

- The incident occurred on Saturday 23rd February 2019.
- The outing was due to start at 09:30 with three 4x+s and two coaching launches.
- One launch had one coach and the other had two coaches.
- The launches were lightweight aluminium boats, 4 metres long, fitted with a 15hp outboard motors.
- The plan was to row together upstream and then turn and row downstream to turn upstream of Thomond weir and return to the club.
- The tide was ebbing and the stream was augmented by a considerable volume of rainwater.
- The Head Coach (who was also the Club Safety Officer) did an undocumented risk assessment and, together with the other coaches, concluded that it was safe to proceed.
- The 4x+ that contained the casualty was delayed and departed about 30 minutes after the other two 4x+s and one coaching launch containing two coaches.
- Coaches and coxes were wearing PDFs, rowers were not.
- The 4x+ continued rowing downriver to the turning area immediately above Thomond Weir.
- The Coach did not realise the group had, by this time, completed the course and was heading for the clubhouse.
- The 4x+ attempted to turn above Thomond weir as planned, under the instructions of its coach.
- The Coach stated that the rowers did not respond adequately to his directions and that the river flow propelled the 4x+ downriver at a deceptively fast rate.
- The 4x+ rapidly drifted downstream towards the weir
- The bow of the 4x+ hit a support span and it slewed sideways across the weir.
- The weir's concrete supports spans are approximately 7 m apart.
- The 4x+ was 12.8 m in length.
- The 4x+ breached and overturned across two supports.
- The crew were thrown into the water.
- The 4x+ remained afloat but lodged across two of the weir's supports.
- Four of the crew surfaced; three climbed onto the upturned hull while one remained in the water and clung on to the hull, all in accordance with their training.
- One crew member did not surface in the water.
- The Coach in the Safety Boat steered through the weir and turned the boat, bow upstream, to approach the distressed 4x+.
- The Coach made contact with the 4x+ while under the weir's spans.
- The Coach saw a crew member trapped in the water.
- The Coach left his steering position and moved forward and was able to reach down to grab and attempt to recover the trapped Rower from the water.
- The Coach found that the Rower could not be pulled from the water.
- The Rower was snagged by her waist length hair in one of the 4x+'s riggers.
- The Coach lifted the rigger with his right hand.
- This enabled the Coach to raise the trapped Rower to the surface with his left hand.

- At this point the Coach spoke to the trapped Rower who responded twice with his name.
- Despite persistent efforts by the Coach and a 4x+ crew member onboard the upturned 4x+ they were unable to free the trapped Rower's hair.
- Two of the remaining 4x+ crew were on the upturned hull, one was in the water assisting with the trapped Rower and one other was in the water holding onto the 4x+.
- The Coach in the Safety Boat was alongside the trapped Rower attempting a rescue.
- The crew member holding onto the upturned 4x+ became detached and was swept through the weir and on downriver.
- The Coach was now presented with a dilemma; to stay with the trapped Rower or retrieve the drifting crew, who was not wearing a PFD and was in danger of drowning.
- The Coach considered that, as he had successfully raised the trapped Rower's head above the water surface previously, he did not anticipate any difficulty having to do the same again.
- The Coach released his hold on the trapped Rower, retrieved the crewmember who had gone through the weir and the other crew who was assisting in the water and quickly returned to the trapped Rower.
- In the meantime, the 4x+ had overturned further, and the trapped Rower was further submerged under the water.
- The Coach was unable to raise her to the surface again.
- Two members of the public appeared on the bridge to assist.
- One of them climbed down to assist in rendering help from the Safety Boat.
- A member of the public made a 999 call to the emergency services, this was timed at 10.12 hrs.
- The remaining crew climbed across from the upturned 4x+ hull to board the Safety Boat.
- The coaches in the other safety boat were unaware of the emergency at Thomond Weir.
- The remainder of the crew of the 4x+ with the Coach and a member of the public were all on the Safety Boat attempting to rescue the trapped Rower.
- A local Authority Fire Rescue inflatable boat with two crew onboard arrived on scene.
- The Fire Rescue crew were able to free the trapped Rower by cutting the Casualty's hair.
- The Casualty was taken aboard their boat which immediately departed the scene.
- A crew member applied cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to the Casualty as the boat took the Casualty to shore and waiting paramedics.
- The Coach and remainder of the 4x+ crew returned to the Boat Club.
- The Coach informed the Head Coach of the incident by mobile phone while enroute to the Club.
- The 4x+ was recovered from the river the following day, 24 February 2019 and taken by Gardai (Police) to a secure storage location.

Appendix 2 - Recommendations for Rowing Ireland and Current Practices of British Rowing

The Report makes recommendations for the Rowing Ireland. These are listed below alongside the relevant practices of British Rowing.

Recommendations for Rowing Ireland	Current Activities by British Rowing
Immediately carry out a review and clarify its policy with regard to affiliated club's safety practices and Rowing Ireland's role in audit and enforcement as provided for the Rowing Ireland Safety Committee.	Review MCIB recommendations for Rowing Ireland and identify any Opportunities for Improvement (in this document).
Implement a programme for the effective dissemination of Rowing Ireland safety recommendations, and of the Code of Practice.	RowSafe is well communicated, freely available on the website in the public domain, and referenced in the Rules of Racing. Notifications of annual updates are sent to all clubs. Monthly Reports and Safety Alerts are widely distributed, sent to all clubs and published on the website. This is reinforced by the annual Safety Audit.
Appoint a Rowing Ireland Communications Officer with specific responsibility to open and maintain interactive communications with all Rowing Ireland affiliated clubs in order to disseminate Rowing Ireland's safety advice to affiliated clubs.	Safety Communications in British Rowing appear to work effectively. There is support from the Communications and Membership Teams and Rowing Safety features on the website. There is no need for organisational change.
Implement a programme of Rowing Ireland Safety Courses for club safety officers and coaches with particular focus on hazard identification, risk assessment and risk mitigation processes.	Safety (risk management, hypothermia & capsized and recovery) is included in coach education. Online courses on Risk Management, Risk Assessment, Hypothermia and Capsized are all freely available to members.
Immediately advise and encourage all affiliated clubs to carry out an audit of all river obstacles and hazards in the club's area of activities taking into account seasonal river flow conditions and prevailing tidal conditions in order to produce a Hazard List readily available to all club members and reviewed and updated on a regular basis.	This is included in RowSafe and is referred to as the circulation plan.

Recommendations for Rowing Ireland	Current Activities by British Rowing
<p>Immediately implement a Safety Policy review with regard to the applicability of S.I. No. 921 of 2005 – Pleasure Craft (Personal Flotation Devices and Operation) (Safety) Regulations 2005 as amended by S.I. (2012) 349 regarding their application to Olympic style rowing boats, especially in relation to minors and during training, issue clear guidelines and consistent with the Code of Practice.</p>	<p>This relates to the use of Personal Flotation Devices by people afloat and is a legal requirement in Ireland but there is an exemption for people in “Olympic Style Rowing Boats”.</p> <p>It is not applicable in Britain although it may be appropriate for new rowers and young rowers to wear PFDs.</p>
<p>Immediately carry out a review of its policy with regard to affiliated club’s procedures involving junior/novice rower training, introduction of novices to river activity skill sets and crew capability assessments.</p>	<p>RowSafe advises Clubs to have induction training for new rowers.</p> <p>We provide guidance in the form of L2R course content with supporting documents such as handbooks for the learners.</p>
<p>Immediately carry out a review of its policy with regard to affiliated club’s rowing boat crew standards for personal protective clothing and hair length with regard to the dangers associated with hypothermia and entanglement and recommend a minimum level of safety clothing standards for rowing crewmembers.</p>	<p>Hair length has been covered in the February 2019 Monthly Report.</p> <p>We could do more on clothing in RowSafe but it is already covered.</p> <p>PPE (PFDs) are included in RowSafe.</p>
<p>Immediately implement a Safety Policy with regard to requiring club safety boats to carry onboard extra Personal Flotation Devices to enable the rescue of crew.</p>	<p>This is not a practical option in many instances due to the size of the crews and the carrying capacity of some launches. Circumstances should be a factor here; rowing on the sea, an estuary or a very large lake might lead to the routine adoption of this policy but it should not be a general policy. It is a matter for each club’s risk assessment.</p>
<p>Initiate a programme of guidance and advice to all affiliated clubs to develop an effective means of communication between the coaches other than by mobile phone technology.</p>	<p>This depends on the mobile phone signal and the effectiveness of radio communication in the locality (radio is most effective if there is a line of sight between the radio transmitter and receiver). This could be considered in the next revision of RowSafe. It is a matter for each club’s risk assessment.</p>
<p>Consider whether there is merit in adopting a requirement for minimum manning levels for safety boats.</p>	<p>The problem with adding extra crew to safety boats is that it reduces the rescue capacity. In many cases the primary use of launches is for coaching but they will be used for safety and rescue if needed.</p> <p>It is a matter for each club’s risk assessment.</p>

Recommendations for Rowing Ireland	Current Activities by British Rowing
Implement a programme to push down the guidelines and advice contained within Rowing Ireland's Safety Manual to affiliated club level.	All the relevant information is widely available and well communicated. This is reinforced by the annual Safety Audit.
Consider whether there is merit in requiring evidence of compliance with the Code of Practice and Rowing Ireland safety recommendations as a condition of affiliation to Rowing Ireland.	This is not directly applicable but the annual Safety Audit will be checked to ensure that it covers the items included in section 11 of the Regulations of British Rowing.
Consider whether there is merit in engaging with the funders of rowing clubs to require evidence of compliance with the Code of Practice and Rowing Ireland safety recommendations as a condition of funding.	This is not applicable as most clubs are funded by their members.
Immediately assess its approach to the creation of safety policies or guidelines and ensure that these policies or guidelines are effectively communicated to clubs in order to develop a proactive approach to monitoring and improving rowing safety standards at club level.	This is not applicable, as demonstrated above. The assessment is incorporated into the content of this Appendix.

Appendix 3 Recommendations for the Rowing Club in Ireland and the corresponding reference in RowSafe

The Report makes recommendations for the Irish Rowing Club. British Rowing clubs are invited to review these and identify any of their own practices that they may wish to improve. The relevant section(s) of RowSafe are also identified.

Recommendations for the Rowing Club	Relevant section of RowSafe
Immediately carry out an audit of all river obstacles and hazards in the Club's area of activities taking into account seasonal river flow conditions, water outflows and prevailing tidal conditions in order to produce a Hazard and Obstacle list. Ensure the Hazard and Obstacle list is disseminated in an effective way, and readily available on an ongoing basis to all Club members. Ensure the Hazard and Obstacle list is part of a regular audit and update of all safety procedures and documents.	<p>Hazards, etc. should be included in the circulation plan.</p> <p>See RowSafe sections 2.1 Communication of Safety Information 3.2 Club Safety Plans and Safety Rules 4.2 Competition Safety Plans and Safety Rules</p>
Immediately carry out a risk assessment programme of all its "on river" activities including the assessment of river obstacles and hazards, tidal states and river flows, safety boats and equipment condition, crew experience, coach and helper availability, qualifications and safety supports.	<p>Risk Assessment is included throughout RowSafe, in particular in 3.1 Club Risk Assessment 4.1 Competition Risk Assessment</p> <p>Chapter 9. Topics Covered in Risk Assessments</p>
Immediately carry out an audit of the type and scale of safety and rescue equipment onboard safety boats during river training sessions and bring them to at least the minimum standards required by Rowing Ireland and as recommended in the Code of Practice Chapter 8 Rowing Boats and FISA Minimum Guidelines for the Safe Practice of Rowing. Ensure that safety equipment onboard safety boats are to the type, scale and in a usable condition and that procedures include ensuring there is an identified responsible person for checking the equipment, and for the proper recording of same.	<p>Launch safety kits are included in RowSafe sections</p> <p>5.2 Launch Driving 7.4.1 Launch Safety Kits</p>
Immediately carry out a review of the capability and suitability of the Club's safety boats with regard to providing safety support during the Club's water training activities.	<p>Launches are covered in RowSafe section 7.4 Launches</p>

Recommendations for the Rowing Club	Relevant section of RowSafe
Immediately carry out a review of crew personal protective clothing (including having adequate treatment of all hair lengths) having regard to the dangers associated with hypothermia.	Clothing and hair are covered in RowSafe sections 6.1 People new to Rowing 6.1.1 Safety Advice for People new to Rowing 9.1.1 Indoor Rowing Risk Management
Immediately carry out an audit of the Club's safety practices and ensure they comply with legislation in respect of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and General Applications 1993, and that they follow applicable Marine Notices, the guidelines from Rowing Ireland, the Code of Practice: The Safe Operation of Recreational Craft (2017), and FISA's Minimum Guidelines for the Safe Practice of Rowing.	The equivalent legislation in the UK is section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974, this deals with the safety of people who are not employed due to the activities of the employer. The whole of RowSafe relates to this issue.
In conjunction with the audit above, develop a viable Safety Management System and proactive safety culture within the Club to include a system for the regular audit of the Club's health and safety policies, procedures, and their effectiveness.	Safety culture is covered in RowSafe sections 1.1 Roles and Expectations 1.2. Positive Safety Culture 3.4. Club Rowing Safety Adviser Job Description 11.1 Indoor Rowing 12 Incident Reporting
In the context of the safety review and audit, review record and ensure compliance with the respective responsibilities of Club members/coaches/Club Safety Officer as recommended by Rowing Ireland.	Safety review and audit are covered in RowSafe sections 3.4. Club Rowing Safety Adviser Job Description 13 Auditing and in the Annual Safety Audit
Immediately carry out a review of the Club's procedures with regard to safety training of junior/novice rowers. Review the non-wearing of Personal Flotation Devices by junior/ novice trainees with safety boats to carry onboard Personal Flotation Devices to enable rescue of the crew under training in compliance with the Code of Practice where Personal Flotation Devices are not being worn.	Safety training of junior/novice rowers is covered in RowSafe sections 1.1. Roles and Expectations 6.1 People new to Rowing 6.1.1 Safety Advice for People new to Rowing 2.1. Communication of Safety Information 2.2. Make Up of Club Induction Pack 5. Competence
Introduce planning processes so that the coaches in charge of Club training sessions have fail safe procedures mitigating the effects of unexpected deviations from the "Plan".	Pre outing safety planning is covered in RowSafe sections 3.1. Club Risk Assessment 3.2. Club Safety Plans and Safety Rules

Recommendations for the Rowing Club	Relevant section of RowSafe
Introduce training session procedures whereby safety boats are never separated to the extent that the advantages of mutual support and assistance between the safety boats are lost given that many local features on a river involve bends and banks with limited visibility.	This is not directly covered in RowSafe as the need is highly venue specific. It can be addressed by the club's Risk Assessment, see RowSafe sections 3.1. Club Risk Assessment 3.2. Club Safety Plans and Safety Rules
Introduce an effective means of communications between the coaches on safety boats other than by mobile phone technology.	Communication is covered in RowSafe sections 2. Communication 2.1. Communication of Safety Information 2.3 Radio Procedure
Introduce minimum manning levels for Club safety boats of at least two persons including the safety boat operator.	This is not directly covered in RowSafe as having extra people in launches reduces their rescue capacity. It can be addressed by the club's Risk Assessment, see RowSafe sections 3.1. Club Risk Assessment 3.2. Club Safety Plans and Safety Rules
Initiate and timetable regular Club officer/Club coach meetings and working groups to ensure safety issues and coaching practices are reviewed and discussed in order to propagate a healthy and interactive climate of information exchange within the Club.	Communication at meetings on safety is covered in RowSafe section 3.4. Club Rowing Safety Adviser Job Description
Ensure all Club coaches coaching minors attend the Sports Ireland Coaching Children Programme and that there is a continuous development of coaching skills.	This is covered in the British Rowing Safeguarding guidance
The accident/incident content of this reporting book should be pro-actively disseminated among the Club's coaches as part of the Club's safety culture.	Incident communication is covered in RowSafe section 12. Incident Reporting

Appendix 4 - Information previously shared in Monthly Reports

February 2019 - 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.



June 2019 - A little good news

The February 2019 monthly report contained information about an incident in Limerick, in the Republic of Ireland, in which a 12-year-old girl, was trapped in a capsized 4x+. 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. She was taken to hospital and treated in Intensive Care.

Information has recently [been published](#) showing that she has survived the incident and her recovery continues.

This shows the importance of good, prompt, pre-hospital care and the effectiveness of longer-term care in hospital, together with the resilience of young rowers. We should never give up in what may appear to be a difficult situation.