



# **Queen Elizabeth High School Rowing Club Safety Plan and Emergency Action Plan for Rowing**

**September 2025**

Next annual update: September 2026

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

QEHS Rowing club is an extracurricular club for the students of QEHS Hexham. The club is based at Tyne Green in Hexham. The club itself has grown significantly in recent years with perhaps 110 regular rowers in Y9, Y10, Y11, Y12 and Y13. New members tend to be recruited in September, some in a structured way such as through Learn to Row and others individually throughout the school year. Communication with members is a key activity in support of safe rowing and effort has been put in recently to improve communication between parents, rowers, and Coaches.

The River Tyne at Tyne Green is relatively shallow, and rowers can generally stand up in the river depending on the flow speed. However, the club is aware of statistics around river incidents and safety precautions are taken seriously. The major threat to safety at Tyne Green is the Weir below the bridge. The major focus for our safety plan is to adopt safety procedures that reduce the chances of rowers ending up in a position where they are too close to the weir. Rowers also need to be aware of the effect of the wind. Tyne Green is relatively open to wind, especially the prevailing westerlies rowers are constantly reminded that the wind can push them onto the weir quickly. Our policies will ensure that all rowers are trained to be competent at turning their boat quickly to prevent the threat of the weir.

As a club, we understand that the rowing at the QEHS rowing club can be challenging, and safety issues are taken seriously. Water sports by their very nature involve some risk, all those who take part should be aware of those dangers and must accept them whilst trying to minimize them. As a club we have adopted much of the guidance from British Rowing's (BR) document Row Safe. RowSafe has adopted the modern safety approach of trying to find the ways in which people can take part in an activity without putting themselves and others at unacceptable risk. This document recognises that, in the real world, there is some risk associated with every activity. However, they point out that a little thought can go a long way to ensuring that the level of risk is acceptable.

Parents and Guardians of Junior members should also knowledgeable themselves with the dangers

The safety culture of any organisation is formed from a combination of individual and group:

- Beliefs;
- Values;
- Attitudes;
- Perceptions;
- Competencies;
- Patterns of behaviour.

At QEHS Rowing we are committed to providing new rowers a safe introduction to rowing and inspire a lifelong passion for rowing. We aim to do this with a strong focus on building a positive safety culture. We aim to do this by having:

- Communications founded on mutual trust;
- Shared perceptions of the importance of safety
- Coached sessions on safety
- Confidence in the effectiveness of their safety precautions.

## **2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a rule every club member shall be responsible for his or her own safety and the safety of others both on and off the water, however, every member must also: -

### **1. Everyone is expected to:**

- Take responsibility for their own safety both on and off the water.
- Ensure that their actions both on and off the water do not put others at risk.
- Examine their own actions if they are involved in an incident and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Ensure that they have prepared for the activity that they are about to undertake, including having eaten appropriately and have sufficient drinking water.
- Ensure that they are dressed appropriately for the conditions and that their hair, if long, is restrained such that it does not interfere with their rowing.
- Be aware of, and abide by, the Club Safety Rules.
- Follow the guidance in the Club Safety Plans.
- Report all incidents both within the club and to the Senior Coach.

### **2. Coaches will:**

- Educate and train their crews in understanding and following the club's Safety Plan and Safety Rules and those of other clubs when training away.
- Lead by example.
- Report all occurrences of disregard for the Safety Rules to the club.
- Encourage rowers to report incidents using the Incident Reporting System.
- Coach turning before landing stages.

### **3. Rowing Safety Adviser will:**

- Advise on the appropriate Safety Rules and Safety Plans and their specification.
- Ensure that the Safety Plans and Safety Rules are communicated to all members.
- Advise on the extent to which members comply with the Safety Rules.
- Advise on the implementation and effectiveness of Safety Plans and Safety Rules.
- Assist with reviews of the Safety Plans and Safety Rules and with keeping the Safety Plans and Safety Rules up to date. Regional Rowing Councils Regional Rowing Councils are expected to:
- Provide support and advice to clubs in their region on Safety Plans and Safety Rules.

- Be familiar with the guidance provided in RowSafe.
- Provide advice to the club committee and club leadership on all matters relating to safety as appropriate.
- Ensure the completion of the annual safety audit for the club.
- Undertake Safety Reviews of the club's activities and facilities.
- Undertake inspections and audits if requested to do so by the club and provide feedback to the club committee.
- Promote and monitor Incident Reporting within the club and the reporting of all incidents to British Rowing.
- Periodically (perhaps annually) analyse the club's reported incidents to identify any common issues and trends and initiate action to address any opportunities for improvement.
- Lead or facilitate Incident Investigations as necessary.
- Have completed the Advanced Risk Assessment Training.
- Lead or facilitate the completion and review of the club's Risk Assessment.
- Use the Risk Assessment to identify required safety rules.
- Work with the club committee and the leadership of the club to develop and maintain the club Safety Plan, Safety Rules and Emergency Response Plan.
- Attend local and regional safety meetings.
- Work with the Regional Rowing Safety Adviser.
- Work with other water and land users on safety as required.

### **Communication of Safety Information**

Good communication works in many directions. In rowing it is important that clubs communicate with their members and competitions communicate with participants (including umpires and officials). Effective communication often uses a variety of media, these include personal and electronic communication.

Everyone should ensure that they are aware of the information and guidance that has been made available to them and that they should report any issues or concerns that they are aware of. It is also important to feel free to ask questions and to be able to receive appropriate answers.

Communication methods include:

- In person, face-to-face.
- Safety notice boards (club and competition);
- Digital communications (websites, emails, and social media); and
- Training and induction materials.

All club members, volunteer and parents are expected to:

- Frequently check the various communication methods such as notice boards, emails and websites.

- Review the information available and take appropriate action such as understanding the displayed circulation plan and abiding by it.
- Report concerns, incidents and near misses as appropriate.
- Report all incidents using the British Rowing Incident Reporting System.
- Ask a responsible person whenever they have questions or feel that they need more information.
- Be aware of, and understand, the instructions and any safety requirements when at competitions.

### **3.0 CLUB SAFETY - Risk Assessment and Safety Plans**

#### **CLUB RISK ASSESSMENT**

Club Risk Assessment Hazard identification and risk assessment are the basis for planning to maintain and improve safety. These provide clubs with the ability to understand the ways in which harm can be caused, and to minimise both the probability of that harm occurring and the severity of harm should it occur. It puts clubs in control of their risks.

The Risk Assessment only adds value when the actions that it identifies as being needed are completed. Everyone is expected to:

- Understand, and abide by the rules that the club has defined as a result of its Risk Assessment.
- Be familiar with the club's Safety and Emergency Response Plans.
- Be aware of the hazards associated with each of the club's activities that they take part in.
- Be aware of the hazards in other club facilities such as the boathouse, changing rooms or workshop areas.
- Report all incidents using the British Rowing Incident Reporting System

Coaches are expected to:

- Be conversant with the Risk Assessment for the activity that they are leading.
- Ensure that participants are aware of, and abide by, the club's rules.
- Understand the risks associated with the activities that they are leading.
- Act, where necessary, to ensure that nobody is exposed to substantial or intolerable risk.
- Ensure that participants are aware of the hazards that are associated with the activities that they are leading.
- Report all occurrences of disregard for the Safety Rules to the club.
- Complete the Safety Basics online learning module.

#### **CLUB SAFETY RULES**

Safety Plans describe how members should act in order to keep themselves and others safe. Safety Rules specify the behaviours that the club requires of its members and any behaviours that it would find unacceptable. Club Emergency Response Plans describe how the club will deal with emergencies and other incidents to minimise the harm that they would otherwise cause.

Safety Rules and Safety Plans stem from the Barriers (to reduce the probability) and Controls (to reduce the severity of harm) in Risk Assessments. In most cases the Safety Rules are derived from the Barriers and the Emergency Response Plans are derived from the Controls. This all follows from the definitions. Barriers come into effect before the hazardous event and tend to make it less likely to happen. Barriers identify things that must, or must not, happen and therefore can translate into rules.

Emergency Response Plans are based on Controls that come into effect after the hazardous event has occurred and tend to limit its consequences. In some cases, these could be written as Safety Rules. This is just expressing a control as a "must do action".

Normal rowing procedures are covered most directly by the club's Water Safety Rules. They were last reviewed and updated in November 2023.

Everyone is expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others affected by their activities.
- Read, understand, and follow the Safety Plans.
- Read, understand, and abide by all the Safety Rules.
- Report all occurrences of disregard for the Safety Rules to the club.

## **Swimming Standards**

It is important that rowers who find themselves in the water do not panic and are able to respond so that they can keep themselves safe. In effect, this means that they should be able to swim or float. Floating, rather than swimming, is recommended by the RNLI because it tends to conserve heat and energy when in cold water.

All participants in rowing should be competent and confident in the water. It should be recognised that the ability to swim in a pool does not guarantee the ability to swim in cold, exposed waters.

Everyone taking part in rowing should be able to:

- Float unaided for at least five minutes
- 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

All members, parents and guardians of junior members will be required to sign a declaration on the club application form confirming that he or she can meet the minimum swim standard.

The club will hold regular swim tests together with capsize drills to ensure that all members can meet this requirement.

Capsize and Recovery training is important because it prepares rowers so that they will know what to do in the event of a capsize. Everyone is expected to:

- Know what to do in the event of capsize or swamping.
- Understand the need to stay with the boat and use it as a life raft, unless doing so results in greater danger.
- Take precautions before going afloat to reduce the risk of capsize or swamping.
- Understand that the key steps are to 1. Get free from the boat, 2. Get out of the water on to a boat, and 3. Get off the water.
- Attend any Capsize and Recovery training offered by the club or complete the Capsize Training for Rowers online learning module.

## **PEOPLE NEW TO ROWING**

People who are new to rowing may not be aware of the hazards and risks associated with an activity and need additional support and supervision so that they can keep themselves and others safe.

Everyone is expected to:

- Provide extra guidance and support for people who are new to the sport.
- Ensure that new rowers are not exposed to risks that they would find substantial or intolerable. New Rowers

New rowers are expected to:

- Attend the club's Induction Programme and follow the advice and guidance in the Club Induction Pack
- Provide the club with relevant information such as floating and swimming and ability.
- Inform the club of any reason that they may be at risk due to current or previous illness or injury.
- Operate within their competence level by recognising their growing level of knowledge and understanding.
- Ask a coach or Club Official about any aspects of safety they are concerned or unsure about.
- Take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others affected by their activities.
- Be aware of key club and sport policies and rules and where to find them.
- Report incidents to the club and British Rowing

These are the 5 key things that new rowers should keep in mind.

1. If you do not know what to do, then do not guess; ask someone who does.
2. If you have any medical or fitness concerns, then talk to your coach or safety adviser.
3. If you cannot float or swim, then wear a lifejacket when afloat and know how to use it.
4. Do not do anything that would put yourself or anyone else at risk.
5. Be prepared for the activity that you are about to do, eat, drink (hydrate), and dress appropriately.



## **EQUIPMENT - Safety Checks – Club Boats**

Before any outing is undertaken, all equipment must be checked to ensure that it is in a safe condition and in working order. As a very basic check use the following pointers:

- Check the hull for damage.
- Check the bow ball.
- Check the heel restraints.
- Check all hatch covers are in place and secure.
- Checking the riggers and gates (top nuts)

Under no circumstances whatsoever shall any boat be taken onto the river if it does not meet the above checks.

A more comprehensive boat check includes the following:

A thorough boat and equipment check includes the following:

- No visible signs of damage to the hull, for example scrapes or cracks.
- Buoyancy compartments, seals, hatch covers, boat hull and ventilation bungs are secure and watertight. Buoyancy Bags are fully inflated and installed if no under-seat buoyancy compartments are fitted.
- Bow ball is in good condition and securely fixed (where the construction of the boat, or its composition, is such that the bow is properly protected or its shape does not present a hazard in the event of a collision, then this requirement need not apply).
- Fixing screws or bolts do not represent a hazard in the event of an accident. Any sharp protrusions should be covered or removed.
- In all boats the foot stretchers, shoes or other devices holding the feet of the rowers shall be a type which allows the rowers to get clear of the boat with no delay in an emergency.
- Heel restraints are strong, secure, and durable and the correct length (laces and cable ties are not appropriate). See Safety Alert – Heel Restraints. •
- Shoes shall be in good condition so that they do not break or become partially detached from the boat in the event of a rower trying to remove their feet during a capsize.
- Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will remain in the boat, each shoe or device shall be independently restrained such that when the heel reaches the horizontal position the foot will be released from the shoe.
- Shoe fastenings such as laces, or Velcro or similar materials should not be too tight and must be able to be released immediately by the rower with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap.

- Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will not remain in the boat, each shoe or device must be able to be released by the rower without using their hands or with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap or release device.
- No part of the rigger, or any other structure, restricts the ability of rowers to remove their feet from the shoes in an emergency.
- Rudder lines, steering mechanisms, and rudder (where fitted) and fin are secure and in good working order.
- Outriggers, swivels, gates, seats, runners, and stretchers are secure and operating correctly and show no signs of cracking or fatigue.
- The forward port and starboard rigger on all boats, other than single sculls, should be protected by a backstay. See Safety Alert - Backstays.
- Pins are in good condition, correctly placed (hard forward, soft astern) and spares are carried.
- Blades are undamaged and buttons are secure and properly set.
- The boat is suitable for the situation in which it is to be used, for example maximum crew weight.

All deficiencies must be reported to the any Coach or the Club Safety Officer, who must take appropriate action to ensure that the boat is not used until it satisfies safety requirements. A notice – **“DO NOT USE”** with a description of the deficiency should be prominently, (and firmly), affixed to the boat, so that others do not take it out on the water until the repair work has been completed.

### **Inspections**

The club undertakes regular inspections of all physical aspects of equipment and the parts of buildings that impinge on rowing and rowing-related training.

For the rowing function the following headings are applicable and the results of each are recorded and acted upon:

- Boats and blades
- Safety and other equipment
- Concept 2 Rowing machines
- Premises - boathouse and club house

## **4.0 QEHS ROWING CLUB - RIVER ROWING SAFETY CODE**

### **Safety Map for Rowers - Direction of rowing**

All rowers must follow the direction of rowing as indicated on this diagram. Diagram is displayed in the club house.

We are not the only people who use the river and members should be aware of other clubs such as Hexham Rowing Club, Hexham Canoe Club and Open Water Swimmers using the river, as well as fishermen, dog walkers. There is an increasing number of paddle board owners using the river who are unaware of the water usage agreement between the three clubs based at Tyne Green.

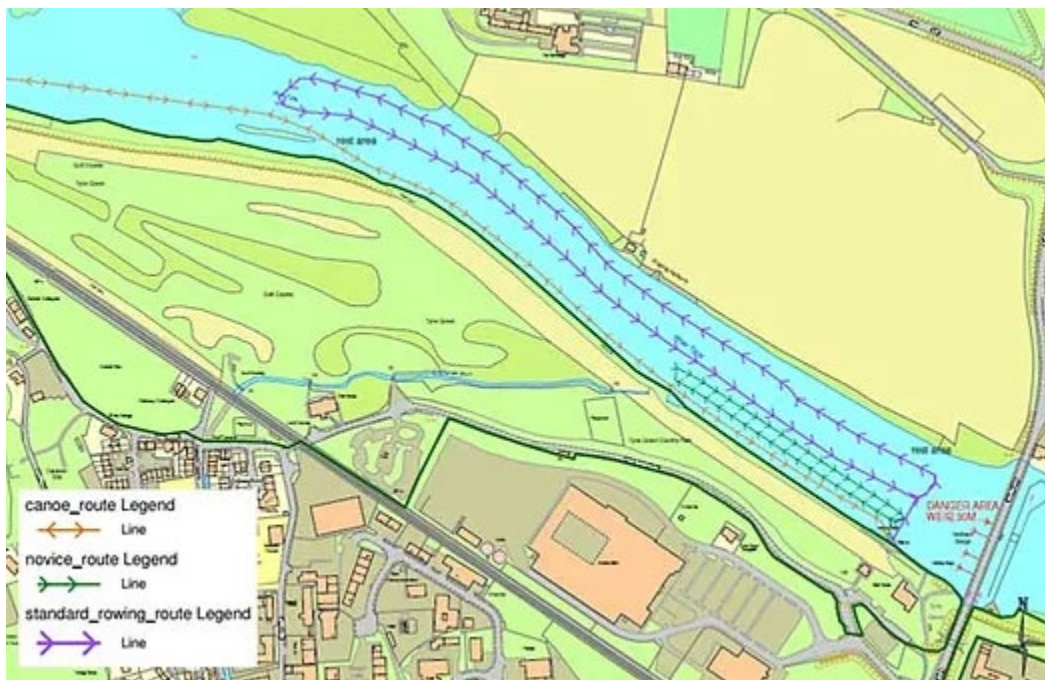


Diagram 1 - Direction of Rowing Map for Tyne Green

### Know Your River

Heavy rain in the west of the county or at Hexham can cause river levels to rise during one outing. If it's raining keep checking the landing stages when you are turning to see if the water is rising an alarm will be raised by coaches from the bankside – if the river is visibly rising, go back in! Boats will be marshalled to hold up stream in a holding pattern. Boats will be backed down onto the landing stage and assistance will be provided to get pupils off the water swiftly.

One hazard at Hexham is the weir and importantly, how close our landing stages are to this significant hazard. This means that all rowers and coaches must be always vigilant of their distance from the weir when boating or landing or turning to go back up the river.

High winds will also affect your ability to row well and to turn safely, so if the conditions change – go back to the boathouse.

The following are key skills that are reinforced and practised to keep rowers safe around the weir.

Practice, practice, practice...

- stopping the boat quickly and confidently
- bow side and stroke side spins
- backing down a boat facing the current
- in an emergency – keep calm, listen to your cox and work as a team.

- Coxes are instructed in the following safety protocol. If the conditions change whilst you are out and you are worried about whether your crew will get too close to the weir, consider turning above the landing stages and letting the stream take you in or backing down if necessary. You are then able to row on and away from the weir if it's not working.

### Where is it safe to turn?

This is an aerial view of the boathouse, landing stages and weir. You can see how close the bottom landing stage is to the weir. All boats, even in a coxed boat, will be instructed to turn by the green line – at Top landing stage even if the water is at a normal height and flow.

Rowers will NOT go on to the water if the water is over the top landing stage.



Diagram 2 - Turn Before the Green Line to Keep Away from the Weir

### Key Danger at Tyne Green is the Weir

QEHS Rowers will be regularly instructed on the following Weir dangers.

### **What is the purpose of the Weir?**

A weir is a large wall that holds back river water so that it can be released slowly downstream and regulate the flow of water.

**Why are Weirs dangerous?** Water flows over the weir and creates a 'washing machine' effect at the bottom. People going into this part of the water are held under by the current making self-rescue or assisted rescue almost impossible. It doesn't matter how good a swimmer you are; swimming skills have little to do with survival.



Diagram 3 - The 'washing machine effect' of being caught below a weir.

Many people fail to realise that the faster the water is flowing, the shallower it needs to be to sweep you over.

- It only takes ankle deep water to knock you off your feet.
- It only takes 60 seconds to drown.

Many weirs (and we know this is the case at Hexham) have debris at the bottom. These are called strainers. Natural strainers force people under water and make self-rescue or assisted rescue very difficult and the debris can cause serious injuries.

## **5.0 RULES ON THE RIVER**

### **Questions to consider when going on the water:**

1. How competent am I/my crew in the following and do I have approval to use the equipment I am planning to use:
  - a. Rowing/sculling in a crew boat.
  - b. Sculling in a single.
  - c. Steering a coxless crew boat.
  - d. Coxing a crew boat.
2. Do I know what the flow and where to check it and do I know what the different restrictions are between green, amber, red/amber, and red.

3. Do I know what the current water temperature is and what additional restrictions apply at the three key cold water temperatures – less than or equal to 8 degrees, 5 degrees and 3 degrees.

4. Do I understand the restrictions around visibility?

5. Do I understand the restrictions around severe weather and electrical storms? Do I know what our definition of an electrical storm is? Adverse River and Weather Forecasts

## **6.0 RIVER HEIGHT AND FLOW**

As part of the regular reminders to members about standard safety procedures.

Current river conditions can be checked at Tyne Green via the following link.:

<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/station/9006>

A river level above 31.60m is the trigger for all water-based rowing to stop on that day.

The following online weather forecasts give good data on weather in the upland areas. This can provide good advanced warning of water levels expected due to precipitation on the hills that are the catchment for the River Tyne.

Mountain Weather Information service

Southern Uplands plus Cheviots - <https://www.mwis.org.uk/forecasts/scottish/southern-uplands>

Yorkshire Dales and North Pennines - Cross Fell

<https://www.mwis.org.uk/forecasts/english-and-welsh/yorkshire-dales-and-north-pennines>

The risk of local lightning storms can be monitored using:

[www.lightningmaps.org.metoffice](http://www.lightningmaps.org.metoffice)

## **Key Water Incident Facts - Develop a Healthy Respect for the Water of any Depth**

The following key facts are continually reinforced with all rowers:

- The majority of drowning deaths in the UK occur within only 3m of a safe point.
- 2/3 of those who die in flood-related accidents are good swimmers.

- After 20 minutes in water at 12°C the temperature of the deep muscle of your forearm would drop from 37 °C to 27°C, leading to a 30% reduction in muscle strength.
- In water 1m deep (waist high), flows of 1m/s become challenging and by 1.8m/s (4mph) everyone will be washed off their feet.
- Just 15cm (6 inches) of fast flowing water can knock you off your feet and be enough for you to be unable to regain your footing.
- 60cm (2 ft.) of standing water will float your car.
- Just 30cm (1ft) of flowing water could be enough to move the average family car.

### **COLD WATER ROWING RULES**

Immersion in cold water represents a particular risk. This may occur when a boat capsizes, is swamped, or a participant falls into the water from a landing stage.

Sudden unexpected immersion presents four stages of drowning risk:

**Stage 1** Initial immersion Cold water shock 0-3 minutes

**Stage 2** Short term immersion Swim failure 3-15 minutes

**Stage 3** Long term immersion Hypothermia 15-30+ minutes

**Stage 4** Post rescue Collapse Hours after rescue

If you do fall into cold water, you will immediately gasp for breath and hyperventilate; this increases the possibility that you will breathe in water and may mean you cannot hold your breath. Just one large aspiration of water can severely affect your ability to breathe. Hyperventilation can also cause dizziness, confusion, and panic. Your heart rate increases rapidly, and your blood pressure increases, potentially leading to cardiac arrest.

- Stay with your boat if you capsize,
- Try not to panic (the gasping for breath will start to lessen with time)
- Get your body out of (and ideally off) the water as quickly as possible; know where you will get out of the river.
- Seek medical attention in the treatment of moderate or severe hypothermia.

### **Advice for Cold Water immersion treatment**

Immersion in cold water represents a particular risk. This may occur when a boat capsizes, is swamped, or a participant falls into the water from the landing stage.

This guidance note accompanies the Cold-Water Rowing Rules and is intended to support all members in the recognition and basic treatment/first aid approach to hypothermia. Accidental hypothermia.

- **Mild hypothermia** is characterised by fast breathing/feeling of breathlessness, fast pulse rate, initial hyperventilation, unsteadiness, slurred speech, impaired judgement, shivering, and "cold diuresis" – an urge to urinate.



- **Moderate hypothermia** is characterised by reduction in pulse rate, shallow/slow breathing, central nervous system depression (confusion and sleepiness) and loss of shivering.

**Passive external rewarming is the treatment of choice for mild hypothermia.**

After wet clothing is removed, the person is covered with blankets or other types of insulation. Room temperature should be maintained at approximately 28°C (82°F), if possible (e.g. using a warm fan). Tepid/warm shower is suitable, but NOT hot. Similarly, warm drinks are OK, but NOT hot.

**Active external rewarming is the treatment for moderate hypothermia, or mild hypothermia that does not respond to passive external rewarming.**

It is also used as an adjunct in severe hypothermia (in which circumstance the casualty should be under direct medical care). It consists of some combination of warm blankets, radiant heat, or forced warm air applied directly to the skin. Rewarming of the trunk should be undertaken BEFORE the extremities to minimize the risk of further core temperature drop, low blood pressure and potentially dangerous blood metabolic change.

**Anything more than mild hypothermia (as described above) would mandate a 999 call. If any casualty with mild hypothermia does not respond to passive external re-warming, dial 999.**

## **7.0 EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND EMERGENCY REPORTING**

### **What To Do If Someone Collapses**

What to do if someone collapses, is unresponsive and not breathing normally If you are on your own:

- Check that you are safe and shout for help.
- Start doing chest compressions to the rhythm of “Staying Alive”.
- Call 999. 1. Ask for ambulance 2. Keep the phone line open 3. Put the phone on speaker.
- Try to keep doing chest compressions while answering the call centre’s questions.
- Keep doing the chest compressions until help arrives. If you do not know or are uncertain how to perform chest compressions, then the call centre will take you through the procedure.

If there are two or more persons present:

Person 1

- Call 999 and ask for an ambulance.
- Answer the call centre’s questions.
- Leave the phone line open.
- Put the phone on speaker.
- Get the AED if one is available.

Person 2

- Do chest compressions to the rhythm of “Staying Alive”.

When you have finished talking to the call centre, you can both:

- Share chest compressions until help arrives.



- Use the AED if available.

#### **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN IN THE EVENT OF A CAPSIZE**

- If out of your depth & unable to wade ashore, hold onto the capsized hull as a buoyancy aid & attempt to swim it to shore.
- If the water is cold, get as much of your body out of the water as soon as possible, draping yourself over the upturned hull (if necessary, turning over the hull for this purpose).
- If possible, "buddy-up"; holding on to each other until rescued to provide mutual warmth and support and to help ensure all are accounted for.
- Other boats in the vicinity should fetch help. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESCUE FROM ANOTHER ROWING SCULL - you are likely to tip over, putting more people in the water with no one to get help.

#### **IN THE EVENT OF A SERIOUS INCIDENT**

- IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, INCLUDING A CREW MEMBER BEING INJURED, TAKEN SERIOUSLY ILL OR BECOMING UNRESPONSIVE, IMMEDIATELY:
- Raise the Alarm with the Coach and with other boats if available.
- Use a mobile phone to dial for emergency assistance 999. If no mobile phone is available row to the nearest location where a safe landing can be made, get to a telephone, and make a 999 call, indicating the closest access location from the list: Tyne Green Boathouse or Hexham and Northern Mart

#### **NEAR-DROWNING**

The goal is to safely rescue the victim and begin first aid.

In a near-drowning emergency, the sooner the rescue and first aid begin, the greater the victim's chance of survival.

Do not endanger yourself in rescuing the victim during this process.

Rescue options to reach the drowning victim in the water:

- Use a Throw Line - stored in the boathouse.
- Throw a rope with a buoyant object.
- Use a long stick.
- Bring a boat alongside the victim and tow the victim to shore. Do not haul the victim into the boat because it may cause the boat to capsize, and both of you will be in the water. Cold water may render the victim too hypothermic to grasp objects within their reach or to hold while being pulled to safety.
- As a last resort, you can attempt a swimming rescue if you are sufficiently trained in water rescue. Do not attempt a rescue beyond your capabilities.

#### **LEPTOSPIROSIS (WEIL'S DISEASE)**

Leptospirosis, or Weil's disease, is an infection which is spread in the urine of animals, most commonly rats and cattle, and can be caught by humans through contact with contaminated fresh water. Infection usually occurs where open wounds are immersed in contaminated water, particularly during the summer months and although human infection in the UK is rare, those who participate in water sports, such as rowing, are at a higher-than-average risk and it is worth taking some precautions.

- wash your hands with soap and water after participating in water-based activities, and particularly before eating.
- clean any wounds as soon as possible.
- cover any cuts and grazes with waterproof plasters.
- shower as soon as possible after a capsize or if you have entered the water.

Symptoms of initial infection may occur up to 3 weeks after exposure and present as a flu-like illness lasting up to a week. If untreated, a severe form of the infection may result in jaundice, multiple organ failure and even death.

## **INCIDENT REPORTING**

Club members are asked to report all incidents of note (as per RowSafe criteria) using the online British Rowing online Incident Reporting system, with encouragement through all coaches and social media (plus face-to-face reminders if necessary). Reported incidents are responded to as necessary at the time and incidents and action taken are reported at the management group committee meetings.

All incidents should be reported using the British Rowing online reporting system (<https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/>)

It is important to report incidents as:

- We can all learn from others where situations have led to an incident and hopefully not put ourselves in similar situations.
- Clubs can use their reports to identify areas of safety needing attention in their location.
- Regional Rowing Safety Advisers can offer advice and help clubs develop their safe practice.
- Statistics gathered are important to counter knee jerk reactions to situations. For example, 'all rowers should wear lifejackets like canoeists and yachtsmen!'
- Only where essential will the reports form the basis of evidence for the Club officers or the Regional Council (not the respective safety advisers) to act if deemed appropriate.

There are obvious cases of antisocial behaviour/swearing etc that might require action as well as less obvious cases where reckless actions put lives at risk would fit into this category. QEHS Hexham Rowing Club maintains a log of club incidents, which is kept confidential amongst Safety Committee and Club Committee. Safety alerts are produced when there are lessons to be learned and shared with all members. These are anonymous.

One sheet headed Emergencies – what to do sets out the cascade of actions depending on the severity of the incident and includes contact details of named club officers in the order of trying to contact.

## **8.0 KEY LOCATIONS & TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

### **Location of Tyne Green for Emergency Services**

Tyne Green - What Three Words - strong.culminate.dearest

Hexham and Northern Mart - NE46 3SG

### **Hospital Contacts in Case of Emergency**

Hexham Hospital - Minor Injuries - Corbridge Rd, Hexham NE46 1QJ - 01434 655388

Cramlington Hospital - A&E - Northumbria Wy, Cramlington NE23 6NZ - 0344 811 8111

RVI Newcastle - A&E - Queen Victoria Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4LP - 0191 233 6161

### **First Aid**

There is one main first aid kit housed on the wall in the boathouse.

A list of Club First Aiders is maintained.

## **9.0 BOAT TRANSPORTATION**

### **Drivers**

Only individuals authorised by the Club are to drive the club vehicle and tow the trailer. All drivers are to be conversant with the British Rowing code for the Towing of Boat Trailers, a copy of which can be found here:

<http://www.britishrowing.org/sites/default/files/rowsafe/2-5-Transport%26Trailers-v1.pdf>

### **Boat Loading**

When boats are being taken to events on the trailer, the captain's will detail the trailer loading plan and communicate that to the participants. Loading is to be strictly in accordance with this plan and the driver is to check compliance with the plan prior to departure. The driver is to ensure that all boats and equipment are safely secured prior to departure and that the necessary requirements for front/rear projections and lighting are observed.

## **LOADING TRAILERS**

The two club trailers will be loaded using the following instructions. The older pupils are responsible under supervision for loading the boats, blades and other equipment outlined for the event. A boat and equipment plan will be posted in the boathouse to act as a checklist.

## **TOP OF THE TRAILER - BOATS**

- All boats should sit with stern at the front of the trailer and bow at the back
- Load quads first, from the inside out
- Quads should sit on the boat at both ends, by rigger screws closest to the bow, at the bow (with cox seat over the edge)
- Quads should be lined up at the stern before tied on
- Tie quads on and make sure they are secure as you go for ease
- Leave a couple inches gap between where boats sit on trailer, rigger screws should be a few cm apart.
- Use longer ties for quads and shorter ties for small boats.
- Top ties should be done after all 4 quads are on top, before boats are on the bottom 2 outside shelves.
- Load small boats from the top down and do the boats in the middle first.
- All small boats must have V blocks under the bow.
- Load boats in the middle from the back of the trailer, with 2 people carrying boat and at least 2 people in the middle of the trailer for singles and at least 3 for doubles.
- Small boats should sit on either the foot adjustment poles or boat (by rigger screws closest to stern) at the stern and on the canvas at bow.
- Don't put boats on the very bottom shelf until the bottom of the trailer is finished and the nets are on.
- It is easier to do the nets if the bottom 2 outside shelves are empty, but not necessary.
- Once all boats are on and tied, check everything is secure by holding the end of the boat and moving side to side. If any movement, the tie is too loose.
- Tie red and white tape to the stern of at least the middle 2 quads. If the rudder isn't at the end of the stern, use electrical tape to secure at the end.
- Make sure there is at least an arm's length of tape to hang loose.

## **BOTTOM OF THE TRAILER - BLADES, TRESTLES AND OTHER KEY ITEMS**

- If stood facing the back of the trailer, stroke side blades (red) go on the left-hand side and bow side blades (green) go on the right-hand side.
- Blades should sit flat with the painted face of the spoon facing up.
- Put sweep blades in first.
- Load blades in sets.
- Try to put blades in the same trailer as the boat they go with, not necessary though.
- Load a couple sets of trestles (or gazebo, if going in trailer) after the first few blades so you know how much space you have.
- Check all blades are in trailer and tick off the list either as you go or after they are all in
- Load quad trestles before small trestles.
- Trestles can also go in the minibus if there is not enough room in the trailers.
- Riggers can be loaded at the same time as trestles and blades.
- Load riggers in their sets.
- Put riggers in the same trailer as their boat.
- Load riggers with back stay against walls of trailer, in square pattern.
- Load wing riggers (e.g. Matt's) last, place on top of normal riggers.
- Once everything is in the bottom of the trailer, tie on nets.

- Tie the sides of the nets to the metal bars on the sides of the trailers and tie fronts and backs of the nets to the bottom shelves of trailer.
- When tying to the middle bar, tie both nets at the same time.
- Use net ties (short, bright blue ties) to tie on the nets.

## **EXTRA POINTS**

Before any boats go on the trailer, check:

- Hatch covers are tight.
- All 5 screws on foot stretcher are tight.
- Seats are either taken out or tied in (if unsure check the plastic at the end of the slide. If it is perpendicular to slide, the seats tie in. If there is a slope, the seats come out. Or check for holes in the slides where bungee attach.)
- If there is more than one trailer, try to have equal weights (same number of coxed/coxless quads and singles/doubles on each trailer)
- Have the trailer as evenly weighted as possible from left to right (e.g. if 1 single and 2 doubles are across one level, put the single in the middle)

# TRAILER LAYOUT (TOP)

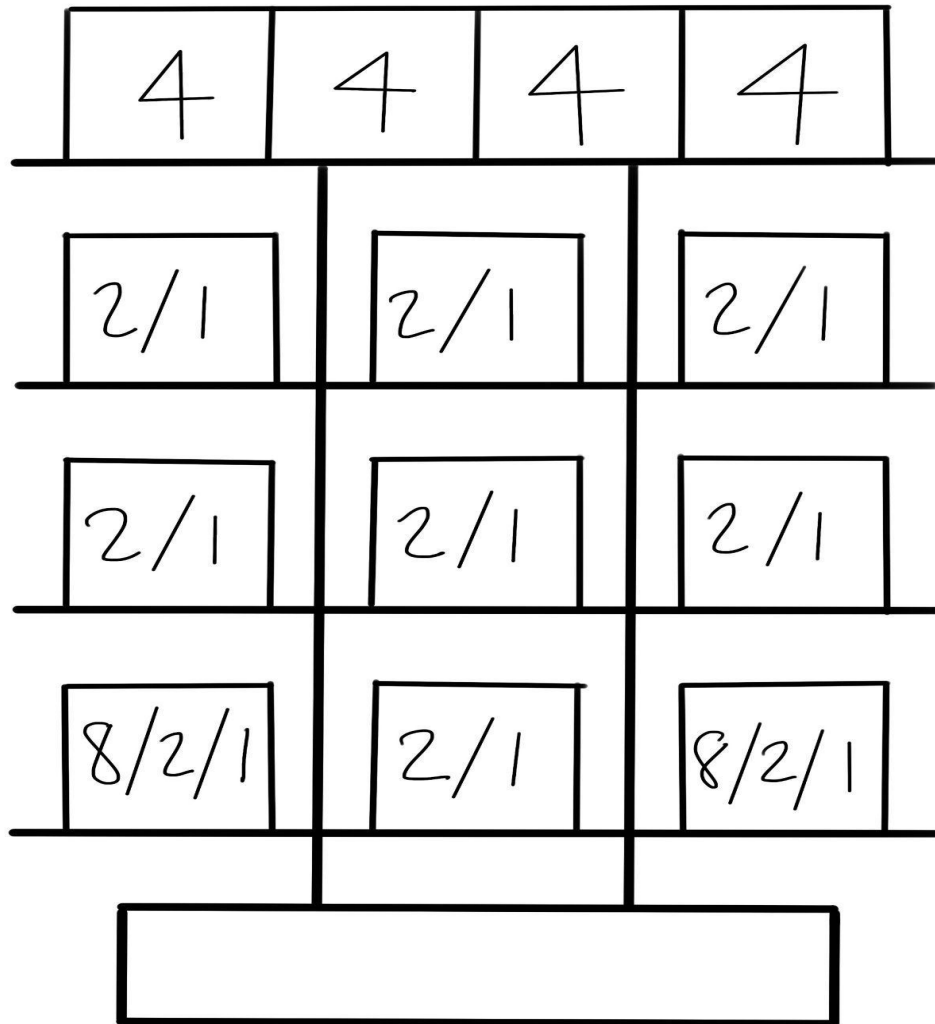


Diagram 4 - Trailer Rack Detailing the Positioning of Specific Boats

# TRAILER LAYOUT (BOTTOM)

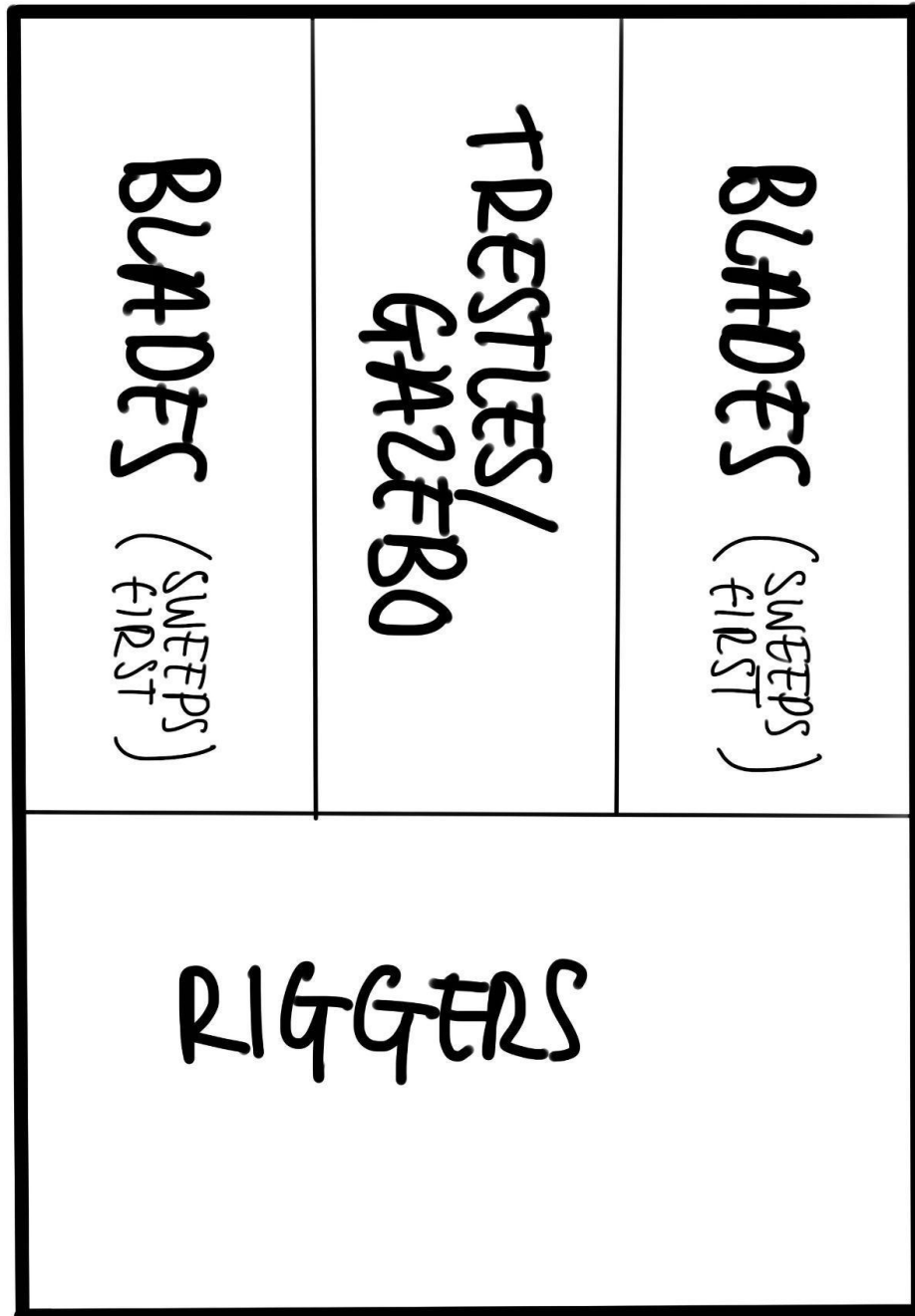


Diagram 5 - Trailer Base: Showing the Position of Equipment to be loaded

## 10.0 COMMUNICATION

As mentioned in preceding sections, communication of information about safety-related issues is key to keeping the club as a safe place to row. Such communication is about both the standard procedures that should be followed to reduce the risk of harm and the specific real-time information such as that about expected rowing conditions or about equipment not to use. The club's methods of engaging with members are evolving all the time with changes in how they and others use social media. The club uses a mixture of cascading information down through squad coordinators using WhatsApp and email now and a direct approach to all through means such as Facebook. The club web site is kept up to date with all information that is not transient or too detailed.

## 12.0 CONCLUSION

This document as always is work in progress, it will be reviewed thoroughly twice a year in September 2025 and April 2026. This plan will always be reviewed and updated in relation to any reported incident or near miss that are reported.

Paul Gaines  
Club Water Safety Adviser  
Version 1 as at 22-08-25

## APPENDIX

### Links to Key British Rowing Documents

British Rowing Row safe

- <https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/>

British Rowing Collision Avoidance - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/collision-avoidance/>

British Rowing Safety Alert Archive -

<https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/safety-alert-archive/>

British Rowing Towing Guidance

<https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/further-guidance/>

British Rowing Cold Water and Hyperthermia Guidance

<https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/further-guidance/>

British Rowing Boat \Safety Checks Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv294UHbj0s>

### Diagrams

Diagram 1 - Direction of Rowing Map for Tyne Green p4

Diagram 2 - Turn Before the Green Line to Keep Away from the Weir p6

Diagram 3 - The 'washing machine effect' of being caught below a weir p7



|                                                                          |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Diagram 4 - Trailer Rack Detailing the Positioning of Specific Boats     | p15 |
| Diagram 5 - Trailer Base: Showing the Position of Equipment to be loaded | p16 |

### Emergency Action Plan: QEHS Rowing Club

**Key Location:** QEHS Rowing Club, Tyne Green Road, NE46 3SG

**OS Grid Reference:** NY939646

**What Three Words:** strong.culminate.dearest

**QEHS Rowers and Volunteers MUST familiarise themselves with the following plan.**

**Know what to do, with what equipment and where to find it:**

- First aid kit is available in the boat house – FA box on the wall – extra first aid in the metal filing cabinet.
- Throwlines and life jackets are available in the boat house.
- Foil blankets, blankets, dry towels, and dry clothing are available in the club house.

In the event of an emergency – **Contact the Emergency Services on 999**

#### **Hospital Contacts in Case of an Emergency**

Hexham Hospital – Minor Injuries – Corbridge Rd, Hexham NE46 1QJ – 01434 655388

Cramlington Hospital – A&E – Northumbria Way, Cramlington NE23 6NZ – 0344 811 8111

RVI Newcatle – A&E – Queen Victoria Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4LP – 0191 233 6161

#### **In the event of a capsize:**

- If at risk of going over the weir, abandon your boat and get to a safe place.
- If out of your depth, hold onto your capsized hull as a buoyancy aid.
- If you cannot hold your boat, remember to float on your back rather than swimming.
- In cold weather, pull up onto your boat, get as much of your body out of the water and straddle the hull as soon as possible, draping yourself over the upturned hull.
- Stay with the boat but manoeuvre it to the bank to get to dry land.
- Other boats in the area should come to your help or older experienced crews will perform a buddy rescue.
- **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESCUE FROM A SINGLE SKULL – YOU ARE LIKELY TO TIP OVER**

#### **IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, INCLUDING A CREW MEMBER BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY ILL, INJURED OR BECOMING UNRESPONSIVE, IMMEDIATELY:**

- Raise the alarm with other boats or coach on the bank or alert a member of the public.
- Use a mobile phone to dial for emergency assistance on 999
- If an ambulance is required DIAL 999 and give the postcode or use What Three Words.

#### **Other Key Telephone Contacts**

**Police: Telephone 101**

**Environmental Agency 24-hour Emergency Line: 0800 807060**

**Environmental Agency Floodline: 0845 988 1188**