



Queen Elizabeth High School Rowing Club Risk Assessment – Rowing Activities

September 2025

Next annual update: September 2026

Scope of risk assessment	Covering water-based rowing activities					
Prepared by	Paul Gaines	Prepared	22/08/25	Review date	01/09/26	
LIKELIHOOD OF OCCURRENCE (L) 1= Very Unlikely 2= Unlikely 3= Likely 4= Very Likely 5= Certain or imminent						
Severity (S) 1= Minor disruption to crew or individual 2= Minor injury/damage to equipment 3= Potential immersion/ exposure to adverse conditions 4= Significant trauma or injury to collision, exposure to conditions or external agent 5= Potential fatality/incapacity						
		Severity				
		1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood Of Occurrence	1	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	2	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	3	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	4	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
	5	Low	Medium	High	High	High
Risk Rating						
	Residual Risk = 1-6 - No further action required. - Ensure controls are maintained		Adequately Controlled Risk = 7-14 Look to improve at the next review		Unacceptable risk = 15-25 Stop activity immediately and improve controls	

	Hazard Risk	Who or What is at risk?	LxS = risk rating no controls	Control measures/ Mitigation	LxS = risk rating with controls	Who	How often
1	General Procedures						
1.1	Unfamiliarity with procedures Risk of injury, damage to boats, loss of equipment	People, boats	3 x 3 9	• Induction training • Regular reminders on key safety issues • Year group briefings at least on an annual basis • Crews to sign in and out	2 x 2 4	Club Water Safety Advisor (CWSA)	Learn to row / new member / ongoing
1.2	Failure to learn from previous incidents on river Major injuries, loss of life, loss/serious damage to boats.	People, boats	4x4 16	• Report details of all incidents, including near misses, to the Club Water Safety Adviser	2x2 4	CWSA	Ongoing
1.3	Lack of confidence in water	People, boats	3x3 9	• Swim test and capsize drill should be completed by all members and repeated at least every year. • Priority for drill completion is new starters	2x3 6	CWSA	As/when new starters join club
1.4	Lack of experience in supervision	People, boats	3x4	• Coaches should have achieved Level 2 coaching	2x2	CWSA	Adequate training

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			12	- qualification (or equivalent) - Coaches must be members of British Rowing for water-based work with juniors and for leading courses on the water on behalf of the club, for adult beginners	4		provided
2	Boathouse						
2.1	Repairs, adjustments and maintenance Minor injuries, damage to boats, loss of equipment	People, boats	3x1 3	- Use of correct tools for job - Correct safety equipment used when required - Appropriate personnel to undertake the work at hand	3x1 3	Asset Management Lead (AML)	As needed
2.2	Unsafe boats and equipment Major injuries, loss of life, loss/serious damage to boats.	People, boats	3x5 15	- Regular audit - Reporting of problems - Proper repairs carried out ASAP - Notices on quarantined boat - Training on checking over boats before every outing	2x3 6	CWSA AML	Monthly audit / daily
2.3	Cleanliness Dust, fungal ingestion/inhalation, rats	People, boats	3x4 12	- Inspection - Regular cleansing - Pest control if serious	2x3 6	CWSA Coaches AML Club Captains	Weekly
2.4	Mobile boat racks, shutters, gates. Muscular strain, bumps	People, boats	3x3 9	- Inspection and simple maintenance - Regular professional	1x3 3	Club Captains Coaches	Weekly

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	Damage to boats Collision			checks for shutters		AML CWSA	
2.5	Riggers on moving boats Bumps, head/eye injury, damage to boats	People, boats	3x5 15	• Close gates • Sufficient people to lift boats • Observers to warn • Boats stored neatly without access impeded.	1x5 5	Coaches Club Captains	Daily
2.6	Storage of equipment Trips, slips, falls, bumps to people , damage or loss of equipment	People	4x3 12	• Regular inspection of storage areas • Store equipment neatly. Put equipment in cupboards or receptacles when finished with • Keep floor/access areas clear	2x3 6	Club Captain (boats)	Weekly / daily
2.7	Lighting Light failure leading to darkness and poor visibility	People	1x5 5	• Regular maintenance checks carried out • Repair fuse and/or replace tubes promptly	1x3 3	AML	Checks weekly / repairs when needed
2.9	Boats & trailers, changing facilities, car park, club Theft/vandalism as outdoor areas cannot be closed off	People	3x3 9	• Warn in advance of risk. • Ensure vigilance during the races. • Offer secure storage if possible.	2x2 4	All club members and parent helpers	Daily
3	Access to and from the river						
3.1	Steps, some damaged Slips, trips, falls	People, boats	3x4	• External lighting • Steps inspected before	2x3	CWSA / users as	Daily / repairs as needed

			12	sessions by coaches • Clear steps of debris, weed, mud and ice. • Descend and ascend slowly, under control • Footwear with good grip • Get steps repaired	6	individual	
3.2	Low water conditions at steps: Falls, muscular strains, inability to wade ashore or carry boats up to the first step. Cuts and grazes, likely to become infected.	People, boats	3x3 9	• Warnings issued about water obstacles. • Lower landing stage will be used. • Care taken with boats queuing	2x3 6	CWSA / users as individual	Daily
3.3	Rowing equipment left lying Slips, trips, falls, damage to blades, equipment may be knocked into the water	People, blades, other equipment	3x2 6	• Good supervision • Put all rowing equipment back as soon feasibly possible • Shoes stored against the bank side. • Care needed with Blades as boats are landing as they become a trip hazard	2x2 4	Rowers Parents Coaches Members of the Public	Daily
4	River Water Quality, Debris and other Hazards						
4.1	Quality Infections, poisoning, water-borne diseases	People, pets	3x5 15	• Avoid ingestion, wash hands after rowing, cleanse and cover cuts, blisters and other areas of broken skin. Shower as	2x4 8	CWSA / rowers as individual	Daily

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				soon as possible after rowing. • Use a screw top water bottle. • Wear strong shoes or boots on steps			
4.2	Floating debris Damage to boats, capsize, drowning	People' boats	1x5 5	• Keep watch for debris. Cancel rowing when large amounts of debris are present • Warn novice and inexperienced crews and coxes • Some debris may be able to be moved safely	1x4 4	Coaches Rowers as individual s	Daily
4.3	Underwater obstructions Damage to boats, capsize, drowning	People, boats	3x3 9	• Safety map on display in clubhouse • Warnings about temporary obstructions posted in clubhouse and on website • Warn novice, visiting and inexperienced crews and coxes	1x3	CWSA	Daily
4.4	Overhanging trees	People, boats	1x2 2	• Good lookout	1x1 1	Rowers as individual s	Daily
4.5	Members of the public Verbal abuse	Boats and people	1x2 2	• Report if serious	1x1 1	Rower as individual	Daily
4.6	Wildlife	People,	3x2	• Hygiene, vigilance when	1x3	CWSA/	Daily

	Weil's disease	boats	6	- on the water - If wildlife are becoming a limiting factor assess whether continuing to row is safe to do so - Report interaction with wildlife	3	rowers as individual	
5	Water Conditions						
5.1	Rough water conditions Wind, especially when against tide can create large waves – danger of capsizing or swamping	People, boats	4x4 16	- All boats to have built-in buoyancy - Cancel rowing when conditions are severe - Wind can be an issue at Tyne Green	2x4 8	Coaches CWSA	Daily
6	Weather Conditions and Light						
6.1	Overall risk Capsize/swamping Injury/chill/hypothermia	People, boats	2x5 10	- Coaches to refer to 5-day forecast in clubhouse and link on website - Display and regularly publicize club rules - Coaches to plan ahead in light of likely conditions	1x5 5	CWSA / coaches	Weekly
6.2	Cold/Frost Capsize/swamping Injury/chill/hypothermia	People, boats	2x5 10	- Wear appropriate clothing for conditions - Spond updated to reflect the correct clothing to wear - Some spare clothing available in the boathouse - Heaters in the club house for cold days	1x5	CWSA	Daily

				Towels are available in the boathouse			
6.3	Thunder Storm Injury	People, boats	2x4 8	- Cancel rowing if there is danger of imminent thunderstorms - Stop rowing and return to clubhouse if an unexpected thunderstorm occurs	1x3 3	CWSA	Daily
6.4	Bright sun and high temperature Sunburn, sun stroke, dehydration	People, boats	3x4 12	- Wear sunglasses and sunscreen - Coaches to watch for signs of sunstroke stroke - Rowers to take water on outings	2x3 6	Coaches	Daily
6.5	Mist/fog Collision, grounding	People, boats	3x4 12	- No rowing if far bank can not be seen - Novices/visitors/inexperienced rowers to take extra care	2x3 6	Coaches	Daily
		People, boats					
7	Boat Handling Off the Water						
7.1	Lifting, carrying, launching Falls, slips, trips, musculo-skeletal injury Damage to boat	People, boats	4x3	- Have sufficient people assist in handling the boat - Obey lifting instructions - Training for novices	2x3 6	Coaches Club captains Parent Helpers	Daily / training when required

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7.2	Trestles Trapped fingers Collapse	People, boats	3x3 9	• Check and repair trestles • Ensure that boats in use have sufficient trestles	2x3 6	AML Coaches Club Captains	Daily
7.3	Carrying blades Impact injury Loss/damage	People, boats	2x2 4	• Keep good lookout • Check when carrying and fitting • Blades starred against the fence to keep them out of the way of boats been carried	1x2 3	Rower as individual	Daily
8	Coxing						
8.1	Inexperienced coxes and steer persons collision, capsizing, injury and damage to boats	People , boats	4x4 16	• Training and assessment for coxes and steer persons • Novice trainees to be supervised	2x3 6	CWSA / Lead coach	Daily / training when required
8.2	Life jackets Failure to inflate Drowning	People ,	2x5 10	• Regular checks that lifejackets are fit for purpose • Prevent cox going in a boat without life jacket • Manual inflation life jacket in front loaders	1x5 5	CWSA / squad lead coach / cox as individual	Monthly / Daily
8.3	Lack of appropriate clothing Chill/hypothermia, drowning	People , boats	4x4 16	• Extra care on warm clothing in cold conditions • Shoes not welly boots • Hot Water bottles are available in the boathouse	2x2 16	Cox as individual	Daily

8.4	Equipment failure Cox box failure – crew unable to respond to directions – risk of collision, damage, grounding	People , boats	3x4 12	• Check equipment and re-charge regularly • Cox to check working and charged before each outing • Any issues to be reported to coaches • Coaches to inform AML of any issues that need to be investigated.	2x3 6	AML Coaches Captains	Daily
9	Rowing on the water						
9.1	Not following rules of the river Risk of collision, capsize, injury, damage to boat	People, boats	2x4 8	• Local safety rules and Tyne code on display in clubhouse and on website • Training for new rowers • Regular reminders to all rowers • Keep good lookout	1x4 4	CWSA / Rower as individual	Training when required / Daily
9.2	Interaction with non-powered river users (incl canoeists, paddle boarders, open water swimmers) Risk of collision due to unexpected movements or speed	People, boats	3x4 12	• Respect their right to use the river • Slow down if necessary • Remain polite • Be vigilant if swimmers are in the river	2x3 6	Rower as individual	Daily
9.3	Collision with weir Collision, currents and eddies	People, boats	3x3 9	• Avoid turning close to bridges • Take particular note of direction of current	2x3 6	Rower as individual / CWSA	Daily

				strength and wind conditions • Bank side observer to be vigilant to boats approaching turning zone. • Pupils always back down to the landing stage. This allows pupils to put in a stroke if required.			
9.4	Collision with posts, buoys, jetties Collision, capsize, damage to boat/blades	People, boats	3x3 9	• Draw attention to safety map on display • Keep a good lookout • Watch current close to obstacles and structures	2x2 4	CWSA / rower as individual rower / cox as individual	Daily
9.5	Lack of liquid Dehydration, infection from river water	People, boats	2x4 8	• Take bottle in the boat • Screw top bottle or similar to prevent contamination with river water and mud. • Modify session if the heat is excessive - allow plenty of breaks	1x3 3	Rower as individual	Daily
9.6	Lack of buoyancy Swamping, Damage to boat Injury, drowning of crew	People, boats	2x5 10	• Regular inspection • Check hatch covers before every outing • Any specific issues need to be reported to coaches and AML. • Boats not to be used will be clearly signed.	1x5 5	Coaches AML	Daily
9.7	Gates come undone Capsize, drowning,	People, boats	2x5	• Check securely tightened • Check top nut	1x5	Coaches	Daily

	hypothermia		10	- Coaches to reinforce the importance of this check. - Coaches to circulate all boats and check while boats are being prepared to be taken out.	5		
9.8	Blades Loss, breakage, capsize	People, boats	2x4 8	- Check novices have fixed blades correctly in boat - Check collars are tight - Check for damage	1x4 4	lead coach / rower as individual	Daily
9.9	Communication with land based personnel	People, boats	3x5 15	- Coaches are required personnel have a mobile phone on them during water based activity - Check at the beginning of each session that everyone has shared telephone numbers	2x3 6	CWSA / coach / rower as individual	Daily
10	Extra Care for Beginners						
10.1	Cannot swim Risk of drowning	People	3x5 15	Anyone who has not completed a satisfactory swim test to wear life jacket	1x5 5	Rower as individual / lead coach	Daily
10.2	Poor or inadequate instruction leading to unsafe behaviour, Risk of injury	People	2x3 6	- A minimum of 1 Qualified L2 coach present - No L2 coach then the session will be a dry land session. - Prepare clear training plan for the exercise	1x3 3	lead coach	Daily

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				Brief thoroughly - use whiteboards to brief rowers of the sessions.			
10.3	Novice rowers unfamiliar with river Risk of injury and damage to equipment	People, boats	3x5 15	- Experienced rowers / coaches to be present on water with novices - Novice rowers advised not to row in adverse weather conditions	2x3 6	CWSA / Lead coach	Daily