

OLRA ROWING SAFETY POLICIES

(REV. APRIL 2025)

Scope: This policy applies to all people participating in OLRA sanctioned rowing: adults, minors and coaches. These are minimal standards; each individual has their own abilities and tolerance for conditions and equipment. Beyond these standards, each person must make their own determination if they will be comfortable and safe in each situation and others shall respect those boundaries.

1. ALL PARTICIPANTS:

All participants must attest to their ability to swim, on the registration form. The organizational standard for being able to swim includes: swimming 150 yards and treading water/staying afloat for 10 minutes.

Safety Recommendations:

- Annually review the US Rowing Safety Resources, including watching the Safety Video, found on the US Rowing website.
- Wear bright colored or neon colored clothing on the upper body

Weather:

Fog: If, when standing at the boathouse, the first island is not visible, unaccompanied rowing is prohibited.

Electrical Storms: Launching of boats must be delayed thirty minutes from the last time thunder is heard, or lightning is detected using a weather forecasting application such as Lightning. If thunder is heard while on the water, crews must proceed immediately to the boathouse. If lightning is detected, crews must seek cover at the nearest dock or beach. Do not proceed to row until you have not seen flashes of lightning or heard any claps of thunder for at least 30 minutes.

Cold Water: Cold water is defined as temperature of 50° Fahrenheit or less. From the date of commencement of rowing (approximately March 15) until the Director of Rowing deems the water temperature to be safe, there will be no rowing of boats with fewer than four oars (singles or pairs). This will also apply in the Fall, when the Director of Rowing, checking the water temperature, suspends rowing in boats with fewer than four oars for the remainder of the season.

Daylight: The terms of the agreement between OLRA and RSD18 prohibit engaging in water-based activities outside of daylight hours, ie sunrise to sunset. This policy consistent with the agreement, prohibiting any rowing outside of daylight hours.

2.ACCOMPANIED ROWERS

Definition: Accompanied rowers are defined as those rowers for whom a coach is responsible. The responsible coach must be in an RSD18 launch, and compliant with all Launch Driver responsibilities described in section 4. All junior rowing, and all Learn To Row participants are accompanied. Adults wishing to consider themselves as accompanied must notify the responsible coach that she/he is responsible for their crew.

Traffic Pattern: Responsible coaches must ensure that their crews adhere to the traffic pattern unless:

- A. Weather conditions dictate a safer route
- B. Crews are participating in a structured workout

Boats traveling counter to the traffic pattern are burdened. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that burdened boats avoid collision with any boat traveling in compliance with the traffic pattern.

Weather: It is the responsibility of the coach to monitor the weather and ensure that crews for whom he/she is responsible are safe and comply with organizational rules listed in section 1.

3.UNACCOMPANIED ROWERS

Definition: Unaccompanied rowers are defined as those participants for whom no coach is responsible. Unless the coach on the water has been notified that he/she is responsible for a particular crew, that crew is considered unaccompanied.

Authorization of Minors (under age 18): Minors (those under age 18) shall not row unaccompanied, unless an adult is in the boat.

Adult Authorization: Adults may row unaccompanied if:

- Can enter and exit the boat on the dock unassisted
- Demonstrated ability to steer to follow the traffic pattern and avoid hazards
- Demonstrated ability to maneuver forwards and backwards
- Can verbalize a safety plan in the event of capsizing
- Crewmates who deem a rower as unsafe are empowered to recommend a change of personnel.

Traffic Pattern: Before launching, unaccompanied participants must familiarize themselves with the Rogers Lake traffic pattern. Maps are provided posted in the boathouse and in the Blood Street Sculls Manual (available on the website, and hard copy). All participants shall adhere to the traffic pattern unless:

- A. weather conditions dictate a safer route
- B. boats are participating in a structured workout

Boats traveling counter to the traffic pattern are burdened. Burdened boats must watch out for, and give way to any boat traveling in compliance with the traffic pattern. The traffic pattern is in a counterclockwise direction around the lake. Once clearing the harbor/launching area, boats must keep the shore continuously to starboard avoiding natural obstructions, docks and floats along the shore or protruding into the lake. Keep well off all obstacles.

Weather: It is the responsibility of adult, unaccompanied participants to survey the weather prior to launching, to mitigate against the risk that weather conditions will deteriorate while they are on the water, such that they are in violation of the weather regulations stated in section 1.

Cold Water Regulations: In compliance with Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) regulations 15subtitle 121sections a13 and a17, between October 1 and May 31, unaccompanied rowers must wear a Type I, II, III or V, U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device. It is recommended that participants purchase their own Coast Guard approved personal flotation device.

Wind/Waves: Waves are generated by wind. Unaccompanied rowers are prohibited from rowing in winds of 12 MPH or more. If white caps (defined as waves with foamy crests usually beginning at 9 – 11MPH) are present, unaccompanied rowing is discouraged. If sudden winds materialize while rowing, return to the boathouse using the safest route or, if necessary, take the boat to a safe shore or dock and wait until the winds subside.

Sign Out/In: All unaccompanied boats are required to sign out in the logbook, detailing date, launch time, vessel and participants (8+ waived). At the conclusion of your row, sign in and report any necessary repairs to equipment in accordance with the Damage Policy.

4.RESPONSIBILITIES OF LAUNCH DRIVERS:

All launch drivers must comply with the Launch Policy, which includes presentation of a Connecticut Boating License to the Director of Rowing for documentation. All safety launches must be equipped with:

- 7/16" and 3/4" wrench, pliers, screwdriver, knife are recommended
- 12 lifejackets (each bag contains six jackets)

- Paddle
- VHF radio on Channel 73 (not required if there is only one launch on the water)
- Blue emergency bag (horn, whistle, space blankets, first aid)
- Cell phone (waterproof bag)
- Use 'kill switch' lanyard

Optional equipment includes a walkie talkie for communication with coxswains.

When Using Launch in an Emergency:

Priorities

- Rowers **MUST** stay with boat (right it and sit in flooded boat if possible)
- Launch driver gives out life jackets
- If another coach is on the water, notify them immediately with location of incident
- Get rowers out of the water (prioritize smaller/thinner rowers) and onto the launch using bow ladder
- Keep the launch balanced front/back, side/side, having all passengers sit.
- If cold, use space blankets and huddle on deck
- If conditions warrant, or if athletes are in the water for an extended period, check for signs of hypothermia and call 911, if necessary
- Get boat later