

# BAINBRIDGE ISLAND ROWING SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Revision 6, Fall, 2018

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## Introduction

Safety is the responsibility of every rower and staff member. Rowers, coxswains, and coaches complement the BIR commitment to safety. Lapses in safety consciousness can result in serious injury or death and/or costly repairs to expensive equipment. Leadership in safety consciousness and preparedness can significantly reduce these incidents and improve their outcome if they occur. The Bainbridge Island Rowing (BIR) *Safety Policy* consists of rules approved by the BIR Board to better ensure the safe handling and operation of shells, launches, and equipment and the supervision of crews. These Policies are in place to reduce the chance of personal injury or equipment damage, and to indicate safe and responsible behavior. The *Safety Policy* does not guarantee complete rower safety. The *Safety Policy* is to be used in conjunction with the BIR *Boat Use and Planning Policy*.

## Leadership

As mentioned above, leadership plays an important role in avoiding incidents and dramatically improve the outcome. A willingness to lead regardless, requires preparedness and a certain amount of moxie. BIR members are required to read and understand these Safety Policies annually as a part of membership renewal, and as such should be prepared to take a leadership role ("person in charge") in an incident and bring it to the best possible outcome.

## Director of Rowing (DOR)

The Director of Rowing is responsible for setting and diligently maintaining the safety culture at BIR. He/she:

- qualifies Launch Operators/Safety Officers and advanced rowers who may use smaller shells without a launch (BIR Boat Use Policy).
- maintains BIR's coach background check program and reports to the BIR President on this matter.
- is an integral part of the Incident Reporting process, follows up on all cases in which he/she is not directly involved, and works with the BIR Safety Committee to address closure on all incidents / emergencies.
- encourages each squad to exercise simple emergency procedures from time to time on the water and promotes an annual Water Safety Training Day open to all BIR members and nearby rowing clubs.
- hosts the annual BIR Safety seminar/review.

When the DOR is absent from the local area, he/she will designate an alternate and report this to all coaches and the BIR Board President and Vice President.

## BIR Safety Committee

The BIR Board of Directors is responsible for establishing and amending the *Safety Policy* and for appointments to the Safety Committee. The BIR Safety Committee is responsible for developing the administration and testing (qualification, review, and documentation) of matters pertinent to rowing safety, and ensuring the proper supply of safety equipment and its condition through periodic inspections. The Safety Committee will meet periodically throughout the year to discuss BIR's safety posture, safety issues including incidents/emergency situations, and engage BIR coaches in safety-related conversation. The Safety Committee is also responsible for reviewing and determining root and secondary causes and developing recommended and also addressing situations involving non-conformance with the Safety Policy and resultant consequences as determined by the coach involved and the DOR.

## Incident Reporting

Very often incidents (injury, boat capsizing, and equipment damage) arise as a result of multiple lapses in attention. Incident reporting is a process by which 1) BIR leadership is promptly made aware of incidents, 2) BIR leadership makes the necessary communications to members and the community at large, 3) Procedural changes from the lessons learned are communicated and implemented.

The incident report process is described in detail in the Coaches section of this document). It commences with the Launch Operator/Safety Officer or Person In Charge (could be a coxswain) completing the on-line Incident Report Form and continues with BIR Board and DOR assessment of the event to determine membership and community communication needs, and concludes with Safety Committee and DOR analysis of the event, and report to the BIR Board. Analysis helps pinpoint the root cause of accidents and provide specific lessons for members and coaches to help avoid future incidents. Periodic review of incident reports reminds us both of our policies, the importance of on-scene leadership, and the need for vigilance. Part Two of these policies contain both parts of BIR's incident report format part 1 of which is also available at BIR's [www.icrew.club](http://www.icrew.club) web site, and the Coach Incident Reporting section addresses how the incident reporting process is implemented in detail including preparation and submission (Coach/Person In Charge), review and intermediate actions (BIR Board), and finally follow-up, development of lesson learned, and implementation of training (BIR Safety Committee).

## Annual safety seminar

The BIR DOR will conduct an Annual Safety Seminar and Safety Review. Coaches and Safety Officer/Launch Operators will participate. The Director of Rowing will invite coxswains and other rowers to this seminar. The seminar will review rowing, launch, trailer, and yard incident reports on file from the preceding year, discuss resolution of the incidents, and how each incident might have been prevented. Based on the review, the group may recommend additions and/or amendments to the Safety Policy to the Board of Directors.

## Personal health

A BIR Value is Fitness: Rowing is a lifetime sport that is accessible to everyone. It develops strength, flexibility, and fitness for junior and master rowers. With this in mind, our policy is that medicine necessary to maintain health is an individual responsibility. While we ask members to complete medical-related forms as a part of annual registration, we also ask that they attend to their personal medical needs and let others know only so much as to allow them to render assistance if necessary.

There is a no blood alcohol level or other intoxicant level for rowers and staff at the time of any on-the-water event. This policy is strictly enforced.

## Part 1: Definitions and Details

### Rowers

#### General Requirements for All Rowers

Rowing and sculling can be highly energetic activities. All rowers are advised to discuss with their physicians if rowing is appropriate for their physical condition. BIR responds to on-the-water emergencies by contacting Bainbridge Island Fire Department for assistance as well as providing on-the-water assistance. Rowers are required to file a medical history, medical contact, and an authorization for the release of medical information forms to assist emergency responders. Updating the medical history and medical contacts is the responsibility of the rower. Members are asked to provide medical information as a part of the BIR annual registration for use only by emergency medical technicians. Members are responsible for medications that may be required during daily activities. BIR recommends that the individual carry their medications on person. Assistance in the transport of medications can be

requested. Members can also inform rowers or personnel of their medical condition(s) for assistance in case of emergency. Examples of such medications are for asthma or bee stings.

To minimize injury to squad members, during transport of shells both into and out of the water, BIR requires an annual weight lift test to assure sufficient physical strength for the launch and return of shells. The individual's share of the weight for an eight-person shell is 35 lb. BIR encourages weight training to achieve this capability. For those who cannot pass the annual weight test, BIR will try to provide assistance during launch and return of the shell.

All Rowers must adhere to the BIR Safety Policy and Procedures as well as the use of common sense safety procedures. With Masters rowers, the potential exists, for those who keep personal shells in the Rowing Center, for conflict between personal decisions involving personal property and BIR coach (paid or volunteer) interpretation of BIR Safety Policies. In those situations, a BIR member's interests will be subordinate to those of BIR coach directions.

The Spring season Juniors rowing program at BIR is a School (BHS) Club sport, however Junior rowers are required to adhere to the BHS Code of Conduct throughout the year.

Before rowing for the first time in any calendar year, all rowers must address relevant parts of BIR's registration process:

- Acknowledgement of reading the *Safety Policy and Procedures* available on-line.
- Provide Authorization for the Release of Information in Case of Emergency and, via iCrew registration, a current Medical Emergency Point of Contact
- Completed on-line a US Rowing liability waiver for the current year regardless of regatta participation intentions. ([www.usrowing.org](http://www.usrowing.org)). Championship membership level affords the individual additional personal insurance coverage. Basic membership does not.
- Sign and provide current-year BIR Consent and Release from Liability Form
- Print out, sign, and turn in the Junior Rower registration packet from iCrew for Junior Rowers
- Have on file a float test completed within the past ten years. (Form available in Links at [www.bainbridgerowing.org](http://www.bainbridgerowing.org))
- Provide indication that rower is capable of lifting his/her share of boat weight overhead or, if not, should partake in improving his/her upper body strength through a dedicated fitness program. One's share of an eight-person shell is approximately 35 pounds. NOTE: It is the responsibility of the individual to make his/her arrangements for assistance carrying boats if it is required.
- Pay annual membership dues, program fees, and rack fees as appropriate.

### Qualifications and training

*Learn-to-Row participants* have little or no experience. *Learn-to-Row participants* must be capable of lifting and carrying their share of the boat. Prior to rowing the first time, learn-to-row participants must watch and certify that they have watched the USRowing Safety Video, <http://www.usrowing.org/Safety/SafetyVideo>

They will row in BIR shells only under the direct supervision of an experienced coxswain and within visual range of a coach in a safety launch. One coach will be responsible for no more than 16 Learn-to-Row category rowers.

*Novices* are rowers that have rowed less than a year and have completed a Learn-to-Row course or are High School students enrolled in the BIR Junior Rowing Program. Novices can row in BIR shells under the direct supervision of an experienced rower capable of executing coaching and launch operator responsibilities or in boats in which experienced rowers occupy at least half the seats. Novices must report to their coach that they have watched the USRowing Safety Video, <http://www.usrowing.org/Safety/SafetyVideo>

*Experienced rowers* have rowed a year or more. They have demonstrated safe boat handling skills to a BIR coach. A coach can permit experienced masters and junior rowers/scullers to scull (single, double, coxless quad) or row in fours or pairs sweep boats without a coxswain. From the BIR Boat Use Policy:

- BIR boats shall be attended by a coach in a safety launch except at regattas. The following exception exists for **General Use** boats only:
  - Small boats (doubles and singles only unless otherwise authorized by the DOR) may be used without a safety launch in daylight hours only provided the rowers using it are masters coach-recommended as appropriate.

#### Scullers and Rowers of Pairs

- Unless a rower is participating in BIR's sculling program, a flip test is required to row BIR sculls (singles and doubles) and pairs to demonstrate the ability to safely get back into a capsized shell or use it as a paddleboard to get to shore. (Mount the capsized shell facing the end mounted in order to be able to steer while paddling). After two failed attempts to right a capsized shell, the rower should instead get up on the keel and paddle ashore.
- Wear bright colored clothing to increase visibility on the water and to aid in the identification of rowers in case of emergency.
- Interested scullers and/or pair-rowers may complete a Captains Test of which a flip test is included.

#### Off-water/preparatory safety

1. Do not row if there exists or is a threat of a) high winds, b) an electrical storm, or c) reduced visibility (fog or driving rain/snow).
2. Adhere to the BIR Cold Weather Policy in Part 2. Consider dressing in layers and bringing water with you in the shell.
3. Before rowers use BIR rowing equipment for the first time, a coach or experienced rower will explain standard boat-handling protocol.
4. The coxswain is responsible for coordinating *every* movement of four and eight-person shells. Rowers will respect and help coxswains generally by minimizing talking in the boat unless directed by the coxswain or otherwise absolutely necessary.
5. Prior to launch, check your seat for smooth operation; your foot stretcher for a) alignment, b) tight fasteners, c) 3 inches or less heel-tie movement, and d) unacceptable wear of shoes/sandals/clogs; and rigging components to ensure tight fasteners. Catastrophic component failure and accelerated wear during workouts or races can be prevented by these checks.
6. Use navigation lights if rowing at or after sunset or before sunrise.

#### On-water safety

1. Rowers will respect and help coxswain and coach by executing commands given by the coxswain or the coach. A rower with safety concerns afloat will bring these concerns to the attention of the coach or coxswain and otherwise will not talk in the boat.
2. If sculling or rowing pairs, give strong consideration to rowing with a buddy and stay close to shore.
3. Make note of equipment issues in the boat and work with the coxswain to ensure they are both recorded on the equipment status board in the Rowing Center upon landing and brought to the

attention of the coach. If the issue is serious, recommend the coxswain seek help from the coach/launch operator and return the boat to shore for repair.

4. All rowers should be familiar with and prepared to carry out the Incident/Emergency Procedures described in Part 2 of these policies.

## **Coxswains**

### **Qualifications and training**

Coxswains will be trained by coaches, experienced coxswains, or experienced rowers. A coach may permit a master or junior coxswain to cox General Use shells without a launch in certain conditions and to cox Designated Racing shells. See the BIR Boat Use Policy.

Coxswains will have reviewed the video at: <http://www.usrowing.org/Safety/SafetyVideo> and will have ridden in a launch or rowed in a shell with an experienced rower/launch operator over the entire length of Eagle Harbor (east of the Aquatic Conservancy for launches) before executing coxswain duties for the first time.

### **Off-water/preparatory safety**

1. Do not row if there exists or is a threat of a) high winds, b) an electrical storm, or c) reduced visibility (fog or driving rain/snow).
2. Adhere to the BIR Cold Weather policy in Part 2., Checklists.
3. Ensure that the shell bow ball is present and fastened securely.
4. Install navigation lights with good batteries before launching if the boat is to be in use before sunrise or after sunset.
5. Take charge of boat handling from rack to slings, slings to water, and return to storage using standard commands with which rowers are familiar. Know these commands and exercise them clearly and with authority.

### **On-water safety**

1. Take charge of boat operations from launch to landing using standard commands with which rowers are familiar. Know these commands and exercise them clearly and with authority.
2. Know and adhere to the Eagle Harbor traffic pattern (see Part 3, Other Information: Eagle Harbor Traffic Pattern). Know the location of permanent mooring balls, pencil buoys, and lighted buoys.
3. All shells underway must be within line of sight of a safety launch at all times unless otherwise authorized by the DOR. This is a shared responsibility between the Launch Operator/Safety Officer and each Coxswain.
4. Be alert for the unexpected entry of row boats into the channel between live-aboard boats and docks, entry of power or sailing vessels from the marinas into the channel that may not see you, logs or other objects adrift on the water, boats moored in unexpected locations, and wakes from passing power boats. Do not hesitate to rapidly stop the boat if necessary by yelling "Way enough! Hold water!"
5. Know the tide levels to avoid grounding in particular at Stetson Point and at the head of Eagle Harbor.

6. Return to shore immediately if there arises a) an electrical storm, b) high winds, or c) reduced visibility (fog or driving rain/snow). If an electrical storm arises, head for nearest shore, not the boatyard! Rowers and coxswain should debark at the shoreline, attempt to secure the boat in a way that will minimize hull damage – including resting the hull on the beach, and seek appropriate shelter.
7. Make note of equipment issues in the boat and work with rowers to ensure that issues are recorded on the equipment status board in the Rowing Center upon landing and brought to the attention of the coach. If the issue is serious, seek help from the coach or launch operator. If appropriate, return the boat ashore immediately for repair.
8. All coxswains should be familiar with and able to assist in Incident/Emergency Procedures described in Part 2 of these policies.

## **Safety Officer/Launch Operators**

### **Qualifications and training**

A Safety Officer/Launch Operator is trained and approved by the DOR to operate a launch safely in the proximity of multiple shells on the water at the same time. The launch is capable of creating a wake that can impair stability of shells. A Safety Officer/Launch Operator understands how shells of various sizes function on the water; the associated risks including limited stability, limited visibility, and the substantially higher speed at which they can travel in relation to Coast Guard inner-harbor speed limits; and their fragility when it comes to even minor collisions or wave-induced hull damage.

A Safety Officer/Launch Operator must have solid general boating experience in order to operate a Safety Launch safely inside and outside of Eagle Harbor, and in the vicinity of rowing shells, while devoting his/her primary attention to the safety of rowers and their equipment.

A Safety Officer/Launch Operator, individuals must:

- Be trained and qualified by a BIR coach,
- Sign a Coach/Launch Operator Agreement (see Part 3, Other Information) to be filed in ones personnel folder,
- Have a valid Washington State Boater Safety Certification, and a valid First Aid and CPR Certification
- Have a valid First Aid, CPR, and AED Certification.
- Have read and understand the BIR *Safety Policy and Procedures*
- Have read the BIR Boat Use Policy,
- Have watched the video at: <http://www.usrowing.org/Safety/SafetyVideo> and ridden with an experienced Coach over the entire length of Eagle Harbor (east of the Aquatic Conservancy), north and south channels, before executing launch operator duties the first time.
- Will wear a life jacket while operating a BIR safety launch.

Safety Officers/Launch Operators are expected to be familiar with:

- How to operate each unique launch/engine configuration
- The Eagle Harbor Traffic Pattern and incident / emergency response access address numbers on maps provided aboard each launch, posted in the boatyard, and as described in Part 3 of the these policies.
- The proper responses to emergencies that can arise on-water, including collision, grounding, swamping, man overboard, rower medical emergencies, as well as mechanical failures affecting normal rowing. The appropriate responses to emergencies are described in Part 2, Incident/Emergency Procedures in these policies.

## Off-water/preparatory safety

1. Do not permit rowing if there exists or is a threat of a) high winds, b) an electrical storm, or c) reduced visibility (fog or driving rain/snow).
2. Use the Safety Officer/Launch Operator checklist in Part 2 to ensure the proper safety equipment and communications equipment is carried on board safety launch. Confirm that radio communications function before launching.
3. Adhere to the BIR Cold Weather policy in Part 2., Checklists.
4. Ensure shells are outfitted with navigation lights when required.
5. Know the tide height to avoid grounding in shallow water.

## On-water safety

1. Alert coxswains to hazards for navigation *before* a crisis occurs. This includes low water and grounding, boat traffic, debris in the water, unexpected boat moorings, proximity of shells to shoal water, other shells on a collision course, obstacles routinely encountered in the waterway, and waves induced by power boats. Alerting coxswains to hazards is especially critical in the dark. If necessary to avoid having a shell run aground or collide, do not hesitate to clearly and with authority order it to rapidly stop, by yelling "Way enough! Hold water!"
2. Make note of equipment issues in the boat and work with rowers to ensure they are both recorded on the equipment status board upon landing and brought to the attention of the coach. If the issue is serious, notify other Safety Officers or Launch Operators for help. If necessary, return the boat ashore immediately for repair. The appropriate responses are described in Part 2, Incident/Emergency Procedures.
3. All shells underway must be within line of sight of a safety launch at all times unless otherwise authorized by the DOR. This is a shared responsibility between the Launch Operator/Safety Officer and each Coxswain.

## Coaches

Coaches are also Safety Officer/Launch Operators who ensure the safety of BIR rowers and coxswains and the safe operation of BIR equipment.

A Coach will:

- Be hired by the board,
- Sign a Coach/Launch Operator Agreement (Part 3, Other Information) to be filed in ones personnel folder,
- Have completed the USRowing Coaching Level 1 training, have equivalent prior coaching experience, or for assistant coaches be working toward that level of experience,
- Have a valid Washington State Boater Safety Certification Card.
- Have a valid First Aid, CPR, and AED Certification.
- Have read and understand the BIR *Safety Policy and Procedures*
- Have read and will adhere to the BIR Boat Use Policy,
- Have watched the USRowing Safety Video <http://www.usrowing.org/Safety/SafetyVideo> and have ridden with an experienced Coach over the entire length of Eagle Harbor (east of the Aquatic Conservancy), north and south channels, before carrying out launch operator duties the first time,
- Certify scullers who use BIR sculling boats (Captains test)
- Train and qualify Safety Officers/Launch Operators
- Complete online at USRowing **SAFESPORT** training and submit a copy of **SAFESPORT** Certificate of completion <http://www.usrowing.org/safety/safesport>

Coaches and Assistant Coaches are expected to be familiar with:

- How to operate each unique launch/engine configuration,

- The Eagle Harbor traffic pattern and incident / emergency response access address numbers on maps provided aboard each launch, posted in the boatyard, and as described in Part 3 of the these policies.
- Proper responses to emergencies, such as collision, grounding, swamping, man overboard, and mechanical failures as well as land-based casualties, e.g., rowing center or at regattas. The appropriate responses are described in Part 2, Incident/Emergency Procedures.

### Incident Reporting Process

Leadership for this process rests with the DOR, and, in his absence, his formally designated substitute or the BIR Vice President.

Leadership at the scene rests with the Launch Operator/Safety Officer or on-water Coach, the Coxswain, or the Person In Charge (PIC) if ashore. The PIC will be that individual with the confidence and knowledge to take charge of the incident / emergency, lead the orchestration of immediate and followup actions, and be responsible for the initial reporting of the event using (verbal report) the call list in each launch and the Rowing Center and (written report) the format in Part 2 which is available on our [www.iCrew.club](http://www.iCrew.club) web site. The PIC will liaison with the BIR Vice President and Safety Committee to support analysis of the event reported on.

Leadership at the BIR Board level is led by the BIR Vice President to whom the Safety Committee reports. He is responsible for working with the Safety Committee who will work with the reporting individual or other person central to a reported incident/emergency and the DOR to complete the analysis of what happened, develop and transmit lessons learned, and to close out the incident report.

The BIR Safety Committee will ensure current incident report contact information and instructions for reporting are posted in each BIR Launch.

Before addressing the Incident Reporting part of handling emergencies, it's useful to see the context of incident reporting in the four steps to handling an incident / emergency. These four steps are addressed fully in the Incident/Emergency Procedures in Section 2: Checklists. In every case, incident / emergency response involves the following steps:

- 1) recognition of the problem and determination of the Person In Charge (PIC) - see steps in Section 2,
- 2) execution of immediate and supplementary actions (PIC) - see steps in Section 2,
- 3) initial reporting by a) phone call AND b) Incident Report submission (PIC - 4 hours or less) and membership/community communications (BIR Board - 48 hours or less) if warranted depending on the nature of the incident / emergency - see the Incident Reporting subsection of the Coaches section, and
- 4) a post-mortem analysis of what happened and why in order to identify root causes of the incident / emergency and train BIR membership and leadership to reduce the likelihood of recurrence or the effectiveness of response to the casualty (Safety Committee, BIR Vice President, and PIC - 2 weeks or less).

Steps For Reporting and Acting on An Incident/Emergency - the details of steps 3 and 4 above:

- 1) The Launch Operator/Safety Officer, DOR, or PIC will, having completed immediate and supplementary actions for the incident/emergency that took place, and within 4 hours:
  - a) Call the DOR, BIR Vice President, BIR President, BIR Secretary, or BIR Treasurer - in that order. If connection is not't made, a voice mail should be left if possible and the next person on the list called until someone is reached. Texting to reach these people is acceptable with the same caveat - unless there is a reply, assume only a message to have been left and move to the next point of contact on

the list. Contact information for incident / emergency call-in attempts is posted by the Safety Committee along with Incident Reporting instructions on all launches and the Rowing Center shed.

b) Complete Part 1 of an on-line Incident Report at BIR's iCrew web site: [www.iCrew.club](http://www.iCrew.club) or, manually, using the Incident Report form in Section 2: Checklists. The on-line version allows one-stop (BACKUP) delivery of the incident report to the BIR leadership that appear in the call list: DOR, BIR Vice President, BIR President, BIR Secretary, or BIR Treasurer. If a manual report is submitted, it must be delivered to the Director of Rowing or his designated stand-in or the BIR Vice President. Report content is self-explanatory.

2) Having submitted part 1 of the report, the PIC will be contacted to work with the Vice President or a member of the Safety Committee to complete Part 2 of the Incident Report within two weeks. The DOR will also assist in this effort.

3) In response to receiving the Incident Report form, the BIR Vice President will, working with the President, DOR, and others as needed, and within 48 hours, both a) determine the need for and act on extending appropriate and timely communications to the BIR community and Bainbridge Community as appropriate, and b) engage the Safety Committee to work with the DOR and/or PIC to complete Part 2 of the Incident Report. The nature of the incident will determine the scope and timeliness of communication.

4) The Safety Committee, working with the DOR and/or PIC will complete Part 2 of the Incident Report and file it following report form instructions. The Safety Committee and DOR will address the issue including status of closure at Board meetings, including making recommendations for policy changes if warranted, until the matter is closed. In addition, the Safety Committee will investigate insurance implications regarding injuries/damaged equipment through the appropriate Board Director responsible.

## **General**

The Safety Committee shall arrange for a safety inspection of shells and launches prior to each season of rowing. Shell inspections shall cover the following items:

- Hull and deck integrity inside and out
- Foot stretcher shoes/sandals/clogs for wear and 3" heel-tie integrity
- Cox box communication through all speakers
- Bow-ball secured properly

Launch inspections shall cover items listed in Part 2: Checklists (Safety Officer/Launch Operator's Checklist that includes items both aboard the launch and in the rowing center.)

## Part 2: Checklists

### Safety Officer/Launch Operator's Checklist

1. Obtain boat key/or dead-man key as appropriate, from the shed.
2. Check fuel tanks and top off if required with marine fuel from the boat yard fuel locker.
3. Check the onboard equipment Inventory:
  - a. Up-to-date incident/emergency reporting contact information and response outline
  - b. boat hook
  - c. paddle
  - d. rescue lifting strap
  - e. B-1 fire extinguisher (USCG)
  - f. Emergency response map of Eagle Harbor showing access addresses.
  - g. Registration (USCG)
4. Check hand-carried equipment inventory:
  - a. Kippy-Liddle bag (from USRowing) OR the following:
    - Bag containing 9 Type II PFDs
    - Nine emergency blankets
    - Throwable flotation with 25' of line (USCG)
    - Working flashlight (USRowing)
    - First aid kit (USRowing)
  - b. Cell phone
  - c. Charged VHF radio or walkie-talkie
  - d. Whistle or horn (USCG)
  - e. Unexpired flare (USCG)
  - f. Toolbox with spare rowing parts, including spare spacer/bolt/washer/nut sets; 7/16" and 1/2" wrenches and a spacer tool.
5. Turn on navigation lights on at sunset, before sunrise, or any time that visibility is poor.
6. Consider the weather, time of sunset or sunrise, and harbor conditions, including tides and which boats will be launching with what range of rower/coxswain experience on board.
7. Make note of any missing components in the various kits, low gas supplies, or problems with equipment, and enter same on the Rowing Center equipment status board so the problem can be fixed.

## BIR Cold Weather and Air Quality Policies

### Cold weather:

Multiple factors contribute to the risk of hypothermia to rowers and coxswains when a boat capsizes including water temperature, time in the water, extent of the body immersed, air temperature, wind, precipitation, etc. Hypothermia is also a risk for rowers who will cool rapidly in the boat during chilly weather once covered with perspiration or wet from splashing after, and even during, a workout. Coxswains are particularly vulnerable since they aren't working as the rowers are. Finally, standing in cold water too long during launch and recovery will cool the body down.

Rowing centers across the country exercise a wide range of control measures for rowers during colder months of the year, and some are complex. As a result of experience at regattas, we have based policy based on 1) a combination of assessments, particularly air temperature, wind speed, and precipitation, 2) good judgment on the part of the coaches, rowers, and coxswains, and 3) in the end - the coach's ultimate decision.

Air temperature may be checked on the thermometer at the boat yard and/or by other readily available sources.

Wind speed (steady and gusts) may similarly be checked at the waterfront using an instrument kept in the Rowing Center and/or by other readily available sources from which wind chill may be determined.

The degree of precipitation, like wind speed, will vary with location and doesn't lend well to numerical measurement for purposes of our decision-making but may be generally characterized as light, moderate, and heavy.

Given the complexity of considering three parameters, good judgment is important, and the assessment by each person involved will be considered by the coach who will make the final decision to take boats on the water for both the purpose and duration agreed upon.

### BIR Policy:

1. If air temperature is less than 35F, the Four Oar Rule is in effect to reduce hypothermia risk. Club doubles and larger shells may go out or two or more singles or pairs. No club singles or pairs will be allowed on the water alone.
2. If air temperature is less than 32F, no club boats will go out due to exposure and falling risks.
3. Wind chill factor will be considered. To the extent wind chill drops the apparent temperature to the above levels, those rules will be applied.
4. Precipitation will affect the decision also. Assuming wind-chill-corrected temperature limits are met, the coach will decide whether or not to row if precipitation is light or moderate and, if so, for how long. If precipitation is heavy, boats will not be launched. If it becomes heavy after launch, boats will return to the boatyard.
5. The above rules are strongly encouraged for personal boat use.
6. Exceptions to these rules will be granted solely by the Director of Rowing provided additional safety measures are taken to prevent or mitigate hypothermia.

Rowers are reminded that ordinarily after two failed attempts to right a capsized shell, the rower should instead get up on the keel and paddle ashore. In cold weather conditions, it is highly recommended to directly get out of the water and up on the keel and paddle ashore.

Rowers are encouraged to read and consider the US Rowing Cold Weather Tips available on-line.

**Air quality:**

In recent years, forest fires have contributed to significant degradation of air quality in our region. The local weather service posts an EPA-determined local air quality index (AQI) each day, particularly during summer months.

**BIR Policy:**

If the AQI exceeds 150, rowing programs will be cancelled until it falls below 150.

## BIR Captain's Test for Single and Double Scullers and Pair Rowers

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Sign out of log book
- Safely un-rack shell
- Check rigging
- Adjust foot stretcher
- Safely carry boat to and place in water (water launch) without assistance\*
- Mount oars properly
- Board and launch smoothly
- Row smoothly feathering with oars off the water
- Check way ahead clear of navigation hazards looking over both shoulders as frequently as appropriate for harbor location/conditions (minimum of every 10 strokes or so)
- Turn boat smoothly 180 degrees in both directions rowing with both oars
- Spin boat in place smoothly 180 degrees in both directions
- Row, back, and spin the boat with a single oar, alternating oars to keep course
- Execute a controlled emergency stop starting from a stroke rate of 28
- Back boat 15 strokes smoothly
- Prepare for and land boat smoothly without grounding
- Safely return boat to yard without additional assistance\*, rinse off, properly wipe down
- Rack stow boat without assistance\*, rinse and stow oars.
- Completed a flip test in past five years
- Pass verbal test (rules of road, shell vulnerability and keys to visibility, harbor knowledge, BIR Safety Policy)

\*For independent boat use

Coach: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

File with the Director of Rowing

## Incident/Emergency Procedures

Incidents are typically any event in which serious material damage to shells. Emergencies are typically any event in which injury has occurred to a BIR member or person engaging with BIR members.

Essential to a smoother outcome in any incident/emergency is having willing and prepared leadership at the scene regardless where it happens involving BIR members - Eagle Harbor, in or around the Rowing Center, or enroute to or at a regatta. Someone must take charge and guide the incident / emergency actions that follow tailored to the specific nature of the casualty. On water, this will be the launch operator/safety officer or coach present or the coxswain in cases where a shell is involved. But it may also be a BIR member versed in casualty responses and willing to take a lead role in executing them if others who ordinarily should will not or are not involved in the situation at hand.

In every case, incident / emergency response involves four steps:

- 1) recognition of the problem and determination of the Person In Charge (PIC) - see steps below,
- 2) execution of immediate and supplementary actions (PIC) - see steps below,
- 3) initial reporting by phone call AND Incident Report submission (PIC - 4 hours or less) and BIR membership/community communications (BIR Board - 48 hours or less) if warranted depending on the nature of the incident / emergency - see the Incident Reporting subsection of the Coaches section above (pages 9-10), and
- 4) a post-mortem analysis of what happened and why in order to identify root causes of the incident / emergency and train BIR membership and leadership to reduce the likelihood of recurrence or the effectiveness of response to the casualty (Safety Committee, BIR Vice President, or PIC - 2 weeks or less). See the Incident Reporting subsection of the Coaches section above (pages 9-10).

Five types of incident / emergency may occur when rowing: **man overboard** (includes capsizing), **collision, grounding, mechanical failures, and medical**. The most prevalent category of emergency that might occur at or around the Rowing Center is the fifth, medical, as are emergencies that might be expected while proceeding to or from or at a rowing regatta. Serious equipment damage in the boatyard or at a regatta is addressed by the fourth, mechanical failures.

The BIR Safety Committee will develop and implement an on-water Emergency Response Plan separate from this document. This plan will be developed with the help of the Bainbridge Emergency Medical Service. Immediate and supplementary actions for these five categories of incidents/ emergencies follow.

The sequence for incident / emergency call-in attempts is: Director of Rowing, BIR Vice President, BIR President, BIR Secretary, or BIR Treasurer. If connections aren't made, voice mail should be left if possible and the next person on the list called until someone is reached. Cards containing these phone numbers and the four Incident/Emergency Procedure steps are maintained by the Safety Committee on each BIR launch.

BIR uses an on-line incident reporting form accessed through our space on [www.iCrew.club](http://www.iCrew.club) to quickly notify the DOR, certain members of the BIR Board, and members of the Safety Committee. Manual forms are also available in the shed. The report format, with initial and supplementary steps to be taken led by the Person In Charge, appears in the checklist following this one.

1. **Man overboard:** Rowers can find themselves in the water if their boat capsizes, if they are ejected from their boat by a severe crab, if they slip during seat racing changes, etc.
  - a. If a boat capsizes:

- i. Coxswain/rowers, do a head count; attempt to calm each other. STAY WITH THE BOAT.
  - ii. If a Safety Launch is available, coxswain and rowers will work together with the Safety Officer to get people out of the water as quickly and carefully as possible. Those still in the water, STAY WITH THE BOAT. Use the buoyant ends of the shell to get the body's core out of the water. The Safety Officer/Launch Operator will dispense life jackets while maneuvering the launch to recover people in the water, dispense emergency blankets once aboard, and then get the rowers/coxswain ashore to dry off and warm up. Anticipate hypothermia and be prepared to treat it.
  - iii. If a Safety Launch is not available, STAY WITH THE BOAT. Only if the shell is a single or double, attempt to right the boat unless cold weather conditions exist, re-board it, and row ashore; otherwise, or if it's not possible to right a smaller boat after two attempts (or if cold weather conditions prevail), use it as a float/surfboard, and attempt to paddle toward nearest shallow water and seek means to dry off and get warm. Anticipate hypothermia and be prepared to treat it.
- b. If a rower is ejected from his seat (this only occurs if a shell is traveling at high speed):
- i. Rower: attempt to stay calm. Try to maneuver clear of passing riggers and skeg.
  - ii. Coxswain: 1) If man overboard occurs during a practice *and it is safe to do so*, yell "Way enough! And yell for Safety Officer/Launch Operator assistance to recover the person. If unsafe to stop immediately, maneuver the boat out of traffic and seek to recover the person or, if a safety launch is nearby, yell for Safety Officer/Launch Operator assistance. 2) If man overboard occurs during a head race *and it is safe to do so*, yell "Way enough! Hold water!" Direct a portion of rowers to set the boat and avail others to assist recovery of the person. If unsafe to stop immediately, maneuver the boat out of traffic and seek to recover the person or, if a safety launch is nearby, yell for Safety Officer/Launch Operator assistance. 3) If man overboard occurs during a sprint race, yell for a Safety Officer/Launch Operator to recover the person. If not responsive or immediately available, stop the boat and call attention to the Safety Officer/Launch Operator to recover the person.
  - iii. The Safety Officer/Launch Operator will maneuver the launch to retrieve the person in the water, provide an emergency blanket, and get the person to shore as fast as possible.
  - iv. In any event, get the person ashore to dry off and warm up. Anticipate hypothermia and be prepared to treat it.
- c. If a rower falls overboard:
- i. Rower: attempt to stay calm.
  - ii. Coxswain: Yell for Safety Officer/Launch Operator assistance if available to recover the person. If not available, direct a portion of rowers to set the boat and avail others to assist the person, if necessary, in re-boarding.

- iii. Get the person ashore to dry off and warm up. Anticipate hypothermia and be prepared to treat it.
2. **Collision:** Collisions can occur with other shells, other boats, and fixed or drifting obstacles in the water. Collisions can result in capsizing, particularly with smaller shells. Collisions can result in minor to serious injury and minor to serious equipment damage. In the event of a collision, personal safety comes before equipment safety.
  - a. Coxswains/rowers: If appropriate (almost always), stop the boat. Focus on personal injury first by requesting each rower/coxswain report. Seek Safety Officer/Launch Operator assistance. Assess damage to the boat and determine if it can be safely returned ashore.
  - b. The Safety Officer/Launch Operator will render aid to the injured person/people including the possibility of taking them aboard the launch and/or directing the shell be taken directly to shore or launching area.
  - c. In the absence of a Safety Launch, the coxswain/rowers will render assistance to the injured and then seek to return the shell to shore as described above.
  - d. If the collision damages the hull seriously enough to preclude further operation, the shell should be flagged with pink/orange/bright tape to alert teams to not use that shell until repairs are affected. Lesser damage should be brought to the attention of the DOR who should record the problem for subsequent repair.
3. **Grounding:** Minor grounding can occur when launching or landing. DON'T DO IT! Groundings underway can result in capsizing, particularly with smaller shells. See exception in Coxswain's actions during an electrical storm. Groundings rarely result in personal injury but can result in minor to serious equipment damage. In the event of a grounding, personal safety remains a priority, but early attention to minimizing equipment damage is important.
  - a. Coxswains/rowers: Stop the boat. Assess water depth, the status of hull integrity, the nature of the grounding, and how best to un-ground the boat or prevent it from sinking or subject it to further damage. Unload only the number of people needed to float the boat safely with minimal damage.
  - b. Safety Officer/Launch Operator, if present, renders assistance taking care not to ground the launch.
  - c. If the grounding damages the hull seriously enough to preclude further operation, the shell should be flagged with pink/orange/bright tape to alert teams to not use that shell until repairs are affected. Lesser damage should be brought to the attention of the DOR who should record the problem for subsequent repair.
4. **Mechanical failure:** Shells can suffer rigging, seat, and foot stretcher failures that make further normal operation of the boat infeasible. Shells can also suffer hull damage from waves that can affect hull integrity. Similarly, shells can also suffer hull damage in the boatyard and during transportation to/from the water and to/from trailers.
  - a. Rowers will identify the failure to the coxswain and jointly assess the casualty and its resolution. If a Safety Officer/Launch Operator is present, the coxswain may seek recommendations. Even with minor mechanical failures, serious thought should be given to carefully returning the boat ashore for repair.
  - b. If hull integrity is breached, follow the procedure for a capsized boat if appropriate.

- c. If mechanical failure occurs or is noted on shells in the boatyard or during transportation, the shell should be flagged with pink/orange/bright tape to alert teams to not use that shell until repairs are affected.
5. **Medical:** This section addresses serious medical emergencies such as heart attack/stroke/seizure and may be applied to the vast majority of emergencies that might be expected around or within the Rowing Center or enroute to/from or at a rowing regatta involving BIR members.
- a. The afflicted rower or person will, if possible, make the emergency known to other rowers or people nearby and to the coxswain if present. A Person In Charge should step up.
  - b. Other rowers will alert the coxswain who will immediately stop the boat and yell for Safety Officer/Launch Operator assistance. The Safety Officer/Launch Operator or Person In Charge will assess the situation with the assistance of all present, determine the severity of the situation, and evaluate the need and feasibility of transferring the afflicted person and one other to assist that person to the launch using an emergency rescue strap on each launch or to the nearest emergency clinic if ashore. A second rower from the affected boat (assuming a 4+ or 8+) should board the launch with the victim to either administer CPR or otherwise stabilize the victim and keep them warm. Note that a 4+ becomes a 2+ (coxed pair) for remaining rowers.
  - c. The Safety Officer/Launch Operator or Person In Charge will, having assessed the situation and before attempting to move the afflicted person, dial 911 and direct emergency responders to the nearest feasible dock or beach or other location at which to meet either the shell or the launch or the affected person. Quickly determine which mode of conveyance, is the safest and fastest and commit to it. The Safety Launch will most often be the fastest way to get the afflicted person ashore. Look for dock-posted house numbers on the water to help EMT personnel find you.
  - d. If no Safety Launch is present, the coxswain will direct the boat at best speed to the nearest shore or dock if warranted. Other rowers will go ashore to reach and direct emergency responders as fast as possible.

# Incident Report Form

Part 1 (This form is available on-line )

- *WHO SHOULD SUBMIT AN INCIDENT REPORT?*

Initial incident reporting is the responsibility of:

- *Launch Driver or Coach:* for incidents involving use of boats
- *Coach:* for incidents on land during practice or involving rowers at any time during regattas.
- *Parent Leadership Team:* For incidents involving regatta volunteers, bystanders or damage to regatta kitchen equipment.
- *Person in Charge (PIC):* In the event that none of the above options are appropriate.

***NOTE: Part 1 of the report should be filled out by someone with firsthand knowledge of the incident. Follow-up actions will be taken by the Director of Rowing, Safety Committee and BIR Vice President.***

- Name \*
- E-mail \*
- Phone Number
- Date of Incident  
Date
- Time of Incident
- Location of Incident
- Incident involved:  
Injury Damage to BIR equipment/property Damage to non-BIR property
- Vessel(s) involved if applicable (by name)
- People involved (by name, i.e, coxswain, rowers, launch-driver, regatta volunteers, observers, etc).
- Description of the incident (activity in progress at that time)
- Other factors that played a role in the outcome of incident (equipment malfunction, weather, light, etc.)
- If the incident involved an injury, what steps were taken immediately afterward?
- Any additional information

Part 2 - Determination of root and secondary causes, development of recommended actions, BIR Board review, filing.

The Safety Committee, directed by the BIR Vice President and working with the DOR and Person in Charge, is responsible for leading and concluding within two weeks of an incident / emergency a post-mortem analysis of what happened and why in order to identify root causes of the incident / emergency, train BIR membership and leadership to reduce the likelihood of recurrence or the effectiveness of response to the casualty, and possibly initiate safety policy changes. (Safety Committee, BIR Vice President, or PIC - 2 weeks or less).

Having submitted part 1 of the incident report, the PIC will be contacted by and work with the Vice President or a member of the Safety Committee to help complete this Part 2 of the Incident Report using the steps indicated. The DOR will also assist in this effort. The Safety Committee and DOR will address the issue including status of closure at Board meetings, including making recommendations for policy changes if warranted, until the matter is closed. The Safety Committee will file parts 1 and 2 of the report in the BIR Office for use during annual safety seminars.

Determination of contributing and root causes of the incident [To identify the root cause, ask, for each "initial" root cause stated, "why?" If the answer remains the same, the actual root cause has been identified.]

1. .
2. .
3. .
4. .
5. .
6. .

Resolution(s)/recommended actions:

Board report date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Filing date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 3: Additional Information

### Eagle Harbor Traffic Pattern

Adhering to a consistent set of traffic patterns helps to ensure the safety of rowers, shells, and launches, and to other boaters on the water as well. The map of Eagle Harbor below provides emergency response access address numbers at the ends of many docks and piers around the harbor. A copy of this map is provided aboard each launch,

1. An aerial photo of the Eagle Harbor traffic pattern will be posted at the boatyard at all times annotated with traffic patterns and certain hazards to rowing. A replica of this is in the figure below. Become familiar with it and with the names and locations of shore and shoreside landmarks. In particular, note the addresses
2. Always stay to starboard. This means stay to the right if you are facing forward (coxing or driving a launch), to the left if you are facing backward in a “blind” boat (1x, 2x, 4x-).
  - All traffic patterns are counter-clockwise.
3. Heading *west* from Bill Point (the Wyckoff Creosote Plant):
  - a. Take a straight line from Bill Point to the Washington State Ferry maintenance yard.
  - b. Proceed through the Middle Harbor, staying to starboard. Watch out for traffic coming out of the Waterfront Park boat launch area, along all slips from the Queen City Yacht Club outpost past Winslow Warf Marina, and from private slips adjacent The Harbor House Pub.
  - c. Stay close to shore as you turn to starboard into the Inner Harbor at Stetson Point being considerate of shoal water that can develop there at low tide. Leave the pencil buoy there to port. Head directly toward the base of the docks at the Sunday Cove condominiums until clear of the two white round buoys, then turn to port and pass into the Aquatic Conservancy between the end of Sunday Cove docks and the Strawberry Plant pencil buoy.
  - d. Swing wide, leaving room for east-bound traffic, as you enter the Aquatic Conservancy, turning around the pencil buoy there.
  - e. Stay to starboard in the Aquatic Conservancy. Let the height of tide dictate how close your course is to shore. If you go to the head of the harbor, be cognizant of a few pylons near-shore.
4. Heading *east* from the head of the harbor:
  - a. Head along the south shore.
  - b. Hug the corner as you turn to starboard into the Inner Harbor but avoid the docks close aboard.
  - c. Stay on the south (right hand) side of the waterway south of the round white buoy that often holds a trimaran yet north of a shallower round buoy at that point that rarely holds a boat.
  - d. Swing wide heading from the Inner Harbor to the Middle Harbor keeping the pencil buoy at Stetson Point to port. \*Again, be extra cautious in the Middle Harbor.
  - e. After passing the eastern-most pencil buoy south of the public dock, head in a straight line to the eastern-most pier at Eagle Harbor Marina keeping the Washington State Ferry maintenance yard to port.

f. From this pier, head in a straight line to Bill Point.

\* Depending on the desires of the Coach or Safety Officer/Launch Operator, the skill of the coxswain, and the density of anchored or moored boats, the south and middle channels may be taken instead of the north channel described above. The south channel proceeds between docks and property and mooring buoys along the south shore of Eagle Harbor. The middle channel lies on a line roughly between the Stetson Point pencil buoy and the cove south of Bill Point.

## Bill Point to Blakely Harbor Traffic Pattern

Leaving the protected water of Eagle Harbor poses new risks including swells and waves from passing vessels, reflected waves from the metal seawall at Bill Point, and the potential for weather changes affecting rowing conditions more dramatically than they might within Eagle Harbor. Boats operate in Puget Sound at high speed and produce a substantial wake. Swells can strain shells unless negotiated properly. Standing waves and steeper boat/ship waves can potentially flip shells. Neither Blakely Harbor nor passage along Rockaway Beach offer address-marked docks available that can serve as landmarks for directing emergency responders in case of emergencies, but homes line the entire route accessibility of emergency help. The passage to Blakely Harbor does provide nearly 2.5 kilometers of obstacle-free rowing.

Our Stillwater launches have been demonstrated to hold 11 adults while our Wintech launches have been demonstrated to hold just 7-8. Stillwater launches should be used by Launch Operator/Safety Officers to accompany rowers on this route. If more than one 8+ is involved, consideration should be given to matching the number of launches to the number of rowers from an emergency recovery perspective.

1. From Bill Point, proceed south along Rockaway Beach staying reasonably close to shore. Be alert for the rare possibility of standing waves (reflections of west-bound waves interfering with in-bound waves) adjacent to the metal seawall. Also, two promontories extend from the shoreline creating grounding danger at low tide. The first is mid-way between Bill Point and the mouth of Blakely Harbor and the second is at the north entry point to the harbor. It is advisable to pick a landmark southbound midway between Blakely Rocks and the harbor mouth and northbound between Wing Point and Bill Point.
2. A good route in Blakely Harbor is to circumnavigate the moored/anchored boats
3. Weather is a substantial consideration when deciding to row outside of Eagle Harbor. The wind must be nearly calm as should be the near-term forecast, and the seas must be virtually flat. Fetch is long enough north and south that any developing breeze except westerly can quickly turn a decent row into a rough row.
4. Given that safety is a priority, should any rower, coxswain, or the coach have concerns about starting south or, once committed, to continue, the entourage should either not leave Eagle Harbor or, having done so, should return to those protected waters.

## Coach and Safety Officer/Launch Driver Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that I have entered into a written agreement with Bainbridge Island Rowing to serve as a Coach or Assistant Coach and to drive the Safety Launch for the Juniors and/or Masters rowing program.

I have:

- Obtained a valid First Aid, AED, and CPR Certification.
- Reviewed the USRowing Safety Video at <http://www.usrowing.org/safety-video/> and ridden with an experienced Coach over the entire length of Eagle Harbor (east of the Aquatic Conservancy) before carrying out launch operator duties the first time.
- Completed the US Rowing - Coaching Level 1\*.
- Obtained a valid Washington State Boater Safety Certification\*\*.

\*Coach-only: Assistant Coaches may be “under instruction” with a certified Coach and in the process of learning material to enable their passing of these examinations.

\*\*Not required if born before 1 January, 1955

I have read and will adhere to the policies contained in Bainbridge Island Rowing Safety Policies and Procedures.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-signed: \_\_\_\_\_

BIR Director of Rowing

Date: \_\_\_\_\_