

# **INLET ROWING CLUB**

## **SAFETY HANDBOOK**

Adapted from the Safety Handbook of the  
Victoria Rowing Society

Effective January 1, 2008

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook outlines the safety policies and procedures to be followed by participants in programs of the Inlet Rowing Club (IRC)

### **1.0 SAFETY FACTORS**

#### **1.1 Swimming / Medical Requirements**

Prior to participating in any IRC programs, all participants will: Sign a waiver that states that they either know how to swim or, if they can't swim, that they're aware of the risks associated with being on the water.

#### **1.2 Pleasure Craft Operator Card**

Any coach, rower or volunteer operating a powercraft that is less than 4m in length on behalf of the Inlet Rowing Club must have a valid Canadian Coast Guard Pleasure Craft Operator Card.

#### **1.3 Water Training**

1.3.1 All rowers and coaches in IRC rowing programs will receive comprehensive instruction in safety procedures prior to involvement in rowing. For coaches, this will happen before their first day of coaching, for rowers, this will happen on their first day of rowing.

1.3.2 All new members of the Inlet Rowing Club will be informed and made aware of the features of the Burrard Inlet including safe beaching locations, danger spots, obstructions and other safety hazards, prior to their involvement in rowing.

1.3.3 The Safety Handbook will be made available to all rowers and coaches in two ways: it will be posted on our website and a hardcopy will be available at the boathouse

1.3.4 All rowers and coaches will respect the rights of other users of the Burrard Inlet and obey the rowing course rules established by the IRC. Rowers and coaches shall be aware of and remain courteous to other users at all times.

#### **1.4 Hours of Operation:**

1.4.1 Sunrise: All boats that head out onto the water near sunrise must be equipped with proper safety lights (red bow light, and white lights at stern, port side and starboard side – all lights set to flashing).

1.4.2 Sunset: All boats must return to the dock no later than the posted sunset time for that day.

1.4.3 From December 1<sup>st</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup>, no on-water rowing activity will occur prior to 7:00am.

#### **1.5 Supervision:**

1.5.1 All crews must log on/off the water before/after workouts. This will be the responsibility of the bow seat or coxswain of each boat. A permanent IRC logbook will be available for this purpose.

1.5.2 Minors (under 19) must not proceed on the water without the supervision of a coach in a safety launch.

1.5.3 Crews may not row away from the dock area until a safety launch is on the water and the engine is running.

1.5.4 All crews must stay in proximity to the safety launch responsible for their supervision.

1.5.7 During organized rowing at least one safety launch will remain on the water or ready at the dock until all crews are off the water.

## **1.6 Coaching Requirements:**

1.6.1 All coaches / volunteers who operate a safety launch for IRC must have a Pleasure Craft Operator Card.

1.6.2 It is the intention of the Inlet Rowing Club to only hire coaches that have completed the “RCA Learn-to-row Instructor” course.

1.6.3 The head coach is required to have Level II Coaching Certification, Standard First Aid and CPR Certification (including hypothermia and heat injury instruction).

1.6.3 Coaches / volunteers must be in good standing with Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA), Rowing BC (RBC), and other recognized rowing organizations such as Go Rowing and Paddling Association of Canada (GO). Persons who have a negative record related to coaching/rowing will not be permitted to coach at IRC.

## **1.7 Equipment Requirements:**

(as per appropriate Canadian coast guard regulations)

1.7.1 All shells on the water must be deemed to be rowable and seaworthy, and will contain the following:

- two navigation lights (one at the bow, one at the stern) in dark conditions
- a sound signaling device
- an inflatable personal flotation device (PFD) or lifejacket at each seat. Alternatively, a PFD or lifejacket for each rower may be stowed in the safety launch.

1.7.2 All safety launches will contain the following:

- two oars or one paddle
- a buoyant heaving line 15m or longer
- a bailer
- a first aid kit
- three approved flares (Type A, B, or C) or a watertight hand-held searchlight
- a sound signaling device
- space blankets and a PFD or lifejacket for each person on board. Access and use of the emergency supplies will be reserved solely for use in on-water emergencies. Also to be carried, if not aboard shells, are sufficient PFD's or lifejackets for every rower being supervised.

1.7.3 The Canadian capacity limit must be clearly displayed on each launch.

1.7.4 All rowers and coaches will be appropriately instructed in the operation of safety launches.

## **1.8 Weather restrictions: WHEN IN DOUBT DON'T GO OUT!**

1.8.1 All coaches and rowers will be made aware of the potential danger from darkness, fog, high winds, ice, cold water, storms, thunder and lightning or any combination of the above.

1.8.2 Coaches must be responsible for determining if conditions are too dangerous to row due to any of the above circumstances. If you can hear thunder, do not go on the water! No rower will be forced to row against his/her better judgment should conditions be questionable.

1.8.3 If thunder begins while crews are already on the water, turn around and head back to the dock. If thunder AND lightning

begins, head immediately to the closest shore, and get out of the boat.

1.8.4 Rowing will not take place in foggy conditions if visibility falls below 1000 meters.

1.8.5 If the fog sets in after crews have launched, boats should immediately head back to the dock and proceed slowly with only bow seat / bow pair rowing. If the fog gets thick, bow seat should not row and should only watch where the boat is going; another seat should row instead - this is true for all boats except bow-coxed boats (where the cox would have a better view than bow seat). The safety launch should stay with the boats and set itself up near hazardous areas (e.g. big barrel, log booms, poles, anchored boats, etc.) to guide crews past and to prevent collisions.

## **2.0 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **2.1 Emergency Agencies**

2.1.1 For any emergency requiring external assistance, **TELEPHONE 911** and state:

- Which agency is required (Police, Ambulance, Fire)
- Your name and location:

**OLD MILL BOATHOUSE**

**2715 Esplanade St., Port Moody (at Rocky Point)**

- A concise description of the event
- Any need for water rescue

### **2.2 On Site Authority:**

2.2.1 The senior coach present will assume command in the event of an emergency and will direct and control operations until the arrival of appropriate authorities. At that time, this coach will

identify themselves to the authorities and continue to liaise with authorities and direct IRC personnel accordingly.

2.2.2 Inexperienced operators or improperly equipped individuals will not be allowed on the water during an emergency situation.

## **2.3 Extreme Water Conditions:**

2.3.1 PERSONAL SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT AND SUPERSEDES THE SAFETY OF EQUIPMENT. Should it not be possible to reach a safe spot (see 2.3.3) and the safety of the rower is at stake, rowers are directed to row to the nearest accessible shoreline and get off the water.

2.3.2 Should unsafe conditions (such as visible lightning) occur during training, rowers will immediately proceed to the most accessible and safest of six safe spots around the Burrard Inlet; or to any available shoreline if necessary.

2.3.3 Easiest choices of safe beaches are:

- ✓IRC Launching/Docking area
- ✓Beach across from dock
- ✓Sunnyside Beach
- ✓The Marina
- ✓Private docks between the first and second powerlines
- ✓Barnet Beach

2.3.4 The shell(s) must be removed from the water and placed upside down on the riggers and out of the wind if possible while the rowers await rescue. If safe to do so, crew should stand on windward side of shell when lifting, facilitating lifting process by preventing further swamping of shell.

## 2.4 Signals

2.4.1 EMERGENCY: INTERNATIONAL DISTRESS SIGNAL – Raise and lower outstretched arms repeatedly. Use only for serious trouble.

Daylight: Lifejacket whistles.

Darkness: Lifejacket whistles and wave light over head.

### 2.4.2 NON-EMERGENCY

*LAUNCH - HELP REQUIRED*: Wave one arm over your head

*GO ON BY*: Wave one arm in a throwing fashion.

## 2.5 Boat Mishaps/Survival Procedures

2.5.1 All rowers must immediately put on any available clothing, then put on and inflate the PFD's if stowed under the seats. Rowers must then put on any hat(s) and the coxswain/bow person must immediately utilize the light or whistle to signal the safety boat(s) for help or to assist them to find the shell. If the PFD's are carried in the safety boat(s) they must be distributed, put on and inflated immediately.

2.5.2 Shell swamped but floating and rowers out of water. Align shell to minimize further swamping, then remain upright and in seat awaiting rescue (assume a fetal-like position at top of slide).

2.5.3 Shell sinking deeper into water, submerged or capsized.

Should a shell fill with water or submerge, and safe-harbor is not possible, the following procedures are to be followed:

- The shell should be rolled upside-down to increase buoyancy by trapping as much air as possible. If wind is a factor, roll with the wind. Oars should remain in the oarlocks to increase buoyancy.

- **ROWERS MUST STAY WITH SHELL AND NOT**

**ATTEMPT TO SWIM ASHORE** - both the boat and oars usually float and will support the crew. The group shall "buddy up" across the boat with even distribution on either side of the shell

(1&2 / 3&4 . . .) and huddle towards the middle or high point of the shell. The coxswain must buddy with the seat adjacent pair. Each buddy is responsible for holding onto the other person while they are draped across the shell.

- Pairing is essential as it gives added life support to each rower (each is holding on to the life of another). This facilitates reciprocal communication and positive support. This relationship should be continued until actual rescue, when rowers must be rescued in pairs. This will prevent a premature feeling of relief resulting from rescue contact, and letting go before the rescuers take firm hold of the rowers.

- All rowers must remain as calm as possible and the coxswain/bow person should assume command and check every rower continually until rescued.

#### 2.5.4 Cold Water Considerations

- Minimize movement to preserve body heat (no swimming or treading water). Use the HELP (Heat Escape Lessen Position) or a modified HELP position when buddying up across the overturned shell.

- Keep clothes on and put on hat/mitts, etc.

- Get body as much out of water as possible: get on top of boat.

- Assume fetal position, if possible. Protect groin/armpits/neck and head as much as possible.

#### 2.5.5 Small Boat Considerations

- **SMALL BOATS, WHERE POSSIBLE, MUST ROW IN GROUPS.** If a partner's shell submerges or capsizes the "buddy" rower(s) must ensure they are out of danger (back in shell or on shore) before going to get help.

- The smaller the boat the better the relative buoyancy. It is possible to reenter the shell and get ashore if conditions are not serious.

- To re-enter, make sure the oars are perpendicular to the shell and grasp with one hand. Pull yourself up so you are lying across the

bow side of the cockpit. Pivot to seat yourself on the runners. Slowly maneuver your legs into position. (Go one at a time in crew boats, but all oars should be perpendicular).

## **2.6 Rescue Procedures**

### 2.6.1 Launch Capacity

- The maximum legal capacity of a launch shall not be exceeded in a rescue. The maximum capacity will be labeled and visible on each safety boat.
- In extreme conditions those rescued must be taken directly to shore or to the nearest safe spot. As many trips are to be taken as are required to remove all those involved in the accident as quickly and safely as possible.
- Each launch should be staffed by two people (if possible) to counterbalance and assist each other where necessary.

2.6.2 PFDs / Life Jackets: Each rescuer shall wear an appropriate PFD or lifejacket and extra PFDs or lifejackets (as per rule 1.7.1) should be put in the launch in case of need.

2.6.3 Approach: Any accident shall be approached from leeward, into the wind, to prevent the launch from being pushed onto the shell(s), and to ensure maximum control.

### 2.6.4 Assessing the situation:

- The conditions of the people in the water and the severity of the circumstances must be assessed quickly.
- Verbal contact with those in the water must be established so that they can be talked through the rescue quickly: tell the people in the water what is going to happen so they know what is going on.
- Those in greatest risk (distress) must be rescued first. Rescue must occur in pairs.

- A head count will be conducted upon the launch's arrival and then repeated upon leaving.

## **2.7 Treatment:**

### **CONDITIONS OF HYPOTHERMIA OR HEAT STROKE**

\*Information taken from Rowing Canada Aviron's NCCP Level One Coaching Manual

2.7.1 Hypothermia: Information on hypothermia will be posted in a prominent location at the boathouse. All coaches and rowers must have a thorough understanding of this information.

2.7.2 Moderate Hypothermia: Some respiratory and cardiac function, semiconscious. Act as follows:

1. Maintain an airway, artificial respiration at rate of 1/2 normal breathing (CPR). Only perform CPR if breathing stops.
2. Transfer to a warm environment as soon as possible.  
(Space/fleece blankets in safety boats, showers in boathouse)  
Remove wet clothing and begin to warm neck, head and trunk (avoiding extremities).
3. Fluid intake should be avoided
4. Transfer to medical care as soon as possible.

2.7.3 Profound Hypothermia: **IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED** appears deathlike, little or no cardio-respiratory function, unconscious. Act as follows:

- Call 911 immediately
- Do not attempt to rewarm the victim
- Do not apply external cardiac compression. CPR should NOT be executed for a hypothermia victim as it will induce ventricular fibrillation. Remember that in an unconscious hypothermia victim, you will not be able to tell if the victim is dead or alive. Your job is to maintain the victim until professional help arrives.

- Maintain an airway – artificial respiration to be applied.
- AVOID physical manipulation of victim. Carotid pulse monitoring must be gentle to avoid triggering reflexes that may cause ventricular fibrillation.

2.7.4 Heat Stroke: Potentially fatal, appears confused, nausea, vomiting, seizures, ultimately loses consciousness. Act as follows:

- Immediate medical help is required.
- Maintain a horizontal body position to guarantee blood supply to brain. Immerse or cool with water (hose) to lower the body temperature. Stop when victim is conscious and alert.

## **2.8 Clothing Requirements:**

2.8.1 It is recommended that each rower have a wool or polypropylene hat in the shell while on the water during the winter months (November through February) and a sun hat in the boat during the summer months (May through September).

2.8.2 It is recommended that each rower bring a complete change of dry clothing to each workout during the winter months. This is a requirement for novice rowers. Note: This is a good precaution in the event of a mishap and it is wise practice for rowers to change into dry clothing after every workout for obvious health reasons.

2.8.3 During the winter months it is recommended that rowers wear multiple layers of clothing to reduce heat loss. Polypropylene or washable wool are highly recommended for underwear as an insulating layer. Exposure to chilling cold when fatigued can lead to colds, influenza, etc.

## **3.0 INFRACTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS**

### **3.1 Penalties for Safety Infractions**

3.1.1 Safety infractions will be handled by the head coach and executive committee subject to the following conditions:

3.1.2 First infractions may result in an immediate suspension of up to 10 days plus a subsequent probationary period of 3 months at the discretion of the head coach and executive committee.

3.1.3 Suspended parties must complete an open book exam on IRC safety policies and procedures before resuming any rowing activities or use of IRC facilities. Failure to successfully fulfill this requirement will result in an indefinite extension of the suspension period until the test is successfully completed to the satisfaction of the head coach and executive committee.

3.1.4 Any subsequent infraction during the probationary period following any suspension will result in an immediate suspension of up to 3 months at the discretion of the head coach and executive committee.

3.1.5 Subsequent conditions for reinstatement will be determined solely by the head coach and executive committee.

3.1.6 Suspensions may be applied to individuals, groups or programs. The scope of any suspension for safety infractions will be decided by the head coach and executive committee.

# Burrard Inlet Rowing Flow Pattern

