

Clermont Crew

Safety and Operations Manual

Reviewed/revised 2015

Failure to comply with the Safety and Operations Manual may result in complete or partial loss of participation privileges for participants or member organizations without refund of fees, dues, assessments or the like, or in the restriction or suspension of use of Clermont Crew property, facilities, or equipment for non-participants, without refund of fees, dues, assessments or the like.

Accountability

1. All rowers under 18 years of age will be under the direct supervision of a coach when rowing.
2. All rowers will read and acknowledge with their signature that they understand and will comply with all club safety rules prior to participating in any club activities. A safety assessment will be completed by any person wishing to row as a member of the club.
3. Rowers under 18 and their parents will be provided training on the pertinent parts by a coach and will sign the acknowledgement.
4. Prior to participating in any club activity, everyone will sign a USRowing waiver of liability acknowledging the risks and hazards of rowing. A parent or guardian will sign for anyone under 18.
5. All practices will be recorded in the log book prior to rowing. Coaches may log for all boats under their supervision with a single entry. Each boat not under the direct (on the water) supervision of the coach must be logged out and in individually.
6. Safety Rules, notices or updates and emergency phone numbers will be posted in the safety manual. A copy of the manual will be placed in the boathouse.
7. There will be a safety committee led by the Clermont Crew Safety Director to ensure this plan is kept current and followed.

Procedures

1. Each rower will participate in a water safety program. Coaches, and the Clermont Crew safety committee are responsible for ensuring rowers are trained. Topics will include:
 - a. Rescue procedures in the water
 - b. Recognition of unsafe water conditions
 - c. Basic first aid
 - d. Weather related injuries (i.e. Hypothermia)
 - e. Proper navigation rules and boat handling
 - f. Rowing terminology
2. Every rower shall complete a swimming test, demonstrating the ability to tread water. The swim test must be witnessed by a coach. Certificates of completion of the swim test will be kept on file for as long as the rower is a member of the team. Every rower will receive a copy of this manual and sign an acknowledgement form stating they have received and read the manual.

3. Anyone injured during a rowing activity or on the boathouse grounds will report the injury to the coach, safety director or club officer. If sufficiently serious, a formal incident report will be submitted to the club president.
4. All launches will operate in accordance with applicable safety regulations.
5. Experienced rowers new to Harsha Lake will be given complete safety/course rules/lake familiarization training before rowing. Ideally they will row the lake first with experienced rowers. Beginning rowers must be adequately instructed and supervised until skill level to row unsupervised has been demonstrated and certified.
6. Club boats will only be transported on a car, van or trailer by driver specifically designated by the club president or head coach. They will be familiar with related U.S. Rowing guidelines and comply with all motor vehicle rules for doing so.

Facility

1. All gasoline storage will be in a secure, approved storage area and will use approved, flame-proof containers.
2. Fire extinguishers will be present, clearly marked and annually inspected.
3. Aisles will be kept free of obstacles.
4. Launches will be stored in the designated storage area.
5. A first aid kit will be maintained in the boathouse and inspected regularly.
6. Outboard engines will be stored on designated racks
7. Boathouse doors and the road gate will be locked when departing.

Hours or Rowing

All rowing from the Harsha Lake boathouse will be during daylight hours. No boats may depart the dock before official sunrise and all must be back at the dock by official sunset.

Lake Landmarks

See map

Equipment

Each person is 100% responsible for the whole boat and 100% accountable for their own oar, rigging, foot stretchers, seat and slide. Check to make sure that all equipment is functioning properly before leaving the dock. If you aren't sure, ASK! Check the following:

1. That nuts on the rigging are tight, position of your foot stretchers and the smoothness of your slide are acceptable.
2. That the forward end of the slide is blunt and will not gouge your calves.
3. That the persons in front and behind you have sufficient room for their complete stroke.
4. That the heel ties on your shoes are tied and in good condition.

5. That your seat fits your body. Adjust with seat pads or a different seat.
6. That your oar handle is properly sized.
7. That your oarlock height is proper.
8. That your clothing cannot become tangled in your seat or oar handle.
9. That you have proper safety devices on board, if warranted in your rowing shell.
10. Boats must have a bow ball affixed.
11. Every boat launching from the facility must have heel restraints/quick release mechanisms in compliance with USRA rules.
12. Shoes with Velcro closures are strongly recommended in all boats. If tied shoes are used they should be only snug enough to hold the foot stable but remain loose enough for quick foot removal in the event of an emergency.
13. For both safety and equipment maintenance reasons rowers will only use boats that are consistent with their skill level. As beginner rowers progress in skill, club leadership will designate available boats. This does not preclude “rowing up” in higher lever equipment under the supervision of experienced rowers or coaches.

Coached Crews

1. All junior rowers require a coaching launch.
2. Coaches will carry a cell phone to allow for a quick direct link with rescue services in the event of an emergency. The following numbers will be provided to coaches and posted in the boathouse:
 - a. 735-2730 East Fork Field Office of Ohio Watercraft
 - b. 734-4323 East Fork Park Office
 - c. 477-7528 Lissa Heekin, Safety Director
 - d. 859-992-4176 Jenny Beene-Skuban, Program Director
 - e. 911

Use of Radios, if present

1. The radio shall be used to monitor Channel 9, the hailing and emergency channel.
2. Channel 9 should also be used to send out advisory calls, brief announcements, or to establish communication with another party, but two-way communication must be carried out on another channel by asking the other party to switch channels.
3. All launches must have aboard a working cell phone which is to be used as needed for emergency calls after any immediate rescue actions have been taken.
4. Advisory radio calls should be made when leaving the Clermont Crew dock using the main radio in the boathouse.
 - a. Your identity (e.g., Clermont Crew with 4 shells and a launch)
 - b. Your location specified by a river landmark
 - c. Your intention (.e.g., launching ...)
 - d. When launching, your time frame (e.g., on the water over the next 1.5 hours)

- e. There is no requirement for a single, double or pair to have a radio.

Dock Closure

The dock may be closed at any time in the interest of safety. The senior members shall assess conditions that affect safety of operations at all times and are responsible for making to decision to close the docks.

Dock and Launching Procedures

Before launching:

1. Make a security call on the main VHF radio in boathouse.
2. Have radio onboard, if required
3. Shells must carry full crews, including coxswain's in coxed shells, except that an eight that is accompanied by a coaching launch may go out with either eight or six rowers, but in all cases the bow and stern pairs must be filled.

Rowing on the Lake

Shells shall keep to the right side of the lake, except where otherwise specified in this manual.

Hazards on the Lake

Lake Debris

1. Debris is most prevalent after heavy rains, when lake water rises.
2. Debris can be particularly dangerous if it is lodged on the lake bottom, so that what appears to be a floating object is, in fact, solidly fixed.

Hazards posed by other vessels

1. It is important to remember that other vessels may take an unexpected course due to hazards such as debris, wind, etc., raising the likelihood of a collision.
2. **Even small vessels may produce a wake. If you encounter a large wake, take it broadside to avoid having parts of shell unsupported by water when the waves pass.**
 - a. **Turn the shell parallel to the wake.**
 - b. **Stop, feather the oars, and lean away from the wave when it reaches the shell.**
3. Recreational motor boats and sail boats.
4. Row boats and kayaks.

Emergency Assistance

1. Call for help on the radio (Channel 9) should you require assistance.

2. If the situation is critical, use Channel 9 and *declare that you have an emergency*.
3. If the situation is not critical, use standard radio hailing procedures.

Rough Water

Waves are generated by winds, tides, currents, or wakes from passing boats. Because shells are vulnerable to high waves, specific care is needed with approaching wakes.

1. If approaching wake is higher than the gunwale, the shell should be turned parallel to the wake to avoid having parts of the shell unsupported by the water. It is possible to split a shell under these conditions. Rowers should stop rowing and lean away from the approaching wake, with oars on the wake side lifted slightly.
2. If the wakes are lower than the gunwale and widely spaced, continue to row without a course adjustment. Deep and closely spaced wakes that are lower than the gunwale may be taken at a 90 degree angle with the bow directly toward them.
3. Turning in waves is tricky; allow plenty of room, energy and time.

Person Overboard - Individual Action

1. Your shell and oar have been designed to provide floatation. They are not PFD's, but they may be used as emergency flotation devices.
2. **Under no circumstances should a rower in the water leave his or her floating boat. Even if a swamped boat is within possible swimming distance from the shore, the rower should not strike out for the shore. Instead, swim the boat to the shore. Do not leave your flotation even if you consider yourself a strong swimmer.**

Person Overboard - Shell Action.

1. Stop the boat.
2. In an eight or four the stern rower opposite the side of the person overboard removes his or her oar from the oarlock and slides it to the person in the water. If a starboard rower is overboard, the rear port rower (stroke) slides the oar; if a port rower is overboard, the rear starboard rower (7 or 3) slides the oar.
3. The swimmer lies across the oar and remains close to the shell.
4. Another rower may, if necessary, enter the water to assist the swimmer.
5. If there is no launch immediately available, the swimmer can climb back into the shell or be escorted or towed to shore.
6. If the swimmer cannot get into the shell, he/she should hang onto a rigger or gunwale, or lay on top of the stern section and be towed to shore or to a bulkhead ladder.
7. When anyone goes into the water, an incident report shall be filed (c.f. G 2, a).

Person Overboard - To Climb Back into the Shell

Shells with rowers still in shell (usually sweep shells)

1. All rowers remaining in the shell set it up by using the oars. Oar of person in water should be held out of way by adjacent rower.
2. The person in the water begins entry of shell from the side opposite his or her oar to help balance shell. (Rowers may lean a little away from the side on which the person in the water is attempting to get in.) Grasp only the gunwales; don't touch the skin of the shell or the riggers.
3. Initially just your hands will be transferring your weight to the gunwales. As you come aboard, your body, legs and feet will transfer your weight to the gunwales.
4. Kick with legs to propel body over shell while keeping body low.
5. When body is across shell, twist to sit in shell and then bring legs aboard.

Sculls with single rower or all rowers in the water.

1. One rower at a time should board shell, beginning with stern-most rower and proceeding toward bow; the other rowers hold shell stable by placing an equal number of individuals on each side of the shell holding the gunwales steady.
2. The person in the water should first position the oars by holding both oars together over center of shell with hand closest to stern.
3. Person in water should try to lay flat on water surface facing the shell while holding shell by gunwale with hand closest to bow grasping gunwale opposite to the side you are on. Try not to push down on gunwale on your side.
4. While continuing to hold the oars with your stern-most hand, kick with feet to drive body toward shell. As body comes over shell, stay low over the shell to keep center of gravity low. As you move forward, your weight should be transferred to the center of the shell.
5. When the boat is balanced with your body across the shell, bring your bow-most leg across the shell behind you and straddle the shell. Then get your rear on the seat or seat platform. Once the shell is balanced with your legs on either side of the shell, bring your legs up in front of you into the shell.
6. Now you are ready to take one oar with each hand and steady the shell with the oars.
7. If another sculler is in the water, you should use your oars to keep shell steady while persons remaining in water repeat steps 1-6.

Person Overboard - Launch Action

1. Upon coming to the swimmer, stop the launch and put the engine in neutral.
2. If possible, pull the swimmer out of the water into the launch. Then put him/her back in the shell, if desired.
3. If many rowers are in the water, distribute PFD's as required, rescue the rowers, and shuttle them to the nearest shore. Avoid overloading the launch.

Shell Swamped, Broken or Sinking

1. If the shell is swamped, everyone must get out. If you stay in the shell, the flotation chambers at the ends, combined with weight in the middle, may cause the shell to break.
2. Unload the shell by pairs, starting from the middle of the boat (.e.g., rowers 3 and 4, 5 and 6, 1 and 2, 7 and 8. Coxswain exits with stern or bow pair as appropriate.
3. If rescue by a launch is not imminent:
 - a. If you can, swim the shell to shore, keep the shell upright, trail the oars in the oarlocks and swim the shell and oars to shore or a bulkhead ladder. Get out of the water.
4. If conditions do not permit you to swim the shell to shore, maximize your survival time:
 - a. Remove the oars, but do not let them drift away. Move to the ends of the shell. Invert the shell, hull side up. The hull traps air under it and thus forms a stable platform. Survivors can lay partly on top of the hull, and buddies can hold onto each other across the hull.
 - b. Do not swim away from a floating boat.
5. To lift a swamped shell out of the water:
 - a. Bail all possible water out of the shell: a swamped shell is very heavy.
 - b. If the shell bow and stern compartments have filled with water, they must be drained before the boat can be removed from the water.
 - c. Get many extra people to help lift the boat.
 - d. Lift the gunwale closest to the dock and roll the shell away from the dock to pour the water out as you lift the shell.
 - e. Keep the shell from hitting the dock as you lift.

Weather

1. Rowers/coaches must always be aware of weather conditions. Watch for gathering clouds, changes in wind speed/direction, temperature changes, etc.
2. A weather radio will be kept in the boathouse and should be checked if there is any doubt.
3. Do not row if a thunderstorm warning exists for the immediate area. If a watch or a warning is in the region but outside the immediate vicinity exists, stay close to the dock area and monitor conditions. Land all boats at the first sign of lightning.
 - a. Do not launch until 20 minutes after last audible thunder or visible lightning.
 - b. If you are caught in a thunderstorm dock boat at nearest shore and wait out storm.
4. Boats will not launch in high wind conditions, defined as causing whitecaps on the water. If such conditions are encountered while on the water return to the dock immediately if safe to do so. If not, seek and stay in a sheltered area until winds subside and then return later.

5. Do not row in fog unless visibility is at least 100 yards. If fog sets in while on the water, keep a land reference on one side and return to the dock, moving slowly and prepared to stop. Make noise frequently with a sound device or by shouting to warn other boats. Ensure quiet when not signaling to listen for other boats.
6. When docks are not accessible, boats will wet launch from the beach.
7. When the water temperature is below 50 degrees, the risk of hypothermia increases significantly. Water temperature will be monitored and posted in the boathouse. Water and air temperature combined must equal 90 degrees. For example: if the water is 50 degrees and the air is 40 degrees, then the cold weather rules go into effect., no rowers will be allowed on the water.

Weather Related Health Emergencies

Hyperthermia

Occurs when there is an increase in body temperature, usually when the air temperature is above 76 degrees, and the victim is exposed to sun and heat in combination with a decrease in fluids. It may occur when a) sweat cannot easily evaporate; b) the body is being heated by the environment; c) water loss from sweat and respiration is not replaced and dehydration occurs. Two serious conditions may result:

Heat exhaustion

Signs are throbbing headache, nausea, cool skin, chills, sweaty, and pale pulse. Action - drink water, shade from sun, and treat for shock.

Heat stroke

Heat stroke is life threatening -- signs are behavior changes, unconsciousness, hot but not sweaty, flushed warm skin and rapid pulse. Action- douse with cool water, shade from sun, fan, ensure the airway is open, always get medical assistance as soon as possible.

To avoid these problems in hot and humid weather:

1. Maintain a high fluid level. Drink water before leaving the dock and frequently while on the water. Take an individual plastic water bottle for easy access.
2. Avoid sunburn by using sunscreen, with a sweatband or hat to keep lotion out of eyes.
3. Wear light clothing.
4. Remain in the shade when off the water.
5. Plan activity level consistent with the degree of heat and humidity.

Hypothermia

Occurs when a victim is subject to cold temperatures, cold water, ice or snow. There is potential danger for hypothermia when the water temperature is below 80 degrees and very dangerous

when the water temperature is below 50 degrees. Symptoms include feeling cold, turn bluish and shivering, and followed by numbness, apathy, lethargy, disorientation and loss of mental capacity.

Action if cold and shivering:

1. Get out of the water quickly, even on top of the capsized boat. Heat loss is 25 times greater when in the water.
2. Huddle with others
3. Drown-proofing (dead man's float) is not an acceptable survival technique. Keep as much of the body out of the water as possible.
4. Move to shelter quickly, remove wet clothing and re-warm body. In mild hypothermia conditions, re-warm in a shower, tub or with warm blankets.
5. Do not give any liquids to drink, treat for shock.
6. Continue to re-warm and always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.

Action if cold and shivering has stopped:

1. Treat as above but DO NOT RE-WARM EXTREMITIES! If victim is no longer shivering, the torso must be re-warmed to avoid circulation of cold blood to the heart. This can kill. Wrap the victim in a warm blanket and apply heat to under arms and groin area; wrap again in a separate blanket. Wrap each arm and leg separately to prevent rapid re-circulation of blood to the heart. Hot packs should not be placed directly on the victim, a thin layer should be used to protect the victim from burning. If possible place the victim in a sleeping bag with a warm person.
2. Administer artificial respiration and CPR if necessary. Always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.

Cold water immersion

Be aware that in very cold water people have survived as long as one hour underwater. Recover a victim immediately and even though there may be no sign of life, administer CPR efforts until medical assistance is obtained.