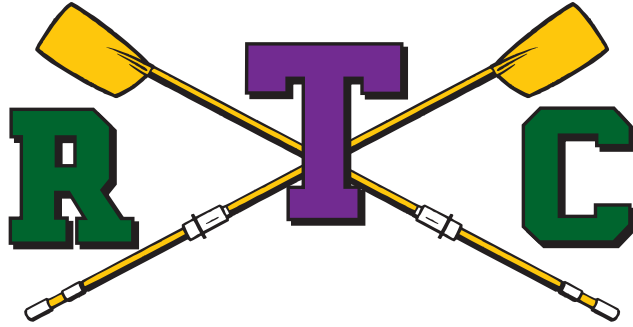


Tallahassee Rowing Club

Safety and Related Guidelines 8/2008



TRC rows without safety/coaching launches

Your safety is your responsibility

These guidelines will help you (rowers and coxswains) make safe choices

1 Before You Start

- Watch the US Rowing 2007 Safety DVD and read these guidelines.
- Consult your doctor(s) before starting a new sport such as rowing.
- Notify your coxswains, coaches and crewmates of any condition that might impact your health during a row and have needed medication with you (i.e. EpiPen, inhaler, etc.).
- Be a strong swimmer & comfortable in the water.
 - While neither the US Coast Guard nor Florida Law requires rowers in rowing shells to wear personal floatation devices (PFD), TRC recommends you obtain and wear a pfd if you are rowing a single when in cold weather conditions and if you are coxing in cold weather (being fully clothed increases your risks of drowning if you fall in the water in cold weather).
- Learn basic vocabulary about rowing:
 - use Wikipedia
 - www.usrowing.org/NewToRowing/GlossaryofRowingTerms/index.aspx
 - www.srarowing.com/newrower/rowingprimer.aspx
 - Do a web search and you will find lots of useful info from clubs in the US, Canada and other countries.
- Know Lake Hall traffic pattern(s) – all patterns are counter clockwise.
 - Maps of Lake Hall are available. Check the TRC website.
- TRC also recommends that members learn First Aid and CPR.
 - Local options include the Southeastern School of Health Sciences <http://www.southeastschool.net/> and Capital Area Chapter American Red Cross <http://redcross.tallytown.com/training-hss.html>
- Never row alone.
 - When rowing in a single, have a **buddy** in another boat or on shore.
- If rowing in a single, become competent at flipping and self-rescue.
- Obtain a TRC Emergency Contact Phone List and keep it in your car.
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2 Preparation for Going on the Water

- Be aware of the weather:
 - Temperature – see Section 7 for additional info
 - Cold (air temp and water temp)
 - Water temp information is available each day on <http://www.redhillstriathlon.org/index.php>
 - Heat and dew point
 - Wind speed, wind direction & location of the lee (protected) shore.
- Lightning
 - If you see lightning **or** hear thunder, stay off the water.
 - It's usually safe after no thunder and no lightning have been observed for thirty minutes. Be conservative here.
 - The National Lightning Safety Institute says:
 - "If you can see it, flee it; if you can hear it, clear it."
 - <http://www.lightningsafety.com/>
 - NOAA is another good source of information:
 - <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/index.htm>
- Show up *regardless* of weather unless your row has been cancelled.
- Dress appropriately for the weather.
 - Rowers should wear socks.
- Bring water to drink, even for cool weather or early morning rows - see Section 7 for additional info.
- Cover open blisters and open calf bites to protect the equipment from your bodily fluids and you from infection. You may wear gloves, but it is generally considered better for your rowing to build up slight calluses and avoiding severe blisters by not gripping the oar tightly.
- Ensure that someone in your crew has a means of communication with shore (use a zip lock bag or waterproof pouch with air in it to help protect the phone and make it float).
 - If rowing in a single, ensure that your **buddy** knows how you will communicate distress and have a rescue plan.

3 Gate, Dock and Parking Lot

- Be early.
- Obtain an after-hours pass when you purchase the annual park pass. There is no extra charge for an after-hours pass.
- If the park is closed, a member of your crew should stay at the gate and relock the gate once the crew is all in the park. When TRC members find the gate locked, they should not "open" the park for the public by unlocking the gate and leaving it open. Stay with the gate until your crew have entered or exited and relock it if you found it locked.
- Be courteous to rangers and folks fishing as well as people launching shells, kayaks, fishing boats, etc.
- Coxswains should walk in the front of a carried boat, holding onto the bow ball to keep from impaling bystanders and damaging property. It's also easier that way in our case to check dock iciness/wetness before boat carriers step onto it, and for the coxswain to warn folks on the dock (rather than screaming from 30 feet behind the stern), that a heavy shell is coming their way.
- Take care not to fall off the dock.

- Be aware of wet or icy dock conditions.
- Except for rare occasions, by the time a crew has carried a boat down to the dock, everyone should be completely ready to check their station and await instruction from the coxswain to take a station and begin the row. If you have to go to your car or the bathroom after the boat is in the water, be very quick.
- TRC also has several cox boxes available. If you need access to a cox box, check with a Board member or member of the Coaching Committee to make arrangements.
- Have a cell phone with emergency and other contact info programmed – but note that most regattas will disqualify you if an official sees you use a cell phone, even on the way to the starting line. So be careful to leave your phone behind when racing.
- Have a first aid kit in your car to assist your crew mates with injuries or emergencies as needed.
- Display your after hours pass before or after park hours.
- The speed limit in the parking area is 10 mph.

4 Rowing Equipment

- See *Equipment Usage Guidelines* document.

5 On the Water

- Never row alone – when rowing in a single, have a **buddy** in another boat or on shore. Have your communication and rescue plans in place before rowing.
- Avoid injuries due to technique error (tight grip, etc.).
- Don't talk while rowing pieces or otherwise when underway; be quiet and attentive to the coxswain.
- When the coxswain calls weigh enough and hold water, do it.
- Learn what to do when you encounter a wake (higher than gunnel vs. lower than gunnel) in a coxed and uncoxed boat (see DVD for more info).
- Do not row when white caps are visible.
- Watch for changes in weather or wind.
- Lightning – Do not launch if anyone sees any lightning or hears nearby thunder; return to the dock at the first sign of any lighting, regardless of location or distance of the lightning. Be aware that carbon fiber conducts electricity.
- Stay together and with the boat if it swamps or flips.
 - Shells are flotation devices but oars are NOT.
- Coxswains must know water right-of-way rules and when in doubt, yield.
- Coxswains must have sunglasses available when coxing @ dawn and dusk.

6 Accidents on the water

- At Lake Hall, the most common problems are occasional floating logs, patches of water lilies and other vegetation and of course... gators and flocks of ducks. Avoid these obstacles as you can.
- Carry a means of communication with other boats and folks on shore and know standard distress signals (one or two of the oars held vertically in the air, whistle blow, etc.).
- Learn about crabbing dangers and how to avoid injury (watch DVD re: small, medium and “ejector” crabs).

- Avoid collisions with other boats (be careful when visibility is difficult due to glare, fog, or darkness). Watch for additional boats and be aware of the location of all boats at all times.
- Learn how an emergency stop is done (all rowers “weigh enough and hold water”). Note that “weigh enough” has a different meaning than “let it run”. “Weigh enough” means stop rowing and drop blades to the water. “Let it run” means stop rowing but don’t drop blades to the water until directed. Let it run is usually used for by a coxswain for a specific reason.
- Swamping (risk to boats and rowers).
 - If the boat becomes swamped (perhaps due to high wave action) try to row to the nearest dock or a calmer area where you can bail.
 - If the boat fills with water and you are in warm water conditions but cannot row the boat, go into the water and turn the boat over. Indicate you need help by using a distress signal.
 - If the water is cold, stay in the boat if filled and keep it upright so you can avoid getting all the way into cold water. A swamped boat can usually still be rowed very slowly the short distance to shore at Lake Hall. There is no point on Lake Hall that is more than 300-400 ft from shore.
- Never abandon the boat.
- Flipping in a single or double.
 - Be competent at self-rescue: practice in the beach area and watch video instruction.
 - Do not tie your shoes too tight.
 - Consider Velcro straps to hold your oars together. Consider how you will bail your boat and carry a means of communication (whistle, phone, etc.).

7 Cold and Hot Weather

Cold weather

- Learn signs and treatment of hypothermia.
- Greatest danger in cold weather is being in the water - particularly when water is below 50 degrees.
- See <http://www.redhillstriathlon.org/index.php> for daily info on water temp at Lake Hall.

Hot weather

- Learn signs and treatment of heat exhaustion, dehydration and heat stroke.
- Maintain a high fluid level - bring 50% more water than you think you need (remember that hydration improves performance and keeps you healthy). If you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated.
- A wet hat will keep you cooler than a dry one!
- Sunglasses, sunscreen, etc.
- Seek shade when available.

8 End of Practice

- Approach dock at controlled speed. Once within 100 feet, never row more than two rowers and be sure bow pair is OUT to help watch the dock.
- Face the coxswain unless you are in bow pair. Bow pair should assist the coxswain with the approach to the dock.
- Avoid contact between the hull and any surface (other than your hands!).

- Rack and lock the boat where you found it, in the direction you found it (either bow first or stern first). See ***Equipment Usage Guidelines*** document for additional detail regarding equipment.