

Lea Rowing Club Safety Policy

Lea Rowing Club (**Lea RC**) is committed to ensuring, promoting and improving the safety of all its members and visitors. When on club premises or participating in any club activity Lea RC members are required to comply with:

- **British Rowing Water Safety Code and Rules of Racing;**
- **Lea Rowing Club Safety Policy; and**
- **Jane Blockley's "Cold Water Survival".**

In the event that any of the provisions of this document are found to be contradictory to Lea RC Code of Conduct, the Lea RC Code of Conduct shall be considered to be accurate.

1. ATHLETES

- 1.1 All Lea RC members are required to have completed a membership form before taking part in any physical activities on the premises of the club.

Capsize and Swim Tests

- 1.2 All athletes using fine boats are required to have provided the Lea RC Captain, Rowing Committee and/or Water Safety Advisor with assurances they can swim 50m in light clothing. All athletes must have carried out a capsize drill.

Health

- 1.3 It is essential that all athletes are in good health before they train. Before undertaking physical activities all Lea RC members must have fully completed the par-Q questionnaire section of the Lea RC membership form. It is the responsibility of the athletes to monitor their own health. If, for whatever reason, you as an athlete no longer fulfil the criteria to train (as set out in the Par-Q questionnaire on the membership form) you must not train. If you have a medical condition you must provide the Lea RC Captain, Rowing Committee and/or Water Safety Advisor with a signed letter from your doctor, or other qualified individual, your medical condition is not going to put you at risk when participating in any activities at the club.

2. SUPERVISION AND COACHING

Qualification and Experience

- 2.1 Lea RC acknowledges that individuals, when beginning to coach, may not have attained any coaching awards. Lea RC expects that all coaches will work constructively towards attaining, as a minimum, the British Rowing level two coaching qualification (or other such commensurate qualification as may exist from time to time).
- 2.2 Inexperienced coaches should seek advice and accept guidance of more experienced or more highly qualified coaches at all times.

Coach to Athlete Ratio

- 2.3 Before engaging athletes in any kind of coaching every coach should consider whether they are capable of safely managing the number of athletes under their supervision. Coaches should consider:
- (a) the level of competence of the athletes in their coaching group;
 - (b) the age of the athletes in their coaching group; and
 - (c) the type of boat the athletes are to use.
- 2.4 Coaches must be aware that athletes new to the sport require close supervision at all times. Coaches must ensure athletes new to the sport are provided with equipment and supervision commensurate with the level of athlete competency.

Boat suitability

- 2.5 Athletes and coaches must ensure that they have an appropriate level of experience before attempting to use any of the Lea RC equipment.

2.6 If the athlete is not experienced in using a certain type of equipment athletes should not use that equipment without the permission of the Lea RC Captain and only in the company of a coach or coxswain.

2.7 Single scullers, in particular, must be suitably competent before going on the water unsupervised.

Gymnasium

2.8 Athletes may only use the gymnasium once they have been shown how to use the equipment by a suitably experienced coach.

2.9 Juniors may only use the gymnasium when a suitably experienced coach is present to supervise them.

2.10 Athletes are not permitted to make use of weights equipment if training on their own.

2.11 All equipment must be put away after use.

3. WATER AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

3.1 Athletes and coaches must take into account that there can be significant variations in water and weather conditions. Before going afloat athletes and coaches must consider the:

- (a) experience of the athletes in the relevant conditions;
- (b) boat type being used;
- (c) river height and speed of flow;
- (d) amount and type of debris in the river; and
- (e) number and type of other river users.

3.2 Athletes and coaches must be aware of the weather conditions and should take them into account when making a decision to go afloat. In particular athletes and coaches should be aware of:

- (a) *Lightning*. This is very dangerous. Athletes should not go afloat if there is a lightning event or a risk of a lightning event occurring. In the event a lightning event occurs when you are on the river you should seek the most immediate, safe method to get off the water. A lightning event is any event where the gap between lightning and thunder clap becomes less than 30 seconds. Once the gap between lightning and thunder has increased back to 30 seconds boats need to wait a further 30 minutes before returning to the water;
- (b) *Wind*. Athletes and coaches should be aware of the potential impact of winds on the manoeuvrability of boats, especially when turning. Excessively high wind conditions can generate waves, particularly when the wind is against the stream;
- (c) *Fog/mist*. Athletes and coaches should be aware that fog can significantly reduce visibility. Athletes should not go afloat if visibility prevents the athletes from seeing from the club to the cranes at the level at which they would be sitting in the boat;
- (d) *Atmospheric Temperature*. High temperatures can lead to hyperthermia, while low temperatures can result in hypothermia. Individuals should dress appropriately for the conditions. Hypothermia is of particular risk to coxswains. Coaches and coxswains should ensure athletes are appropriately attired before going afloat. Athletes should always ensure they have enough fluid with them to reduce the risk of hyperthermia. Athletes should always take more clothing on the water rather than less in order to reduce the risk of hypothermia; and
- (e) *Water temperature*. In winter this is low. In the event of capsize in winter risk of hypothermia is high. If a capsize in winter occurs athletes should remove themselves from the water as quickly as possible and seek warmth. If possible wet clothing should be removed and replaced with dry clothing. Athletes who have capsized in cold water should be provided with an emergency space blanket as soon as possible following evacuation from the water.

3.3 All coaches are to carry throwlines at all times and emergency space blankets if there is risk of capsize and hypothermia. All coaches are to carry a mobile phone and list of emergency service phone numbers.

3.4 Athletes, coxswains and coaches must be aware the river is used by a variety of other craft and powered launches. Care must be taken at all times when navigating the river to ensure risk of collision with other craft is eradicated. Athletes and coxswains are required, when in doubt, to stop their craft and allow another, potentially hazardous craft, to pass by/evacuate the relevant section of river.

3.5 Athletes and coaches must be aware that safety conditions, hazards and navigation rules may change when rowing at other locations. Athletes, coxswains and coaches are required to fully understand the risks, hazards and navigation rules of any location where they go afloat.

4. LIGHT

- 4.1 Rowing in the dark is potentially dangerous. Crews are prohibited from rowing in the dark unless they are accompanied by a coxswain. In addition, crews must have attached to the boat a white light at the bow point of the boat and a white light at the stern point of the boat capable of being seen at a distance of 250m (lights should not be attached to rowers or coxswains).

5. EQUIPMENT

Safety

- 5.1 The British Rowing Water Safety Code requires that all boats are fitted with certain safety features. The following must be fitted and in full working order before an athlete(s) goes afloat:
- (a) Heel restraints;
 - (b) Bow ball;
 - (c) Buoyancy tank hatch covers; and
 - (d) Steering mechanisms.

If any of the above are defective the boat must not be used until properly repaired.

Boat Integrity

- 5.2 If a boat is unsafe to be used or would sustain further damage through use it should not be used. Any damage found on a boat, or sustained through use, should be noted on the notice board at the rear of the Viiiis bay and reported to the Captain immediately.

Life Jackets

- 5.3 All coxswains must wear lifejackets. Lifejackets must be used by all occupants of coaching launches. All coxswains must ensure their lifejacket is in good working order before going afloat.

6. ACCESS AND EGRESS TO BOATS

- 6.1 Athletes and coxes must be aware that the landing stage is situated adjacent to a public footpath. Care must be taken when taking boats into or out of the boatshed and when manoeuvring boats or other equipment in the vicinity of the club.
- 6.2 Athletes and coxes must be aware that the landing stage is of concrete and wood construction. Particular care should be taken when going afloat and landing on the landing stage. Athletes and coxswains must be aware that the landing stage may be hazardous when slippery.

7. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Rescue Methods

- 7.1 Lea RC members are encouraged to be familiar with all basic first aid and emergency procedures contained in first aid courses and in the British Rowing Water Safety Code. Coaches should be familiar with methods of rescue from both launch and bank.

Rescue Equipment

- 7.2 Throw lines are located in the Junior Shed and in the main boat bay. All coaches should carry them. Life buoys located along the river but can not be relied upon to be present.

First Aid

- 7.3 First Aid kits are located in the main boathouse, junior shed and office. The contents of these is checked regularly. If you need to use them you should inform the Water Safety Advisor and the Captain. A list of qualified First Aiders is provided next to each First Aid kit.

Phones

- 7.4 Coaches must carry a mobile phone with them at all times. In addition, landlines are located in the boathouse café, bar and Lea RC club office.

8. HEALTH

- 8.1 Athletes, coxswains and coaches should be aware that by rowing on the river they are at risk of contracting water borne diseases. All members should be aware of the British Rowing recommendations regarding water borne diseases and should ensure that they follow basic hygiene recommendations after using the river and/or gym.

9. NOTES ON NAVIGATING THE LEA CANAL.

Right of Way

- 9.1 Crews travelling upstream have the right of way.

Turning

- 9.2 With the exception of the footbridge immediately below the club and at Lathams crews should not spin within 50m of bridges or bends. There should be no overtaking or spinning between the footbridge adjacent to Lea RC and the Canoe Club and between Lathams and The Curtains.

The River

- 9.3 The River Lea is lock-controlled and non-tidal. As a consequence the height of the river does not vary much and the flow is always down stream. Downstream is, when standing in front of the boathouse facing the river, to the right.
- 9.4 The rule of the river is to travel on the right. The stretch normally available for rowing is from Tottenham Lock (upstream of the boathouse) to Old Ford Lock (downstream of the boathouse).

Tottenham Lock to Old Ford Lock

- 9.5 Starting at Tottenham lock you should be aware that other river users make use of the lock. Crews should be careful not to get too close to the lock. The stretch of the river between Tottenham lock and 'The Gate' is much used by anglers.
- 9.6 The Gate is a turn to the right located downstream from Tottenham Lock. Crews should be aware that the turn is unsighted and crews may be coming in the opposite direction. When approaching The Gate from upstream the river may be seen to fork. Crews should take the left fork to Tottenham lock. The right fork is a dead end and shallows very quickly.
- 9.7 After The Gate the first obstacle downstream is a railway bridge which is narrow on the left. Crews coming upstream should be vigilant for crews travelling downstream. Crews travelling upstream should not let their bowside blades pass close to the wall of the bridge as there are some semi-submerged obstacles.
- 9.8 Downstream of the railway bridge there is a long turn to the left, known as the 'Novice Bend'. Crews should take care to stay on their proper sides of the river to avoid collisions. When steering the Novice Bend in a downstream direction careful note should be taken that the bank requires more than a 90 degree turn to be made as it protrudes slightly at the exit to the turn.
- 9.9 Downstream of the Novice Bend there is a 1km straight. The boathouse sits at the end of the 'Club Straight' The Club Straight is used heavily by beginners and juniors. Due care should be taken when manoeuvring around inexperienced crews. The landing stage is in front of the boathouse at the end of the Club Straight. Crews should be aware that there may be other crews either boating or landing from the landing stage. Care should be taken to give boating or landing crews enough space.
- 9.10 Immediately downstream of the club there is a footbridge, turn to the left and marina. Crews should be aware that river boats are often moored on the left hand bank at the marina fuelling station. Immediately after the turn to the left and on the left hand bank is the exit/entrance to the marina. Crews should be aware of river boats entering/exiting the marina. River boats frequently move into and out of this section of river. Crews should be aware that hazards on this section of the river will frequently change.
- 9.11 Immediately after the marina is a second footbridge and a left/right S-bend. Located on the right hand bank of the right hand turn is a canoe club. The towpath moves away from the riverbank at this point so coaches will be unsighted and unable to provide warning of crews travelling in the opposite direction. Crews should be aware that there is sometimes tree foliage growing out over the river on the right hand bank. Vigilance is required for canoeists going afloat; especially on weekends. Crews should always travel through the S-Bend at light pressure and give extra care to ensure they maintain a correct steering line.

- 9.12 After the S-Bend is a short straight followed by a small turn to the left, another straight, a railway bridge and a slight turn to the right. Due to the bends being slightly unsighted crews should not turn on any of these stretches of river and should not row at firm pressure.
- 9.13 After the slight turn to the right there is a straight leading to 'Lathams'. Lathams is a turning point and crews may turn here in order to travel upstream back to the boathouse. Crews should be aware of other crews turning here. Canoeists often use the Lathams bend so vigilance is required.
- 9.14 After Lathams there is a turn to the right followed by a sharp turn to the left in excess of 90 degrees and a sharp turn to the right under Lea Bridge Road. The river narrows. All crews should take this section of the river at light pressure and maintain extra vigilance. Crews should take extra care to ensure they maintain the correct steering line. Coxswains will likely find they need to request the crew pull-on on one side of the boat and lighten-off on the other in addition to the use of the rudder in order to navigate these bends and maintain correct river position.
- 9.15 Fifty yards downstream are some former sluice gates known as 'The Curtains'. A sweep oared boat cannot row through The Curtains. Sweep oar crews need to line themselves up with the centre of the arch, easy oar, pull the blades inboard and drift through The Curtains. Crews travelling in a downstream direction should use the right hand arch of The Curtains and crews travelling in an upstream direction should use the left hand arch.
- 9.16 Downstream of The Curtains there are a series of slight turns and straights. There is a turn to the right (the start of the '2k course') a turn to the left and then a turn to the right (the 'bottom of the straight') These can be navigated at pressure but care must be taken by crews to be vigilant for those travelling in the opposite direction.
- 9.17 Downstream of the bottom of the straight there is a 1500m stretch of river. This stretch has two bridges which narrow the river on the right hand side. Care must be taken to avoid the bridges.
- 9.18 At the end of the straight is the end of the '2k course' and a slight turn to the right. Located just after the turn to the right is Eton Mission boathouse and landing stage. Care must be taken to ensure that there are no boats pushing off or landing at Eton Mission.
- 9.19 Shortly downstream from Eton Mission is a narrow footbridge which sits on a slight turn to the left. Care must be taken when steering through the bridge to ensure that a correct line is taken and oncoming crews are avoided.
- 9.20 After the footbridge the river widens out and on the right hand side is a spur of the river known as 'the T-junction'. Care must be taken as river boats sometimes turn into and out of the T-junction. Crews should not take the right hand turn down the T-junction. If coxswains are steering an VIII it may be sensible to turn the boat at the T-junction.
- 9.21 After the T-Junction there is a slight turn to the right and an straight leading to Old Ford. This is the end of the river. Crews should be careful not to get too close to the lock as river boats often make use of it.
- 9.22 If crews are navigating to Old Ford together a basic navigation pattern should be observed when turning at Old Ford. Crews should approach the end of the river towards Old Ford at low pressure on the right hand bank and easy oars. Crews should spin as close to Old Ford as safety will allow. Crews should then proceed up the left hand bank away from Old Ford. Crews following behind should proceed in a like manner one after the other. Following crews should not turn downstream of a crew turning at Old Ford.

Boating/Landing

- 9.23 Crews going afloat must boat and move away from the landing stage in a downstream direction. Crews should boat as far downstream on the landing stage as possible so as to allow other crews to boat behind them and crews to land. Crews should be vigilant when pushing away from the bank to make sure that they are not pushing off into the path of crews travelling either upstream or downstream.
- 9.24 Crews must always land their boat facing downstream. Crews downstream of the landing stage are required to proceed upstream of the landing stage in the usual manner on the right hand side of the river. Crews wanting to land should turn their boat upstream of the 100m mark onto the correct side of the river for a crew travelling downstream. Crews may then proceed to land on the landing stage.