

# **Salmon Arm Rowing Club**

## **Rowing Safety Guidelines**

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# Introduction

Rowing, like many sports, carries inherent risks, especially at the beginning and end of the season when the water is cold. The Salmon Arm Rowing Club follows a "Safety First" policy, partially based on Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) safety policies.

The club adheres to RCA safety requirements and updates this document when necessary. The most recent RCA guidelines can be found here:

- [RCA Safety Guidelines](#)
- [RCA Individual Rowers' Responsibility for Safety](#)

**Policy Last Modified:** March 2025

**Next Review:** March 2026

# General Safety Responsibilities

**Safety is Everyone's Responsibility!** If you identify an issue that may affect your safety or that of others, speak up before heading out.

## Waivers & Registration

- All members and guests must sign the **Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) waiver** and the **Salmon Arm Rowing Club Waiver** before participating.
- Minors (under 18) must be registered by a parent/guardian and have a signed **Acknowledgement of Risk and Consent Form**.

## Swim to Survive Requirement

Participants should be able to:

1. Roll into deep water
2. Tread water for one minute
3. Swim 50 meters

## Substance Use & Health Considerations

- **No alcohol or recreational drugs** before or during rowing.
- The coach/crew captain may prevent a rower from participating if they are deemed unfit.

## Illness & Infectious Diseases

- Stay home if sick and practice hygiene precautions.
- Socks must be worn in rowing shells.

## Reporting Issues

- Address concerns with the **coach/crew captain**.
  - If unresolved, escalate to the **Rowing Director**.
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# Weather & Environmental Conditions

## General Rule: If in Doubt, Don't Go Out!

### Lightning

- Rowing is canceled during a forecasted lightning storm.
- If caught on the water, row to the nearest safe docking site or shore.
- Do not relaunch until **30 minutes** after the last lightning strike/thunder.

### Wind & Weather

- Rowing may be canceled due to **whitecaps, cold weather, or unsafe conditions**.
- If rowing in rough weather, stay **near shore** for safety.
- Communicate to avoid collisions.

### Air Quality

- AQHI **1-3**: Normal practices.
- AQHI **4-6**: Modified workouts; masks (N95 with valves) encouraged.
- AQHI **7+**: Rowing is canceled.

### Visibility

- Minimum of **150 meters** of unrestricted visibility required.
- No rowing **before sunrise or after sunset**.

### In-Water Hazards

- The **bow seat rower or coxswain** must watch for hazards like deadheads and powerboats.

### Safe Docking

- Stop the boat before grabbing the dock.
  - Exit before removing oars.
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# Personal Safety Equipment & Attire

## Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

- **Mandatory** for rowers under **18** and weak swimmers.
- Strongly encouraged for all rowers.

## Clothing & Sun/Heat Protection

- Wear weather-appropriate clothing in a waterproof container (e.g., drybag).
  - Brightly colored shirts and caps improve visibility.
  - Follow **SLIP-SLOP-SLAP-WRAP-SLURP** guidelines:
    - **SLIP** on a long-sleeved shirt
    - **SLOP** on sunscreen
    - **SLAP** on a broad-brimmed hat
    - **WRAP** on sunglasses
    - **SLURP** (stay hydrated)
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# Required Equipment in Rowing Shells

Every shell must have:

- **One Transport Canada-approved PFD per person** (mandatory for rowers under 16)
  - **Whistles** (two for four-person boats; three for eight-person boats)
  - **Watertight flashlight** (if used in restricted visibility)
  - **Rowing shell check:**
    - Bow-ball in good condition
    - Functional heel restraints
    - No missing bolts or drain plugs
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# Coach/Safety Boat Protocol

## General Safety Boat Rules

- The coach boat must **remain within sight and hearing** of rowers.
- A **1:8-10 ratio** of safety boats to rowers is ideal.

## Rowers Requiring a Safety Boat

- **Junior rowers (under 18)**
- **Participants exempt from swim skill requirements**

### **Safety Boat Operator Requirements**

- Must have a **Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC)**
- Wear a **PFD** at all times
- Be attached to the **kill switch**
- Launch the boat **before rowers leave the dock**

### **Safety Boat Equipment (Per Transport Canada Regulations)**

- Sufficient **PFDs**
- **15m buoyant heaving line**
- **Paddle & bailer**
- **Watertight flashlight**
- **Thermal blankets (cold water protocol)**

### **Navigation Limitations**

- Safety boats **cannot operate before sunrise or after sunset** due to lack of navigation lights.

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## **Rowing Without a Safety Boat**

- Consider the **least experienced rower** when choosing boats.
- **Use stable shells** (e.g., touring quads, coastal doubles).
- Ensure **whistles and PFDs** are available.
- At least **two people in the group should carry a cell phone** in a waterproof container.
- Maintain **visual contact** with each other at all times.

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## **Equipment Handling & Boat Safety**

### **Lifting & Carrying Rowing Shells**

- Ensure enough people are evenly distributed for lifting and carrying.

### **Loading & Unloading Rowers**

- Follow organized procedures to keep the boat stable.

### **In-Craft Communication**

- Follow commands from the **coxswain or bow person**.

### **Rowing Course Map**

- Follow the **established traffic pattern** and be aware of other water users.

### **Training for All Seats**

- Rowers should gain experience in different positions.
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## **Emergency Procedures**

### **Capsize Procedures**

- Coaches/crew leaders must **review capsize procedures** before each session.
- Rowers should apply the **buddy system** and attempt one re-entry.
- If unsuccessful, use the **straddle-and-paddle** technique (lie on top of the shell and paddle like a surfboard).

### **Swamping**

- If a boat takes on water, **bail it out**.
- If necessary, some rowers may exit until stability is regained.