

Cal Dragon Boat Incident 2017

Executive Summary

On June 17, 2017 at approximately 11:10 AM Cal Dragon Boat (CalDB) ran aground in rocky shoals near Coast Guard Island (CGI) after violating several California Dragon Boat Association (CDBA) safety policies and navigational rules thereby critically damaging the dragon boat; stranding the team; and requiring rescue services from the US Coast Guard (USCG), Oakland Police Department (OPD), Alameda Police Department (APD), Renegades Dragon Boat (RDB), and CDBA staff. There were no major injuries.

All appropriate documentation including incidents reports were filed and appropriate authorities were notified. CDBA conducted an extensive review interviewing CalDB leadership; determined the set of causes of the incident; and determined punitive measures, corrective actions, and areas of improvement for CalDB. These include:

1. *This incident was avoidable provided the team stayed inside the designated paddling zone and main channel. The CDBA safety manual/policy identifies the location where CalDB ran aground as a hazard zone where boats should not be piloted. Additionally, the aids to navigation in the region of the hazard zone indicate where the safe main channel for navigation is located. Being able to identify and understand aids to navigation is a critical skill of boat pilots in busy inland waterways. To improve CalDB's applicable knowledge of navigation of inland waters:*
 - a. [REDACTED]
2. *The certified steerspersons responsible for training the novice steersperson failed to fulfill their roles as trainers by failing to guide the trainee to the designated practice zone, regain control of the boat when the trainee lost control, and prevent collision.*
 - a. [REDACTED]
3. *CDBA requires that teams submit online practice manifests so that authorities may be informed of how many people they are attempting to rescue. This incident is representative of a type of emergency when such information would be critical for rescue. CalDB failed to submit such manifest on the day of the incident.*
 - a. [REDACTED]
4. *CDBA's agreement with the City of Oakland requires the maintenance of certain documents per the City's directive. CalDB had not maintained up to date records.*
 - a. [REDACTED]

5. CalDB's incident report indicated internal corrective actions that the team intends to take to prevent future incidents like this one. The team commits to this cited measure (cited from CalDB incident report dated June 17, 2017) to prevent future incidents:
- a. Currently, the Captains and Coaches check wind and weather conditions the night before and the morning of practice. In the future, tide conditions and weather will be checked, recorded the morning before a practice, and, if potential hazards exist, ways to approach it safely. A novice steer, before learning how to steer on the water, will also need to be able to point out danger zones on a map for every site at which we practice. Furthermore, while learning and practicing, he or she will only be allowed to steer in wide channels with no potential obstacles. If there is no such place at that time and date, he or she cannot steer that day.

■ [REDACTED]

■ [REDACTED]

■ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CalDB has fulfilled all of its obligations to date.

Additionally, CDBA has identified a common cause for many northern CA DB incidences. Despite CDBA safety policy requirements, steerspersons in training are commonly left unsupervised by a competent, trained steersperson. This usually takes the form of the supervisor being present on the boat but being so engrossed in coaching or his/her own paddle training that little attention is given to the trainee the trainee's ability to steer a boat safely resulting in minor incidents and this incident. To address this CDBA is implementing stricter steersperson training provisions requiring that supervising steerspersons not be engaged in any activity other than those of observing and coaching the trainee and attention to boat and water safety.