



GREATER CHICAGO DRAGON BOAT CLUB SAFETY PROGRAM

SAFETY

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Dragon Boat Paddling is a water sport activity and a physical activity. The following information is provided to help keep everyone safe. Please review and be familiar with the information.

EMERGENCY PLAN

“EMERGENCY”

- The steer or drummer shall use the command "EMERGENCY" to indicate that an emergency exists. At this command, the front pair and the rear pair of paddlers will raise their paddles straight up in the air; all other paddlers will put their paddles in the water in the "hold water" position. The command "EMERGENCY" will be used to signal a paddler overboard, a medical emergency, or swamping. The capsizing of a boat will be evident to emergency personnel. If the steer is unable to issue the command, the drummer will take over.
- A bailer will be located in the stern of the boat near the steer to be used in the event of swamping or a boat taking on a large amount of water.

FIRST AID

- A first aid emergency is any medical emergency or physical injury that takes place on board the dragon boat. The injured paddler or his or her buddy signals the steer by raising an arm in the air. The steer issues the command "EMERGENCY" to alert emergency personnel. The steer communicates the nature of the emergency to the emergency personnel who assume responsibility for the first aid care. The dragon boat then returns to the unloading area, or to the starting line, as appropriate.

PADDLER OVERBOARD

- Paddler overboard means a crew member has fallen out of the boat. The steer issues the "EMERGENCY" command. The steer points with an arm at the paddler in the water so EMT personnel are aware of the nature of the emergency and the whereabouts of the victim. Should the paddler swim back to the dragon boat, he should be floated on the windward side of the boat until help arrives. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REBOARD THE PADDLER.** When emergency personnel arrive, they will take the paddler on their boat and return to the dock. The rescued paddler remains on the dock until the rest of the crew arrives.



GREATER CHICAGO DRAGON BOAT CLUB SAFETY PROGRAM

COLLISION

- A dragon boat collision can put many people in the water and in danger. In the event of a collision, the race is stopped immediately: all dragon boats come to a stop to avoid adding to the collision.
- Dragon boats are not to assist with the rescue. A dragon boat is not maneuverable; it will get in the way of emergency personnel and may cause injury to paddlers in the water. All dragon boats not involved in the collision give the collision site a wide berth and return to the unloading area. All injuries are reported to the steer when the buddy check is completed. Crew members should keep calm and quiet so they can hear directions from the steer and emergency personnel.
- Crew members stay in the boat. This will keep paddlers out of harm's way when emergency personnel arrive. Paddlers in the water should avoid climbing on top of, or attempting to get into either boat as the boats may start to roll, injuring other paddlers.
- If a crew member is injured, the uninjured buddy uses one hand to grasp the gunwale of the boat and the other to grasp the collar of the Personal Flotation Device of the injured buddy. It is important for the uninjured buddy to maintain verbal contact with their buddy. If the water is cold or paddlers feel cold, they should be instructed to pull their knees to their chest and wrap their arm around their legs.
- Upon their arrival, emergency personnel take control of the situation. The steer provides information on missing buddies or injuries. Emergency personnel may take some paddlers on board the rescue boat.
- Paddlers being boarded on the rescue boat follow the directions of the emergency personnel and allow themselves to be pulled into the boat.

CAPSIZING

- A capsized dragon boat is one that has turned upside down with the hull of the boat skyward. Participants should understand that they cannot stop a boat from capsizing once it has started to turn. Participants let themselves go with the boat's roll. Paddlers on the high side of the dragon boat should try to throw themselves clear of their partner and release their paddles.
- Participants who come up under the overturned boat can breathe in the air pocket, grasp the gunwale of the boat with one hand and duck back down, oriented by their hand on the gunwale until they are clear of the boat and can surface. Upon surfacing, buddies check each other for injury and report any injuries to the steer.
- Crew members stay with the boat. This will keep paddlers out of harm's way when emergency personnel arrive. Paddlers in the water should avoid climbing on top of, or attempting to get into the boat as the boat may start to roll, injuring other paddlers.
- If a crew member is injured, the uninjured buddy uses one hand to grasp the gunwale of the boat and the other to grasp the collar of the Personal Flotation Device of the injured buddy. It is important for the uninjured buddy to maintain verbal contact with their buddy.



GREATER CHICAGO DRAGON BOAT CLUB SAFETY PROGRAM

If the water is cold or paddlers feel cold, they should be instructed to pull their knees to their chest and wrap their arm around their legs.

- Upon their arrival, emergency personnel take control of the situation. The steer provides information on missing buddies or injuries. Emergency personnel may take some paddlers on board the rescue boat. Paddlers being boarded on the rescue boat follow instruction of emergency personnel and allow themselves to be pulled into the boat.

SWAMPING

- A boat is swamped when it takes on large amounts of water. A swamped boat floats upright just below the surface of the water. If water can be safely and quickly bailed out, the steer assigns someone to do this with the bailer. If the boat cannot be bailed, the crew stays in the boat to steady it - all paddlers reach with their paddles as far to the outside as possible. It is important that the paddlers stay in the boat and to remain still.
- When the boat is swamped, the steer conducts a buddy check. Any injuries are reported to the steer. Paddlers are reminded to stay calm and quiet so they can hear directions from the steer and emergency personnel.
- Upon their arrival, emergency personnel take control of the situation. The steer provides information on missing buddies or injuries.

PRE-LAUNCH SAFETY BRIEFING

- Introduce yourself to the team that just boarded the boat (NOTE: Some Clubs might perform a more detailed Safety Briefing periodically including demonstrating CPR rescue and other emergency safety briefings)
- Count the entire crew, including yourself, and record the total number onboard.
- Go over the basic commands you plan to use;
 - Take it Away (Start Paddling)
 - Let it Run (Stop Paddling)
 - Hold Water (Buried Blades Deep in Water to Stop Boat)
- Determine the experience level of the crew / paddlers
- Clarify that the Steersperson is the ultimate authority in issues of navigation and boat safety
- Have paddlers identify their “seat buddies”
- Inform the crew if the boat capsizes to stay with the boat. Once up, find your seat buddy. Take a head count. You may designate a strong swimmer to search under the boat. Utilize your cell phone, tow rope, etc. Do not swim away from the boat. It will continue to float even if full of water.
- Ask if there are any last questions from the crew prior to launching.



GREATER CHICAGO DRAGON BOAT CLUB
SAFETY PROGRAM
INSPECTING FOR RISK (BEST DEMONSTRATED PRACTICE SHARING)
(Source: USDBF Recommendation to Event Organizers)

Items in *italics* are potential Control Measures that may not be available.

Hazard	Sub-Hazard	Severity	Frequency	Control Measure
Falling in during Embarking or Disembarking.	Immersion, minor falling injuries.	Minor.	Totally avoidable.	Provision of enough space is probably the best safety boon. Marshals to ensure disembarking complete before embarking crews move forward. <i>Embarking areas separated from spectators – no barriers. Secure mooring bollards – not available. First Aid awareness at embarkation point and on rescue boats -check for shock.</i>
	Major injuries, at worst crushing between boat and bank.	Major.	Totally avoidable.	As above plus first aid provision.
Capsize	Immersion, panic	Minor	25% chance of one capsize. <i>(2000:0, 20 02:1, 2004:0)</i>	Prevention: Trained steersperson. Alcohol ban. Team briefing. Cure: see immersion.
	Knocks, concussion	Major	Low.	As above plus first aid provision and buddy system.
Swamping (from wake or wind).	Immersion	Minor	Low	Prevention: Trained steersperson, low speed limit, sheltered location. Cure: See immersion.
	Knocks	Medium	Low	As above plus first aid provision and buddy, buddy system.
Collision with other craft or persons.	Immersion.	Minor	Totally avoidable.	Prevention: Trained steersperson. Alcohol ban, Low speed limit. Crew training before first race. Race Control. Start/Stop signals. Start horn. Must be no overlap with diving area. Cure: See immersion.
	Knocks, running over casualties.	Major	Totally avoidable.	As above plus first aid provision and buddy system.
Bangs and bumps during racing, esp. if capsize.	Knocks. Teeth.	Minor possibly up to medium.	Inevitable.	Trained steersperson. Alcohol ban. Entry pack makes clear limitations to event's liability.
Falling out of boat	Immersion	Minor	Unlikely	Alcohol ban.
Medical emergency in boat	Self medicating			Depends on individual. Generally asthmatics (say) should take inhalers on board.
	Help needed.	Major	Not likely, but depends upon crews.	Trained steersperson, safety boats, first aid provision.



GREATER CHICAGO DRAGON BOAT CLUB SAFETY PROGRAM

Spectators falling in	Immersion	Minor	Quite likely.	Boat marshals would see this. Low banks make rescue easy. Often shallow on North side. (Possible extra measures are temporary fencing, however, this only increases the danger if it collapses. Marshals at narrow path.)
Spectators land hazards on North Bank.	Falling, cuts on debris.	Minor	Quite possible, especially if drunk	Bank inspection beforehand. Site clear up by SPA. There are paths down, and the flat area is nearly 20m wide. In previous years little debris has been found, although what there is tends to be dogs mess and beer bottles – not nice.

Items in *italics* are potential Control Measures that may not be available.

Hazard	Sub-Hazard	Severity	Frequency	Control Measure
Motoring hazards above North Bank.	Distractions, bad parking.	Medium.	Middling.	No problem in previous years. Race is about 50m south of, and 10m below, the road. So drivers won't see much. But people may mill and some may park badly. Advise police.
After immersion Hyperthermia, sunburn	Drowning -	Major Minor to Medium	Very unlikely. Possible.	Buoyancy aids Clothing advice. Alcohol ban. Refreshments (liquids) available.
Immersion (while in water)	Hypothermia	Medium	Unlikely in water, as rescue should be quick.	Buoyancy aids, clothing advice, safety boats. Est. water temp May 2006 12C min ¹ .
After immersion	Hypothermia	Medium	Unlikely if suitable clothing with team.	Shelter (tents) and change of clothing (teams should bring).
After immersion	illness (later).	Medium	Hard to tell. <i>Rugby Club swam in 2002 – reported no illnesses when asked later.</i>	Actual water quality not measured. Not grossly polluted, but is not classified as bathing location. Inconsiderate yachts may pump out raw sewage. Local watercourses flushed after heavy rain. Dinghy activities regularly held and no problems reported. Risk increased for non-water sport crews. Advise of Weil's disease after immersion. Teams advised against swimming in entry pack.
Consequences of Injuries	AWSDG being sued	Medium	Unlikely	Not being negligent! Identification of safe procedures and limitations in entry pack. Provision of suitable support & facilities. BDA organising the race itself/SPA site owners.
	BDA being sued	Medium	Unlikely	Not being negligent! Public liability insurance for the race.
	SPA being sued	Medium	Unlikely	Not being negligent! Not organising the race. Public liability insurance for visitors & spectators during the open day.