



MILL TOWN ROWING SAFETY POLICY

Effective Date: August 7, 2024

Safety Policy

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1. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the Mill Town Rowing (MTR) Safety Policy is to establish, maintain and disseminate the Club's safety guidelines and ultimately ensure the safe operation of the Club at all times. This guide governs all boat handling and on-water rowing at any facility or location that members use while sanctioned by the Club. The Safety Policy is maintained by the Safety Committee and the Head Coach. The policies and procedures in this policy shall be adhered to in all respects. Nevertheless, blind adherence shall not replace the exercise of sound judgment. The Safety Committee is composed of the Head Coach, at least one board member, and other members of the Club.

Mill Town Rowing considers safety to be the priority of all rowers, coxswains, and coaches. The policies and procedures in this Safety Policy are written for everyone's benefit.

Policy terms are defined as follows:

- Note: An operating procedure, practice, or condition, etc., that must be emphasized.
- Shall: A procedure that is mandatory.
- Should: A procedure that is recommended.
- May or Need Not: A procedure that is optional.
- Will: Indicates futurity and never indicates any degree of requirement for application of a procedure.

Communications and Compliance

Our Safety Procedures and Policies are documented on the Mill Town Rowing website [Mill Town Rowing](#) and in the Common Policy and Manual also available on the website.

Members are required to comply with the procedures and policies in this Safety Policy.

Disciplinary action may follow member or staff violation of the Safety Policy. The first violation of Club Safety Policy will result in a written reprimand. The second violation will result in a suspension of rowing privileges or coaching duties. The third violation will result in a cancellation of membership and accompanying privileges or a termination of employment.

Liability

Liability insurance shall always be in force; if for any unforeseen circumstance there is a lapse in coverage all club activities are to be suspended. The Operations Director is responsible for ensuring that the insurance policy is in force and is required to keep the Safety Committee informed of the policy.

Individual members are responsible for their own medical clearance; the Mill Town Rowing / US Rowing waiver indemnifies Mill Town Rowing of liability for individual members.

Every member, guest and coach who participates in club-sponsored on-water rowing or erg sessions shall sign a US Rowing "Release of Liability" on a yearly basis. The Operations Director or designee shall maintain documentation of the signed forms.

2. DELINEATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Mill Town Rowing Head Coach and Safety Committee Responsibilities

Responsible for ensuring the policies and procedures of this Safety Policy are followed.

Should conduct a quarterly "Safety Meeting" at a minimum. Safety Meetings will also need to be held in the event of an incident report.

Have the authority to cancel rowing activities at any time if it is deemed that policies and procedures are not being followed or if any unsafe condition exists.

Shall ensure all members have acknowledged reading the Safety Policy before participating in on-water rowing activities.

Should ensure that for each coach, rower, and coxswain are registered and have a record of the following:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Address
- Phone Number
- Emergency Contact Information
- Medical Information and Waiver

Shall ensure all rowing equipment is maintained with safety in mind and that unsafe equipment be prominently marked and removed from use.

Shall schedule rowing on the Snohomish River and surrounding sloughs, as long as the conditions are favorable per the policies set forth in the MTR's Safety Policy.

Shall ensure instructors (coaches) are knowledgeable in the correct supervision of athletes in a marine environment. Shall require current CPR, AED, First Aid, and Washington Boating certification by all coaches and other staff. Shall maintain a first aid kit in a communal, well-identified location.

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) shall be maintained and available at practices and MTR attended regattas, as appropriate.

May remove coaches, coxswains, or athletes from their duties if they are deemed a threat to safety. Shall coordinate with the Operation's Director to ensure organizational liability insurance is in full force at all times.

The Safety Committee should provide regular safety tips to staff and participants.

All members who participate in any on-water rowing shall complete a swim test, certified by an accredited lifeguard. The Safety Committee is responsible for ensuring compliance. Swim test certifications will be maintained by the Operations Director, cooperating with the Safety Committee.

Coach Responsibilities

Shall maintain current CPR, AED, First Aid and Washington Boater Safety training certifications.

Shall not supervise training sessions or MTR sanctioned events while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal substances, or while abusing prescription medications.

Shall be responsible for knowing the number of boats on the water during a rowing session and that all boats have returned to the dock before ending the session.

Shall ensure that each launch has all of the safety equipment that is listed in the "Coaching Launch" section of the Safety Manual.

Ensure safe conduct of operations during a rowing session and that coxswains are observing the appropriate water traffic patterns.

Have the authority to cancel rowing activities at any time if it is deemed that procedures and policies are not being followed or if any unsafe condition exists.

Are responsible for aiding any capsized boat -- even if from another sport or a pleasure boat. Coaches are reminded to stop at a safe distance and offer assistance. Approach with caution and in a controlled manner. Be aware of your prop!

Shall conduct seasonal coxing/ bowing clinics for new members and any continuing members who need a refresher.

Shall review coxing/bowing performance seasonally to make sure everyone has the basic capabilities and thorough knowledge of safety procedures to keep the crew and boat safe.

Coaches may relieve athletes of coxswain duty if he/she is deemed a threat to safety.

Shall ensure that all coxswains are properly equipped and informed of safety procedures in the event of an emergency.

Shall wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD), with attached safety ignition key, while operating a safety launch.

Shall ensure each guest, staff or athlete riding in the launch is wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD).

Check weather and tides prior to commencing the session. Monitor evolving conditions throughout the session.

Shall ensure that coxswains and crew abide by the specific rules below. Monitor other boat traffic. Communicate with other coaches about conditions and river usage.

Coxswain and Bow Seat Responsibilities

Are responsible for the safety of the crew, the shell, and others around the shell from the moment the shell is lifted from the racks until it is returned to the racks.

Shall not participate in training sessions or MTR sanctioned events while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal substances, or while abusing prescription medications.

Shall ensure bow ball and stern ports/hatches are secure before launching.

Ensure that a properly outfitted cox box is in the boat when it leaves the dock, if available or appropriate for the shell.

Ensure that heel tie-downs are in place and the heel of shoes cannot be raised more than three inches.

Are responsible for following the traffic pattern at all times. The coxswain/bow seat is responsible for being aware of and avoiding other boat traffic, which may or may not be following the traffic pattern.

When rowing at facilities other than on the Snohomish River, and surrounding sloughs, become thoroughly familiar with and adhere to the local traffic patterns and safety procedures.

Coxswains shall wear a Mill Town Rowing issued PFD (personal flotation device) or their personal PFD, if approved by the coach, during practice.

Coxswains shall bring a cell phone on the water as a backup to the coaches, and to summon aid in the event the coach needs rescue.

A coxswain or bow seat may be relieved of coxing/bow duty if they are deemed a threat to safety.

Shall utilize an appropriate application to be thoroughly knowledgeable on knowing the direction of the flow of the tide, as well as the relative speed of the tide change.

Athlete Responsibilities

All participants in Mill Town Rowing sanctioned rowing activities, guests, and coaches:

Shall familiarize themselves with all the contents of this Safety Policy, the Mill Town Rowing's Member Common Policy and Manual, and any safety guidelines or notices that the Club provides via written or oral communication; including but not limited to the US Rowing Safety Video located on their website at [Safety Resources - USRowing](#).

Shall not participate in training sessions or MTR-sanctioned competitions while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal substances, or while abusing prescription medications.

Shall, at all times, follow all of the Club's rules and Snohomish River traffic patterns.

Shall follow the instructions of the Club's coaching staff, coxswains, and Safety Committee.

Should consult a physician about engaging in any form of exercise, including rowing and indoor training, if applicable.

Shall notify the Head Coach if they have any medical condition that could impair their ability to row or that requires special attention.

Shall take appropriate precautions to address any such conditions while participating in Mill Town Rowing sanctioned activities. This may include taking medications or devices (e.g., asthma inhalers, EpiPen) in the boat or while traveling.

Shall not participate in training sessions while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal substances, or while abusing prescription medications.

Should inform the Head Coach or Safety Committee member of any unsafe condition or unsafe equipment they observe.

Are encouraged to share any safety suggestions they may have with the Head Coach or a Safety Committee member.

No shell owned by Mill Town Rowing shall be on the water without a safety launch operated by a staff member or qualified designee approved by the Head Coach.

Shall notify the coxswain immediately if they see a hazard or possible collision that they believe the coxswain does not see, or if the coxswain is in violation of adhering to the standard traffic pattern without explaining to the crew their intentions. An emergency supersedes the rule for a crew member not to speak in a moving boat.

Shall notify the coxswain or coach if they believe they hear thunder or see lightning.

Private Boat Owners shall record their departure and subsequent return in the club logbook, as is applicable once MTR has a facility available for private boat storage.

Safety in the Boat

- Before entering the boat, ensure all outboard oars are on the water.
- Rowers should be quiet and attentive to the coxswain or coach.
- Rowers should keep at least one hand on the oar while on the water.
- After docking do not pull an outboard oar in until everyone is out of the boat.
- Oarlocks shall remain locked until everyone is out of the shell.
- Shall follow the established traffic pattern on the Snohomish River or location of the Mill

- Town Rowing activity.
- Rowers should wear brightly colored gear to aid in visibility.

3. CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR ROWING

No earlier than 1 hour before sunrise, and no later than 1 hour after sunset. The Snohomish River must not be in flood stage.

There must be at least 150 feet visibility in the event of fog. Ice must not be present on the river. If thunder or lightning is seen or heard, no boats may launch for 30 minutes to ensure the weather pattern has cleared.

If boats are on the water when thunder or lightning is present, all boats shall land as soon as possible. Athletes will carry carbon fiber oars low to the ground and store out of the elements, as soon as possible.

Safety launch on the water, operated by a trained and approved coach or designee of the Head Coach, and outfitted as described below.

Snohomish River must be free of significant obstructions, including logs and other debris. Wind must be below 15 MPH for experienced crews: below 12 MPH for inexperienced crews. The Snohomish River, or location of rowing, must be free of "whitecap" waves. The Coach will check windspeed using an appropriate wind measuring application.

The Head Coach will determine the ratio of boats per coach per rowing session. The ratios will be determined based on the coach's experience. The Head Coach will ensure the coach is aware of their limitations.

All boats should remain with the responsible coach/safety launch at an appropriate distance so that they can be supervised/observed and immediate assistance can be rendered if required, USE SOUND JUDGMENT AT ALL TIMES.

Rowing shells and coaching launches will follow the Snohomish River's traffic patterns and local municipal code.

Members and guests who have signed a US Rowing Liability Waiver may ride in a launch with the coach's permission. Riders shall wear a PFD (personal flotation device).

Coaches shall have checked the weather and tidal forecast prior to departing and monitor conditions during the session.

4. PREPAREDNESS FOR ROWING

Rowing Equipment

It is the coxswain's responsibility that their shell should not leave the dock unless the following equipment is either installed or onboard:

- Bow ball.
- Cell phone and/or radio (if available)
- Coxswain tool bag with the following wrenches: (1) 6" adjustable wrench, (1) ½" wrench, (1) 7/16" wrench.
- Quick-release shoes with Velcro closure and heel tie-downs

Coaching Launch

In the event of an emergency a well-prepared safety launch can assist the individuals in question and transport them to safety.

Each coaching launch contains:

- Mobile Phone
- First Aid Kit in Waterproof Box
- 20 USCG-Approved Personal Flotation Devices Type II
- Hand Bilge Pump
- Rescue Throw Bag (can be doubled as a towrope).
- Waterproof High Intensity Flashlight
- Air Horn
- 20 Emergency Mylar Rescue Blankets
- Megaphone

The Head Coach, or designee, shall be responsible for ensuring these items are onboard the coaching launch prior to an on-the-water session.

Facility Safety (*Reserved until MTR has obtained a rowing facility*)

Athletes should exercise caution when crossing streets. Wear brightly colored clothing and walk with a buddy.

All coaches and athletes should work to maintain a clean facility to eliminate trip hazards. Equipment should be put away neatly after use. Personal gear should be stowed in lockers, or out of the common path of travel.

Spilled liquids should be cleaned up immediately.

All members should be cognizant of basic safety practices – including hydration, disinfecting blood-contaminated equipment, dressing appropriately for the weather, etc.

The Club commends that athletes warm-up and stretch before indoor or on-water training sessions.

5. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Limited Vision

The greatest danger while rowing is collision caused by limited vision or carelessness. Great care should be taken when rowing around sunrise and sunset. Minimize conversation. Be careful not to get too close to shore or known hazards. Wear brightly colored clothing to increase your visibility to other river users. Do not row after sunset nor before sunrise.

Fog

Fog limits visibility, but also mutes sounds. If caught in fog, crews should proceed with extreme caution and appropriately slower speeds. Be prepared to stop quickly. If the fog is too extreme it may be better to sit still. Make noise so that other boaters can be alerted to your presence. Do not assume fog that appears to be thinning will continue to do so.

Wind

Crews should return to the dock if wind increases beyond the limits stated above, or if sound judgment dictates. If wind is too great, coaches should seek an alternative docking site, as listed below.

Lightning/Thunderstorms

Crews shall return immediately to the dock, or proceed immediately to shore or an alternative landing site, if necessary. There does not have to be rain or thunder to have conditions conducive to lightning. A rapid change in temperature, hail or heavy rain can be precursors to lightning.

Cold Weather Rowing

Rowing when the water temperature is below 50F should only be done with great consideration. Hypothermia is a swift and incapacitating killer that strikes when the combination of cold weather and moisture work to decrease the body temperature. It can take mere minutes before an adult is incapable of helping themselves once hypothermia has set in.

Keep in mind you don't have to fall in the water to get hypothermia. Cold air temperatures and any moisture on the body (from sweat or being splashed, rain, sleet, and snow) can lead to hypothermia.

Note: the temperature of the Snohomish River water rarely goes above 50F. This makes it possible for a person in the water to quickly get hypothermia, even on a warm day.

Alternative Docking Sites

In the event of a sudden weather or other emergency, rowers and coaches should know where to dock on the Snohomish River, and alternative places to land a boat.

- Dagmar's Marina
- Langus Park Boat launch
- Langus Park Rowing Dock
- Northwest riverbank by "the point"
- Steamboat Slough Marina
- Newland's Construction
- Rotary Park Boat launch, south of Lowell Riverfront Park

6. ADDRESSING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

CALL 9 – 1 – 1

- ACCIDENT REQUIRING ANY IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE
- If CPR is Necessary
- In case of an Injury or Medical Problem
- In case of a Boating Accident Involving Injury
- In Case of Fire (evacuate boathouse immediately)
- To Report a Crime

Boathouse Address / Location: **(Reserved)**

Temporary Location:

During practice, across from parking lot, 333 Smith Island Rd

Trailer parked overnight at Signal Trailer Service 1871 Ross Ave, Suite E

Call non- emergency (425) 407-3999.

- If you are concerned about a seemingly unstable individual
- Suspicious circumstances in the surrounding areas
- Not an immediate risk to person or property.

Call Park Ranger (425) 388-2700

- A boating accident not involving injury or Mill Town Rowing members.
- Suspicious circumstances
- Disruptive individuals on the river

Incident Reporting and Tracking

In the event of an incident resulting in equipment damage, injury or that requires assistance from emergency services (aid car, police, fire department, park ranger) an incident report shall be filled out that day on iCrew. Every active member and coach can fill out an incident report. In the event that there is damage to equipment, there shall also be a damage report filed in iCrew as soon thereafter, as possible.

7. ON-WATER EMERGENCIES

All athletes, coxswains and coaches should be fully aware of what actions to take in each of the following circumstances.

Lost Fin

If a shell has lost a skeg while on the water, it should return to the dock immediately under supervision of the coach.

Rower Injured/Equipment Broken

Anyone may give the command: "Weigh enough, hold water!" Coxswain should signal launch for assistance. Coach will use sound judgment to either fix on the water or return to the dock under close supervision.

Rower Overboard

If a rower is ejected from the boat while underway, the ejected rower should stay below the surface of the water to avoid being hit by the shell or its oars as it passes by.

The shell should stop immediately. Anyone may give the command: "Weigh enough, hold water!" The stroke may remove their oar and get it to the person in the water. Crew and coach should ascertain if the "man overboard" is conscious or in need of first aid. People in the water should lie across the oar and remain close to the shell.

The launch picks up the person and the coach will determine if the rower returns to the shell or is returned to the dock for warming or medical attention.

Capsizing and Swamping Situations

If rowers egress from a swamped boat -- STAY WITH THE BOAT!

Shell Taking on Water (Swamping)

- If a shell takes on an abnormal amount of water, the athletes should notify the coach, who should provide hand-operated bilge pumps to the athletes. Pumping excess water out of the boat before it reaches a critical point will significantly reduce the probability of swamping or capsizing.
- Shell Swamped, with Rescue Imminent: Immediate command: "Weigh Enough!"
- Coxswain directs rowers to untie, signals launch and unloads rowers by pairs -- starting in the middle of the boat -- as soon as possible in order to avoid damage to the boat.
- Pairs should form "buddies" and keep a watch on each other. The Coxswain should buddy with the stern pair. The coach should distribute lifejackets to the athletes in the water.
- Athletes with low body fat should be prioritized in cold water rescues. Until otherwise directed by the coach in the launch, STAY WITH THE BOAT
- The coach should shuttle rowers to the nearest shore, being careful not to excessively overload the launch.

If rescue is not imminent, take the following steps:

- At no time should any crew member leave the boat to swim to shore! A short swim can be far longer than it appears due to currents, wind, water temperature, or personal fatigue.
- The shell will normally float, even if just below the surface. The oars will act as flotation devices. Rowers and coaches shall stay calm.
- Rowers shall stay with the shell.
- Coach or an athlete shall take a headcount.
- Pair up and maintain regular one-on-one communication.
- Rolling the boat hull-side up can make a stable platform to get your body out of the water.
- Remove oars or place them parallel to the shell. It is dangerous to roll a shell when the athletes are near the riggers. The bow four should move to the bow of the boat. The stern four and coxswain should move to the stern of the boat.
- Attempt to roll the boat so that rowers can either lie on top of the hull or buddies can hold each other across the hull. Athletes can drape themselves over the hull to get their torsos out of the water, minimizing heat loss.
- Rowers should make every effort to get their bodies out of the water, as heat loss occurs more rapidly in the water.

- Minimize movement to minimize heat loss.
- Attract attention of launches, crews, or people on shore. Waving an oar is a sign of distress.
- If it is feasible, the athletes also may kick-paddle the boat to shore, making sure to stay with the boat. Recovery of a Flipped or Damaged Shell
- Once all rowers who were involved in a capsizing or swamping incident are accounted for and properly taken care of, the next step is to recover the shell.
- Assess the situation. Avoid situations where injury or further damage could occur. Identify who is the leader of the recovery operation.
- Identify approximate wind speed and direction, current speed and direction, and other hazards. Assemble resources: Other experienced staff, athletes, multiple launches may be required.
- Decide how best to move into position to work on the shell. Move slowly!
- Recover all gear that has floated away from the shell (e.g., loose oars, coxboxes, speed coaches)

Docking a boat with no rowers:

- Remove the oars unless they are acting as floatation for a severely damaged shell.
- Roll the shell upright if it is not already.
- Loop a line through the stern- or bow-most riggers and tie off to two points to the launch.
- Drive the launch at a slow and controlled pace, making sure the prop is clear of the tow line.
- Assemble others on the dock to safely land the boat. *The boat must be bailed (use bilge pumps) before being lifted from the water. Empty bow and stern compartments, as well as seat wells.*
- Use extra people to lift the shell from the water to avoid injury while lifting. *Support any damaged parts of the shell while lifting.*

8. WEATHER-RELATED MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a condition that occurs when the temperature of the human body is lowered to a dangerous point due to exposure to cold and/or wet conditions. Cold temperatures and wet conditions work together to pull heat away from the body lowering the body's core temperature. Even in mild conditions, the addition of rain or submersion in cold water and can sufficiently reduce body warmth to trigger hypothermic conditions in the body. A person's condition can degrade rapidly, impairing breathing and coordination making it impossible to swim or keep one's head above water. Emergency action needs to be taken no matter what the level of hypothermia.

Early Hypothermia - Symptoms: rapid shivering, numbness, loss of strength and coordination, semi consciousness.

Action: Maintain open airway. Transfer to a warm environment as soon as possible. Remove wet clothing. Use blankets to help warm individual and put inside warm room or warm vehicle. Warm torso area first. Seek medical attention.

Profound Hypothermia

Symptoms: Person will be pale, stiff, and cold. Unresponsive to stimuli, and possibly unconscious. Little or no cardiac or respiratory activity will be present.

Action: Move or manipulate as gently as possible. Prevent further heat loss, but Do Not attempt to rewarm. Maintain open airway and activate EMS procedures. Call for emergency help (9-1-1) immediately!

Heat-Related Emergencies

Higher temperatures and high humidity can lead to heat-related illnesses. As humidity rises, the body's ability to cool through sweating is diminished since evaporation is limited. The best way to avoid heat-related injuries is to practice at cooler times of the day: early morning or late afternoon. The body needs time to acclimate to increased temperatures. Intake of fluids is also key and should be encouraged.

Dehydration further impairs the body's ability to cool off. There are two major heat-related illnesses to be aware of: heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat Exhaustion

Early Symptoms: heavy sweating, cramps, tiredness, weakness, malaise, mild decrease in performance.

Action: rest and fluid replacement.

Advanced Symptoms: profuse sweating, impaired judgment, emotional changes.

Action: If there is mild temperature elevation, an ice pack may be used to help cool the body to normal temperatures. Several days rest may be necessary, and rehydration is a priority.

Heat Stroke

Symptoms: confusion, nausea, vomiting, seizures. The victim loses consciousness. Body temperature rises as high as 106. Skin is dry and clammy.

Action: Get medical help immediately! Lower body temp by immersing in water, maintain the horizontal position of the victim. Stop treatment when the victim is conscious.



Safety Policy Consent Form

By signing this I consent that

- I have reviewed the Mill Town Rowing Safety Policy and I know where to find it on the Mill Town Rowing website.
- I am responsible for reading, understanding, and carrying out my responsibilities as the Mill Town Rowing Head Coach, Safety Committee Member, or Athlete.

Any questions I have about the Mill Town Rowing Safety Policy will be brought to the Head Coach or Safety Committee.

If a policy review needs to be made, I will request a review by the Safety Committee directly to the Head Coach, or to the Safety Committee.

Sign: _____

Date: _____

Print: _____