



# Falcon Boat Club Activity & Safety Handbook



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## What is this handbook for?

This handbook sets out the rules and guidelines for Falcon members undertaking in club organised activity within rowing, kayaking and canoeing.

The primary aim of this handbook is ensure members are safe when undertaking club activity.

### **Club Policy: Safety**

Falcon Boat Club has a zero tolerance for anyone being harmed as a result of our members' participation in the sport.

We believe that harm is not an inevitable consequence of our activities and that incidents that cause harm can be avoided. We will strive to provide an environment in which the sport can be practised safely and enjoyably by our members. We will guide and lead our members in a way that fulfils these aims.

We recognise that our members have primary responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. The Club, through its Officers and Committee, will encourage safe practice having due regard for the guidance provided by British Rowing's RowSafe and British Canoeing's Paddlesafer safety guidance.

The Club has safety rules that it expects its members to respect; these can be found below. Complying with these rules will help to prevent harm.

The Club is also committed to learn from the incidents it becomes aware of and will share this information to help others in the sport to learn too. We are committed to make appropriate use of British Rowing and British Canoeing's Incident Reporting Systems.

<https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/>

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/guidance-resources/safety-1/incident-reporting>

Members are invited to refer any questions and concerns, relating to safety, to the Club's Rowing Water Safety Adviser *Claire Parker* [rowing.safety.falcon@gmail.com](mailto:rowing.safety.falcon@gmail.com) or Rowing Club Captain Jon Crooks [rowing.captain.falcon@gmail.com](mailto:rowing.captain.falcon@gmail.com) or, the Canoeing and Kayaking safety advisor [kayaking.safety@falconboatclub.org.uk](mailto:kayaking.safety@falconboatclub.org.uk) or relevant captain [kayaking@falconboatclub.org.uk](mailto:kayaking@falconboatclub.org.uk) or [canoeing@falconboatclub.org.uk](mailto:canoeing@falconboatclub.org.uk)

Signed by Club President / Chair of Trustees:

Nick Barnett

1/9/2023

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## **Key Activity Areas:**

### **River Boards / Flags**

Depending on the relevant River Boards, each activity will set out the parameters for group and use of club equipment. The rowing section use the OUCS flags for guidance. It is a requirement of club membership that all members follow the instructions based on the river conditions.

### **Buoyancy Aids**

A well-fitting buoyancy aid (BA) could, in extreme circumstances, save a life. The wearing of buoyancy aids is not a substitute for taking sensible precautions and assessing risks prior to and during a training session.

In each section below, the relevant requirements for Canoeing, Kayaking and Rowing are laid out.

### **Club Local Risk Assessments**

At the end of this document are the current Falcon local risk assessments covering local activities. These risk assessments do not cover every potential risk on a Falcon activity but cover the main identifiable risk as assessed by Falcon's Rowing, Kayak and Canoe committees.

### **Please also see:**

The club website <https://falconboatclub.org.uk>

British Rowing RowSafe <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023-British-Rowing-RowSafe.pdf>

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## Defibrillator, First Aid and Emergency Action Plan

- The defibrillator (AED) on the bridge side of the club house is linked into the national register 'The Circuit'. If you need to get it out of the sealed box, call 999 , the code to open the box is **C0147X**
- St John's Ambulance 4 minute video on using an AED is <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/how-to/how-to-use-a-defibrillator/>
- The longer 15 minute mobile cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training by BHF (RevivR) is an excellent interactive way to learn CPR quickly. <https://revivr.bhf.org.uk>
- Claire Parker (Rowing WSA) is the registered guardian of the defibrillator, so please do let her know if you see anything amiss with it. [Rowing.safety.falcon@gmail.com](mailto:Rowing.safety.falcon@gmail.com)

### Cold water shock and hypothermia can be fatal

- Ensure you know how to cope if you end up in the water.
- An emergency supply for hot drinks is kept beside the sink in the social area. Level 1.

Canoeing / Kayaking:

- <https://paddleuk.org.uk/safety-documents/>

Rowing:

- <https://www.rlss.org.uk/cold-water-shock-the-facts>
- <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safety-Alert-Cold-Water-Kills-1.pdf>
- BR learning on capsizing and hypothermia <https://www.rowhow.org/course/index.php?categoryid=22>

### First Aid Kits

- a. In the club house:
  - a. bay 1 on the board by the entrance door.
  - b. Entrance foyer
  - c. The gym (along with accident book for gym)
  - d. Level 1 main hall
  - e. Level 1 café
- b. For the junior rowing outings, Marshalls have 5 rucksacks with survival blankets and high viz jackets on the cox box cupboard.
- c. Touring rowing outings to take their own first aid kits on longer outings.
- d. It is down to the discretion of each individual kayak coach, and at the instruction of the Lead Kayak Coach, as to whether first aid kits are carried out on sessions, and means to call for emergency help
- e. It is down to the discretion of each individual canoe coach, and at the instruction of the Lead Canoe Coach, to whether first aid kits are carried out on sessions/trips. A means to call for emergency help must be carried by each individual canoe coach.

### First Aid training

First aid trained leads are listed on the club notice boards. All club coaches should have undergone first aid training. The training should be updated every 3 years.

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## **If first aid is delivered**

Should you end up using the club first aid kit, please email: [Rowing.safety.falcon@gmail.com](mailto:Rowing.safety.falcon@gmail.com)

Report serious incidents to :

British Rowing:

<https://incidentrepor/ng.bri/shrowing.org>

Paddle UK:

<https://www.bri/shcanoeing.org.uk/guidance-resources/safety-1/incident-repor/ng>

# EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN



Version 2.5 04/07/2023

## 1 Summoning the Emergency Services

In case of serious emergency, **phone 999** without delay. (This includes potential cases of hypothermia or loss of consciousness after an accident.)  
Consider delegating someone to wait at the access point for services to arrive.

## 2

Use the What3Words App (QR codes) to indicate sites along the river when contacting the services (SEEMAP). Falcon Boat Club's postal address is:  
The Falcon Boathouse, Meadow Lane, Oxford OX4 4BJ  
(What3Words ref: **bossy.quite.event**)

## Important locations along the river:

### Emergency Access Points

### Defibrillators (AEDs)

## Medical Emergency on the Water

- Raise the alarm immediately, asking another crew or bystander to call 999, if necessary.
- Determine the nearest and most accessible site to aim for (see map →) and communicate that to the Emergency Services (What3Words—see above).
- (Not much first aid can be provided on the water.)

## First Aid and Defibrillators

- There is a First Aid kit box hanging on the board just inside the side entrance to bay 1, and in the gym in bay 4 in the Falcon boathouse. (Most boathouses should include one, if they are open.)
- If you believe someone is having a heart attack, call 999 for an ambulance and inform the operator that there are Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) nearby. They will provide codes for access.
- AEDs are located at (at least) four points on the Isis. See map for details

## In the event of a rowing capsiz

- Stay with the boat (it is your main buoyancy aid) and swim it (either righted or still upside down) to the nearest point where you can review the situation.
- If it is cold, keep as much of your body out of the water as you can (straddle or drape yourself over the hull).
- If there is more than one person in the water, stay together and account for everyone.
- Call on other crews, coaches or launches to support any rescue and recovery.

## Cardiac Massage

- If there is no effort at breathing, do not try and check for a pulse, but commence cardiac massage (30 per minute) and artificial respiration (2 per minute).
- Apply the defibrillator pads and follow the instructions from the AED.

## In the event of FIRE at the boat house

Upon discovering a fire or suspecting one is imminent (e.g. smoke from an unknown source), press the nearest fire alarm and evacuate the building, directing people to the car park on Meadow Lane. Call 999 and contact the fire brigade. **Do not attempt to address the fire yourself** if that might endanger yourself or any others. Account for all evacuees and inform the fire brigade of this on their arrival. Fire extinguishers are located as follows: **A**. On the ground floor: River end bays 1 and 3, back of bay 2. **B**. On the first floor.

### What3Words

<https://what3words.com/>

Site QR Code

App QR Code



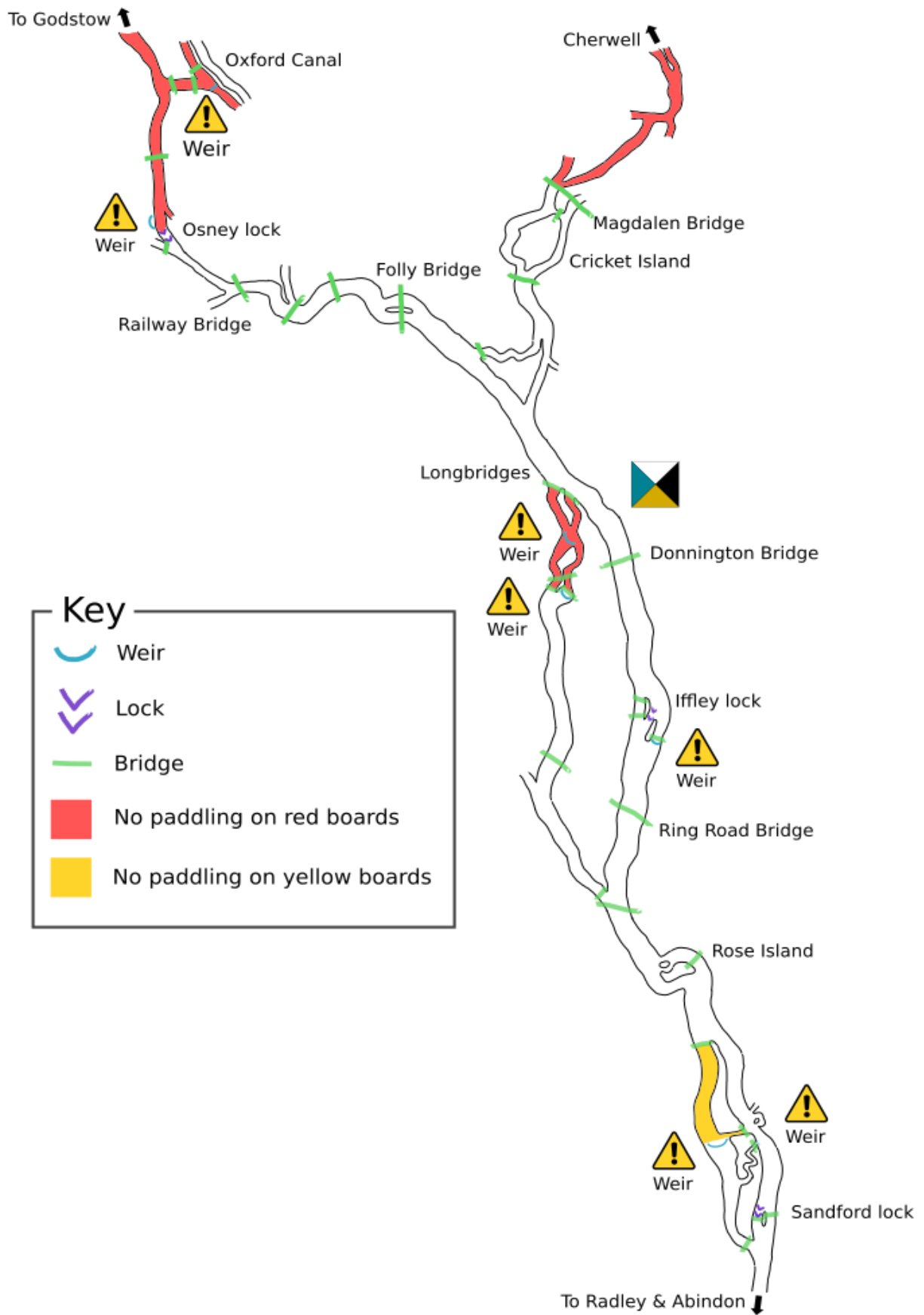
## Taking charge

Where possible, the relevant squad or crew coach shall take charge of and coordinate any incident. Other members present should make themselves available to assist on request rather than acting independently. No one should leave the site of an incident until it is resolved, unless they are asked to do so (e.g. to fetch help).

## If involved in an incident:

Report it to:

- 1) Canoeing: <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/guidance-resources/safety-1/incident-reporting>
- 2) Rowing: <https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/>





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## **Falcon Boat Club: Kayaking**

### **Section 1: Club activity, and the use of club and private equipment**

#### **1. Club Activity**

- a. Club activity is defined as:
  - i. Sessions advertised on the club training schedule or bookings sheet.
  - ii. Coaching courses advertised on the club website.
  - iii. Organised events/sessions arranged by a qualified club coach for specific external groups (e.g. for scouts/cubs, disability groups, friends/family).
  - iv. Additional sessions led by a qualified club coach that is widely advertised to appropriate club members (e.g. via the club Facebook page, Teamer or club membership email list).
- b. Club activity does not have to be run by a qualified coach. The club may determine that a club member is suitably experienced, safe and competent to lead a particular group.
- c. The coach or leader of a group during club activity is responsible for determining whether and where their group paddles during each session.
- d. When the Environment Agency is displaying strong stream warning (“red boards”) on either the Osney-Iffley or Godstow-Osney stretches of the Thames then no club activity may occur upstream of Osney lock on the Thames or upstream of Magdalen Bridge on the Cherwell.

#### **2. Use of Club Equipment**

- a. Club equipment is primarily for use during club activity and races. These take precedence over non-club activity.
- b. Boats may not be taken away from Falcon without permission of the Kayak Captain, Kayak Lead Coach, Water Safety Officer or Club President. This will only be permitted for a short period of time, e.g. to do an event or race outside of typical club events.
- c. Club equipment may be used outside of club sessions only by club members in marathon divisions 1-6 when the Environment Agency is showing no stream warnings (<http://riverconditions.environment-agency.gov.uk/>) and following the rules shown in Table 1
- d. Anyone else wanting to use club equipment outside of club sessions must ask for specific permission prior to using the equipment, from the club chairman, lead coach or kayak captain or designated Canoe coach.
- e. Club members may not take friends / family members out in club equipment

#### **3. Use of Private Equipment**

- a. The club does not restrict adult club members’ use of their privately owned equipment, providing that they act in a manner which does not bring Falcon into disrepute.
- b. We recommend that paddlers familiarise themselves with the club’s local water risk assessment
- c. Junior members may only use their own equipment outside of club activity if they are under direct supervision of their parent(s). In exceptional circumstances, there may be written agreement between the club and a junior’s parents to permit them to use their own equipment outside of club activity and without their parent’s supervision.

**Table 1: Restrictions applying to the use of club equipment outside of club activity.**

Age group	Marathon division	NO stream warnings	YELLOW boards	RED Boards
Seniors	1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum group size of 3</li> <li>British Canoeing <u>and</u> Falcon membership held</li> </ul>	Only with specific permission from club chairman, lead coach or kayak captain	
Seniors	7-9 or unranked	Only with specific permission from club chairman, lead coach or kayak captain		
Juniors	all	Only with specific permission from club chairman, lead coach or kayak captain		

#### 4. Kayaking Buoyancy Aid Policy

##### Introduction

As a racing club, we are committed to preparing athletes for racing at the top level of our sport (where BAs are not worn) in a safe environment.

- a) **The default position is that all paddlers should wear BAs except in certain circumstances, detailed below for juniors and seniors.**
- b) **During club activity, the coach or session leader has the right to insist that any paddler wears a BA, and that paddler may not take part in the session if they refuse.**
- c) **BAs must be worn by all paddlers in club sessions, regardless of age or ability if:**
  - The Environment Agency (EA) is displaying red boards on the stretch of water that the training session is taking place on. <http://riverconditions.environment-agency.gov.uk/>
  - The paddler has a history of a medical condition which could reduce their ability to self-rescue/be rescued in the event of a capsize (e.g., epilepsy)
- d) **During club activity, the coach or session leader may decide that some/all paddlers in the session do not need to wear BAs, provided they have considered all of the following factors:**
  - the ability & stability of each paddler in their boat.
  - the river conditions (flow conditions, water temperature, ease of exit from waterway in event of capsize)
  - the weather conditions (temperature, wind speed & directions, rain/hail/snow)
  - the light conditions (i.e. is it currently dark or likely to get dark during the session)
  - the type of session planned (distance to be travelled from club, how close coach will be to group)
  - the group dynamics (number and ability of paddlers in group, range of ability in group, presence of other coaches within group, how well the coach knows each paddler)
- e) **Additional rules for Juniors (any paddler aged under 18)**
  - In addition to the considerations and rules applying to all paddlers, the coach decide that a junior does not need to wear a BA in a session providing that:
    - their parent has agreed in writing that they are happy for coaches to make the decision as to whether they should be worn.

- the junior is ranked in at marathon division 6 or better.
- During club timetrials, all juniors must wear BAs unless:
  - their parent and coach have agreed in writing that the junior does not need to.
  - the junior is ranked in at marathon division 4 or better

**f) Racing**

The rules for BAs for that race must be abided to by all Falcon paddlers. A coach or parent may insist that a junior ranked in division 6 or quicker wears a BA (where this is not mandatory in the race rules) if the junior's experience or the race/weather/river conditions deem this appropriate.

**g) During non-club activity, the club recommends that all paddlers wear BAs, especially in these circumstances:**

- when paddling alone / in pairs
- when the EA red or yellow boards are showing on the stretch of river on which the session takes place
- when paddling in the dark
- in cold/windy conditions

**5.) Safety Standard: Club Equipment, Broken Boats and Incident Reporting**

- a.) Falcon will ensure that there are facilities for members to report broken or damaged kayaks for repair.
- b.) It is the responsibilities of coaches and members to report incidents via the British Canoeing online incident report form:  
<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/go-canoeing/access-and-environment/access-to-water/incident-reporting>
- c.) Falcon will ensure that all Club owned buoyancy aids receive an annual safety inspection.

**Section 2: Criteria for Kayak & Canoeing Coaching**

- a.) Those leading Falcon kayak or canoe activity will usually have a British Canoeing (BC) coaching or leadership qualification. Occasionally, the Lead Coach for kayak or canoe may agree that an experienced paddler may lead sessions. In this case, the type of group and any limitations on conditions must be recorded here: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1W25C6AYJqx6-V-ZOojs0Fd4VhQinn7\\_93iRH\\_oXYzM/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1W25C6AYJqx6-V-ZOojs0Fd4VhQinn7_93iRH_oXYzM/edit?usp=sharing)
- b.) BC coaching or leadership awards define the environment in which that coach/leader may practise. Falcon's local water will in most circumstances be classed as very sheltered water, but this would rise to sheltered water when the Environment Agency (EA) yellow boards are showing and moderate water on red boards.
- c.) Since the environmental conditions are only some of the factors which determine whether a session can safely proceed, in discussion in advance with the relevant Lead Falcon Coaches, Falcon permits its coaches and leaders to operate outside of the remit of their BC qualification where they have fully considered all the risk factors related to the session. This risk assessment should be carried out prior to, and dynamically during, every session as part of the coaching process. It does not need to be physically recorded, but is mental exercise.

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d.) All coaches and leaders must be familiar with the local water risk assessment and buoyancy aid policy. They must be aware before the session what the river conditions are using the EA's board system, with the University's flag system providing additional information. The flags are displayed on the front page of the Falcon website, with a link to the EA boards.

e.) Coaches/leaders should remember that they are responsible for the safety of all paddler within their group.

The coach/leader should decide:

- If to paddle (*"if in doubt, don't go out"*)
- Where to paddle
- What to paddle (craft, session)

Taking into account the following criteria:

- their own confidence and ability in the prevailing conditions
- ability & stability of each paddler in their boat
- river conditions (current speed & smoothness, ease of exit from waterway in event of capsize)
- water temperature, given that sudden submersion in very cold water can be dangerous
- weather conditions (temperature, wind speed & directions, rain/hail/snow)
- light conditions (i.e., is it currently dark or likely to get dark during the session)
- type of session planned (distance to be travelled from club, how close coach will be to group)
- group dynamics (number and ability of paddlers in group, range of ability in group, presence of other coaches within group, how well you know each paddler)

f.) The Falcon Kayak and Canoe committee has the authority to approve/reject coaching status as delegated by the Board of Trustees.

g.) All coaches are required to undertake DBS enhanced check and complete at least Safeguarding Level 1 training. The level of involvement in Junior coaching may determine a high level of training required.

h.) Coaches are required to hold an active first-aid certificate.

i.) As defined on a case-by-case by the Kayaking committee, sufficiently experienced individuals can run session as coaches.

j.) Falcon Kayak and Canoe committee reserves the right to remove coach status.

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## **Falcon Boat Club: Canoeing**

Falcon Boat Club prides itself on being an inclusive club where possible offering paddle sports opportunities for all. If we cannot meet your needs we will endeavour to seek the support of British Canoeing and their Paddle-Ability specialists to signpost you to the nearest club or water sports provider that may be able to meet your needs.

**General Principle:** Before commencing any journey or activity and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all, coaches, leaders and paddlers should confirm that all reasonable preparations, safety considerations and necessary resources are in place for the proposed activity, for the prevailing conditions and the forecast conditions.

### **Section 1: Canoe Club activity, and the use of club and private equipment**

#### **1. Club activity**

- a. Club activity is defined as:
  - i. Sessions advertised on the Canoe WhatsApp group, club training schedule or bookings sheet.
  - ii. Coaching courses advertised on the club website.
  - iii. Organised events/sessions arranged by a qualified club coach for specific external groups (e.g., for scouts/cubs, disability groups, friends/family).
  - iv. Additional sessions led by a qualified club coach that is widely advertised to appropriate club members (e.g., via the club Facebook page, Canoe WhatsApp group or club membership email list).
- b. Club activity does not have to be run by a qualified coach. The club may determine that a club member is suitably experienced, safe and competent to lead a particular group.
- c. The coach or leader of a group during club activity is responsible for determining whether and where their group paddles during each session.
- d. When the Environment Agency is displaying strong stream warning (“red boards”) on
  - i. The Godstow-Osney stretch of the Thames no club sessions to go immediately above Osney (upstream from Osney Lock to Botley Road Bridge) due to the strong pull of the weir just above Osney lock
  - ii. either the Osney-Iffley or Godstow-Osney stretches of the Thames then no club activity may occur immediately upstream of Magdalen Bridge on the Cherwell. **Exception:** Canoe group coaches approved by the water safety officer or Canoe Lead Coach may use dynamic risk assessment to lead paddlers with appropriate skill/experience immediately upstream of Magdalen bridge for development opportunities. Specific permission must be sought for each planned trip.
- e. If any part of the canoe section club activity will take place in reduced visibility or darkness all boats must be correctly lit with two white lights, one on the bow and one on the stern.
- f. Coaches reserve the right to accept or rejected attendees on activities based on suitability of conditions and experience / suitability of the participant(s).

#### **2. Canoeing Buoyancy Aids**

- a.) All canoe group paddlers must wear BAs during canoe group club sessions and on peer paddles. During club activity, the coach or session leader has the right to insist that any paddler wears a BA, and that paddler may not take part in the session if they refuse.

### 3. Use of Club Equipment

- a. Club equipment is primarily for use during club activities. These take precedence over non-club activity.
- b. Boats may not be taken away from Falcon without the permission of the canoe Captain or a water safety officer if Captain not available. This will only be permitted for a short period of time, e.g., to take part in an event outside of typical club events.
- c. Canoe section members who have Explore Award or equivalent or above can arrange peer paddling sessions using club equipment. These sessions are NOT club activity and are marked on the booking system accordingly, see guidance below.
- d. Falcon will ensure that Canoes are safety checked yearly.
- e. If private boats are used for club activity, the coach will ensure the boat is to standard.

### 4. Use of Private Equipment

- a. The club does not restrict non-beginner adult canoe group members' use of their privately-owned equipment, provided that they act in a manner which does not bring Falcon into disrepute.
- b. We recommend that paddlers familiarise themselves with the club's local water risk assessment and work within the control feature of the risk assessments.

### 5. Guidance for canoe group members who have Explore Award or equivalent or above arranging non club activity sessions using club equipment

- a. The online booking system / spreadsheet can be used for canoe group members who have Explore Award or equivalent or above to arrange group paddling sessions using club equipment. These sessions are NOT club activity and are marked on the booking system accordingly. Please see Table 2 for restrictions and ensure you are familiar and compliant with the kayak and canoe risk assessment. All members of the peer group must
  - i. Have Explore Award or equivalent or above
  - ii. Hold British Canoeing On-the -Water Membership
  - iii. Wear a correctly fitted buoyancy aid
  - iv. Ensure they complete the online booking system / spreadsheet

**Table 2: Canoe Restrictions applying to the use of club equipment outside of club activity.**

Age group	Level	NO stream warnings	YELLOW boards	RED Boards
Adults	Canoe Award or equivalent or more and sign off from the canoe head coach and water safety officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum group size of 2 canoes in good weather</li> <li>- Minimum group size of 3 canoes in moderate weather conditions</li> <li>- British Canoeing and Falcon membership held</li> <li>- If any part of the activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum group size of 3 canoes</li> <li>- British Canoeing and Falcon membership held</li> <li>- If any part of the activity will take place in reduced visibility or darkness boats must be correctly lit with</li> </ul>	No club equipment to be used outside of club activity

		will take place in reduced visibility or darkness boats must be correctly lit with two white lights, one on the bow and one on the stern	two white lights, one on the bow and one on the stern	
Adults	Explore Award or equivalent		Only with the specific permission of the canoe head coach or canoe captain or water safety officer	No club equipment to be used outside of club activity
Juniors	Explore Award or equivalent or above	- Minimum group size of 3 canoes including minimum 2 adults - British Canoeing and Falcon membership held - If any part of the activity will take place in reduced visibility or darkness boats must be correctly lit with two white lights, one on the bow and one on the stern	Only with the specific permission of the canoe head coach or canoe captain or water safety officer	No club equipment to be used outside of club activity
Adults	Paddle Safer and sign off to peer paddle from the canoe head coach, canoe captain or water safety officer	- Minimum group size of 2 canoes in good weather or 3 canoes in moderate weather and good light between April and October only - British Canoeing and Falcon membership held	No club equipment to be used outside of club activity	No club equipment to be used outside of club activity
Adults	Up to and including Discover Award	No club equipment to be used outside of club activity		
Juniors	Active paddlers and those not actively paddling up to and including Discover Award	No club equipment to be used outside of club activity		

**6. Falcon Boat Club Approved Partnership Working with other British Canoeing Paddlesports Clubs** (e.g., Oxford Canoe and Kayak Club)

**Approval by Falcon Boat Club for paddlers from other British Canoeing Paddlesports Clubs joining Falcon Boat Club groups:**

- a.) Falcon Boat Club welcomes members of other British Canoeing Affiliated Paddlesports Clubs joining approved Falcon paddlesports activities as long as their attendance is agreed by Falcon

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Boat Club in advance of the activity, complies with Falcon Boat Club rules, regulations and risk assessments, they have full British Canoeing On-The-Water Membership as well as the required skills and experience for the proposed activity and conditions.

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## **Falcon Boat Club: Rowing**

Please also see <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/rowing>

### **Section 1: joining the Club, Club activity, and the use of club and private equipment**

#### **1. Joining the club - welcome!**

- a. New non-rowing potential members should join an adult (18+) learn to row course (<https://falconboatclub.org.uk>) or Junior (up to 18) learn to row course <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/juniorrowing>
- b. New members with previous rowing experience are very welcome and should contact the vice-captain. [vicecaptainrowingfrcc@gmail.com](mailto:vicecaptainrowingfrcc@gmail.com)
- c. Complete a membership application form <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdW-R1luIMN4Tmgfix4F8esmoClceceX0BIUmSKGKqkVaGQ/viewform>
- d. Junior rowers (12-17) with prior rowing experience, should contact the club on: [juniorrowingfalconbc@gmail.com](mailto:juniorrowingfalconbc@gmail.com)
- e. All members are encouraged to join British Rowing ([www.britishrowing.org.uk](http://www.britishrowing.org.uk)) and read the BR safety guidance RowSafe <https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/>

#### **2. Club Outings**

- a. Club activity is broad and aims to cater for all interests.
  - Regular club outings for 18+ occur on Saturday and Sunday mornings all year and Tuesday and Thursday evenings in the summer. These are open to all and includes sweep oar and sculling outings.
  - Other groups include Development squads for men and women, Junior squad, touring rowing group, and independent adult rowers. All have squad leaders / captains. Many take part in races or events throughout the year.
  - Sign up for club outings on [www.frc.squadlist.co.uk](http://www.frc.squadlist.co.uk) or <https://frc.squadlist.app>
- b. Club activity does not have to be run by a qualified coach. The club may determine that a club member is suitably experienced, safe and competent to lead a particular group.
- c. The coach or leader of a group during club activity or individual independent rowers are responsible for determining outing plans. Factors that may change and affect the session include the river flag and the following.
  - coach/session leader's own confidence and ability in the prevailing conditions
  - the ability, experience and skill levels of the crews / coxes in their respective boats
  - the river conditions (current speed & smoothness, ease of exit from waterway in event of capsized)
  - the water temperature, given that sudden submersion in very cold water can be dangerous.
  - the weather conditions (temperature, wind speed & directions, rain/hail/snow, lightning).
  - the visibility and light conditions (i.e. is it currently dark or likely to get dark during the session, is there fog)

- 
- the type of session planned (distance to be travelled from club, level of supervision etc)
  - the group dynamics (number crews / boats, range of ability, presence of other coaches)
- d. Club Junior outings
- A suitable adult presence must be in place for all junior sessions
  - There should always be at least 2 adults available, including at least 1 with DBS check
  - Junior outings have specific guidelines for parent marshals.  
<https://falconboatclub.org.uk/juniorrowing/about> Marshalls for junior squad outings have designated rucksacks with high viz jackets, survival blankets and water along with walkie-talkies linking to the coach, and a FBC river safety pocket book.

### 3. Use of Club Equipment

- a. Club equipment is primarily for use during club activity and races. These take precedence over non-club activity.
- b. Boats may not be taken away from Falcon without permission of the Captain or Lead Coach. This will be only be permitted for a short period of time, e.g. to do an event or race outside of typical club events.
- c. Any experienced rower wanting to use club equipment outside of club outings should book on the boat booking spreadsheet which is sent out by email to all members on Friday afternoon. More guidance is available on <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615#Boat-booking>
- d. Coxes and bow-steers should have been assessed (see section 3) before being allowed on the water without supervision from the boat or bank. Less experienced single scullers should have completed an observation test by a club official before they use a club single without supervision. This can be done by squad captain, club captain / vice captain, or club coach. Guidance on training to cox, bow-steer and single scull is in section 3 below and on the safety webpage <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/river-conditions>
- e. Some boats are restricted to very experienced rowers by captain's permission only. This is clear on the boat booking spreadsheet. Guidance on obtaining captain's permission is seen on <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615#Captains%20Permission?> And <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/rowing/links>
- f. Club members may occasionally (no more than 5 times a year) take one friends/ family members out in club equipment. Please see the club website for details. In particular the captain must be informed beforehand.  
<https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615#Guests%20at%20Falcon%20?>
- g. Indoor rowing machines (Ergs – Concept 2 and RP3 ) may be used - see guidelines in clubhouse by the machines. They are booked using the boat booking spreadsheet above.
- h. The club gym may be used by adults and supervised juniors once you have undergone gym induction (contact [rowing.captain.falcon@gmail.com](mailto:rowing.captain.falcon@gmail.com)) and consent form. See <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/613>

### 4. Use of Private Equipment

- a. Private equipment may be stored in the club for a fee (see membership application form) and must be insured by the owner.

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- b. The club does not restrict adult club members' use of their privately owned equipment, providing that they act in a manner which does not bring Falcon into disrepute.
  - c. There are specific restrictions on guest non-members use of equipment including private equipment. Please see <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615#Non-members-private-equipment>
  - d. We recommend that rowers using their own equipment follow the guidelines here and also as outlined in the club's local water risk assessment (see rowing appendices)

## 5. Racing and external events

- a. Race entry is coordinated by squad coaches / captains and submitted by the club vice captain. See [vicecaptainrowingfrcc@gmail.com](mailto:vicecaptainrowingfrcc@gmail.com) See also. <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615#how-do-i-get-to-a-regatta>
- b. The 2 club trailers can be booked to take boats to races and other events. To book Contact [vicecaptainrowingfrcc@gmail.com](mailto:vicecaptainrowingfrcc@gmail.com) . Details including sample loading plan available on <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615#Rowing-Trailer>.
  - Drivers must check their license, insurance (which should cover towing a trailer), vehicle V5C are compliant and receive training from a club official.
  - They should have a buddy to support manoeuvring.
  - All screws, nuts fixings, hatch covers should be checked for tightness, seats should be fixed with small bungees.
  - A minimum of 2 tie positions for each boat, 3 for larger boats. Double ties should be used at each position. One over the boat attaching to the cross piece, a second one between trailer upright, under the boat and looping over the first tie to secure it.

## Section 2: Practical issues for outings.

### 1. Swimming, Buoyancy Aids and Life Jackets, Capsize

- a) All active rowing members confirm on applying for membership whether they are: **'a competent swimmer and able to float unaided for at least 5 minutes, swim at least 50 meters in light clothing, tread water for at least 2 minutes and swim under water for at least 5 meters.'**
- b) Participants unable to comply with the above swimming requirement must wear appropriate buoyancy aids.
- c) Junior members will be asked to undertake controlled tests in the river near the boathouse: swim in clothing, cold water immersion and capsized drill during the summer months (latest end of September) and not if the river is redflag, or likely sewage outflow. See 'Swim tests, Cold Water and Capsized drills' document on <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/juniorrowing/about>
- d) Coxes to wear lifejackets at all times (NB A buoyancy aid supports the wearer in the water but is not designed like a lifejacket to turn the wearer face up)
- e) All club members to complete a formal capsized drill training and assessment within 6 months of joining the club if not already completed. Courses are available from Oxford University Rowing Club ([sabbatical@ourcs.co.uk](mailto:sabbatical@ourcs.co.uk)). **Online course and quiz link for all members to complete.** <https://www.ouwlr.org.uk/capsized-drills/> Please Inform the WSA on completion of the test: [rowing.safety.falcon@gmail.com](mailto:rowing.safety.falcon@gmail.com)

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f) In the event of capsize:

- **Release the feet** pull the velcro quick release to free your feet (always check these and heel restraints before an outing).
- **Hold onto the boat** and stay with it.
- **Keep your head out the water** to avoid gasping in water.
- **Pull yourself onto the boat** - it is your main flotation aid.
- **Alert others**, lifebelt or throw line can be thrown from bank if needed.
- **Get to the side** and off the water
- Return to boat house, provide a warm drink, (emergency supply is next to the sink in the social area), have a warm shower.
- Foil Survival blankets available at boathouse along with first aid kits, dryrobe in changing rooms.
- If the rower has **gaped in water**, they should be assessed by a first aider, and advised to seek medical attention urgently if their breathing deteriorates in the following hours.

See Emergency Action Plan above in cases where (near) drowning has occurred.

## 2. Clothing and equipment to bring on an outing

- a) Clothing should be appropriate to the prevailing weather conditions. Particularly for coxes.
- b) Wear High Visibility clothing, especially coxes and single sculls and bow-steers.
- c) Do not wear clothing that could impede recovery in event of capsize - eg Dryrobes denims, jeans.
- d) Do not wear Hoodies when rowing or sculling as thumbs can catch in pocket. Hoodies can be turned inside out if no other option.
- e) Long hair should be tied up in a bun to avoid getting trapped in equipment particularly in a capsize.
- f) Spare clothing to be brought for all outings, throughout the year however warm the weather.
- g) Bring a bottle of water to all sessions, as well as sun cream / sun hat for hot weather

## 3. Health issues

- a) Rowing is a sport which requires at least a basic level of fitness. **Ensure your coach understands your fitness levels and capabilities as well as any health issues.** Members should work to improve fitness levels, and complete relevant information on the membership application form and **inform coaches /leads of relevant medical conditions.**
- b) Cover cuts with waterproof dressings. Wash your hands soon after rowing and avoid rubbing eyes or eating finger foods until you have done so.
- c) Infections: Members should not attend training or competition if they have an infectious illness. Members should not return to training until fully recovered.
- d) Epilepsy: Members with epilepsy should make coach aware. (see risk assessment below)
- e) Asthma: Members with asthma should always take prescribed inhaler before exercise. Carry inhaler in the boat in a drybag. Minimise exercise with upper respiratory tract infection.
- f) Heart: Members with significant cardiac conditions should only row following medical advice.

- g) Diabetes: Members with diabetes to ensure that they have eaten and taken appropriate medication before outing. Take high glucose content food / drink on outing to treat hypo if needed.
- h) Members should be aware of waterborne diseases such as Weil's disease, gastroenteritis, and the general signs and symptoms of the disease.

#### 4. Handling boats in the boat house

- a) Ensure you have been informed about correct techniques for handling boats by your coach/cox. Crews should carry boats with even numbers on each side unless placing boat onto or lifting from the water.
- b) High level small boats to be accessed in the boat house with care. Use the yellow plastic steps. Or the red step ladders in bay 1, placed on a firm concrete surface.
- c) Place chock(s) under the boat above yours before taking out or returning your boat, remove the chock after the manoeuvre.
- d) Do not run in the boathouse, take care when moving boats and blades, do not leave equipment in the way of others. Slide the boat rests back into position after large boats have been taken out.
- e) Leave oars on the ground outside, not against the wall. Return to the correct rack after the outing.
- f) Don't leave boats unattended on trestles in strong winds.
- g) **Boat checks to be done before every outing.** If you are not sure, ask your coach or view this YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jv294UJHbj0s>

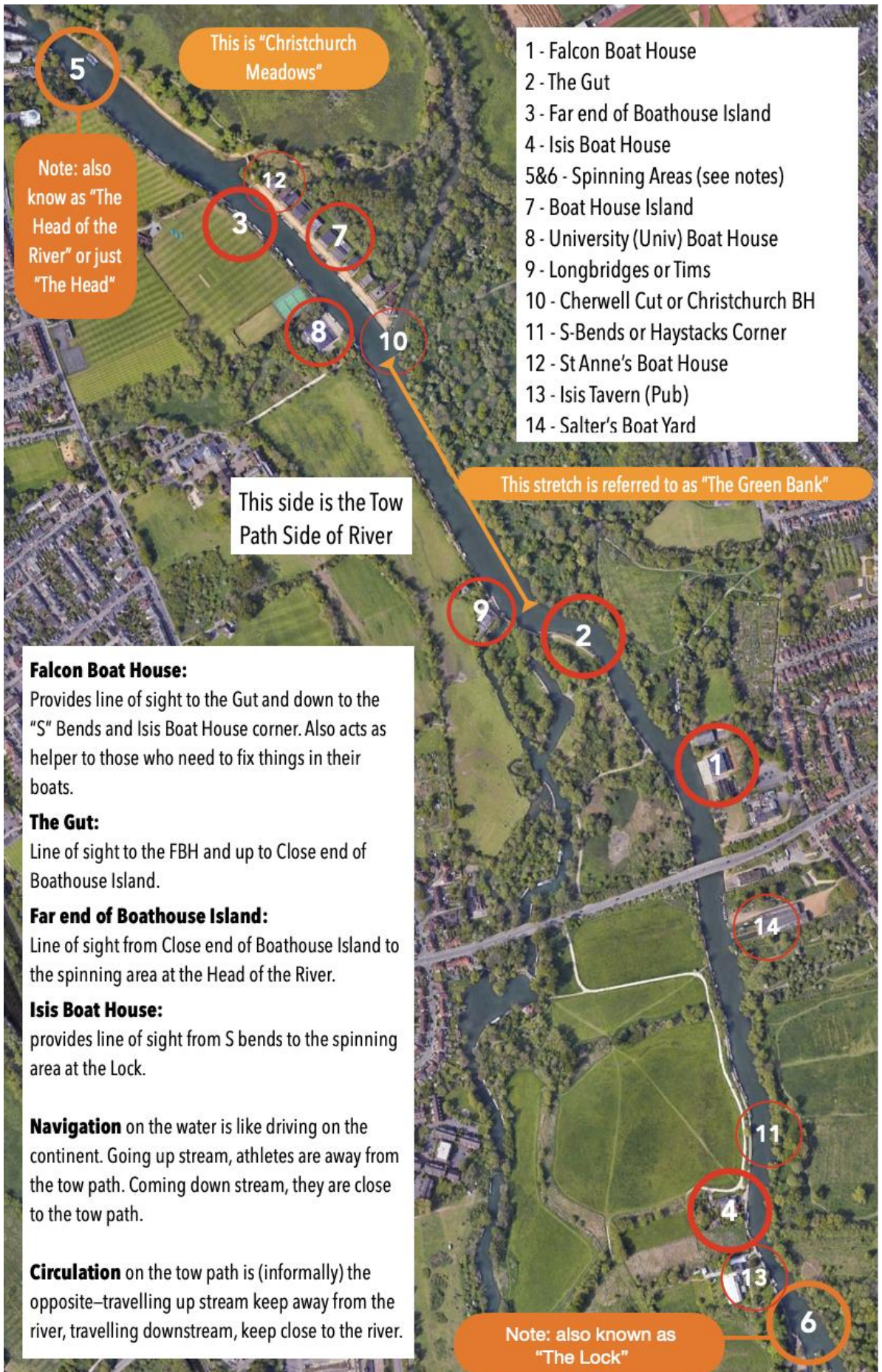
You can also read RowSafe chapter 7. <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023-British-Rowing-RowSafe.pdf>

<b>Boat Hull</b>	No Holes or deep scratches
	No damage to canvas/surface on top of boat
<b>Rudder and lines (if fitted)</b>	Check rudder strings are moving freely
	Rudder Moves freely and operates correctly with lines
<b>Fin</b>	Fixed and straight
<b>Riggers</b>	Swivels move freely, Gate opens and closes securely
	Rigger fixings to boat are firm and secure.
<b>Bow Ball</b>	Ball not damaged
	Ball ball securely fixed
	Bow ball vent closed if present
<b>Feet stretchers</b>	Firmly fixed to boat, locking nuts tightly secured.
<b>Shoes</b>	Pulling Velcro quick release with one hand opens both shoes
	Shoes are securely fixed to the stretcher under the toes
	Shoes are in good condition
<b>Heel restraints</b>	Should prevent the heel raising above horizontal
	Should be strong and durable. NOT laces or cable ties.
<b>Seats and runners</b>	seats run freely
	Runners should be clean
<b>Hatch covers</b>	Open, check they are attached with a string, then close securely.
<b>Blades</b>	No damage, buttons secure and properly set (ie matching position for sculling blades)

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- h) Ensure you use the correct method of getting into and out of boat. Hold land side rigger down when other crew are getting in /out to avoid capsizing
  - i) Ensure gates, fixing screws and nuts on stretchers are positioned correctly and checked for tightness before and periodically during outings. Coxes to remind crews.
  - j) On returning from your outing, clean the runners, wash down the hull (and inside if dirty).
  - k) Replace the half tennis balls on rigger gates before storing boat

## 6. On the river: Navigation Plan

- a) Follow rules of the river and local navigation plan. A circulation pattern that has been agreed with all water users: row on the right hand side of the river (in the direction of travel). See navigation plan below (by Nick Kenworthy-Browne).
- b) Particular care should be taken when **rowing through the gut**. Avoid overtaking other boats and rowing at speed through this section of river. There are many overhanging trees and tight bends.
- c) Coxes, scullers and bow-steers to warn other crews / boats they see approaching them. Bow-steers/scullers should consider using head mounted mirrors or similar.
- d) Crews should keep to the correct side of the river and remain alert for kayaks/canoes. Paddlers have less need to watch behind them whereas rowers depend on it. Be aware that paddlers are more manoeuvrable and they may use the “wrong” side of the river at times.
- e) When pulling into the bank, whether at Falcon or elsewhere, always try to do so in the upstream direction, especially with a strong current, and ideally avoid the boathouses next to Longbridges in these conditions – it’s very easy to get sucked down under the bridges towards the weir.
- f) Spinning Guidance
  - a. Normal spinning points are
    - i. Upstream: Spin before the Head of the River below Folly Bridge
    - ii. Mid-river: Outside Hertford boat house at Longbridges (give way to crews coming down and upstream)
    - iii. Return to Falcon: Downstream of Falcon with clear visibility both ways
    - iv. Downstream: The basin before Iffley lock
  - b. In Light and Dark Red these are modified
    - i. Upstream: before the upstream end of the towpath footbridge at Folly bridge
    - ii. Mid-river: Beware of strong stream going under the footbridge at Longbridges
    - iii. Return to Falcon: Downstream of Falcon with clear visibility both ways
    - iv. Downstream: No further than Haystacks corner (upstream of Isis boathouse)
- g) Keep away from weirs and locks if not intended to pass through the lock.
- h) If intending to pass through locks: Learn the mechanisms of lock usage
  - I. How to manage and use locks (parking up, entering and exiting lock etc)
  - II. How to order the fill / empty cycle by use of the sluices and gates
  - III. How to safely hold /ship oars in locks, avoid oars / boat getting caught on steps or chains.
  - IV. Learn how to stop at the high pontoons adjacent to locks, pulling blade handle back and blade forward whilst leaning out on the pontoon side
  - V. Use ropes and boat hooks to hold onto pontoon.
  - VI. Learn about the drift towards a weir, how to take wind and stream into account - sometimes beneficially to hold position near a lock
  - VII. No passage through locks on Red Boards.
- i) Be aware of the dangers associated with overhanging trees and the danger of trees falling into the river. There is an injury and collision risk.
- j) Beware of the dangers of getting too close and disturbing wild animals such as swans and geese.



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## 7. River and Weather conditions and Risk Assessment ( & Rowing Appendix)

### a) River flow rate: flags & boards

The Oxford University rowing clubs (OURCs) use their flag system. This can be found on the Falcon website. <https://falconboatclub.org.uk> The colours in ascending order of fast flow are: Green - Blue - Amber - Red - Black. There are 2 sections of river which are allocated their own flag status: the Isis (Folly bridge to Iffley lock) and Godstow (Godstow lock to Rainbow bridge). This system is active during university term time only. Outside of university term, the club rowing water safety advisor and captain will determine the estimated flag using weather and river status information sources given below. This will be emailed to club members. <http://www.atm.ox.ac.uk/rowing/river.html>

The Environment Agency use a board system. This can be found on their website, with a link from FBC website: <http://riverconditions.environment-agency.gov.uk/> There are 3 levels: no stream warning, yellow boards (stream increasing/decreasing) and red board (strong stream). They cover all the navigable Thames - the sections of interest to us are mainly Osney-Iffley, Iffley-Sandford and Osney to Godstow. No lock transit on EA red boards.

The Rowing section has a set of Guidelines to restrict the rowers that may access the water, using club equipment, under the different (OURC) flag conditions.

#### IF IN DOUBT DON'T GO OUT!

**Green flag:** all rowers and boat classes with suitable permissions and supervision

**Blue flag:** all experienced rowers and any crews coxed or bow-steered by experienced persons

**Amber flag:** no coxless boats without prior permission from a suitable risk assessor - i.e. probably limited to experienced crews of a competitive standard

**Light Red flag:** dependent on dynamic risk assessment, no rowing except in circumstances of very high competence / experience for the whole crew and low river traffic *and only with prior permission of a suitable risk assessor*.

**Dark Red Flag:** exceptional permission required from the captain or vice captain for any outing in these conditions due to the high flow rate (>3m water height difference between Osney and Iffley lock), no junior crews will be permitted.

**Black flag:** No rowing under any circumstances,

#### Suitable risk assessors

Senior Coaches (John Hill, Jeff Bethray, Mary-Heather Bethray, Andy Munro, Sam Jenks, Tim Baker, Howard Jacobs, Paul Munsey) rowing Captain, Vice Captain.

**For JUNIOR rowers,** see also detailed guidelines on outings and flags - see Rowing Appendix

For Coxes and Bow steers who have been assessed, prior permission is only required for DARK RED FLAG, otherwise the following table applies:

Guidance from a suitable risk assessor should be sought if crew competency is uncertain. For coxes and bowsteers under supervised training, see section 3 below regarding flag rules for training outings.



	Crew level				
Cox Level	Novice/LTR	Post Learn to row	post LTR mixed with majority experienced	competent/experienced	Very Highly competent /experienced
Bronze	No				
Silver					
Gold					Dark Red

	Crew level				
Bow steer level	Novice/LTR	Post Learn to row	post LTR mixed with majority experienced	competent/experienced	Very Highly competent /experienced
Bronze	No	No			
Silver					
Gold					Dark Red

**b) Strong winds / choppy water**

- a. Follow met office guidance and avoid rowing in extreme weather
- b. Use larger boats (eg 2x rather than 1x), Use more stable boats
- c. Bank riders to carry throw ropes.
- d. Use bailer/sponge to prevent water accumulation

**c) Low temperatures:**

- a. Check water temperature if air <8 degrees. (eg <https://dl1.findlays.net/show/temp/thames1>)
- b. If Water temperature is below 3 degrees: **amber flag rules apply for 1x, 2x, 2-** .Single scullers must **buddy up**.
- c. Avoid rowing if ice on the river. **(Black flag rules apply)**

**d) Lightning:**

- a. Avoid rowing if lightning present or forecast.
- b. **If lightning occurs: Black flag rules apply.** If already on the water, leave the water immediately and seek shelter in a suitable building (not necessarily your home boathouse), if available.
- c. Do not return to the water until at least 30mins has passed without thunder or lightning flashes.

**e) Low visibility:**

- a. Lights to be attached to boat in poor light conditions to aid location of the boat.
- b. No outings at night.
- c. if both lifebelts (in the Gut and below Donnington Bridge) not visible from hard, **Black flag applies. No rowing**

**f) Flooding:**

- a. No rowing if the river bank is flooded at the boat house pontoon, and pontoon edge is not visible – **black flag**

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## Section 3: Coaches, training /assessments for Coxes, Bow steers and single scullers

### 1. Coaches

- a. In line with BR policy, all coaches working in the club whether club members or not, paid or volunteer, must be members of and register as a coach with BR.
- b. Coaching qualifications should be appropriate for the prevailing conditions (*including valid first aid training for all coaches*)
- c. Assistant coaches to be designated by senior coaches following appropriate instruction.

### 2. Training to be a cox, bow steer or single sculler at FBC

#### a) Overall guidance.

- Club training and assessment of coxing and bow-steering determine the flags that members can safely go out in a club boat on the river (see table page 25).
- For adult rowers, the competency levels to be reached are listed below.
- All members wishing to be assessed as cox, bow-steer or single sculler should have completed their supervised capsized drill and online training prior to assessment.
- British Rowing coxing guidance and capsized training modules can be accessed [here](#). The University capsized training module and test [here](#).
- **Juniors:** Once junior members show lots of awareness around boat skills, they will be taught to bow steer or cox. They will always be taught and closely supervised by a junior coach. The Club Junior Head Coach will sign off once they have the skills to cox or bow-steer without such close attention, and maintain a list of approved junior coxes and bow-steers.

#### b) Training plan.

##### Coxing:

It is helpful for new coxes to have had experience of rowing/sculling in a single, double or 4 to understand how boats are manoeuvred. The Red Kites provide an ideal starting point for new coxes, fine boats could be used with suitable crew competences as coxes learn and progress, moving to 4x+/4+. Only after sufficient skill is demonstrated should they move to coxing eights. A first session in the tank or red kite allows calls and timing to be practised in controlled conditions.

Training **MUST** be undertaken by a club coach or an experienced club cox with Silver or Gold.

The flag conditions and crew experience for training and assessment outings **MUST** not exceed those described in the coxing level being trained for. EG a novice cox should only go out in green flag initially and later, as they gain experience, in blue flag only with experienced crew and always with a trainer or assessor. See appendix 1. New coxes **MUST** never cox novice crews.

Training should be extended over multiple sessions to allow different conditions and content to be observed. Initially, the trainer should be at stroke seat in the boat, and can

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later progress to bank riding the crew as the cox gains experience.

**Bowsteers:**

Trainee Bowsteers should start in a double, and only progress to a quad once they have gained experience, and they should always be with a trainer until they have successfully completed assessment.

Training MUST be undertaken by a club coach or experienced bowsteer at or above the bowsteer level being trained for, but a minimum silver. I.e. a silver bowsteer or coach can train a novice or bronze bowsteer. A gold bowsteer or coach can supervise a silver bowsteer training for gold.

The flag conditions and crew experience for training and assessment outings MUST be as described in the bowsteer level being trained for. EG a novice bowsteer should only go out in a green or later blue flag with experienced crew and always with a trainer or assessor.

Training can be extended over multiple sessions to allow different conditions and content to be observed. For novice bowsteers, the trainer should initially be at the 2 seat in the boat, and can later progress to other seats or bank riding the crew as the bowsteer gains skills.

**Single sculling:**

Novice single scullers MUST be coached by a trained club or external coach, initially in green flag conditions. Training sculls can be used. Many scullers will have experience sculling in a quad and double before single sculling but this is not essential.

**C) Assessments of coxes, bowsteers and single scullers:**

a) Once trainee coxes, bowsteers and single scullers have reached the level required (See criteria on the competency spreadsheet below) they should book an assessment.

b) Cox, bowsteers and single scullers MUST be assessed by **senior club officials /coaches with appropriate coxing/bow-steering experience** (i.e. at or above the level being assessed) before being signed off to undertake unsupervised outings as per the table below.

c) **Club Assessors (Nov 2024 onwards): John Hill, Jeff Bethray, Mary Heather Bethray, Jon Crooks, Sam Jenks, Howard Jacobs, Andy Munro, Tim Baker, Paul Munsey.**

d) Assessments may take more than one outing, and should be recorded by the assessor [on this form](#) and assessments should specify whether the assessment was single scull, double or quad for bowsteer in the notes. Kezia Hobson, club lead cox will maintain the [list](#) of assessed coxes / bow steers / single scullers

<b>Competence Steering Level for coxes, bow steers and single scullers</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Club / Bronze</b>	
Handling a boat	- from racks, trestles, to water etc
Boat checks (with crew)	- knowing which parts require checks
Water safety (basic requirements)	- life jackets, flag conditions, risk assessment criteria etc
Crew management (incl. launching + landing)	- handling boat to and from the water, using correct terminology for crew standard
Local navigation rules (incl OURCs)	- rights of way, spinning points (flag status dependent)
Following a course	- keeping to the correct side etc
Avoiding obstacles / traffic	- trying to keep the boat moving
Awareness of external factors (current / stream / weather conditions)	- e.g., maintaining a position; impact of run-off under Longbridges
Emergency stop	Demonstrate ability to stop the boat quickly and effectively - 'hold the boat hard'
Spinning effectively (base conditions)	- clearing your lane and arriving in the right place, pointing in the right direction, backing down
Landing safely	- slow and accurate -land going upstream - unless strong upstream wind, or locks
Clear calls (propulsion / manoeuvring)	- using correct calls to achieve required outcomes incl stopping
Basic rowing technique	- timing, squaring, depth
Timing of commands	- giving half of a stroke cycle before the command applies
<b>Touring Specific Bronze</b>	
Negotiating locks	- understanding the process and how to approach, park up, pack together within and pass through a lock
Landing against higher mooring levels	- "shipping oars" or otherwise parking up against a landing stage set higher than the boat
<b>Development / Silver</b>	
Following a simple outing programme	- conforming to a general brief on session content
Take account of crew's skill levels	- check extent of responses to some advanced commands (e.g. "Hold it lightly")
Reading the river / anticipating and reacting	- taking account of other crews activities and intentions to reduce interruptions to your own crew
Use of stream	- taking account of stream patterns to improve line; using ferry-glide effect etc
Reducing use of rudder	- minor adjustments when blades in the water etc
Advanced rowing technique	- prompting technical points to improve crew coordination and propulsion
<b>Touring Specific Silver</b>	
Managing a touring crew	- acting as Crew Captain (additional criteria to be advised)
<b>Competitive/Gold</b>	
Spinning effectively (challenging conditions*)	- e.g. reverse spinning when appropriate (* = high stream, heavy traffic etc)
Following and adapting a complex outing plan	- understanding the purpose of a session plan and adapting to the conditions, where necessary
Rules of competition	- read and understand some rules of racing
Choosing a racing line	- use or take account of current and conditions to optimise your racing course
Attaching to a stake boat / starting stage	- attach safely and then adjust direction, according to any side winds
Motivating crews	- know your crew and what they respond to; have a list of useful, relevant calls
Tactical responses	- e.g. take advantage of your racing line or concede position, as appropriate

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## **Section 4: Club launch, Club Equipment, Broken Boats and Incident Reporting**

### **1. Use of the club launch.**

- a. A key requirement is that anyone using the launch must have their RYA2 certificate.
- b. Use of the club launch is detailed on the website FAQ page. <https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615>

2. **Any damaged or suspect equipment** to be labelled with swing-tags provided and/or withdrawn from service. Boat manager to be informed via [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Rf4ORc36dNxHetkYat9Er7skfyeEi87D9ryErNmNGs4/viewform?edit\\_requested=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Rf4ORc36dNxHetkYat9Er7skfyeEi87D9ryErNmNGs4/viewform?edit_requested=true)



3. **It is the responsibilities of coaches and members to report incidents** (including capsizes, collisions, injury, near misses) to the Club Rowing Safety Adviser by email [rowing.safety@falconboatclub.org.uk](mailto:rowing.safety@falconboatclub.org.uk) and to British Rowing online: <https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/>
4. Falcon boat manager will ensure that all Club owned **buoyancy aids and life jackets** receive an annual safety inspection.
5. **The first aid kits** will be checked monthly and refilled by the water safety advisor.

Rowing Water Safety Poster Version 4.2 Jan 2025

# Water Safety for Rowers



**Find  
the  
Flag**

Falcon  
River Safety

OURCs  
Flag Status

Scan Me

EA River  
Conditions

Scan Me

ANU's  
River Flow

Scan Me

**BLACK  
Flag  
= No  
Outing**

Cox/Bowsteer	Crew competence level vs Maximum Flag permitted				
	Novice/LTR	Post Learn to row	Post LTR mixed with majority experienced	ALL competent/experienced	ALL Very Highly competent/experienced
Bronze Cox	No				
Silver Cox					
Gold Cox					Dark Red – Captain's agreement only

Bronze Bowsteer	No	No			
Silver BS					
Gold BS					Dark Red – as above

☀️ ☁️ ❄️ ❄️ ☀️

Water Temperatures

Water Temperatures below 3° C **Amber flag rules apply for 1x, 2x, 2-, no single scullers out on their own, buddy up.**

Scan Me

Wind & Gusts

Consider wind speed, gusts, and direction before boating. A dynamic risk assessment may be needed.

Fog/poor visibility

Wear high viz. Use boat lights. If both lifebelts (the Gut and below Donnington Bridge) are not visible **DO NOT GO OUT**

Lightning

**Black flag rules apply.** If already on the water, leave the water immediately and seek shelter in a suitable building (not necessarily your home boathouse), if available. Do not return to the water until at least 30mins has passed without thunder or lightning flashes.

ICE

If there is ice on the water **Black Flag rules apply.**

Flooding

If the pontoon is flooded **Black Flag rules apply.**

Suitable risk assessors include:


John Hill, Jeff Bethray, Mary-Heather Bethray, Sam Jenks, Andy Munro, Howard Jacobs, Tim Baker, Paul Munsey and rowing Captain and Vice-Captain.

Guidance outlined above is strongly advised for users of private equipment, but for all club equipment it is mandatory.

WHEN IN DOUBT, DON'T GO OUT!



## Kayaking and Canoeing Risk Assessments

<h3 style="color: #4F81BD;">Risk Assessment</h3> <p>Generic Local Water Regular Activities</p>	
<p>Stage 1: Identify the venue and look for any hazards            Stage 2: Decide who might be harmed and how            Stage 3: Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done            Stage 4: Sign the Assessment to show you have considered all hazards, precautions and required actions            Stage 5: Review your assessment at least every 12 months and provide the Safety Officer with a signed copy for filing</p>	
Name of Assessor/Coach.	Jo Bates (lead coach)
Venue	Falcon Boathouse and nearby river and canal network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>River Thames from King's lock to Abingdon lock, including Duke's cut</li> <li>Oxford canal from Shipton lock (no 41) to Isis lock (no 46)</li> <li>River Cherwell from A40 road bridge (north of the Victoria Arms pub) to junction with Thames</li> <li>Lasher Mill Stream</li> <li>Other local streams</li> </ul>
Date of Review	01/04/2023
Date of Next Review	12 months from this review
Signature	

### Overview

The following are factors which all coaches/session leaders should consider when planning and delivering training sessions. The list is not exhaustive and coaches/session leaders should also be prepared to alter their planned session should any factors change (dynamic risk assessment).

Factors that may change and affect the session include:

- coach/session leaders' own confidence and ability in the prevailing conditions
- the ability & stability of each paddler in their boat.
- the river conditions (current speed & smoothness, ease of exit from waterway in event of capsize) - see below for flag/board guidance
- the water temperature, given that sudden submersion in very cold water can be dangerous
- the weather conditions (temperature, wind speed & directions, rain/hail/snow)
- the light conditions (i.e. is it currently dark or likely to get dark during the session)
- the type of session planned (distance to be travelled from club, how close coach will be to group)
- the group dynamics (number and ability of paddlers in group, range of ability in group, presence of other coaches within group, how well the coach knows each paddler)

### Flow rate: flags & boards

There are 2 systems that warn us of fast flow:

1. The Environment Agency use a board system. This can be found on their website: <http://riverconditions.environment-agency.gov.uk/>. There are 3 levels: no stream warning, yellow boards (stream increasing/decreasing) and red board (strong stream). They cover all of the navigable Thames - the sections of interest to us are mainly Godstow-Osney, Osney-Iffley, Iffley-Sandford and Sandford-Abingdon.



2. The University rowing clubs use their flag system. This can be found on the Falcon website. The colours in ascending order of fast flow are: Green – Light blue – Dark blue - Amber - Red – Black. There are 2 sections of river that it covers: the Isis (Folly bridge to Iffley lock) and Godstow (Godstow lock to Rainbow bridge). Grey flag means that it is not being updated (often the case during the university holidays).

Some things to remember:

- The Isis flag only applies downstream of Folly bridge so even if it is showing amber or blue, upstream of Folly (and especially through the bridge) can be pretty fast.
- The Isis stretch (Folly-Iffley) is generally the slowest flowing sections of the river Thames locally, due to flow going down the backwaters, so this section can be safer to paddle than other areas.
- The Cherwell is not a managed river so reacts more quickly to increased rainfall than the Thames. This means that after heavy rain, the Thames may be OK but the Cherwell could already be flowing quickly. It also tends to go back to normal flow rates quicker than the Thames too for the same reason.
- Obstacles such as bridge pillars and islands restrict the flow of the river and so can make the flow higher or “swirlier”. Upstream of Folly gets fast/swirly quite quickly, while the stretch from Iffley to Sandford will be a much easier paddle for the same board rating.
- Take care of whether the yellow EA boards say stream increasing or decreasing: an increasing sign means it could be about to turn onto red boards.

Another useful website is this one, which monitors the level of the Isis and predicts when it will be back off red flag: <http://www.atm.ox.ac.uk/rowing/river.html>

### General Hazards

List of Hazards	People at risk	Risk control	Further action
Unfamiliar location	All participants	Separate Offsite Risk Assessment Form to be completed	Coach to complete Offsite RA form and send a copy to Safety Officer for review
Inappropriate instruction	All participants	Instructors to hold appropriate and current BC coaching qualifications for the prevailing conditions, or to have been judged competent by the club committee. Supervision levels to be appropriate to the size and competence of the group	Coaches qualifications to be kept on file
Lifting and carrying kayaks and canoes, possible strain to back and muscular strain. Emptying water out of filled kayak or canoe.	All participants	Coach to explain correct way to lift boat. Recommend that smaller/weaker paddlers pair up to lift 1 kayak front and back, especially for heavier boats. Recommend that 2-4 paddlers lift canoes depending on paddlers and/or canoe size Explain how to empty water from boat	Briefing and demonstration by Coach on correct way to lift and carry kayaks and canoes. Coach to brief on emptying kayak or canoe.
Risk to others (rowers, members of the public, etc) being struck by moving equipment	All participants and others using boathouse and riverbank	Coach to caution participants about running around the boathouse, taking care when moving boats and paddles, not leaving boats in the way of others carrying boats	Coach to tell participants to be aware of others in and around boathouse
Equipment failure	All participants	Coach to explain to participants how to check boats, rudders, paddles etc	Equipment log is in place and maintained, and a progressive maintenance programme is undertaken. Any damaged or suspect equipment

			to be labelled or withdrawn from service until repaired or scrapped.
Hypothermia (most likely caused by falling into cold water or lack of appropriate kit for very cold weather)	All participants	Coach to ensure that clothing is appropriate to the prevailing weather conditions. Good instructor awareness – understanding of water temperatures Survival blankets available at boathouse	Coach briefing on types of clothing to be worn to be warm when kayaking or canoeing.
Hyperthermia, sunburn and dehydration	All participants	All participants to wear appropriate clothing. Recommend bringing a bottle of water to sessions. Explain the need to cover up and protect the head Use sun block when necessary	Coach briefing on types of clothing to be worn to remain cool when kayaking or canoeing. Coach to brief on problems of heat and excess sun.
Water and weather conditions	All participants	Coach take the water and weather conditions into account, as explained at the top of this document.	Coach to check weather and water conditions before session.
Minor cuts, splinters, first aid	All participants	Participants to be aware that there is a first aid kit available if needed	Coach to ensure that first aid kit is available (in boathouse or in coaches boat) and adequately stocked
Losing contact with rest of group	All participants	Coach to explain designated paddling area Participants to be told not to stray too far from the Coach or other supervisors	Coach to ensure that contact is not lost with any of the group.
Capsize	All participants	Participants to be briefed on the correct method of capsizing and what to do when in the water	Coach to brief all participants on the procedure, in the event of capsize.
Damage to feet from glass etc on the riverbed	All participants	Suitable footwear to be worn on riverbank and on the water in case of capsize	Coach to brief all participants on the risk of damage to feet and to recommend what to wear.
Drowning	All participants	For Kayak members, there is an expectation that members should be able to swim. For Canoe members, new members should discuss their swim and water confidence with the coach before going on the water.  When a club member is not a confident swimmer, they should ensure that the coach of the session is aware of this. Participants to wear appropriate buoyancy aids throughout the activity, in line with the club's buoyancy aid policy.	Fitting of buoyancy aids checked by Coach prior to the session starting. Capsize drill explained to reduce possibility of participants not making clean exit from upturned craft Canoe group to complete regular capsize drill sessions each summer Membership form includes declaration of swimming competence.
Weil's Disease	All participants	Coach to ensure that all participants are aware of waterborne disease and the general signs and symptoms of the disease.	Encourage all participants to wash their hands soon after the activity. Encourage participants to take showers if they fall in the river. Participants warned to seek medical assistance if they believe they have been infected.
Boats / Rowers	All participants	Participants warned about the dangers from other users of the river. Coach to ensure participants know to	Vigilance by supervising coach throughout the session

		keep to the right hand side of the river and to avoid getting too close to rowers etc.	
Wildlife	All participants	All participants warned about the dangers of getting too close and disturbing wild animals such as swans and geese.	Vigilance by supervising coach throughout the session
Other Events on the Water	All participants	Coach to explain where it is possible to paddle when there is a regatta or "bumps" race on the river	Coach to be aware of planned events and plan session accordingly
Fishermen	All participants	Participants warned to steer away from anglers' lines wherever possible.	Participants warned of the dangers of old line and hooks left in overhanging trees and on riverbank
Overhanging trees	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers associated with overhanging trees and hidden strainers.	Periodic inspection of the river especially after floods or strong winds.  Coach to provide advice of route and how to avoid strainers, and how to deal with capsize/swimmer safely in these conditions
Weirs and Locks	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers associated with local weirs and locks (see below for more detail)	Participants warned to keep away from weirs and locks, unless this is part of the planned session. In this case, the coach/leader may use dynamic risk assessment to lead paddlers with appropriate skill/experience on the downstream flow of approved weirs, or running the lasher/rollers, for development opportunities.  Coach to provide instructions of where to exit from river when approaching local locks etc.
Bridges	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers of water near and under local bridges	Coach to provide advice of route and how to avoid fast moving water near bridges, unless this is part of the planned session. In this case, the coach/leader may use dynamic risk assessment to lead paddlers with appropriate skill/experience near bridges for development opportunities
Other hazards such as moored boats and posts in the river when the flow is high	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers of fast flow upstream of other hazards such as moored boats and posts in the river when the flow is high	Coach to provide advice of route and how to avoid fast moving water upstream of hazards
Members of the public throwing items at paddlers	All participants	Coach to remain vigilant around bridges, or where groups of youths are gathered	

See below for risks associated with specific local areas:

**River Thames from King's to Abingdon locks, including Duke's cut**

List of Hazards	People at risk	Risk control	Further action
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Rowers	All participants	Coach to ensure participants know to keep to the right hand side of the river and to avoid getting too close to rowers etc.	
Bridges - all bridges are hazards especially those with narrow arches	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers of water near and under local bridges, in particular <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gasworks Bridge – flow from castle weir stream on left hand side coming downstream</li> <li>Folly Bridge – flow can be strong, moored boats and fairly narrow arches</li> <li>The railway bridge at Kennington – narrow spaces between arches and banks, with overhanging trees</li> </ul>	
Weirs - all weirs are hazards	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers associated with local weirs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beyond the swimming pool at Long Bridges</li> <li>associated with Iffley Lock</li> <li>associated with Sandford Lock</li> <li>associated with Osney Lock</li> </ul>	No club sessions to go immediately above Osney (upstream from Osney Lock to Botley Road Bridge) in red board conditions due to the strong pull of the weir just above Osney lock  Weir stream between Sandford lock and Rose Island (past the hydroelectric plant) only to be used in very low flow conditions by competent paddlers due to the strong pull of the weir
Locks - all locks present hazards in use.	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers associated with local locks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>King's Lock</li> <li>Godstow Lock</li> <li>Osney Lock</li> <li>Iffley lock</li> <li>Sandford lock</li> </ul>	

#### River Cherwell from A40 road bridge to junction with River Thames

List of Hazards	People at risk	Risk control	Further action
Punters	All participants	Coach to ensure participants know to avoid getting too close to punts etc.	
Bridges - all bridges are hazards especially those with narrow arches	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers of water near and under local bridges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Magdalen bridge</li> </ul>	No club sessions to go immediately upstream of Magdalen bridge on red board conditions due to strong flow, and mooring of punts/rowboats in main arch of bridge  <b>Exception:</b> for canoe group – canoe group coaches approved by the water safety officer or Canoe Lead Coach may use dynamic risk assessment to lead paddlers with appropriate skill/experience upstream of Magdalen bridge for development opportunities. Specific permission must be sought for each planned trip.
Weirs - all weirs are hazards	All participants	Ensure that participants are	<b>Exception:</b> for canoe group – canoe group

		aware of the dangers associated with local weirs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University Parks with rollers</li> <li>Along Mesopotamia</li> </ul>	coaches approved by the water safety officer or Canoe Lead Coach may use dynamic risk assessment to lead paddlers with appropriate skill/experience to navigate weirs.
Side channels	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware that side channels may be shallower and have more obstacles than the main channel	
Overhanging and fallen trees	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware that due to the narrow river, overhanging and fallen trees are more common on the Cherwell than on the Thames	

#### Oxford Canal from Shipton to Isis locks

List of Hazards	People at risk	Risk control	Further action
Canal boats	All participants	Coach to ensure participants know to keep to the right hand side of the canal where possible and to give moving canal boats plenty of space	
Bridges - all bridges are hazards especially those with narrow arches	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers of water near and under local bridges – on the canal, these can be particularly narrow and low	
Locks - all locks present hazards in use.	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers associated with local locks along the canal	

#### Lasher Mill Stream


List of Hazards	People at risk	Risk control	Further action
Overhanging trees	All participants	Coach to ensure participants are told to keep away from low hanging trees	
Weirs - all weirs are hazards	All participants	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers associated with local weirs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Lasher</li> <li>The Double</li> <li>The Treble</li> </ul>	Paddlers should not go downstream of the large pipe crossing the back stream above the Lasher as it leads to the top of the double and treble weirs. This is a great danger in strong flow.  <b>Exception:</b> for canoe group – canoe group coaches approved by the water safety officer or Canoe Lead Coach may use dynamic risk assessment to lead paddlers with appropriate skill/experience in very low flow.
Longbridges streams from the Thames to the Lasher - flow	All participants	Coaches to ensure participants are aware of and have the skills/experience to safely manage the flow	Paddlers should not go under longbridges to these streams when the flow is strong.  <b>Exception for canoe group</b> – canoe group coaches approved by the water safety officer or Canoe lead Coach, may use

			dynamic risk assessment to lead paddlers with appropriate skill/experience under longbridges for development opportunities. Specific permission must be sought for each planned trip.
Old swimming pool – old supports for platforms slightly submerged – causing obstructions	All participants	Coaches to inform participants of obstructions.	
Section from Lasher weir to Lasher weir pool – flow and overhanging/fallen trees	All participants	Coaches to ensure participants are aware of and have the skills/experience to safely manage the flow and any overhanging/fallen trees	

**Other Local Streams – eg Hinksey, Tumbling Bay, Bulstake, Castle Mill**

List of Hazards	People at risk	Risk control	Further action
Overhanging and fallen trees/branches	All participants	Coaches to ensure participants are aware of and have the skills/experience to safely manage any overhanging/fallen trees	Coaches to use dynamic risk assessment to respond to risks as required
Weirs - all weirs are hazards	All participants	Coaches to ensure participants are aware of and have the skills/experience to safely manage the areas around any weirs	Coaches to use dynamic risk assessment to respond to risks as required
Water levels	All participants	Coaches to ensure participants are aware of and have the skills/experience to safely manage high and low water levels	Coaches to use dynamic risk assessment to respond to risks as required
Bridges	All participants	Coaches to ensure participants are aware of and have the skills/experience to safely manage the areas around bridges	Coaches to use dynamic risk assessment to respond to risks as required

## Rowing Risk Assessment

<h3 style="margin: 0;">Risk Assessment</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Generic Local Water Activities</p>	
<p>Stage 1: Identify the venue and look for any hazards</p> <p>Stage 2: Decide who might be harmed and how</p> <p>Stage 3: Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done</p> <p>Stage 4: Sign the Assessment to show you have considered all hazards, precautions and required actions</p> <p>Stage 5: Review your assessment at least every 12 months and provide the Safety Officer with a signed copy for filing</p>	
Name of Assessor/Coach.	Claire Parker - Water Safety Advisor (Rowing),
Venue	Falcon Boathouse and nearby river network (incl. Godstow to Abingdon, Cherwell)
Date of Review	8/1/25 (V9)
Date of Next Review	12 months from this review
Signature	Claire Parker

### Overview

The following are factors which all coaches/session leaders should consider when planning and delivering water-based activity sessions. The list is not exhaustive and coaches/session leaders should also be prepared to alter their planned session should any factors change (dynamic risk assessment). This is also applicable for independent outings.

For outings beyond the geographic scope of this risk assessment, or for outreach events, a specific risk assessment should be undertaken by the organiser and reviewed with the club water safety advisor.

**The risk assessment guidance outlined below is strongly advised for users of private equipment, but for all users of club equipment and any Black Flag situation it is mandatory.**

Factors that may change and affect the session include:

- coach/session leader's own confidence and ability in the prevailing conditions
- the ability, experience and skill levels of the crews / coxes in their respective boats
- the river conditions (current speed & smoothness, ease of exit from waterway in event of capsized) - see below
- the water temperature, given that sudden submersion in very cold water can be dangerous – see below
- the weather conditions (temperature, wind speed & directions, rain/hail/snow, lightning) – see below
- the visibility and light conditions (i.e. is it currently dark or likely to get dark during the session, is there fog) -see below
- the type of session planned (distance to be travelled from club, level of supervision etc)
- the group dynamics (number crews / boats, range of ability, presence of other coaches)

If an incident occurs, this should be reported to the Club Rowing Safety Adviser by email [rowing.safety.falcon@gmail.com](mailto:rowing.safety.falcon@gmail.com) and to British Rowing online: <https://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/>

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## Flow rate: flags & boards

There are 2 systems that warn us of fast flow:

1. The University rowing clubs (OURCs) use their flag system. This can be found on the Falcon website. <https://falconboatclub.org.uk> The colours in ascending order of fast flow are: Green - Blue - Amber - Red - Black. There are 2 sections of river which are allocated their own flag status: the Isis (Folly bridge to Iffley lock) and Godstow (Godstow lock to Rainbow bridge). This system is active during university term time only. Another useful website is this one, which monitors the level of the Isis and predicts when it will be back off red flag. Outside of university term, the club rowing water safety advisor and captain will determine the estimated flag using weather and river status information sources given below. This will be emailed to club members. <http://www.atm.ox.ac.uk/rowing/river.html>
2. The Environment Agency use a board system. This can be found on their website, with a link from FBC website: <http://riverconditions.environment-agency.gov.uk/> There are 3 levels: no stream warning, yellow boards (stream increasing/decreasing) and red board (strong stream). They cover all the navigable Thames - the sections of interest to us are mainly Osney-Iffley, Iffley-Sandford and Osney to Godstow. No lock transit on EA red boards.

The Rowing section has a set of Guidelines to restrict the rowers who may access the water, using club equipment, under the different (OURC) flag conditions. **If in doubt, don't go out!**

**Green flag:** all rowers and boat classes with suitable permissions and supervision

**Blue flag:** all experienced rowers and any crews coxed or bow-steered by experienced persons

**Amber flag:** no coxless boats without prior permission from a suitable risk assessor - i.e. probably limited to experienced crews of a competitive standard

**Red flag:** dependent on dynamic risk assessment, no rowing except in circumstances of very high competence / experience for the whole crew and low river traffic *and only with prior permission of a suitable risk assessor.*

**Dark Red Flag:** exceptional permission required from the captain or vice captain for any outing in these conditions due to the high flow rate (>3m water height difference between Osney and Iffley lock)), no junior crews will be permitted.

**Black flag:** No rowing under any circumstances,

Some things to remember:

- The Isis flag only applies downstream of Folly Bridge. In general, most rowing sessions are limited - especially in the winter - to the stretch between Folly Bridge and Iffley Lock.
- For the benefit of water users, the Environment Agency try to keep the flow of the Isis stretch slow by diverting water along the backwaters - i.e. under Longbridges. Consequently, the stream below the Gut can be slow when it remains faster above Longbridges. When in doubt, coaches should check above the Gut before committing to an outing.
- The Cherwell is rarely used for rowing but is occasionally visited by the Touring section of the club. It is not a managed river so reacts more quickly to increased rainfall than the Thames. This means that after heavy rain, the Thames may be OK but the Cherwell could already be flowing quickly. It also tends to go back to normal flow rates quicker than the Thames for the same reason.
- Obstacles such as bridge pillars and islands restrict the width of the river and so can increase the flow. Upstream of Folly deteriorates quite quickly and trips towards Osney and Godstow may prove more hazardous if higher flow conditions develop.
- Take care of whether the yellow EA boards say stream increasing or decreasing: an increasing sign means it could be about to turn onto red boards.
- No lock transit on EA Red Boards.

Coxes and bow-steers are assessed by senior coaches and club officials, and assigned bronze, silver or gold which links to experience / competence of the crew members and determines the prevailing



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flag condition that they may be trained and may take a crew out. See relevant table and current risk assessors in the activity and safety handbook.

### Spinning Guidance

Normal spinning points are

Upstream: Spin before the Head of the River below Folly Bridge

Mid-river: Outside Hertford boat house at Longbridges (give way to crews coming down and upstream)

Return to Falcon: Downstream of Falcon with clear visibility both ways

Downstream: The basin before Iffley lock

In Light and Dark Red these are modified

Upstream: before the upstream end of the towpath footbridge at Folly bridge end

Mid-river: Beware of strong stream going under the footbridge at Longbridges

Return to Falcon: Downstream of Falcon with clear visibility both ways

Downstream: No further than Haystacks corner (upstream of Isis boathouse)

List of Hazards	Hazardous event	Barriers put in place to reduce the probability of a hazardous event occurring	Further Controls to reduce severity of the harm if it occurs.
<b>Hazards associated with the Water</b>			
Deep water	Fall into water or capsize resulting in drowning	<p>Coach to check participants' level swimming competence.</p> <p>All active rowing members to confirm on applying for membership whether they: <b>Can float unaided for at least 5 minutes. Are a competent swimmer and able to swim at least 50 meters in light clothing, treat water for at least 2 minutes and swim under water for at least 5 meters.</b></p> <p>Junior members will be asked to undertake controlled tests: swim in clothing, cold water immersion and capsize drill in the river during the summer months (latest mid-October).</p> <p>Participants unable to comply with the above swimming requirement to wear appropriate buoyancy aids if line with the club's buoyancy aid policy.</p> <p>Coxes to wear lifejackets at all times</p> <p>All lifejackets and buoyancy aids to be checked and serviced annually.</p> <p>Spare clothing to be brought for all outings, throughout the year however warm the weather.</p>	<p>Match supervision and use of BAs to demands of any potential risk from an individual's need</p> <p>Capsize: Ensure all participants trained in capsize drill. Including staying with boat, getting onto upturned boat, getting back in boat and to side of river. Lifebelt or throw line can be thrown from bank if needed. Assess for injury to crew, administer first aid in boat or back at boat house. Seek medical attention if severe injury.</p> <p>Drowning: Bank based coach/bystander to throw lifeline or use throwline, pull victim to shore, call emergency services, if no effort at breathing start cardiac massage and use defibrillator: see club emergency action plan</p>
Fast flowing water / flooding	Capsize, Swept over weir / into bridge. Unable to return to boat house	<p>All users to be aware of river flag status and rules outlined above in risk assessment text page 1 to 3. .</p> <p>No rowing if the river bank is flooded at the boat house pontoon and the pontoon edge is not easily visible <b>Black flag rules apply</b></p>	<p>Capsize – see above</p> <p>Collision: with weir / fixed objects, call other boats for help. Assess boat for damage. Try to move to nearest bank and evacuate boat if damaged. Call emergency services if unable to move boat and crew.</p> <p>Assess for injury to crew, administer first aid in boat or back at boat house. Seek medical attention if severe injury.</p>
Glass etc on the riverbed	Cuts to feet	<p>Suitable footwear to be worn on riverbank</p> <p>Coach to brief all participants on the risk of damage to feet and to recommend what to wear.</p>	<p>First aid</p> <p>Seek medical attention for severe injury</p>
Wildlife	Birds attack rowers	<p>All participants warned about the dangers of getting too close and disturbing wild animals such as swans and geese.</p> <p>Inform rowers about legal requirements and guidelines for accident avoidance.</p>	<p>First aid</p>

		Vigilance by supervising coach throughout the session	
Water borne hazards /infections	Infection with Weil's disease after exposure to water	Coach to ensure that all participants are aware of waterborne disease and the general signs and symptoms of the disease.  Cover cuts with waterproof dressings  Hose down equipment after outings.	Encourage all participants to wash their hands soon after the activity and avoiding rubbing eyes or eating finger foods until they have done so.  Encourage participants to take showers if they fall in the river. Participants warned to seek medical assistance if they believe they may have been infected. Hand sanitizer in café.

### Hazards associated with the Weather

Cold weather	Hypothermia (most likely caused by falling into cold water)	Coach to ensure that clothing is appropriate to the prevailing weather conditions. Particularly for coxes.  Check water temperature if air <8 degrees. (see temp at Shiplake) <a href="https://dl1.findlays.net/show/temp/thames1">https://dl1.findlays.net/show/temp/thames1</a>  If Water temperature is below 3 degrees <b>Amber flag rules apply for 1x, 2x, 2-</b> Single scullers must <b>buddy up</b> .  Avoid rowing if ice on the river. ( <b>Black flag rules apply</b> )	All users should be aware of how to recognise and treat / respond to symptoms.  Return to boat house, provide warm drink  Survival foil blankets available at boathouse along with first aid kit. Dryrobe in changing room.  Seek medical treatment if severe
Hot weather	Hyperthermia, sunburn and dehydration	All participants to wear appropriate thin clothing.  Bring a bottle of water to sessions. Coxes to remind crews to drink regularly during breaks in outings.  Rest in the shady areas  Cover up and protect the head Use sun block  Coach to brief on problems of heat and excess sun. Avoid outings in extreme heat (eg mid-day)	Move to cooler shady area Remove outer clothing Drink water Use river water for cooling Shower in cool water Seek medical treatment if severe
Strong winds / choppy water	Capsize  Swamping  Damage to equipment on land	Follow met office guidance and avoid rowing in extreme weather  Use larger boats (eg 2x rather than 1x) Use more stable boats  Bank riders to carry throw ropes.  Avoid rough water  Use bailer/sponge to prevent water accumulation	Use buoyancy aid  Capsize see above  Boat swamped, bail out water and move to bank.  Any damaged or suspect

		<p>Leave oars on the ground, not against the wall,</p> <p>Don't leave boats unattended on trestles in strong winds.</p>	<p>equipment to be labelled with swing-tags provided and/or withdrawn from service. Boat manager to be contacted.</p>
Poor visibility / light conditions	Collision and capsize risk	<p>Coach to check visibility before starting a session.</p> <p>Wear High Viz clothing, especially sculls and Bowsteer.</p> <p>Lights to be attached to boat in poor light conditions and early and late outings.</p> <p>No rowing at night.</p>	<p>Carry phone to contact club</p> <p>Collision: assess for damage, try to return to boat house, if not possible, land nearby.</p> <p>Any damaged or suspect equipment to be labelled with swing-tags provided and/or withdrawn from service. Boat manager to be contacted.</p>
Fog	Collision and capsize risk	<p>Assess developing fog throughout outing.</p> <p>Wear High Viz clothing, especially sculls and Bowsteer.</p> <p>Follow rules of the river and local navigation plan.</p> <p>Teach scullers, bow steers and coxes to lookout and listen for other boats and warn them.</p> <p>If FOG: if both lifebelts (in the Gut and below Donnington Bridge) not visible from hard, <b>Black flag applies. No rowing.</b></p>	<p>Lights to be attached to boat in poor light conditions to aid location of the boat.</p> <p>Contact club using phone if unable to return due to developing fog.</p> <p>For Collision and capsize see above</p>
Lightning	Lightning strike causing burns, electrocution or cardiac arrest	<p>Avoid rowing if lightning present or forecast.</p> <p><b>If lightning occurs: Black flag rules apply.</b> If already on the water, leave the water immediately and seek shelter in a suitable building (not necessarily your home boathouse), if available.</p> <p>Do not return to the water until at least 30mins has passed without thunder or lightning flashes.</p>	<p>If struck by lightning, follow club emergency action plan.</p> <p>Administer CPR / Defibrillator</p>
<b>Hazards associated with other water users</b>			
All water users	Collision	<p>Circulation pattern agreed with all water users: row on the right hand side of the river (in the direction of travel). See club navigation plan with circulation pattern.</p> <p>Cox Bow steer scullers to Alert other users to presence of the boat eg 'look ahead double'.</p>	Collision see above

		Coxes, bowsteers and single sculeers to be assessed by senior club coaches / officials before undertaking unsupervised outings.	
Novice rowing crews	Collision with inexperienced crews	<p>Awareness - especially in the Michaelmas Term - of large boats in the wrong place and without control as novice crews and coxes try to learn the basics.</p> <p>Restrict times? College novice crews are not allowed through the Gut until mid term and so, till then, this hazard will be evident upstream but not apparent at the club</p> <p>Coxes, scullers and bowsteers to warn crews they see approaching them.</p>	Collision see above.
Kayakers	Collision	<p>Coach to ensure crews keep to the correct side of the river and remain alert for kayakers. Both parties need to be turning around to be aware of potential dangers.</p> <p>Ensure rowers recognise that kayakers have less need to watch behind them whereas rowers depend on it.</p> <p>Be aware that kayakers are more manoeuvrable and they may use the "wrong" side of the river at times.</p>	Collision see above
Other waterborne craft (mobile and fixed) and river users, including effect of wash	Collision Swamping	<p>Participants warned about the dangers from other users of the river who may not observe correct navigation procedures or are unable to control their craft adequately.</p> <p>Coach to ensure participants know how to navigate the local waterways and how to deal with non-conformances from others.</p> <p>Crews to be aware of fixed craft moored along river and avoid collision of blades or boats with these.</p> <p>See navigation plan for correct flow of river traffic.</p> <p>Correct training in rowers' development - especially coxes and bowsteers.</p> <p>Vigilance by supervising coach throughout the session</p> <p>Coach crews how to handle wash, use bailer to prevent water accumulation</p>	Collision and capsize see above. Swamping see above
Anglers	Entanglement with line / hooks	<p>Participants warned to steer away from anglers' lines when possible.</p> <p>Show respect and gratitude whenever a</p>	<p>Cut fishing lines</p> <p>First aid treatment.</p>

		fisherman takes avoiding action to allow free passage.	
Other Events taking place on the Water	Impact on rowing outing	Coach to ascertain and explain where it is possible to row when there is an event taking place locally.  Coach to be aware of planned events and plan session accordingly. Rowers to respond and respect advice or instruction from event management and representatives	
Punters	Collision	Coach to ensure participants know how to anticipate and thereby avoid getting too close to punts etc.  Consider bank holidays, good weather with higher expectation for tourist and college users of punts	Collision see above
Members of the public throwing items /using gel guns at rowers	Injury	Coach to remain vigilant around bridges, or where groups of youths are gathered  Consider using mobile device to record any inappropriate behaviour.	First aid as required.  Any damaged or suspect equipment to be labelled with swing-tags provided and/or withdrawn from service. Boat manager to be contacted.
Houseboat residents becoming aggressive	Psychological impact.  Injury	Coach /cox / crew to apologise if oars / boats contact /damage houseboats, causing residents to become upset.  Consider using mobile device to record any inappropriate behaviour.	Call 999 if aggressive behaviour becomes physically threatening.

**Hazards associated with the local environment  
(Thames /Isis - Godstow to Abingdon and river Cherwell)**

Overhanging trees,	Danger of blades being entangled on submerged roots and branches.  Danger of injury to cox and crew.	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers associated with overhanging trees and the danger of trees falling into the river.  Periodic inspection of the river especially after floods or strong winds.  Cox to warn crew if obstruction seen ahead	Capsize and collision as above  Any damaged or suspect equipment to be labelled with swing-tags provided and/or withdrawn from service. Boat manager to be contacted.  First aid as required.
Bridges - all bridges are hazards especially those with narrow arches	Risk of collision with bridge arches	Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers of water near and under local bridges below and traffic priority ("Give way to craft coming downstream")  -Folly Bridge -The railway bridge at Kennington -Magdalene bridge	Capsize and collision as above  Any damaged or suspect equipment to be labelled with swing-tags provided and/or withdrawn from service. Boat manager to be contacted.

		<p>Follow local navigation plan</p> <p>Ensure crews are aware how to pass narrow bridges by partially shipping oars safely, drawing handle back past the body, spoon remaining on the water for stability</p> <p>Know how to deal with turbulent water, priority passage through a bridge (powered craft vs. man-powered; upstream vs. downstream etc)</p>	
Weirs - all weirs are hazards	<p>Risk of going over weir.</p> <p>Risk of collision with weir posts</p>	<p>Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers associated with local weirs</p> <p>Make navigation plan available to all.</p> <p>Participants warned to keep away from weirs and locks if not intended to pass through the lock. In particular spinning at Iffley lock should be just beyond or at Isis Farmhouse. In fast flow conditions, should be at Haystacks.</p> <p>Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers associated with local weirs (see page 2 above)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At longbridges</li> <li>● associated with Iffley Lock</li> <li>● associated with Sandford Lock</li> <li>● associated with Osney Lock</li> <li>● associated with Godstow lock</li> <li>● associated with Abingdon lock</li> <li>● University Parks with rollers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Along Mesopotamia</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>No Lock transit in EA Red Boards.</u></p>	<p>Capsize and collision as above</p> <p>Any damaged or suspect equipment to be labelled with swing-tags provided and/or withdrawn from service. Boat manager to be contacted.</p>
Locks - all locks present hazards in use.	Risk of collision and capsize	<p>Ensure that participants are aware of the dangers associated with local locks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Iffley Lock</li> <li>● Sandford Lock</li> <li>● Osney Lock</li> <li>● Godstow lock</li> <li>● Abingdon lock</li> </ul> <p>Learn the mechanisms of lock usage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how to manage and use locks (parking up, entering and exiting lock etc)</li> <li>- how to order the fill / empty cycle by use of the sluices and gates</li> <li>-how to safely hold /ship oars in locks, avoid oars / boat getting caught on steps or chains.</li> </ul> <p>Learn how to stop at the high pontoons adjacent to locks, pulling blade handle back and blade forward whilst leaning</p>	<p>Seek help from the lock keeper in passing through the lock.</p> <p>Collision and capsize see above.</p>

		<p>out on the pontoon side. Use ropes and boat hooks to hold onto pontoon.</p> <p>Learn about the drift towards a weir, how to take wind and stream into account - sometimes beneficially to hold position near a lock</p>	
<b>Hazards in and around the boathouse and going afloat and landing</b>			
Lifting and carrying boats	Musculo-skeletal strain	Athletes to be suitably informed about correct techniques, including crews carrying boats with even numbers on each side unless placing boat onto or lifting from the water.	<p>First aid</p> <p>Seek Medical treatment if severe</p>
Risk to others (other club members, the public etc) being struck by moving equipment	Injury	Coach to caution participants about running in boathouse, taking care when moving boats and blades, not leaving equipment in the way of others	<p>First aid</p> <p>Seek Medical treatment if severe</p>
Impact on obstacles in boathouse, high racks	Injury	<p>Advise all boathouse users of the extent of riggers sticking out at head height and at foot level, keep the boathouse tidy, be cautious about the change in light levels when entering the boathouse etc</p> <p>Maintain lighting systems (fluorescent tubes etc), remind users about hazards and any changes to the organisation of equipment etc</p> <p>High level small boats to be accessed in the boat house with care. Use either the yellow plastic steps, or the red step ladders in bay 1 with rollers, placed on a firm concrete surface only.</p>	<p>First aid</p> <p>Seek Medical treatment if severe</p>
Unstable boat on going afloat / landing	capsize	<p>Participants to be briefed on the correct method of getting into and out of boat.</p> <p>Coach to brief all participants on the procedure, in the event of capsize. Use of boat as a buoyancy aid.</p>	Capsize see above.
Boats / Oars falling from racks	<p>Injury</p> <p>Damage to equipment</p>	Ensure that boats and oars are correctly stored and fixed	<p>First aid</p> <p>Any damaged or suspect equipment to be labelled with swing-tags provided and/or withdrawn from service. Boat manager to be contacted.</p>
<b>Hazards with incorrectly set and poorly maintained equipment and incorrect clothing</b>			
Equipment failure / maintenance	<p>Injury</p> <p>Capsize, risk that feet may be caught in shoes if heel restraints don't release.</p>	<p>Coach to explain to participants how to check boat hulls, rudders, riggers, bow balls, stretchers, shoes, heel restraints, hatch covers, etc before the outing. See checklist on website and poster in club.</p> <p><a href="https://falconboatclub.org.uk/river-">https://falconboatclub.org.uk/river-</a></p>	<p>Any damaged or suspect equipment to be labelled with swing-tags provided and/or withdrawn from service. Boat manager to be contacted.</p> <p>First aid</p>



		<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv294Uhb0s">conditions</a> BR boat safety checks. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv294Uhb0s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv294Uhb0s</a> Ensure gates, fixing screws and nuts on stretchers are checked for tightness periodically during outings. Cox to remind crews.	Capsize see above.
Clothing / hair	Capsize	Ensure crews do not wear clothing that could impede recovery in event of capsize - eg Dryrobes denims, jeans.  Ensure crews do not wear Hoodies when rowing or sculling as thumbs can catch in pocket. Hoodies can be turned inside out if no other option.  Long hair should be tied up in a bun to avoid getting trapped in equipment particularly in a capsize.	See capsize
<b>Hazards associated with health conditions / fitness</b>			
Rowers with low fitness levels	Collapse or illness	Coaches to understand fitness levels and capabilities and work within them. Members to improve fitness levels.	First aid  Seek medical attention if severe
Minor cuts, splinters,	Risk of bleeding or infection	Participants to be aware that there are first aid kit available if needed  Ensure that cuts are covered with plaster or dressing when rowing	Coach to ensure that first aid kit is available (in boathouse or in coach's boat) and adequately stocked.  Regular inspections /replenish of first aid kit to be recorded.  List of all first aiders to be visible on club notice boards.
Crew member or sculler with Infections diseases (eg respiratory infections, gastroenteritis)	Spread of infection	Members should not attend training or competition if they have an infectious illness.  Members should not return to training until fully recovered.  Practices good hygiene (hand wash, wash equipment) after all outings.	Seek medical advice if members become severely unwell with infectious diseases following outings.
Crew member or sculler with epilepsy	Seizure during a rowing outing, risk of injury	Members with epilepsy should make coach aware.  Members with epilepsy should not be allowed on the water within 1 year of a seizure or 6 months of reducing or stopping anticonvulsants (as per DVLA driving guidelines) Awake seizures where consciousness and function is not affected may be permitted to row or cox following medical review.	In the event of a seizure occurring on the water, recover to the bank, follow emergency action plan.
Crew member or sculler with asthma	Asthma attack whilst on the water risk of collapse	Members with asthma should always take prescribed inhaler before exercise. Carry inhaler in the boat in a drybag. Minimise exercise with upper respiratory	In the event of an asthma attack, inhaler to be used, and member to be taken to boathouse. See emergency action plan for

		tract infection.	severe cases.
Crew member or sculler with diabetes	Hypo or hyper glycaemia during outing. Risk of collapse	Members with diabetes to ensure that they have eaten and taken appropriate medication before outing.  Take high glucose content food / drink on outing to treat hypo if needed.	Medical advice to be sought
Crew member with cardiac conditions	Heart attack whilst rowing	Members with significant cardiac conditions should only row following medical advice.	Call 999 urgently In the event of attack or cardiac arrest. If no respiratory effort, start CPR and Use defibrillator. See emergency action plan.
Physically disabled rowers	Injury  Fall into water  Capsize	Disabled rowers to discuss risk with coach. Lower limb prosthesis only to be worn if can be released from shoe quickly. Lower limb amputee to use of walking aid to get into and out of boat. Seek assistance from others in carrying boats.	First aid in the event of injury.  Capsize see above
Visually impaired rowers	Injury  Fall into water  Capsize	A specific risk assessment for visually impaired rowers governing all aspects on and off the water should be drawn up by the responsible coach in conjunction with the water safety advisor.	First aid in the event of injury.  Capsize see above

### **Hazards associated with use of indoor rowing machines in the club house**

Use of poor technique when rowing	Musculoskeletal injury	Guidelines placed by machines on use and technique. Coaches to train on use of machine	Administer first aid Refer to physiotherapist if appropriate.
Crowding between and around machines	Falls	Ensure machines are well spaced and people don't gather round.	First aid
Unclean machines	Infection risk	Towels to be used beneath machines to catch sweat. Wipe clean machines and handles after use	Recognise and treat infection as appropriate.
Clothing catching on seat/rollers and track	Rowing being pulled off machine	Long tops to be tucked in	First aid
Inadequate nutrition or hydration before exercise	Rower dehydrated or hypoglycaemic	Ensure rowers have adequate water, nutrition before and during use	Water, first aid, high glucose food.
Rower with long hair leaning over machine to hold feet in position.	Hair catching in machine	Tie hair back	Cut hair free
Equipment breakage	Injury due to equipment breakage	All equipment issues/failure to be identified in an equipment log, and taken out of service before repair.  Ensure all machines are serviced regularly, usually every 3 months  Ensure the handle is not left in the cradle thus stretching the cord.	Administer first aid.
Medical issues	Epilepsy, diabetes asthma symptoms develop	See above in medical issues section	First aid, or ambulance support as required.

<b>Other hazards</b>			
Inappropriate instruction	Risk of injury, or capsize.	<p>Coaches (paid or volunteer) to register as coaches with British Rowing (BR)</p> <p>Coaching qualifications should be appropriate for the prevailing conditions <i>(including valid first aid training for all coaches)</i></p> <p>Assistant coaches to be designated by senior coaches following appropriate instruction</p> <p>Coaches MUST follow the guidelines for training coxes, bow steers and single scullers in the activity and safety handbook.</p>	<p>Coaches qualifications to be kept on file using the club wide coaches qualification spreadsheet.</p> <p>Capsize and first aid see above.</p> <p>All coaches to undergo 3 yearly first aid training as per BR guidelines</p>
Safeguarding risk	Risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults	<p>The club follows the BR safeguarding policy.</p> <p>A suitable adult presence must be in place for all junior sessions</p> <p>There should always be at least 2 adults <u>available</u>, including at least 1 with DBS check</p>	Multi-agency safeguarding Hub to be informed of any safeguarding issues that arise (near miss, or incidents).
Use of Club Launch	<p>Risk of collision, injury or capsize</p> <p>Risk of petrol leakage/damage /fire.</p>	<p>The club launch (CoX 902) may only be driven by persons with RYA Level 2 certificate. A guide to using the launch <a href="https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615#Do-we-have-a-launch">https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615#Do-we-have-a-launch</a></p> <p>Life jackets must be worn by driver and passengers. Launch bag must be taken on all journeys.</p> <p>Petrol to be provided by launch driver and not stored on club premises.</p>	<p>Launch driver qualifications to be kept on file</p> <p>Capsize and first aid see above.</p>
Use of club trailer	<p>Risk of trailer breaking</p> <p>Risk that trailer is towed by incorrect vehicle / driver</p> <p>Risk of collision of trailer with other vehicles or fixed objects.</p>	<p>Trailer serviced every 2 years by Keith Long. Recorded on Rowing FAQ on website. It should always be visually inspected by members before use for obvious signs of mechanical problems</p> <p>Trailer weight unloaded is 600kg, rated for a loaded weight of 1200kg. Drivers should ensure vehicle V5C confirms it can tow trailer, and that their license and insurance is suitable.</p> <p>Drivers towing the trailer should seek training via the captain. They should pay attention to surroundings when manoeuvring. An additional person should always assist.</p>	

	<p>Risk shoes/hatch covers coming loose</p> <p>Risk of boats or shoes/hatch covers coming loose from trailer during journey</p>	<p>All screws, nuts fixings, hatch covers should be checked for tightness, seats should be fixed with small bungees.</p> <p>Boats should be placed as per plan on the Regatta Training Schedule.  <a href="https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615#Rowing-Trailer">https://falconboatclub.org.uk/node/615#Rowing-Trailer</a></p> <p>A minimum of 2 tie positions for each boat, 3 for larger boats. Double ties should be used at each position. One over the boat attaching to the cross piece, a second one between trailer upright, under the boat and looping over the first tie to secure it.</p>	<p>Driver should stop immediately if boats come loose and rectify.</p>
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