



SAFETY MANUAL

This manual has been developed by the Safety Committee of Cape Cod Rowing and approved by the Board of Directors. Safety is everyone's responsibility. All participants in Cape Cod Rowing are expected to know the contents of this manual and to understand the guidelines for safe rowing. The sport of rowing encompasses specific risks. This manual is intended to make the sport as safe as it can be for our members, coaches, coxswains and visitors.

General Safety Overview

- **Use the buddy system.** Cape Cod Rowing strongly recommends rowing with another person. It is best to have a minimum of TWO people out at once to look out for one another.
- **Stay with the boat.** If you flip, do not swim for shore. Stay with the boat and either try to get back in or push it to shallow water or call for help.
- **Watch out for others.** Look out for swimmers, other boats, fishermen.
- **Follow the traffic pattern.** This helps others anticipate where you will be. Remember, directly ahead of you is your biggest blind spot.
- **Stay visible.** You are low to the water in a very thin boat – lights, high visibility shirts and hats are the best way to be sure others see you.

Safety Protocols Detail

All members must attest that they can swim a distance of 100 continuous yards and can tread water for 10 minutes.

We require all members to view [USRowing's safety video](#).

We recommend that all singles scullers wear a PFD or have one attached to their person while rowing. Here are links to some PFDs appropriate for use while rowing:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07HPWN2S4/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1

<https://www.westmarine.com/buy/west-marine--ultra-slim-manual-inflatable-life-jacket-belt-pack-black--17037524?recordNum=2>

Recommended Clothing

- Wear high visibility or brightly colored clothing. Rowers have a very low profile on the lake and are easily missed by boaters.
- Closely-fitted clothing is advised to avoid having clothing caught in the seat track or becoming entangled with your oar handles. Spandex shorts/leggings are a rower's friend!
- Wool and polypropylene perform best in cold weather.
- Dress in layers. Better to have too much clothing that you can remove as you get warmed up.

Equipment Check Procedure

Prior to launching, check:

- That nuts on the rigging are tight, position of foot stretchers and the smoothness of slide are acceptable.
- That the forward end of the slide is blunt and will not gouge calves.
- That the heel ties on your shoes are tied, the correct length and in good condition (or if using mules or quick release shoes, make sure that they are in proper working order).
- That your clothing cannot become tangled in your seat or oar handle.
- That you have proper safety devices on board the shell, such as a PFD (strongly encouraged for single rowers), cell phone in watertight container, whistle, water.
- Check bow ball to make sure that it is securely fastened.

Rowing Terms & Commands

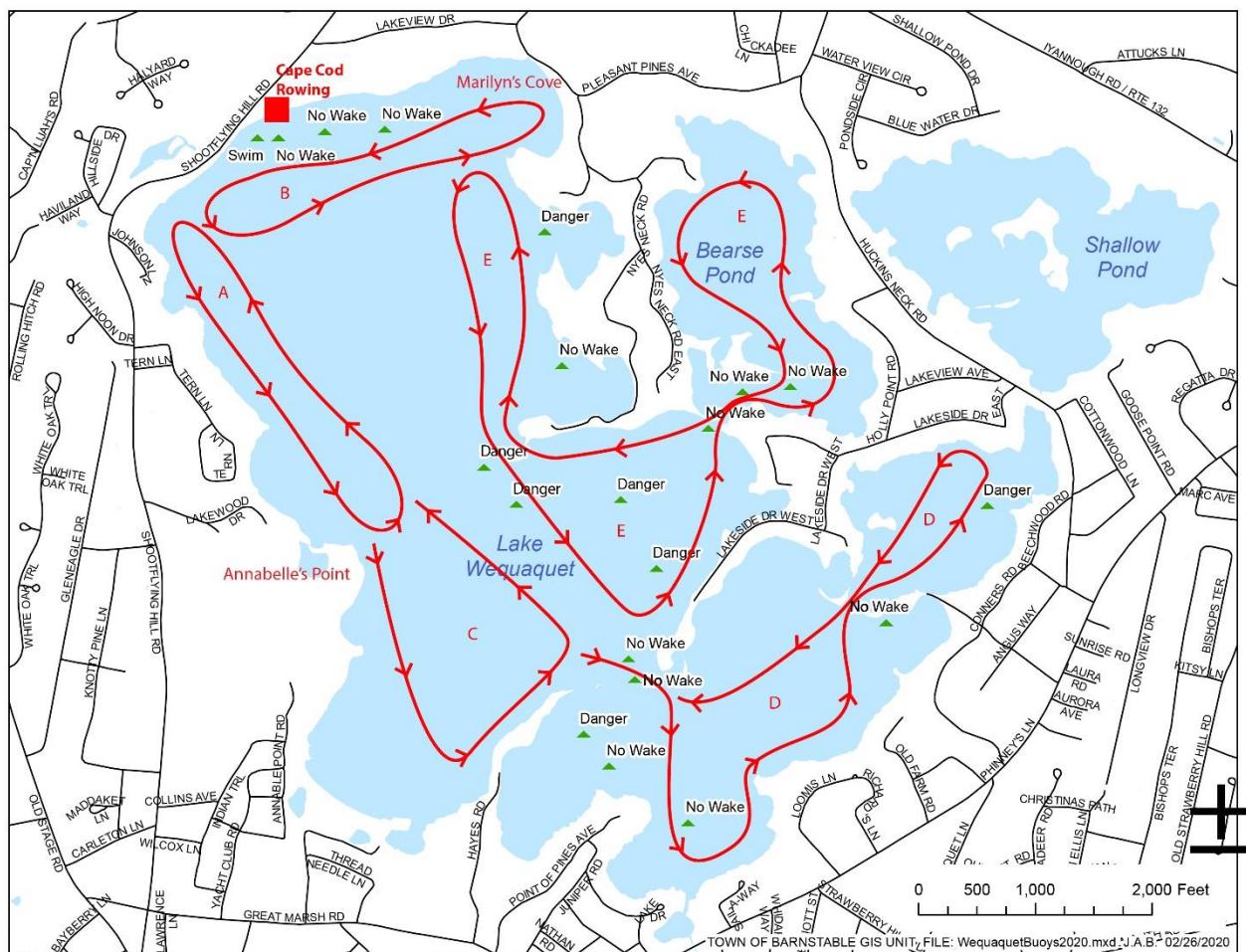
Before ever getting into a shell on the water, a rower must understand the following terminology:

- Bow, Stern, Port, and Starboard
- Weigh Enough, Ready to Row?, Back, Tie-in, Un-tie, and Stop.
- The number of your seat, stroke, bow person, seat numbers in between and what number/seat s/he is that day.
- The term stop should be used only when talking to a specific crew in a race.
- When a coxswain or coach wants a crew to stop immediately, the proper term is "Weigh enough! Hold water!"
- Should someone give the command "Weigh enough! Hold water," rowers must respond immediately, square the blades in the water and bring the boat to a halt.

Logging In and Out

All CCR members and visitors rowing in singles and doubles are required to sign in and sign out when they enter and leave the water in the CCR Logbook. The logbook is located in the shed, just to the right of the door. Because we cannot always monitor the logbook, we also utilize an electronic logbook, which will provide a record of rowers' departure and return in real time. The Virtual Logbook can be accessed through the CCR website. If you are the last rower to return to the beach, check the log to make sure all rowers have logged out and that the boats used have been returned to the racks. If a rower or boat is unaccounted for, and you cannot determine the whereabouts of the rower, call 911 if warranted.

Traffic Patterns (map is oriented to the north)



This diagram offers a general recommendation of preferred traffic patterns for rowers on Lake Wequasset. Note that weather conditions, especially wind velocity and direction, will impact these patterns. We most commonly row in a north-south pattern along the western side of the lake. If the wind is out of the north, we shift to an east-west pattern along the northern side of the lake. Keep these important safety measures in mind when out on the lake:

- Turn around and look where you are going at least every ten strokes. This includes looking to your left and right for cross traffic. Be aware that the area that is hardest to see is what is directly in front of your boat.
- When rowing, know where you are and where other boats (including pleasure and fishing boats) and obstacles are at all times. Make note of how many other scullers and/or swimmers are out or headed out on the lake. Keep clear by steering away early.
- Row with another boat; it is strongly recommended that all rowers use the buddy system while rowing in singles. Stay close to shore.
- If rowing with others, do not row more than two boats abreast.

Swimmer Precautions

We share Lake Wequaquet not just with other boaters, but also with swimmers. Like rowers, swimmers have a low profile on the water and can be difficult for rowers to spot. It is essential that you are aware of the presence, or possible presence, of swimmers in the water.

- ***Swimmers always have the right of way.***
- Wear a HIGH VIS shirt and/or hat so other rowers and swimmers can see you. There are neon yellow mesh vests in the shed for everyone's use if you forget to wear a brightly colored shirt.
- Turn around and look where you are going at least every ten strokes. This includes looking to your left and right for cross traffic. Be aware that the area that is hardest to see is what is directly in front of your boat.
- If wind conditions allow, it is best to row either back and forth along the east or west shores of the lake, which are areas not used by swimmers.
- Rowing in foggy conditions is STRONGLY DISCOURAGED. What seems safe enough at the beach may quickly degenerate to pea soup conditions farther out on the lake.

Weather Precautions & First Aid Guidelines

Failure to follow these weather-related guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

Check for predicted wind and temperatures at the lake: <https://www.myweather2.com/Fishing/United-States-Of-America/Massachusetts/Wequaquet-Lake-Barnstable.aspx>

WIND:

It is recommended that extreme caution is used rowing in high winds. We generally do not go out in winds over 12 mph in team (sweep) boats. This limit should be lower for scullers. If sudden winds come up, return to

the beach if the trip is safe, or take the boat to the nearest shore and wait for the winds to calm. Try to minimize equipment damage but remember that you are more valuable than the boat.

FOG:

Do not row in fog unless your visibility to shore is as least 100 yards. Be sure to have land reference points. If fog sets in while you are on the water, move slowly, and be prepared to stop quickly. Use a sound making device (cox box, horn, or whistle) to advise other boats of your location as you take your boat to shore, following the shore back to the boathouse.

LIGHTNING:

Do not row in an electrical storm. Lightning detectors are inexpensive and can clip on your belt. A good conservative rule to follow is to wait 30 minutes after hearing the last sounds of thunder, or 60 minutes after seeing the last flash of lightning, to launch. If you are on the water and see lightning, hear thunder, or notice your hair standing on end with static electricity, head for the nearest shore. If the storm is upon you, take your boat ashore and wait for the storm to pass.

NOTE: If you are about to launch and hear thunder or see lightning, or quickly darkening skies, do not launch.

WAKES AND WAVES:

Pay attention to rough water. Waves are generated by winds, tides, currents, or wakes from passing boats. Because shells are vulnerable to high waves, specific care is needed with approaching wakes.

- If approaching wake is higher than the gunwale, the shell should be turned parallel to the wake to avoid having part of the shell unsupported by the water. It is possible to split a shell under these conditions. Rowers should stop rowing and lean away from the approaching wake, with oars on the wake side lifted slightly.
- If the wakes are lower than the gunwale and widely spaced, continue to row without a course adjustment. Deep and closely spaced wakes that are lower than the gunwale may be taken at a 90 degree angle with the bow directly toward them.
- Turning in waves can be tricky; allow plenty of room, energy and time.
- For more information see the [USRowing Safety Video](#).

LIGHTS AND DARKNESS:

Know the times for sunrise and sunset. The greatest and most frequent danger while rowing is a collision caused by limited vision or carelessness. Great care should be taken when rowing in darkness or near-darkness.

Please note that rowing in a single, pair or double is strongly discouraged in dark conditions.

- Take extra care to look and listen. Minimize conversation.
- Be careful not to get too close to shore or known hazards.
- Only row in familiar waters while rowing at dusk, dawn, or in the dark.
- A 360°/all-around white light on the stern of each rowing shell when rowing between sundown and sunup. It should be visible enough to warn approaching vessels.

- The bow of every boat should have a red light on port side and green light on starboard side.
- All lights should meet Coast Guard minimum standards with no less than one nautical mile of visibility for bow lights and stern lights.
- Carry a sound making device.

HEAT AND COLD:

The 4-Oar Rule: Whenever the combined air + water temperature is below 100 degrees F (e.g. water 40 degrees and air temp 59 degrees), rowers using club equipment must adhere to the 4-oar rule. Only boats with a minimum of 4 oars combined may be on the water. In other words, a double (4 oars), a four, a quad or an eight but not singles or pairs.

In hot weather:

Hyperthermia occurs when there is an increase in body temperature, usually when the air temperature is above 76 degrees, and the victim is exposed to sun and heat in combination with a decrease in fluids. It may occur when sweat cannot easily evaporate; the body is being heated by the environment; or water loss from sweat and respiration is not replaced, and dehydration occurs. Two serious conditions may result:

- Heat exhaustion: signs are throbbing headache, nausea, cool skin, chills, sweaty, and pale pulse. Action: drink water, shade from sun, and treat for shock.
- Heat stroke is life threatening; signs are behavior changes, unconsciousness, hot but not sweaty, flushed warm skin and rapid pulse. Action: douse with cool water, shade from sun, fan, ensure the airway is open, get medical assistance as soon as possible.

To avoid these problems in hot and humid weather:

- Maintain a high fluid level. Drink water before leaving the beach and frequently while on the water. Take an individual water bottle for easy access.
- Avoid sunburn by using sunscreen and wear a hat or visor to keep the sun off the face and out of the eyes.
- Wear light clothing.
- Remain in the shade when off the water.
- Plan activity level consistent with the degree of heat and humidity.

In cold weather:

Hypothermia occurs when a victim is subject to cold temperatures, cold water, ice or snow. There is potential danger for hypothermia when the water temperature is below 70 degrees and very dangerous when the water temperature is below 50 degrees.

Hypothermia can occur without the victim being in the water, rowing in extremely cold weather can cause symptoms. Symptoms include feeling cold, turn bluish and shivering, and followed by numbness, apathy, lethargy, disorientation and loss of mental capacity.

NOTE: Make sure the coxswain is warm but safe. They are not moving. Many layers are not safe, if the boat flips, they can drown. Mustang Survival suits are a better warming option.

What to do if cold and shivering:

- Get out of the water quickly, even on top of the capsized boat. Heat loss is 25 times greater when in the water.
- If unable to get out of the water, huddle with others. Keeping as much of the body out of the water as possible.
- Move to shelter quickly, remove wet clothing and re-warm body. In mild hypothermia conditions, re-warm in a shower, tub or with warm blankets.
- Do not give any liquids to drink, treat for shock.
- Continue to re-warm and always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.

What to do if shivering has stopped:

- Call or assign someone to call for EMS.
- Treat as above but DO NOT RE-WARM EXTREMITIES!

If victim is no longer shivering, the torso must be re-warmed to avoid circulation of cold blood to the heart. This can kill. Wrap the victim in a warm blanket and apply heat to the underarms and groin area; wrap again in a separate blanket. Wrap each arm and leg separately to prevent rapid re-circulation of blood to the heart. Hot packs should not be placed directly on the victim, a thin layer should be used to protect the victim from burning. If possible, place the victim in a sleeping bag with a warm person.

- Administer artificial respiration and CPR if necessary. Always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.

In a situation of cold-water immersion, be aware that in very cold water people have survived as long as one hour underwater. Recover a victim immediately and even though there may be no sign of life, administer CPR efforts until medical assistance is obtained.

For more information and demonstrations of hot and cold weather care see the [USRrowing Safety Video](#).

Emergency Protocols

The sport of rowing carries the risk of capsizing, or “flipping.” We strongly urge all members to practice re-entering their boats from the water under calm conditions and close to shore. If you practice this drill even just once or twice, it could help you to remain calm and prepared in the event of an unplanned flip. Here is a 2 minute video showing how to do it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhtv53MOrqA> Rowers should not leave his/her shell unless being rescued. If a swamped boat is within a swim-able distance from the shore, the rower should swim the boat to the shore. You can pull yourself up onto the stern deck of the boat and use it like a surfboard and kick/paddle towards shore. The boat is your life raft – even if it is full of water, it will float. Do not leave your boat even if you consider yourself a strong swimmer.

We recommend that all single scullers without supervision wear or carry a PFD in the boat.

- Your buddy's boat or the launch can help stabilize you for the re-entry in the event you capsize.
- A buddy can call for emergency assistance if needed.
- If you cannot re-enter the boat, swim the boat to shore, lying on the stern, using the shell as a paddleboard.
- Or, you can abandon your shell and lie on the stern deck of your buddy's boat to be taken to shore. The loss of muscle control can occur very quickly and dramatically in cold water. The stern deck rescue may be your only option.

For rowers in team (sweep) boats:

- If in distress wave your arms or a shirt above your head or raise one oar in the air, a whistle, bullhorn or other means of making noise can help attract rapid assistance.
- In the event of a man overboard, the immediate command should be "Weigh enough! Hold water!" If the safety launch can get to the victim first, allow the launch to rescue the victim. If the launch is not in the immediate vicinity, back the shell to the victim and have him/her hang onto the shell until the launch arrives. Another rower may have to enter the water to assist if the victim is injured.
- If a rower is injured, the immediate command should be "Weigh enough! Hold water!" Signal launch if first aid is needed.
- If the shell is damaged but afloat and not taking on water, immediate command is "Weigh enough! Hold water!" Make adjustments or signal launch for assistance.

If your shell swamps the immediate command should be "Weigh enough! Hold water!". A shell is swamped when the interior water reaches the gunwales. If your shell has sealed compartments under each rower's bench, it will stay afloat and the rowers should stay in the shell. If the rowers are in a boat without sealed compartments (older boats), the flotation ends may cause the boat to break apart. In that case the rowers should follow the procedures listed below.

- Coxswain directs rowers to untie, and by seat number rowers should carefully slip overboard.
- If the boat is taking on excessive water, signal the launch and unload rowers by pairs; starting in the middle of the boat; as soon as possible in order to avoid damage to the boat. Pairs should form buddies and keep watch of each other. The cox should buddy with the stern pair.
- If rescue is not imminent, take the following steps: Remove oars and place them parallel to the shell. All persons should move to the two ends of the shell. It is dangerous to roll a shell when near riggers. Then roll the boat so the hull is up, to form a more stable flotation platform so rowers can either lie on top of the hull or buddies can hold onto each other across the hull. Remember that body heat loss occurs 25 times faster in the water. Do not roll the boat if rescue is on the way.
- A launch can shuttle rowers to the nearest shore. Be careful not to overload the launch.
- When the boat has been brought to the shore, remove the oars. If the ends of the shell have filled with water, they must be drained before the boat can be removed from the water. Lift the shell carefully to

avoid injury or damage. A boat full of water is very heavy, so try bailing first, then roll the boat slowly and lift it from the water.

- If the shell breaks apart and begins sinking, the immediate command should be "Untie!" Get out of the boat and follow the same procedures as for a swamped shell. Do not leave the floating boat. Swim boat to shore if launch is not immediate.
- If the shell is capsized the immediate command should be "Untie!" This rarely happens except in small boats. Be sure that all rowers and cox are accounted for. Stay with the boat until assistance arrives.

If another boat is in distress near your craft, maneuver your shell to the distressed shell. Assist in any way that does not jeopardize the lives in your shell.

Coxing Safety

The Coxswain is in charge and the primary function of the cox is safety. First, safety of rowers and people, then safety of equipment. The Cox must use an authoritative voice so the rowers can hear commands and follow them. This starts with boat handling on the shore. Be sure you have the attention of all your rowers and they are listening to your commands to ensure no one gets hurt while taking the boat off the racks and placing it into the water. This includes bystanders on the shore. Use of an authoritative voice also helps prevent damage to equipment.

- All coxswains should take a whistle from the shack and must carry a cell phone. Waterproof bags are in the shed.
- Coxswains are particularly vulnerable in cold weather and should have proper clothing including outerwear that will shed water.
- Make sure that you are aware of the local traffic patterns and rules on the water.
- Be aware of powerboats and anticipate their wakes. It is generally best to be perpendicular to a wake, unless it is higher than the gunwales. It is prudent to stop rowing and have blades flat on the water for stability if a significant wake is coming at your boat – particularly if you are parallel to the wake. Tell your rowers what you are doing and why.
- Take precautions around other types of vessels to avoid collisions and be courteous. Treat other boaters with respect - they may be the ones to come to your rescue if needed.
- Familiarize yourself with shallow water, stumps, rocks, seasonal problems and landmarks.
- The coxswain should make frequent checks on both sides of the boat. Listen for oncoming traffic.
- In stern coxed boats, use your bow rower to help see in front of you. Occasionally ask "Bow are we clear ahead?" In addition to clearing traffic or obstructions that you can't see, this reminds the bow rower that they are part of the safety team.

In an emergency, such as flipping the boat or a rower in medical distress, you can use your whistle to get the attention of nearby motorboats or use your cell phone to call 911. Tell the operator that you have a rower in medical distress (e.g. heart attack) or are overturned on Lake Wequaquet with the number of rowers (including you). Tell the operator where on the lake you are and if there are any injuries to anyone. **Tell everyone to stay with the boat.** In colder temperatures, rowers should try to pull as much of themselves out of the cold water as possible while waiting for assistance. Do not let anyone "swim for it" unless there is no other chance of rescue.

The Launch Driver

Note: Coxswains and coaches must carry a cell phone with them in the event of emergency. Save local emergency numbers in your phone for direct communication.

Coaches and anyone driving a CCR launch:

- Must be trained in the proper use and operation of the powerboat.
- Know and obey all local, state, and federal regulations concerning boating and safety requirements.
- Adhere to the traffic pattern map for the lake.
- Instruct rowers and coxswains on the traffic patterns and lake conditions.

Proper supervision protocols must be developed and carried out to ensure the safety of the rowers. Newly hired coaches will be trained in CCR's supervision and safety protocols.

Coaches and coxswains must ensure that rowers in multi-person shells stay quiet and attentive to the coxswain or coach.

Athletes who are minors must never be left unsupervised without a safety launch on the water.

The Launch

Crews should stay within hailing distance of their safety launch. The launch is outfitted to assist rowers and/or their shell if needed.

Most frequently, basic tools and the coach's expertise are sufficient for small equipment adjustments or repairs on the water. The recommended tool kit for the launch includes wrenches, nuts, tapes, washers, and other materials needed to make small repairs. Only minor repairs should be done on the water.

If more serious needs arise, the launch is there for rapid response. The launch must be equipped with a sufficient number of [US Coast Guard approved life jackets \(PFDs\)](#) for each rower and coxswain under your care and any passengers on your launch. While states regulate requirements for wearing PFDs in power boats, USRowing strongly recommends that everyone in the launch wear a properly fitted PFD, especially the coach, all year round.

Launch Equipment

In addition to PFDs, the launch must be equipped with the following items:

- Type IV throwable PFD
- Bailer
- Anchor
- Paddle
- First aid kit
- Tool kit
- Navigation lights

- Extra line
- Sound-making devices

Launch Capacity

Never exceed the capacity limits set by the launch manufacturer. This information is posted on the launch. Contact the manufacturer if not posted. Be aware of the capacity limits during an emergency to avoid overloading the launch.

Launch Condition and Inspection Recommendations

- Keep launch lights in working order.
- Keep the engine well serviced so that it will start with one pull.
- Contact Barnstable Harbormaster for a launch inspection at the start of each season.

Emergencies

- Coaches must carry a cell phone in the launch. Save local emergency numbers in your phone for direct communication.
- Know how to have rowers enter the coaching launch from the water. Approach from the leeward side, keeping the outboard propeller away from persons in the water. Turn off the engine as soon as contact is made. Do not exceed the launch's capacity limit. For more information and demonstrations see the [USRowing Safety Video](#).
- Have a procedure in place in the event that a launch runs out of gas.
- Have an incident report form available should a problem arise. The reporting coach should file a report at the earliest opportunity.

Additional Links

Safety Information Links