



**AVON COUNTY ROWING CLUB**  
**SPRING HEAD OF THE RIVER RACE**

**2 March 2019**

Held under the rules of British Rowing

Compliant with British Rowing Policy on Safeguarding and Protecting Children and  
Vulnerable Adults

# **Safety Plan**

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# HEAD OF THE RIVER RACE

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## SAFETY PLAN

(Published – November 2018)

### 1 Safety Adviser and Welfare Officer

- 1.1 The Safety Adviser is a member of the organising committee and is named on the cover sheet of this Safety Plan.
  - Water safety is discussed at each meeting of the organising committee.
  - Water safety is part of the event review.
- 1.2 The Welfare Officer is a member of the organising committee and is named on the cover sheet of this Safety Plan.
  - Welfare and safeguarding is a regular item at meetings of the organising committee.
  - Welfare and safeguarding is part of the event review.
  - A Welfare Statement is published separately from the Safety Plan

### 2 Risk Assessment

- 2.1 A risk assessment has taken place. A copy is included in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 An emergency plan has been drawn up. A copy is included in **Appendix 4**.

### 3 Scope of the Safety Plan

- 3.1 The safety plan covers the decision making process for cancellation due to inclement conditions, rules applying to the event, communications, medical and first aid, the safety of other river and bank users, race umpires, instructions to officials and competitors, emergency vehicle access and an accident and emergency action plan.
- 3.2 It is the intention of the organising committee to provide a safe environment in accordance with British Rowing 'Row Safe' guidelines. However competitors, coaches and clubs are specifically reminded that every person attending the event, including those competing, or officiating, do so entirely at their own risk and are solely responsible for:
  - their own safety;
  - ensuring their boats are safe and are prepared as per the advice and guidance in 'Row Safe' and the BR Rules of Racing. Any boat found failing to meet the standard will be excluded;
  - the strict observance of the circulation pattern and BR Rules of Racing;
  - deciding, together with their coaches, whether or not they are competent and able to compete safely in the prevailing weather and water conditions.
- 3.3 Provision is made for 'Plan B' (See **Appendix 2**)

### 4 Abandonment, Restrictions and Hazards

- 4.1 The decision to abandon the race on the day, or restrict entry to certain classes of crews, will be made by the Chair of the Race Committee with advice from the Safety Adviser. This decision will take into account weather and river conditions on the day of the race.

Conditions that would typically cause racing not to take place would be frozen water, flooding/high water, high stream speeds, severe winds, poor visibility, lightning, and excessive floating debris. All other conditions would usually see some form of racing take place.

- 4.2 Prior to race day, the Chair of the Organising Committee will monitor the forecast for weather and river conditions. If conditions are forecast to be unfavourable, the race may be cancelled prior to race day. This decision will be taken by the Chair of the Organising Committee with advice from the Safety Advisor. If the event is to be abandoned in its entirety, this will be determined as soon before the start of the event as possible to reduce inconvenience to clubs who are travelling to the event.
- 4.3 At the start of the day, an assessment will be made by the Chair of the Race Committee, Chair of the Organising Committee and the Safety Advisor based on the fixed and variable aspects of the event – i.e. age, experience, category, boat type, boat construction with respect to buoyancy, weather, the course, water conditions and any other external factors. If conditions are moderately poor, but safe for certain categories of boats (e.g. larger boats) and/or more experienced crews (including coxes) the race committee may restrict racing to any combination of: boat type; age of crew; experience of crew; and experience of coxswains. All decisions by the race committee will be final, and crews outside these categories will be refused permission to boat for the full period of racing, including before, after and between divisions.
- 4.4 An ongoing assessment will be made during the day by the Chair of the Race Committee, Safety Advisor and the Chair of the Organising Committee. A division of the race may be abandoned at any time (before or after the start of a division), or restrictions applied to racing crews, if conditions deteriorate during the time of boating and all crews completing the course. See Emergency Plan, Appendix 4.
- 4.5 Race officials will monitor weather conditions and forecasts during the race day and before. Weather apps will be used for this purpose. Crews will not be boated if a thunder and lightning storm is imminent. Where this has not been predicted, and in the case of severe storm accompanied by thunder and lightning during racing, suspension and resumption of racing should follow the 30/30 rule: racing/boating should stop when the flash-to-bang count is 30 seconds and should not resume until 30 minutes after the last lightning. Crews and officials will be cleared from the course as quickly as possible, aiming to get everyone to shelter in 15 minutes. PA/loudhailers will instruct all athletes, officials and spectators to move under cover.

Competitors and spectators will be advised on what to do in the event of lightning by the public address system or loudhailers. This will include instructions on how the course will be cleared of crews and officials, to seek 'proper shelter' and when the Race Committee will make decisions on racing. See Emergency Plan, Appendix 4.

- 4.6 Prior to race day, the river will be inspected for any hazards – e.g. trapped logs, overhanging trees etc. As many as possible will be removed. On the race day, the course will be inspected for any new hazards. These will be communicated to crews as they boat for their division via a safety noticeboard that will be set up near the boating area with the course map, monitor positions, specific competitors' instructions and any new hazards prominently displayed.

## **5 Suspension of Racing**

- 5.1 In the event of an incident on the water on the course, racing may be stopped if it is deemed unsafe to continue. If the race has been stopped, it will only be restarted by the Chairman of Race Committee with advice from the Safety Adviser. In the event of an incident on the water, but off the course, the racing may be stopped, or postponed, if necessary.

## **6 Medical Support Arrangements**

- 6.1 First Aid cover will be supplied by 2 qualified first aiders based at the clubhouse.
- 6.2 The Safety Adviser will ensure that adequate medical services, in the event of injury or illness, are provided during the period of racing. The Safety Adviser will be in charge of handling any medical incidents that may occur.
- 6.3 We shall ensure that competitors and supporters know where to obtain First Aid.
- 6.4 Radios will be available for the Safety Adviser, safety boats and first aiders to summon First Aid to an accident.
- 6.5 The first aiders will call 999 for an emergency ambulance if appropriate. Competitors with minor injuries will make their own way to hospital if necessary.
- 6.6 The local ambulance service does not wish to be advised in advance of the exact locations that ambulances should go to. They would rather we simply dial 999. The locations will be either ACRC or Minerva Rowing Club depending on the site of the accident. Avon County Rowing Club access is at BS31 3JS (ST 68825 66604) and Minerva Rowing Club access is at BA1 3NB (ST 71765 65850). The nearest hospital is the Royal United Hospital in Bath – Coombe Park, Bath Somerset, BA1 3NG (Tel: 01225 428331).
- 6.7 Clear access from the A4 road to the clubhouse for emergency vehicles will be maintained until racing is finished.

## **7 Safety Boats**

- 7.1 Two adequately equipped safety boats will be provided to patrol the whole area involved in the race, i.e. the course, the marshalling area above the start and the area between the finish and the turning point for returning to the rafts. During boating, paddling to the start and racing, these boats and crews are on constant standby to attend any incidents that might occur on the water. They will provide a rapid response, when called to do so.
- 7.2 The safety boats will be manned by drivers of at least RYA powerboat level 2 and another person to assist.
- 7.3 The safety boats will be in radio contact with the Safety Adviser.
- 7.4 The crews of the safety boats will wear appropriate lifejackets/buoyancy aids and carry rescue equipment.

## **8 Marshals, Monitors and Umpires**

- 8.1 There will be at least two umpires on duty during each division. Umpires are trained and certificated by British Rowing (BR) in 'Rules of Racing' and 'Row Safe'. They will have radios and whistles and flags and maps to show them where other officials are. Their instructions will tell them how to call a safety boat to an incident, how to stop the race if necessary and how to contact the First Aiders.
- 8.2 Race Monitors will be on duty in designated positions during each division to observe the whole race. All will have written instructions. They will have radios and whistles and flags and maps to show them where other officials are. Their instructions will tell them how to summon a safety boat to an incident, how to stop the race if necessary and how to contact the First Aiders. Race Monitors will report in to the Safety Advisor.

- 8.3 Boat marshals are certificated launch drivers (RYA Level 2). There will be a marshal on the water above the start of each long division and several on the bank. Marshals for the short course will be on the bank. They will have loudhailers and radios.
- 8.4 Anyone conveyed, or working in a launch or boat will be required to wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid whilst afloat. Marshals on the rafts will be advised to wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid.

## **9 Instructions to Officials and Competitors**

- 9.1 Instructions that include local racing rules, navigation rules, marshalling procedures and identification of local hazards (including navigating the mid-course bridge) will be posted on the event website. <http://www.avoncountyrowingclub.org.uk>

These instructions are also included in the race programme' a copy of which is supplied to each club along with its numbers on race day. Any last minute notices will be given to the club representative when the numbers are collected.

- 9.2 Competitors will be advised of the actions to be taken in the event of an incident. Emergency numbers will be posted on the noticeboard.
- 9.3 Course officials (umpires, radio hub, marshals and race monitors) will proceed to their positions before, or as, crews proceed to the start. Course officials will be provided with specific instructions regarding their duties, including when they are required to be on station.
- 9.4 Safety launch crews will be instructed to be afloat and ready before crews go onto the water.
- 9.5 The Safety Adviser will tell the Chairman of Race Committee when it is safe for racing to commence.
- 9.6 Racing will be stopped for an incident on the advice of the Safety Adviser or any official, if they deem it to be unsafe to continue racing (racing may continue during an incident if it is considered safe to do so). The Chairman of the Race Committee, with advice from the Safety Adviser, will allow racing to commence after an incident where racing was suspended.
- 9.7 It is the responsibility of all competitors to make sure their equipment is safe to use and there will be experienced officials available to check as many boats as possible before they launch.

## **10 Special Points: Off the water**

- 10.1 Parking will be strictly controlled to allow maintenance of an adequate access for emergency vehicles.
- 10.2 When car parking is provided in areas off the A4, appropriate signage will be placed on footpaths to warn people using the busy A4 road to and from the club.
- 10.3 Competitors will be advised that care needs to be taken when moving boats down from the car park to the launching rafts.
- 10.4 A dedicated First Aid area will be provided.

## **11 Special Points: On the water:**

- 11.1 The weir is well signposted and a marshal will ensure that crews turn well before reaching the weir area.
- 11.2 There will be marshals above the start, covering the area where crews wait to be called for their race.
- 11.3 For an incident on the water, the racing may be stopped. If this is the case, no crews will be allowed to boat. The rafts will be cleared for emergency access. The safety boats will attend the incident and will bring the casualty (or casualties) back to the rafts. Radio contact with the first aiders will be maintained and an ambulance called if necessary.

## **12 Leptospirosis/Weil's Disease**

- 12.1 Good hygiene practice will be maintained. This will be achieved through:
  - Including advice (text in **Appendix 3**) in the printed instructions available to each crew on registration and on the event website
  - Displaying the advice on notices by any catering facilities
  - Providing antiseptic hand-cleaner at catering facilities
  - Race officials will ensure that anyone who falls into the water is offered a shower as soon as possible

## **13 Other Users of the Area**

- 13.1 Signs will be placed for other users of the river. The marshals at each end of the event (ie above the start and at the turning point below the boathouse) will inform approaching boats about the race and will use radios to alert race control. Arrangements will be made for the boats' safe passage through the racing course. The boats will either: be asked to wait for a division to be completed before they proceed along the course; or racing will be postponed to allow their safe access along the course prior to starting the race.
- 13.2 Signs advising the general public using the footpath will be placed at either end of the boating area. Competitors will be advised that they will need to be careful when moving boats on the land.
- 13.3 The boathouse side of the course is a recognised fishing area, controlled by the Bathampton Anglers Association. Anglers are informed in advance via the River Avon Users Committee. Any anglers on the bank of the racing course, will be asked to suspend fishing during the period of a division passing through (approximately 20 minutes per division).
- 13.4 Both marinas on the stretch of the river where the race will take place will be informed by the organisers.

**Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment**

**Appendix 2 – Plan B**

**Appendix 3 – Weil's Disease Guidance**

**Appendix 4 – Emergency Plan**

# APPENDIX 1

## RISK ASSESSMENT

No.	Hazard	Cause	Persons at Risk	Risk Factor	Mitigation	Resp.
1	Tripping, slipping & falling on rafts or land while manoeuvring boats	Wet, frost, mud, tree roots	Competitors, raft marshals	Low	Supervise launching and assist crews where needed	OC
2	Capsize (including crew getting into difficulty on capsize)	Any, but particularly inexperienced crews  Poorly maintained boat or other equipment  Weather, and water, conditions could contribute	Competitors	Med	Ability to withdraw competitors if conditions are beyond their experience  Adequately equipped safety boats. Monitors on bank. Radio communications  Boat checks  Cancellation or restrictions to types of competitors due to water, or weather, conditions	OC and coaches  OC  Umpires  OC
3	Collision between boats on water	Poor steering, inexperience, poor coxing	Competitors	Med	Clear instructions sent to crews prior to race  Race monitors to warn crews in the event of potential incidents  Safety boats to attend in the event of major incidents	OC and Coaches  OC  OC
4	Road accident due to competitors or spectators accessing car park	A4 is a dangerous road with high traffic volume at speed	Competitors, spectators, officials and helpers	Low	Clear, warning signage at the access point	OC
5	Crews collide with bank, fallen trees, logs, fishing lines, other obstacles	Failure to follow instructions, poor steering, or unseen obstructions	Competitors	Med	Course checked prior to each division by each race monitor  Clear instructions to crews prior to event  Race monitors to warn crews who may be off course  Safety boats to attend in the event of major accident  Umpire positioned close to bottom bridge	Safety Adviser  OC  OC  OC  Umpire

No.	Hazard	Cause	Persons at Risk	Risk Factor	Mitigation	Resp.
6	Lightning strike (see Safety Plan 4.4)	Lightning storm	Competitors and officials	Low	Safety Adviser to check weather conditions and instruct crews to return to landing stage asap, de-boat and seek shelter until conditions improve.	Safety Adviser and all rowers
7	River surge	Twerton flood gate open	Competitors	Low	Safety Adviser to check with Environment Agency prior to race	Safety Adviser
8	Slips, trips and falls	Muddy conditions, tree roots, trip hazards	Anyone	Med	Advise everyone to keep area tidy – crews to remove shoes, boots from boating area.  First Aiders present.	OC, Coaches, crews  Safety Adviser
9	Moving, or manoeuvring, boats or blades that may hit people	Poor supervision and/or inattention of crew of bystanders	Anyone, including walkers or joggers on towpath (right of way)	Low	Coaches to instruct their crews.  All experienced people to warn crews or bystanders if they see potential incidents.  Warning signs on towpath	Coaches  OC and all rowers  OC
10	Officials fall in river or are injured	Slip on getting in/out of boat transport, or on bank or rafts	Officials and helpers	Low	No slippery boots to be worn on rafts or in boats  Wear buoyancy aid on rafts  Briefing to Race Monitors to include safety warning	OC  OC  Safety Adviser
11	Leptospirosis (Weil's disease) See Safety Plan Appendix 3	Contact with infected water	Competitors and Officials	Low	Showers available in the club house for anyone who falls in river	OC
12	Welfare and safeguarding issues	With a lot of young people at the race there is potential for inappropriate behaviour from adults present	Young people - competitors and spectators	Low	A Welfare Officer is appointed who is a member of the Organising Committee. There is an agreed Welfare Statement  Registration will assist with any issues that arise, and contact the Welfare Officer and/or the Safety Adviser, if necessary	Welfare Officer, Officials, OC  OC
13	Injury due to loading/unloading boats	Abrasions/bruising caused by hitting boats/riggers/etc. Pulled muscles, falls, bruising due to climbing on trailers or stretching to load/secure boats	Competitors, coaches and helpers	Med	Controlled loading and keeping riggers and seat together in crates  Having lots of people to help to get boat on high racks. Extra care when securing boats by climbing on trailer	Coaches And all rowers  Coaches And all rowers

14	Catering accident	Gas bottle leak resulting in inhaling butane gas or explosion	Catering staff and customers	Med	Connect all bottles correctly. Supervisor to check  No smoking in catering area	Catering supervisor  Catering staff
15	Catering accident	Hot urn or kettle results in scalds or burns	Catering staff	Med	Caterers trained and supervised	Catering supervisor
16	Catering accident	Windy weather blowing outside equipment around causing scalds or burns	Catering staff and customers	Med	Secure all equipment or move it inside building. Especially hot water urn.  First Aiders on site	Catering supervisor  OC
17	Catering accident	Cuts from sharp knives	Catering staff	Med	No unauthorised people to use knives  Any cuts dealt with quickly by First Aiders	Catering supervisor and catering staff  OC
18	Catering – food poisoning of customers	Unhygienic food preparation and serving resulting in contaminated food	Customers	Med	Catering supervisor has food hygiene certificate and training. Ensures all other staff implement basic hygiene rules – gloves, food and money handling, etc.	Catering supervisor and catering staff

**Notes:**

- Where OC is stated as responsible this will primarily indicate the HoR Organising Committee, but also all officials and helpers from the Club (and also includes Minerva members and all others who are helping out on the day).

## APPENDIX 2

### “Plan B”

*Needed to cover for failure of any part of the planned safety arrangements – ‘what, if, then, else’*

#### **Failure of safety arrangements**

In the event of:

The loss of a safety boat, or multiple launches, will be covered by a replacement launch. If none are available, there will be a shortening of the course to maintain a 2 minute pick up time and / or operation of a batch system.

The loss of race monitors, marshals and umpires (RMMU) support, or key race officials, will be covered by extended shifts or replacement by other suitably qualified officials and/or persons. Specifically, the Safety Adviser would be replaced by a qualified BR umpire, or the Chair of the Organising Committee.

The loss of medical cover will be covered by a qualified club First Aider.

The loss of radio communications will be covered by use of mobile phones.

Notes:

Changes to racing arrangements may see the length of the course being shortened, racing restricted to larger boats and/or more competent crews.

Five permanent landing stages provide multiple options to boat as conditions dictate.

These arrangements have been made based on previous events history and will be reviewed as situations develop.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Leptospirosis / Weil's Disease**

The following advice will be displayed so it is available to all crews and officials.

#### **CAUTION**

#### **LEPTOSPIROSIS / WEIL'S DISEASE**

Leptospirosis is an infection caught through contact with urine from infected animals (rats, cattle and pigs mainly) in water and soil. It is generally only a problem in slow moving or stagnant water. The organisms enter the skin through cuts and abrasions and also through the mouth, eyes or nose.

#### **Prevention:**

**Do not swallow river water**

**Cover cuts and abrasions with plasters before approaching the river**

**Wash your hands after rowing, especially before eating**

**Keep your water bottles away from contaminated surfaces including water in the bottom of the boat**

**Always wear footwear when on the bank**

**If you fall into the river, the race officials will ask you to take a shower immediately – you are strongly advised to do this**

If you feel unwell with 'flu-like' symptoms (vomiting, high temperature, headache, muscular pains) after the rowing event then you should contact your doctor straight away so that the proper treatment may be initiated immediately.

Sources: BR website with link to Environment Agency

## APPENDIX 4

### Emergency Plan

It is recognised that there may be an unforeseen emergency during race day, where crews are at risk on the water. During these incidents, where possible, the Safety Advisor will take control of the situation and notify all officials of their role and required actions. It is noted that, due to the steepness of the banks along most of the course, it is not possible for crews to disembark safely except at the rowing club pontoons.

Emergency	Response
Unforeseen changes in resources e.g. safety boat, marshals, race monitor or umpire missing from their stations	The Safety Advisor and members of the organisation committee will assess the situation and react accordingly. The race may be delayed while these resource gaps are filled with suitable substitutes, or other compensatory measures may be put in place.
Unforeseen changes in weather, or water, conditions after crews have boated and on the course – examples are torrential rain, high wind gusts, electrical storm, river surge (due to opening of sluice gate)	<p>The weather forecast will be monitored throughout the day. However, there may be a change in conditions that has not been forecast, even at short notice. The Safety Advisor, in consultation with other race officials, will assess how severe these may be and the possible effects on crews. If these are predicted to be a safety risk, a plan will be put into operation and communicated to all officials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race monitors, umpires and safety boat crews will be informed of the plan so they can tell instruct rowing crews what the course of action will be</li> <li>• Crews may be instructed to disembark as soon as possible and return to land. If they are racing, they will continue to race as this gets them to land faster. If they are marshalling or navigating below 2500 metres, they will return to Avon County Rowing Club. If they are further upstream they will disembark at Minerva Rowing Club.</li> <li>• Crews may be instructed to seek shelter</li> <li>• Crews may be instructed to brace themselves against rough water or high wind gusts</li> <li>• Safety boats may be deployed to help any crews that are in trouble</li> <li>• Race Monitors will instruct or assist crews where necessary, and observe in case rescue is required</li> </ul>
Pleasure craft (narrow boat, RIB or cruiser) proceeding upstream on Avon County RC side after race has commenced and refusing to wait	<p>This is an emergency for the event as the racing line is through the Avon County RC side of the Bottom Bridge (port side of river). The pleasure craft would normally take this arch when travelling upstream, as it is on their starboard. On being informed, the Safety Advisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact Monitors 5,6,7 and tell them to route all boats through the Minerva side arch at the bottom bridge</li> <li>• Then contact all monitors and advise them of the problem in case they need to warn crews</li> </ul>
Crash at Bottom Bridge	<p>This is an emergency, as subsequent, racing crews will be trying to navigate this arch of the bridge. The Safety Boat is positioned just upstream of the bridge and will be aware of the emergency. Monitor 7 will also be aware of the situation. One of these officials will:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get safety Boat 2 to help with recovery and assistant to the crew(s) that has/have crashed</li> <li>• Contact Monitors 5,6,7 and tell them to route all boats through the Minerva side arch at the bottom bridge if this is still navigable</li> <li>• If the river is blocked, contact all upstream monitors and the Starter Umpire to stop crews racing and hold any crews in the marshalling area that haven't already started</li> <li>• If the river is not fully blocked, contact all monitors and advise them of the problem in case they need to warn crews</li> </ul>
<p>Powered boat which has been moored along the course, leaves moorings, navigates and possibly turns across course</p>	<p>This emergency situation could be hazardous to racing crews as they may find themselves blocked while rowing a full speed on the course. The hazard will be noticed by one of the race monitors or umpires. The observing monitors may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise all others and Safety Adviser who will decide whether to start/stop racing</li> <li>• If possible, ask/instruct the boat to move out of the way of racing crews</li> <li>• Use his/her loud hailer to warn crews who are approaching the obstruction</li> <li>• Stop crews from racing until it is safe to continue</li> <li>• Inform all other monitors, umpires, Safety Advisor and the starter of actions taken and general situation</li> </ul>