



## **BRISTOL AVON REGATTA**

**09 May 2026**

# **Safety Plan**

### **Document creation details**

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# **BRISTOL AVON REGATTA**

**EVENT DATE – Saturday 9th May 2026**

## **SAFETY PLAN**

### **1 Introduction**

The regatta is organised and hosted by Avon County Rowing Club. It is a well-established regatta which has been taking place annually since 2008 on a 1000 metre straight 2 lane course on the Bristol Avon, close to Avon County's boathouse at Salford.

Bristol Avon offers events for adults, juniors and masters at all experience levels, racing in fine boats. The racing is all downstream and is held on traditional knock-out lines, with separate rounds with winning crews coming off the river until it is time for their next race.

A factor of interest is the width of the river. Since it is quite narrow, the organisers arrange the circulation pattern so that while a race is on the course, no non-racing boats are anywhere on the course.

This Safety Plan complies with British Rowing's document "RowSafe". The regatta is run under British Rowing's Rules of Racing.

### **2 Event Organisation**

The main members of the Bristol Avon Organising Committee are:

Chair and Secretary:	William Gray
Safety Adviser:	Alastair Watson
Welfare Officer:	Marian Lovell
Race Committee Chair:	Jon Garner

The Race Committee comprises Geoff Peattie who is a member of the Organising Committee and an umpire, and 2 other umpires.

The Organising Committee should be contacted through the Chair at 07540 656950.

#### Communications – before the event

The following documents are e-mailed to the competing clubs during the week before the event, with the draw:

- Notes for Competitors (this includes the key information about the safety arrangements)
- Circulation Pattern (on and off water)
- Parking arrangements (including directions to the event for trailers and other vehicles)
- Welfare Statement

These documents are also posted on the event webpage: [avoncountyrowingclub.org.uk/bristol-avon-regatta/](http://avoncountyrowingclub.org.uk/bristol-avon-regatta/) and are sent to the umpires.

Approval for the event is obtained from the Navigation Authority, which is the Canal and River Trust, who see and approve this Safety Plan. Other river users and local residents are also informed about the events well in advance.

The boathouse side of the course is a recognised fishing area, controlled by the Bathampton Anglers Association. As the regatta is being held during the closed season for fishing, there is no requirement to inform the association.

### Communications – on the day

Signs will be placed for other users of the river. The marshals/umpires 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 race to be completed before they proceed along the course; or racing will be suspended to allow their safe access along the course prior to starting the race.

Signs advising the general public using the footpath will be placed at either end of the regatta area. Competitors will be advised that they will need to be careful when moving boats on the land.

Before boating commences, the Safety Adviser will ensure that the Rescue Launches and First Aiders are fully briefed on the safety arrangements.

The pack of documents sent to the competing clubs with the draw (see above) will be displayed on a Notice Board, together with any information about any particular river hazards and any other last minute safety information.

### Documentation

The Risk Assessment is at Appendix 1.

The Circulation Pattern is attached as separate documents. They cover both on and off water.

The Access Points are as follows. Casualties will be brought to the rafts at the Avon County Rowing Club boathouse. Emergency vehicles can be driven close to the rafts. The access to the site is by the turning into the field by the Avon County Rowing Club sign on the A4 at the east end of Saltford, opposite The Glen. The Grid Reference is ST 68917 66479 and the postcode is BS31 3JS. The What Three Words link is <https://w3w.co/pickles.snowboard.marzipan>.

### Safety Monitors

Safety monitoring will be undertaken by:

- the umpires on duty during each race on the bank (at the start, two intermediate points and finish). Umpires are trained and certificated by British Rowing in Rules of Racing and Safety.
- the 2 Rescue Launches. No competitor boat will be allowed on the water unless at least 1 Rescue Launch is on the water. Racing will not be permitted unless both Rescue Launches are on the water and in position.
- marshals positioned on the bank, at the rafts and in the trailer park and on the route to boating.

All these personnel will have radios. Those by the water will also have throw lines. All Rescue Launch drivers will be highly experienced, having had substantial number of Rescue Launch

outings within the previous 12 months, and possessing a thorough knowledge of Rescue Launch and river-use protocols. They will where possible have RYA Level 2 qualification and will in all cases be approved by the club captain as having equivalent skills. All the radios used during the event will be set to one of two channels: the safety channel or the admin channel. The radios used by the key safety personnel will all be set to the safety channel.

### Checks before racing commences

Before racing commences, the Safety Advisor will check that all umpires and safety boats are in position, and the course is clear for racing. When satisfied that the course is safe, the Safety Advisor will inform the Co-ordinating Umpire that racing may commence. The Co-ordinating Umpire will then check that the Start, Finish and Bank Umpires are prepared for racing to commence. When the Co-ordinating Umpire is satisfied, he/she will inform the Start Umpire that they may start the races.

### Rescue Launches

The Rescue Launches will be provided by Bristol Avon Sailing Club and Avon County Rowing Club. Each will carry two crew and be equipped as per "RowSafe" (issued by British Rowing). Arrangements will be made for a suitable back-up Rescue Launch to be deployed in the event of boat failure.

The drivers of the Rescue Launches will have radios on the safety (umpiring) net.

The Safety Adviser will give the Rescue Launch personnel written instructions. Appendix 4 specifies the positioning of the Rescue Launches and the procedures to be used when instructing them to attend an incident (to ensure clarity of instructions).

### Boat checking

British Rowing's Rules of Racing state that it is the responsibility of the competitors to ensure that their boats are safe and prepared to the standards required by "RowSafe", and are suitable for the crew and conditions in which they are to be used.

Regatta Officials may make spot check inspections of boats before they are launched and shall exclude any boat that is found to fail to meet the required standards.

## **3 Accident and Emergency Procedures**

In the event of an incident on the water, the umpire, or other official observing the incident will take immediate, appropriate action. This may include:

- issue instructions to a safety launch to attend the incident using the call procedures set out in Appendix 4
- alert First Aiders that a casualty may be arriving by launch to the rafts
- call the Start Umpire to suspend racing
- call other umpires to warn/stop crews who are already racing on the course
- tell the casualty what to do and/or use a throw line
- inform the Safety Advisor and Co-ordinating Umpire of the incident and, in the event of a major incident, ask for back-up
- any other actions that are deemed appropriate, and would not compromise the safety of themselves, other officials or the public

For a major incident, the Safety Advisor would take charge, advised by the Co-ordinating Umpire. The Safety Advisor would allocate available resources, deliver instructions and communicate with medical staff (first aiders and/or ambulance staff), if necessary.

If racing has been stopped, it will only be restarted by the Coordinating Umpire with advice from the Safety Adviser.

Any incidents will be recorded by the Safety Adviser and submitted online to British Rowing.

### First Aid

First aid will be supplied by 2 qualified and equipped first aiders based near the rafts. A dedicated first aid room in the Boathouse facilities block with lounge and towels will be provided.

A defibrillator is available for use, if necessary. It is located in the Gym Area (ground floor) of the Facilities Block, and is

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. The nearest A&E Department is a 12 minute drive away (3.7 Miles):

Royal United Hospitals Trust  
NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park  
Bath  
BA1 3NG  
(*What3Words location – flap.reader.ruled*)

Clear access from the road to the raft area for emergency vehicles will be maintained until racing is finished and all boats are off the water.

## **4 Abandonment Plan**

The decision to cancel the regatta, or restrict entry to certain classes of crews, will be made by the Organising Committee with advice from the Safety Adviser and/or the Race Committee Chair. This decision will take into account weather and river conditions on the day of the race. If conditions are deemed to be forecast to be unfavourable, the regatta may be cancelled prior to race day. During the event, racing may be suspended or abandoned on the decision of the Race Committee.

If conditions are moderately poor, but safe for certain categories of boats (e.g. larger boats) and/or more experienced crews (including coxes) the Organising Committee (or Race Committee on the day) may restrict racing to any combination of: boat type; age of crew; experience of crew; and experience of cox. All decisions by the Organising Committee and/or the Race Committee will be final, and crews outside these categories will be refused permission to boat for the full period of racing.

Appendix 2 sets out in more detail the actions to be taken in the event of specific weather conditions.

## **5 “Plan B”**

In the event of failure of any component of the safety equipment or non-availability of safety personnel, the Safety Adviser will consider the implications for the safe running of the regatta and issue instructions as to the required changes required to maintain safety.

In particular:

- loss of rescue launch – the back-up launch will be deployed
- unexpected absence of personnel with safety duties – personnel will be reallocated from other duties
- unexpected absence of First Aid staff or equipment – boats will not be allowed on the water unless the Safety Adviser is satisfied there is adequate First Aid provision
- failure of safety radios – radios will be redeployed from the administration network

## **6 Measures for Specific Hazards**

### River conditions and obstructions

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 before they boat for their race. There will be a safety notice board with the map, emergency contacts, competitors' instructions and any new hazards prominently displayed.

### On the water

The weir is well signposted and protected by a barrier, and a marshal will ensure that crews turn well before reaching the weir area.

There will be marshals above the start, covering the area where crews wait to be called for their race.

### Off the water

Parking will be strictly controlled to allow maintenance of an adequate access for emergency vehicles.

Competitors will be advised that care needs to be taken when moving boats down from the car park to the launching rafts.

Competitors will be advised that care needs to be taken when turning on to the busy A4 road, or when crossing the A4 on foot.

It will be ensured that adequate space is available for competitors and spectators to shelter under cover if the weather is bad.

### Poor water quality (and Leptospirosis/Weils Disease)

The River Avon water quality is poor. Good hygiene practice will be maintained. This will be achieved through:

- Including advice (see Appendix 3) in the instructions sent to the competing clubs and on the event website.
- Providing antiseptic hand cleaner at catering facilities
- Regatta officials will ensure that anyone who falls into the water is offered a shower immediately

### Biosecurity

There is a need to minimise transfer of harmful or alien species between waterways. The instructions to the competing clubs will include a request to wash their boats and other equipment before they come to the event, and wash them again before they use them back at home.

### Other

Other specific hazards and their mitigation methods are in the Risk Assessment at Appendix 1.

## **7 Safeguarding**

The Safeguarding Policy of Avon County Rowing Club is at Appendix 5.

In addition, a specific Welfare Statement is drawn up for the event. This is a separate document which forms part of the package sent to the Clubs competing at the event.

# APPENDIX 1

## RISK ASSESSMENT

**Event:** BRISTOL AVON REGATTA

**Event Date:** 10 May 2025

**Venue:** AVON COUNTY ROWING CLUB, SALTFORD, BRISTOL

**Organiser:** AVON COUNTY ROWING CLUB

No	Hazards identified		Persons at risk	Risk Factor	Measures required to control risk			Action
	Hazard	Cause	Exposed Group	Risk Factor before control	Preventative measures	Protective Measures	Emergency procedures	Action to be taken by
1	Tripping, slipping & falling on rafts	Wet, frost, mud, tree roots	Competitors, raft marshals	Low	Keep clean, free of frost, remove hazards.	Supervise launching and assist crews where needed.	Qualified First Aiders to administer first aid and assess injuries	Safety Adviser
2	Capsize	Inexperience, adverse weather or stream conditions, debris, obstructions	Competitors	Low (in strong wind, debris, fast current - med)	Vetting of competitors by coaches. Restriction by Race Committee on boats allowed to take to water	Ability to withdraw/ban competitors if conditions beyond their experience	Fully equipped Rescue Launches. Umpires and marshals. Radio network. First Aid. Good hygiene practice to guard against Weil's disease	Race Committee, crew coaches
3	Capsize, sinking, difficulties getting out of boat in event of capsize	Poorly maintained boats in dangerous condition	Competitors	Low	Competitors are responsible for the condition of their boats. Regatta officials may check boats before launching	Bow balls, heel restraints, buoyancy compartments etc	Fully equipped Rescue Launches. Umpires and marshals. Radio network. First Aid. Good hygiene practice to guard against Weil's disease	Control Commission, crew coaches
4	Collision between boats (competitors, officials, other river users)	Inexperience, accident, failure to follow instructions, or keep proper lookout. Adverse wind or river conditions	Competitors	Med	Clear instructions to crews on circulation pattern. Competent marshals. Selection of appropriate race starting intervals by Starter	Umpires and marshals. Ability to withdraw/ban competitors if conditions beyond their experience	Fully equipped Rescue Launches. Umpires and marshals. Radio network. First Aid. Clear procedure for stopping race in emergency.	Organisers, Race Committee, crew coaches

## RISK ASSESSMENT (continued)

No	Hazards identified		Persons at risk	Risk Factor	Measures required to control risk			Action
	Hazards	Cause	Exposed Group	Risk Factor before control	Preventative measures	Protective Measures	Emergency procedures	Action to be taken by
5	Collision with bank, fallen trees, logs, obstacles	Failure to follow instructions, or keep proper lookout. Adverse wind or river conditions	Competitors	Med	Removal beforehand of obstacles. Clear instructions to crews on any remaining obstacles, buoys if necessary.	Umpires and marshals. Ability to withdraw/ban competitors if conditions beyond their experience.	Fully equipped Rescue Launches. Umpires and marshals. Radio network. First Aid. Clear procedure for stopping race in emergency	Organisers, Race Committee, crew coaches
6	Slipping or tripping (other than on rafts)	Muddy or frosty conditions, oars or other items on ground	Anyone	Low	Individuals' awareness of conditions. Alert on-land marshalling to prevent and deal with trip hazards. Oar racks will be provided if possible	Sweeping, spread wood chippings, salt as necessary	First Aid	Organisers, coaches, visitors
7	Moving boats, blades, etc. hitting people	Poor supervision, carelessness	Anyone	Low	Responsibility of coaches	Clear information about boat on/off routes, alert on-land marshalling	Qualified First Aiders to administer first aid and assess injuries	Organisers, coaches, Safety Adviser
8	Walkers or joggers get hit by boats on towpath	Careless manoeuvring of boats on way to raft. Members of the public don't know how boats are moved	Members of the public walking or running on footpath	Low	Coaches and coxes to be careful when moving boats	Notices on footpath to warn passers-by of race activity	Qualified First Aiders to administer first aid and assess injuries	Organisers, coxes and coaches, Safety Adviser

## RISK ASSESSMENT (continued)

No	Hazards identified		Persons at risk	Risk Factor	Measures required to control risk			Action
	Hazards	Cause	Exposed Group	Risk Factor before control	Preventative measures	Protective Measures	Emergency procedures	Action to be taken by
9	Officials fall in or are injured	Slip on getting in/out of boat transport, collision, slip on bank	Umpires, marshals, boat operatives	Low	Check all transport arrangements before event	Wear buoyancy aids if on boat	Rescue Launches, First Aid. Qualified First Aiders to administer first aid and assess injuries	Organisers, officials, Safety Adviser
10	Poor water quality, Leptospirosis, Weil's Disease	Contact with River Avon water carries health risks	Competitors, officials	Low	Advice on dangers and good hygiene practice	Antiseptic wash, showers available	Offer of a shower for anyone who falls in	Organisers, competitors, officials
11	Transfer of invasive species between waterways	Material adheres to equipment	Water users, wildlife	Low	Request to wash equipment	Cleaning materials available	n/a	Clubs visiting from other waterways
11	Lightning strike	Rowing boats with carbon fibre oars	Competitors	Med	Plan for identifying dangerous conditions and clearing river	In event of thunderstorm take action as set out in Appendix 2	Fully equipped Rescue Launches. Call ambulance	Safety Adviser
12	Road accident	Busy main road – insufficient care when cars & trailers turning, people crossing road on foot	Competitors, spectators	Low	Warning message in information sent to competitors. No parking planned for far side of road	Visitors to take care	Qualified First Aiders to administer first aid and assess injuries Call ambulance	Organisers, competitors, spectators, Safety Adviser
13	Burns from scalding water, cooking gas	Strong winds or other cause lead to upset of catering equipment	Catering staff, customers	Low	Careful siting of catering, care using equipment	Monitor weather and impact on catering safety	Qualified First Aiders to administer first aid and assess injuries. Call ambulance	Catering manager Safety Adviser

## **RISK ASSESSMENT (continued)**

### NOTES

- 1 The site is not far from ambulance bases.
- 2 The level of activity on the water is more predictable than on a normal training day.
- 3 It is therefore felt that the presence of an ambulance is not essential provided that first aiders are present on the site
- 4 The day before the race, a decision will be made, based on forecast weather and river flows, whether to hold the regatta for some or all crews/divisions/boat types.
- 5 Weather and river conditions can vary quickly. The river state is inspected on the day of the regatta and competitors informed at registration of any new hazards and again by the raft marshals as they launch.
- 6 The course is regularly assessed during the day.
- 7 Less experienced competitors may be withdrawn according to the conditions and their ability to cope with them.
- 8 The Race Committee will monitor conditions throughout the event and will decide what action is required.
- 9 The River Avon Users Group, Canal & River Trust and local marinas are informed that the event will be taking place.
- 10 The catering volunteers will include at least one person who holds a Food Hygiene Certificate

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **BAD WEATHER OR FAST CURRENT/DEBRIS**

#### **Thunderstorm**

In the event of lightning, the Safety Adviser will monitor the interval between lightning and thunder. If it is less than 30 seconds, the Safety Adviser will instruct racing and boating to be stopped and all boats and launches to return to the rafts and come off the river, by the following procedure:

- Boats currently racing: stop racing and immediately proceed down the course.
- Boats above start: proceed immediately down the course in an orderly fashion
- Boats below finish: turn and return to raft
- The "holding marshal" (on bank below finish) will ensure boats turn safely
- Safety launch to go above the start (unless already there) and follow last boat down to rafts
- Boating will not restart until authorised by the Safety Adviser.

#### **Heavy rain**

The Safety Adviser will instruct Control Commission to check that competitors are wearing appropriate clothing.

#### **Strong wind**

The Chairman of the Race Committee (with advice from the Safety Adviser) will decide whether to limit entries to older and more experienced crews and/or larger boats, or to cancel the event. The Safety Adviser will instruct Control Commission to check that competitors are wearing appropriate clothing.

#### **Fast current and/or debris in river**

The Chairman of the Race Committee (with advice from the Safety Adviser) will decide whether to limit entries to older and more experienced crews and/or larger boats, or to cancel the event.

#### **Low temperatures**

The Safety Adviser will instruct Control Commission to ensure that competitors are wearing appropriate clothing.

#### **Frost/ice/snow**

The Safety Adviser will ensure that all rafts and access routes are cleared of slip hazards

## **APPENDIX 3**

Advice to be given to all crews and officials.

### **CAUTION - POOR WATER QUALITY**

**Cover cuts, grazes and blisters with waterproof plasters**

**Do not swallow river water**

**Wash your hands after rowing, especially before eating (antiseptic handwash will be provided at the catering facility)**

**Keep your water bottles away from contaminated surfaces including water in the bottom of the boat. Ensure the bottle has a closed top**

**Always wear footwear when on the bank or pontoons**

**Clean down all equipment when back on land**

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

#### Leptospirosis / Weil's Disease

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

Sources: British Rowing document Guidance for Rowing when water quality is poor, British Rowing website with link to Environment Agency

## APPENDIX 4

### Rescue Launches – stations and call signs

One Rescue Launch will be on station at the top of the course within the first 250m of the start. This launch will be called “Rescue Launch Start”, whichever actual boat is on that station.

The other Rescue Launch will be in the second half of the course and will be called “Rescue Launch Finish”, whichever actual boat is at that station.

It will be made clear to the Rescue Launch personnel what their call sign is as they take up station at the start of racing, and during racing as they rotate duties and stations.

No other launches will be called Rescue Launches but will be called marshalling launches.

## APPENDIX 5

### Safeguarding Policy – Avon County Rowing Club

Avon County Rowing Club is a long-established rowing club, located in Saltford (between Bath and Bristol) and serving the surrounding community. It is affiliated to British Rowing, the national Governing Body for the sport.

British Rowing provides comprehensive policies, procedures, guidance and advice on safeguarding. Avon County Rowing Club's policy on safeguarding is to adopt and implement those policies and procedures in their entirety. This is provided for in the Avon County Rowing Club Constitution, as follows:

#### “SECTION 6: SAFETY AND WELFARE

##### 6.1 Equal Opportunities

6.1.1 The Club is strongly committed to equal opportunities for all sectors of the community. It is the policy of the Club to ensure that no participant, volunteer, coach, parent or carer will receive less favourable treatment on grounds of age, gender, marital status, employment status, social class, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, religious belief or disability, or will be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which are not relevant to performance.

##### 6.2 Safety and Welfare

6.2.1 The Management Committee shall appoint a Safety Adviser and a Welfare Officer.

##### 6.3 Participant Protection and Behaviour and Welfare

6.3.1 The Club accepts the policy and procedures relating to Participant Protection, Behaviour and Welfare, as set out by British Rowing, and requires all members to accept them as a condition of membership.

6.3.2 Anyone who wishes to report any grievance, personal matter or alleged inappropriate behaviour of any type should approach the President, Welfare Officer, Captain or other appropriate Officer or club member.”

The British Rowing policies, procedures, guidance and advice can be found at the following web page:

[www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safeguarding/](http://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safeguarding/)

#### Rowing Competitions

Avon County Rowing Club organises rowing competitions, attended by other rowing clubs. In order to provide for specific safeguarding requirements at those competitions, the Club prepares specific safeguarding documents for each competition, as follows:

- Welfare Statement and Plan
- Safety Plan and Risk Assessment