

Vancouver Rowing Club  
Rowing Section  
Safety Handbook

May 30, 2010



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to the Vancouver Rowing Club.....	3
Purpose of this Handbook.....	3
Hours of Operation.....	3
Rowing at VRC .....	3
Boathouse and Dock Rules .....	4
Security .....	4
Equipment Rules.....	4
VRC Safety Code.....	7
General Safety Considerations .....	7
Port of Vancouver Restrictions .....	7
Rowing Flow Pattern.....	7
Weather Considerations – When in doubt – don’t go out! .....	8
Rower’s Safety Responsibilities .....	10
Rowing Clothing.....	10
Coxswain/Bow Person’s Safety Responsibilities .....	11
Coach’s Safety Responsibilities .....	11
Before leaving the dock, responsibilities include: .....	11
Know Your Athletes .....	11
Coaches Safety Checklist.....	12
Coach Boat Inspection.....	12
While on the Water, a coach’s responsibilities include: .....	13
What to do in an Emergency.....	14
Emergency Communications .....	14
Marine Communications .....	14
Cell Phones.....	14
Non-Emergency Contact Numbers .....	15
Appendix A – Coal Harbour Map .....	16
Appendix B – Rower and Coaches Recovery Plan.....	16
Appendix B – Rower and Coaches Recovery Plan.....	17
Water Emergency Action Plan .....	17
Appendix C – Fuelling Procedures.....	21
Fuelling Procedures at the gas barge .....	21

## Welcome to the Vancouver Rowing Club

The Vancouver Rowing Club (VRC) is a non-profit, multi-sport, amateur athletic club centrally located in the heart of Vancouver. Established in 1886, nestled in the entrance to Stanley Park with an unbeatable view of Coal Harbour, Vancouver Rowing Club is Vancouver's oldest club.

The founding sport of the VRC is proud to boast of its unsurpassed history in international and Olympic rowing, and continues its tradition of athletic excellence. VRC celebrates an impressive international record and continues to foster athletes. VRC is also proud of the support we provide to Vancouver's diverse community with the use of our heritage designated clubhouse and in the many social and athletic events we offer to the general public.

## Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook outlines the procedures and safety policies to be followed by coaches and participants in the Rowing Section programs and LTR programs at VRC. This handbook meets the standards of Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) and Transport Canada (TC) Regulations and as such each member of RCA is responsible for knowing and adhering to the TC Regulations, especially those applicable to rowing.<sup>1</sup>

Rowing Canada Aviron Safety Guidelines [www.rowingcanada.org](http://www.rowingcanada.org)

Transport Canada's Regulations for Rowing Shells <http://www.tc.gc.ca/en/menu.htm>

## Hours of Operation

Rowing at VRC is primarily evening and weekends with some early morning rowing. No rowing activities shall commence prior to sunrise and all shells must be off the water by sunset. After daylight savings (Nov-March), program rowing occurs during the daylight hours on the weekends only. During daylight savings (April-Oct):

Monday ~ 4 to 9pm Novice Juniors, Novice, SuMasters, and LTR
Tuesday ~ 6 to 9pm Juniors, SaMasters and LTR (Rec: May-Aug)
Wednesday ~ 4 to 9pm Novice Juniors, Novice, SuMasters, and LTR
Thursday ~ 6 to 9pm Juniors, SaMasters and LTR
Friday ~ 6 to 9pm Rec program
Saturday ~ 8am-4pm SaMasters, Novice, and LTR
Sunday ~ 8am – 4pm SuMasters, Juniors, Rec, and LTR
Other ~ regattas as scheduled

## Rowing at VRC

---

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Coast Guard Safety Notice – Transport Canada's Regulations For Rowing Shells

## **Boathouse and Dock Rules**

The following rules are for the VRC Boathouse and dock area:

### ***Keep Premises Clean and Orderly***

- VRC encourages pride in its facility by maintaining an orderly and tidy boathouse and grounds, through daily or weekly means, as deemed appropriate by the Equipment Manager. Work parties and/or regular maintenance tasks will be organized and participation by all athletes is expected.

### ***Storage***

- All shells and blades shall be stored neatly in the proper manner in the racks assigned to them by the Equipment Manager.
- Launches shall be stored neatly in their assigned locations so as to minimize damage.

### ***Docks***

- Docking shall have right of way over launching. Dock courtesy shall prevail in all circumstances.
- Crews should be ready to row with all crew members present and oars and safety equipment on the dock BEFORE bringing the shell down to the dock. Launch shells with the bow facing away from the clubhouse or towards Lost Lagoon in the correct traffic direction.
- All shells shall dock and launch as quickly as possible. All gear and equipment shall be removed from the docks following a workout.

### ***Security***

- All athletes and coaches shall be responsible to ensure that boathouse security works. All athletes shall have access to the facility during normal operating hours (access card available at the office, deposit required). The alarm system shuts off and turns on at predetermined times, these times are posted on the bulletin board.
- The shell bay doors must be securely closed once all crews are off the water. Check first to see if other athletes are still out, then secure those bays not in use. IF IN DOUBT, SECURE.

### ***Equipment Rules***

- Authorized Use: No coach or athlete shall use equipment without the proper authorization as determined by the Equipment Manager.

- When rowing a shell, the shell must be signed out in the shell sign out log found in the shell bay. This includes private shells.
- If a shell has been signed out but is still in its berth in the shell bay after the sign out time has lapsed; an athlete may wait 15 minutes after the sign out time to take possession of the shell. The new user must sign out the shell in their name at that time.
- When signing out a shell to be used during a program time, the crew must consist of at least 75% of program members. If the shell crew is comprised of less than 75% of program members, the crew must wait until 15 minutes has elapsed to sign out a shell.

### ***Handling the Shell***

- The coxswain/bow person is in charge on land and water. Two types of commands will be given, A) Preparation B) Execution.
- Take your time when moving the shell. Coxswain/bow person should point out any problems before and during the action(eg. "watch the rigger" "keep it on shoulders").
- Coxswain/bow person walks behind the shell, looking forward and around for possible problems. The first two athletes are responsible for the front of the shell. All athletes should be alert to potential problems. In straight shells the last athlete is responsible for the trailing end.
- Position stretchers properly to balance shell and avoid FIN damage.

8+	between riggers 1&2 and 7&8
4+/4x/4-	under riggers 1 and 4
2-/2x/1x	slightly outside cockpit

- On the dock, keep the toes over the edge while lowering the shell or taking it out (with one hand in and one hand under). This prevents the shell from hitting the dock. Coxswain/bow person stands at the fin pushing the shell away from the edge to avoid hitting the fin. Keep the shell away from the dock's edge at all times and lean away when shoving off or landing to keep riggers above the dock.
- Landing at the dock: All athletes should be alert and watching their dockside oar as the shell approaches the dock. Lean away when commanded and raise the oar to clear the dock. All landings should be at slow speed, courtesy and cooperation being the rule. Move the shell as far down the dock as possible to permit others to dock or launch.

### ***Care and Maintenance of Equipment***

---

- Athletes shall report equipment damage promptly by completing a yellow damage tag, and attaching it to the shell. Never row with broken equipment. Damage tags can be found by the log book in the boathouse. Note: Athletes are responsible for assisting Equipment Manager with the repairs. All athletes are responsible for the care of the shells they row, including washing shells and oars after each time the shell is taken out on the water.
- Oars
  - a. carry one in each hand, not in bundles
  - b. place on dock, side by side, not piled
  - c. place on the ground, convex side up to protect paint
  - d. roll over, convex side up when launching or landing
- Cox Boxes
  - a. coxswains and coaches only are authorized to handle Cox boxes
  - b. connections are sensitive so make sure you know what you are doing, never pull the wires
  - c. weekly: lightly clean and oil plugs and connections
  - d. do not leave lying around where clumsy feet can kick or step on, protect at all times
- Daily check all nuts and bolts before and during each row. Never row with a loose foot stretcher or rigger. Each athlete shall keep their place in good condition, doing small repairs after talking with coach. Major repairs shall be coordinated by the Equipment Manager. Coxswains and athletes should always have a basic rowing tool kit handy. (7/16 or adjustable wrench, multipurpose screwdriver, electrician's tape, pliers). All shells shall be washed daily after each row.
- Weekly: Cleaning and lubricating shall be done by athletes. Thoroughly wash assigned shells and oars. Clean and lubricate oarlocks with approved lubricant. Do not lubricate seat slides. Check for damage or loose parts. Tidy up deck and sweep boathouse.
- Labeling: All removable parts are to be engraved for their shell location. Pirating is discouraged and forbidden except in emergencies, after prior permission from the Equipment Manager.
- Parts Cabinet: The coaches and Equipment Manager will have access to parts in order to control inventory. A well-stocked cabinet represents a large investment. Attention to proper care will reduce pressure on parts replacement costs.
- Storage: Always store equipment (oars, shells, stretchers, tools, gas tanks, etc.) in the designated places. After the row, put away all equipment used (coach boats, life jackets, water hose, stretchers, cleaning supplies etc.)

## **VRC Safety Code**

Safety is the responsibility of rowers, coaches, instructors, and coxswains. Included in this handbook are the safety rules that apply both on and off the water. Each rowing section member shall receive a copy of the VRC Rowing Safety Handbook and understand its contents prior to participating in rowing. All athletes and coaches in VRC rowing programs shall be offered instruction in safety procedures prior to involvement in rowing.

It is the responsibility of all members/athletes to ensure they are aware of all safety procedures, safe boat handling, safe beaching/docking locations, danger spots, obstructions, features specific to Coal Harbour, and understand water emergency procedures prior to involvement in rowing. Rowers should be able to swim 50m in light clothing and be sufficiently at ease in the water not to panic and to be able to keep themselves afloat. If a person cannot meet this requirement for physical or other reasons, an approved PFD should be worn when on the water.

All athletes and coaches shall respect the rights of other users of Coal Harbour and obey the rowing course rules established by VRC, the Canadian Coast Guard, and the Portmetro Vancouver Harbourmaster. Athletes and coaches shall be aware of and remain courteous to other users at all times.

## **General Safety Considerations**

VRC is home for over 300 boats, with an even greater number of vessels at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. In addition, there are vessel docks located along rowing course with several large charter motor vessels and a transient float plane dock. Both power and sail vessels enter and exit the area and rowers must be aware that vessel movement may occur at any time. Rowers should listen for engines, warning blasts as vessels leave their berths, and keep track of boat movements.

Important - Wear white or bright colours at all times on the water, wear a whistle, and have a lifejacket on board for each person in shell or boat.

## **Port of Vancouver Restrictions**

It is important for crews to understand the landing patterns and the Aircraft Operation Zone at Coal Harbour, Canada Place, Burnaby Shoal. See Appendix A to view map.<sup>2</sup> A five knot speed limit inside the area of Coal Harbor to Burnaby Shoal.

## **Rowing Flow Pattern**

- With exception of LTR1, who has permission to launch straight across course and turn into rowing lane but only when safe to leave dock, all other shells will follow the pattern as outlined below.
- After launching, go WEST to the Seawall. Then SOUTH, then EAST to start, or in the "pond" area, called Devonian Harbour, to adjust foot stretchers, water up, drills, etc.

---

<sup>2</sup> Vancouver Rowing Club course – see appendix

- All shells to row in a counter-clockwise pattern, from the dock at VRC out to the conference centre. This means going out from the club, shells are on the south side of the harbour and coming back to the club, on the north side.
- Learn to Row has limited control over their shells: be aware of them at all times!
- Keep at least 30 feet/10 metres from the edge of the course (where possible) to improve the ability of yachts leaving their slips to see you and avoid collisions.
- Do not stop between Deadman Island beacon and the cruise ship terminal: this water is a seaplane transit area (see map in Appendix A for defined Rowing Course). Proceed with caution and review map for corridor of travel. Rowers in the Seaplane landing zone may jeopardize our ability to row beyond 1500 metres and the Executive retains the right to censure those rowers who row in this area. **Never** enter the float plane landing zone, known as Alpha Zone.
- Stay to the south side of the Deadman Island and Coal Harbour Beacon.
- If you row outside of the fixed rowing course (i.e. north of Deadman Island Beacon, do not go farther out than the 9 o'clock gun and stay to the west side of the gas barge. Always row accompanied.
- When docking, approach the dock slowly from the East along the NORTH side of the course. Be aware of all traffic overtaking you. If there is no space at the dock, row by, turn at the end and row out to the charter boats/Bayshore hotel before cutting across the course. **ABOVE ALL USE COMMON SENSE!**
- Do not cut across the course to dock or after launching as this represents the greatest danger to all traffic its narrowest point due to the congestion. Be aware that Learn to Row lacks shell control due to their size and crew ability and may be forced to cut across the course.
- Note the patterns of the Tour Boat Operators: 1 long signal indicates that they will be moving within 60 seconds. 3 short blasts signal imminent movement. For your own protection stay out of their way when they are under way.
- Be predictable to all traffic on the water!
- All athletes rowing during program times but training separately from the main group shall stay inside the Deadman's Island beacon area. These athletes must identify themselves to the program coach who will advise the athletes in the program. If an athlete leaves the program time early, they must announce to the coach or, alternatively, a fellow athlete who will advise their coach as soon as possible.
- When rowing outside of program times, row with no fewer than two shells on the water at all times. Prior to going on the water, athletes will ensure safety launch is set up and engine warmed up. Athletes are to stay within sight and sound of each other throughout duration of workout. It is advised that at least one person has small boat operator certificate on file in VRC office.

### **Weather Considerations – When in doubt – don't go out!**

All athletes and coaches shall be aware of the potential danger from darkness, fog, high winds, ice, cold water, storms and any combination of the above. Coaches shall be responsible for determining if conditions are too dangerous to row due to any of the above circumstances. No athlete shall be required to row against his/her better judgment should conditions be questionable.

### **Know Weather and Water Conditions**

Always check the weather and water conditions before going out on the water. You can check out both on RowingBC web site even before coming to the boathouse by going to [www.rowingbc.com](http://www.rowingbc.com). Remember that the weather can change much more quickly and more violently on the water.

All athletes and coaches shall be aware of the potential danger from darkness, fog, high winds, ice, cold water, storms and any combination of the above. Coaches shall be responsible for determining if conditions are too dangerous to row due to any of the above circumstances. Use common sense about going in wind, hot and cold weather conditions.

- No athlete shall be required to row against his/her better judgment should conditions be questionable.
- Never leave the dock when there are white-capped waves or waves over 1 foot. If water is too rough beyond Bayshore/blue sheds, stay inside this area.
- Never leave dock if you hear thunder or expect lightning.
- Never leave the dock in foggy conditions if visibility falls below 500 meters or if the Bayshore hotel is not visible from the dock
- Use common sense about going in wind, hot and cold weather conditions.

PERSONAL SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT AND SUPERSEDES THE SAFETY OF EQUIPMENT. Should unsafe conditions occur during training, athletes are directed to row for the nearest accessible shoreline/dock and get off the water. The shell(s) shall be removed from the water and placed upside down on the riggers and out of the wind if possible while the athletes await rescue.

### **Rowing in Hot Weather**

Heat exhaustion and dehydration are the primary dangers.

Maintain a high fluid level - bring 50% more water than you think you need.

A wet hat will keep the body cooler.

Wear sunglasses to reflect the glare and plenty of sunscreen.

### **Rowing in Cold Weather**

To protect against the cold, rowers and coxswains should wear layers of clothes, removing and adding as the need arises.

Poagies are bags that cover the oar handle and the hands but still enable the rowers to grip the handle.

Sunglasses will protect your eyes from glare, spray, and cold wind.

### **Rowing in Wet Weather**

A single layer of water repellant fabric will stop most of the rain and waves.

Wet weather on a cold day is of the greatest concern because heat loss will increase.

Wool and technical fabric wicks water away from the body and retains more body heat than cotton.

## Rower's Safety Responsibilities

### 1. Before leaving the dock each rower should make a personal "Risk assessment".

- Examples: Am I healthy and not overtired for a row today? Am I dressed properly for the weather and for safety? Do I have my lifejacket or PFD on me or in the shell? Do I have my whistle? Is the shell in good order? (Hatches closed, oarlocks tightened, etc.) Is there a coach boat in attendance? Will there be someone around to summon help if necessary? Are there obvious hazards on the water? (ie: tourist boats, other vessels, logs and debris in the water) Is my rowing technique up to the current water conditions? Am I clear about safe havens along the rowing venue?

If the answer is NO to any of these questions, fix what can be corrected or consider not rowing that day.

### 2. While rowing, follow a routine to minimize risks of an "accident"

Examples: Warm up on the water. Look around for other shells, sail or motor vessel traffic. Keep an eye on the location of the coach boat. Check behind you every 5-10 strokes. If possible, row with a buddy or do not leave the pack. Re-check the water and wind conditions – are you still able to row well if these have changed?

### 3. Rowers Personal Equipment

Each athlete must wear white or bright colours at all times on the water

Each athlete must wear a whistle

Each athlete must have a lifejacket or Personal Flotation Device (PFD) on board

Consider wearing a nametag on a lanyard, with an emergency phone number

## Rowing Clothing

- Appropriate clothing is mandatory for safety and visibility. All athletes and coxswains shall wear bright clothing to ensure visibility of the shell, particularly during low-light conditions.
- It is recommended that each athlete bring a complete change of dry clothing to each workout during the winter months. This is a requirement for novice rowers. Note: This is a good precaution in the event of a mishap and it is wise practice for athletes to change into dry clothing after every workout for obvious health reasons.
- During the winter months it is recommended that athletes wear multiple layers of clothing to reduce heat loss. Polypropylene or washable wool are highly recommended for underwear as an insulating layer. Exposure to chilling cold when fatigued can lead to cold, influenza, etc.
- It is recommended that each athlete have a wool or polypropylene hat in the shell while on the water during the winter months (November through February) and a sun hat in the shell during the summer months (May through September).

## **Coxswain/Bow Person's Safety Responsibilities**

1. Leads their crew on and off the water as well as steers the shell. Cox's play an essential role in maintaining a calm and purposeful manner when working out on the water and in case of emergencies.
2. Maintains the safety of the rowers by appropriate launching, steering and landing practices.
3. Ensures safety by providing leadership in the general care of the equipment in use.
4. Communicates with the coach and transmits the coaches messages to the crew.
5. Coxswains are in charge of an emergency and rescue situation - deferring to the coach when the coach boat arrives on the scene.
6. Bow persons perform similar roles in coxless shells.

### **Coxswains or Bow person's Signals**

Emergency Signal (International Distress Signal): Wave both hands over your head. Use only for serious trouble. Use sound device (whistle) to signal for help.

Non-Emergency: Launch help required - wave one arm over your head. Go on by - wave one arm in a throwing fashion.

## **Coach's Safety Responsibilities**

- All coaches shall have a minimum of NCCP Level 1 Coaching Certification or be undergoing training to acquire such. VRC program coaches are required to have current certification in CPR, First Aid with hypothermia and heat injury instruction, small craft safety and water rescue.
- All coaches and instructors require a "Pleasure Craft Operator Card" which is a mandatory requirement by TC (Competency of Operators of Pleasure Craft Regulations of the Canada Shipping Act) to operate a safety launch. A copy of this card is to be kept on file in the LTR Coordinator's office at VRC.
- Stay to the south side of Deadman Island and Coal Harbour Beacon and advise all rowers to do so as well. Water is very shallow on north side of beacons and will damage motors and boats.
- The coach boat operator should be watching for boats leaving or returning to the docks and inform the rowers of the activity. A good tip is to look for masts on boats that are moving relative to the other masts in the marina.

### **Before leaving the dock, responsibilities include:**

#### **Know Your Athletes**

- Minors (under 19) must not proceed on the water without the supervision of a coach (or an approved substitute) in a launch. The first launch out for each workout will be a coach boat.

- All Juniors and Novice (1 year of rowing or less) crews shall have a maximum launch/athlete ratio of 1/9, if three or more launches out then 1/12. This includes passengers in the coach boat.
- During the period from December 1 through January 31, small shell rowing (2x, 2-, 1x) will be restricted to crews under strict group supervision, other than experienced rowers.
- The maximum recommended launch/athlete ratio is 1/15 for experienced crews in a structured program. This includes passengers in the coach boat. All crews must stay in proximity to the launch responsible for their supervision.
- During organized rowing, at least one launch will remain on the water or ready at the dock until all crews are off the water.

### **Coaches Safety Checklist**

- ✓ Ensure all rowers have signed out shells using the VRC shell sign out book.
- ✓ Check the weather conditions and water conditions for debris. Look at the flags on the VRC club roof to help determine the best launching and rowing conditions.
- ✓ Pick up two-way radios, safety vest, whistle, and bull horn from the coach's office.
- ✓ Prepare the coach boat with gas tank, appropriate number of life jackets, blankets and first aid kit and recovery items<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ Meet the athletes and coxswains to discuss the workout, traffic pattern and any unusual circumstances on the waterway – eg: yachting sail pass, new tour boats
- ✓ Check the rowers and coxswain are dressed appropriately for their workout. Dress in layers and make sure your lower back and feet are well protected. Every rower must wear bright colours white, yellow or bright. The coach and/or the VRC safety officer can ask you to wear a safety vest if bright colours are not being worn.
- ✓ Make sure rowers have the supplies that will keep you physically comfortable and safe- such as hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, water, whistle and for winter rowing an appropriate amount of warm clothing/poagies.
- ✓ Check all equipment before leaving the docks – rowers and their coxswain are responsible for checking the conditions of your shell and its rigging. Please bring any missing parts to the attention of the coach and equipment manager immediately.

### **Coach Boat Inspection**

#### **Daily Inspections**

Daily inspections ensure that all equipment and vehicles are in a safe and in proper working condition. These inspections should be taken seriously and can be the difference in preventing an accident from occurring. Also, if crews simply ensure that all bolts are tightened and the oil reservoir is filled, they can help extend the life of the equipment substantially.

Hull

---

<sup>3</sup> Coach Boat Checklist – see appendix

- Ensure that the Transom Plug is in Place and properly secured
- Ensure that the hull is in proper condition
- Ensure that there are no objects under the hull that will cause damage when the coach boat is moved to the water

#### Engine

- Ensure engine transom clamps are firmly tightened
- Ensure that the engine is in good working order
- Ensure that all gas lines are properly secured
- Ensure that the gas tank is full – use 1/3 rule – 1/3 out, 1/3 back, 1/3 in reserve
- Put engine in neutral before starting
- Ensure the kill switch and cord are attached to the engine and the coach boat operator
- If other people are in the coach boat, communicate with them that the engine is being turned over

\* Fuelling procedures are described in Appendix E.

#### **Small Vessel Regulation Safety Equipment**

Ensure that all regulatory gear is on board. Safety Equipment must be able to meet requirements for the largest rowing vessel being used.

#### **Rescue Equipment**

- Ensure that any rescue equipment is on coach boat
- Tow line
- Ladder/Safety lines
- Communications device
- Also to be carried, if not aboard shells, are sufficient lifejackets for every rower under the coach's supervision.

#### **While on the Water, a coach's responsibilities include:**

- ✓ Wear a safety vest (lifejacket or PFD) while operating the coach boat
- ✓ ALWAYS have the engine kill cord attached to you while operating a coach boat
- ✓ Before leaving the dock, make note of how many rowers and shells you are responsible for
- ✓ Before leaving the dock talk with the other coach boat operators and test the radios to ensure you are both on the same frequency and the volume is loud enough
- ✓ Ensure the other coach boat(s) on the water have a two-way radio and an agreement of coach boat positioning has occurred – ie: one coach boat at each end of the course
- ✓ Ensure all rowers are following the designated rowing pattern
- ✓ Be courteous while moving along the rowing course ensuring your coach boat is not swamping rowers. Ensure, when possible, that the coach boat is properly trimmed to limit the wash/wake and the impact that the vessel has on other vessels in the area.

This can be accomplished by changing the angle of the engine relative to the coach boat or by changing the position of objects in the coach boat to redistribute the weight.

- ✓ Remove any logs and debris (that is physically possible) from the rowing course

## What to do in an Emergency

### Emergency Communications

#### Marine Communications

When more than one coach will be on the water at a time, coach boat operators are required to carry a two way radio that can be picked up from the coaches office prior to their on water training session. If available, carry a cell phone for emergency communication.

For any emergency requiring external assistance TELEPHONE **911**, and state the following: Which agency required (Police, Ambulance, Fire, Coast Guard). If you just require the Marine Police and it is an emergency, call **604-665-9346**.

1. Your name and location:  
VANCOUVER ROWING CLUB  
COAL HARBOUR, STANLEY PARK  
GEORGIA ST. ENTRANCE  
450 Stanley Park Drive (604-687-3400)
2. A concise description of the event
3. Any need for water rescue

Any incidents involving outside agencies or authorities, non-VRC vessels or property, injury or harm sustained by athletes or substantial damage to shells must be documented in an Incident Form and the Safety Officer notified. This Incident Form is found in a red binder above the shell sign out shelf.

#### Cell Phones

**\*16** on some cell phones will directly call the Canadian Coast Guard Marine Communications and Traffic Service Centers. (\*16 service is provided by Telus, but not by Fido or Virgin.

*Note: cell phones are not a reliable substitute for a marine radio and not the best means of issuing a distress call. Cell phones can lose reception or get wet and damaged. Calling from your cell phone does not alert other vessels close to you that you are in distress. Unlike VHF transmissions, some wireless phone signals cannot be followed back to your location by rescuers. The Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons provide training regarding the use of VHF radios.<http://www.cps-ecp.ca/>)*

## **Non-Emergency Contact Numbers**

Contact Vancouver Police Department Marine Division or the Port of Vancouver to report vessels anchored in "the pond" (Devonian Harbour).

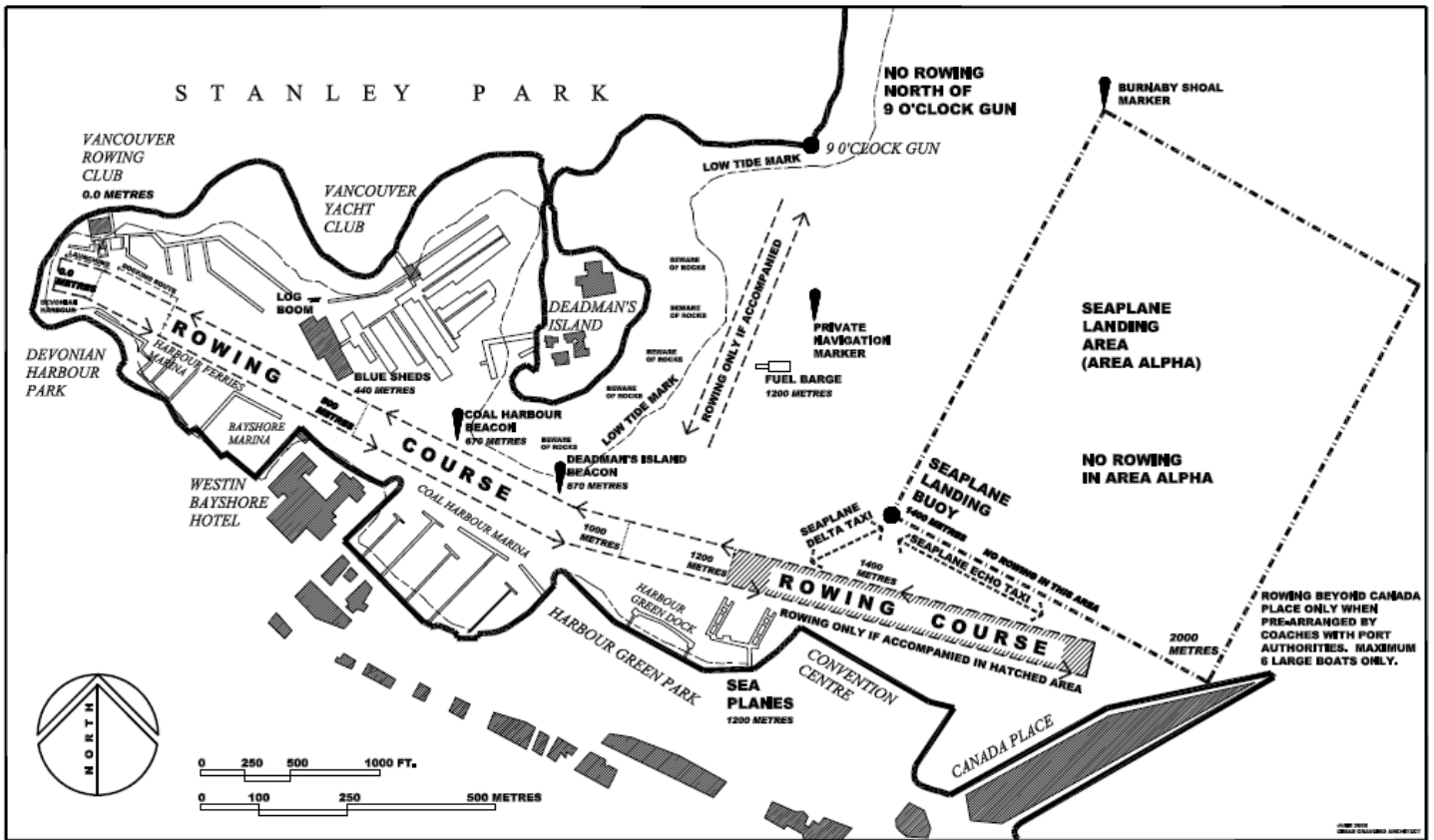
### Nearest Hospitals:

St. Paul's Hospital	1081 Burrard Street 604-682-2344 (main switchboard only)
Vancouver Hospital	855 West 12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue 604-875-4111 (main switchboard only)

### Other Non-Emergency Numbers:

Marine Squad (Police)	604-665-9086
Ambulance	604-872-5151
Fire Department	604-665-6000
Police	604-717-3321
Boating Safety	604-666-0146
Weather (taped message)	604-664-9032

Appendix A – Coal Harbour Map



VANCOUVER ROWING CLUB COURSE IN COAL HARBOUR

## **Appendix B – Rower and Coaches Recovery Plan**

### **Water Emergency Action Plan**

The objective of a Water Emergency Action Plan:

1. To save life
2. To prevent injury
3. To minimize damage to equipment

Emergency scenario examples:

#### **Rower Overboard!**

##### **1. Emergency action by the rower overboard:**

- When you sense that in a few seconds you will fall into water, use the few moments to mentally take control - you know what to do, so do it!
- Avoid jumping into cold water - try to slide into the water
- If possible, take a deep breath before hitting the water
- Be prepared for the shock of cold water'
- Try to pinch your nose and keep your mouth closed
- Try to keep your face out of the water - keep your back to the waves
- Try to keep water away from nose and throat
- Don't be frightened if you feel disoriented or gasping for air, it will pass
- As soon as possible get your bearings - Where is your shell? Is it overturned? Where are other shells? Where is the coach boat?
- Hang onto your shell immediately and do not leave it
- Blow your whistle as hard and as long as you can
- Yell for help if you can
- Your priority now is to get as much of your body as you can out of the water. Pull yourself onto your overturned shell (torso on top of shell)
- If the shell is not overturned, hold on to anything on the shell with your torso out of the water as much as possible.
- Do not try to get back into the shell unless you are certain of very quick success.
- If you cannot get yourself onto the shell have your life jacket on or your PFD activated and assume a fetal position to conserve body heat.
- Do not leave your shell and do not try to swim to shore.
- Avoid all unnecessary movement while waiting for rescue.
- In "warm" water - if you are close to a safe haven - you may slowly swim towing your shell to safety - never leave your shell!

##### **2. Emergency action by other shells or coach boats in the vicinity:**

- Each coxswain, bow person and rower must always keep an ear open for whistle sounds or cries for help
- Respond immediately!
- In coxed shells, coxswain takes charge of the rescue, the bow person takes charge in coxless shells

- "Hold water"
- Whistle, yell, wave both arms to hail coach boat
- Show direction of "help needed" by waving one arm
- Approach rower in water from the lee side (downwind side) if possible
- Ask rower in water: "Are you OK? Any injuries?"
- Instruct rower to stay with the shell and lift torso onto shell
- Assure rower that help is coming
- Stay with rower(s)
- When coach boat arrives, report how long the rower has been in the water and pass on any information about the rower's condition

### **3. Emergency action by the coach/safety person in the coach boat**

- Wear your life jacket or pfd
- Approach the site from the lee side to into the wind to prevent the launch from being pushed into the accident and to ensure maximum control.
- The crew in the coach boat should never stand up in a small open unstable boat.
- Turn the motor off as soon as you are in position to bring the athlete on board. Do **not** leave motor in neutral, idling
- Take charge of the situation: "We are here!" Reassure rower in the water.
- Enquire: Are you OK? Any injuries?
- Get further information from coxswain or rowers of nearby shells
- Lower rescue ladder from the transom

⇒Rower who is shivering but who is rational, and not injured otherwise should be helped into the coach boat, wrapped up in blankets and taken immediately to the dock. If still OK, have rower go into the shower (with someone accompanying him/her), ensure clothes removed and person gets in warm shower. The rower should be observed for couple of hours and should avoid activity until fully recovered.

⇒Rower showing disorientation, problems with breathing, falling into unconsciousness, etc. should be lifted into the coach boat with utmost care and kept in the horizontal position as much as possible. Once in the coach boat, the rower should be kept as still as possible. Cover the rower with a blanket and speed to the nearest dock. If possible, call ahead for help and urgent transport to a hospital.

#### **Safety Boat**

It may be necessary to use the transom area for the recovery.

- Conscious – not injured

Recover the casualty from the transom or use the portable rescue steps aboard the safety boat. Ask the rower to leverage themselves up on the engine and back of the boat to hoist themselves into the boat or climb up the rescue stairs set over the side of the boat. The coach may be required to counter balance the weight by moving to the bow of the boat.

· Conscious – injured

Recover the casualty facing away from the boat, lift under the arms or by clothing; ensuring that no further injury is caused. First, lift the victim to assess, and then help manoeuvre the person around and into the boat. Ensure that the person is placed in a comfortable position, low in the boat to avoid any further injuries.

· Unconscious

Place the casualty facing away from the boat, lift under the arms or by clothing; ensuring that no further injury is caused. First, lift the victim to the top of the gunnel and assess, and then help manoeuvre the person around and into the boat. Ensure that the person is placed in a comfortable position, low in the boat to avoid any further injuries.

If there are two people in the safety boat, it may be necessary for one of the two to move to the far side of the boat to rebalance the list (heel) of the vessel and ensure that the boat does not take on water on the side where the casualty is being recovered. This is specific to the boat and training will ensure that crews understand the dynamics of the vessel

**More than one rower overboard!**

The principles outlined above can be applied to the situation. Be aware of the space limitations of the coach boat. Immediately call for extra coach boats.

**Collision between shells or a floating or stationary object with rower overboard**

- In coxed shells, coxswain in charge (or bow person in coxless shell)
- Immediately whistle, yell, or signal with both arms waving for coach boat
- Immediately throw lifejacket to rower(s) in water
- If need be, detach one oar and push it to rower
- Under no circumstances, leave the shell or have any rower swim from the shell
- While waiting for coach boat, keep watching and assisting rower in water
- Assess the situation: is anyone in the shell(s) injured?
- Does the injured require immediate first aid?
- If so, order all to balance shell, rower behind injured rower to administer aid
- Assess the shell: is there damage to the shell(s)?
- Is the shell taking on water?
- Can the shell be rowed back to the dock or to a safe haven?
- If so, wait till coach boat (or other vessels assisting) arrives to rescue rower in water

**Shell is swamped but floating and rowers are still in the shell**

- Coxswain (or bow person in a coxless shell) in charge
- Immediately signal for help
- Start bailing immediately
- Untie shoes

- Put on lifejackets or PFD's
- Put on whatever extra clothing is available, including hats
- Cox and bow person constantly account for all rowers and each other

Note: If the shell fills with water to the gunnels, it will still float; however, if gunnels are below water level, the shell may break up. If shell is breaking up, one at a time the rowers should slip into the water, keep hold of the shell for flotation. (DO NOT JUMP into the water). Remove the oars and place them parallel to the hull. Move to the ends of the shell and attempt to roll the shell over. Rowers must buddy up and hang onto each other with torso's over the hull while waiting for rescue.

#### **Sudden sickness while rowing:**

- If rower becomes sick, return shell to dock immediately.
- In warm weather conditions, consider heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Symptoms include headache, nausea, pallor, rapid pulse - skin may be warm, flushed, without sweat - pulse may become rapid, pounding. There may be behaviour changes and even unconsciousness. Even while moving back to the dock, douse the rower with cool water, shade from the sun, fan the face, and loosen clothing. Call ahead for immediate paramedical/medical attention.

#### **Post rescue**

- Coach in charge
- Inspect rescued or injured person
- Stop bleeding
- Ensure clear airway
- Provide warmth - or in case of suspected heat exhaustion or heat stroke, cool person down
- In all situations, use common sense and err on the side of caution: send for paramedical help
- Do not transport injured or sick persons in your personal vehicle
- Record information about the person and the event for the club records: submit it to the Safety Officer or the Rowing Section Captain for safekeeping
- Determine if any further follow up is needed to help improve safety culture

#### **Recovering the Rowing Shell**

- Remove the oars from the oarlocks and place in coach boat
- Using one rigger pull the shell towards the side of the coach boat so the shell is parallel to the coach boat
- Holding onto rigger, put the coach boat in drive and idle slowly towards the dock
- Should a shell fill with water or submerge and safe harbour is not possible, the following procedure is to be followed: The shell should be rolled upside-down to increase buoyancy by trapping as much air as possible. If wind is a factor, roll shell with the wind. Oars should remain in the oarlocks to increase buoyancy.

## Appendix C – Fuelling Procedures

### Fuelling Procedures at the gas barge

Raw fuel is extremely harmful to the marine environment and its vapours create a fire hazard. Follow these procedures, steps-by-step, when refueling:

- Moor your coach boat securely to prevent spillage
- Shut off all engines
- Send guests ashore
- Do not smoke while refueling
- Turn off electrical switches, power supplies, and avoid using electrical devices such as portable radios or cell phones
- Remove portable tanks from the vessel before refueling
- Know the capacity of the fuel tank and do not overfill it – you have a duty to prevent leakage or spillage of fuel into the hull or water
- Wipe up spillage and properly dispose of the cloth or towel used
- No person shall knowingly allow leakage of fuel within or from a small vessel
- Return filled gas tanks to the VRC dock, place in the gas storage container and ensure the air lock is released