MANHASSET CREW

SAFETY POLICY

March 2023

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF ROWING SAFETY

The Ten Commandments of Rowing Safety are simple. Here's the Checklist.

1. **SAFETY COMMITTEES MUST DEVELOP AND ENFORCE SAFETY RULES** for scholastic rowers;
2. **COACHES MUST HAVE First Aid, CPR, and Boating Safety certifications**;
3. **SCHOLASTIC ROWERS MUST PASS A SWIM TEST** or wear a life-jacket on the water;
4. **COACHING LAUNCHES MUST BE PROPERLY REGISTERED AND EQUIPPED** with a first aid kit, PFDs for all rowers in that coaches care, tool kit, VHF radios or cell phones in waterproof containers, and a flashlight;
5. Everyone on coaching launches **MUST WEAR USCG** approved life-jackets and drivers must have kill-switch cords;
6. **ROWERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 MUST BE SUPERVISED** on the water at all times;
7. **ROWERS ON WATER TEMPERATURES BELOW 50**℉ may require additional safety precautions;
8. Boats must not launch and should head for shelter immediately in the presence of whitecaps, or winds over 12 knots (13.8 mph); fog (visibility to shore less than 100 yards); electrical storms;
9. A map of local water traffic patterns and known hazards must be posted;
10. **A WRITTEN ACCIDENT REPORT MUST BE SUBMITTED** to the head coach, and chairperson of the safety committee for any incident in which: a) a boat swamps, capsizes or requires assistance for on-water repairs, or b) a rower is injured and requires medical attention.

Based on 2023 USRowing Safety Guidelines

MANHASSET CREW SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Manhasset Crew safety committee is a committee appointed by the Friends of Manhasset Crew (FOMC) Board of Directors. The committee includes the FOMC chairperson, a FOMC vice president (safety committee chairperson) and Manhasset Crew's Director. The safety committee will develop and annually review all safety rules, protocols, and procedures.

These responsibilities should include, but are not limited to:

- An annual safety review meeting and safety checklist review before the start of the spring season.
- A documented safety policy to ensure safe practices and events to prevent incidents and accidents.
- Procedures for responding to both on- and off-water emergencies.
- Means for reporting and tracking injuries, incidents and equipment damage.

SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Know the waterway.

Post a map of local waterways, of traffic patterns (for crew shells as well as all motorized boats) and any known hazards.

Use a Logbook.

The team uses a whiteboard in the boathouse with the daily line-up. This needs to be copied either digitally or on paper and kept on file by the Manhasset Crew Director or coaches depending on availability. The logbook must contain lineups, shell name/description, time in and out of the water, as well as any damage or incidents that may have occurred on the water.

Everyone on the water should be noted on the line-up and logbook.

All Rowers Should Have a Physical and Pass a Swim Test.

Arrange to have a lifeguard perform the test, not the coach. The coach should observe the test, and make note of weak swimmers. The coaches update a google doc of all rowers and the date they passed the swim test. The swim test google doc is available to all coaches and the safety committee.

At minimum, rowers should demonstrate the ability to float and/or tread water for ten minutes, and put on a life jacket while floating.

NOTE: If a rower cannot swim, they should wear a PFD in the shell at all times. Inflatable PFDs are an option.

All clubs should recommend that rowers consult with their physician before starting or re-joining the sport.

On the Launch

Shells should stay within hailing distance of their safety launch. The launch has been outfitted to provide assistance to rowers and/or their shell in the event that it is needed. Most frequently, the toolbox and coach's expertise is available for small equipment adjustments or repairs, to allow for rowing to continue.

If more serious needs arise, the launch is there for rapid transportation.

In and On the Boat:

The boat is not a Personal Flotation Device (PFD); it is an Emergency flotation device. Newer shells have been designed for flotation and have flotation compartments under the rower's bench. Older boats may not have sealed compartments under the rower's bench but the bow and stern compartments will keep the boat afloat. For more information and demonstrations see the USRowing Safety Video.

- USRowing recommends that all unaccompanied shells carry Coast Guard approved PFDs. A copy of the Coast Guard Regulations concerning PFDs is available upon request from USRowing.
- **Oars are not a PFD, nor an emergency flotation device.**

Modern oars will fill with water in a matter of minutes and lose any expected flotation.

Educate the rowers:

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

- Bow, stern, port, and starboard
- Weigh enough, ready to row?, back, tie-in, un-tie, and stop.
- The number of your seat, stroke, bow person, seat numbers in between and what number/seat s/he is that day.
- The term stop should be used only when talking to a specific crew in a race.
- When a coxswain or coach wants a crew to stop immediately, the proper term is "Weigh enough! Hold water!"
- Should someone give the command "Weigh enough! Hold water", rowers must respond immediately, square the blades in the water and bring the boat to a halt.

Each person is 100% responsible for the whole boat and 100% accountable for their own oar, rigging, foot stretchers, seat and slide. USRowing recommends before leaving land to place the boat in slings and check the following:

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

Use the buddy system at all times when not accompanied by a launch.

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

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

Know the Venue:

Make sure that you are aware of the local traffic patterns and rules on the water.

- Take precautions around other types of vessels to avoid collisions and be courteous with boats that have less maneuverability or ability to stop quickly.
- Familiarize yourself with the local traffic patterns, including launching and return patterns at the dock.
- Familiarize yourself with shallow water, stumps, rocks, seasonal problems and landmarks.
- Stay clear of bridge abutments and other man-made or natural obstacles. Do not negotiate a turn near such an obstacle.
- The coxswain or single sculler should make frequent checks on both sides. Listen for oncoming traffic.
- Be courteous to others on that water. Be aware of powerboats and treat them with respect.

<u>WAKES AND WAVES:</u>

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

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

Emergency Conditions

Rowers should not leave his/her shell unless being rescued. If a swamped boat is within a swim-able distance from the shore, the rower should swim the boat to the shore. So do not leave your flotation even if you consider yourself a strong swimmer.

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

- If a rower is injured the immediate command should be "weigh enough! Hold water!". Signal launch if first aid is needed.
- If the shell is damaged but afloat and not taking on water; Immediate command "weigh enough! Hold water!". Make adjustments or signal launch for assistance.

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

- Coxswain directs rowers to untie, and by seat number rowers should carefully slip overboard.
- If the boat is taking on excessive water, signal the launch and unload rowers by pairs; starting in the middle of the boat; as soon as possible in order to avoid damage to the boat. Pairs should form buddies and keep watch of each other. The cox should buddy with the stern pair.
- If rescue is not imminent, take the following steps: Remove oars and place them parallel to the shell. All persons should move to the two ends of the shell. It is dangerous to roll a shell when near riggers. Then roll the boat so the hull is up, to form a more stable flotation platform so rowers can either lie on top of the hull or buddies can hold onto each other across the hull. Remember that body heat loss occurs 25 times faster in the water. Do not roll the boat if rescue is on the way.
- A launch can shuttle rowers to the nearest shore. Be careful not to overload the launch.
- When the boat has been brought to the shore, remove the oars. If the ends of the shell have filled with water, they must be drained before the boat can be removed from the water. Lift the shell carefully to avoid injury or damage. A boat full of water is very heavy, so try bailing first, then roll the boat slowly and lift it from the water.
- If the shell breaks apart and begins sinking, the immediate command should be "untie!" Get out of the boat and follow the same procedures as for a swamped shell. Do not leave the floating boat. Swim boat to shore if launch is not immediate.
- If the shell is capsized the immediate command should be "untie!" This rarely happens except in small boats. Be sure that all rowers and cox are accounted for. Stay with the boat until assistance arrives.

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

TRAVEL SAFETY

The team will travel to regattas under the supervision of coaches and parent volunteers. Travel may involve overnight stays in hotels. The MHS Crew Student and Parent Handbook defines policies for travel/regattas.

Athletes and parents should read and understand all policies in the MHS Crew Student and Parent Handbook, especially related to travel safety.

Coaches will ensure the following checklist is completed for travel:

- first aid kit
- AED
- emergency contact information
- power of attorney forms