

Dart-Totnes ARC Water Safety Plan: Rules, Procedures and Guidelines

1. Introduction

This document sets out the Safety Procedures and summarises the codes of practice operated by Dart-Totnes ARC and comprises part of the club's Duty of Care policy. Safety is everyone's responsibility and is paramount at all times, so these procedures apply to all members and visitors to Dart-Totnes ARC including users of private equipment.

2. DTARC Water Safety Rules

- 2.1 All members must abide by the **Amateur Rowing Association Water Safety Code**, the **International Regulation for Preventing Collisions at Sea (IRPCS)** and the **Dart Harbour Navigation Authority** bylaws.
- 2.2 During club training sessions, The Captain, Vice Captains, Safety Advisor, Senior Coach or other senior person in charge shall decide if the river conditions are suitable for rowing, this decision being final and without appeal.
- 2.3 Individual crews, scullers and their coaches shall, in addition to the above, conduct their own risk assessment and plan their outing accordingly.
- 2.4 **All crews and scullers must record their details and expected return times on the In/Out board. The club does not allow single scullers to venture out alone with club boats.**
- 2.5 **Beginners** must be supervised on the water at all times and must remain in sight of an experienced coach or senior person in charge. **Inexperienced** rowers or scullers (as defined by judgement of the coach or senior person in charge) shall not go further down the river than the end of Longmarsh Reach unless accompanied on the water by suitably experienced persons.
- 2.6 No **junior** member shall go out on the river unless there is a senior person in charge, and shall not go further down the river than the double bends unless accompanied by a competent experienced senior within the crew OR in an accompanying boat.
- 2.7 Safety features (bow balls, heel restraints, hatch covers etc) on all boats must be in accordance with the ARA Safety Code. Individuals and crews are responsible for checking their boats before each outing.
- 2.8 Accidents that involve third parties or result in injury to club members or damage to club equipment must be recorded as **Reportable Incidents**, whilst other incidents such as capsizes must be noted as **Recordable Incidents**, in the Incident Logbook in the boat house.
- 2.9 **Limits of Navigation:** In general, do not go up-river beyond Steamer Quay due to underwater obstructions, strong eddies and limited space to manoeuvre. Never proceed below Dartmouth Castle.
- 2.10 Crews must dress for conditions anticipated, should not wear jeans and should always bring a towel and a change of clothes and carry liquid to avoid dehydration.

IF IN DOUBT DO NOT GO OUT

3. Notes for Private Scullers and Rowers

- 3.1 No less than any other club member, scullers and rowers using their own boats must be aware of all safety rules and duty of care notes. The club does not take any responsibility for personal injury whatsoever, nor does it take responsibility for damage to a member's property.
- 3.2 Boat owners are responsible for ensuring that they have the minimum third party insurance cover on their boats; uninsured boats cannot be stored on the club premises.
- 3.3 Boat owners are also responsible for ensuring that their boats are licensed by the Dart Harbour Navigation Authority for use on the Dart
- 3.4 The club strongly recommends that single scullers do not venture onto the water alone. Lone scullers choosing to ignore this recommendation do so at their own risk and should leave word with someone that they are going out on the river.
- 3.5 All crews and scullers must record their details and departure time with expected return time on the In/Out Board.

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4. Emergency Information

4.1 Emergency phone numbers

999	Ambulance, Fire, Police or Coastguard.
0845 4647	NHS Direct
01803 862671	Doctor (Leaside Surgery, Babbage Road)
01803 862073	Doctor Catherine House, New Walk)
01803 862622	Community Hospital (Minor Casualties)
01803 6145567	Torbay Hospital (24hr major, casualty & X rays)
01803 832337	Dart Harbour Navigation Office
01803 839224	Dart Lifeboat Station
01803 882704	Brixham Coastguard
08452777444	Devon & Cornwall Police
0800 807060	Environment Agency
01803 557624	Torbay Wildlife Rescue Service

4.2 Emergency Phones

Red phone in boat house (outside ladies changing room)

Phone behind bar in upstairs club house.

Phones in neighbouring industrial units.

Anybodies mobile.

4.3 Missing Crews Procedure

If a crew or sculler has not returned by 1 hour after their written up return time, check that the boat is still out and ask if they have been seen, check if their cars or bikes are still at the club and phone their homes. If not accounted for assume they are in difficulty, and:

- Call the Dart Harbour Office, Brixham Coastguard and club Captain.
- Detail one responsible person to remain at the boathouse as a point of contact.
- If available and safe to do so, take the safety launch with safety kit bag, mobile phone and one other person (and inform the Harbour Office/Coastguard) to search the river.

5. Safety Equipment

5.1 Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs –Lifejackets and Buoyancy Aids)

All coxswains, launch drivers and launch crew must wear a flotation device.

Coxswains in bow-loaders must wear a manually operated self inflating lifejacket and NOT a foam buoyancy aid, due to risk of getting trapped underwater.

PFDs are kept on hooks by the boathouse door. Choose one the correct size for your activity and fit correctly, using the straps and clips provided. Wash and stow correctly after use. Report any damage.

Throw lines are kept on the hooks with the PFDs, in an emergency –

Get the attention of the casualty, reassure them and explain that you will use the line.

Position yourself on the bank with a safe footing and with regard to the path the casualty will take as they are pulled in.

Hold the line by the handle in one hand and throw the bag.

If you miss, loosely lay the line³ in big loops on the ground, fill the bag with water and try again.

Pull the casualty in steadily.

The casualty must hold the bag and beware of water thrown up into the face when being pulled in.

5.3 First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is located near the main entrance to the boat house with the buoyancy aids and throw lines. Its content is checked monthly. Use of the kit should be recorded in the Incident Log Book.

5.4 Safety and In/Out Notice Boards

The main Safety Notice Boards are located towards the back of the boat house alongside the entrance to the ladies changing rooms. They display the ARA Water Safety Poster, Child Protection, hypothermia and first aid posters, navigational rules and charts, ARA Guidelines for the safe use of rescue launches and ARA guidelines for the towing of trailers. The Incident Logbook and Damage & Repair Logbook are kept by these boards.

Members and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves with the information and check regularly for updates.

The In/Out board is for the recording of crews and scullers details when they take to the water and should include name, Type of boat, time out and expected time back. On safe return from an outing the entry should be deleted. It lives in the boathouse and brought out whenever a boat takes to the water.

5.5 Motor Launch

The club owns a small rigid inflatable launch with a 15hp 4-stroke outboard for coaching and safety boat duties.

The driver, who should ideally hold an RYA Level 2 Powerboat Certificate, must have the club Captain's permission and be familiar with the ARA's Water Safety Code, guide for the use of Rescue Launches, local rules of navigation and the correct use of the safety equipment provided. The driver must also be accompanied by at least one other responsible person. The driver, crew and any passengers must wear buoyancy aids and should not wear wellington boots.

An ARA Rescue Launch Kit, paddles, bailer, spare fuel, anchor and line should be carried in the launch. The Incident Logbook and Damage & Repair Logbook should be used as necessary, with any problems reported to the Captain or Safety Adviser.

5.6 Incident Reporting

It is a requirement of the ARA and the club's insurers that any accident or incident is recorded. It also enables the club to identify areas where safety can be improved.

Accidents that involve third parties or result in injury to club members or damage to club equipment must be recorded as Reportable Incidents, whilst other incidents such as capsize must be noted as Recordable Incidents in the Incident Logbook in the boat house.

6 Local Navigation

6.1 Speed.

Power driven vessels are not to exceed six knots in most of the river and "dead slow" in Home Reach. Rowers and scullers should proceed slowly and with caution along Home Reach and past the Club during Club Juniors and Beginners sessions.

6.2 Overtaking

Rowers and scullers should move out towards the middle of the river when overtaking and not cut inside. IRPCS Rule 13 applies "any vessel being overtaking any other shall keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken".

6.3 Circulation

The standard circulation pattern is anti-clockwise. Boats launching in a down-river direction should cross to the other side as soon as it is safe to do so.

Note – Craft under oars have no rights of way over powerboats or sailboats.

7 Risk Assessment

Coaches, coxswains, crews and scullers should conduct a risk assessment before taking to the water. Risk is the probability of an accident multiplied by the severity of the outcome. Listed below are some of the basic checks individuals should undertake (and the associated hazards in round brackets) [and actions to take in square brackets]:

Weather – temperature: is it very hot or very cold? (hypothermia, heat exhaustion) [wear appropriate clothing, take bottled water, and limit duration].

Weather – wind speed & direction: will it cause adverse wind-against tide? (swamping, capsize) [plan ahead and don't go too far downstream].

Tide: when is high or low water? (grounding) [delay outing or return in good time].

Is the boat OK – (injury through collision, entrapment, sinking) [bow balls, heel restraints and buoyancy compartments in good order].

How competent are you? (capsize, collision) [beginners and inexperienced rowers to be accompanied by a coach and make sure you are up-to-date with the Clubs safety byelaws].

You should also ask yourself “what if” (e.g. capsize while unaccompanied in cold weather or capsize or injury to a quad full of juniors in your charge) and take whatever precautions are required to minimize the risk.

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