

## Guidelines for Rowing Training in Oriental Bay November 2013

Wellington Rowing Club, Star Boating Club, the Wellington Rowing Association (WRA) and the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) Harbour Rangers have had a number of meetings to discuss protocols for rowers and swimmers wishing to train on shared water within the Wellington Harbour. Accidents involving collisions between rowers and swimmers are of grave concern and we have identified a need to put in place guidelines to mitigate the risk of further accidents.

While the rowers training on the harbour can be identified as belonging to two rowing clubs that operate under one association (WRA), the swimmers training/recreating on the harbour are more independent in nature. It is therefore more difficult to communicate with this group of harbour users and developing a shared understanding of harbour use is problematic.

It was therefore decided that the rowing clubs should focus on measures they could put in place to mitigate risk and that these measures should be communicated to and ratified by the Harbour Rangers. It would then be the Harbour Rangers' responsibility to communicate a protocol for harbour use to other groups training and recreating on the harbour.

The following guidelines for the Wellington Rowing Club and Star Boating Club are suggested:

### 1. Rowing New Zealand and Club Safety Guidelines

Safety Officers from both clubs will ensure that their coaches and rowers are aware of their club's safety procedures and the Rowing New Zealand Water Safety Code (appendix 1), and that there are systems in place for ensuring these guidelines are adhered to. Particular attention should be paid to:

- The number of skiffs that may be supervised on the water by a coach/safety boat at a training session.
- The number of rowers that can be supervised on the water by a coach/safety boat at a training session.
- The distance that must be maintained between the coach/safety boat and skiffs during a training session.
- The guidelines for unaccompanied training.

### 2. Greater Wellington Regional Council Bylaws

GWRC has bylaws governing craft operating on Wellington Harbour (appendix 2). Rowing boats are exempt of the 5 knot speed restriction (bylaw 3.2.5) and are therefore permitted to train inside and outside the 5 knot buoy line, although outside is recommended if conditions permit. Coaching boats are still bound by the 5 knot rule, except when they are in close attendance to a rowing boat.

It was noted that most swimmers would be training/recreating inside the 5 knot buoy line, between the 5 knot buoy line and Oriental Bay shoreline. Swimmers will (where possible) be made aware of the risks of swimming in the harbour due to the presence of various watercraft in the area and the difficulty in seeing swimmers in the water. Advice on a "safe swimming lane", in a line from Freyberg Beach to the Point Jerningham lighthouse, will be provided through signage installed by Wellington City Council and GWRC. Note however, that swimmers could be encountered anywhere within the area.

In response to our concern for swimmer safety we intend placing a restriction on training between the 5 knot buoy line and Oriental Bay shoreline.

**Inside the 5 knot buoy line to Oriental Bay shoreline rowers must be accompanied by and within hailing distance of a coach/safety boat. The purpose of this is to provide an extra set of eyes for rowers and coxswains when training in an area where swimmers are likely to be.**

Outside the 5 knot buoy line, rowers may train accompanied or unaccompanied within the guidelines of the Rowing New Zealand safety rules.

Note that under Maritime law "Every vessel must at all times maintain a proper look-out..."

Appendix 1 Rowing New Zealand "Water Safety Code, 2004"

Appendix 2 Extract from Wellington Regional Council website, "Navigation and Safety Bylaws"

APPENDIX 1

# **Rowing**

## **Water Safety Code**

April 2004

**This code shall be prominently displayed in every clubhouse/boathouse and additional copies made available to all coaches, administrators and members.**

**“Approved Personal Floatation device (PFD), lifejackets or buoyancy aids are those approved under the Maritime Rule 91, Navigation Safety”**

**The rules below provide an exemption from carrying approved buoyancy aids or PFDs as required by Maritime Rule 91.4( 1)**

## **The Code**

### **1.1**

Every Association, Club, School, College and University (hereafter reference will only be made to Club) shall appoint a Safety Officer.

The Safety Officer shall advise the club on the requirements of the NZRA Water Safety Code and oversee its implementation and operation. Breaches of the code are to be identified and must be advised to the offender.

### **1.2**

There shall be prominently displayed in every Club and Boathouse; a list of vital telephone numbers relating to safety in general.

- EMERGENCY SERVICES - '111'
- Fire, Police, Ambulance, list details of information to be given, viz: situation, access, details
- Doctors
- Local hospital casualty department
- Local river or harbour police
- Coastguard
- Lifeguards

Clear directions to the nearest alternative telephone point shall also be displayed.

### **1.3.1**

Safety and First Aid equipment shall be readily available in every Club. This equipment must include -

- First Aid Box (to be fully stocked, contents listed. The box contents must be checked monthly).
- Thermal/exposure blankets
- Rescue lines
- Life jackets
- Buoyancy aids/ Personal Floatation devices (PFD's)

### **1.3.2**

Clubs must ensure that their coaches and organisers undertake basic first aid training.

### **1.4**

Visual aids on water safety, life saving and resuscitation procedures shall be displayed prominently.

### **1.5**

Every Club providing rowing or sculling facilities shall draw up and display a plan of the local waterway, drawing attention to the navigation rules and any additional rules required to accommodate specific local hazards. Instructions shall be included on any variation in normal procedures necessary to combat tidal, stream, wind or other climatic conditions which may arise locally.

### **1.6**

An accident log shall to be maintained and be available for inspection at all times, giving time, place and nature of accident, injuries/damages sustained and names and addresses of witnesses. All cases of accident involving injury shall be notified in writing to the local Association and the NZRA using the standard pro-formas attached (See incidence reporting)

A boat maintenance log or notebook shall be kept for each patrol boat showing maintenance and repairs for the boat, equipment and motor, and the date when the work was carried out.

**The following paragraphs relate to specific aspects of the sport which, for convenience, have been grouped under separate headings for ease of reference**

### **Equipment**

For the safety of all concerned, rowing equipment must be maintained in good order.

#### **2.1.**

Every boat must at all times carry firmly attached to its bows a white ball of not less than 4cm diameter made of rubber or material of similar consistency

#### **2.2**

Heel restraints and "quick-release" mechanisms must be in proper and effective working order in all boats equipped with fitted shoes. The restraints must allow no more than 50mm of heel lift on the shoe.

#### **2.3**

For outings between the hours of 30 mins before sunset to 30 mins after sunrise boats shall be fitted with lights as required (light requirements 11.6.3). and shall carry a torch to alert other vessels so as to avoid collision or signal for assistance.

#### **2.4**

Check oars and sculls to ensure that "buttons" are secure and properly set.

#### **2.5**

Buoyancy compartments, bow and stern canvasses, etc., must be checked to ensure that they will function as intended.

### **Rowers, Scullers & Coxswains**

#### **3.1**

All persons participating in rowing or sculling must be in good health and able to swim a minimum of [50]m in light clothing and shoes.

#### **3.2**

Physically challenged athletes participating in rowing or sculling activities must be provided with suitable rescue facilities to cope with any accident whilst afloat.

#### **3.3**

All coxswains shall wear an approved lifejacket (non self inflating) when on the water for both training and in competition. Where the coxswain is located in the bow of a boat, care must be taken in the choice of lifejacket to ensure that the coxswain is not restricted when exiting the boat. Self-inflating life jackets must not be used.

#### **3.4**

All crews, when going on the water - whether accompanied or not, must appoint a person to have overall responsibility for the crew. This person will usually be the person steering the boat or the stroke of the crew if the person steering is considered unsuitable. It is this person's responsibility to ensure that the crew complies with the rules and is the person to whom any inquiry will be directed should an incident occur.

### **Coaching**

**For the purposes of this document a coach is defined as a person or persons accompanying a crew or crews in a powered craft.**

#### **4.1**

Coaches are not only concerned with coaching their crews, they have a responsibility to remind crews that they need to fulfill the crew's safety requirements on the water. (see sections 2 and 3)

#### **4.2**

A coach shall ensure that every member of the crews of which he has charge is aware of the appropriate safety procedures at all times.

#### **4.3**

Coaches shall ensure that the whole crew, including the coxswain, are dressed suitably, adequately protected for the weather conditions they are likely to encounter.

#### **4.4**

Coaches and coaching launch drivers shall wear life jackets at all times whilst afloat.

#### 4.5

All coaching launches and safety boats shall carry the following safety aids:

- A bailer, and, for inflatable rubber dinghies, a suitable inflation pump and a spare inflation valve.
- A sound signalling warning device, capable of attracting attention over at least 200 meters. e.g. Air horn or whistle
- A grab line at least 15m (50ft) long with a large knot tied in one end to assist throwing (ideally a purpose made rescue/heaving line - 'throw bag').
- Sufficient approved Buoyancy aids or PFD's for the biggest boat they are coaching (8 max) (see Club Training Below)
- A basic first aid kit (contents recorded and checked before going out).
- A sharp knife in carrying sheath.
- A paddle.
- Simple handholds fixed to the side of the launch to give help to any person being rescued.
- Engine cut-out lanyard device, accessible to the driver at all times
- Anchor and line.
- If more than 500 meters from the nearest shore a red hand flare shall be carried.

#### 4.6

Any activity on the water between the hours of 30 mins before sunset to 30 mins after sunrise requires the launches to be fitted with lights as laid down by the MSA ( see appendix Club Training below) and carry a torch to alert other vessels to avoid collision or to signal for assistance.

### **CLUB TRAINING**

#### 5.1

The areas of water in which the club carries out its training must be clearly defined in a **Risk Management Plan. (RMP)**

#### 5.2

For these purposes 2 types of water training areas exist.

##### 5.2.1

That which is used most often by club crews, i.e. going from Point A to Point B and back again to Point A. (usually close to the clubhouse).

##### 5.2.2

That which is used sometimes by crews, i.e. areas which are outside those described in (a). Areas, which are used for occasional longer outings.

#### 5.3

All on water hazards moving or fixed need to be clearly defined in the RMP with appropriate strategies outlined if a crew gets into difficulties.

#### 5.4

Suitable landing or exit points need to be identified along the rowing route with the closest medical centres listed.

#### 5.5

The Risk Management Plan to be clearly displayed in the Clubhouse and supplied to each rower upon becoming a member of the Club.

## **5.6**

Four types of training are identified as

1. Accompanied training (with coach)
2. Unaccompanied training (without coach)
3. Training before dawn and after dusk
4. Open Water - defined as more than 1500 meters from a bank or shore.

The following conditions apply and must be adhered to.

### **5.6.1 Accompanied training.**

**5.6.1 a.** – When accompanied by the coach/safety officer in a powerboat - One coach in a powerboat can supervise a maximum of 3 rowing skiffs at any one time, provided that the crew/s are always able to hear given instructions from the coach. The powerboat should carry the required number of Buoyancy Aids/PFDs as per 4.5

All coxswains and coaches must wear approved lifejackets when carrying out their duties on the water (as required in 4.3 above)

**5.6.1 b.** When the Coach/Safety officer is not in a powerboat - In sheltered waters where the sides of the waterway are less than 200 meters apart - crews must be under the observation of an individual(s) who is/are able to summon additional help if required.

### **5.6.2 Unaccompanied training**

Each rower must either wear an approved buoyancy aid/ PFD or the boat must have an easily accessible buoyancy aid for each person.

NOTE: Before going on the water a member of the crew must assume responsibility for the crew. It is that person's responsibility to ensure that the crew complies with the rules for unaccompanied crews and is the person to whom any inquiry will be directed should an incident occur. (as per 3.4)

### **5.6.3 Training before dawn and after dusk**

Note: This is dangerous and should not be encouraged.

The rules above for Accompanied and Unaccompanied training will apply, in addition:

Boats must carry on the bow a continuous all round (360 degrees) white light one metre above the level of the canvas on the bow and visible for at least 500 meters in all directions and a torch

Coach boats must display a continuous all round white light on the bow capable of being seen for at least 500 meters in all directions and a torch

### **5.6.4 Open Water Rowing**

Each Person must wear an approved PFD and have on board a method of attracting attention (whistle)