

Tyne Amateur Rowing Club - Risk Assessment - rowing activities

Scope of Risk Assessment	Water based rowing activities, with first section focusing on new starters				
Prepared by:	Harry Clark	Last reviewed/revised:	1 October 2025	Next review date:	1 October 2026

LIKELIHOOD OF OCCURRENCE (L) 1 = Very unlikely 2 = Unlikely 3 = Likely 4 = Very Likely 5 = Certain or imminent						
SEVERITY IF INCIDENT OCCURS (S) 1 = Minor disruption to crew or individual 2 = Minor Injury/damage to equipment 3 = Potential immersion/exposure to adverse condition 4 = Significant trauma or injury due to collision, exposure to conditions or external agent 5 = Potential fatality/incapacity						
		Severity if incident occurs				
		1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood of occurrence	1	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
	2	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	3	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	4	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
	5	Low	Medium	High	High	High

RISK RATING (RR)		
Small Residual Risk = 1 - 6 No further action required. Ensure controls are maintained	Adequately Controlled Risk = 7 - 14 Look to improve at next review	Unacceptable Risk = 15 - 25 Stop activity immediately and improve controls

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	Hazard & Risk	Who or what is at risk?	L x S - risk rating <i>with no controls</i>	Control Measures/Mitigation	L x S - risk rating <i>with controls</i>	Who	How often
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1	General measures for activities involving new starters						
1.1.	Unfamiliarity with procedures Risk of injury, damage to boats, loss of equipment	Rowers, boats	3 x 3 9	• Induction training • Regular reminders on key safety issues • Squad briefings at least on an annual basis • Crews to sign in and out	2 x 2 4	Club Rowing Safety Adviser (CRSA)	Learn to row / new member / ongoing
1.2	Failure to learn from previous incidents on river Major injuries, loss of life, loss/serious damage to boats.	Rowers, coaches, boats	4 x 4 16	• Report details of all incidents, including near misses, to the CRSA and for more serious incidents on the British Rowing system	2 x 2 4	CRSA	Ongoing
1.3	Lack of confidence in water	Rowers	3 x 3 9	• Swim test and capsized drill should be completed by all members and repeated at least every 5 years. • Priority for drill completion is new starters	2 x 3 6	CRSA, coaches	When new starters join club
1.4	Lack of experience in supervision	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 4 12	• At least one coach present, at sessions requiring a coach, should have achieved Level 2 coaching qualification (or equivalent) • Coaches must be members of British Rowing for water-based work with juniors and for leading courses on the water on behalf of the club for adult beginners.	2 x 2 4	CRSA, coaches	Adequate training provided

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1.5	Participants are in poor health or injured prior to starting their session.	Rowers, coaches, Boats, coaches	2 x 3 6	- Schools to highlight any student illness or injury with club before beginning the session - Coaches to verbally ask all participants/customers prior to each session if there are any injuries or illnesses to note - First aider is available on site at all times	1 x 3 3	Coaches	Every session
1.6	Participants are incorrectly dressed for the session.	Rowers, coaches, coaches	3 x 2 6	- All participants must have the correct clothing on relative to the prevailing weather conditions to prevent anything from heat stroke to hypothermia - Any participant not correctly or sufficiently dressed will be advised to change, participants in insufficient clothing may be prevented from water activities. - All participants required to bring spare kit in case they capsize or get wet. Participants with long hair are advised to tie it up using the hairbands.	1 x 2 2	Coaches	Every Session
1.7	Capsizing during a session	Rowers, coaches, Boats, coaches	3 x 5 15	- Participants will be briefed on what to do in the instance of capsize (get feet out of shoes, stay with the boat, try not to panic, get on hull of boat) - Participants will be briefed on correct clothing to reduce risk of absorption of water. No hoodies or jeans should be worn. - Precautions to reduce risk of capsize, floats on the boat for beginners or putting beginners in stable boats - Coach to undertake mental risk assessment before each session to see if safety cover needs to alter to support the students. - A coach or experienced rower can be in bow seat of a boats for students less able to support	2 x 5 10	Coaches	Every Session

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				stability Coaches and participants will be briefed on checking heel restraints are correct to avoid feet getting stuck on capsizes			
1.8	Incorrect ratio of coaches to rowers	Coaches, Rowers, coaches, Boats	2 x 3 6	- The beginner participants' ratio is 1:4 rowing, 1:5 if one coxing on the water - This ratio can be expanded to 1:8 for crews that are deemed to be sufficiently experienced by the coach. - The coach should only boat crews they feel are competent for conditions at time of session. - Following Safeguarding protocols, no junior is to be in a 1-1 situation with any adult on site at the club, including any of the coaching team	1 x 3 3	Coaches	Every Session
1.9	Insufficient launches available to safely run session.	Coaches, Rowers, coaches, Boats	2 x 5 10	- Coaching launches are fit for purpose, checked for damage or holes and that bungs and lights (if dark) are present. - Launches have the safety kit bag with the correct contents and that the container is sealed and dry. - Sufficient and appropriate fuel for the outing - Kill cords attached to engine and coach - Paddle on board in case the engine fails - Coaches wearing lifejackets - Coaches appropriately dressed for the weather - Coaches to have mobile phone on loud, charged and with them at all times for the session	2 x 3 6	Coaches	Every Session

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2	Boathouse						
2.1	Repairs, adjustments and maintenance Minor injuries, damage to boats, loss of equipment	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 1 3	• Use of correct tools for job • Correct safety equipment used when required • Appropriate personnel to undertake the work	3 x 1 3	VC (Vice Captain) Boats, coach	As needed
2.2	Unsafe boats and equipment Major injuries, loss of life, loss/serious damage to boats.	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 5 15	• Regular audit • Reporting of problems • Proper repairs carried out ASAP • Notices on quarantined boat • Visual and physical check of buoyancy Compartments and bungs being watertight. • Every boat has a securely fixed bow ball before going on the water. • Check that all swivels and gates in working order. • Check for working seats for the boat. • Check that foot stretchers and shoes are attached with the correct heel restraints. • Check steering mechanisms are working. • Depending on ability level check that rigger floats are secure. • Ensure each launch has the correct kill cord, fuel, safety kit, paddle and throw line.	2 x 3 6	CRSA / VC Boats	Monthly audit / daily
2.3	Cleanliness Dust, fungal ingestion/inhalation, rats	Rowers, coaches, pets	3 x 4 12	• Inspection • Regular cleansing • Pest control if serious	2 x 3 6	Club Manager / Squads	Weekly

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2.4	Mobile boat racks, shutters, gates. Muscular strain, bumps Damage to boats Collision	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 3 3	• Inspection and simple maintenance • Regular professional checks for shutters	1 x 3 3	VC Boats, Club Manager/	Monthly / annually
2.5	Riggers on stored or moving boats Bumps, head/eye injury, damage to boats	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 5 15	• Close gates • Sufficient rowers, coaches to lift boats • Observers to warn • Boats stored neatly without access impeded.	1 x 5 5	VC Boats	Daily
2.6	Storage of equipment Trips, slips, falls, bumps, damage or loss of equipment	Rowers, coaches	4 x 3 12	• Regular inspection of storage areas • Store equipment neatly. Put equipment in cupboards or receptacles when finished with • Keep floor/access areas clear	2 x 3 6	VC Boats	Weekly / daily
2.7	Petrol Fire, inhalation, spillage & contamination	Rowers, coaches, visitors, wildlife	3 x 4 12	• Store in approved containers • Containers in steel cupboard when not in use • Fill launch containers in open air • Approved personnel only allowed to handle the petrol/containers	1 x 3 3	Launch drivers	Daily
2.8	Lighting Light failure leading to darkness and poor visibility	Rowers, coaches	1 x 5 5	• regular maintenance checks carried out • Repair fuse and/or replace tubes promptly	1 x 3 3	Club Manager	Checks weekly / repairs when needed
2.9	Hoses Slips, falls	Rowers, coaches	3 x 3 9	• Put the hose away after use. Check for tangles/kinks and remove.	1 x 3 3	Users of hose	As needed

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2.10	Boats & trailers, changing facilities, car park, club Theft/vandalism as outdoor areas cannot be closed off	Property within club premises	3 x 3 9	- Warn in advance of risk. - Ensure vigilance during the races. - Offer secure storage if possible.	2 x 2 4	Club Manager / members as individuals	Daily
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3	Access to and from the water						
3.1	Steps, some damaged Slips, trips, falls	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 4 12	- External lighting - Clear steps of debris, weed, mud and ice. - Descend and ascend slowly, under control - Footwear with good grip - Get steps repaired	2 x 3 6	CRSA, users as individuals	Daily / repairs as needed
3.2	Low tide conditions at steps: Falls, muscular strains, inability to wade ashore or carry boats up to the first step. Cuts and grazes, likely to become infected.	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 3 9	- Warnings issued on upcoming low tides - Avoid boating during very low tides where possible.	2 x 3 6	CRSA, users	Daily
3.3	Strong tides and current on boating or landing Capsize, damage to boat, collision	Rowers, coaches, boats	5 x 3 15	- Assistance on the shore - Training in landing techniques - Arrive/leave heading into tide/wind/current whichever is stronger	3 x 2 6	Coach	Daily
3.4	Hadrian's Way path Collision with walkers, horse-riders or cyclists. Bumps, falls, damage to boats	Rowers, coaches, boats, visitors, passers by	3 x 2 6	- Give way to path users - Advise rowers not to hesitate to shout if necessary	2 x 2 4	Users	Daily

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3.5	Rowing equipment left lying Slips, trips, falls, damage to blades, equipment may be knocked into the water or float away as tide rises	Rowers, coaches, blades, other equipment	3 x 1 3	• Good supervision • Put all rowing equipment back as soon as feasible possible • Check steps after outings, especially after dark	2 x 1 2	Rowers as individual	Daily
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4	River water quality, debris & other hazards						
4.1	Quality Infections, poisoning, water-borne diseases	Rowers, coaches, pets	3 x 5 15	• Avoid ingestion, wash hands after rowing, cleanse and cover cuts, blisters and other areas of broken skin. Shower as soon as possible after rowing. • Use a screw top water bottle. • Wear strong shoes or boots on steps	2 x 4 8	CRSA / rowers as individual	Daily
4.2	Floating debris Damage to boats, capsize, drowning	Rowers, coaches, boats	1 x 5 5	• Keep watch for debris. Cancel rowing when large amounts of debris are present • Warn crews and coxes	1 x 4 5	Coach / rower as individual	Daily
4.3	Underwater obstructions Damage to boats, capsize, drowning	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 3 9	• Safety map on display in clubhouse and on TARC website • Warnings about temporary obstructions posted in clubhouse and on website • Warn novice, visiting and inexperienced crews and coxes	1 x 3 3	CRSA	Daily
4.4	Overhanging trees and posts	Rowers, coaches, boats	1 x 2 2	• Good lookout	1 x 1 1	Rower as individual	Daily

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4.5	Members of the public Stone throwing and verbal abuse	Rowers, coaches, boats	1 x 2 2	- Stay clear of banks when vandals are sighted - Report if serious	1 x 1 1	Rower as individual	Daily
4.6	Wildlife Weil's disease, bird flu, attack by or harm to large birds, collision with seals	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 2 6	- Good hygiene, vigilance when on the water - If presence of wildlife is becoming a limiting factor assess whether continuing to row is safe to do so - Report serious interaction with wildlife to coach	1 x 3 3	CRSA, rowers as individual	Daily

5	Water conditions						
5.1	Water skiers Water skiers may be present, risk of collision or swamping from wash.	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 2 6	- Keep good lookout - Stop rowing to sit through wash - Avoid designated water skiing area if necessary	3 x 1 3	CRSA, rowers as individual	Daily
5.2	Mid-tide Strong currents, particularly on bends Rapid exposure of mud banks-danger of grounding Temptation to proceed to Wylam	Rowers, coaches, boats	4 x 3 12	- Check on tide times and extent, on display in the clubhouse. - Tide times link on website - Warnings of exceptional tides - If currents appear dangerous consider abandoning/canceling rowing and provide warnings to novice/inexperienced crews and coxes	1 x 3 3	CRSA / VC Coaching	Daily
5.3	Low tide Exposed mud/rocks/debris Slippery steps River very narrow - increased risk of collision and grounding	Rowers, coaches, boats	4 x 4 16	- Check on tide times and extent, on display in the clubhouse. - Tide times link on website - Warnings of exceptional tides. - Warnings to novice/visiting/inexperienced crews and coxes to keep good lookout	4 x 1 4	CRSA / VC Coaching	Daily

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5.4	Rough water conditions Wind, especially when against tide can create large waves – danger of capsizing or swamping	Rowers, coaches, boats	4 x 4 16	• All boats to have built-in buoyancy • Cancel rowing when conditions are severe • Sufficient launches including a rescue launch	2 x 4 10	VC Boats, CRSA	Daily
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6	Weather & light						
6.1	Overall risk Capsize/swamping Injury/chill/hypothermia	Rowers, coaches, boats	2 x 5 10	• Publicise need to consult weather forecast • Display and regularly publicise club rules • Coaches and squads to plan ahead in light of likely conditions	1 x 5 5	CRSA / coaches	Weekly
6.2	Cold/Frost Capsize/swamping Injury/chill/hypothermia	Rowers, coaches, boats	2 X 5 10	• Wear appropriate clothing for conditions	1 x 5 5	CRSA	Daily
6.3	Thunder storm Injury	Rowers, coaches, boats	2 X 4 8	• Cancel rowing if there is danger of imminent thunderstorms • Stop rowing and return to clubhouse if a thunderstorm occurs (Rule of 20)	1 X 3 3	CRSA	Daily
6.4	Bright sun and high temperature Sun burn, sun stroke, dehydration	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 X 4 12	• Wear sunglasses and sun screen • Coaches to watch for signs of sun stroke • Rowers to take water on outings	2 X 3 6	Rower as individual	Daily
6.5	Mist/fog Collision, grounding	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 X 4 12	• No rowing if far bank cannot be seen • Novices/visitors/inexperienced rowers to take extra care	2 X 3 6	Crew, coach	Daily

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6.6	Lack of light at night Collision, capsize, grounding, falls/trips/slips	Rowers, coaches, boats	4 x 5 20	- Only experienced coxes or steer persons - Novices/visitors/inexperienced crews not to row - Boats to comply with club safety rules lighting requirements and clothing - No rowing upstream of White House - All crews to be signed out and back in	3 x 3 9	Crew, coach	Daily
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7	Boat handling off the water						
7.1	Lifting, carrying, launching Falls, slips, trips, musculo-skeletal injury Damage to boat	Rowers, coaches, boats	4 x 3 12	- Have sufficient rowers to lift, coaches assist if necessary - Remind of lifting good practice regularly - Training for novices	2 x 3 6	Rower as individual	Daily / training when required
7.2	Trestles Trapped fingers Collapse	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 3 3	- Check and repair trestles - Have sufficient trestles	2 x 3 6	Rower as individual	Daily
7.3	Carrying blades Impact injury Loss/damage	Rowers, coaches, boats, passers by	2 x 2 4	- Keep good lookout - Check when carrying and fitting	1 x 2 2	Rower as individual	Daily

8	Coxing						
8.1	Inexperienced coxes and steer persons Collision, capsizing, injury and damage to boats	Rowers, coaches, boats	4 x 4 16	- Training and assessment for coxes and steer persons - Novice trainees to be supervised	2 x 3 6	CRSA / Lead coach	Daily / training when required

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8.2	Life jackets Failure to inflate Drowning	Rowers, coaches	2 x 5 10	- Regular checks that lifejackets are fit for purpose - Prevent cox going in a boat without life jacket - Manual inflation life jacket only in front loaders	1 x 5 5	CRSA / coach / cox as individual	Monthly / Daily
8.3	Lack of appropriate clothing Chill/hypothermia, drowning	Rowers, coaches	4 x 4 16	- Extra care on warm clothing in cold conditions - Shoes not welly boots	2 x 2 4	Cox as individual	Daily
8.4	Equipment failure Cox box failure – crew unable to respond to directions – risk of collision, damage, grounding	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 4 12	- Check equipment and re-charge regularly - Cox to check working and charged before each outing	2 x 3 6	VC Boats / cox as individual	Daily

9	Coaching from launches						
9.1	Outboard engine checks Risk of engine failure / damage to launch	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 4 12	Check launch/engine regularly - if checks failed do not use the launch	2 x 3 6	Launch driver	Daily
9.2	Lack of experience & experience Risk of drowning/death/injury to those being coached and coach. Damage to boats	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 5 15	- Aim all coaches to be Level 2 RYA power boat - Training and assessment for all launch drivers - Novice trainees to be supervised - Risk assessment before every activity	2 x 3 6	Launch driver	Daily
9.3	Lifting, launching heavy launch with engine Muscular strains, falls, damage to launch and engine	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 3 9	- Sufficient rowers, coaches to carry launch - Remove engine and carry separately if very few people - Do not drag on steps	2 x 3 6	Rowers/ launch as individual	Daily

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9.4	Missing lifejackets Increased risk of drowning	Rowers, coaches	4 x 3 12	- Wear at all times on water in launch - Carry spare in launch (check in launch bag) - If lifejacket is are missing inform CRSA of need to replace the lifejacket	2 x 3 6	CRSA / Launch driver	Daily
9.5	Missing throw rope Increased risk of drowning	Rowers, coaches	3 x 5 15	- Carry in launch (check in launch bag) - Practice use	2 x 3 6	Launch driver	Daily
9.6	Juniors more vulnerable In event of an incident/accident requiring coach's full attention for one individual, others may be at risk	Rowers, coaches	3 x 3 9	- Ensure adequate coach/launch cover for number out - If at all possible have launch buddy	2 x 3 6	CRSA	Daily
9.7	Outboard motor failure Failure to rescue rowers if an incident	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 4 12	- Ensure regular inspection and maintenance - Check enough petrol before going out - Take mobile phone - Ensure paddle or oars before leaving	2 x 3 6	Launch driver / VC Boats	Weekly / Daily
9.8	Driver losing control of launch Injury to themselves or rowers Hypothermia if falling out of launch Damage to boats	Rowers, coaches	3 x 4 12	- Training including proper use of kill cord - Driver to wear and use kill cord correctly - Drive the launch carefully at all times	2 x 3 6	CRSA / launch driver	Training when required / Daily
9.9	Tying up Boat damage or loss if launch floats away	Boats	1 x 3 3	- Check on tidal movement - Tie securely and check regularly if left on steps for a period of time	1 x 2 3	Launch driver	Daily

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9.10	Bow wave/wash Capsize of other craft Damage to other craft	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 3 9	- Control of speed especially in the training area where beginners and inexperienced rowers are on the water, and near steps. - Control of speed where there are vertical walls at the riverside (waves bounce off)	2 x 3 6	Launch driver	Daily
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10	Rowing on the water – other considerations						
10.1	Not following rules of the river Risk of collision, capsize, injury, damage to boat, especially on bends	Rowers, coaches, boats	2 x 4 8	- Club Safety Rules and River Tyne Rowing Club Safety Code are on display and on website - Training for new rowers - Regular reminders to all rowers to read above - Even if following rules, keep a good lookout – other may not	1 x 4 4	CRSA / Rower as individual	Training when required / Daily
10.2	Interaction with water skiing Risk of collision, capsize, injury, damage to boat	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 4 12	- Respect their right to use the river above slipway - Consider not going past slipway if on - Keep well in to bank if going past slipway - Stop rowing if severe wash until it is past	2 x 4 8	Rower as individual	Daily
10.3	Interaction with non-powered river users (incl canoeists, paddle boarders, sailing boats) Risk of collision due to unexpected movements or speed	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 4 12	- Respect their right to use the river - Slow down if necessary - Remain polite	2 x 3 6	Rower as individual	Daily
10.4	Collision with bridges Collision, currents and eddies	Rowers, coaches, boats	4 x 4 16	- Avoid stopping or turning close to bridges - Take particular note of direction of tidal flow and wind - Special care at Newburn Bridge	2 x 3 6	Rower as individual / CRSA	Daily

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10.5	Collision with posts, buoys, jetties Collision, capsize, damage to boat/blades	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 3 9	• Draw attention to safety map on display • Keep a good lookout • Watch tide and current close to obstacles and structures	2 x 2 4	CRSA / rower or cox as individual	Daily
10.6	Lack of liquid Dehydration, infection from river water	Rowers, coaches	2 x 4 8	• Take bottle • Screw top bottle or similar to prevent contamination with river water and mud.	1 x 3 3	Rower as individual	Daily
10.7	Lack of buoyancy Swamping, damage to boat Injury, drowning of crew	Rowers, coaches, boats	2 x 5 10	• Regular inspection • Check hatch covers before every outing or check if in a boat with Inflatable buoyancy bags that bags are inflated	1 x 5	Crew, coach, VC Boats	Daily
10.8	Gates on boats come undone Capsize, drowning, hypothermia	Rowers, coaches, boats	2 x 5 10	• Check securely tightened and holding oars in place • Check top nut is tight regularly	1 x 5 5	VC Boats	Daily
10.9	Blades Loss, breakage, capsize	Rowers, coaches, boats	2 x 4 8	• Check novices have fixed blades correctly in boat • Check collars are tight • Check for damage	1 x 4 4	Coach / rower as individual	Daily
10.10	Communication with land-based personnel	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 5 15	• Coaches and launch drivers must have a mobile phone on them during water-based activity • Phones not to be used by rowers	2 x 4 8	CRSA / coach / rower as individual	Daily
10.11	Rowing at night Personal injury, damage to boats	Rowers, coaches, boats	3 x 4	• Night time rowers must be accompanied by a launch - maximum ratio of one launch per three boats.	2 x 3 6	CRSA / coach	Daily

Enquiries to Harry Clark, Club Rowing Safety Adviser, at safety@tynearc.com

Tyne Amateur Rowing Club, Water Row, Newburn, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 8NL