

Miami Beach Rowing Club

Safety Manual

Throughout its long history rowing has established itself as a safe sport. Consistent with that history, the operations of the Miami Beach Rowing Club, its members and all associated organizations will be conducted with safety as the number one priority. The location of most boathouses present some safety challenges. In Miami Beach, variations in the width of the waterway, bridges, commercial traffic and pleasure boat traffic are all potential hazards. The channel is a no wake zone, which must be observed at all times.

This safety manual is intended to outline the best procedures to ensure a continuous safe rowing operation. It has been drawn from the experience of rowing clubs throughout the world, U.S. Coast Guard navigation rules, recommendations of the U.S. Rowing Association and consultation with local marine patrol.

Every participant is responsible to know and follow the procedures outlined in this manual. Every participant is responsible to monitor the activities of other rowers and provide feedback and immediate corrective action in the event of any non-compliance or if observing any unsafe actions or conditions. The same co-operative team effort required for good rowing is necessary to ensure a safe operation. Coaches have an additional responsibility for training, supervising and controlling their teams.

Failure to comply with the procedures in this plan will result in follow-up and disciplinary sanctions with the individuals or groups involved. Repeat or serious infractions will result in banishment from the facility and activities of the Miami Beach Rowing Club.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1) On the water, all rowers under 18 years of age will be under the direct supervision of a coach in a launch.
- 2) All rowers will read and acknowledge with their signature that they understand and will comply with all club safety rules prior to participating in any club activities. Parents or guardians of rowers under 18 will sign the acknowledgement.
- 3) Prior to participating in any club activity, everyone will sign a waiver of liability acknowledging the risks and hazards of rowing. A parent or guardian will sign for anyone under 18. Waiver form attached.
- 4) Each boat not under the direct supervision of a coach on the water will be logged out and in individually.
- 5) Coaches will be certified in First Aid, CPR and by U.S. Rowing's coaching standards.
- 6) A bulletin board will be mounted in a prominent place in the boathouse with a posting of safety rules, a map, any safety notices or updates and emergency phone numbers. Rowers and coaches will check this board prior to launching.

- 7) No one under 18 may be at the facility unsupervised. Club coaches will supervise arrival, departure and training of junior rowers.
- 8) The Club coaches will complete regular safety inspections of the facility and equipment and of the requirements in this manual. They will be responsible to ensure any required corrective action is complete. Additionally, the director will conduct an annual review of this manual, updating and redistributing as needed.

PROCEDURES

- 1) All rowers will participate in a water safety program. Coaches are responsible for ensuring rowers are trained. Topics will include:
 - * rescue procedures in the water
 - * recognition of unsafe water conditions
 - * waterway rules and boat handling
 - * rowing terminology
- 2) All rowers under 18 will demonstrate their swimming / flotation skills by completing a swimming test. See attached. As an alternative, rowers under 18 may present a current Red Cross Intermediate swimming or higher certification.
All rowers over 18 will certify by signature that they are proficient. Anyone not meeting this requirement must take swimming lessons before participating in any Miami Beach Rowing Club activity.
- 3) Anyone injured during a rowing activity or at the facility will report the injury to a Club coach. If sufficiently serious, a formal incident report will be submitted to the board of directors.
- 4) All launches will operate in accordance with applicable safety regulations and carry USCA-Approved lifejackets, First Aid Kit, a flashlight, horns and a radio or cellphone.
- 5) Experienced rowers new to the Club will be given a complete safety and waterway rules familiarization session before rowing. Ideally they will row the waterway first with experienced rowers or a Club coach. Beginning rowers must be adequately supervised until a skill level to row unsupervised has been demonstrated and certified by a Club coach.
- 6) Novice rowers are restricted to using the waterway between the 63rd street Bridge and the 71st street Bridge.
- 7) Guests must demonstrate rowing experience and that they are capable of using the equipment safely. Guests may only use the facility and equipment upon approval of a Club coach. All guests must sign a waiver of liability form.

FACILITY

- 1) All gasoline storage will be in a secure storage area approved by the Miami Beach Fire Department.
- 2) Fire extinguishers will be present, clearly marked and regularly inspected.
- 3) Emergency exits will be kept free of obstacles.
- 4) Launches will be stored in the designated storage area.

- 5) A first aid kit will be maintained in the boathouse and replenished regularly.
- 6) Boathouse doors and gates will be locked when Club coaching staff is not on duty or not in the facility.

HOURS OF ROWING

- 1) All unsupervised rowing from the boathouse will be during daylight hours. No boats may depart the dock before sunrise and must be back at the dock by sunset unless accompanied by a Club coach. The only exception is advanced rowers.
- 2) Advanced rowers may row one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset. Lights will be used on the boats in order to be seen clearly when rowing in the dark.
- 3) Avoid wearing dark colors when rowing in the early morning and late evening hours.
- 4) Novice rowers may only go on the water when a Club coach is present at the facility.
- 5) The head coach must approve all rowers who wish to go out alone.
- 6) New members will be eligible for a key to the facility when they have paid club dues, passed an intermediate skills test administered by the head coach and have been a member of the club for at least six months.

WEATHER

- 1) Rowers/Club coaches must always be aware of weather conditions. Watch for gathering clouds, changes in wind speed/direction, temperature changes, etc.
- 2) Do not row in a thunderstorm or if a thunderstorm warning exists for the immediate area. If a watch or a warning is in the region but outside the immediate vicinity, stay close to the dock area and monitor conditions. Land all boats at the first sign of lightening.
- 3) Boats will not launch in high wind conditions, defined as causing whitecaps on the water. If such conditions are encountered while on the water return to the dock immediately if safe to do so. If not, seek and stay in a sheltered area until winds subside and then return.
- 4) On very hot days, rowers should carry water, a hat, wear SPF protection and avoid excessive exposure.

EQUIPMENT

- 1) Any boat launching from the facility must have a bow ball affixed.
- 2) Every boat launching from the facility must have heel restraints/quick release mechanisms in compliance with USRowing rules. Club coaches will ensure the Club boats are in compliance.
- 3) Shoes with Velcro closures are strongly recommended in all boats. If tied shoes are used they should be only snug enough to hold the foot stable but remain loose enough for quick foot removal in the event of an emergency.
- 4) For both safety and equipment maintenance reasons rowers will only use boats that are consistent with their skill level. As beginner rowers progress in skill, the head coach will designate appropriate boats. This does not preclude "rowing up" in higher-level equipment under the supervision of Club coaches.
- 5) Any damage due to accident or negligence of equipment is the responsibility of the member(s) involved.

- 6) Team boat crews are responsible for handling, cleaning, maintaining, rigging and storing team boats.
- 7) All club boats and oars will be washed with soap and water immediately after use. Please conserve water. Car washing is not permitted at the facility.
- 8) Club boats will be transported on a trailer by drivers specifically designated by the head coach. The drivers will be familiar with related USRowing guidelines and comply with all motor vehicle and the Club's insurance regulations for doing so.

WATERWAY TRAFFIC

The greatest hazard associated with rowing is the interaction with other boats on the water. Large vessels cannot stop to avoid us; we must avoid them. For our own safety and consistent with navigation rules, rowers will always assume large vessels have the right of way. To ensure safety, actions of rowers and other watercraft must be consistent and predictable. All rowers will follow these rules:

- 1) Keep to the right, consistent with the Coast Guard navigation rules. That is, two boats approaching on opposite courses will normally pass port side to port side. If debris or other hazards cause a deviation from this pattern, return to the correct side as soon as possible and pay particular attention approaching turns and bridges.
- 2) When encountering an approaching large vessel, rowers will stop and move as close to the shore as is safe, leaving some room to absorb any anticipated wake. Acknowledge the vessel's presence with a wave or other signal, keep it in sight and establish eye contact with the captain. In the worst case scenario and a collision would appear possible, row the shell into the shore and get out onto the shore, abandoning the shell.
- 3) After passage, rowers must still cope with the wake. Large wakes should be taken parallel to the shell. There are two distinct parts. The first will be to the side and be taken by lining up nearly parallel to the direction of travel. The second will be created by the strong prop wash from the vessel and will be a series of large rolling waves following directly behind the boat and oriented perpendicular to travel. Shells can generally stay to the side of the waterway, letting these swells pass by. If not, take them parallel to avoid breaking the shell.
- 4) Rowers will always assume traffic will be encountered. Coxswains must always remain vigilant. Scullers must remain alert using very frequent visual clearing turns to ensure clear water ahead.
- 5) All boats will use the designated arches for the 63rd street bridge. When traveling south, boats will use the center arch on the west side. When traveling north, boats will use either the main drawbridge arch or the center arch on the east side. See attached map.
- 6) Coaches will not use power megaphones before 9am. Coxbox volume will be kept to a minimum to avoid disturbing residents.

DOCK OPERATIONS

- 1) Launching - All shells will launch north from the dock and establish clearance from any traffic before crossing the waterway to turn south and proceed in accordance with normal traffic pattern rules.

- 2) Returning - All shells will return to the dock from the south. To approach from the north, row past the dock and, after establishing clearance from any traffic, cross the waterway, turn north and proceed to the dock.
- 3) No race pieces will be performed in front of the dock.

HEALTH

Rowing takes place on the water, not in it. The waterway presents a variety of hazards including floating debris, etc.

- 1) No club member may get in the water without the permission and direct supervision of a Club coach. There will be no throwing in of coxswains or any horseplay, etc. Items dropped in the water that are not visible and within reach from the shore are considered lost and not recoverable.
- 2) Current Tetanus and Hepatitis shots are strongly recommended for all rowers.
- 3) To protect feet, shoes should be worn in and around the boathouse and on the dock.

COMMUNICATIONS

- 1) A boathouse telephone will be maintained to facilitate emergency communications. Emergency numbers will be posted near the phone.
- 2) If there is an emergency at the facility or on the water call or have someone else call 911 immediately.