

Portland Rose Festival Dragon Boat Race
Portland, Oregon
June 6 and 7, 2026

Practice and Safety Rules



FOREWORD

The Portland-Kaohsiung Sister City Association (PKSCA) hosts the Portland Rose Festival Dragon Boat Race as an expression of the ancient Chinese culture. It is an international people-to-people event as well as a local civic event. Our goal is to conduct a race that can be enjoyed by all members of our community. We intend for it to be fun and fair to new and recreational teams and paddlers as well as to experienced and world-class teams and paddlers. In the spirit of Sister Cities International and our beautiful city, we will adhere to the principles of fairness and friendliness to all.

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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Under the authority granted by the PKSCA Board, the Portland Rose Festival Dragon Boat Race will be managed by the Race Director who is appointed by the PKSCA Board. Responsibility for the race and team practice sessions rests with the PKSCA Race Director who, along with the PKSCA Board, sets policies, rules, and regulations governing these activities.
- B. If, for any reason beyond the control of the Race Director and the PKSCA Board, practices must be canceled or curtailed, then there will be no refund. This rule also applies to a possible terrorist threat or action.

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II. TEAM CAPTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Read and acknowledge Practice Rules (this document) and Race Rules. This is a MUST! Also, ensure that each team member has read and is knowledgeable of the contents of the official rules and regulations, and that each team member and participant will always abide by them while on the water, on the land, and on the dock.
- B. Attend each of the monthly team captain's meetings (see the calendar located at www.pkscsca.net) or to arrange for a representative to attend. If Captains meetings are done via streaming, all teams both local and out-of-town captains must attend (or send a representative).
- C. New team captains (regardless if the team is new) MUST also attend ONE new captain orientation session. Dates will be made available once the season is underway. Veteran captains may also attend.
- D. It is required for the team captain or a representative and the tiller(s) to attend the March team captains meeting for the U.S. Coast Guard's or our safety presentation.
- E. Along with the tiller, attend both team captains' meetings the Saturday and Sunday of race weekend. Times may vary but will be confirmed by the June's Captains' meeting.
- F. Have a team policy in place to deal with a situation in which one team member contracts a highly transmissible airborne disease (COVID-19, RSV, etc). This policy should include safety protocols to protect all other team members and inform them of their possible exposure.
- G. Ensure all team members (and/or any persons getting on a boat) have completed and signed the 'participant waiver', either electronically or by paper. No participant is allowed on a boat without completing and signing the waiver. Our new registration system has a built-in system to have captains get team members waived. For Minors or Wards, please have the parent or guardian complete a paper waiver or the online waiver at the link you have been sent.
- H. Captains must verify that all team members (and one-time participants) have completed and signed waivers. The race registrar (and/or director) will maintain and update a list of completed participant waivers for captains to use and can be found at the link sent directly to the captain. If a paper copy is required, please contact the race registrar or race director. The race registrar/director maintains the right to spot check teams for completed waivers.
- I. Local teams must have three required Volunteers registered on-line with PKSCA by May's captains meeting. Volunteers must also complete and sign a 'volunteer waiver.' Captains can verify that their volunteers have completed waivers by visiting the link sent to them. Captains are responsible for finding replacements if volunteers drop out. At least one volunteer must be registered to work on Sunday. **Volunteers registering for the dock must be 18 or older at the time of the race.**
- J. All captains (local AND out of town) must submit a race weekend team roster by the Wednesday before race weekend (up to 29 members including tiller, caller, flag catcher) that includes the following:
 1. Team name & division
 2. Team member first and last name
 3. Team member position (paddler, tiller, caller, flag catcher; team members may have multiple positions)
 4. Acknowledgement of completed/signed waiver for each team member

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- K. Roster may be emailed to the race registrar (registrar@pksca.net). This is preferred. Paper rosters may be handed over at the June Captains' Meeting.
- L. A team may not participate during race weekend without a submitted team roster by June's captains' meeting.
- M. Starting in 2024, we will remove the need for PHOTO rosters. HOWEVER, each race participant will be given wristbands that will need to be worn all weekend. Captains will receive wristbands for their team at June's Captains meeting or Saturday morning, no later and no exceptions. The number of wristbands will match the number of participants on the team roster that must be submitted by the Wednesday before race weekend. Details of wristband procedures during race weekend are on the Race Rules document on the PKSCA website.

III. CALLER AND TILLER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Have read and acknowledged PKSCA Practice and Race Rules
- B. Tillers must attend the safety portion during March's Captains' meeting as well as both race weekend morning captains' meetings.
- C. Caller and tiller shall have control of the team and the boat at all times during practices.
- D. On the water, the caller/coach shares the same responsibilities as the captain.
- E. Each team is required to have one experienced tiller on the boat at all times. When there is a tiller-in-training, then an experienced tiller must also be on the boat.
- F. At all times while in the boat, the caller is considered to be the captain of the boat and the crew. The caller/captain has the sole responsibility to enforce safety policies and rules. In emergency situations, the tiller may override the caller/captain and command a maneuver, or halt the boat. The caller/captain and the tiller may temporarily delegate the responsibility to a guest coach or caller. **If the caller leaves the front deck, a replacement must take their place to act as a lookout.**
- G. Tillers have the sole responsibility to ensure that the boat is located in the safe practice areas on the river at all times (see 'Safe Practice Areas and the Practice Area Map' contained in this document).
- H. If the tiller observes impending danger, then they must override the caller/captain and command a maneuver or else halt the boat. If a team member observes impending danger, then they must make a loud verbal warning.
- I. At least one team tiller is required to attend the March team captains meeting for the U.S. Coast Guard safety presentation.

IV. TEAM AND PADDLER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Know and abide by all Portland Rose Festival Dragon Boat Race Practice and Safety Rules.
- B. If the coach/captain is unable to attend practice, designate a temporary team member to ensure all rules are being followed, both on the dock and on the water (this should be the caller & tiller).
- C. Conduct oneself so as to maintain the highest integrity and dignity for oneself and the team with good sporting behavior, friendship, and respect for the traditions of the dragon boat race and the cultures of the participating countries, organizations, and individuals. **Respect the equipment!**
- D. Immediately report violations of the Practice and Safety Rules and damaged or broken PKSCA property to the Race Director. **(Contact email at the end of this document.)**
- E. Each team member is responsible for their own safety at all times while engaging in activities



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related to practicing and racing in PKSCA boats. All crew members, particularly callers and tillers, must be aware that they have responsibilities for the safe control of the boat and should never go on the water if they are in any way impaired by alcohol, controlled or illegal substances, or performance-enhancing drugs.

- F. During practices, teams will be required to occasionally allow PKSCA officials to accompany them on the boat. The PKSCA official may direct the team to divert the boat to another location in order to observe and/or communicate with other boats.

V. TEAM COMPOSITION FOR SAFETY

- A. The number of persons on a boat may not exceed 30, except in rescue operations.
- B. The minimum number of persons on a boat at any time the boat is away from the dock is twelve (12) with no fewer than ten (10) paddlers, 1 caller, and 1 experienced tiller. Please adjust upward for inclement conditions.
- C. At least one responsible adult of legal age, 21 years or older, must be on a boat during all practices.
- D. The minimum age for any team member for all divisions is 14.
- E. In order to ensure a proper and safe lookout capability during practices, the caller/coach and the tiller, plus a minimum of four (4) persons located throughout the paddler's section of the boat must have vision at the level required by the Oregon Department of Transportation for a driver's license.
- F. First bench paddlers/lead strokes must also be aware of surroundings (when not during a race piece) and must make the coach/caller aware of any hazards happening in front of the boat.

VI. PRACTICE TIMES

- A. Practice times are assigned based on team registration (so first come, first served). During registration, 3 practice time slots are available to input. Your team may not receive your first choice. The practice schedule will be created by February and can be referenced here: [Practice Schedule](#). Please refer to the practice schedule throughout the registration time frame before you input your options to ensure the slots you would like are available. The registrar will confirm your assigned practice time by email. Please do not start practice without that confirmation.
- B. If practice times need to be changed, please make those adjustments yourself in the new system. Contact registrar@pkscanet if you have issues changing practice times. Change requests will be based on when the request was sent. Please ensure the slot that is being requested is available before sending the request. The registrar will send confirmation of the change. Please do not start your practice without the confirmation. Please provide 24 hours for email confirmation.
- C. Each team is guaranteed a maximum of three (3) one-hour practices per week; not more than two (2) one-hour practices on separate days between Monday and Thursday, and not more than two (2) one-hour practices on Saturday and Sunday. Variations to this pattern must receive approval from the Race Director or Registrar.
- D. Any team found to be practicing at an unassigned or unscheduled time and/or using more than one unassigned or unscheduled boat per practice will be charged \$35.00 rental fee per hour, per boat.

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VII. GENERAL PRACTICE AND SAFETY RULES

- A. No alcohol, controlled or illegal substances or performance-enhancing drugs, or persons who are under the influence of these items or substances are permitted on the boats at any time.
- B. Animals or pets, other than certified service animals, are not permitted on PKSCA boats at any time.
- C. Teams must load, practice, and unload within the assigned practice time. No early departures are allowed. Boats must arrive at the dock five minutes prior to the end of the assigned practice time. Time of day will be determined by your smartphone or smart watch which is linked to a time server. In most cases there should be less than a minute difference between any two devices.
- D. Each team is required to have one experienced tiller on the boat at all times. When there is a tiller-in-training, then an experienced tiller must also be on the boat.
- E. Not more than four PKSCA boats are permitted in a practice race.
- F. No videotaping/filming of Portland Rose Festival Dragon Boat Race events, practices, and related activities for commercial purposes, broadcast, or any other public distribution is permitted without written permission of the PKSCA Board. Direct any inquiries to the Race Director. See below for contact information.
- G. When boarding and while aboard the boat, all people must wear a properly-fitted and secured U.S. Coast Guard-approved non-inflatable vest-style life jacket that is placed over all clothing.
- H. Each boat must have one extra throwable flotation device (i.e., one extra life jacket) located in the boat for each practice.
- I. At all times while in the boat, the caller is considered to be the captain of the boat and the crew. The caller/captain has the sole responsibility to enforce safety policies and rules. In emergency situations, the tiller may override the caller/captain and command a maneuver, or halt the boat. The caller/captain may temporarily delegate the responsibility to a guest coach or caller.
- J. At the conclusion of the practice, teams must promptly return PKSCA equipment to its assigned lockers. Team members must leave the dock promptly. Teams choosing to meet before or after the assigned practice time must meet in an area other than the dock.
- K. At the discretion of the Race Director, practices may be canceled or restricted due to weather, water conditions, or other dangerous conditions. On days of weather issues please check email.
- L. If a lightning storm, flood, or other dangerous condition occurs during any practice session, then the caller/captain or the tiller must direct the boat immediately back to the dock. After the boat is secured, the crew must immediately proceed to land and shelter. If practice time remains after the danger has passed, then the practice may continue until the team's assigned return time. Do not extend the practice time.
- M. Teams must have a cell phone on the boat during all practices.
- N. Teams must load and unload the boats at the start and finish of the practice session at the PKSCA docking area which is located inside the marina. No loading or unloading of individuals away from the PKSCA docking area. Additional team members may be loaded on the outside of the marina dock once the boat is completely stopped with fenders deployed and with at least two team members holding onto the dock. Unloading and loading a boat on the outside of the dock may be done when a team arrives late or the marina is particularly crowded. **No boat may be left on the river side of the dock. If no team is available to take the boat, it must be moved to the**



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inside of the dock when conditions allow.

- O. For all early morning and evening practices, quiet must be maintained on the boat when in and around the harbor in order to not disturb the harbor neighborhood. When exiting and entering the harbor at these times, the caller/captain and tiller must keep voices low.
- P. Basic safety procedures should be reviewed at the beginning of each team practice, e.g., secure Life Jackets, know your seatmate, "hold the boat" command, stay with the boat if the boat capsizes or swamps, etc.
- Q. The caller/captain shall take a headcount prior to leaving the dock.
- R. The caller/captain shall take charge during an incident or mishap on the water. The caller/captain should conduct a headcount of the team to ensure that all team members are accounted for and that they remain together until an official rescue boat arrives or the boat is brought safely to shore. If a certified rescue boat arrives, (e.g., U.S. Coast Guard, river patrol, etc.), then the caller/captain surrenders command to the rescue personnel.
- S. When exiting and entering the harbor, proceed slowly and carefully. Avoid all contact with other boats, pilings, and the dock.
- T. At no time should any part of the boat and/or paddles make contact with any private boat unless there is an emergency. It is the duty of any team involved in or observing such incidents to immediately report incidents to the Race Director. (Contact email at the end of this document.)
- U. The tiller and caller/captain must always watch beyond the front, back, and sides of the boat. Both must always be standing and alert to possible dangers such as barges, other boats, floating debris, deadheads, etc.
- V. Standing/sitting on the head of the dragon is prohibited at all times.

VIII. INTERNATIONAL WATERWAY SAFETY RULES

- A. According to the "International Regulations for Preventing Collisions" and the U.S. Coast Guard, no rules shall exonerate any vessel or crew from the consequences of any neglect to comply with the rules, or any neglect of any ordinary precaution, or any special circumstances. No boat has a clear right-of-way. However, this does mean that following all rules and applying common sense precautions indicates using good seamanship practices.
- B. Recognize that the dragon boats are not easily maneuverable and not very fast.
- C. Keep a proper lookout.
- D. Maintain a safe speed for conditions; usually slower is better, especially in the dock area.
- E. Take positive action to avoid accidents on the water and in the harbor.
- F. Give way to oncoming boats.
- G. When in doubt, give way.
- H. When overtaking another boat, pass with a wide margin and, if possible, announce the boat's position.

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IX. SAFE PRACTICE AREAS

- A. No practicing or stopping in the commercial channels. Note: there are commercial channels on both the east and west sides of Ross Island. Remain close to the shore (50 yards, or 150 feet or three boat lengths); see the Dragon Boat Practice Area Map on the last page of these Practice and Safety Rules.
- B. Use the most direct route when crossing the river.
- C. Race-course practice runs that cross the main commercial channel are only permitted to occur during full daylight hours. Be on high alert when crossing any commercial channel.
- D. If the tiller observes impending danger, then they must override the caller/captain and command a maneuver or else halt the boat. If a team member observes impending danger, then they must make a loud verbal warning.
- E. Always yield to commercial and public boat traffic. Immediately alter course to steer away from oncoming barges and boats. Do not attempt to outrun this traffic.
- F. Paddling north (downstream) of the Hawthorne Bridge is never allowed under any circumstances
- G. Paddling between the west pier of the Tilikum Crossing Bridge and the west bank of the river is not allowed under any circumstances.

X. DUSK AND NIGHT PRACTICES

- A. Dusk and night practices begin when the sun sets over the west hills and cannot be seen from the river.
- B. Paddling on the east side of the river is not allowed after dusk under any circumstances.
- C. All after-dusk practices must be near the west shoreline of the river and not farther than 50 yards from the shoreline.
- D. One bright white light must be placed in the holder on the tail of the dragon boat and the light must be turned on for all practices at and after dusk. Lights are provided by PKSCA and are located in the tall storage lockers on the dock.
- E. Do not depart the dock without a properly working stern light. The light must be operational before leaving the dock. If the light ceases to work during the practice, then the boat must immediately return to the dock. It is advisable to bring a spare light in case the PKSCA- provided batteries fail. Please notify the Race Director as soon as possible of any issues with the stern lights. (Contact email at the end of this document.)
- F. Teams are allowed to add personally-owned white light to the stern holder. Do not use strobe lights because these indicate that a boat is in distress.

XI. DOCK AND BOAT SECURITY

- A. When returning boats to the dock, tie up all boats following these directions:
- B. Two (2) abreast in the southern-most position, closest to the marina entrance from the river.
- C. Three (3) abreast in the next position.
- D. Three (3) abreast in the next northern-most position, farthest from the marina entrance.



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- E. All boats must be moored with heads facing south, toward the marina entrance.
- F. The last teams returning to the dock EVERY evening are required to secure and lock all boats. Generally, these teams will be returning to the dock at 9:00 pm. Check all eight (8) boats to ensure that all eight (8) are secured for the evening.
- G. Return paddles and lights to the assigned upright locker. Team captains, callers, and tillers are responsible for stowing paddles and lights properly.
- H. Return Life Jackets to the assigned horizontal locker. Place Life Jackets standing upright rather than piled on top of each other. This allows fresh air to ventilate the Life Jackets which helps to reduce mold and odor. Team captains, callers, and tillers are responsible to ensure that Life Jackets are properly stored.
- I. Team captains must keep team members away from the center of the dock in order to permit pedestrians room to move safely.
- J. No inappropriate behavior or loud noises are allowed on the dock.
- K. Be a good citizen; pick up any trash found in the dock area and place it in the trash bins located near the top of the ramp.

XII. EQUIPMENT

- A. All PKSCA boats, paddles, Life Jackets, and any other PKSCA-owned equipment used during the practice sessions must be returned undamaged and in serviceable condition. Replacement or repair costs of damaged equipment will be charged to the responsible team if PKSCA determines negligence or deliberate damage.
- B. Team members are not permitted to alter PKSCA-owned paddles in any way. This includes, but is not limited to, applying sticky or waxy substances to the shaft, roughening, or taping the hand-gripping surfaces. Friction tape and wax-type material may not be used on ANY PKSCA boats or equipment.
- C. Paddlers may use personally-owned, unmodified Sawyer Special paddles, model #SP8. Personally-owned paddles may have decorations such as decals, paint, or tape. Wax, wax-type materials, and sticky substances may not be used on any equipment taken aboard a PKSCA boat.
- D. Team members may use personally-owned U.S. Coast Guard-approved vest-style Life Jackets. Ski- belt style and inflatable Life Jackets are not allowed.
- E. Do not step on the seats/benches of a boat at any time; step between the seats/benches.
- F. Immediately report broken or damaged equipment to the team's captain and then to the Race Director to ensure the uninterrupted use of the boats and equipment.

XIII. STORAGE OF PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- A. The PKSCA, its officers, Board members, volunteers, and staff are not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged personal items stored in the lockers, on the dock, or in the boats.
- B. When storing and removing items in the lockers, team members must lock the lockers when leaving the dock.
- C. Team members are responsible for any damaged or lost PKSCA equipment or personal items stored by others. Please immediately notify the Race Director. (Contact email at the end of this document.)

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XIV. PRACTICE FLAG USE

- A. The practice flag and buoy will be made available approximately three weeks prior to race weekend.
- B. The first teams out each day are responsible for anchoring the buoy.
- C. Place the anchor in the river so that the buoy floats in line with the dolphin (group of vertical pilings) which is located approximately 150 yards south of the floating restaurant. Videos are available online.
- D. All practice runs will be made from south of the practice buoy starting within 150 feet of the west shore near the Marquam Bridge pier. Do not extend this run.
- E. Under no circumstances will there be more than one boat making a practice run at any time.
- F. Teams should line up under the Marquam Bridge and take turns at practice runs.
- G. The use of the leg straps is recommended, but no longer required. If personally owned straps are used, their closed length must not exceed the closed length of the PKSCA straps. Personally owned straps are to be removed after use and replaced with the PKSCA straps. The flag catcher must lie in a prone position on the head of the dragon with their head facing forward and use their hand(s) and legs to secure their position on the head of the dragon so they can safely catch the flag. (The flag catcher should not drop the flag during a practice run. If it is dropped the team must recover the flag and place it back in the buoy.)
- H. After the flag has been caught, immediately stop the boat, return the flag to the buoy, and then immediately move clear of the flag for the next team's practice run.
- I. No one is allowed to stand on the head of the dragon boat at any time.
- J. The last team returning to the dock each night is responsible for retrieving the buoy, the anchor and flag, and then for securing the buoy and anchor in the front foot well of an outside boat, and locking the flags in Locker Cluster #1, Locker #1 (the paddle locker, rather than the Life Jacket locker).
- K. Videos demonstrating putting the buoy in the water and pulling it out are available online on the PKSCA website.

PENALTIES

Penalties will be assessed for not honoring these Practice and Safety Rules. Penalties may include loss of practice times, disqualification of team personnel such as callers and tillers, and other appropriately deemed penalties as determined by the race officials.

Website: www.pksca.net

Email: racedirector@pksca.net

Postal Address: PKSCA, PO Box 80404, Portland, Oregon, 97280

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