



Making Rowing Safer for all in Tasmania

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Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) has been asked by Rowing Tasmania to help it provide safety management information to the Tasmanian rowing community. The following points are topics for consideration for all clubs, schools, coaches, rowers and other parties connected to the sport of rowing.

It is imperative that all clubs/schools affiliated with Rowing Tasmania, as recommended by Rowing Australia, have an appointed safety officer. The safety officer should have a safety management plan that is available to all club/school coaches and rowers as required. This safety management plan must adequately cover the situation of scullers rowing alone and training without a coach boat.

The points below should also be used in conjunction with the Rowing Australia, On Water Guidelines. (<http://www.rowingaustralia.com.au/docs/on-water-safety-guidelines-2010.pdf>)

MAST compulsory safety requirements for each powered coach boat

- Life Jacket (PFD) to be worn whilst under power at all times:
 - Level 50 (similar to PFD Type 2) in smooth water (inland lakes and rivers); or
 - Level 100 or Level 150 (similar to inflatable PFD Type 1) in sheltered and coastal waters.
- Anchor rope and chain;
- Auxiliary propulsion (oars);
- Bailer or bilge pump;
- Fire extinguisher;
- Flares (if operating outside smooth waters). Whilst this would be unlikely, in the case of an emergency with a capsized scull it may be a quick way of attracting another coach boat, so flares should be given consideration in smooth waters also;
- Operator to be licensed if motor 4hp or greater; and
- Boat to be registered with MAST if over 4hp (if only used for rescue/coaching, fee exempt, but must display registration number and currency sticker).

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MAST compulsory speed limits

- Coach boats are advised they are not to exceed 5 knots within 120 metres of a person swimming;
- Coach boats are advised not to exceed 5 knots within 60 metres of a mooring, moored boat or other vessel or shoreline; and
- Must adhere to legislated 5 knot limits at all times.

Recommended additional safety equipment for coach boats

- Additional foam life jackets or other flotation device that can be thrown to those in the water in case of emergency with rowing shell;
- Communication – handheld VHF or mobile phone for contact to emergency services or other on-water support;
- Thermal/safety blankets – these come in small packages, are easily stowed and ideal after cold water immersion;
- Torch – when training in darkness;
- Use “kill” switch on outboard if on coach boat alone; and
- Consider use of “prop guards” to ensure safe rescue.

Navigation light requirements – coach, rescue boats

The following requirements are **mandatory** under the International Collision Regulations:

- Port and starboard side lights showing an arc of unbroken light of 112.5 degrees from the bow (combined 225 degrees); and
- An all round white light showing an unbroken light over an arc of 360 degrees **OR** a stern light and mast head light.

Navigational light requirements – rowing shells

The following are taken directly from [‘Rowing Australia On-water Safety Guidelines’](#):

- Two all-round white lights, one attached to the boat at or near the forward or bow end, and one attached to the boat at or near the stern end.
- A continuous white light is considered acceptable if it is visible in clear conditions from a distance of 1 kilometre (at 360 degrees*). * *added by MAST*
- A flashing white light is considered acceptable if it flashes at least once per second and is visible in clear conditions from a distance of 1 kilometre.

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Notwithstanding the above, it is considered acceptable for a light to be masked so as not to interfere with the vision of the vessel's occupants, provided at least one light is visible from any direction.

Additional MAST comments on light requirements – rowing shells

- Port and starboard lights on the bow and an all round white light on the stern are recommended on shells.

Shells and rowers **should not** display red “bike riders” lights under any circumstances as they may cause confusion with conventional port lights on other craft.

Weather forecasts

- The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) issue two forecasts a day at 0530 and 1630. These are available almost instantly and warnings are issued when between forecasts;
- Coaches should obtain the very latest forecast available to them prior to any training session and brief the crews;
- Access to weather is via BOM or the MAST phone weather service; and
- Smart phones today allow easy and instant access to weather reports.

Tides

- Coaches should be aware of tidal movement prior to training sessions and relay information to crews; and
- Coaches should be aware of fresh water run after heavy rain.

Rescue in the event of rowing shell capsize

- Clubs/schools are advised to take into account the number of rowers aboard the largest shell which is monitored by a rescue boat and the load capacity of the rescue boat to facilitate rescue of the rowers; and
- Means of retrieving rowers from the water should be considered and practiced often; and
- Belt type PFDs are suggested as an added safety feature for novice crews.

Visibility of rowing shells

- Suggested bright clothing worn by rowers in addition to above lighting requirements; and
- Possibility of reflective tape on either side of bow to enable instant spotting with torch should lights not work.

Wash from other vessels

- To avoid sustaining wash for longer periods, shells should slow down and turn parallel to the wash to expedite passage of another vessel in either direction.

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Angle of shell to wash

- Recommended that crews position shell parallel to the wash using oars to maintain stability.

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Side of Channel

- As per International Collision Regulations, rowers should keep as far as safe and practical to the starboard side (right hand side) of a channel, being mindful of the depth of water and of any obstructions.

Increase in wash severity

- With regard to keeping to the starboard side of the channel, rowers should be aware that wash can increase in severity in shallow water.

Noise from coach boat

- Coaches are to be conscious of excessive noise from the use of megaphones in early morning training sessions around populated areas. Where practical, the megaphone should be faced away from the shore where disturbance is to be minimised.

Action by charter vessels and ferries

- Rowers should be aware that if a charter boat or ferry is concerned or unclear of a shell's actions, five rapid blasts may be sounded to alert the crew in accordance with the International Collision Regulations;
- All charter boat skippers and crew to maintain a vigilant lookout for rowers and slow down for an appropriate distance to reduce wash; and
- Carrying a VHF radio will allow rescue boats direct communication with charter vessel or ferry if required.

Swamping

- Coaches should brief their crews at regular intervals. Recommend viewing Rowing Tasmania and MAST DVD – "Making rowing safer in Tasmania"

Rivers

Stumps and debris - upper Tamar (Launceston), upper Derwent (New Norfolk), upper Huon (Franklin)

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- Coaches and rowers should be aware that stumps may be an obstruction in certain parts of the river especially after flood;
 - Coaches should be aware of debris after heavy rain that may cause difficulty to shells and coach boats;
- and
- Rescue Boats are not to exceed 5 knots in the vicinity of the Seaport development.

Tamar River

- **Tidal Movement:** Coaches should make themselves aware of tidal movements and flow of the Tamar;
- **Seaport Development:** Rescue Boats are not to exceed 5 knots in the vicinity;
- **Royal Park Precinct:** High tidal range (3.8mtr) Mud flat allow min Tide 500mm for pontoon access at low tide;
- **South Esk River:** (Gorge flood, strong river flows), debris in river after flood;
- **Ferries:** Lady Launceston and Tamar Odyssey do regular trips up the Gorge;
- **Home Point / North Esk River junction / Seaport / Bridges (Charles St, Tamar St):** Vessels under Pilotage have right of way (red and white vertically divided flag);

The mouth of river experiences very strong tidal flows on both outgoing and incoming tides. When running against the wind, it can be a very rough area, further complicated by large number of boat movements from Seaport Marina , ferries and other rowing crews (from North Esk , St Pat's and Scotch Oakburn College) operating in a very small channel (particularly at low tide);

- Crews and coach boats should proceed with care through the spans of the Charles St Bridge when heading up and downstream. Crews and coaches should be aware of tidal flow especially when heading west (downstream) approaching club house pontoons in the vicinity of Seaport and on the northern bank. Crews and coaches should also be aware of the strength of tidal flow against wind when deciding to come alongside pontoon.
- **Home Reach Precinct:** Mud flats, debris stuck in mud after flood, high commercial usage, dredging operations, shipping, a broken pile at 2000 metre mark (below surface at high tide). The direction of travel needs to be reinforced, as coxswains and rowers (who are travelling in the opposite direction of sight) tend to veer into middle of river. Also, crews need to be mindful that if they pull out of the channel to allow a larger vessel to pass, the height of its wash will increase proportionally to the

shallowing of the bottom. (We have had instances of boats being lifted and then dumped on the mud by passing vessels);

- **Tailrace Precinct:** Subject to strong river flows when power station is operating. A whirlpool is visible on some tides near the mouth of the tailrace and its meeting with the Tamar River. This can be strong enough to turn a rowing scull around;
- **Stephenson's Bend Precinct:** Subject to strong tidal flow, wind and large wash from passing vessels. Mud flats exposed. Large volumes of crews pass this area on way to Tamar Island;
- **Tamar Island Precinct:** Subject to mud flats exposed, strong tidal flows, wind. Waves can stand up quickly when wind and tide are opposite, only one isolated emergency exit pontoon;
- **Safety alerts to be emphasised:** Strong tidal flows , wind, fog, high volume of craft on river, direction of travel chart, always watching for obstacles ie: other craft, piles, debris, dredging, mud, visibility of crew.

Lower River Derwent

- Coaches should make themselves aware of commercial shipping movements in the Port area;
- Vessels under Pilotage have right of way (red and white vertically divided flag);
- Coaches using the area north of the bridge and the Sullivans Cove area on the western side of the river should keep an eye out for tugs and the regular ferry run upstream from Sullivans Cove;
- Be aware of potential shipping movements around Macquarie Wharf;
- Be aware of potential shipping movements around Selfs Point and Risdon Wharf areas;
- Coaches south of Sullivans Cove should be mindful of recreational boating movements in and out of the RYCT and DSS marinas and the general mooring area of Battery Point and Sandy Bay. This is paramount in early morning when boats heading downstream into sun;
- Coaches on the eastern side of the river should be aware of recreational boating movements from the GBBC, Geilston Bay, MYCT and moorings at Lindisfarne Bay and the BYC marina and moorings in Kangaroo Bay;
- Coaches and sculls are not to travel through the middle span of the Tasman Bridge or spans on either side; and
- Vessel abort area – Between Rosny Point, Kangaroo Point and the main channel to the bridge. This is marked on the navigation chart.

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Mersey River - Devonport

- The main channel – rowers should, where possible stay out of the main channel. i.e. between the beacons and shore; and
- Swing basin. Daily services operate out of Devonport and ships swinging on departure take up most of the swing basin.

General Tasports advice to Rowers and Coaches

- Rowing sculls are very difficult to see from the bridge of a ship, especially in low light conditions;
- Wash from large vessels can be unpredictable therefore they should be given a wide berth;
- Large vessels do not generally manoeuvre easily therefore rowing sculls must keep well clear;
- Rowing sculls will be difficult to detect on ships radar or shore based CCTV;
- Advice on shipping movements is contained on Tasports website – www.tasports.com.au Go to “Port Services” “Shipping List” and click on required port;
- Tasports Port Control is available for information on VHF channels 12 and 16 on a 24/7 basis.

Further Recommendations

- Each club/school has a nominated **safety officer** who is registered with Rowing Tasmania to enable any ongoing issues to be directed to that officer;
- Each club/school has a **safety management plan** to cover emergencies that may occur on the water, both during training and competition, and that this plan is known to participants and coaches;
- Tasports, Rowing Tasmania and MAST meet at start of each season and conduct a de brief at the completion;
- All coaches, safety officers and club/school officials encourage participants to log onto the following website
http://www.rowingaustralia.com.au/about_ra_policies_on-water-safety.shtm
This website will direct you to the RA On-Water Safety Code and Guidelines.

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Disclaimer

The protocols and warnings contained in this document, 'Making Rowing Safer for all in Tasmania' are current at the date of last update and are provided for information purposes only, to assist clubs, schools, coaches, rowers and other connected parties ('Participants') with the health and safety of the sport of rowing. Rowing Tasmania Inc. and its sponsors, by this publication or at all, accept no responsibility in relation to the health and safety of those participating or connected to the sport of rowing. Participants are urged to develop their own health and safety procedures in consultation with appropriate advice, with protocols and warnings that are adapted to their own circumstances. The protocols and warnings herein published may well need to be supplemented by further and other measures referable to the Participants' individual circumstances. Participants engage in the sport or rowing at their own risk.

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