

# 2.3 Boats & Blades

## Don't let your equipment let you down

### Responsibilities

#### Personal

- Check the boat and equipment is in a safe condition and in working order before each outing and is suitable for the conditions in which it is being used
- Report and record any damage to appropriate person and ensure the boat or other equipment is quarantined if necessary

#### Club

- Ensure that all equipment used for rowing, sculling and coaching is properly and regularly maintained
- Ensure that all equipment used for rowing and sculling is safe and adequate for its intended purpose and that it does not expose its users to danger
- Instruct participants in the process of equipment checking and why it needs to be done at each outing

#### Coach

- Train participants in the process of equipment checking
- Ensure crews check equipment prior to each outing

#### Club Water Safety Adviser

- Check that all club equipment used for rowing, sculling and coaching is being properly and regularly maintained to ensure that it is safe and adequate for its intended purpose and that it does not expose its users to danger in accordance with the minimum standards to be adopted

#### Regional Water Safety Adviser

- Advise clubs on the regular checking and maintenance of their boats/equipment, the minimum standards to be adopted and further good practice
- Suspend water activity, through the Regional Rowing Council, where there is evidence of disregard for minimum standards and advice

#### Competition Organisers

- Check, in accordance with the Rules of Racing, that competitors' equipment used for rowing and sculling at competitions complies with the Row Safe Guidance

#### Coxswain

- Check, with the crew before each outing, that the boat and equipment is in a safe condition, in working order and suitable for the conditions in which it is being used

#### Equipment Manufacturers and Suppliers

- Ensure that all equipment supplied, manufactured or repaired for rowing, sculling and coaching complies with the minimum standards to be adopted
- Provide clubs and individuals information regarding the inherent buoyancy of the boat in relation to the ARA's or FISA's requirements
- Ensure that all boats are plated with the date of manufacture, the design weight, and if it conforms to the ARA's or FISA's requirements on buoyancy
- Label boats in accordance with the 1998 EU Directive 94/25/EC Recreational Craft Directive

## Minimum standards to be adopted

- In the event of being swamped - all newly constructed boats must have sufficient inherent buoyancy, together with their oars and sculls, to support a seated crew of the stated design weight such that the rowers' torsos remain out of the water and the boat can be manoeuvred
- All Clubs and individuals purchasing new boats must confirm with the manufacturer or supplier that the boat being supplied complies with the ARA's or FISA's requirements on buoyancy and insist on the boat being plated accordingly
- If, after risk assessment for a planned activity, it is judged that a boat, new or old, does not have sufficient inherent buoyancy, additional buoyancy must be added
- Where the construction shape of a boat or its composition is such that the bow presents a hazard in collision, a solid ball of not less than 4cm diameter made of rubber or material of similar resilience must be firmly attached to the bow
- All boats where 'fitted shoes' are employed must have effective heel restraints. These must be properly adjusted (the heel must be prevented from rising higher than the lowest fixed point of the shoe) and in working order. Likewise, the foot release from any other type of fitment that may be used must be self-acting and not require the intervention of the athlete or a rescuer
- Buoyancy compartments must be watertight to ensure effective operation
- Rudder lines, steering mechanisms, rudder and fin, must be secure and in good working order
- The 'buttons' on oars and sculls must be secure and properly set
- Before each outing the following checks must be made:
  - check that buoyancy compartments, seals, hatch covers, boat hull and ventilation bungs are secure and watertight

Is your boat fit for purpose?

Remember to log all damage and repair

## 2.3 Boats & Blades

- check that the bow ball is securely fixed and fully covers the bow of the boat in order that adequate protection is given to any person or object struck by the moving boat. This check should also examine any fixing screws or bolts to ensure that they do not represent a further hazard in the event of accident
- check that outriggers, swivels, gates, seats and stretchers are secure and operating freely. In difficult water conditions are 'splash boards' available and fitted?
- check that heel restraints are secure and that restraints are adequate and effective – heels should be positively restrained not to rise higher than the lowest fixed point of the shoe
- check that rudder lines, steering mechanisms, rudder and fin, are secure and in good working order
- check oars and sculls for damage and ensure that 'buttons' are secure and properly set
- check that the boat is suitable for the situation in which it is to be used, for example maximum crew weight
- check that if lighting is required it is suitable for the outing (see navigation/steering)

### Further good practice

(In addition to minimum standards to be adopted)

- Boats with insufficient inherent buoyancy for a swamping situation should be identified and marked accordingly by the club and unless extra buoyancy is added, its use restricted to situations where risk of swamping is low
- Boats and equipment should be stored in an orderly fashion, in well-lit premises where possible, in such a way as to minimise damage to persons or equipment
- Damaged equipment should be 'quarantined', with the nature of the damage clearly marked, to ensure that it is not used by others unaware of its condition
- Procedures should be in place where damage to equipment is notified to responsible officials without delay and the damage repaired before the equipment is used again
- All damage to boats and equipment and the repair should be logged

### Further information

#### Row Safe – related sections

- 1.3 Club Safety Plans
- 3.1 Beginners
- 3.2 Juniors

#### ARA website

- Fit to Compete poster
- ARA Rules of Racing

