

## Wilmington Rowing Center SAFETY RULES

The following rules are intended to provide guidance and instruction on safety issues. However, no set of Safety Rules can be created to address all hazardous situations, and neither WRC nor its Board of Directors can assure the safety of individual rowers.

### Overview:

Safety is an individual responsibility. Safe conduct and practices in the WRC boathouse and while rowing out the WRC boathouse are prerequisites for membership in WRC.

Rowing season/times: The WRC dock generally remains in the water year round. However, for safety reasons, rowing in club singles and doubles is prohibited from mid December to mid March at the discretion of the Safety Committee. Rowing is permissible at other times—weather, water conditions, and daylight permitting. Rowing with WRC equipment is limited to the period between 30 minutes before sunrise and 30 minutes after sunset.

Mature, safe behavior, good manners and sportsmanship are expected on the water, at the dock, and in and around the boathouse at all times. All members are expected to be alert and attentive when engaged in WRC activities, to prevent accidents and to help others avoid accidents, to offer help whenever a situation calls for it. Unbecoming behavior may result in the loss of membership.

Your responsibilities include

- Knowing your physical abilities and limitations. Rowing is a strenuous and difficult sport. Lifting and carrying equipment should be done with care for the rower and the equipment.
- Learning the hazards, anticipating trouble, and taking actions to secure your own safety and the safety of others. Possible hazards/dangers include collision with other boats, running into stationary or floating objects, capsizing, and hypothermia from exposure to cold water or low temperatures, swift currents and tides, lightning, equipment failure, ejection from the boat (projectile “crabs”).

### Emergency Phone Numbers:

- Promptly report emergencies to the appropriate agency when assistance is needed.
- Carry emergency numbers and a cell phone with you when rowing by yourself (See below)

Emergency	<b>911</b>	Police/Fire/Ambulance
Non-emergency	<b>302-654-5151</b>	City of Wilmington Police
Dangerous motorboat traffic	<b>1-800-523-3336</b>	DNREC Div. of Fish and Wildlife/ Boating Safety
Facility Security Issues	<b>302-528-6956 (preferred) 302-425-1890 ext 125.</b>	Riverfront Development Corporation Security Command Center Cell Phone Office Number

### Emergency Procedures:

- 1. Shell overturned/swamped:** All occupants should stay with the shell and float to the nearest shore. All other boats should stay nearby until all persons are out of danger before getting help. Members are encouraged to carry charged cell phones in waterproof cases, whistles or air horns to summon help in an emergency. Waterproof cell phone cases are available at the boathouse.
- 2. Rower overboard:** If the water is cold, it is critical to get rowers out of the water and back to a warm area as soon as possible. Rowers should be aware that victims of hypothermia may lose reasoning abilities without being aware of it.
- 3. In the event rescue assistance is required:** Use your cell phone to contact emergency personnel or the boat depending on severity and urgency. Boat house responders should deploy the rescue launch located on the dock and the motor and other equipment in the box on the dock.

### General Safety Rules, Policies and Procedures:

The following rules apply to both WRC and privately owned boats.

- 1. NO ONE**, including members and guests, may row or use WRC facilities for any purpose until they have signed the Waiver/Release form. Members must renew the waiver annually with their membership renewal. Members and lesson participants must also provide evidence of their ability to swim. Inexperienced rowers must be accompanied on the water at all times by an experienced rower.
- Members and guests may use WRC equipment only as approved (see Rowing Policy).
- Any equipment to be used must be inspected for breakage before use.
- Damaged WRC equipment may not be used. If you find damage, put the information on the Equipment Status Board and a "Do Not Row" sign on the boat sign on the boat to prevent accidental use and to assure that repairs are made.
- All WRC and private boats launching from the WRC dock must be entered in the Log Book. The log needs to be completed completely, accurately and legibly, including departure time, return, boat identification, names of crew.
- No boat may be launched if the weather or water conditions are dangerous or threatening. White caps, thunder, lightning, water temperature, ice, debris and high wind indicate unsafe conditions.
- WRC members are expected to learn basic nautical and rowing terms (for example port, starboard), rowing commands, rules of navigation when encountering large vessels under way, characteristics and hazards of the Christina River. Only qualified members may cox or bow a boat without a launch accompanying them (see Rowing Policy).
- Members are expected to be aware of their own physical capacities and technical abilities, and may not row if other factors such as a strong current could create a hazard to themselves, to others, or to equipment.

### On-Water Rules (refer to map for traffic pattern/bridge locations/landmarks):

Insert map (TBD-In Development)

1. Launching/Docking: As a general rule, boats launch and dock with the bow facing upstream. Weather and current conditions may dictate approaching the dock going down river. Extreme caution needs be exercised at all times to avoid accidents and damage.
2. Traffic Pattern: The general rule is to travel on the right hand side (starboard) and stay closer to your starboard shore to avoid collision with boats moving in the opposite direction. Some deep draft river traffic must stay in the channel and this may require rowers to yield or move to port side (see next rule on Passing)
3. Passing:
  - Boats traveling in opposite directions – Generally on-coming boats pass port-to-port.
  - Boats traveling in the same direction - Boats being overtaken are expected to move close to shore to permit faster boats to pass. Faster boats are expected to pass toward the center of the river.
  - Different rules may apply when sharing the waterway with a large vessel like the Kalmar Nyckel or commercial shipping. (Point 10. for Navigation Around Large Vessels)
  - Navigating Through Bridges:
    - Boats must proceed through the railroad bridge above the Shipyard Shops immediately to the right of the center bulkhead going both upstream and downstream.
    - Boats traveling through the 1-95 bridge should use the 2 right-hand spans.
5. Upstream Boundaries: Do not row Quads, Fours or Eights past the DE141 Bridge at Newport. Singles and Doubles should exercise caution going further than this point with particular attention paid to the tide change times.
6. Downstream Boundaries: Do not row into the Port of Wilmington past the point identified by the Lobdell Canal. Exercise caution when rowing the Brandywine River: do not row Quads, Fours or Eights into the Brandywine, do not enter at low tide in a single or a double, do not proceed further than the old waterworks building below the Market Street Bridge.
7. Continually be aware of hazards such as debris (both floating and fixed debris), sandbars and change of tide.
8. Daylight Restrictions: Boats may be on the water only 30 minutes before sunrise or 30 minutes after sunset. If a boat will be out past sundown, before sunup, or in limited visibility situations, safety lights must be used at bow and stern. Stay off the river when visibility is poor.
9. Winter Restrictions; WRC singles, doubles, and pairs may not be used from December 15 through March 15 because of the hazards of hypothermia. A notice will be posted to this effect. This prohibition may be extended by the Safety Committee if the water temperature remains too cold after March 15.
10. Rowing Alone: Rowing singles alone is discouraged. Remember that the chances of surviving an accident or medical emergency are much higher if another person is available to come to the rescue.

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11. Navigating around Large Vessels: Large vessels such as the Kalmar Nyckel, commercial shipping have the right-of-way. They will blow their horn to indicate where they wish smaller craft to be relative when passing. One blast means they want your boat on their port, two blasts means that you need to pass on their starboard side, and five blasts means that you need to get out of their way immediately because there is imminent danger of collision. Rowers, coaches and coxswains need to understand how to respond when a large vessel approaches bow-to-bow or stern-to-bow. In an emergency situation, the simplest course of action is to simply "get out of the way." Rowers should become familiar with where these vessels dock, their normal navigation paths (channel), and stay away from prop wash.

### Launches:

1. Launches may be operated only by members qualified to operate launches. Launch drivers are subject to local laws & licensing requirements (an operator's license is required for those born after 1/1/78).
2. The safety committee will train and qualify launch drivers. A list of qualified launch drivers will be maintained by the safety committee and posted at the boat house
3. Launches MUST not carry more than capacity (printed on capacity sticker on the inside of the boat).
4. Use of safety tether is mandatory when mounting and dismounting outboard motors.
5. If a launch will contain only the driver, weight must be added so that there is some weight in the front of the boat. Blocks will be placed on the dock to be used for this purpose. Fuel supply containers SHOULD be placed in front of the operator for the same reason, unless there is at least one other person in the boat.
6. A launch MUST be equipped with a safety bag, charged cell phone in a waterproof case, paddle, throw rope & throw cushion.
7. Launch drivers must observe the no wake zone and to be courteous when passing boats and try to minimize wakes in other locations. The No Wake Zone extends from the port of Wilmington to the WRC Dock area.
8. Launch Drivers and passengers must always wear a PFD (life jackets located at the safety station).
9. Guest passengers (non boathouse members) MUST wear a PFD and MUST sign a waiver.
10. Launches MUST use lighting according to US Coast Guard. An all around white light is provided for launches that can be installed on the stern.
11. If motors are equipped with cut off switches, they must be attached to any solo launch operator.
12. Driving a launch can be dangerous. Drive at your own risk.

### Safety Equipment:

Members should familiarize themselves with the safety equipment for on water use.

1. Safety bags will be available for launches. Each bag will include 9 life preservers, 9 space blankets or ponchos, a safety throw line, first aid kit, air horn or peal-less whistle (or audible signaling device), cell phone case, fire extinguisher and tools.
2. Waterproof cell phone cases are available. Each group of boats not accompanied by a launch should carry at least one charged cell phone.

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3. Air horns are available, and members are encouraged to carry them.
4. Bow/stern lights are available for times of limited visibility using the convention of “bow blinking, stern steady”.
5. A lightning detector and weather station and radio are mounted at the front desk is available.
6. Scullers should consider using a mirror in the bow position to assist in navigating.

### **Boathouse and Dock areas:**

1. All members should familiarize themselves with the location of the:
  - a. First aid kit,
  - b. Fire extinguishers and their use (training available through the Safety Committee),
  - c. AED (auto external defibrillator) and become certified in its use,
  - d. Emergency launch and motor stored on dock during rowing season.
2. All equipment must be stored properly and carefully to avoid accidents, especially boats in high racks, oars, ladders, and lifts. Members are encouraged to ask for help in taking out and putting back equipment to avoid unnecessary injury and boat damage.
3. Tools, oars, and other equipment must not be left on the floor of the bays, on the ramp, or in the area outside the doors where it may create a tripping hazard.
4. Particular care must be used when taking boats up and down the ramp. The ramp may be slippery, especially early in the morning.
5. Doors and gates must be locked when no WRC member is present in or near the boathouse. On the water is not considered near the boathouse. Leaving the facility including equipment unsecured will encourage theft and vandalism.
6. Likewise, the gate at the ramp must be locked when members are on the water.
7. Carried boats have the right of way. Members are expected to be alert for boats and stay out of the way.
8. When handling boats, members must be aware of the length of the boats and avoid striking people and objects. Because pedestrians and others who may be present on the river walk are generally not familiar with rowing shells, particular care must be exercised when turning a boat.
9. The river walk can get a lot of foot traffic, including children on bicycles, roller-blade skaters, and other fast moving people. Members must be sure to look up and down the river walk before crossing the river walk (especially with equipment), and exercise care to assure that incidents with pedestrians do not occur.
10. Boats in slings outside the boathouse must be kept off the river walk.