

Safety Plan and Risk Assessment 2024

The following notes are distributed to the Clubs racing at Wallingford Head for distribution to competitors, their coaches, organisers, marshals, umpires and safety personnel and are available on the event website.

They must be read by every person taking part together with the [Competitors' Instructions](#), Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing ("Row Safe") and the [Course Map](#).

Regatta Safety Advisor

The Organising committee has appointed Tim Brock as the Safety Advisor. He is a member of the Organising Committee and has produced this document and updated the risk assessment which is annexed in this document.

Race committee

A race committee chaired by Adrian Champion will undertake the duties detailed in the British Rowing Rules of Racing. In particular, they will decide whether weather conditions are too dangerous to permit racing to continue.

Race Safety

Wallingford Head is run in accordance with the British Rowing Rules of Racing ("Rules of Racing"). It is compulsory that all competitors comply fully with the Rules of Racing and all aspects of Row Safe.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that it is the responsibility of Clubs, their athletes and coaches to ensure that their equipment complies in all regards with the requirements of Row Safe. It is also the responsibility of clubs to ensure their crews are capable of racing competently over the distances the crews have been entered for. Any crew that is considered not capable will not be allowed to race and the club will be reported to British Rowing.

Race officials may inspect boats chosen at random. Boats that fail to comply with Row Safe and the Rules of Racing will be disqualified from the event. All crews attending Wallingford Head must comply fully with the rules as laid out in the **Competitors' Instructions**. Specific attention is drawn to competitors and coaches that boats designed to have watertight hatches and/or bungs must have these in place and fitted correctly.

All club/crew coaches are to ensure that their athletes are correctly briefed on Row Safe, in particular in relation to capsizing procedures.

Participants who have any potential health problems that might cause problems to themselves or other competitors (e.g. epilepsy) must advise the Entries Secretary 48 hours prior to race day. The Race Committee retains the right not to allow a competitor to go afloat if, in their opinion, the health condition constitutes an unacceptable risk.

Suspending/Stopping the Race

The primary duty of every Race Official is to care for the safety of competitors and others. It may be necessary to stop the race should conditions alter significantly through the course of the race or a major event occurs (e.g. multiple collisions). Racing will be abandoned or postponed if the Safety Advisor and/or a Race Umpire decide that conditions are unsafe. The Safety Advisor and/or the Chair of the Race Committee shall immediately inform all Marshals and Umpires using the event radio network.

Marshals, mainly club members with knowledge of the river, will immediately instruct racing boats to stop by shouting "STOP RACING" on megaphones and guiding boats into the most sheltered part of the river adjacent to one of the banks. If conditions are equal on each bank, preference should be given to bringing

crews in to the towpath bank where assistance can be given more easily.

Launches are to stay in position so as to give cover over the entire course and drivers are to be vigilant and respond to any request for help from Marshals. All launches are equipped with Safety Boxes which include emergency foil blankets which should be used to ensure crews remain warm.

The Safety Advisor and the Chief Umpire shall decide on terminating the event or re-starting if conditions improve.

Safety cover, incidents, and emergencies

All launches will carry radios and safety equipment as specified by Row Safe. Safety cover will be provided for the reach bounded by the old Wallingford Bridge and the marshalling position of the last boat in each division. Cover will commence 120 minutes before the start of each division, with limited cover provided by safety boats initially. Full cover will be in place 20 minutes before the start of each division. Crews are not permitted to go afloat until safety cover is in place and the Chair of the Race Committee has given approval for boating.

Bank and on-water marshals will be in place to provide line of sight cover for the whole course from 20 minutes prior to the start of the division, until the last boat in that division has cleared the area for which that Marshal is responsible. A safety launch will follow the last crew in each division. On the water safety cover will terminate for each division as the last crew arrives at the rafts.

There will be a medical tent in the boating area which will be the command centre, and point of contact, for all safety and first aid related questions.

A radio system will be in operation. The radio system covers the bank marshals along the course, the start, the safety boats along the course and the finish. This is supplemented by use of officials' mobile phones as a backup in the event of radio failure.

In the event of an on the water incident, competitors should firstly ensure their own safety, and then ensure a Race Official is aware of the problem.

If any persons suffer any injuries, the nearest Race Official will immediately raise Safety and/or the Chair of the Race Committee who will assess the situation and determine the appropriate action.

Persons suffering minor injuries will be taken by rescue launch to the boating area, Cholsey Ferry or the nearest landing stage, notifying race control by radio or by phone. Race Control will then organise appropriate medical support.

In the event of a person being injured on land, Race Control should be informed. The medical tent in the boating area should be contacted in all cases for assistance.

All accidents, collisions or capsizes must be reported to Race Control and the online BR incident report form filled in prior to leaving the event..

In the case of a serious incident call the Emergency Services on 999. Do not wait for the event's first aid teams to arrive.



There will be safety teams provided at the Boating Area and the Cholsey Ferry. The safety crew at Cholsey Ferry will be able to arrange transport back to the boating area. All safety boats have trained personnel with equipment on board, however some treatment may be best provided on land.

Please note that a conventional Ambulance may not be able to get close to the riverbank. Do not hesitate to ask for the Air Ambulance if you are at a position inaccessible by road. Safe landing areas, clear of obstructions are shown on the Course Map.

Clothing

Do think of conditions and the fact that you may be sat at the start area for some time (up to 3 hours). Ensure that rowers have suitable clothing, particularly juniors.

Annex: Safety Risk assessment 2024

Instructions for competitors, officials, visitors, and coaches are available online at www.wallingford-head.org.uk from a minimum of 14 days prior to the event. Instructions detail such items as circulation patterns for vehicles and boats, location of facilities etc.

All Boat Movements on the Water are covered by Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing (“The Code”) as published by British Rowing. The Code applies to all participants, who are responsible for self-policing the code. Further, coaches, marshals, umpires and all officials enforce the code.

Failure to comply with any part of that code in relation to equipment or behaviour will lead to the crew or participants not being able to go afloat and /or race.

Hazard	Potential Outcome	Likelihood	Measures to Reduce Risk	Overall Risk
VEHICLE & CYCLE MOVEMENTS & USE:				
Fall hazard while unloading boats	Injury to rowers and /or damage to boats	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on competency of crews and coaches. British Rowing provides guidelines on trailers and towing 	Low / Moderate
Collision hazard due to trailers, boats and cars	Injury to rowers and or damage to boats	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car park marshals to ensure trailers and cars are parked to allow adequate space to manoeuvre boats and people and that no speeding is allowed • Traffic to trailer park buildings is restricted to trailers and cars with boats • No spectator cars are allowed into the trailer parks, but directed to alternative parking under marshal supervision 	Low
Hazard while navigating in parking area	Injury to rowers and spectators	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marshalls to advise drivers on parking locations • Speed limits to be maintained using signs and marshals • Marshalls to be in position at all times when parking area in use • Coordination with providers of Parking Areas to ensure all required 	Low

			activities are managed by Marshalls	
Hazard for pedestrians when proceeding to racing and spectators	Injury to rowers and spectators or pedestrians	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed limits to be maintained using signs. • Marshalls to ensure that the speed limits are maintained 	Low
LANDING STAGES:				
Slip hazard due to muddy slope leading to rafts	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slope will be treated or covered in straw to provide a non slip surface 	Low
Trip hazard due to items being left on landing stages	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raft marshals instructed to minimise time crew equipment is left on staging • Blade storage is provided at the sandy bank to keep blades off the floating stages • Shoes to be cleared from the stages by coaches and raft marshals 	
SAFETY BOATS:				
Slip hazard and heavy object handling when launching and recovering Safety boats	Injury to safety boat crews and equipment	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety boat crews are trained how to launch and recover safety boats from ramps. • Persons not providing safety boat cover will not be permitted near launch/recovery sites while safety vehicles are nearby 	
Use of safety boats at high speed may affect water conditions for other river users	Risk to other craft on river and risk of capsize of rowing craft	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety boats will only operate at high speed when effecting a rescue. • Marshalls will make other crews aware of any imminent danger due to high speed craft 	
Use of safety boats may affect other (non-competitive) river	Risk to other craft on river		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs will be mounted identifying that a race is in progress above and below race 	

users			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency and lock keepers have been notified of event taking place • Medical teams at strategic places to enable rapid response and reduce travel of safety boats 	
PRIOR TO RACE START:				
Collision with other boats on way to start or in marshalling area	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On water safety cover provided from 20 minutes prior to start • Reliance on competency of crews and coaches, and compliance with the Code • Traffic rules are circulated to athletes prior to the event, non-compliance may lead to race penalties being applied 	Low
Long wait in marshalling area prior to start	Potential for hypothermia	Low, varies according to December weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on competency of crews and coaches supported by British Rowing Coach education programme • Raft marshals to advise crews, especially coxes, thought to have inadequate protection for the current conditions • Competitors are asked to wear appropriate clothing for the conditions 	Low
DURING A RACE:				
Incidents involving other race crews	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All racing is carried out under British Rowing Rules of Racing and in compliance with the Code. All races are observed by marshals at all times • Bank marshals along the course will advise boats to move as necessary if there is a safety issue 	Low

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No warm-up on the course and warming up is restricted to the marshalling area under strict instructions of the bank marshals 	
Capsize	Potential for hypothermia	Low (in December)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Umpires and marshals along the course can summon safety boats with emergency blankets Only Fours and Eights racing which are less likely to capsize than smaller boats. 	Low
THUNDERSTORMS				
Lightning	Severe injury, death or damage to equipment and structures	Low	<p>If thunder or lightning is observed all racing will be suspended and crews informed to clear the water. All tents are to be evacuated, and all spectators to be advised to get into vehicles, to close doors and windows. Then await the all clear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All clear will be provided by the Chair of the Race Committee only, and only once no thunder or lightning has been observed for 30 minutes. In the case of lightning, all blades MUST be put flat on the ground and not held by athletes or coaches 	Very Low
ON THE COURSE:				
Overhanging trees on the race line	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overhanging trees have been cut back to minimise the possibility of interference Marshals to warn boats if safety may be compromised 	Low

Cruisers, narrow boats and other river traffic	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lock Keepers at Benson Lock and Cleeve Lock will be given hand-outs for boats entering the rowing reach and giving advice • Marshals will ensure that the bends are clear before start of racing and keep particularly vigilant in guiding cruisers etc. in the area of the bends • EA approval to close the river to non-race traffic during the race has been requested. 	Low
Bends (1km into race)	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra marshals allocated to keep crews visible at all times and advise on safe line 	Low
Four-arches railway bridge (above start)	Injury to rowers and/or damage to boats	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care going through narrow arches and under control of marshals 	Low
INCLEMENT WEATHER				
Squalls, heavy rain, sleet, snow, fog, severe crosswinds, etc.	Severe injury, death or damage to equipment and structures	Medium (in December)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race Committee to assess race conditions and agree time delay(s), postponement of racing, cancellation of all racing, or cancellation of classes of crews felt to be at particular risk in the conditions • Participants will be advised of the situation over the public address system. 	Low
Stream conditions	Ability to navigate course successfully to start and along the race course	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stream conditions will be monitored using the nearest flow rate (Sutton Courtenay) from the EA prior to race day and during race day. • EA river conditions are provided on their web site and racing will not be 	Low

			allowed on Red boards (unless boats are already at the start)	
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