

**HHSRA SAFETY MANUAL AND  
COACHES GUIDE**



## **I. Introduction**

The Hingham High School Rowing Association (“HHSRA”) is dedicated to providing a top quality rowing experience for members of the Hingham High School crew team. Safety while on the water, on the dock, on land and traveling to and from regattas is one of the highest priorities for the student-athletes, the coaches and for all parent-volunteer members of HHSRA. This Safety Manual and Coaches Guide is intended to provide a summary of the safety requirements, including those requirements of the Town of Hingham Harbormaster as described in the Interscholastic Safety Practices (“ISP”) issued by the Harbormaster and attached hereto and incorporated herein as Appendix IV, while at the same time recognizing that respecting and abiding by safety procedures is first and foremost the personal responsibility of each of the student-athletes, each of the coaches and for all parent-volunteer members of HHSRA.

## **II. General Requirements for all Hingham High School Crew teams**

### **A. Safe Rowing Equipment**

For the safety of all concerned, rowing equipment should be maintained in good working order. Particular attention must be paid to the following:

- Every boat must have a firmly attached ball of not less than 4 cm (1.5 inches) diameter on its bow. Where the construction or nature of the boat is such that the bow is properly protected or its shape does not represent a hazard then this requirement need not apply.

- Heel restraints and “quick-release” mechanisms must be in proper and effective working order in all boats equipped with fitted shoes. These restraints should not allow the heel to lift more than 3 inches.
- All oars should be checked to ensure that “buttons” are secure and properly set.
- Bow and stern compartments should function as individual buoyancy compartments and must be checked to ensure that they will function as intended.
- Boats should meet minimum flotation requirements:  
When full of water a boat with the crew seated in the rowing position should float in such a way that the top of the seat is a maximum of 5 cm (2 inches) below the static waterline. Older boats not designed to meet this requirement may use inflatable buoyancy bags, foam blocks or other materials.

**B. Local Code of Practice**

Since conditions vary from venue to venue, each organization should prepare and display a local code of practice, which should include a plan of the local water, drawing attention to local navigation rules, hazards and restrictions to water use. HHSRA abides by the ISP. Attention should also be drawn to any variation in normal procedures that may be necessary due to the state of the tide or stream, high winds, or other climatic conditions. Local codes of practice should emphasize that safety is paramount. HHSRA will post this in a mutually convenient area on Barnes Wharf respecting the operations of Lincoln Maritime Center. In the absence of such a posting, our coaches in coordination with the Director of Rowing will communicate all of the Local Code Practice to the crew members.

**C. Personnel Responsibilities**

## 1. General

All participants in rowing and sculling, including coxswains, should receive proper instruction in watermanship and technique, including capsize instruction, from a qualified coach on the HHSRA staff. No one should put him- or herself or others at risk when on the water. This applies particularly to beginners and to juniors. Encouragement should be given to athletes to become fully aware of life-saving and resuscitation procedures by attending training courses. In particular, it is highly desirable that Safety Advisers and coaches should be so trained. Seasonally, HHSRA will appoint a Safety Committee with a single Safety Officer and members of the HHSRA at large. Rowing activities should be coordinated with those of other local water users to minimize clashes of interest and the possibility of creating additional water hazards. There should be a required reporting structure for all non-trivial accidents to the Safety Adviser or higher authority where these events are recorded for further review. This information should be passed on to the town authorities (the Harbormaster) for a comprehensive overview of safety in the sport.

## 2. Rowers and coxswains

Any rower or coxswain going out on the water will be responsible for abiding by all local rules, regulations and traffic patterns. They should be in good health and properly attired for the present and potential conditions. All rowers and coxswains should demonstrate the ability to swim 50 meters (54 yards) in light clothing and to demonstrate within that test competence under water and in treading water. If a person cannot meet the requirements of the swimming test for physical or other reasons, an approved lifejacket or buoyancy aid should be worn when in a boat. In case of accident, **stay with your boat** rather than attempting to swim to the shore.

Your boat, unless seriously damaged, is your life raft. Coxswains should receive a full explanation on handling the boat, all relevant safety procedures and boat handling. Inexperienced coxswains should be allowed out in boats only if observed by an experienced coach, preferably in a fully equipped coach boat. They must also be familiar with navigation rules.

### 3. Coaches

Coaches must be responsible for those under their authority and should ensure that they are informed of safety procedures and abide by them. They must evaluate environmental conditions and determine if it is safe for rowers to go out on the water.

## **D. Coaching Boats**

### 1. General

The presence of a coaching boat gives far better safety protection to a crew than a coach on a bicycle on the land. The coach must drive safely, always consider the safety of those on board, and consider the effect upon other water users.

### 2. Training Drivers

To take out an engine-powered boat without previous instruction is to put the driver, any passengers and other water users at risk. At the very least the club shall ensure that an experienced driver goes out with a new driver until he has shown that he is fully in control of the launch. The manner in which coaching boats are driven may create unnecessary problems for other water users. Excessive washes and waves create difficult rowing conditions and can cause accidents to smaller boats. Thoughtless driving often causes damage to moored boats and to riverbanks. To use coaching boats for

coaching, rescue and other purposes all on the same water, requires drivers to be fully aware of the effect of the wake they cause and the risk that the very sport they are seeking to assist cannot take place because their manner of driving their boat has made the water unusable.

### 3. Coaching Boat Requirements

All coaching and safety boats should carry the following safety aids:

#### **KIPPY LIDDLE SAFETY KIT – ONE KIPPIE LIDDLE BAG FOR EACH BOAT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE COACH**

The kit contains the following items:

- Adult USCG-Approved Personal Flotation Devices (11)
- Rescue Throw Bag
- Telescope Paddle
- Waterproof High Intensity Flashlight
- A horn, whistle or similar warning device, capable of attracting attention over a distance of at least 200 meters (217 yards).
- Emergency Rescue Blankets (9)
- Waterproof First Aid Kit

Additional required items:

- A Marine VHF radio (monitor channel 69)
- Each coach must have a cell phone (to call 911)
- A bailer
- A tow line
- A boat hook
- A grab line at least 50' long with a large knot tied in one end to assist throwing. Ideally a purpose made rescue/heaving line throw-bag.

- A basic first aid kit (list contents and check regularly as before).
- A sharp knife with carrying sheath.
- A paddle.
- Engine, cutout lanyard device.
- An anchor and line.

#### 4. Lifejackets

It is required that buoyancy aids or life jackets be worn at all times by all on board a coaching boat and are essential when going out to sea or on very wide stretches of water. Life jackets that depend on oral inflation should be worn partly inflated; those that have auto inflation must be checked at intervals suggested by the manufacturers.

#### 5. Coaching Boat Maintenance

Maintenance of the boat and its engine is vital since the possible consequences of failure are great. A tool/spare parts box should be kept dry and checked regularly (an extra can of pre-mixed fuel is also a vital spare). It is a wise precaution to check that the engine is securely fixed to the hull and that the secondary safety fixing exists and is properly effective every time the boat is used.

### **III. Cold Water Guidelines – Hypothermia**

#### **A. Background**

Most experts in immersion hypothermia and cold water near drowning/ drowning define cold water as temperatures below 20° C (68°F) (It is also recognized that colder temperatures increase the rate of body cooling and increase the risk of cold shock and swimming failure. The majority of persons dying from immersion succumb in the early stages of the incident due to a range of

physiological responses including gasping, hyperventilation and rapid peripheral cooling, resulting in aspiration, reduced breath-hold and incapacitation. Preparation and prevention are essential to protect against the effects of the cold-water environment. This should include emergency drills with the equipment that would be used.

## **B. Guidelines**

### **1. Conditions**

Environmental conditions should be monitored, including water temperature, wind, precipitation and sea state, and appropriate safety directions such as those set out in #3 below should be issued.

### **2. Clothing**

Protective clothing should be worn which is appropriate for the conditions. The activity with the objective is to keep the body dry and to insulate against heat loss.

### **3. Precautions**

When the water temperature is at 10° C (50° F) or below or when the environmental conditions warrant, special safety precautions should be considered. Possibilities should include:

- Warning members against going on the water;
- Advising members to go on the water only if carrying a personal flotation device (PFD) or lifejacket of appropriate size for each member of the crew, a sound-signaling device and, if it is after sunset and before sunrise, navigation lights as set out in the Collision Regulations, and;



- Where appropriate, only if attended by a safety boat carrying a PFD or lifejacket of appropriate size for each member of the crew of the largest vessel being attended.

### **C. Hypothermia**

Hypothermia occurs when the whole of the body has been chilled to a much lower than normal temperature, i.e. below 35° C (95° F) compared with the normal body temperature of 37° C (98.6° F). This should be avoided at all costs.

- **“Dress to beat the cold”** - Layers of clothing are more effective than one warm garment. The outer layer should be wind and waterproof.
- Do not take or give alcohol in cold conditions. Alcohol accelerates heat loss as well as impairing judgment.
- Be alert to the warning signs of cold both in yourself and others.
- Coaches of young children must be particularly aware of the risks to their charges of exposure to cold. Exposed arms, legs and head heighten the risk.

If a person has fallen into cold water, their body will lose heat rapidly. To reduce heat loss, the person should keep his clothes on except for heavy coats or boots which may drag the person down. Sudden immersion in cold water can have a shock effect that can disrupt normal breathing, reducing even a proficient swimmer to incompetence. Confusion and an inability to respond to simple instructions will become evident. When hypothermia is suspected; try to prevent further loss of body heat and re-warm the affected victim. Send for help. Hypothermia is a medical emergency whether the patient is conscious or unconscious. If conscious the victim should be actively re-warmed under careful observation. If unconscious the victim must get medical aid as soon as possible. Follow instructions given under Resuscitation.

## **D. Symptoms and signs of hypothermia**

The following are the most usual symptoms and signs, but all may not be present:

- Unexpected and unreasonable behavior possibly accompanied by complaints of coldness and tiredness.
- Physical and mental lethargy with failure to understand a question or orders.
- Slurring of speech.
- Violent outburst of unexpected energy and violent language, becoming uncooperative.
- Failure of, or abnormality in, vision.
- Twitching.
- Lack of control of limbs, unsteadiness and complaining of numbness and cramp.
- General shock with pallor and blueness of lips and nails.
- Slow weak pulse, wheezing and coughing.

A very dangerous situation is still present when a person who has been in the water for some time is taken out of the water. Further heat loss must be prevented. The victim should be protected against wind and rain if possible. Re-warming can be carried out by:

- Wrapping the victim in a thermal/exposure blanket.
- Others placing their warm bodies against the victim.
- Giving hot drinks (if conscious), but not alcohol.

### **Prevention Is Always the Best Policy**

## **E. Resuscitation**

To be effective, resuscitation must be started as soon as possible, even while the patient is in the water. Otherwise irreversible damage or death will occur within a few minutes. Many thousands of lives have been saved by ordinary citizens who have known what to do and have had the courage to do it at the critical time. The

saving of life during a medical emergency depends on the accurate assessment and proper management of the ABC of resuscitation:

**A - Airway**

**B - Breathing**

**C - Circulation**

On finding a person requiring resuscitation:

### 1. Approach

Establish there is no danger to yourself or the victim. If you see someone in difficulties in the water, DO NOT go into the water after him. It is critical that the rescuer handle the emergency in such a way that he himself remains safe. Remember there may be neck or back injuries requiring extra care when moving the victims.

- Find something to help pull him out – a stick, a rope or clothing.
- Lie down to prevent yourself from being pulled in.
- If you cannot reach him, throw any floating object - football, plastic bottle - for him to hold on to, then fetch help.
- If you are in a safety launch carefully approach him if it is safe to do so.

**Reach - Throw - Tow**

**Having Rescued the Victim - Shout Immediately For Help**

### 2. Assess the patient

Responsiveness - Establish responsiveness by shouting “ARE YOU ALL RIGHT” loudly and gently shaking the shoulder. If the patient is unresponsive, i.e., not breathing with no pulse: leave the patient immediately and summon help. Return to the patient and commence resuscitation.

#### a) Breathing

Inspect the airway - remove blood, vomit, loose teeth or broken dentures but leave well fitting dentures in place.

b) Open the airway

The rescuer should place two fingers beneath the point of the patient's chin, lift the jaw and at the same time place the palm of the other hand on the patient's forehead. Tilt the head well back by pressing on the forehead and the airway will open.

c) Check for breathing

The rescuer should place her ear close to the patient's mouth looking down along the line of the chest.

- Listen for the sound of breathing.
- Feel for air movement indicating breathing.
- Look for rising and falling of the chest.

d) Circulation

Check for the presence of a pulse by feeling for the carotid artery in the neck. The artery lies along each side of the voice box (larynx). If the patient is unresponsive - not breathing with no pulse - leave the patient immediately and go and telephone for help. Return to the patient and commence resuscitation.

If the patient is unresponsive, not breathing but with a pulse - perform ten "mouth to mouth" (expired air resuscitation) breaths, then leave the patient and "911". Return to the patient, check for breathing and pulse and continue resuscitation.

If the patient is unresponsive but is breathing and has a pulse then turn him on his side into the recovery position.

e) The Recovery Position

Kneel to one side of the patient. Take the nearest arm and place it at 90° to his body, elbow bent and palm uppermost.

Take the farthest arm and place it with the palm outwards held against the casualty's cheek. Bend the far knee upwards to 90°, keeping the foot flat on the ground. Supporting the hand on the face, pull gently but firmly on the bent up thigh to roll the patient towards you. Rearrange the far side, now upper leg to 90° and ensure the airway is still open by tilting the head and lifting the chin.

### 3. Resuscitation Procedure

This is the provision of artificial ventilation by mouth to mouth breathing, and an artificial circulation by external chest compressions.

#### a) Mouth to Mouth Breathing (Expired Air Resuscitation)

Lie the patient on his back. Kneel beside the head of the patient and open the airway by lifting the head and lifting the jaw. Open the patient's mouth and pinch the nostrils closed. Open your mouth, take a deep breath, seal your mouth firmly over the patient's mouth and breathe out steadily into the patient. Watch the patient's chest rise as if he is taking a deep breath 1-2 seconds. Remove your mouth from the patient's mouth and allow the chest to fall (4 seconds). Give two breaths.

If mouth to mouth breathing is difficult, check and reposition the airway. Vomiting may occur if breathing returns, place the patient in the recovery position to prevent him from choking.

#### b) Mouth to Nose Breathing

If mouth to mouth breathing fails to give air to the patient mouth to nose breathing is an alternative method. With the patient placed in same position as described above the mouth is sealed firmly over the patient's nose and you may breathe out steadily into the patient. Ensure that sealing of your mouth around patient's nose does not prevent airflow to the nose. Watch the patient's chest rise as if he is taking a deep breath 1-2 seconds. Remove your mouth from the patient's nose and allow the chest to fall (4 seconds). Give two breaths.

#### c) External Chest Compression

Place the patient flat on his back and kneel alongside the chest. Place the heel of one hand on the lower third of the breast bone. Place the

heel of your other hand on top of the first hand. With your arms held straight and the hands on the chest all the time, press down on the breast-bone to depress it 4-5 cm (1.5 to 2 inches), then release. Compress the chest smoothly 30 times at a rate of approximately 80 compressions per minute. After performing 30 compressions give 2 ventilations. Continue the compressions and the ventilations until help arrives. Do not stop to reassess the patient's pulse or breathing until help arrives.

#### 4. Training

Remember that effective resuscitation training is essential; the foregoing text is only a guide/aide to understanding the practice of resuscitation that you are strongly recommended to learn. Contact your Red Cross or other medical training group for practical instruction in First Aid and resuscitation.

### **IV. HOT WEATHER GUIDELINES - Hyperthermia**

Where rowing training and racing take place in a warm climate, participants may be subject to health risks. Organizers and other responsible persons should be prepared to evaluate the potential risks and to take precautions. This section represents the conclusions reached by the FISA Sports Medicine Commission in their paper "Hot weather and safety guidelines" which gives more detailed information on heat related problems and safety measures. The main medical problems in warm and hot environments are related to:

- Air temperatures
- Air humidity
- Heat Radiation from sun and warm environments
- Exercise induced heat production
- Impaired heat reduction (Clothing, ventilation, hydration)

The main strategies to prevent heat-induced illnesses are

- Acclimatization
- Adequate hydration
- Postponement of exercise to cooler time periods of the day.

## **A. BASIC MEDICAL ISSUES**

High intensity exercise in a hot environment with associated fluid loss and elevation of body temperature can lead to:

### **1. Dehydration - Heat Exhaustion - Heat Stroke**

The heat related problems always start with dehydration and accompanied by an elevated body core temperature. Exercise further increases heat load on the body. With increased core temperature, energy demands for temperature regulation increase and this further depletes energy resources, particularly glucose stores. These conditions are prerequisites for the heat induced illnesses. However, it should be mentioned, in the case of excessive thermal load, heat exhaustion and heat stroke may occur without dehydration. The main heat related illnesses are represented in Table 1 with the causes and physical problems, the indications and symptoms, and simple rules for treatment. Any athlete with an elevated temperature above  $> 40^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $104^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) which does not resolve after 30 minutes of cooling and rehydration is to be considered a medical emergency.

### **2. Personal recommendations**

#### **a) Hydration:**

The base fluid need of athletes is 2 liters per day and increases with exercise time (1 liter / hour) and air temperatures (1 liter per  $9^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) temperature increase above ( $77^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). For hydration, water, hypotonic and isotonic fluids may be used.

b) Radiation:

Indirect radiation from the sun or from hot cars or in hot rooms enhances the negative effects of hot temperatures.

Shade provides shelter.

c) Hats:

Athletes in direct sunlight should wear hats which should be wetted with water.

d) Clothing:

Clothing should be made with fabrics that minimize heat storage and enhance sweat evaporation. Light colored, loose fitting clothes, made of natural fibers or composite fabrics with high absorption properties that provide for adequate ventilation are recommended.

e) Rest:

Sleep and rest enhance temperature tolerance.

f) UV Sun block: decrease radiation damage of the skin and reflect also radiation. This decreases thermal load.

g) Lying down after races in warm environments may have negative effects on circulation and may provoke collapses.

Rowers are advised to cool themselves with water after the races.



## Appendix A:

# HHSRA PRE-PRACTICE SAFETY CHECKLIST



### Coach

- CPR course
- Proper clothing
- First Aid Course
- Boating Safety course
- Safe water conditions
- Knowledge of waterway
- Use a logbook to record direction and time of return
- If possible, have marine band radio or cell phone in case of emergency.
- Practice plan
- Swim test
- Megaphone
- Weather forecast
- Observer in Launch
- Tools

**Athletes**

- Swim test
- Physical examinations
- Stretch before workout
- Safety talks
- Proper clothing
- Water to drink

**Launch**

- Life jackets
- Registration
- USCG required equipment
- Spare parts and seat for each make of shell
- First aid kit
- Safety lights
- Spare safety plugs

**Shells**

- Bow ball
- Water tight compartments sealed
- Megaphone or coxbox for coxswains
- Rigged properly
- Equipment checked (rudder, fin, etc.)
- Lights

## **Appendix B: Capsize & Person Overboard Procedures**

Note: It is the responsibility of any coach boat to provide assistance to any capsized boat- even if from another sport, or a pleasure boat. Coaches are reminded to stop at a safe distance and offer assistance. Approach with caution and in a controlled manner. Be aware of your prop!

All crew members should be fully aware of what actions to take when a crew swamps, flips, or capsizes. In any of these events the crew should remain with the shell! The shell will float (an important reason to close bow and stern ports before going on the water). Furthermore the oars will act as flotation devices. If for some reason the shell sinks below the surface, the shell should be rolled so the bottom is facing the sky, as this traps air underneath the shell and increases buoyancy. At no time should any crew member leave the boat to swim to shore! A short swim can be far longer than it appears due to currents, wind, water temperature, or personal fatigue. Stay calm. The first thing that should be done in a team boat is for the coxswain or bow person to get a head count to make sure all rowers are accounted for. The crew, while holding onto the shell, should attempt to get the attention of other crews, or coaches on the water. Waving and making as much noise as is necessary to attract attention. If no crews or launches are on the water nearby, attracting the attention of people on shore is the next step. If the water and air temperatures are low, then the crew members should move along the shell and huddle together in pairs near the middle of the shell. Effort should be made to keep as much of the body out of the water as possible. This can include draping ones self over the top of the hull. A minimum of movement is key to retaining body heat. Constantly check on crew mates and keep up one on one communication.

To recap procedures:

1. Stay calm.
2. Stay with the shell.
3. Take a head count.
4. Pair up and keep communicating with each other.
5. Attract attention of launches, crews, or people on shore.
6. If need be, roll shell over and drape the body across the hull.  
(Sinking shell or cold conditions)
7. Wait for help.

There is one other event that should be addressed that is similar to what was mentioned above: man overboard. A violent crab by an oarsmen can throw them out of the boat. In this situation, it is up to the ejected rower to stay below the surface of the water till the shell has passed (this avoids getting hit in the head by a fast moving rigger(s)). The crew should stop rowing and hold water immediately so they can lend assistance. The crew should get the attention of the coaches' launch while the rower treads water. In the event that a launch is not nearby the crew can back up to the rower in question so the rower can use the shell as a floatation device. It is also feasible to pass an oar to the ejected rower, using the oar as a floatation device. Once removed from the water, the rower should be evaluated to determine if the rower is fit to continue or if a medical emergency is present.

## Appendix C: Swim Test Form

Hingham High School Rowing Association

### Swim Test Form

Rower Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rower Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Test/Pool Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Test/Pool Location Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Lifeguard/Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

I certify that the rower named above has successfully completed the following test:

1. Jump into water wearing bathing suit, pants and long sleeve shirt.
2. Remove the pants while treading water, and then;
3. Swim 100 yds, with the shirt on;
4. After the 100 yds, Tread water for 1 minute, and then remove the shirt.
5. Continue treading water for 4 more minutes;
6. Then catch a tossed Lifejacket, put it on and secure it, while still treading water.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Certification/ #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Interscholastic Safety Practices**

For Hingham Based Teams

### Table of Contents

1. Definitions
2. Applicability
3. Safe Procedures
4. Safety in Your Equipment
5. Safety in Coaching
6. Safety Boats
7. Rescue Procedures for Safety Boat
8. Cold Water
9. Emergency Scenarios
10. Emergency Refuge Area

### **Preface**

*The purpose of these Interscholastic Safety Practices is to provide guidance for programs based on Hingham Harbor. Program directors and coaches are relied on for their professional knowledge of their sport and expected to make common sense decisions. Water sports possess inherent dangers associated with the water (drowning) and cold-water sports possess additional dangers (hypothermia). These dangers should always be guarded against when a coach makes a decision.*

*To ensure the safety of all programs, they shall coordinate with one another to ensure sufficient safety boats on the water. These guidelines are not to replace federal, state, local laws or regulations promulgated by leagues or the Athletic Director. Safety should always be first.*

*When in doubt, don't go out!*

## 1. DEFINITIONS

**Boat.** The word “*boat*”, shall mean any boat involved in the program whether it be a sailboat, rowing shell, or safety boat.

**Catch a crab.** The term to “*catch a crab*”, shall mean to put ones oar in the water at the wrong time which results in the oar flipping parallel to the boat.

**Crews.** The word “*crews*”, shall mean the person(s) in a rowing shell, sailboat, and/or safety boat.

**Emergency Refuge Areas.** The term “emergency refuge area”, shall mean a predetermined area where boats may go ashore in the event of an emergency.

**Life Jacket.** The term to “*life jacket*”, means a floatation device approved by the United States Coast Guard and in serviceable condition.

**Off-Season.** The term “*off-season*”, shall mean the period from October 20 to the following April 30.

**Rescue Boat.** The term to “*rescue boat*”, shall mean to any safety boat or other boat involved in rescue operations.

**Safety Boat.** The term “*safety boat*”, which may also be referred to as a “safety powerboat” or “*coach boat*”, shall mean the vessel responsible for coaching and the safety of the rowing and sailing crews.

**Season.** The word “season”, shall mean the official club, varsity, or interscholastic season dates as determined by the MIAA, other governing body, or the Hingham High School Athletic Director.

## 2. APPLICABILITY

**These regulations apply to all –**

- A. Program directors, coaches, coxswains, sailors, and individual crew that participate in school or community sports.
- B. Vessels used as a safety boat during a practice, regatta, or competition based at Hingham Harbor.
- C. Visiting programs shall follow their own established safety procedures unless otherwise directed by the athletic director.

## 3. SAFETY PROCEDURES

### A. Pre-boating preparedness:

- i. All crews and programs must complete a boating log listing all rowers and sailors, planned destination, time on and off the water. The log must be left at the location from which they launched. Above all, there should be a record of exactly who is on the water at any given time.

### B. Safety on the dock

- i. All gear and equipment must be removed from the docks as quickly as possible following a practice. Shoes and other equipment left on the dock constitute a hazard to other crews using the dock, and should be stored off the dock or taken in the boat.
- ii. It is important to plan arrivals at the dock so that there are no conflicts with other planned departures.
- iii. Safety boats must be ready to run before the crews leave the dock.
- iv. Properly equipped safety boat(s) must be available at the dock or on the water at all times for each respective program.

**C. Water / weather / visibility safety**

- i. No rowing or sailing will take place if the water, weather, and visibility conditions are potentially dangerous. Each sport will make the determination whether to hold based upon the criteria pertinent to their sport. Ex: Sailing may practice on a day that is too windy for rowing.
- ii. The Coach shall determine if the conditions are unsafe:
  - a. No rowing or sailing will occur prior to daylight or after sunset, unless equipped with visible bow lights.
  - b. No rowing or sailing will occur when visibility is reduced by fog.
  - c. No rowing or sailing will occur under high winds/large seas.
  - d. Any rowing or sailing activities undertaken when the water temperature is below 50 °F must adhere to special Cold Water Rules (see section 8).
- iii. There are many potential dangers in Hingham Harbor. All crews must be familiar with the current, water and wind conditions, short-term weather forecast (for thunderstorms), and water level (to determine submerged hazards and channels) prior to boating.

**D. Safety During Practice**

- i. No crew are allowed on the water without the appropriate number of safety boats and coach supervision unless they are given specific permission from the Harbormaster.
- ii. All boats that are further than 500 yards from a safety boat must carry their own PFDs (enough PFDs for each member of the crew including coxswains).
- iii. Sailing crews shall wear a school issued helmets when sailing.
- iv. Sailing crews shall wear a properly fitting dry suit when sailing. Wrist and neck seals shall be in good serviceable condition and the dry suit must be worn according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- v. Sailing crews can wear spray suits when the coach determines the weather conditions are appropriate. The coach shall consider the wind speed, air and water temperatures (which both must be near or exceeding 60 °F) when making this decision.

**E. Injured athlete / endangered crew**

- i. At the beginning of the season, crews should establish who in the crew (if anyone) is capable of administering CPR, or other First Aid. This should be done at the same time as the swim test (or whenever the crew is at least asked if they can all swim). In straight (coxless) boats, the bow person and/or another should be established to take the position that a coxswain would normally have should an accident occur.

**F. Rower Overboard**



- i. If a rower goes overboard, such as when they catch a crab: The coxswain gives the command to stop rowing and pause at hands away. The coxswain should take great care to make sure that the overboard person is clear of riggers and oars; once this is established they should instruct the crew to hold water.
- ii. The stroke removes his/her oar and directs, but does not throw it, to the person in the water.
- iii. The crew backs the boat to the person in the water.
- iv. The coxswain gets hold of the person or lets him/her grasp a rigger. Do not attempt to bring the person aboard if the safety boat is near.

**G. Rower Unconscious**

- i. If a rower has lost consciousness, support him/her in the water until a rescue craft arrives, or help him/her to the bank as fast as possible if no rescue craft is at hand. All rowers should know life-saving procedures. If necessary, resuscitation should initiate immediately, even while the rower is still in the water. An ambulance should be summoned by the quickest method available.

**H. Break-up or Sinking Procedure for Rowing:**

- i. The crew must remain in a group, using oars as PFD's, or putting on PFD's if available.
- ii. No one leaves the group, shell, or flotation device until they are at shore or at the rescue boat. Crews may leave the shell if they can touch bottom and wade to shore, but this must only be done as a group.
- iii. Use the buddy system, distribute crew evenly on the remains of the hull, encourage one another, and share flotation devices.
- iv. The coxswain should account for all crewmembers; keep numbering off.
- v. **NO ONE ATTEMPTS TO SWIM TO SHORE.** Visual perception is dramatically altered in the water and distance seems much shorter than what it really is. Await the arrival of the safety boat, unless the crew can touch bottom and safely wade into shore.

**I. Emergency Procedures**

- i. In every emergency situation one coach must be designated to request outside assistance and report to the coaches after the request is made so that everyone knows help is on the way. The coach requesting assistance will make the decision on whether calling 911.
- ii. For any emergency requiring external assistance telephone 911, and state the following:
  - a. Your name
  - b. Your location: Town of Hingham Harbor (Inner Harbor, Outer Harbor, ect.)
  - c. A concise description of the emergency
  - d. Which agency is required (Harbormaster, Police, Ambulance)
  - e. Any need for water rescue
  - f. Closest shelter point
- iii. Broadcast a distress call on VHF channel 16 so any boats in the area can assist and the USCG will be aware of your situation.

**4. SAFETY IN YOUR EQUIPMENT**

- A. It is the crew's responsibility to check the state of the equipment prior to boating. Ensure all equipment is present and operational and no defects are present.
- B. Lifejackets:
  - i. Rowing
    - a. Crews in rowing shells, EXCEPT the coxswain, are not required to wear a lifejacket because they do not allow someone to row properly. A lifejacket can get in the way of necessary hand and arm movements, as well as blocking the elimination of heat from the body.
    - b. Rowing shells shall have life jackets for each crew onboard unless it is attended by a safety boat carrying lifejackets of appropriate size for each member of the crew;
    - c. If the attending safety boat is more than 500 yards from the rowing shell during practice, the rowing shell then must carry enough lifejackets for all the crew.
    - d. At a minimum, coxswains must wear a lifejacket while on the water from September 15<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup> in line with 323 CMR 2.07 section 10. However, coxswains are encouraged to wear lifejackets at all times.
  - ii. Sailing
    - a. All crews are required to wear a lifejacket at all times.
    - b. All crews are required to have their lifejacket on before rigging the sailboats and must remain on until the boats are completely unrigged and the crews leave the docks.
- C. Whistles: Each boat must be equipped with an emergency whistle to signal for help in case of an emergency.

## 5. SAFETY IN COACHING

- A. All Coaches Must:
  - i. Possess a current CPR and First Aid certification;
  - ii. Know the physical capabilities and limitations of their athletes and the equipment they are using.
  - iii. Be aware of each athlete's level of swimming ability--in the case of an emergency, a non-swimmer (or a weak swimmer) would have to be rescued first.
  - iv. Check that all equipment is safe, and that crews have proper clothing and fluids appropriate for the outing and weather conditions before they shove off. Coxswains should carry basic tools (wrenches, black tape, and screwdriver) in case of equipment failure.
  - v. If practices are held in the predawn darkness, or as the sunsets, the coach must ensure that all boats are properly lit. Bow persons and coxswains should also be encouraged to wear reflective (or white) clothing.
  - vi. Not leave the dock with the safety boat until the crews shove off.
  - vii. Must wear life jackets at all time when in boats.
  - viii. Attempt to be close to your crews at all times;
  - ix. Strictly limit the number of crews and athletes they supervise in line with their rescue capacity.
  - x. Watch for hazards on the water. It is often easier for the coach, who is higher above the water, to see hazards ahead--particularly those lying low in the water. The coach first informs the coxswain or steersperson of the hazard and then

- directs them to stop or how best to avoid the hazard (try to remove or mark such hazards to help other crews).
- xi. Not load the safety boat such that if they are operating it from the stern seat they do not have adequate vision over the bow of the boat.
  - xii. Know how to make and recognize standard distress signals and how to take appropriate action if signals are given by crews or by other boats.
  - xiii. Realize that they are responsible for the well-being of their crew. Arriving late, and leaving early, as well as not properly monitoring crews is unacceptable.
  - xiv. Be aware of and show consideration to other water users. They must ensure that neither their safety boat(s) nor the crews they are supervising place anyone else using the water in jeopardy. They must always be alert to give help to other programs who may be in danger and without assistance.

## **6. SAFETY BOATS**

### **A. Each safety boat must carry:**

- i. Each boat must be equipped with a paddle or oar should the engine fail.
- ii. One hand-held bailer or one manual pump.
- iii. Throw bag, life ring or other appropriate device with at least 30 feet of buoyant rope to aid in throwing, and for a person in the water to secure a hand hold.
- iv. A space blanket or reflective blanket to warm a person until taken ashore during cold weather.
- v. Properly mounted running lights if boating outside daylight hours.
- vi. Tow line preferably nylon to reduce shock through stretching.
- vii. Additional spare lines to throw to a person in the water or secure items on the safety boat.
- viii. Boat hook for reaching a person close by in the water or retrieving items from the water.
- ix. Noisemaking devise for emergency situations.
- x. Anchor, chain and rode appropriate to hold the safety boat.
- xi. Boarding ladder, or a line with a large bowline for a foothold.
- xii. Basic first aid kit containing a sugar source for diabetics.
- xiii. Marine VHF Radio: This is essential for all safety boat(s) to communicate should one safety boat break down or need assistance from other boat(s). All boat(s) shall monitor channel 69.
- xiv. A cellular phone is essential for all safety boats to telephone 911 in the event of an emergency.

### **B. Numbers of Crew**

- i. The number of crew in a safety boat should be limited to those needed to operate the safety boat and perform rescues. A safety boat with too many people aboard does not move as quickly or with as much control. Untrained crew or people interested in another function (e.g., photographers and spectators) may interfere with rescue operations.

### **C. Clothing**

- i. Safety boat crew should wear appropriate clothing to stay warm and dry. It is important that the safety boat crew be able to perform at peak efficiency when called upon to do their task.

## 7. RESCUE PROCEDURE FOR SAFETY BOAT

- A. Inexperienced operators or improperly equipped individuals should not be allowed on the water during rescue operations.
- B. A safety boat needs assistance when there are multiple crews in the water and recovering all crews will exceed the capacity of their safety boat. There may be other times when a safety boat needs assistance and the safety boat should request assistance as soon as possible. If it is determined at a later time assistance is not needed the request can be canceled. (See emergency scenario 2 below)
- C. In the event of a rescue requiring multiple safety boats, all able crews on the water should immediately be sent to shore with at least one safety boat overseeing this process or remain in the area of the rescue. The other safety boats must work together to respond immediately and not jeopardize their crews. The response can be staggered with one or more safety boats responding immediately and others overseeing the able crews returning to shore.
- D. When responding to the location where assistance is needed.
  - i. Approach site where equipment is disabled, or where there may be crews in the water into the wind so that they will not drift down onto, or be blown against the equipment or crews in the water.
  - ii. Assess the situation. Quickly establish the condition of the crews in the water, and the severity of the circumstances.
  - iii. Establish verbal contact with those in the water so they can be talked through the rescue quickly. Those in greatest distress or risk should be rescued first.
  - iv. Distribute lifejackets carried in the safety boat to all rowers.
  - v. Do not attempt to bring crews into the rescue boat by the stern or anywhere near the engine. Cold or exhausted crews will need assistance to enter the boat.
  - vi. Rescue should occur in pairs (buddies). This will prevent an athlete from letting go, until the rescue craft actually rescues the crew.
  - vii. A head count must be conducted on the arrival of the rescue boat(s) at the scene, and must be repeated each time it leaves and returns.
- E. If possible, use a throw bag or a length of rope attached to the rescue boat to throw to crews in the water to calm them, and to pull them to the rescue boat.
- F. Take care to not disable your rescue boat by grounding it in shallow water or by hitting an obstruction.
- G. Overloading:
  - i. **Overloading is by far the greatest, and the most avoidable, danger when using small safety boats.**
  - ii. Operators must know the limitations of their safety boat. Coaches should only take one additional person aboard in early spring and late fall (i.e. total of two persons in a safety boat). Non-essential passengers may impede emergency operations or take up space needed for crews in distress.
  - iii. Remember, as the load in a safety boat is increased, it settles lower in the water, and the free board is reduced to the point where a wave may come over the gunwale causing the safety boat to sink even further and possibly swamp.
  - iv. Finally, whatever happens in a small safety boat will happen quickly. There will not be any time to put on life jackets or to make preparations before the crew and operator are in the water with possible injuries. Any debris or deadhead struck at speed may puncture the hull or cause the boat to capsize.

v. Make several trips, if necessary.

## 8. COLD WATER RULES

- A. All boats MUST be accompanied by a safety boat when the water temperature is below 50 °F. The number of boats being supervised by a safety boat must be limited to ensure close contact between all crews and the safety boat at all times. The qualifications of the safety boat personnel determine the number of athletes that can be supervised at a time. The safety boat must be equipped with the appropriate safety gear.
- B. When the water temperature is less than 50 °F, rowers and coxes that enter the water have only a short period of time (matter of minutes) before they start to suffer from hypothermia and shock.
- C. Sailors should wear dry suits, gloves, and hats to protect themselves against the elements.

## 9. EMERGENCY SCENARIOS

- A. It is impossible to predict all possible emergency situations, but these emergency scenarios are designed to anticipate possible emergency situations that could occur on Hingham harbor. These scenarios are designed to make you think (rather than to instruct) about what to do under certain emergency situations, though you should rely upon common sense if you find yourself in an emergency. While it is important to safe guard the equipment, the most important factor is the safety of the crews.
- B. Scenario 1: Rapid Onset of High Winds and Heavy Rain
  - i. The dark clouds for these sudden storm events can usually be seen approaching for some time. You may also observe a sudden shift in temperature with the temperature dropping rapidly over the course of a couple of minutes. If you observe a system moving in, make your way to the dock and bring the equipment in promptly. If you do find yourself trapped by the weather and unable to make it to the dock, then make your way to the nearest refuge site (defined below). This may include the yacht club or a boat ramp. If the safety boat realizes that the shells may not make it to the dock, the safety boat may instructs the shells to, move as close to shore as possible and when the water is shallow enough, hop out and bring the boat and oars ashore, flip, and rest on the ground. When all persons are out of the water, the safety boat should immediately call 911 to notify Hingham Public Safety that all persons are safely ashore and where they are located. The safety boat can then return to the dock for safety until the system passes and the boats can be recovered.
- C. Scenario 2: Squall and Heavy Rain
  - i. Sailboats unable to make the dock as a squall approaches capsize in different locations and six persons are in the water. The sailboats are unable to right because of the strong winds and heavy rain. The supervising safety boat becomes a rescue boat can only rescue two more persons before reaching maximum capacity. The rescue boat recognizes that his/her boat cannot rescue all crews from the 49 °F water. The rescue boat requests assistance from the other safety boats to help rescue the remaining four persons and monitor the remaining sailboats to shore. The other safety boats must dispatch an appropriate number of safety boats to assist in the rescue and monitoring of the returning sailboats. The other safety boats first terminate practice and send their boats to the dock,

ensuring appropriate supervision of their boats as they return to shore, and then respond immediately to assist in the rescue.

D. Scenario 3: Lightning Detected

- i. It is best to avoid going out if lightning is forecasted, and the coach will be responsible for checking the weather forecast ahead of time. Any signs of lightning before boating, the boats should not leave the dock. If lightning is detected while on the water, return immediately to the dock. Being in the open water in a boat is one of the worst places to be, so move immediately to the dock. If it is a violent storm, you may need to get to the closest shore, and beach. Always try to use a refuge area because they are easily accessible by public safety and support vehicles. Keep your eye on the weather and the presence of storm clouds.

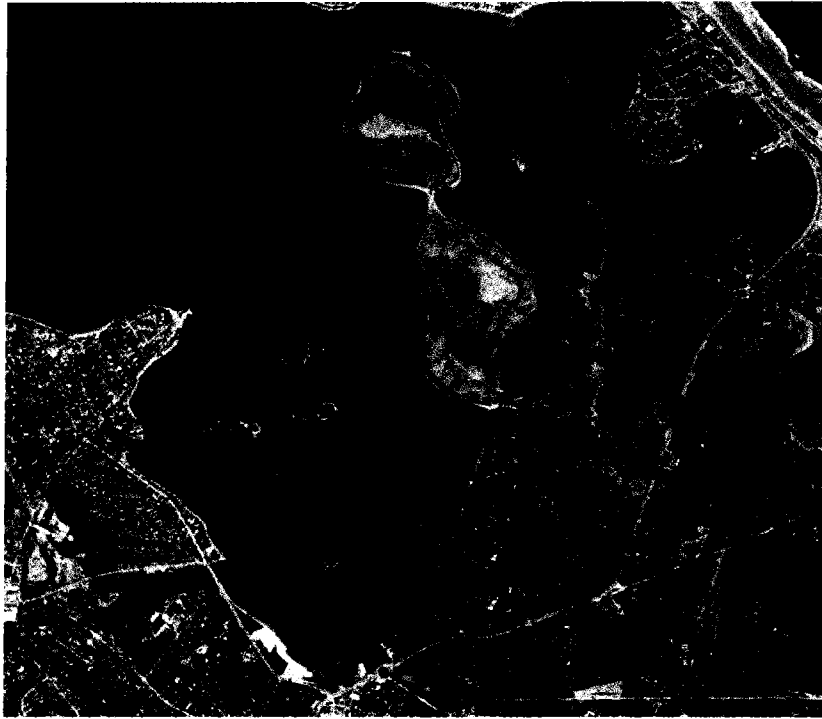
E. Scenario 4: Unconscious Crew

- i. A crew member catches a crab while the shell was moving at a fast pace. The rower was thrown from the boat. The safety boat should immediately respond to the person and approach from downwind or up current so they are not pushed into the person. Immediately assess the condition of the crew. An unconscious crew member may be brought into the rescue boat or be kept alongside the rescue boat if necessary. The rescue boat should call for help on VHF radio 69 requesting assistance from other safety boats. The rescue boat must direct somebody to call 911 and the directed party must acknowledge that they are doing so and afterward confirm that Hingham Public Safety was notified.

## 10. EMERGENCY REFUGE AREA

It is important that you keep an eye on changing weather patterns and return to the dock if it looks like the weather will get worse. *These refuge areas are for emergency situations. If at all possible return boats to the dock.* If you take shelter in a refuge area the crew must stay together and call Hingham Public Safety notifying them of your situation and that all crew are accounted. Refuge can be taken anywhere however, these predetermined locations are easily accessed by emergency and support vehicles.

- A. Hingham Yacht Club – Pull the boats out of the water on the rocky shore between the club and the jetty, invert or remove sails, and get to a safe place preferably sheltered by the building.
- B. Downer Ave at white fence – Pull boats ashore at the white fence, invert or remove the sails and get to a safe place.
- C. Bathing Beach – Pull the boats out of the water, invert or remove sails, and get to a safe place.
- D. Worlds End Guard Shack – Pull the boats out of the water, invert or remove the sails and get to a safe place by the guard shack.
- E. Boat Ramp next to Steamboat Wharf Marina – Pull boats out of the water on the boat ramp to the right of the marina, invert or remove sails, and get to a safe place. *When in the Weir River and the weather rapidly deteriorates, strongly consider going to refuge site (E) Boat Ramp next to Steamboat Wharf Marina because of the long distance to the inner harbor and the potential dangers of the open water after exiting the river.*



Reference:

1. Interscholastic Sailing Association Safety Practices, A Basic Guide, Amended 2014, *available at* [http://hssailing.org/documents/ISSA\\_safety\\_practices\\_guide\\_2014\\_10\\_19.pdf](http://hssailing.org/documents/ISSA_safety_practices_guide_2014_10_19.pdf) (last viewed March 30, 2016).
2. USRowing Safety Guidelines, *available at* <http://www.usrowing.org/safety/safetyguidelines> (last viewed March 30, 2016).