

**ST. CATHARINES ROWING CLUB**  
**COLD WATER ON-WATER SAFETY CODE**

Rowing Canada Aviron, in its publication “Rowing Safely RCA Safety Requirements and Safety Guidelines” (April 29, 2022), requires that all member rowing clubs have an on-water “Safety Code” and a designated “Safety Advisor”. This is the St. Catharines Rowing Club’s (SCRC) On-Water Safety Code for *Cold Water* Rowing. The SCRC Club Captain is the club’s Safety Advisor.

Safe enjoyment of the sport is the aim of the St. Catharines Rowing Club and personal safety is of paramount importance. Rowing is an outdoor water sport that carries inherent risks of personal injury either from a collision, or from drowning as a result of falling into the water. All risks are heightened in COLD WATER.

**This On-Water Safety Code for Cold Water Rowing is in effect when the temperature of the water in Martindale Pond is less than 11 degrees Celsius.**

The SCRC On-Water Safety Code for when the water temperature is 11 °C or greater can be found in a separate document.

The following are the rules that must be followed to comply with the Cold Water On-Water Safety Code. The consequences of failing to comply with the rules are outlined at the end of the Code.

**SWIM TEST AND SAFETY TRAINING**

1. When Cold Water rules are in effect, *all* participants of the club’s on-water activities shall be able to swim. Non-swimmers will be not be allowed to row or cox. Details of the swimming ability requirements can be found in the SCRC “Ability to Swim/Attestation Form”.
2. Each year all rowers, coxswains, coaches and safety boat drivers are to complete the RCA on-line education modules “Rowing Safely” <https://safety.rowingcanada.org/en/#/> as part of the club’s membership registration process.

**LAUNCHES**

1. Coach boats and safety boats, for the purposes of on-water coaching and safety, shall be regarded as the same type of vessel. They are referred to herein as “launches” for brevity.
2. Each launch operator must ensure the launch under their control is in a well maintained, serviceable and safe condition. Operators must report any mechanical/operational issues with a motor or launch immediately to the Club Captain.
3. When in a launch, the first responsibility of the driver is safety for all. Any time there is an emergency with any club, any person, or any equipment, launch drivers are obligated to respond to someone in distress. In an emergency, any coach from any club can use

SCRC equipment to help out. In an emergency, safety comes first; the Club colours we wear go away immediately and without question.

4. There shall be a maximum of two persons on board a launch when being operated as a coach boat or safety boat.
5. The following must be carried on board each launch:
  - i) Launch drivers are to have with them their Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC). (The Club Captain shall keep a copy of the PCOC on file);
  - ii) Each person on board shall wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) or a floater suit of appropriate size. If a person on board is less than 16 years of age, the PFD shall be inherently buoyant;
  - iii) A paddle;
  - iv) A plastic or metal bailer with an opening of at least 65 cm<sup>2</sup> and a capacity of at least 750 ml;
  - v) 15 m buoyant heaving line;
  - vi) Watertight flashlight;
  - vii) Pealess whistle;
  - viii) A reboarding device;
  - ix) Navigation lights, if operated before sunrise or after sunset, or in periods of restricted visibility\*\*; and
  - x) Nine (9) PFD's for rowers on the water.
6. Each launch driver shall affix the 'kill switch' to their person when operating the boat.

\*\* Effective February 28, 2023

## **ROWING SHELLS**

1. Prior to launching, rowing shells are to be checked by the user(s) to ensure that the shell meets the RCA Rules of Racing equipment requirements, that the hull and riggers are sound and any steering mechanism is functional. Crews must report any mechanical/operational issues to their coach or to the Club Captain immediately.
2. The following equipment must be carried on board:
  - i) A pealess whistle and
  - ii) A white light if the shell is operated after sunset or before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility.
3. Coxswains are encouraged to wear a PFD or a floater suit where practicable. (A PFD for a coxswain less than 16 years of age must be inherently buoyant.)

## **COLD WATER COURSE OPERATION RULES**

1. No crews are allowed on the water without a supervising launch. The maximum ratio of shells per launch is 6:1. The shells may not be more than 500 m from the supervising launch. It is not enough for rowers to simply be within 500 meters of any launch. Crews need confirmation from the launch driver that their row will be

monitored. The supervising launch may be from another SCRC program, High School or from another club (Brock, Ridley, Ridley Grad).

2. The launch operator and the crew(s) he/she is responsible for shall have discussed the training plan the crew(s) will be using. Unless the launch driver has given his/her consent to be responsible for the crew(s), it is not enough for rowers to be within 500 m of any launch in their general vicinity.
3. All crews must sign out and in using the clothes pin system on the dock.
4. All crews and scullers will follow the traffic pattern as outlined on the motor shed. There shall be no rowing above the starting gates.
5. No crews shall launch before ninety (90) minutes before sunrise.
6. In the months of November to February inclusive, no crews shall launch before the start of nautical twilight.
7. All crews shall be off the water by sunset.
8. Nautical twilight, sunrise and sunset times will be posted on the notice board each month by the Club Captain.

#### **ADVERSE WEATHER**

1. Crews should not launch if fog reduces visibility to less than 500 metres.
2. If the density of fog increases when crews are already on the water, and the visibility drops to less than 250 metres, crews shall end their practice and slowly make their way back to the main dock.
3. At any time crews or launch drivers see lightning, crews are to immediately head back to the dock or the nearest shelter area.

#### **EMERGENCY**

In any emergency, call 911 and follow the instructions posted on the Emergency Action Plan.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

1. The COLD WATER On-Water Safety Code will be reviewed annually and posted prominently at the rowing club by the Club Captain.

2. The COLD WATER On-Water Safety Code will be required reading by athletes and coaches during the high school and club's membership/registration process.
3. The Club Captain will review the COLD WATER On-Water Safety Code with all coaches prior to the cold water rules taking effect.
4. Coaches will review the COLD WATER On-Water Safety Code with their athletes when the Captain declares the Cold Water Code to be in effect.

## **MONITORING AND PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

1. Adherence to the Club's COLD WATER On Water Safety Code is the duty and responsibility of every SCRC coach and member. Failure to follow the rules outlined in this safety code could result in disciplinary action and/or suspension of club privileges, at the discretion of the Club Captain. Final interpretation and enforcement of the rules is the responsibility of the Club Captain, and if needed, in consultation with the Rowing Committee.
2. The Club Captain shall have the final say in matters related to rowing times, safety, equipment maintenance and usage. If the Club Captain is not present, the most senior coach, or any other individual so designated by the Club Captain will assume this responsibility.
3. The Club Captain shall employ the following progressive disciplinary steps when rowers and coaches are non-compliant with the COLD WATER On Water Safety Code:
  - a. First Offense – Conversation and Reminder of Rule(s) – This conversation should seek to understand what the athlete/coach believes the rules to be and the steps they have taken to follow them. If the athlete's/coach's interpretation of the rule(s) is incorrect, the Club Captain will clarify and reinforce the rule(s) to the individual(s).
  - b. Second Offense – Formal Oral Caution – The Club Captain will investigate the offence, and if warranted, will give the offender(s) a formal oral caution.
  - c. Third Offense – Formal Written Warning – The Club Captain will investigate the offence, and if warranted, will give the offender(s) a formal written warning.
  - d. Fourth Offense – Suspension of Club Privileges – The Club Captain will investigate the offence, and if warranted, will suspend the rowing privileges of the offender(s) for a period of time to be determined by the Club Captain.
  - e. Ongoing Concerns – Termination of Membership – The Club Captain will investigate the ongoing offences, and if warranted, recommend to the SCRC Board of Directors to terminate the membership of the offender(s).

Finalized by the Board of Directors December 7, 2022. To be reviewed annually.