

Boat Lighting Requirements

These guidelines set out the minimum operational requirements for boat lighting during rowing activities conducted in low-light or reduced-visibility conditions. They are intended for adoption by rowing schools, clubs, coaches, participants, and safety boat operators to support safe navigation, reduce collision risk, and promote consistent decision-making on shared waterways.

The purpose of these guidelines is to:

- improve the visibility of rowing shells and safety boats.
- reduce the risk of collision with other crews, powered vessels, infrastructure, and other waterway users.
- support safe training and coaching in low-light conditions; and
- provide a clear operational standard for schools and clubs.

These guidelines apply to all rowing activities conducted by or under the authority of a school or club, including training rows, coaching sessions, safety boat operations, and other water activities undertaken in low light, darkness, or restricted visibility.

Low-light and reduced-visibility conditions.

For the purpose of these guidelines, low-light or reduced-visibility conditions include any time when a person on the water cannot be seen clearly at a safe distance.

This may include periods before sunrise, after sunset, dawn, dusk, fog, rain, smoke, heavy cloud, storm conditions, glare, or any other circumstance in which visibility is reduced.

West Lakes Red Light

At West Lakes, activation of the finish tower red light, located above the clock, should be treated as an operational indicator that low-light conditions exist, and boat lighting requirements apply.

The red light operates via a light-sensitive switch and will generally activate during periods of darkness or reduced visibility. Failure of the red light, sensor, or associated equipment does not remove the obligation to comply with applicable lighting requirements.

Rowers, coaches and clubs remain responsible for assessing visibility and ensuring boats display the required lights whenever conditions require, regardless of whether the red light is operating.

Boat Lighting Requirements

Requirement	Standard
Bow Light	One all-round white light attached at or near the bow end of the boat.
Stern Light	One all-round white light attached at or near the stern end of the boat. A red light is acceptable as an alternative stern light.
Continuous Lights	Continuous white lights should be visible in clear conditions for at least 1 kilometre.
Flashing Lights	Flashing white lights are acceptable provided they flash at least once per second and are visible in clear conditions for at least 1 kilometre.
Light Masking	Lights may be partially masked to prevent interference with the vision of crew members, provided at least one light is visible from any direction by other water users.
Mounting Methods	Lights may be mounted on a bow number holder, secured to the hull using suction mounts, or fitted using another secure mounting method.

Requirement	Standard
Condition of Lights	Lights must be securely fitted, operational before launch, and remain operational for the duration of the outing.

Notwithstanding the above, it is considered acceptable for a light to be masked so as not to interfere with the vision of the vessel's occupants, provided at least one light is visible from any direction by other water users

Coxswain and crew visibility.

Coxswains and crews must ensure that boat lights are not obstructed and that safe forward observation is maintained at all times.

Additional visibility aids may be used where they improve safety and do not create glare, confusion, or distraction for other water users.

Safety boats

Safety boats operating during low-light or reduced-visibility conditions must display navigation lighting in accordance with applicable marine safety requirements.

Safety boat operators must maintain effective lookout, proceed cautiously, and ensure communication equipment is available and functioning where required.

Launch restrictions.

No boat is to be launched, and no session is to continue, if:

- required lighting is unavailable.
- required lighting is not functioning properly.
- visibility is insufficient to allow safe navigation.
- weather or water conditions materially increased risk; or
- a coach, teacher in charge, or authorised official directs that the activity does not proceed.

Participant safety must take priority over training outcomes, scheduling, or program convenience.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Schools and Clubs	Ensure boats used during low-light or reduced-visibility conditions are appropriately equipped with the required lighting and that participants, coaches and volunteers are aware of these requirements.
Coaches, Teachers in Charge and Other Responsible Persons	Assess visibility conditions before and during each session and determine whether rowing activities can proceed safely. Activities must be modified, delayed, suspended or cancelled where visibility creates an unacceptable risk.
Participants	Must not launch without the required lighting when conditions require it. Participants must report faulty or damaged lighting equipment and comply with safety directions relating to visibility and water access.

Compliance and directions

All participants, coaches, schools, and clubs must comply with any operational directions, restrictions, or temporary controls issued by the relevant school, club, regatta authority, or Rowing SA in relation to lighting, visibility, or water access.

Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in a direction to return to shore, restriction from water activities, suspension of the session, or further disciplinary or administrative action under the applicable club, school, or association rules.