

Participant Safety Requirements

This document provides a summary of the minimum safety requirements that apply to all athletes, coxswains, coaches, volunteers, and participants involved in rowing activities conducted by affiliated clubs and schools.

This document should be read in with the [Rowing SA Safety and Training Policy](#), [Rowing Australia Rules of Racing](#), the City of Charles Sturt permit conditions, and any club or school safety procedures.

Swimming Ability

Rowing South Australia (Rowing SA) requires the following activities to be tested and confirmed for all members as part of the affiliation process.

All active members partaking in on-water rowing activities of any type must be:

- Instructed in the actions to be taken in the event of a capsize.
- Be capable of releasing themselves from the boat.
- Be able to swim 50m in light clothing (e.g. rowing kit) and be sufficiently at ease in the water not to panic.
- Be able to tread water for a minimum of 3 minutes as per Rowing Australia's water safety and assessment guidelines.
- Have their swimming ability recorded at the time of becoming a member of a club or school.

In addition, we recommend that members and participants in rowing should be able to demonstrate they are both competent and confident in and under the water and can swim underwater for at least 5 metres.

If a participant cannot swim, or cannot meet any of the above requirements, then:

- Additional flotation aids, either on the person or within easy reach in the boat, or modifications to the equipment must be adopted in conjunction with additional supervision and rescue plans.
- If a safe alternative cannot be found the athlete should not be permitted on the water.

These conditions are particularly relevant for para athletes, athletes with reduced or limited mobility, athletes with limited swimming ability and inexperienced athletes.

Capsizes and Rescues

Clubs and schools must ensure that all rowers are to have proper instruction in the actions to be taken in the event of a capsize, at least once a year.

Capsize training is recorded for each member.

Clubs and schools should ensure that all active members practice capsizing and accident drills throughout the season.

In the event of a capsize, rowers and coxswains should be instructed to stay with the boat rather than attempt to swim to safety. The boat, unless seriously damaged, is buoyant and can be used as your flotation device and be considered a life raft.

If the water is cold, rowers and coxswains should be instructed to get as much of their body out of the water as possible by draping themselves over the upturned hull, if necessary, turning the boat over for this purpose.

Rowers and coxswains should also be instructed to "buddy-up", with two people holding on to each other until rescued to provide mutual support and to help ensure that all are accounted for.

If the boat cannot be righted or athletes cannot be returned to the boat and a rescue boat is not present, rowers and coxswains should hold on to the boat and kick with their legs to move the boat towards the nearest shore, keeping vigilant for other boat traffic

Boat Safety Requirements

All active participants must ensure:

- Boats are fitted with a compliant bow ball.
- Foot stretchers and shoes allow rowers to get clear of the boat without delay in an emergency.
- Heel restraints are correctly fitted and maintained.
- Equipment used for rowing activities is safe and fit for purpose.

Boat Lighting Requirements

All crews rowing on any South Australian waterway must show light(s) if operating between sunset and sunrise or in periods of low light or restricted visibility.

This includes:

- Periods of low visibility, such as heavy rain or periods of fog.
- Periods of low light, such as overcast skies.
- The period immediately before and after sunrise and sunset.

In addition, at West Lakes, activation of the finish tower red light should be treated as an operational indicator that low-light conditions exist, and 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.

Participants must comply with the requirements set out in the [Rowing SA Boat Lighting Requirements](#) document.

Individual Responsibilities

- All members of the rowing community have a responsibility to ensure their actions, both on and off the water, do not compromise the safety of themselves or others.
- All individuals must familiarise themselves with relevant course and waterway maps and be sufficiently capable of manoeuvring their craft in accordance with those course or waterway maps, and any prevailing conditions, prior to conducting any rowing activities on that waterway.
- Individuals must take all reasonable action to avoid a crash or collision when on any waterway or any shared path.
- All individuals should report any concerns, incidents, or near misses to their Club Safety Officer, or directly to Rowing SA by lodging the [Incident Report Form](#).

Incident Reporting

All participants are responsible for reporting:

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| • Incidents. | • Hazards. | • Equipment failures. |
| • Near misses. | • Unsafe practices. | • Safety concerns. |

Reports should be submitted in accordance with the [Rowing SA Incident Reporting Procedure](#).