**LYC Rowing Safely Policies and Protocol, revised April 2022**

**Purpose:** The LYC Rowing Program is committed to rowing safely and safeguarding members, staff, visitors and volunteers who support the program. This document lays out the roles, responsibilities and procedures that are to create the safest possible recreational rowing.

**Scope:** All LYC rowers, visiting rowers, Learn-to Row participants as well as coaches /instructors and support volunteers are responsible for their own safety, safety of others and safety of LYC equipment.

**Responsible Party:** The LYC Board of Directors responsible to oversee this safety policy, and are primarily responsible to ensure that all safety requirements set out by Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) and any other requirements for due diligence are met.

**Safe Rowing Policy and Protocol**

LYC Rowing’s Safe Rowing Policy and Protocol follows guidance from RCA, including the

* Rowing Safely: RCA Safety Requirements and Safety Guidelines <https://rowingcanada.org/uploads/2019/05/safetyguidelinesrcav2.pdf>
* RCA Rowing Safety modules <https://safety.rowingcanada.org/en/#/>

RCA requires that each club:

1. Is responsible for assessing the risks in its particular environment and in establishing the appropriate safety procedures in minimize those risks
2. Appoints a Safety Advisor (safety officer) whose duty is to ensure that an appropriate safety program is drawn up, implemented at the club in accordance with RCA guidelines, and reviewed annually.
3. Displays its own Safety Code following the RCA Safety Checklist, and ensure all members, staff and volunteers are familiar with it
4. **Environmental risk assessment and policies:**
   1. Water temperature:
      * Safety boats required for rowing when water temperature is below 10 degrees C.
   2. Wind and weather:
      * Boats are not to go out in:
        1. heavy breeze (greater than 20 km/hr) or large whitecaps,
        2. dense fog (inability to see Little Herman’s Island from launching beach).
        3. thunder and lightning within the last two hours or projected for time of row.
      * When rowing in light fog keep land in view and row as a group in the same direction
      * If weather conditions are uncertain, either the coach or Safety Officer will make the final decision.
   3. Hazards on the water include- the ramp, wharf, floats, mooring balls, moored boats especially at LYC and in Echo Bay, yellow club sailing marks, navigation buoys, tides, shoals and reefs (e.g. Little Hermans shoal and the mud flats past the Hermans Island Bridge). If rowers are not familiar with the area they should confine their rowing to Princes Inlet (inside Little Hermans and Echo Bay)
   4. Refer to the chart of the rowing area identifying local hazards and usual rowing routes. (link)
5. The **LYC Rowing safety officer** for 2022 is Gillian Graves (Gillian Graves [gravewill@aol.com](mailto:gravewill@aol.com))
6. **LYC Safety Rowing Code/ Protocol**

All programs including learn to row, intermediate and senior recreational rowing, and visiting rows will be planned, implemented and managed with the safety of all in mind. To this end, the protocol below is divided into 3 sections of responsibility: Rowers, Safety boat and operators, and Emergency Plan.

***Rowers:***

* 1. Refer to water temperature and weather conditions section above for policies.
  2. Rowers must be registered members of Row Canada and hence have insurance through RCA.
  3. All rowers must while rowing:
     + wear a PFD or carry one in their boat
     + carry their own whistle while on the water
     + wear high visibility clothing
     + ideally have a cell phone with emergency numbers plugged in (see emergency section below)
  4. Sign into the row scheduling app (currently GroupMe) the day before rowing, and note how many other rowers there are, and who they are.
  5. Do not row alone.
  6. Beginner and Intermediate rowers must be accompanied by a safety boat and Masters rower/s.
  7. Check the rowing app immediately before leaving home for your row, in case of rower cancellations/ additions or row cancellation due to weather.
  8. Inspect your equipment (boat, oars, PFD) before leaving and report any damage or missing parts to the coach, or if no coach, on the Row google pages (link)
  9. **Determine your route and circulation pattern as a group before leaving the shore, based on weather conditions, particularly wind and fog. (use the Rowing Chart)**
  10. Identity a rendezvous point/s prior to leaving the shore.
  11. When rowing in a group, attempt to stay together as much as possible; faster rowers should wait at rendezvous points for those who are slower.
  12. Upon return to shore:
      + Clean boat with materials provided and check for any damage
      + Record your row and boat in the Row record google pages (link)
  13. Do not row if impaired.
  14. For experienced Masters rowers rowing without a safety boat, all of the above apply, plus:
      + Row with at least one other person. If only two are rowing, take 2 singles so as to have a safety back-up in case of an incident.
      + Sign into the scheduling App the night before indicating who you are rowing with and your route.
      + Inform a family member/friend of your row.
      + Do not row past Bachman’s Beach on Second Peninsula.
  15. ***Safety procedures while on the water***
      + Pay attention to other rowers and the safety boat if there is one, while on the water.
      + In the event of an incident or impending weather that requires abandoning the row, the safety boat operator will sound two horns or whistles. All boats go directly to the launch area without discussion
      + If there is no safety boat, it is the responsibility of the rowers to stay in close proximity and communication. If conditions deteriorate and exceed the comfort level of any rowers in the group, they all must return to shore immediately.
      + Any capsize should result in a hail/whistle to the safety boat and/or other rowers who are to stay on scene to assist with boat /oars and rower(s) until the safety boat arrives to lend assistance.
      + If there is no safety boat, rowers must stay with their boat. If they are unable to right it and get back in, they should hold on to their boat and push it to shore if possible. Other rowers remain on the scene to help, and call for help.
      + See safety boat and emergency section below.

***Safety boat and operator procedures***

* 1. The safety boat will be operated by LYC Rowing staff (coach or safety boat operator) or a volunteer experienced in small motor boat operation and possessing a Boat Operators license.
  2. The safety boat operator must wear a PFD on the water
  3. The safety boat will be equipped with: life ring, tow line, first aid kit, thermal blanket, spare large life jacket, marine VHF Radio, and laminated list of emergency numbers.
  4. Safety boat equipment should be inspected each day and missing/ malfunctioning equipment reported to the rowing safety officer.
  5. The safety boat operator must have a cell phone, with rowers’ phone numbers available (e.g., from registration spreadsheet)
  6. Preferably, to enable rescue, the safety boat should be a soft-hull inflatable. If not, it should have a rope ladder. The safety boat and operator must be able to conduct on the water rescue if necessary to pull someone inboard to safety.
  7. Safety procedures while on the water (see #15 above)

***Emergency Action Plan (EAP)***

* 1. This will be posted in the clubhouse and includes:
* Vital phone numbers-doctor/ambulance/police- 911
* Fire department Lunenburg-902-634-8343; Mahone Bay-902-624-8437
* Closest Hospital Emergency Department- Lunenburg Fisherman’s Memorial ER-902-634-8801; Bridgewater-South Shore Regional-902-543-4603
* Coast Guard/ Mahone Bay Inshore Rescue- \*16 on cell phone or channel 16 VHF
  1. All boat operators, are expected to have these numbers programmed into their mobile phones that are charged and carried with them (\*16) or VHF radio ( Channel 16) , directions to LYC, and information about the medical files and contacts of participants.
  2. If an on the water medical emergency occurs within easy access of the LYC dock, the boat operator/ row lead should contact emergency services by 911 cell phone or (\*16) to arrange ambulance service to LYC and transfer to the nearest emergency room.
     + The LYC civic address is 734 Hermans Island Road B0J2C0.
     + There is a smart defibrillator in the main clubhouse that anyone can use if the patient has no pulse.
     + If the club is open and there is time, the manager should be notified in order to meet the ambulance- 902-634-3745.
     + The safest approach is via the gas dock and stretcher if the patient is unconscious.

* 1. When determining other haulout locations in an emergency If the rowers are remote from the club, consider the following land access points to meet an ambulance:
     + Kinley’s wharf between Little and Big Hermans-(civic address 829 Hermans Is Road),
     + Goldbloom’s off Osprey Lane on Second Peninsula(150 Osprey Lane Second Peninsula),
     + Creaser’s wharf in Sunnybrook (215 Sunnybrook Road) or
     + Beach under Sargeants opposite Berry Hill Lane sign near corner of Hermans Is Rd and Princes Inlet Dr
     + If going round Herman’s Island –old wharf by 462 Maders Cove Road, or John Franklin’s beach (civic address...)
  2. **Hypothermia is the greatest danger besides drowning, and a safety debriefing on signs and symptoms of hypothermia** must be incorporated into Learn to Row programs and an annual review for members.

1. Provincial health and safety procedures:

* These will be reviewed, added and communicated as required.