



BRITISH DRAGON BOAT RACING ASSOCIATION

SAFETY NOTICE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE LOADING YOUR BOAT



This notice gives important safety information for crew members taking part in Dragon Boating. Please take time to read it carefully.

Dragon boating is inherently safe and capsizes are rare, except where the crew is at fault. However, in any watersport there is always an element of danger. This information is intended to minimise the risks to you.



CONDUCT

Crews must comply with all instructions given to them. Once in the boat, crews must obey the commands of their Helm. Crews who engage in dangerous, unruly, thoughtless or offensive behaviour will be disqualified.

Deliberately capsizing a Dragon Boat can be dangerous and may damage the boat. It also disrupts the racing programme. Crews that cause their own or another boat to capsize or who ram another boat will be disqualified.

Alcohol impairs judgment and can increase the risk of hypothermia. Crews who have been drinking excessively will not be allowed to race.



ABILITY TO SWIM

All crew members must be able to swim at least 50 metres when dressed for racing, and must be competent in cold, deep and open water.



BUOYANCY AIDS

Buoyancy aids must be worn :

- by weak swimmers
- by all crew members under the age of 12
- by Junior crews (under 18) when directed by the Race Organiser
- by those uncomfortable in the prevailing conditions
- in adverse or winter racing conditions, i.e. open water or rivers
- when required by the Race Organiser or Crew Manager
- where local regulations require them

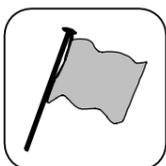
The Race Organisers cannot undertake to provide buoyancy aids for crews.



DRESS

Crew members must be adequately dressed for the conditions. Typically, paddlers should wear :

- T-shirt or vest, and shorts - not jeans
- buoyancy aid, when required
- suitable light footwear e.g. trainers, plastic sandals, wetsuit boots
- waterproof top and trousers, when conditions require it



BEFORE RACING

Before racing begins, Crew Captains must complete a Crew List and give it to the Race Officials.

Crew members must tell their Crew Managers if they are weak swimmers, or they have a medical condition that may affect them during the day.

Before each race, a count of the number of people in the boat must be made by the Crew Captain, and notified to the Boat Marshall. This will be used in the event of a capsize to ensure no one is lost.

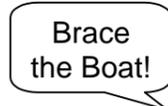


AFTER RACING

The crew remains under the command of the Helm until the boat is unloaded.

When approaching the landing stage, keep your hands clear of the boat's gunwales, to avoid them being crushed between the boat and the jetty. Do not try to fend off the jetty.

Stay seated in the boat until told. Then unload one person at a time starting from one end, as directed by the Helm. Otherwise the boat can capsize or can be damaged.



BRACING THE BOAT

To steady the boat, when sideways on to the wind or waves, the Helm will tell the crew to 'Brace the Boat'. Paddlers must lean out slightly over the side of the boat and press their paddle blades flat on the water, at arms length.



STOPPING THE BOAT IN AN EMERGENCY

To prevent a collision, the Helm will tell the crew to 'Stop the Boat'. Paddlers must immediately place their paddles deeply and vertically in the water and hold them firmly. A backwards stroke with the paddle can then be made.

Crews who fail to stop the boat when there is a danger of a collision will be disqualified.



BUDDY SYSTEM

The Buddy System allows the crew to be checked quickly following a capsize.

- Each person in the boat is paired with the person on the same seat and is given a number by numbering off from the front.
- The 'Stroke Pair' (first pair) in the boat are responsible for the Drummer and the 'rear pair' (last pair) for the Helm.
- In the event of a capsize, each person's first responsibility is to ensure that their partner is safe and well.



CAPSIZED BOATS

If a Dragon Boat capsizes, each pair of paddlers must immediately account for their buddies, to ensure that no one is trapped under the overturned hull, lost or injured. The Boat Captain must account for every crew member by calling out pair numbers and checking everyone answers 'OK'. He will ensure the number of crew corresponds with the count made when the boat was loaded.

The crew should stay calmly in the water with the boat and await the arrival of the Safety Boats or assistance. Do not attempt to turn the boat upright - in an overturned position it can be used as a float.

Once on the land all crew members must again be accounted for and any injuries dealt with immediately.

The boat recovery should only be attempted by experienced persons. The boat can be damaged if it is lifted while there is water left in it.



WATERBORNE INFECTIONS

The water may carry serious diseases such as Weil's Disease, hepatitis, gastro-enteritis, etc. To minimise your risk of contracting an illness :

- Do not drink or swallow the water
- Avoid deliberately splashing water on your face, or in your eyes, nose or mouth
- Avoid swimming or wading in the water
- Cover all cuts and grazes with waterproof dressings
- Use footwear to avoid injuring your feet
- Wash or shower as soon as possible after watersports, before eating or preparing food
- If you fall ill after watersport, go to your doctor early, and tell him you are a watersports participant
- If your symptoms include a high temperature, an influenza-like illness, and joint and muscle pains (particularly in the calf muscles) also tell your doctor about the possibility of Weil's Disease and give him a copy of the Weil's Disease leaflet (ask your Crew Manager or the BDA if you do not have one)



FURTHER INFORMATION

This notice supplements the BDA leaflets 'Safety on the Water' and 'Weil's Disease', which contain further information on safety for Helms, Crew Captains, Crew Managers and Race Officials. Your attention is also drawn to the BDA Competition Regulations and Rules of Racing.