

PIONEER VALLEY RIVERFRONT CLUB

Safety Procedures - 2008

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS TO LONGMEADOW PUBLIC SAFETY BOAT
(Keep them handy and programmed in available cell phones – it is recommended to keep a zip-locked baggy with cell phone among a group of rowers as well as for solo rowers)

From CELL PHONE: (413) 567 – 3357

From LAND LINE: 911

- ✚ All Rowers must certify that they are able to swim 200 yards and tread water for 10 minutes. (See Attestation Release Form)

- ✚ All Rowers should sign in (onto water) and out (onto land) in the club log book (located between boats and oars in waterproof box – no key necessary). This is a necessary club safety procedure. It is preferable to row with a buddy.

- ✚ Please inform club if you have any medical conditions that may affect your safety. (e.g. Asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, heart condition, etc.)

- ✚ Check that all equipment, boat, riggers, oars / locks, foot stretchers, seat / slides are functioning properly before launching.

- ✚ Wear close fitting clothes – loose or baggy clothing can get caught in the slide, seat, or hooked by any oar.

- ✚ Personal Flotation Device – P.F.D., beginners must have P.F.D. on board and be familiar with its use. Intermediates and advanced rowers should consider carrying one also.

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Study Map of River

- ✚ Study attached map that shows local traffic flow and note hazards. Discuss with others the location of shallow water, stumps, rocks, seasonal problems and landmarks.
- ✚ Be aware of river level. Low levels reveal submerged hazards such as sandbars, logs and rocks. High river levels increase the speed of the currents especially between bridge abutments.
- ✚ It's recommended to turn on the downstream side of a bridge rather than above a bridge. This avoids the potential of being washed into a dangerous situation. Good habits determine that a rower does this at all times instead of "chancing it" when currents "seem" light.

Traffic Patterns

- ✚ Favor the shore to your left (starboard) so that a counter clockwise rotation occurs on the river. Stay to the Springfield side going upstream and the Agawam side going downstream. Imagine the river being split in half and allow plenty of room for boats traveling in the opposite direction to proceed without concern for collision.
- ✚ Rowing boats give way to vessels with the least maneuverability such as:
 1. Sailboats without wind
 2. Faster rowing boats
 3. Anchored boats
- ✚ When launching be cautious of docked or moored boats and moorings. Safest entrance / exit from dock area the North-South channel between the docks and the mooring field. Once north of the No Wake sign, one may go further from the shore or cross the river safely.
- ✚ Boats should shove off (launch) and approach the dock (shore) in upstream direction.
- ✚ Do not drag hull of boats on ramp or shore. Find assistance in carrying boats that are found to be heavy, awkward or need to be placed in/out of a difficult to access rack.

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Do Not Row if.....

- ✚ there are electrical storms (e.g. lightning / thunder)
- ✚ waves have white caps – (turning in waves is difficult; allow plenty of room & time)
- ✚ there is thick fog. There must be at least 100 yards of visibility.
- ✚ there is excessive floating debris in the river. Most debris is larger than what is visible (think about the Titanic's iceberg).
- ✚ there is limited visibility – dusk / dawn great care should be taken when rowing in darkness or near darkness. Safety lights should be used that are visible from the bow and stern. It is advisable to wear light colored tops. Only row in familiar water under these conditions.
- ✚ it is extremely cold. Water temp below 50 F is considered dangerous.
- ✚ The mentor/coach has determined to cancel scheduled rowing times because of safety conditions. He/She has the authority to keep boats on shore for everyone's safety.

If you capsize...

- ✚ get back into the boat quickly, extend oars in normal rowing position, grasp both oars with one hand, and use the other to push up onto the deck.

If Unable to re-enter boat...

- ✚ Swim the boat to shore, lying on the stern and using the boat as a paddle board. The shell has been designed for flotation and the oars will glide parallel to the shell providing some balance.
- ✚ Do not try to swim to shore. Do not underestimate the current of the river.

In cold water:

- ✚ Stay with boat preferably lying over the boat with as much of your body out of the water as possible.
- ✚ Roll the boat to increase flotation.
- ✚ Do not move around to try to keep warm, you will lose warmth and energy quickly.
- ✚ Try to attract attention (e.g. waving arms, clothing).
- ✚ Get dry and warm as soon as possible.

Note: If a boat has capsized and has been returned to the dock, it is likely extra heavy. Get assistance pouring water out of boat and carrying to the rack. Carry from the mid-deck area (not the very ends of the boat) and undo the drain plugs for complete drainage.