



# Safety Plan



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## Introduction

Northampton Rowing Club (NRC) is committed to the safety of its members and guests. Safety should always be the number one priority for everyone whilst engaging in activities around the boathouse, rowing or travelling with the club to/from events.

The aim of this plan is to ensure care for the club members, other water users and the public at large by identifying potential risks and to ensure plans are in place to limit those risks.

## Responsibilities

**All members** are personally responsible for and have a duty of care to ensure that their actions, both on and off the water, are conducted in a manner that does not compromise the safety of themselves or others.

**All members** are expected to comply with the requirements of the British Rowing RowSafe Guide, this Safety Plan and any other instructions issued by the Club, in respect of safety.

The complete British Rowing RowSafe guide can be found here: -

<https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/>



## River Safety

**All members** should familiarise themselves with the map (appendix B) of the stretches of river we row on. The map shows the hazards to watch out for when rowing.

**You or a member of your crew must** use the booking out system to record which crew members go out and the boat they have taken. Crews must also book back in to avoid false alarms. The booking out system is located immediately right as you enter through the left hand boathouse door.

The local navigation rules apply, so all boats should **proceed down the right** side of the river in the direction of travel. No one boat has the right of way, so be aware and be prepared to give way or stop suddenly. If you see an oncoming boat straying into your path – shout out to make them aware.

It is recommended not to row alone - always have a rowing buddy with you.

Never stop on a bend or busy parts of the river.

Always make sure it is safe to turn and then do so as quickly as possible.

## Rowing and Sculling at Night

In accordance with the EA rules, all rowing/sculling boats must show lights after sunset. A white light, mounted on the boat to both bow and stern must be shown. LED lights are permitted. **Flashing lights should not be used as main lights.** Lights should **not** be fixed to the riggers as they can be obscured when negotiating bends and turning.

## Coxswains and Steersman

In all coxed boats, the coxswain is deemed responsible for the overall safety of the boat and crew.

In coxless boats, the person occupying the bow seat or the person controlling the rudder (when fitted) is deemed responsible for the overall safety of the boat and the crew.

The only exception to the above being when the coxswain, or the steersman, is a beginner, in which case responsibility will be transferred to the coach or to the person providing the direct instruction and supervision.

## Coaches

All coaches are to be British Rowing qualified with Instructor Award (IA) or UKCC Level 2 as the minimum standard.

Coaches are to ensure that: -

- Crews are aware of the appropriate safety procedures.
- Crews use safe rowing/sculling equipment.
- The outing is conducted appropriate to the prevailing weather and water conditions. Colder conditions need more consideration if Rowability athletes are planning outings.
- Consideration is shown to other water users.
- Crews are appropriately dressed for the session.
- The coach is to be particularly alert for symptoms of hypothermia and heat stroke/dehydration.
- In particular, when coaching young children, the whole crew should be dressed suitably.
- When coaching coxed boats, care must also be taken to ensure that the cox is properly dressed.
- Particular attention is paid to the coaching of coxes as their competence is essential to water safety as well as the crew's success.
- When coaching from the bank a throw line and loud hailer is taken when appropriate.
- The coach/athlete ratio for junior athletes should be one coach to no more than 12 junior athletes. Furthermore, on the water, each coach should only look after a maximum of 4 boats, which should not contain more than 12 junior athletes e.g. 3 quads, 2 quads and 2 doubles, 4 singles etc.

Junior athletes under the age of 18 are not allowed on the water unless under supervision.



## Safety Equipment

NRC provides the following safety equipment: -

### Life Jackets / Buoyancy Aids: -

- The wearing of a lifejacket or buoyancy aid is **compulsory for all coxswains**. Manual inflating jackets **must only** be used by coxswains using front loading/bow coxed boats.
- The wearing of a lifejacket or buoyancy aid is compulsory for all drivers and passengers of the launches.
- Where participants are not members and so have not declared they can swim to the sufficient standard, lifejackets/buoyancy aids should be offered.

- Rowability athletes should wear a lifejacket if a capsized drill has not been completed within the last 2 years.

The life jackets are stored on hooks on the left hand side of the boathouse as you enter through the left hand door.

#### **Throw Lines (bags): -**

**Any person providing coaching or safety cover** from the bank **should carry a throw line**. The throw lines are stored on hooks on the left hand side of the boathouse as you enter through the left hand door.

A really good demonstration on deploying, re-packing (very important to do this correctly) and other info can be found here: -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zJOL40GOtc>

#### **Thermal Exposure Blankets: -**

**Any person providing coaching or safety cover** from the bank **should carry sufficient thermal exposure blankets**. The thermal exposure blankets are stored upstairs with the first aid box and on both launches.

#### **First Aid Boxes**

First Aid boxes are located on the **ground floor (next to the booking out system)**, the **first floor (to the left of the cabin door)** and on **both launches**.



## **River Conditions**

### **Lower stretch**

The lower stretch of river that the club rows on is used as a flood relief scheme called "Washlands". When Washlands is in operation all flood barriers are raised which allows water to be stored. During this time, the river can have increased flow and contain debris. Access to the stage may not be possible.

**No boating on the lower stretch is permitted if Washlands is in operation.** This can be determined if access to the stage is not possible. **Do not boat from other locations made possible by the flood water.**

In summer the lower stretch can be severely affected by weed. The coaches will determine if the stretch is rowable or not. Crews should be aware of other users using the centre of the river to avoid weed. **Race pieces should only be carried out under supervision.**

### **Upper stretch**

If there is a strong downstream wind and/or when Washlands is in operation and the flow on the upper stretch has increased, it can be difficult for inexperienced crews to get back in

due to the proximity of the boom to the boating stage. ***When these conditions exist, only supervised crews should go out*** but this should be determined by the coach.

In summer the upper stretch is affected by weed but less so than the lower stretch. Crews should be aware of other users using the centre of the river to avoid weed. ***Race pieces should only be carried out under supervision.***

### **Upper and Lower stretch**

Fishermen fish both stretches of river. Be aware of any lines out in the river and try to steer around them if it is safe to do so otherwise stop and wait. ***Do not enter into any dialogue with angry fishermen.*** Report any issues encountered to the Club Captain.

Some swans can be very aggressive during nesting and when the young are on the river. Try to steer around aggressive swans if it is safe to do so. Report any incidents to the Club Captain, so other river users can be made aware.

## **Weather**

***All members*** should be aware of the local weather forecast when planning outings, particularly when thunderstorms have been predicted.

### **Thunder**

If ***thunder*** is heard and/or lightning observed before the outing has commenced, individuals and crews must remain at the club.

Rowers already out on the water, coaches/helpers on the bank or coaches planning on putting crews out should use the '***30 - 30 Rule***'. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear the thunder.

- If it is 30 seconds (approx. 10 km away) or less, seek 'proper shelter' – see below.
- If you can't see the lightning, just hearing the thunder is a good back-up rule for it being time to seek 'proper shelter' – see below.
- Wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder before leaving shelter.

On average a typical storm moves at about 40 km/h giving approx 15 minutes to seek 'proper shelter'. This is a long enough time for any crew to get from the furthest part of our river back to the boathouse.

**Proper shelter for us means back at the boathouse/White Water Centre.**

Proper shelter **IS NOT:** -

- Open spaces - field, lake or river.
- Underneath canopies, small rain shelters, trees, umbrellas, tents & marquees.
- Close vicinity to the tallest structure in an area.
- Near metal or carbon objects - riggers, boats, blades, trailers, launches, etc.
- Using electrical appliances or plumbing such as water taps, sinks etc.

## Fog

Fog can sit over the river at certain times of the year. **When these conditions exist, only supervised crews should go out** but this should be determined by the coach. **Visibility needs to be at least 200m and lights need to be used.**



## Equipment

Prior to use, **all equipment** is to be checked to ensure that it is serviceable and appropriate for the purpose for which it is intended. Do not use a boat that is marked as not for use on the booking out system. If a boat is not fit for use after an outing, register the issue on the booking out system when the boat is booked back in so other people know.

**Always** fit hatches before an outing. The boat will not be buoyant if they are missing. This means the boat could sink if it was to capsize.



Fig 1: Fitting buoyancy hatch.



In the unlikely event of your boat capsizing NEVER leave the boat – use it as your buoyancy and wait for help to arrive.



Always remove hatches after an outing when the boat is placed on the rack. This allows any moisture to dry out when the boat is on the rack.

Always check the bow ball before an outing. Never use a boat that has a missing or damaged bow ball.



Fig 2: Checking the bow ball is secure.

Always check the shoes and heel restraints. Never use a boat that has faulty heel restraints.



Fig 3: Checking that the heel restraints are connected.

Always check the boat over for any damage e.g. the shell for holes, make sure the fin is not bent. Never use a boat that shows any signs of damage.

Report any damage you find to the Club Captain. **Do NOT** borrow parts from one boat to repair another. If the boat is not marked as not for use on the booking out system, mark it as so (book it out, then in and log the damage) for the benefit of other users.

## Launches

Launches are to be used **only** by drivers with an RYA Level 2 Powerboat certificate. The Safety Adviser maintains the list of current approved drivers. **All drivers are to wear a lifejacket and have the kill cord connected at all times.** The driver is responsible for ensuring that the launch rescue kit has the required items and that a paddle and boat hook are present. Any items used or missing are to be notified to the Safety Adviser as soon as possible.

All launch drivers are to ensure that the launches are handled with consideration to other river users and in accordance with the British Rowing RowSafe Guide and the Environment Agency Regulations.

***All launch drivers to carry a mobile phone.***

## Incident Reporting

**All members** are responsible for reporting all accidents, incidents and near incidents that they have knowledge of or witness within 24 hours of the event, via the British Rowing online incident reporting system to satisfy the requirements of the British Rowing RowSafe Guide.

A link to the incident reporting system can be found here: -

<http://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/?q=incidentreporting>

In addition to the online system, members are to bring the incident to the attention of the Water Safety Advisor, their coach or squad/Club Captain.

All accidents and incidents will be reviewed by the Water Safety Adviser, and these will be discussed at committee level, along with any additional control measures that are deemed necessary to avoid any future repetition.

Emergency Services are to be contacted by the best means possible as appropriate to any accident or emergency situation.



## Off Water Safety

### Boat care and handling

Rowing boats are delicate pieces of equipment and must be treated as such.

When lifting a boat that is upside down e.g. Off a rack, always hold the sax boards. Never use the riggers or any other part of the boat.



Fig 4: Lifting a boat using the sax board.

When lifting a boat that is the right way up e.g. Off the water, always hold an internal structural part of the boat with one hand and support the shell of the boat with the other. Never hold the seat, seat rails or any other part of the boat.



Fig 5: Lifting the boat using a structural component

When carrying the boat watch the riggers. Be aware of where the bow and stern are too, especially when turning.

When carrying the boat down or up the steps to/from the stage, make sure the boat is parallel to the steps and that you take steps in time with each other. Make sure the bows and stern are clear of the metal I beams when carrying the boat to/from the stage.

Be aware of slippery conditions on the steps, stage ramps and stage, particularly in winter when they can be icy. A bag of sand/ballast is available in the boat house (on the left hand side of the boathouse as you enter through the left hand door) for use in such conditions

Never drop or throw anything into a boat e.g. drinks bottle. This could easily punch a hole into the shell.

When getting into or out of a boat, always stand on the part designed to be stood on (structural). Never stand on the shell of the boat as you are likely to damage it.



Fig 6: Getting into the boat

Never leave a boat that is on the water at the stage unattended as it could be easily carried away by the river's current.

Always ensure that if the boat is placed on trestles/slings, it is placed correctly.

Be aware that in windy conditions, boats can get blown off trestles/slings – so make sure that they are secured.



## Gym

All members are responsible for keeping the gym clean and tidy. After use, every member is responsible for returning all equipment that they have used to its proper location and for cleaning down all items of the equipment that they have used.

All members shall be deemed responsible for their own safety whilst using any of the Club's gym equipment. Should any member have any doubt concerning how to use any item of equipment, or correct technique, they should seek guidance from the Captain or a coach.

Junior members are not permitted to use any of the gym equipment (rowing machines, weights machines or free weights) unless accompanied by a qualified coach or supervised by a person deemed responsible by the committee.

The use of any gym equipment by social members and by guests is prohibited.



## Boat Transportation

### Drivers

Only individuals authorised by the Club are to drive the club vehicle and tow the trailer. All drivers are to be conversant with the British Rowing code for the Towing of Boat Trailers, a copy of which can be found here: -

<http://www.britishrowing.org/sites/default/files/rowsafe/2-5-Transport%26Trailers-v1.pdf>

### Boat Loading

When boats are being taken to events on the trailer, the Captain will detail the trailer loading plan and communicate that to the participants. Loading is to be strictly in accordance with this plan and the driver is to check compliance with the plan prior to departure. The driver is to ensure that all boats and equipment are safely secured prior to departure and that the necessary requirements for front/rear projections and lighting are observed.

## Appendix A: Emergency Action Plan

### In The Event of A Serious Incident/Cardiac Arrest

- IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, INCLUDING A CREW MEMBER BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY ILL OR BECOMING UNRESPONSIVE, IMMEDIATELY: -
  - Use a mobile phone to dial **999** or **112** for emergency assistance.
  - Raise the alarm with a launch or with other boats if available.
- If you come across someone who is not breathing or breathing erratically, the most important thing is to dial **999** or **112 from a mobile** and **start CPR** to keep the blood flowing around the body. The club owns its own Automated External Defibrillator (AED) but don't interrupt CPR to go and get a defibrillator. If it's possible, send someone else to fetch it.
  - The AED is situated on the right wall immediately as you enter the boathouse through the right hand door. The key is in the key box next to the AED. The code for the key box is **9999**.

### Capsize

The following guidelines should be followed if a capsizement occurs: -

- If out of your depth and unable to wade ashore, **stay with the boat** and use it to keep you afloat.
- If the water is cold, get as much of your body out of the water as soon as possible, draping yourself over the upturned hull and try to attract attention immediately.
- If you have to stay in the water, retain warmth by keeping arms and knees tucked into the body.
- Stay calm and breathe deeply.
- Other boats in the vicinity should fetch help or a launch if one is available. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESCUE FROM ANOTHER ROWING SCULL - you are likely to capsizement too, putting more people in the water with no one to get help.

### Cold Water Immersion

Cold water immersion is the result of entering cold water from a capsizement or fall from the bank etc. It should not be underestimated – **IT CAN KILL** as breathing and circulation are immediately affected before hypothermia sets in. The effects of the cold water mean that even healthy individuals, who are good swimmers, can still drown within a short period of time, often only a few feet from the bank.

Any of the following may occur after immersion: -

- Cold shock response (the effects of this will pass, so stay calm!!).
- Dry drowning.
- Cold incapacitation and swim failure.
- Circum-rescue collapse after immersion.

Adopt the “1 minute, 1 degree rule” so you know and can plan a rescue time. **Our river averages around 4°C through winter**, which means you have 4 minutes of useful time to get out of the water.

## Hypothermia

The symptoms of hypothermia depend on how cold the environment is and how long you are exposed for. Severe hypothermia needs urgent medical treatment in hospital. Shivering is a good guide to how severe the condition is. If the person can stop shivering on their own, the hypothermia is mild, but if they cannot stop shivering, it is moderate to severe.

Although hypothermia is defined as occurring when the body temperature drops below 35°C, mild hypothermia can start at higher body temperatures.

## Treating hypothermia

As hypothermia can be a life-threatening condition, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Hypothermia is treated by preventing further heat being lost and by gently warming the patient.

If you are treating someone with mild hypothermia, or waiting for medical treatment to arrive, follow the advice below to prevent further loss of heat.

Things to do for hypothermia: -

- Move the person indoors, or somewhere warm, as soon as possible.
- Once sheltered, gently remove any wet clothing and dry the person.
- Wrap them in blankets, towels, coats (whatever you have), protecting the head and torso first.
- Your own body heat can help someone with hypothermia. Hug them gently.
- Increase activity if possible, but not to the point where sweating occurs, as that cools the skin down again.
- If possible, give the person warm drinks (but not alcohol) or high energy foods, such as chocolate, to help warm them up.
- Once body temperature has increased, keep the person warm and dry.

It is important to handle anyone that has hypothermia very gently and carefully.

Things you should **NOT** do: -

- Don't warm up an elderly person using a bath, as this may send cold blood from the body's surfaces to the heart or brain too suddenly, causing a stroke or heart attack.
- Don't apply direct heat (hot water or a heating pad, for example) to the arms and legs, as this forces cold blood back to the major organs, making the condition worse
- Don't give the person alcohol to drink, as this will decrease the body's ability to retain heat.
- Don't rub or massage the person's skin, as this can cause the blood vessels to widen and decrease the body's ability to retain heat. In severe cases of hypothermia there is also a risk of heart attack.

## **STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Do not go out alone in cold (hypothermia is deadly quick at lower temperatures) or poor conditions – always have a rowing buddy.
- Spin after the last rower has gone past so you're always in the sight of someone else.
- No rowing in the dark without supervision.
- Carry a mobile phone in a tethered waterproof bag/container.

Unsupervised rowers should plan their rescue before going afloat and be confident it will work. Other considerations include: -

- Do you need to wear a life jacket?
- How are you going to summon help?

## **Contact/Telephone Numbers**

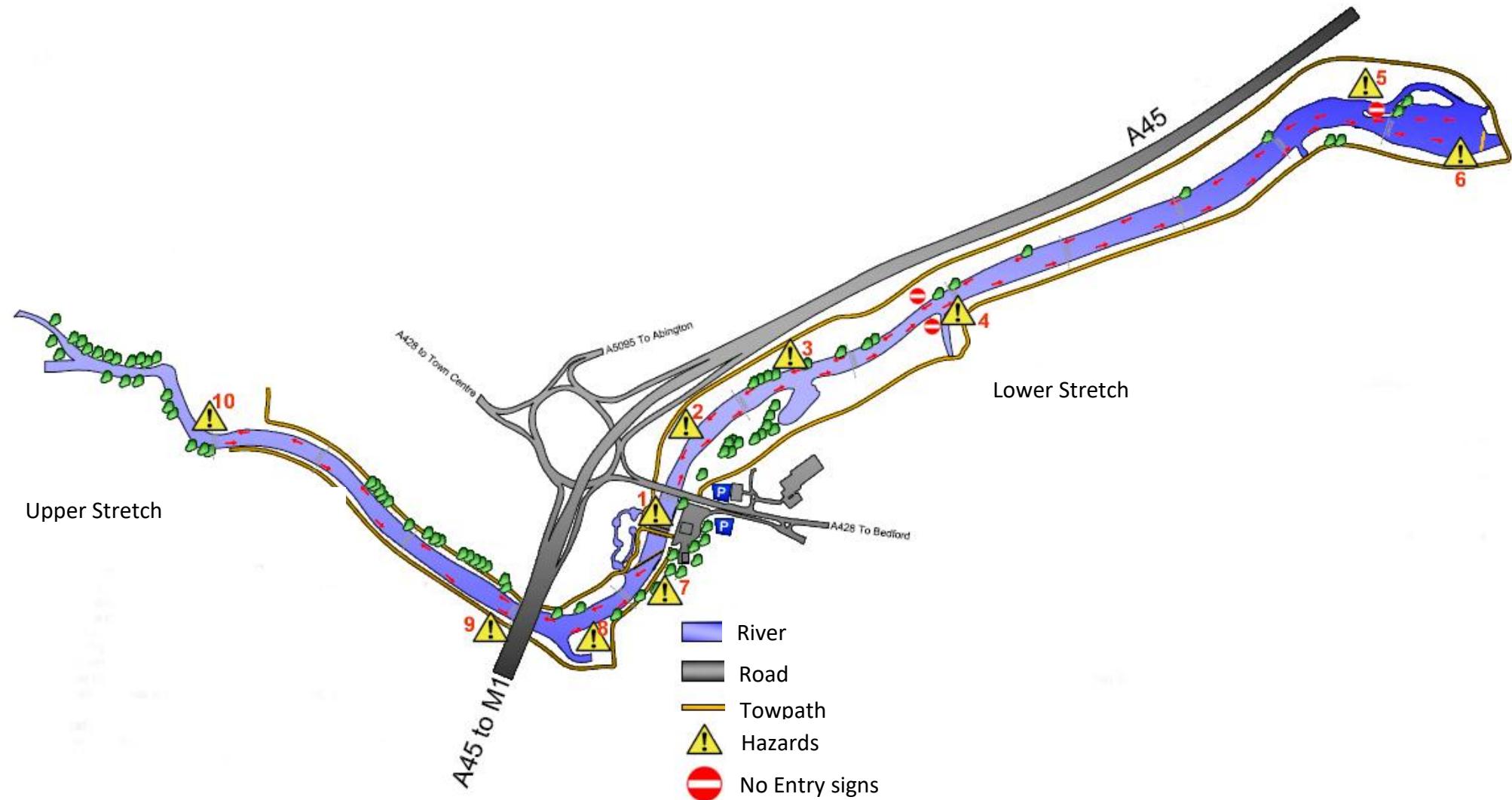
**All crews** are advised to ensure they carry a mobile phone when on the water.

In an emergency, call **999 (112 from a mobile)**.

Northampton General Hospital has A&E facilities and is 5 minutes away: -

Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust  
Cliftonville  
Northampton  
NN1 5BD  
Main Switchboard - **01604 634700**

## Appendix B: River Nene from Beckett's Park to Billing Aquadrome



# Key to Hazards

## **Hazard 1 – Landing Stage, Lower Stretch**

- Beware of and be courteous to other river users when boating and de-boating.
- Do not get too close the weir boom.
- Spin with caution in this area.
- Do not cut the corner when returning to the landing stage. Wait until you have passed under the bridge before crossing the river to the landing stage.
- Launch drivers should avoid the shallow water in the middle of the river until past the bridge.

## **Hazards 2 and 3 – Bends**

- Be aware of the curvature of the river. The line of the bank encourages drifting across the centre line of the river. Stay on your station.

## **Hazard 4 – The Navigation Channel, Lower Stretch**

- Beware of motor boats emerging from the navigation channel. They can be long and stretch across the river before they turn.
- The river is narrow at this point and it can get congested.
- The “No Entry” signs often serve as finishing posts for short pieces of work on the straight. Do not stop here to rest after your piece as others may be following behind you.
- Avoid waiting in this area.

## **Hazard 5 – Entry To and Exit From the Bay**

- Do not enter the channel to the north, this is for motor boats only.
- Beware aware of motor boats emerging from the North Channel.
- The entry to the bay is narrow and on a bend, navigate with caution.
- Novice coxless boats should spin before entering the bay.
- On exiting the bay, the curvature of the river encourages drifting into the far bank, especially in windy conditions.

## **Hazard 6 – The Bay**

- Always allow plenty of drifting space when spinning.
- Do not get too close to the weir boom.
- Be aware of other stationary river users.

## **Hazard 7 – Landing Stage, Upper Stretch**

- Beware of and be courteous to other river users when boating and de-boating.
- Beware of high current/wind when boating. Seek advice if unsure.
- Do not get too close to weir boom.
- Spin with caution in this area.
- Always allow plenty of drifting space when spinning.

## **Hazard 8 – The Navigation Channel, Upper Stretch**

- Beware of motor boats emerging from the navigation channel. They can be long and stretch across the river before they turn.

## **Hazard 9 – The Dual Carriageway Bridge**

- Be aware of metal structures in the river under the bridge.

## **Hazard 10 – Tight Corners**

- Navigation through the corners is more difficult in larger boats.
- The recommended spinning area is just below the first corner.
- Be aware of motor boats emerging from blind corners.