



## **Whakatane Rowing Club**

### **Water Safety Code and Risk Management Plan 2023**

#### **Risk Management Plan**

This entire document constitutes the Risk Management Plan.

These Whakatane Rowing Club guidelines should be followed to reduce the risk of harm to rowers or equipment while rowing.

The formation of the Risk Management Plan has taken into account that while the risk of harm are minimal on the Whakatane River, the most likely and most serious risks are as follows;

- Capsize and failure to release feet from upside down boat with the potential for drowning.
- Traumatic injury from collisions.
- Hypothermia from submersion in cold water.

The emphasis of this document is to minimise or eliminate such consequences.

#### **1.1 Club Safety Officer – Barbara Armstrong**

#### **1.2 Emergency Phone Numbers.**

These numbers below shall be displayed prominently in the Rowing Club by both telephones.

- Emergency Services – 111
- Local Police – 308 5255
- Whakatane Hospital – all services 306 0999
- Whakatane Harbour Master- 027570 8283
- Whakatane Coast Guard – 308 7110
- Computech Alarms -323 6996

#### **Whakatane Hospital Emergency Department Directions.**

- From the round-about at the Rowing Club turn right into Hinemoa St.
- Continue on Hinemoa Street for about 750m then turn left into Stewart Street.
- Travel on Stewart St 400m then turn right into Garaway St then after 150m the Emergency Department will be visible on the right.

#### **1.3.1 Clubhouse Safety Equipment**

The Clubhouse should carry the following safety equipment;

- First Aid Kit.
- Thermal blankets.
- Life jackets and other buoyancy aids.
- Rescue lines.

### **1.3.2 First Aid Skills.**

Coaches should have an understanding of CPR and hypothermia recognition and management. First aid for serious injury will be handled by emergency services which are within a few minutes of the rowing club and any point on the Whakatane River where training is carried out.

Also, note that residential Whakatane runs adjacent to and within 100m of all points on the river where training is carried out. In the rare likelihood that someone in a coach boat does not have a cell phone, houses are within easy reach of the river to access or summon emergency services.

### **1.4 Visual Aids.**

A visual aid showing resuscitation and lifesaving procedures shall be displayed in the club.

### **1.5 Waterway Hazard Information.**

A waterway plan showing river hazards shall be on display in the club.

Coxswains and rowers in un-coxed boats shall be given clear instructions as to the whereabouts of shallow submerged obstacles.

Obstructions on the riverbed should be marked where possible with a flexible pole if those objects come to within 40 cm of the surface at the lowest low tides.

Rowing should not be carried out when river flow rates at the Valley Road telemetry station are above 150 cubic metres per second in the following conditions;

- If the river is still rising
- If there is an outgoing tide
- If there are significant amounts of floating debris when rowing unaccompanied.
- If there is a strong up river wind at the rowing club creating rough conditions
- Note that the least flow rates occurs between the Board Mill and the Yacht Club

Rowing should not be carried out when the wind is strong enough to generate waves greater than 30cm, in the section of river by the rowing club.

### **1.6 Incident Log**

An incident log shall be maintained and available for inspection at all times, giving time, place and nature of the incident. An incident is defined as an unintentional capsize or a collision involving rowing or coaching boats, or any injury occurring to a person on the water.

All cases involving injury shall be notified to the Bay of Plenty Rowing Association and the New Zealand Rowing Association.

### **1.7 Coach Boat Log**

A record of service or repairs to coach boats shall be held. Coach boats are to be maintained in safe operating condition.

## **2.0 Equipment**

Rowing boat equipment shall be maintained as per RNZ requirements and in good order.

- 2.1** Every boat must, at all times, carry firmly attached to the bow a white ball not less than 4 cm diameter made of rubber or similar material.
- 2.2** Heel restraints and quick release mechanisms must be in proper and effective working order in all boats equipped with fitted shoes. The restraints must allow no more than 70mm of heel lift on the shoe.
- 2.3** Training before dawn and after dusk. For outings 30 minutes before sunrise and 30 minutes after sunset, boats shall be fitted with the following lights. A bright white light on the bow which can be seen from straight ahead for 2 km. A similar light in red should also be displayed on the stern pointing directly back. Due to the narrowness of the waterway, lights have no need to be seen through 360 degrees as other boats will only approach them from directly fore or aft.
- 2.4** Swivels and buttons should be in good working order and buttons should be double checked for security before leaving the dock.
- 2.5** All boats must have sealable buoyancy compartments and these must be secured before boats go on the water.

## **3.0 Rowers, Scullers and Coxswains**

- 3.1** It is a requirement that all rowers be capable of swimming 50 m in rowing clothes and be in safe medical condition.
- 3.2** Physically challenged athletes should be provided with rowing equipment that will be significantly unlikely to capsize and that those people always wear an approved buoyancy aid.
- 3.3** All Coxswains are to wear an approved life jacket at all times on the water (not inflating life jackets which could result in entrapment in the boat if inflated before exiting).
- 3.4** All crews when going on the water, accompanied or not must appoint a person to have overall responsibility for the crew etc.

## 4.0 Coaching

A coach is a person or persons in a powered craft, accompanying a crew or crews on the water.

- 4.1 The coach has the responsibility to ensure the safety of the rowers under their charge.
- 4.2 The coach shall ensure that every rower in their charge is aware of the proper safety procedures.
- 4.3 Coaches shall ensure that all rowers in their charge are dressed appropriately for the conditions likely to be encountered while on the water.
- 4.4 Coaches and other passengers in the coach boat must wear approved life jackets whilst on the water.
- 4.5 Coach boats shall carry the following essential equipment;
  - Rescue throw-rope at least 15 m long
  - First aid kit and 2 thermal blankets.
  - A sheathed or folding knife
  - An air horn or whistle
  - An engine cut-out lanyard which is to be used at all times.
  - An oar or paddle
  - A bailer
  - A pump in the case of inflatable boats
  - An anchor is considered as optional due to the confined nature of the waterway and close proximity of the shore at all times.
  - Four PFD's for the rowers

### Notes on PFD's

It is deemed that it is not a requirement to carry more than four PFD's in each coach boat on the Whakatane River for the following reasons;

- historical anecdotes by long standing members indicate that no rowing boats have known to swamp by wave, during the previous 50 years on the Whakatane River
  - no eights have been known to capsize.
  - the maximum number of people to ever have been in the water at one time has been four, the result of a capsized novice quad. Otherwise there have only been on rare occasions one person from a single scull or two people from a double scull at any one time.
  - the shore is **always** within 50m of the rowers and usually a lot less
  - the rowing boats contain sufficient buoyancy that they will support rowers in the water for the short amount of time that it will take to push or pull the boat into the nearby shallows.
  - due the latitude of Whakatane, the water never gets cold enough, even in winter to result in cold water shock. The shore can be easily reached within 5 minutes before severe hypothermia is likely to occur.
- 4.6 Coach boats when used 30 minutes before sunrise and 30 minutes after sunset must have red and white navigation lights on the front and a white light on the back and a torch must be carried in the boat.

## **Club Training**

### **5.1 Entire Club Training Zone.**

The area used for training by the club rowers extends from the Whakatane Fishing Club Warf 3.0 km downstream of the club, to the flying fox approximately 9 km upstream of the club.

#### **5.2.1 Main Club Training Zone**

The main area in which club training is carried out is between the Water Treatment Plant on Valley road upstream of the club and the Yacht club downstream of the club.

#### **5.2.2 Special Club Training zone**

A section of river extending up to 3 km upstream of the water treatment plant can be used when conditions permit such as when there is a low river flow rate (less than 40 cubic metres per second at the Valley road telemetry site- see Env BOP website) and it is within 2 hours of the high tide.

### **5.3 River hazard Identification**

#### **Fixed structures**

- **The Whakatane River Bridge piles.**

When approaching the bridge from upstream (west) it is necessary to immediately start lining up the gap between the bridge piles to row through when the most upstream portion of the rowing club launching steps first become visible ( 80 m).

When approaching the bridge from downstream (east) it is necessary to immediately start lining up the gap between the bridge piles to row through when tree on the south bank first becomes visible 100m below the bridge

The zone within 200 m of the bridge is regarded as a high risk zone and boats must travel at slow pace in this area.

Boats returning to the Club from downstream (east) will go through the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> span on the side of the rowing club.

Boats traveling downstream will travel through the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> spans and boats traveling upstream will use the 5<sup>th</sup> span.

- **Tree stumps and logs.**

These will be identified either with a mark and description on the hazard map or a marker pole on the object in the river, or both.

- **Sand banks.**

These will be marked on the hazard map.

- **Overhanging branches.**

These are clearly visible to rowers and coxswains and should be identified by regular observation.

## **Non Fixed Hazards**

- **Other river users.**

Care to avoid and consideration needs to be given to other river users whether in boats or swimming. Following the maritime traffic rules and regular observation will reduce conflict with other river users.

Care must be taken if turning into the ramp landing area without going under the bridge when coming down river. It is preferable to go through the bridge spans and then row back to the landing area. If turning directly into the landing area care must be taken not to impede any boats rowing into the landing area from under the bridge, especially if the crew is less experienced.

### **5.4 Maritime Rules for Boat Traffic**

All boats on the river should follow the international boat traffic rule which requires boats to pass 'port to port'. Stroke side is the port side. While following this rule minimises the risk of collisions on the river, boats can stray on to the wrong side, particularly where there is a corner or where boats change direction to keep away from river hazards. When rowing un-coxed boats, it is necessary to look around every few strokes and extra care is required for un-coxed unsupervised when doing speed work.

### **5.5 River Exit points.**

Almost the entire shoreline on both sides allow for exiting the river safely. For emergencies the town side is preferable as it is closer to assistance.

## **5.6 Safe Management of Crews on the Whakatane River**

### **5.6.1 Accompanied Training (With Coach in Power Boat)**

#### **5.6.1a Juniors (under 18 years)**

The number of crews on the water per supervising coach boat depends on;

1. Experience and skill of the rowers.
2. The prevailing water temperature, weather conditions and water flow rate.

The ideal safe number of novice crews per coach boat in their first four months of rowing, is two. This is also the most suitable number for effective coaching.

Novice crews should always be within 100m of a coach boat. This is especially important for double or single scullers.

As crews become more skilled (more than 4 or more months regular rowing), a coach boat can manage 3 or 4 crews but this is dependent on the weather and water conditions.

Skilled crews in their 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent seasons can possibly be managed in greater numbers by a single coach boat. That is only on the basis that all boats remain within 300 m of each other and the coach boat.

Highly skilled rowers may row without a supporting coach boat on application to the Club Captain providing a coach or experienced adult rower is rowing with them and that the prevailing water and air conditions are safe. Conditions of approval will be provided in writing to the rower. These rowers must wear or carry a personal flotation device.

#### **5.6.1b Supervision of Adult Rowers (Over 18, Club and Masters)**

The rules above should also apply to novice adult rowers with the exception of fours, quads and eights. These may be unaccompanied by a coach if half or more rowers in the crew have been rowing regularly for more than one season.

#### **5.6.1c Unaccompanied Training (Without Coach boat)**

Permission to train unaccompanied must be sought and obtained from the Club Captain before beginning training. Some conditions may be applied to this approval which will be given in writing to the rower.

Unaccompanied rowers and crews must carry or wear approved PFDs at all times.

## 6.0 Dealing with Capsize

### Self Rescue

Whether accompanied by a coach boat or not, it is advisable to be able to 'self rescue' out on the water. Getting back into the boat can be quicker and less likely to cause boat damage at the shore than either swimming or being towed in by a coach boat.

If very close to the shore it may be quicker for the rower to lie on the hind deck after righting and paddle the boat ashore as if it was a surfboard.

Unassisted rowers must not abandon their boats unless wearing a PFD.

It is the aim of the Club for self rescue techniques to be taught to single and double scullers.

### Assisted Rescue

From April to October it is a priority to get rowers and coxswains out of the water as quickly as possible.

- During these times when the water is cold, the rowing boat can be temporarily abandoned while the rowers are taken care of.
- If an inflatable support boat is present, the rowers can be taken on board to within the safe limit of that boat.
- Any people remaining in the water should hold on to the sides on the mid region of the boat.
- The boat should then be slowly driven **backwards** toward the shore until those holding on can safely let go and get ashore.
- **Do not drag people in the water with the boat going forward**, as severe injury could result from the propeller if someone lets go or their feet swing upwards toward the propeller.
- If the support boat is just a standard club aluminium coach boat, do not attempt to take aboard rowers. They should be towed ashore in the manner mentioned above.

If the water is warm and there is no risk of hypothermia or drowning, the oars can be removed from the rowing boat and put in the coach boat. A rope can then be attached to the rowing boat and the boat and rowers towed ashore together. Singles and doubles can usually be pushed ashore by the rowers.