

**BAY CITY ROWING CLUB**  
**CLUB POLICY AND SAFETY RULES**  
**January 2017**

**CLUB POLICIES**

**1. General.**

- 1.1 Safe practices are essential for all rowers. Please read and abide by the entire policies below.
- 1.2 Rowing and use of equipment is open to *members* in good standing *only* and supervised guests.
- 1.3 Complete and submit a waiver. Members must sign a “Release of Liability” form *every year* prior to the use of equipment. Release forms are e-mailed each year to members and are also available at the boathouse. You can also download a form in **Acrobat PDF** format. All members will acknowledge the receipt and review of the most current **Club Policy and Safety Rules** on the membership form.
- 1.4 Youth rowers under 18 must have a parent or guardian signature on the Liability Release form.
- 1.5 **Club Dues** are billed in March and cover the year from April 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.
- 1.6 The Club treasurer requests that all payment of dues, fees, rentals and deposits be made by **check** to provide clear documentation of payment.
- 1.7 Boathouse keys are not issued to members until dues are paid, and issued only to those who are in good standing. Boathouse keys may be changed each April, at the discretion of the Club Board.
- 1.8 Members must have taken a “Learn To Row” course or otherwise demonstrated knowledge of boat handling, boat safety, boathouse procedures, and rowing ability before a key will be issued.
- 1.9 Lost keys will be replaced for a \$5 fee. Members are **FORBIDDEN** to make duplicate keys. Keys must not be labeled or otherwise marked to indicate that they are for the boathouse.

**2. Use of Equipment and Facilities.**

- 2.1 Use of the clubhouse and equipment is restricted to members in good standing.
- 2.2 Guests are **NOT** allowed to use the equipment unless supervised by a club coach or other **experienced** club member. All guests must sign a Release of Liability form.
- 2.3 The boathouse should be locked if everyone is on the water. Take your key with you.
- 2.4 Members are responsible for stowing all equipment and cleaning up after using equipment or facility.
- 2.5 Members should report damaged equipment to a coach or Board of Directors as soon as possible.
- 2.6 Members are responsible for damage to equipment due to their actions of not following Club Policies or Safety Rules. They must then work in a timely manner with the Board, financially or otherwise, to return the damaged equipment to service.
- 2.7 The board may authorize groups to use the clubhouse for special events.
- 2.8 The Club’s lease terms of the boathouse with the City of Bay City requires our upkeep of the grounds and premises, including the labor of painting the building. Winterizing is also the Club’s responsibility. It is expected that **all** club members contribute their time and talents to help maintain the facilities and the Club’s overall goals, functions and activities.

# **SAFETY RULES**

## **3. General.**

- 3.1 These rules establish a minimum safety standard.
- 3.2 Rowing and use of equipment is open to *members* in good standing *only* and supervised guests.
- 3.3 All Club members are required to follow them and are expected to make an effort to promote safe and responsible rowing.
- 3.4 The Club assumes no responsibility, either expressed or implied, for the personal safety or welfare of any person. These rules are made to teach and help members and their guests in being responsible for their own safety. You are responsible to correctly assess your ability to row safely under the existing weather, river, and traffic conditions any time you go out on the river from the BCRC dock.

## **4. Athlete Prerequisites.** Prior to rowing, each cox and rower must:

- 4.1 Complete and submit a waiver. Members must sign a “Release of Liability” form *every year* prior to the use of equipment. Release forms are e-mailed each year to members and are also available at the boathouse. You can also download a form in **Acrobat PDF** format.
- 4.2 Pass a swim test (youth rowers) or verify swimming proficiency (adults). Club policy is that all rowers must be able to swim. If proficiency isn’t shown, the rower must wear an approved PFD at all times while rowing. The swim test will be defined as swimming 100 yards in a bathing suit, or 50 yards lightly clothed. The test also includes treading water for 5 minutes.
- 4.3 Youth rowers are defined as those youth 18 years old or younger, and/or those still attending high school.
- 4.4 New rowers should view the US Rowing safety video, experienced rowers review as needed.
- 4.5 Prior to sculling in a single without supervision, a novice sculler or new club member must satisfy the requirements of the Club sculling evaluation. Members must have demonstrated knowledge of boat handling, boat safety, boathouse procedures, and rowing ability.
- 4.6 Guests are allowed to use club equipment only when supervised by coach or other experienced club member. Approved guests must sign a “Release of Liability” form prior to using equipment.
- 4.7 Buddy rowing is recommended. Experienced rowers may row solo at their own risk with PFD. Youth rowers **will not** row alone.

## **5. Equipment / Shells.**

- 5.1 It is recommended that an approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD) be present in each recreational single/double scull shell/Quad.
- 5.2 Inspect all boats for loose fasteners, open hatches, missing parts.
- 5.3 Inspect foot stretcher position prior to launching to insure best personal fit.
- 5.4 Verify that bow balls and fins are secure.
- 5.5 Verify that the proper seat(s) is/are securely installed and working freely on the runners.
- 5.6 Never step over a boat; always walk around it.

## **6. Weather Conditions.**

- 6.1 Check the weather forecast each time prior to rowing to make sure severe weather is not likely.
- 6.2 Rain: Severe rain can result in strong, fast, unpredictable currents, and large amounts of dangerous debris will likely be in the water for several days after these rain events. **Do not** row in thunderstorms or other high wind/rain conditions.
- 6.3 Wind: High winds can be dangerous and cause problems with boat control, or cause waves that might swamp the boat. Do not row if winds are approximately 20 mph or higher, even winds under 20 mph can be hazardous depending its direction. Do not assume that conditions are safe if the wind conditions while leaving the dock are less than 20 mph; use good judgment on wind conditions and possible worsening conditions throughout the rowing period. Avoid rowing when whitecaps are present.
- 6.4 Thunder and Lightning: Never launch a boat when there is a possibility of lightning or you hear thunder. Rowers must wait 30 minutes after thunder and lightning completely stops before launching a boat or walking on a metal ramp.
- 6.5 Fog: Do not row in fog.
- 6.6 Cold Temperatures: In early spring/late fall, even when the temperatures are above freezing, frost/ice may be present on the ramp and dock, making them treacherous. The Club policy is that no rowing is allowed if the water temperature is below 55 degrees. Additionally, do not row if the additive values for the air and water temperatures are less than 100.
- 6.7 Hot Weather: It is suggested that rowers should wear protective clothing appropriate for the conditions and their activity. Use sun block with a high SPF factor. Drink plenty of water before, during and after exposure to hot weather. Address any symptoms of heat stress immediately.
- 6.8 Coaches and/or any Club board member will each have the authority to independently make a binding “DO NOT ROW” determination at anytime.

## 7. **Log Book Procedure.**

- 7.1 Prior to going out, the following must be logged: Name, Boat, Time Out, Expected Return, Direction of Row.
- 7.2 After returning: Log in Return Time, make Comments especially if there was any incident or accident.

## 8. **General Rules of the River.**

- 8.1 Collisions with other boats, bridges, piers, pilings, buoys, docks, and other obstacles are the greatest dangers on the Saginaw River.
- 8.2 Before going out, review the logbook to see what other boats are out and where they are likely to be located.
- 8.3 If there is a boat approaching the dock to land, don't proceed down the ramp to launch your boat unless there is sufficient space for the landing boat. Confirm the intended side of the dock for the landing boat. Landing boats have priority.
- 8.4 LOOK AROUND frequently at least every 10 strokes if in a boat with a coxswain, or if you are the cox.
- 8.5 KEEP YOUR EARS OPEN. If you hear someone shouting, it could mean something is wrong. Be prepared to stop and proceed with caution. Be familiar with how to perform sudden emergency stops.
- 8.6 When rowing boats meet, all boats must be prepared to stop and proceed with caution. No boat has the right-of-way, including “blind” boats.

- 8.7 When encountering a “blind” boat, the coxed boat must hail the other vessel loud enough to be heard. Rowers should not sit silent when the cox has not seen a boat or hazard.
- 8.8 Shut down full pressure rowing in the middle of any piece until it is clear that all danger of collision is past, especially with non-rowing boats which are not likely to follow any traffic pattern.
- 8.9 Observe the international “right-side of the road” rule when navigating the river. Club members should row so the boats stay on the starboard side of the river’s centerline. When approaching other boats, move to the starboard side when practical. Boats should never proceed on the wrong side of the river unless directed to do so by a coach, or under emergency circumstances to avoid collisions with other boats.
- 8.10 Specific hazards should be noted and updated on the map-board next to the Women’s Restroom door.

## 9. **River Hazards.**

- 9.1 Strong/Fast Current: During the spring or after heavy rains, the river may have a deceptively fast current. Coaches, scullers, and coxswains should allow for additional stopping distances prior to any bridge or other hazards. In these conditions, boats headed upstream should be prepared to yield way to oncoming traffic that may be unable to stop safely. Note that boats moving with the current must take extra measures to avoid being pushed into other boats or obstacles.
- 9.2 Buoys: These could be moved, so don’t assume their location. They come up on you quickly as you move downstream, especially when the current is strong.
- 9.3 Bridges: Go through the center spans, unless you are sure there is enough water depth on the far sides. Never turn a boat around near, under, or immediately upriver of a bridge. The current can push a turning boat into a bridge structure, so make sure you are far enough away or down river of a bridge before turning. This is especially a problem during strong current conditions.
- 9.4 Floating Debris: Objects like logs and tree branches can cause considerable damage. They sometime float just under the water surface, so coaches, rowers, and coxswains need to pay considerable attention in spotting them and steering clear. Debris tends to be more prevalent after rain.
- 9.5 Deadheads: Deadheads are what happens when a free-floating log becomes mired in the riverbed, usually with one end pointing up toward (and sometimes through) the surface of the water. These can be very difficult to see and extremely damaging to boats. They can occur almost anywhere outside of the main shipping channel. Coaches, scullers, rowers, and coxswains need to watch closely for them.
- 9.6 Other Watercraft: We share the river with motorboats, sailing ships, canoes, lake freighters, tugboats, and barges. Legally, motorboats are required to decrease speed so as to cause a minimum wake when coming upon rowers. This doesn’t always happen. Stop rowing if necessary to wait for a motorboat and wake to go by. Single sculls should align perpendicular to these passing wakes, while sweep eights should align parallel. During the passing wakes, keep all oars flat on the water to stabilize your watercraft. Never argue with any fisherman, pleasure boats, or other motorized craft on the river. All incidents must be reported directly to a Club board member.
- 9.7 Freighters, tugboats, and barges: They cannot stop. *Stay away from them.* Do not go behind them, since the propellers create turbulence that can be dangerous.
- 9.8 Dredge/Construction barges: *Stay away from them.* Do not assume that you know where they are positioned, because they are frequently moved.

- 10. Low Light Rowing.** During morning and evening twilight conditions, the following rules must be observed.
- 10.1 Boats must be at the dock at or before sunset. Before sunrise, rowers must stay on the west side of the Middle Grounds in the side channel.
  - 10.2 Clothing: Each rower, cox and coach must wear a bright colored shirt that will improve the ability of others to see the person(s) rowing. Avoid colors that would blend into the shoreline and camouflage the crew.
  - 10.3 It is recommended that lights be affixed to the boat.
- 11. Coach Requirements.** Each coach must provide evidence of satisfactory knowledge of the following prior to coaching.
- 11.1 Thorough familiarity with the Club Rules.
  - 11.2 Swimming proficiency.
  - 11.3 US Rowing Safety Video.
  - 11.4 Boat and/or Launch safety training, or demonstrated competency.
  - 11.5 Coaching techniques.
  - 11.6 Waiver on file with the Club.
  - 11.7 CPR/First Aid Certification (to be obtained by current coaches as soon as possible after the beginning of the season).
  - 11.8 Level 1 US Rowing Coaches' Clinic (preferred, but not mandatory).
- 12. Launches.**
- 12.1 A launch must be present at all times when the youth sweep (without PFD) are on the water.
  - 12.2 The following equipment is required to be carried on the launch while in use: launch key, whistle and /or megaphone, canoe paddle, motor cutoff lanyard attached to the launch driver, throw able PFD with a lifeline, an anchor and line, cell phone with preprogrammed emergency numbers, and boat registration.
  - 12.3 The additional following equipment is recommended for launch: first aid kit, waterproof flashlight, and preprogrammed Club board member numbers.
  - 12.4 The launch will carry enough PFDs for all youth rowers on the water, excepting those being worn or carried in the shells. This is a recommended requirement for adult rowing.
  - 12.5 No more than two youth sweep boats can be covered by a single launch.
- 13. Health.**
- 13.1 Scrub the dock upon arriving at the boathouse to remove all bird droppings, dead fish and other debris. Beside the potential transmission of disease or bacteria, these items can cause slip hazards. Scrub the dock with brooms and lots of water to thoroughly remove all traces of bird dropping.
  - 13.2 Do not place oars or any other equipment on the dock before all bird droppings have been thoroughly cleaned off.
  - 13.3 Water from the river may contain bacteria or other water-borne pathogens. Be careful and avoid ingesting water that may splash on your face while rowing. Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with hands while rowing. Wash hands with soap as soon as possible after rowing.

- 13.4 Wash open cuts, abrasions, peeling blisters, and other sores on your body with antiseptic soap after rowing.
- 13.5 Wipe boats off after each use. Use detergent as necessary to remove any buildup of algae and hull fouling.
- 13.6 Clean Erg handles and seats with disinfectant after each use.

**14. Penalties and Enforcement.**

- 14.1 Penalties are based on the severity of the violation and the number of violations committed.
- 14.2 Penalty levels include: remedial/refresher safety training, suspension of rowing privileges for a specified period, suspension of all club privileges for a specified period, Termination of membership and permanent loss of privileges to access Club facilities and equipment.
- 14.3 A violation of these safety rules is a serious infraction.