

Staines Boat Club Water Safety Plan (11/6/10)

Introduction

Almost any sport, and certainly any water sport, involves some risk. In order to ensure that all members of Staines Boat Club (SBC) and affiliated rowers of Brunel University, British Airways (BA) and Sir William Perkins School (SWPS) can enjoy rowing in safety, and to comply with British Rowing's (BR's) Row Safe Guide, it is necessary for the club to have a Water Safety Plan.

All members and visitors to SBC shall comply with the requirements of the Water Safety Plan and other associated documents which may be in force at the time (as notified by the SBC committee).

Most of the rules and advice contained in this document are based on simple common sense, so with the help of SBC members it should largely enforce itself. If you see any incident which you feel may lead to an accident or injuries, then SAY SOMETHING, do not assume someone else will deal with it. Any serious incidents or breaches of the plan should be reported to a committee member.

Associated Documents

This document supplements the rules and advice given in the two documents produced by British Rowing and the Environment Agency (EA).

1. BR Row Safe Guide

<http://www.britishrowing.org/row-safe>

2. A User's Guide to the River Thames

<http://www.visitthames.co.uk/form/75/publications.html>

They are both accessible through the relevant organisation's web sites (links above) and you are advised to familiarise yourselves with them. A copy of Row Safe is also available on the Safety Noticeboard at the club.

The following sections expand the generic rules of Row Safe to take on board the local conditions and practices covering the Staines Reach.

Row Safe also includes very useful information and advice on:

- Cold Water Immersion
- Sunburn & Heat Stress
- Waterborne Diseases

Advice on Cold Water Survival and Hypothermia can also be found at <http://www.leoblockley.org.uk/>.

Accident and Incident Log

If you are involved in an accident (especially if it involves damage or injury) please report it to a committee member or coach and also record it online at <http://incidentreporting.britishrowing.org/> where the report will automatically be sent to the Club Water Safety Advisor.

In addition to accidents, any safety related incidents such as capsizes, swampings, equipment failures and near-misses must also be reported online.

Remember the online incident reporting system is not there to apportion blame; it is there to help us to help you reduce risk and enjoy safer rowing.

First Aid

The first aid box is located on a hook just inside the boathouse door (there is also a limited number of supplies in the store cupboard). It is for EMERGENCY USE ONLY. Blisters are an occupational risk for rowers and oarsmen/scullers should bring their own supplies for running repairs to hands etc. The first aid kit will be regularly checked, however if you do use some of the contents please let a committee member or coach know so that it can be restocked as soon as possible.

Emergency Action

The club telephone number is **01784 453595**.

Emergency telephone numbers are displayed next to the club telephone.

Call **999** in case of an emergency and be prepared to describe the incident and its location.

Useful numbers for the club are:

Bell Weir Lock (upstream):	01784 432333
Penton Hook Lock (downstream):	01784 452657
Local Waterway Office:	08708 506 506

In the event that the SBC telephone is out of order or if you are out on the river when an emergency occurs then the nearest public telephones can be found at:

- Runnymede Hotel & Lock Keeper, Surrey Side, upstream of M25 bridge
- The Swan Pub – upstream of Staines Bridge on the Surrey Side
- Thames Lodge downstream of Railway Bridge on the Middlesex Side
- Wheatsheaf & Pigeon – Wheatsheaf Lane, Middlesex Side upstream of Silvery Sands
- Coopers Close, Off Chertsey Lane towards Chertsey

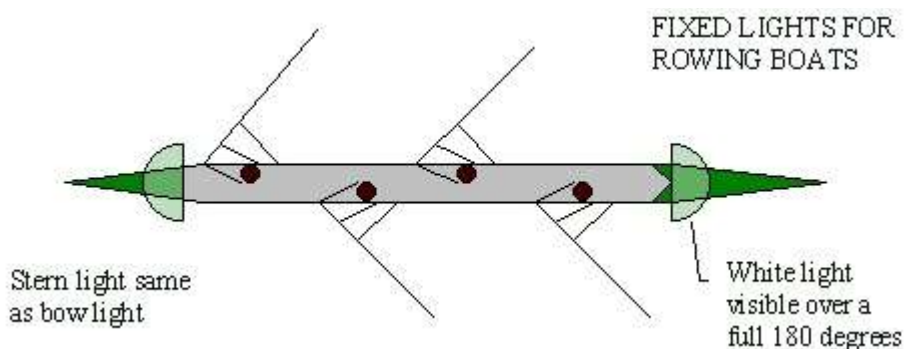
Insurance and BR membership

All boats used by members of the club and visitors must carry at least 3rd Party insurance. SBC crew boats (2-/x, 4+/-/x and 8+) are all covered by the club's 3rd Party Insurance. Club sculls are only insured where they have a sticker on the splashboard confirming that it is insured by SBC. If you borrow a private boat ensure that you are covered with the owner.

The Club does not carry insurance against injury to members while engaged in training or competition on or off the water, and accepts no liability for any injury, however caused.. It is your, not the club's, responsibility to ensure that you are adequately covered. BR membership includes personal accident and civil liability insurance cover for members while engaged "in any activity of the insured organisation anywhere in the world including direct travel to and from such activity within Great Britain, Northern Island, The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man". It is strongly recommended that club members join BR whether they intend to race or not to take advantage of this scheme.

Rowing after Dusk

Rowing after dusk is only permitted if the boat is carrying two WHITE lights which are visible a full 360° at all times.



In the interest of safety the committee has decided that the circulation plan for night rowing will be as follows:

- No rowing above **Staines Road Bridge**.
- Once boated, paddle upstream past the bandstand before turning, row down below railway bridge.

- When rowing downstream, ensure that once having passed under the Railway Bridge, turn immediately to bow side and keep close to the bank.
- All crews turning downstream of the railway bridge, please proceed to the white house below the bridge, the crossing point when coming into the landing stage, where there is much more light to be seen whilst turning.
- Night time rowing is between the church and county stone.
- Crossing back into the club will take place between the white house (Regatta House) and railway bridge. All crews will STOP and check before crossing (This applies both night and day, coxed and coxless).
- Hi vis bibs to worn by bow and cox in stern loaded boats, bow and stroke in coxless boats. This also applies to scullers.
- All boats will be fitted with a working white light front and back, "it was on when I went out isn't an excuse".
- Lights will be fitted and operational 2 hours before "lighting up time".
- Experienced coxes and steers persons only.
- On the white board on the boathouse doors please jot down, the name of the boat going out, who is in the crew and a contact phone number. Wipe out the details when you return. The last crew coming back in to check that all boats are returned, otherwise call the contact number.

Crews are also recommended to wear light coloured or reflective clothing.

Only experienced steersmen or coxes should row the Staines reach after dark. Remember, compared to most other vessels you are small, close to the water and very hard to see.

Equipment

Your safety is significantly affected by the condition of the equipment you choose to row or scull in. You must make sure that the boat you are going to use is in a safe condition before you go down to the landing stage. Boats that have a missing or defective bow ball, heel restraints or buoyancy compartments shall not be used. Any maintenance problem or damage to a club boat should be reported to the Maintenance Officer and/or a committee member as soon as possible.

Environmental Conditions

Visibility and river conditions can vary rapidly and you must be sure that you are happy with the conditions prior to going on to the water. The wind can quickly cause chop on the Staines reach which can swamp a rowing boat.

The Staines reach of river is controlled by weirs at both ends and the stream conditions can vary rapidly with the opening and closing of sluice gates. Both locks will display coloured EA boards indicating the stream conditions.

A **YELLOW BOARD** with **STREAM INCREASING** means that the flow will be rising. A **YELLOW BOARD** with **STREAM DECREASING** means that the flow has started to drop. Members are allowed to row on Yellow Boards if they have been given permission by a member of the committee or an approved coach. A list of approved coaches is displayed in the clubhouse. If a committee member is not confident in their rowing experience to give permission then they must seek advice from a more experienced member or approved coach. Also note that just because certain members are rowing on Yellow Boards this does not automatically mean that you are allowed to row on Yellow Boards – always check with a committee member or approved coach prior to each outing.

The club will not be held responsible for those members who row on Red or Yellow Boards without permission.

All those aged 16 or under must have bank/launch support at all times (not just on Yellow Boards).

A Risk Assessment shall be made prior to EVERY outing, irrespective of conditions. The main criteria to be used are:

- Stream speed and EA board status
- Surface conditions, i.e. waves
- Weather conditions, particularly wind/gusts
- Air & water temperature
- Visibility (e.g. mist, fog, blizzard)
- Crew ability
- Steering ability of cox/steersmen
- Other crews on the water and river traffic

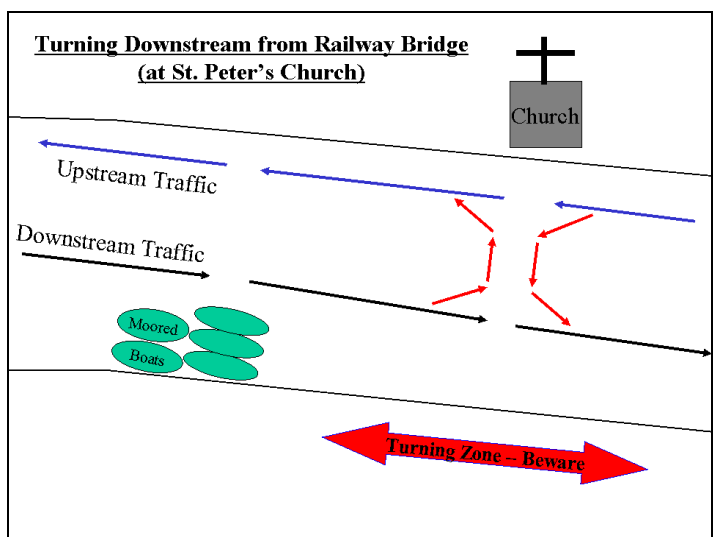
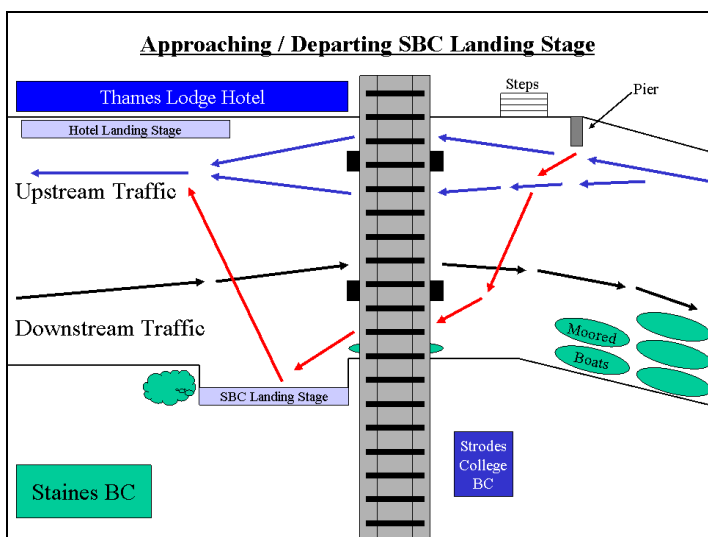
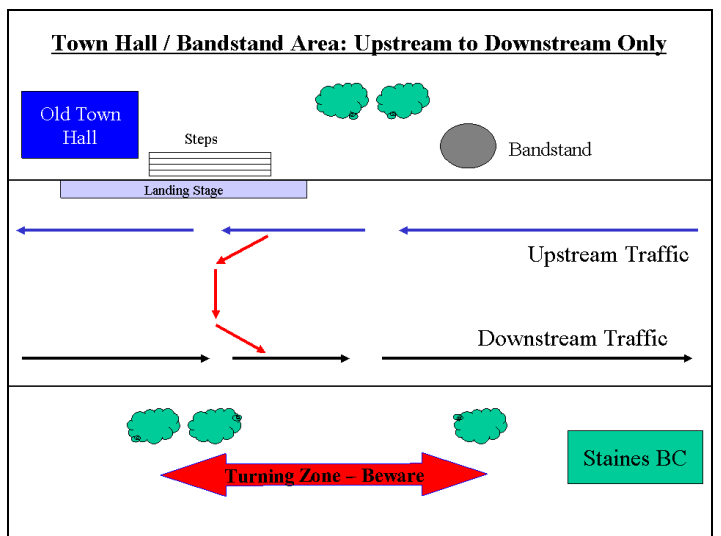
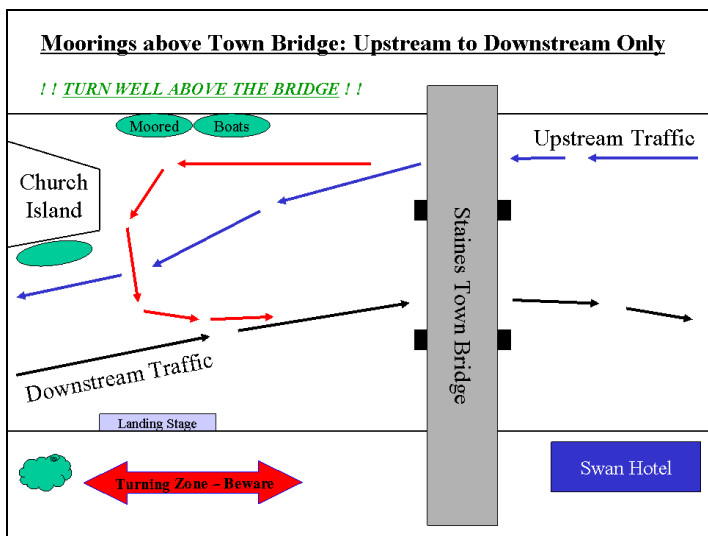
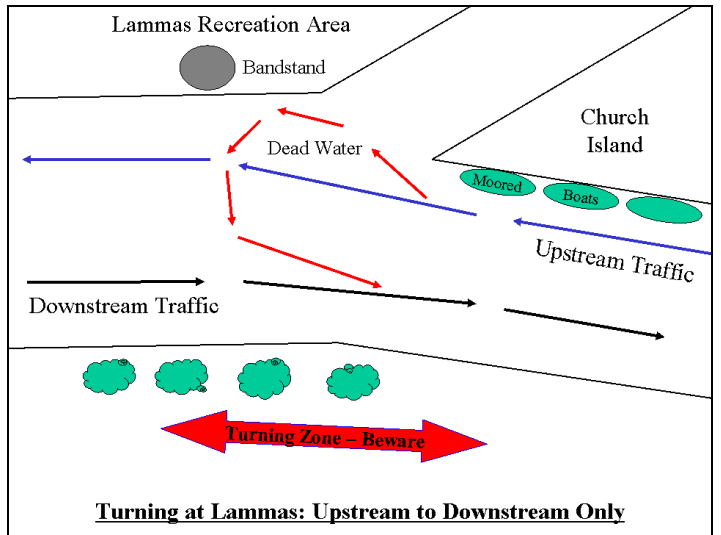
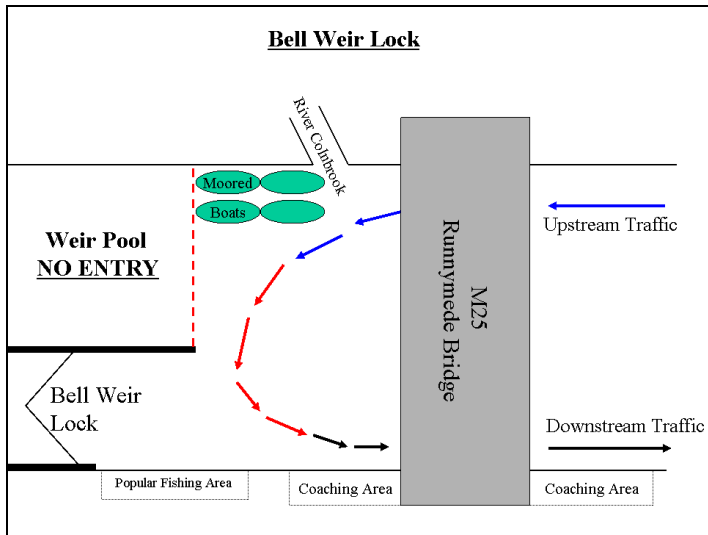
A **RED BOARD** indicates that the stream is at a potentially hazardous level and no one should go onto the river without a safety assessment being made by 2 committee members. Should the committee members concur that the river is safe to row then only large boats (4/8+) with experienced coxswains shall row. A safety launch must also be in attendance.

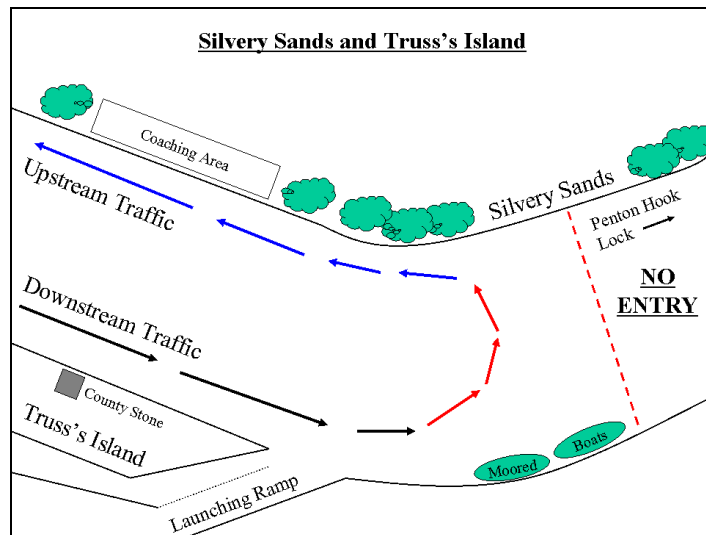
If in doubt do not risk it.

Local Navigation Rules

All members of SBC, Brunel, SWPS, BA and their guests must abide by the local navigation rules at all times.

- All crews/scullers shall keep to the right of the river (bowside blades near to the bank).
- Overtaking can only be done on the left (slower crews near to the bank).
- Crews/scullers going downstream have right of way at all times.
- Crews/scullers should pass through the Railway Bridge going upstream via the centre arch or town centre arch (RHS while facing upstream) and via the central arch while going downstream. The arch nearest to the club must only be used when approaching the landing stage.
- Crews/scullers should pass through the Staines Town Bridge going upstream via the town centre arch (RHS while facing upstream) and via the central arch while going downstream.
- No crews/scullers are permitted to pass downstream of Silvery Sands unless they are to pass through Penton Hook Lock to reach the Burway reach. This may not be done under any circumstances if a Yellow or Red board is in force.
- Crews/scullers may only turn on the river in the approved turning zones when safe to do so (see below). Turning anywhere else is not permitted, except in exceptional circumstances (i.e. an emergency).
- WHEREVER POSSIBLE, PLEASE USE THE WHOLE STRETCH BETWEEN BELL WEIR LOCK AND SILVERY SANDS FOR TRAINING. USE OF THE WHOLE STRETCH RESULTS IN BOATS BEING MORE SPREAD OUT, THUS REDUCING THE PROBABILITY OF COLLISIONS AND NEAR-MISSES.





Rules of the Landing Stage

While using the landing stage at SBC a certain amount of common sense is required. The landing stage is a first come first served situation. However if two boats need the same space on the landing stage at the same time the crew in the water has priority. It is safer for you to stand on the bank and wait for the other crew to come in than to have the other crew drifting while waiting for you to put your boat in the water.

In busy periods do not adjust at the landing stage (do so prior to getting there or out in the water) and do not leave a boat on station at the landing stage while you swap a crew member or someone goes to the toilet etc. Take the boat out of the water and let others use the stage.

Capsize or Swamping

In the event of a capsize or swamping STAY WITH THE BOAT, it will continue to float and will make it easier for a rescuer to spot you. If the stream is taking you towards an obstruction, such as a bridge or pier, try and keep the boat between you and the obstruction so it can provide you with a degree of protection.

Sculler's, Coxswain's and Crew Responsibilities

All persons participating in rowing or sculling must be in good health and be able to swim a minimum of 100m in light clothing and shoes.

It is mandatory for ALL coxswains, launch drivers and launch passengers to wear a life jacket when taking to the water. All the club's lifejackets are of the manually inflating type (i.e. they are not automatic) – to inflate pull the toggle at the bottom of the left/right side of the lifejacket. There is a mouthpiece for topping up the air and a whistle to attract attention.

Staines Boat holds regular swim tests for all members to take part in. It is mandatory for all U18's to have to completed the swim test or be booked on the next available swim test session to be eligible to row. The preferred environment for the swim test is the river, however if deemed appropriate the successful completion of 100m pool session will be accepted as 'passing' the swim test.

If a parent / guardian has any doubt on a minors swim ability it will be necessary for them to wear a 'new' safety jacket until a swim test proves competency.

Any SBC member who is in any doubt of their fitness to participate in rowing or sculling should check with their GP before taking part in any strenuous activity.

Safety Launch

It is mandatory for all launch drivers and passengers to wear a life jacket when taking to the water.

The launch driver is responsible for making sure that the following items are taken aboard:

- Paddle
- Plastic Tub containing Bailer, Whistle, Knife & Thermal Blankets
- Throw Line
- Anchor (should already be fitted to launch)
- Life Ring & Spare Life Jacket
- White bow and stern lights if out in the dark

A copy of the launch user guide is available on the safety pages of the club's website and includes general guidance and responsibilities. A list of members authorised to use the safety launch is displayed in the clubhouse.

Drivers of the launch must be aware of the wash that is created. This is especially relevant when following a crew boat at speed. Even with the design of the club's launch which minimises wash there is the potential to swamp small boats and make it uncomfortable to row in larger boats. When you approach a crew boat or scull please slow down in good time so that your wash is minimised.

Common Sense

Scullers are advised not to go out alone, especially after dark. If you choose to do so then make sure someone knows you are out and when you are expected to return.