

Peterborough City Rowing Club

Guidance Notes for Rowing during high water/flood conditions

In accordance with the constitution of PCRC the club adopts the policies and recommendations of its national governing body - British Rowing. The following are therefore additional guidelines specific to PCRC and should be read in conjunction with *Row Safe*, www.britishrowing.org/publication/row-safe-leaflet

It is important that additional care, over and above that which would normally be shown is taken by all water users when the river and/or lake are in high water or flood condition. The Trustee's & Management Committee recognise that whenever possible & safe to do so we want to encourage athletes to continue their water based training. However, the desire to train should not be at the expense of placing anyone at any greater risk than that which is normal, this includes athletes, coxes, coaches, launch drivers, club officers or the general public at large. Similarly we should not place equipment at excessive risk either.

The consequences of an incident when using either the lake or river in conditions which are deemed inappropriate could be very significant not just for those immediately involved but for other water users or the general public or club officers.

What are high water/flood conditions?

Rowing on the River

For the purposes of this policy high water/flood conditions are as follows:

A When the river is running abnormally high, above it's normal level. If you are unsure about what constitutes abnormally high, ask someone suitably experienced.

B When the flow on the river is abnormally fast
If you are unsure about what constitutes abnormally fast, ask someone suitably experienced.

When the water is crossing the dam which separates the river from the rowing lake the river can be deemed as both abnormally high and abnormally fast.

C When the flow of water down the river exceeds the capacity of the normal river channel and floods adjoining land

Where conditions meet criteria A and B, the river may not be used by juniors, novices, inexperienced or unfamiliar athletes or coaches. Other experienced athletes who are familiar with the river & wish to use it should make a thorough assessment of the risks & document that assessment before deciding it is safe & reasonable to row on the river in those prevailing conditions. If in doubt, athletes should seek further guidance from such persons as the Club Water Safety Adviser, captains, coaches, or other suitably qualified club officers. Reference should also be made to any flood warnings and advice provided by the Environment Agency on their website.

Athletes using the river in high water/flood conditions should be aware that water levels and flow rates can change during an outing depending on the management of the lock systems up stream. River levels can change in a short period of time as a result of lock management.

Where conditions meet criterion C there should be no rowing on the river.

Rowing on the Lake

If the cycle path adjacent to the lake is flooded and coaches cannot accompany athletes along the entire lake, the lake will be out of bounds to juniors, novices, inexperienced or unfamiliar athletes or coaches. In these conditions the lake will also be out of bounds to everyone outside the hours of daylight.

Other experienced athletes who are familiar with the lake & wish to use it should make a thorough assessment of the risks & document that assessment before deciding it is safe & reasonable to row on the lake in those prevailing conditions. If in doubt, athletes should seek further guidance from such persons as the Club Water Safety Adviser, captains, coaches, or other suitably qualified club officers.

In the event of high water conditions on the lake athletes must use landing stages to put boats in and out of the water in the same manner as during normal conditions. Landing stages can be installed at the end of the lake (hotel end). If it is not possible to boat from a secure landing stage, the lake is deemed out of bounds.

Athletes should take particular care when putting boats into and taking them out of the water when using landing stages which are not in their normal position, check the stages are securely positioned before attempting to boat.

Particular care should be taken when navigating on the lake. Keep clear of the bushes, trees & posts on the opposite side of the lake to the clubhouse and clear of the posts & footpath on the clubhouse side of the lake.

In all circumstances athletes should observe the normal circulation pattern on the lake. When the buoys are not visible, athletes must take extra care to ensure a reasonable amount of separation between boats travelling in opposite directions on the lake.

Athletes should be aware that the lake may contain debris during and after flooding which may present a danger to boats and athletes.

Everyone involved in rowing has a duty of care to ensure their actions both on and off the water are conducted in a manner which does not compromise the safety of others. To this end should an incident occur then anyone should seek to render assistance to others if it is safe to do so.

These Guidance Notes are intended to ensure that everyone remains safe as and when there are abnormal levels of water. We recognise that it can be frustrating to have any form of restrictions imposed but the Club has a duty of care and a responsibility to operate safely and this includes restricting rowing activities in situations which could pose an excessive risk to athletes, coxes, coaches, launch drivers, club officers or the general public at large as well as the club as an organisation.

Further guidance is available from *Row Safe*, www.britishrowing.org/publication/row-safe-leaflet

The PCRC Rowing Committee