

Safe Rowing Guide

In joining South Skye & Lochalsh Coastal Rowing Club or participating in any club activity as a guest or visitor you understand, acknowledge, and accept the following rules.

General safety

1. Coastal rowing is an enjoyable and safe activity but it is not risk free. By adhering to the rules and guidelines, along with some experience and a sensible attitude, the risks can be minimised.
2. Our Health and Safety procedures will be reviewed regularly.
3. The club has insurance that covers all equipment, skiff, oars, lifejackets etc from loss, theft or damage. It has “member to member” insurance which covers a member for any loss or injury caused by the negligence of another member of the club. It also has third party cover for vessels and/or property and/or accidental injury to any other person other than a club member.
4. SSLCRC does not accept any liability for any damage to or loss of property belonging to members, their guests or visitors.
5. Members are expected to behave with respect for other members.
6. Inappropriate conduct – eg discriminatory or offensive speech or behaviour – may result in membership being suspended or terminated.
7. Any member who has concerns about safety or the conduct/behaviour/attitude of other members or skippers should make these concerns known to the club’s Chairperson in strict confidence.
8. The name of the person causing concern should not be disclosed in any written form, eg by email or written correspondence.
9. The Chairperson will collect full details from the complainant and report to the Committee who will investigate and decide whether there is good and sufficient reason to terminate or suspend membership, as provided in the Constitution (Section 5).
10. Members and Committee members will be mindful of the need for sensitivity and confidentiality in sharing personal information at all stages in this process.
11. The Club runs safety training days on a regular basis and all members are strongly encouraged to attend.

Slipway safety

1. Members must take care at all times on the Slipway. Aside from the obvious water danger, members should be actively aware of the potential hazards presented by the slipway area’s various fixtures and fittings.
2. No activities can be undertaken without wearing a lifejacket, which must be donned before any activities, either on the slipway or on water, can commence. Once the activities are complete members must check their lifejackets for any damage before storing in the club storage box.

Lifejackets

1. Members may use their own lifejacket so long as it is deemed suitable by cox.
2. Participants should check and understand the type of lifejacket they have selected, whether it is automatic or manual. Lifejackets should fit snugly but not so tightly that they are uncomfortable and always worn on top of clothing. A rule of thumb for checking if they are too loose around the chest is to see if you can fit your fist between the straps and your body easily: if so, the lifejacket is too loose.

Trip hazards

1. The slipway can be slippery in wet or icy conditions along with seaweed at high water mark. You should wear flat footwear with good grip, as well as appropriate clothing for the weather and time of year.
2. Members must be wary of tripping on the slipway due to damaged parts of the concrete, and the various fishing gear at the side of the slipway.

Weather conditions & water safety

1. Crews must note the condition of tide, in addition to the wind strength and direction.
2. If weather conditions are bad or deteriorate the Cox and rowers have discretion to cancel the session.
3. It is inadvisable to row when the wind speed is greater than 20 mph.
4. It is extremely unsafe to row in the dark. It is **prohibited for members to row between sunset and sunrise.**
5. The Cox has absolute discretion in deciding whether the weather or tide conditions are safe for rowing, considering the experience level of the crew.
6. If a member is unwilling or unable to row for any reason they should inform the Cox.

Rowing

Attendance and attitude

1. Use of the skiff and equipment is entirely at your own risk.
2. Rowing is a crew activity.
 - o If you book a place and don't show up you are letting down your fellow crew members and denying other members a chance to row.
 - o If you have to cancel please, out of courtesy to fellow members, let the Bookings coordinator know as soon as possible so that your place can be offered to someone else.
 - o The club reserves the right to suspend temporarily any member who persistently fails to turn up without notification.
3. Treat the skiff and equipment as if it is their own.
4. Report any damage to the Cox or a committee member as soon as possible.

Physical activity

1. When you join a rowing session you warrant that you are physically fit and capable of taking part in the sport of coastal rowing.

2. Please note club committee members and coxes are not qualified to assess your general physical fitness.
3. It is the individual's responsibility to communicate any medical, physical and psychological concerns that might conflict with participation in the activity.
4. Notwithstanding points 1-3, the Cox has absolute discretion in deciding whether or not to allow a member to participate in a rowing session.

Removal and return of skiff cover and equipment

1. All crew should assist with prepping the skiff for rowing/mooring, following the instructions of the Cox.

Boarding and disembarking

1. Board or disembark the skiff one at a time, in the order directed by the Cox.
2. Move slowly and try to maintain a low centre of gravity by crouching down.
3. Only one person should be standing/moving at any time.
4. Crew already in the vessel should remain still and the last person to board should be holding the bow and stern ropes whilst the others board for stability, rowers keeping their hands clear of the edge of the skiff.

Other vessels

1. The whole crew must remain aware of their surroundings and always watch for other vessels or floating objects. Alert the Cox to vessels approaching from the stern.

Accidents / Emergency incidents

1. Each skiff carries a first aid kit for treating minor injuries on board.
2. Each skiff carries a throw line, the end of the line should be secured to the side of the skiff gunwale.
3. If a member of crew falls overboard or off the slipway, remain calm and focus on how to retrieve the casualty, bearing in mind that the circumstances in which a 'man overboard' may occur are varied.
 - o shout loudly 'man overboard'
 - o the Cox will immediately designate a crew member to continually watch and point to the person in water and give directions by arm signals and shouted distance.
 - o if necessary use a throwline.
 - o manoeuvre the skiff to bring casualty to midships and try to bring him/her back onboard.
 - o call emergency services (999) or use VHF radio to alert the coastguard.
4. All accidents must be reported to the committee for entering in the safety log. This should be the responsibility of the Cox.

Cox

1. The Cox is the master of the vessel and has absolute discretion in deciding whether
 - o weather and tide conditions are suitable.
 - o a member is in a fit state to participate in a rowing session.

2. The Booking coordinator will post rowing sessions each Sunday on our club WhatsApp chat. Coxes will be assigned once the crew has been finalised.
3. Sharing of the Cox duties during each row is strongly encouraged.
4. On every rowing session the cox/coxes and crew must:
 - o Cox to have VHF radio (tuned to channel 16 and checked to ensure full /sufficient charge for the planned row duration) and emergency safety bag on them at all times whilst rowing.
 - o Check the weather forecast to decide whether it is safe to row, taking account of the experience level of the crew
 - o Check the tide
 - o Check sunset time. If departing within two hours of sunset, a torch must be carried (**not** a head torch) but the skiff must be returned to the pier location before sunset. **Rowing in the dark is expressly forbidden.** Early morning rows should not depart the slipway before official sunrise.
 - o Carry a mobile phone or make sure at least one crew member has one.
 - o Check the boat equipment before setting out
5. VHF radios. Operation of a VHF radio without a licence is illegal. However, Coxes who do not hold a VHF radio licence may carry the club VHF radio, which has a VHF radio licence, to be used only
 - o to alert the coastguard if the skiff or a person is in ***grave and imminent danger.***
 - o at regattas or races: only on the channel designated by the race controller.

Maintenance and working on the skiff

1. Working alone is discouraged for safety reasons.
2. It's always preferable to work in groups but small shore-based maintenance such as fixing oars, rudders or other ancillary equipment may be undertaken alone.
3. Any activity that requires going near the water must not be undertaken alone.
4. Cleaning the skiff and attempting skiff repairs alone is not permitted.
5. If you are working alone make sure someone close to you knows where you are and when you expect to leave. Ideally post messages on WhatsApp stating when you arrive and depart.

Skiff maintenance rules

1. All maintenance should be accrued on the pier or the skiff moved to a secure shed.
2. Members must make themselves aware of any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required before they start any given task. Tasks must be ticked off as stages are completed to show progress and elements that remain outstanding.
3. Any task that requires the use of chemicals (paint / glue / sealant, etc.) or creates dust should, where possible, be carried out in the open air on the pier. Failing that, masks must be worn to limit inhalation of particles and shed doors/windows opened.