

# **Williamsburg Boat Club**

## **Members Handbook**



**January 2010**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

**A. Purpose:** The objective of the Williamsburg Boat Club (WBC) is to provide instruction, improvement, competition, and overall enjoyment of the art of rowing and to promote a friendly and social spirit among its members.

### B. Code of Conduct

1. Members will conduct themselves in the spirit of good sportsmanship, both on and off the water. Sportsmanship is defined as respect for one's opponent, and graciousness in training, winning, or losing. Unsportsmanlike behavior includes arguing cursing or swearing at other club members or persons in a position of authority, and is not tolerated.

2. Members will adhere to the Members Handbook or accept penalties that the club officers deem appropriate.

3. Any member may be suspended or removed from the club or club leadership for cause, upon decision by the board. "Cause" shall include, but is not limited to:

- failure to pay dues on a timely basis,
- breaking club rules and protocol,
- engaging in or encouraging conduct which harms the club,
- willful disregard of the club's property,
- repeated unsportsmanlike behavior, particularly when wearing club colors,
- unfounded, malicious or libelous remarks about the club or its members,
- criminal conduct of any kind on the premises,
- abuse of trust in matters relating to the club's monies.

4. The board's decision is final, and the definition of "cause" shall be at the board's discretion. The board will allow the charged member to present a written appeal of a membership decision in person with a representative, should the member so choose, and the board shall consider such appeals in strict confidence. The board shall not, in the event the member under consideration is removed, make any adverse comment about that member without exceptional reason.

## II. Organization

**A. Membership:** The club shall consist of the following classes of members who shall be entitled to the privileges as specified herein:

1. General Members: Any person who shall have attained the age of eighteen years shall be eligible for general membership. All privileges of general membership are granted once annual dues have been received by the club treasurer. General members may hold office in the club and shall be entitled to cast one vote at any meeting of the club at which said member is present. General members enjoy the right to row club equipment on which they have been certified and, space permitting, storage of personal rowing equipment at the rowing site.

2. Youth/Student Members: High school and college students in the Williamsburg area who want to row may have limited membership at an annual cost 50% of the general member dues. If such a student desires, dues may be individually assessed on semester or quarterly basis.

3. Family Membership: Any general member whose partner is also interested in rowing may apply for a family membership. Dues for family membership will be set at 150% of general membership dues.

4. Visiting / Seasonal / Out-of-Town Members: The purpose of this membership is to enable individuals who are not full-time residents of the Williamsburg area the opportunity to participate for not more than three months in the club. Fees are 50% of the general membership

5. Non-rowing members: Members who wish to support the sport of rowing but do not wish to row themselves may be charged 50% general membership dues or may provide services in lieu of paying dues as approved by the board.

6. Honorary members: The coach and President of William and Mary Rowing Club (WMRC) are considered honorary members and adjunct members of the board. No other honorary memberships are awarded.

**B. Dues:** Annual dues will be recommended by the executive board to the general membership of the club for approval. The current general membership rate is \$200 per year.

1. General / Family Membership Dues: General and Family Membership fees are due on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Dues may be paid in installments, in two, three or four equal payments as worked out between the treasurer and member, and as approved by the president.

2. Student Dues: Student members will be charged 50% of the general membership annual dues. Members of WMRC may row with WBC at any time of the year with no charge.

3. Storage Fees: Boat club members in good standing will not be charged storage fees at this time. However, storage fees may be assessed in the future as needed. Non-members may store equipment on a space available basis for a fee of \$100 per year. However, non-members may not have gate access, and must park outside the gate and walk to the storage site.

### C. Officers:

1. The officers of the club are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, the Equipment Manager, Past President and Head Coach. They constitute the executive board of the club and shall be elected at the annual membership meeting. Officer terms of office shall be two

years, and staggered such that the President and Treasurer will be elected at one annual meeting, and the Vice President and Secretary elected at the next annual meeting.

2. The President shall preside at all meetings of the club. The President shall appoint all committees and shall be an ex-officio member of those committees. The President shall serve one year past their term as advisor to the current president. In this capacity as Past President, they may take on or complete special projects, but may not vote in board meetings.

3. The Vice President shall assist the President in the discharge of duties, and, in the absence of the President, shall officiate at meetings and club activities.

4. The Secretary shall be present at all meetings of the club (or designate a proxy) and shall keep minutes. The Secretary shall issue written (e.g., email) notice of regular and special meetings and shall maintain a roster of members.

5. The Treasurer will collect all money due the club and bank and disburse the same for all legal debts of the club, and shall keep an exact amount of all receipts, expenditures, and dues, recording the individual names therewith. The Treasurer shall make a written annual report, and report at other times as requested by the board, which shall reflect the financial condition of the club.

6. The Equipment Manager shall:

- Enforce rules that govern use of club equipment.
- Assist with research into the purchase of new equipment by the club.
- Assign rack and storage spaces to members who desire to store rowing equipment in the club's boathouse as approved by the board.
- Be the point of contact for members who wish to reserve club boats for use in regattas.

7. The Head Coach is not an elected position. The head coach is allowed a vote in board meetings, however in years when the head coach holds another elected office in the club, the head coach position is not permitted to vote. The head coach is responsible for:

- Setting the club's summer and winter training programs
- Overseeing the Learn to Row and Learn to Scull programs
- Coordinating the coaches within the club and ensuring some continuity of coaching

8. If an officer's position should fall vacant during the year, it is to be filled by the by the remaining officers at the next board meeting.

#### **D. Election of Officers:**

1. Annual Elections: The elections of club officers shall take place annually at the time and place of the annual winter meeting. Any general member in good standing shall be eligible for office. Only general members shall be entitled to vote.

2. Removal from Office. An officer may be removed from office only by a majority vote of the board, followed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting specifically called for such purpose on two weeks notice. The person charged shall have no vote on such issue.

3. Nominations and Elections: The officers will recommend a slate for club officers prior to the annual winter meeting. The slate will be presented to the general membership for consideration at least two weeks prior to the winter meeting, at which time additional nominations may be made. A vote will be taken by the general membership present, requiring a majority to be elected to office.

## **E. Meetings**

1. Annual Winter Meeting: The annual winter meeting of the club shall be scheduled by the leadership for election of officers, for receiving reports, and for the transaction of other business. The order of business at the annual meeting shall be as follows:

- Call to order
- Reading of minutes from previous meeting
- Reports
- Election of officers
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment

2. Spring Meeting. An annual spring meeting will usually be held at the rowing site. It is designed as an informational forum and may also be used as a venue in which new business may be brought to the membership for voting. The meeting is to be held prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>. Two weeks notice will be provided to the membership regarding the timing, and an agenda will be supplied.

3. Additional Membership Meetings: Additional membership meetings may be held as required by decision of the leadership or by the membership at a previous meeting. At least two weeks notice will be provided to the club members.

4. Quorum: The presence of one-third of the total number of general members shall constitute a quorum at any meeting.

5. Order of Business: The order of business may be altered or suspended at any meeting by a majority vote of the senior members present. The usual parliamentary rules as delineated by Robert's Rules of Order shall govern when not in conflict with these by-laws.

### III. Safety Rules and Procedures

#### A. Personal Safety and Responsibility

##### 1. All members:

- Individuals participating in any activity on the water must accept responsibility for their own actions.
- All persons participating in rowing, including coxswains, must be able to swim. When signing the WBC application form, members attest to their ability to swim 50 yards in workout attire, tread water for 5 minutes, and don a personal flotation device (PFD) while in the water. If a person cannot meet these requirements, a USCG approved PFD must be worn when in a club boat.
- Members must attest to their physical condition and general health on a medical information form. Coaches must be aware of any health conditions or medical needs for rowers on the water, therefore rowers must advise the coach of any significant changes in their health prior to rowing. If in doubt as to their physical condition, a rower should consult a physician prior to rowing.
- Athletes participating in adaptive rowing activities must be accompanied at all times. Suitable rescue and first aid facilities to cope with an incident must be provided.
- In case of accident, stay with your boat rather than attempting to swim to safety. Your boat is your life raft.
- When rowing in a boat without a coxswain, the bowperson is responsible to maintain a good lookout.
- All active members are encouraged to participate in capsized and swimming drills. Junior members are required to attend these drills.
- Wear suitable clothing for the weather conditions.

##### 2. Coaches:

- Coaches should be aware of and take full account of the rowers' capabilities and limitations, and of the limitations of their equipment, particularly where adverse weather and water conditions may be encountered or when training on unfamiliar water, both at home and abroad.
- Before beginning any coaching session, water or land based, the coach must go through a risk assessment process relevant to the activity proposed. The assessment must take into account the ages, abilities, and limitations of the athletes involved, together with the water and weather conditions prevailing or facilities available.
- The coach shall ensure that the whole crew, including the coxswain, is suitably dressed and adequately protected for the weather conditions (hot or cold) that they are likely to encounter.

**3. Coxswains:** Any person steering a boat is responsible for the people in the boat and is considered a coxswain for the purposes of this paragraph. Coxswains are expected to:

- Maintain a proper lookout by sight and hearing so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision.
- Learn and use standard commands for boat control both off and on the water, and be able to use them correctly, clearly, and instructively.
- Understand and observe local navigation rules, and audible and visual signals given by others with whom the water is shared.
- When visiting unfamiliar water, take particular care to learn of local hazards, weather peculiarities, and local rules of navigation.
- Be familiar with the club's emergency procedures.
- Recognize and respect the rights and needs of other water users, such as boaters and fishermen.
- Watch out for swimmers at all times and be alert to unexpected floating objects.
- Know and have practiced accident and man-overboard drills.
- Be aware of the dangers and symptoms of hypothermia.
- Carry basic tools (i.e., wrenches, tape) in case of equipment failure.

## **B. Equipment Safety**

1. All equipment used for rowing, sculling, and coaching needs to be properly and regularly maintained to ensure that it is safe and adequate for its intended purpose and to ensure that it does not expose its users to danger.

2. Before any outing is undertaken, rowing equipment should be checked to ensure that it is in safe condition and in working order. The following is a basic checklist:

- Check for hull damage, leaks, etc.
- Check that buoyancy compartments, seals, hatch covers, and ventilation bungs are secure and watertight.
- Check that the bow ball is securely fixed and fully covers the bow of the boat in order that adequate protection is given to any person or object struck by the moving boat. This check should also examine any fixing screws or bolts to ensure that they do not represent a further hazard in the event of accident.
- Check that outriggers, swivels, gates, seats, and stretchers are secure and operating freely.
- Check that heel restraints are secure and that restraints are adequate and effective, i.e., heels are positively restrained not to rise more than 3 inches between the heel of the shoe and stretcher footboard.
- Check that rudder lines, steering mechanisms, rudder, and fin are secure and in good working order.
- Check oars and sculls for damage and ensure that buttons (collars) are secure and properly set.
- Check that shoelaces or straps are adequate for their purpose. Check, when tightened, that they are not too tight and do not immobilize the feet. Check the condition and attachment of shoes.
- Voice projection and radio communication equipment, when carried in the boat, must be securely fixed to the boat, not the coxswain. Similarly, deadweight (if needed in competition) must not be attached to or carried in a person's clothing.

3. Launches are used for coaching and rescue purposes. Launches operated between sunset and sunrise are required to use navigational lights. Launches must carry the following equipment:

- USCG approved personal flotation devices (PFD) for all rowers on the water
- A “readily available” USCG approved Type IV PFD (i.e., a throwable PFD, such as a boat cushion, that is quickly reachable in an emergency and not in a protective cover or under other equipment)
- First aid kit
- A cellular phone or maritime band radio (VHF-FM)
- A bailer
- A sound signaling device (e.g., a whistle or horn)
- A boarding ladder
- A paddle
- An anchor and line appropriate to local conditions
- A throw line at least 50 feet long
- A “kill cord” must be attached between the motor ignition switch and launch driver when only one person is in the launch.
- Thermal blankets (cold weather only)
- Tools and spare hardware for rowing equipment are recommended, but not required

### **C. River Hazards and Considerations**

1. There are numerous trees, tree stumps, and partially submerged tree “knees” along the shoreline of the river and estuaries. Beware of “deadheads”, which are logs or fallen trees that are either floating downstream or have run aground in relatively shallow water, especially after a significant rainfall or increased current flow. Boats should stay at least 10 feet away from shore, except when launching or landing.

2. Recreational boats, such as ski-boats and bass-boats frequent the Chickahominy River and estuaries. While rowing, shells should have the right of way, but the relatively low visible profile of a shell may be hard for other operators to detect, especially in low light conditions. Be alert for power boats operating at relatively high speeds along the river and in the estuaries. The sound of their motors is often the first cue of their presence.

### **D. Inclement Weather**

1. Rowing should not be conducted when whitecaps are present on the water. However, if a suitable lee is available, rowing may be conducted in that protected space.

2. Boats will not be launched when lightning is in the area. Boats on the water will return to the dock (or nearest suitable shore, if more prudent) when lightning is detected.

3. The minimum visibility to row due to rain, fog, or other obscuration is 1/2 mile.

## **E. Low Light Conditions:**

1. Rowing between sunset and sunrise is not recommended. Rowing at night, as defined as 30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise, is not allowed unless approved by the head coach on a case-by-case basis.

2. When rowing before sunrise or after sunset, each shell and launch is required to have the proper navigational lights.

- Green and red navigation lights on launches must be visible when viewed from the bow or stern, and a white light on the stern must be elevated to be the highest point and visible from all directions.

- Rowing shells must have at least a bright white, omni-directional light mounted at the bow or stern.

- In addition, all boats, including rowing shells, must carry a whistle or other noisemaker for audible warnings.

## **F. Waves and Wakes**

1. Coxswains and rowers should maneuver to pass well behind the stern of an approaching boat.

2. Rowing should stop and the shell should be turned to parallel when approaching wakes or waves approximately 1 foot or greater wave height, keeping all oars flat on the water to stabilize until the waves pass. Otherwise, there is risk of breaking the shell in half and/or swamping the boat.

## **G. Collision Avoidance**

1. Be aware of collision hazards (trees, boaters, kayakers, etc.) at all times and be aware of known underwater obstructions in the area. A chart of the river with known local hazards is in the club logbook in the oar storage building.

2. The bowman is responsible for looking for hazards in coxless shells. Scullers may use rearview mirrors, but should be aware that they do not provide a full field of vision.

3. Keep listening for other boats, especially around estuaries with limited forward visibility, numerous bends in the water's course, and those areas frequented by fishermen.

## **H. Cold Water Rowing**

1. Rowing with the club's equipment when the combined water and air temperature is below 100 degrees (F) is not allowed. "Cold water" for the purposes of this handbook is defined as a water temperature less than 75F.

2. Rowers using their own equipment should realize hypothermia is a swift and incapacitating killer that strikes when the combination of cold air and moisture work to decrease body temperature. It can take mere minutes before adults are incapable of helping themselves

once hypothermia has set in. Keep in mind that you don't have to fall in the water to get hypothermia. Cold air temperatures and any moisture on the body (from being splashed, sweat, rain, sleet, and snow) can lead to hypothermia.

3. Rowing when ice is present on the docks or water is prohibited.
4. The following measures are required when rowing in cold weather:
  - Four Oar Rule – there must be 4 oars on the water when club equipment is used (e.g., one four, one double, two singles, etc.)
  - Buddy System – if individuals go out they must do so in pairs.
  - Wear an inflatable, compact, life vest or wet suit.
  - Stay close to shore.
  - A noisemaker of some kind should be carried in each shell and be attached in some manner so as not to be lost if the shell capsizes.
  - Row with a safety launch present.

## **I. Hot Weather Rowing**

1. Rowers and coxswains should wear a hat to protect themselves from the sun.
2. Water or sports drink bottles should be brought aboard the shell by each person for use during practice.

## **J. Incident Reporting**

1. Incidents involving injury (including cuts or abrasions) or damage to club equipment must be reported as soon as practical, but within 24 hours, to a club officer. Additionally, the equipment manager must be notified if equipment damage occurred or is suspected. The parties involved in the incident should agree who reports the incident. If a coach witnesses the incident then he/she should take responsibility for reporting, otherwise it is usually the cox'n or steersperson.

2. Incidents include, but are not limited to:
  - Slipping on dock or ramps
  - Strained muscles from lifting boats
  - Boat collisions with objects
  - Capsizing

3. Virginia law requires notification of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) in the event of a boating incident in which there is:

- Damage over \$2000 to the vessel or equipment,
- Injury (requiring medical help beyond first aid) or loss of life, and/or,
- Disappearance of any person from a vessel.

Depending on the nature of the event, the DGIF formal report must be reported between 48 hours and 10 days of the event. Refer to DGIF regulations for the report format.

## **IV. Club Rules and Regulations**

### **A. Membership**

1. All members and guests must sign a waiver and medical information form and read the WBC Members Handbook in entirety prior to getting on the water. A copy of the WBC Members Handbook will be provided to each member.
2. A two-week grace period is allowed before joining the club. In this time, a potential member who has been checked out by a coach may row and use the club equipment.
3. A temporary member must submit an application for membership, waiver, and their temporary dues to the president (or his/her designee) prior to continuing to row. Temporary members must view the safety video at the beginning of their first membership month.
4. A new member must submit an application for membership along with their initiation fee to the president (or his/her designee) prior to continuing to row. New members must view the safety video at the beginning of their membership.
5. Dues and fees are due and payable upon receipt of invoice. Failure to pay within 30 days shall cause the member to become delinquent. Delinquent members will receive a statement in writing (i.e., email). After 60 days, delinquent members will not have access to the facility and may be reinstated by paying all outstanding amounts owed and a \$25.00 reinstatement fee.
6. This club operates because of the efforts of members volunteering their time and abilities in support of the club. All members are strongly encouraged to volunteer for a few of the many club activities in which they can support the club. Volunteer activities include, but are not limited to:
  - Club officer
  - Leading or assisting with club projects
  - Coxswain
  - Launch and/or trailer driver
  - Coaching
  - Rowing site maintenance
  - Equipment maintenance

### **B. General Certifications**

1. Swim Test: Adult rowers (18 years and older) must attest they can pass the swim test in rowing attire. The swim test consists of swimming 50 yards, treading water for 5 minutes, and then donning a PFD while in the water. Junior rowers (17 years or younger) must perform the above test prior to getting on the water.
2. All members are encouraged to be certified by the American Red Cross or American Heart Association in First Aid and CPR.

3. Ergometer sessions held at the William and Mary Recreation Center require a minimum of two persons, one of which is CPR qualified, to be present. When only two people are present, the CPR qualified person is not to engage in any exercise. If more than two people are present, the CPR qualified person will not conduct an intense workout, but may conduct a low intensity session (i.e., long, slow, steady state pieces vice fast sets of sprints). If more than one person present is CPR qualified, a CPR lead person will be identified before practice starts.

4. Launch drivers must take a general boating safety course approved by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) and complete a local familiarization and training course prior to being certified to operate a launch.

- An approved general boating safety course is offered at no cost at the Boat US website.
- To be certified as a launch driver, the candidate must show proficiency and knowledge in the following areas:
  - known local hazards, such as trees, deadheads, and shoals
  - locations of suitable emergency landing areas,
  - outboard motor operating procedures,
  - boat handling,
  - club emergency procedures

5. Trailer tow drivers must demonstrate an ability to safely tow and maneuver the trailer prior to transporting shells.

### **C. Coaching Rules:** Coaches:

1. Shall be USRA certified and qualified to operate the launch. American Red Cross CPR and First Aid certification is encouraged.

2. Must know the physical capabilities and limitations of their athletes and the equipment they are using;

3. Must be aware of each athlete's level of swimming ability. In the event of an emergency, a non-swimmer or a weak swimmer would have to be rescued first;

4. Must check that all equipment is safe, and that crews have proper clothing and fluids appropriate for the outing and weather conditions before they shove off;

5. Must not leave the dock with the launch until his/her crew has departed;

6. Should wear life vests when in launches.

7. Must attempt to be close to the boats at all times;

8. Must strictly limit the number of crews and athletes they supervise (ideally, a coach should not have more than 2 crews on the water at a time);

9. Must watch for hazards on the water. It is often easier for the coach, who is higher above the water, to see hazards ahead--particularly those lying low in the water. The coach first informs the coxswain or steersperson of the hazard and then directs them to stop or how best to avoid the hazard (try to remove or mark such hazards to help other crews);

10. Must not load the coach boat such that if they are operating it from the stern seat they do not have adequate vision over the bow of the boat.

11. Must know how to make and recognize standard distress signals and how to take appropriate action if signals are given by crews or by other launches;

12. Must realize that they are legally responsible for the well being of their crew whenever their crew is at the club. Arriving late, leaving early, as well as not properly monitoring crews all constitute possible risks;

13. Must be aware of and show consideration to other water users. They must ensure that neither their launches nor the crews they are supervising place anyone else using the water in jeopardy. They must always be alert to give help to other water users who may be in danger and without assistance.

#### **D. Sculler Certifications:**

1. No sculler may use club equipment unsupervised unless they are certified for that equipment type. Certification is the responsibility of the Head Coach. A rower progressing to the next level of certification may use that higher level equipment only if supervised or escorted.

2. Upon request, a coach will arrange an evaluation for members wishing to move to a new certification level once the minimum requirements for that certification are met.

3. The WBC Sculling Certification form will be completed by the instructor and turned into the head coach. Items included in the certification are:

- Knowledge of WBC procedures and boat use policies
- Knowledge of WBC/USRA safety rules and regulations
- Knowledge of typical local weather conditions as they affect sculling
- Knowledge of navigation rules and traffic patterns
- Demonstrate knowledge of equipment handling, care, and storage
- Demonstrate knowledge of typical equipment adjustments to suit the individual
- Demonstrate ability to launch and land unassisted
- Demonstrate ability to properly maneuver shells (i.e., balancing for wakes, turning, emergency stops, etc.)
- Demonstrate ability to sight and hold a straight course then adjust as needed to accommodate obstructions, hazards, boat traffic, etc.
- Discuss appropriate response to emergencies, such as capsizing, running aground, and self-rescue.

4. Level I: Training Single (Alden). A Level I sculler is certified to row an Alden single without instruction or in a double with a Level II (or higher certified) sculler. A Level I sculler may take out a Maas recreational single scull once they have sculled more than 25 km. To become certified at Level I, a sculler must:

- have sculled a minimum of 75 km, or
- have completed a Learn to Scull class,
- pass an evaluation by a sculling coach.

5. Level II: Racing Single or Double. A Level II sculler is certified to scull a racing single or double. To advance from Level I, a rower must have sculled a minimum of 100 km and pass an evaluation by a coach. The following must be successfully evaluated prior to Level II certification:

- Display good “sculling form”
- Row with no feather without digging in an oar or stopping for 30 strokes
- Do 360° turns in both directions
- Emergency stop from at least 20 SPM at full pressure without flipping
- Row, steer, and navigate continuously without stopping to look frequently
- Land both against and with the prevailing wind or current
- Land both rowing in and backing in
- Launch from mid-dock without assistance
- Demonstrate how to take out a boat and return a boat to its rack
- Take and pass an *ad hoc* oral navigation quiz
- Explain procedures for reporting and taking responsibility for equipment breakage
- Explain pre-launch activities
- Explain cold weather and darkness rowing restrictions

6. A Level I rower may row with a Level II rower in a racing double. Two Level I rowers may not row in a double unless the Head Coach authorizes it on a case-by-case basis. Two Level II rowers may row in a racing double without restriction.

7. Members with prior sculling experience will be granted an appropriate level of sculling certification based on the member’s performance during the coach’s evaluation.

## **E. Rowing Site**

1. The Williamsburg Boat Club operates with the College of William and Mary Rowing Club from a dock at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park, which is operated by James City County.

2. A gate is the only means of security for the facilities. There are two locks on the gate, one for use by WBC and WMRC and one for use by Chickahominy Riverfront Park.

- Members are to lock the gate after entering or exiting. The only exception to this is when another member is in sight behind them, in which case they may leave the gate open for them and the approaching member will lock the gate behind them.

- Should members find the gate open when they arrive or leave the site, they should close and lock the gate behind them.

3. The speed limit in the park is 10 mph and should not to be exceeded. Aside from safety concerns and damage to a vehicle caused by a higher rate over the dirt road, a faster speed will create too much dust and interfere with the many campers using the park facilities.

4. The club shares responsibility with WMRC and James City County Parks and Recreation for the overall maintenance and appearance of the site.

#### **F. General Rules:**

1. Only club members and persons attending club organized classes, who have paid all club fees, will be allowed to row or cox in club boats. Paid members of other rowing clubs may row or cox as guests on a limited basis.

2. Each member must have a signed waiver and a signed medical information form on file.

3. Each practice must have, at a minimum, one person in direct supervision. If the coach is not present, the individual responsible for the safety of the practice session must be at least 18 years old, be qualified in rowing by training or experience, and be knowledgeable about basic sports safety principles and basic rowing safety. The responsible individual has the authority to cancel practices for safety reasons and shall otherwise exercise their supervisory role.

4. As a part of determining whether a practice should be cancelled, the coach, or the person responsible for the practice session, shall obtain a current weather forecast to determine whether severe weather is predicted. Practices will always be cancelled if lightning is detected in the area.

5. The coxswain is in sole command of a shell and should be the only one giving commands and instructions when the shell is moving. However, specific rowers may be requested at times to assist new coxswains in improving their skills. If a coxswain's command will place either the crew or equipment in a harmful position, the rowers have the responsibility to advise the coxswain immediately of this. Rowers should not normally attempt to issue instructions or commands to the crew.

6. All shells equipped for a coxswain shall not launch without a coxswain aboard.

7. No club boats are to be rowed after dark (i.e., 1/2 hr before sunrise and 1/2 hr after sunset).

8. Life jackets: Every rower and coxswain on the river must have a life jacket, either in the coach's launch, or in the shell. When you are on the water without a launch, it is the responsibility of each rower and coxswain to have an accessible life jacket in the boat.

## H. Equipment checkout

1. Boats will be assigned at the beginning of practices based on how many rowers are present. Signing up in advance for practices by using the online calendar is highly recommended and encouraged.

2. Any boat with four or more people rowing usually requires a launch escort to provide an acceptable level of safety. A case by case exception to this rule may be made by the rowers and coxswain only if all people are comfortable rowing without a launch present.

3. Rowers or scullers in boats with two or less rowers are required to ensure a PFD is available for each rower in that boat. A whistle or other noise maker shall also be available. A cell phone in a waterproof container is recommended, but not required. These requirements may be waived if a launch with this equipment aboard is available and these items are in the launch.

4. The coxswain or bow person is responsible to sign out the boat using the logbook located in the oar storage building. Single scullers sign for their single. Upon completion of the row, the boat will be signed back in.

5. Any damaged equipment must be reported to the equipment manager or club president as soon as practical and should not be used until properly assessed or repaired.

## I. Equipment Handling Guidelines:

### 1. Moving Boats:

- When lifting a boat, make sure there are enough people and they are properly distributed.
- Always lift boats off the racks, don't slide it off on the gunwales.
- Watch riggers carefully to make sure they won't hit anything.
- When putting a shell on the racks or on stretchers, make sure it isn't resting on any part of the rigger. The shell should be positioned on a rack so the rack is on or very close to a rib of the shell. Shells should be secured using straps to all outdoor racks, including the trailer.
  - Lift the boat evenly.
  - Listen for the coxswain's commands and do not talk unless necessary.
  - Never step on, or drop anything into, the bottom of a shell.
  - Before leaving the dock, at the beginning of practice, do a quick inspection of your seat, rigger, stretchers, etc., to make sure no parts are missing, loose, or broken. Replace missing or broken parts immediately. If something can't be fixed, use a different shell. **Do not row a damaged shell.** Note any problems discovered before, during, and after a row and advise the coach, equipment manager, or president.
- Be careful when landing at the dock. The coxswain is in charge, and rowers are to be silent except when danger is imminent.
- When transporting shells to regattas make sure the shells are secure and load balanced over the trailer axles. A boat should not be able to move in any direction. Remove all riggers and tie down or remove seats.

- Do not place shells on the ground. Shells should be placed on stretchers or slings so that they are properly supported.
- Walk around a shell. **Never step over a shell.**
- Rigging is not to be changed without approval, with the exceptions of oarlock height washers and foot stretchers.

## 2. Handling Launches:

- The launch is considered a safety vehicle at all times. Launch drivers should make sure all the proper safety equipment is in the launch. Launch drivers must be familiar with emergency procedures and rescue guidelines. The number of persons in the launch must be limited to ensure room is available to rescue crews.

## 3. All Equipment:

- Make sure any equipment problems are entered in the log sheets and the coach, equipment manager, or club president is notified. Do not assume someone else has reported the problem.
- Do not use any equipment with a tag on it stating it is damaged.

## **I. Dockside Procedures**

1. All loose gear and equipment must be removed from the docks as quickly as possible. Shoes and other equipment left on the dock constitute a hazard to other crews using the dock, and should be placed on shore or taken in the boat when multiple boats will be using the dock.
2. Oars are to be carried with the blade in front of the person carrying the oar, and placed on the ground or dock with the blade concave (i.e., so the tip of the blade won't break off if stepped on).
3. Boats landing have priority over boats launching.
4. Rowers are to minimize time at the dock if other rowers are waiting (e.g., adjust foot stretchers away from the dock). It should take less than 2 minutes to launch or recover a shell.
5. Safety launches, when required, must be available and ready to run before a crew leaves the dock.

## **J. River Procedures**

1. The Inland Rules of the Nautical Road apply to the Chickahominy River and its estuaries. The least maneuverable vessel has the legal right of way. For example, power boats should yield to rowing shells, but rowing shells should yield to power boats constrained to navigate in a shipping channel. That said, rowers can expect no priority while on the water, and should always assume other traffic will not give way.
2. Boats should stay out of the middle of the river and the marked shipping channels to the maximum extent practical and safe, and favor the right hand side of the river and estuaries for

their direction of travel. If the river or channel must be crossed, do so as close to a 90 degree angle to the shoreline as practical until clear.

3. Turns should not be started in front of oncoming traffic, including other rowers. Turns are to be completed as quickly as feasible.

4. Coxswains and rowers should pass approaching crews so they pass “port to port”. Crews should be overtaken as fast as practical on the side that allows the minimum time to pass after verbal warnings are given.

5. Rowers must immediately comply with the commands from the coxswain.

6. Rowers should not talk much in the boat. A quiet crew is essential in order for all rowers to hear the coxswain’s commands. If a rower has a question about rowing, ask the coxswain or coach, not another rower.

## **K. Competitive Rowing**

1. Rowers interested in competing are encouraged to let the race coordinator know of their interest. Rowers interested in rowing at a regatta are to sign up for them at least 2 weeks prior to the regatta by using the online calendar. Rowers are to list (in priority) the events in which they would like to row. The race coordinator will determine the club’s boatings for each regatta and advise the rowers of their events. After the rowers agree to these boatings, the race coordinator will register the rowers for these events for the entire boat club (i.e., individual rowers are not to register for a regatta event unless specifically requested). After regatta registration, the rowers are considered committed to the regatta.

2. Rowers who have committed to a regatta are responsible for the registration fees and any additional costs associated with the regatta, such as transportation, meals, and lodging. Additionally, if a rower is not able to participate for any reason, they are responsible to find a replacement rower or else the boating may be scratched from the event and the registration fees forfeited.

## V. Emergency Procedures

### A. Rower Overboard: If a rower goes overboard:

1. The rower should attempt to remain under the surface of the water until the shell has passed to avoid being hit by a rigger or oar.

2. The coxswain gives the command to stop rowing and then to hold water once the rower overboard is clear of riggers. The coxswain will sound 5 short blasts on their whistle to alert other boaters nearby.

3. If a launch is in the immediate area, the launch will recover the rower after approaching the person in the water by heading into the wind or prevailing water current. The boarding ladder is placed over the gunwale of the launch and the rower may climb in.

4. If a launch is not in the immediate area:

- The stroke will remove his/her oar and direct it, but does not throw it, to the person in the water.

- The crew backs the boat to the person in the water.

- The coxswain gets hold of the person in the water or lets him/her grasp a rigger. Another rower may be required to enter the water to assist with first aid. Generally, it should be the person who was seated in front or behind the rower who is now in the water.

- Do not attempt to bring the person aboard a shell if the launch is near.

5. Once removed from the water, the rower should be evaluated to determine if they are fit to continue or whether they need medical attention.

### B. Unconscious Rower: If a rower has lost consciousness:

1. Support him/her (in the water or in the boat) until a rescue craft arrives, or help him/her to the bank as fast as possible if no rescue craft is at hand. All rowers should know life-saving procedures. If necessary, resuscitation should be begun immediately, even while the rower is still in the water. An ambulance should be summoned by the quickest method available.

### C. Swamping, Capsizing, Breakup, or Sinking

1. The crew must remain calm and in a group. Each individual will don any personal flotation device (PFD) available. US Rowing states oars are no longer considered as suitable PFDs, but they can be used in lieu of proper PFDs as emergency flotation.

2. The coxswain (bowperson in coxless shells) will account for all crewmembers. The crew, while holding onto the shell, should attempt to get the attention of other crews or coaches on the water, waving arms, oars or anything to make them more visible and making as much noise as is necessary to attract attention. If no crews or launches are on the water nearby, attracting the attention of people on shore or other boaters is the next step.

3. The shell will float (an important reason to close bow and stern ports before going on the water). If for some reason, the shell sinks below the surface, the shell should be rolled so the bottom is facing the sky, as this traps air underneath the shell and increases buoyancy.

4. No one leaves the group, shell, or flotation device until they are at shore or at a rescue boat. **No one attempts to swim to shore.** Visual perception is dramatically altered in the water and distance seems much shorter than what it really is. Await the arrival of a rescue launch or other vessel, unless the crew can touch bottom and safely wade into shore. Crews may leave the shell if they can touch bottom and wade to shore, but this must only be done as a group.

5. Use the buddy system, distribute crew evenly on the remains of the hull, encourage one another, and share flotation devices.

6. If the water and air temperatures are low, then the crewmembers should move along the shell and huddle together in pairs near the middle of the shell. Effort should be made to keep as much of the body out of the water as possible. This can include draping oneself over the top of the hull. A minimum of movement is important to retain body heat. Constantly check on crewmates and keep up one-on-one communication.

#### **D. Running Aground or Hitting Submerged Object:**

1. In the event a shell runs aground, do not make any attempt to row the oars through anything other than water (i.e., do not attempt to row oars through mud or sand as this will break equipment).

- If possible, back the shell off the bottom by backing the oars through the water.
- If backing is not possible, a rower will get out of the boat and push the boat to deeper water and then reenter the shell.

2. In the event a shell is lodged on or runs over a submerged or partially submerged object:

- Attempt to back the shell off the object keeping the oars in water or attempt to push the obstacle away from the hull trying to minimize contact with the hull.
- It may be necessary for a rower to get out of the boat and push the boat to deeper water and then reenter.

3. Assume there is damage to the hull anytime a shell runs aground or into a solid object. Return to the dock as soon as practical and inspect for damage once the shell is removed from the water. Advise the equipment manager or other club officer of the incident and record the incident in the remarks section of the boat log.

#### **E. Swamped Shell Recovery**

1. Once all rowers who were involved in a capsizing or swamping incident are properly taken care of, it is time to recover the shell. This is a recovery operation, and should be started

only after all rescue efforts have been completed. Slow down and assess the situation, and identify one person who will be in charge of the operation and provide direction to others assisting with these efforts. If, during rescue efforts, a launch or other boat is no longer needed to assist moving people ashore (say the last people are on another boat headed toward the dock), have that vessel stay with the swamped shell.

2. Bring at least one life vests per rigger of the swamped boat and plenty of rope (such as that from the anchor line) to the scene before starting recovery efforts.

3. Determine if the shell is in danger of imminent sinking by assessing the condition of the shell, the present and anticipated environmental conditions, and other known hazards. This includes considering the wind and current speed and direction, depth of water, obstacles the boat is drifting toward, storms on the horizon, etc. Then determine how to maneuver the recovery boats and initiate the recovery. Recovering an eight, and sometimes even a four, may require two launches and experienced launch drivers. If it will be necessary for a person to enter the water to aid in the recovery the shell, that person must wear a lifevest. Do not place a person in the water if the water temperature is below 75F unless they have some sort of protection from hypothermia (i.e., wetsuit or drysuit).

4. If the shell is in imminent danger of sinking, approach the shell and place flotation devices, such as 2 life vests, to each rigger to add buoyancy to the shell. Then recover any gear that has floated from the shell (e.g., oars, coxboxes, water bottles, clothing, etc.). The scene should now be somewhat stabilized.

5. Remove the oars from the shell, if they are still held in the riggers.

6. If the shell is not keel down, it will have to be rolled so it is keel down prior to towing the shell. Remove the life vests from all the riggers on only one side, roll the boat (easiest if there is a recovery boat at both the bow and stern of the shell and the roll is coordinated). When the shell is keel down, reattach the life vests to the riggers. Now it's time to connect the tow line.

7. Tie a line through the perpendicular rigger post and backstay of the bow pair riggers (preferred) or stern pair riggers (if the bow is damaged). Equalize the tension and center the line so that the towline is as close to the centerline of the shell as possible. Alternatively, loop a line several times around the center of the foot stretchers of the bow pair or stern pair and tie it off towards the center of the shell. Ensure the footstretchers are securely fastened to the shell.

8. Lead the remaining tow line out and attach to the stern of a launch. At a slow and controlled pace move the launch away and towards the destination, slowly taking the slack out of the towline and making sure that the prop is clear of the tow line. Tow at a very slow speed, such as the speed in a no wake zone, as the swamped shell now has much more inertia and will resist changes in speed and direction. Avoid any slack in the towline, as snapping a tow line from slack to taut will likely damage equipment and could harm people. In unrestricted areas, the launch driver should attempt some turns and minor speed changes to get a feel for how the swamped shell handles.

9. Once the shell is back at the dock, get as many people along the shell as possible to prepare to drain the water from the shell. This will be heavy work, so if there are not enough people to stand shoulder to shoulder along the entire length of the shell, bail or pump as much water as possible out of the boat before attempting to drain the rest of the water by lifting one side the boat.

10. Make sure that everyone lifts from the legs and not from the lower back. Floating docks will likely submerge a bit. Everyone lays hands on the shell and lift very slowly so that the dock side gunnel tilts up and the water side gunnel tilts towards the water. The idea here is to slowly drain as much water out of the shell as possible before attempting to lift the shell out of the water all the way. The water side gunnel will still be in contact with the water. As people lift, the keel will be oriented so it is parallel to the dock.

11. Once a significant amount of water has been drained, the shell can be lifted in the regular fashion. The shell will still be heavy with trapped water. After the shell is lifted over heads, open the bow and stern deck ports. Then, alternating bow and stern, drop one end as low as possible while keeping the other end at heads. This will drain any excess water that is trapped in the boat. People will definitely get wet during this process, so make sure they have rain gear or extra clothing to change into during cold weather.

12. Put the shell on a rack and ensure all ports are fully open. The boat can then be fully inspected for damage.

13. Adjustable length oars that have been in the water will need to have the handles removed and water drained out of the oars. Remove the handles, place the oars upright so the water drains from them and allow the oar to dry completely before reattaching the handles.

## **F. Heat-Related Emergencies:**

1. Higher temperatures and high humidity can lead to heat-related illnesses. As humidity rises, the body's ability to cool off through sweating is diminished since evaporation is limited. The best way to avoid heat-related injuries is to practice at cooler times of the day such as early morning or late afternoon. The body needs time to acclimate to increased temperatures. Intake of fluids is also important and should be encouraged. Dehydration further impairs the body's ability to cool off. There are two major related heat illnesses, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

### **2. Heat Exhaustion:**

- Early symptoms: heavy sweating, cramps, tiredness, weakness, malaise, mild decrease in performance.
- Action: rest and fluid replacement.
  
- Advanced Symptoms: profuse sweating, muscle incoordination, impaired judgment, and emotional changes.

- Action: If there is mild temperature elevation, an ice pack may be used to help cool the body to normal temperatures. Several days' rest may be necessary and rehydration is a priority.

### **3. Heat Stroke:**

- Symptoms: confusion, nausea, vomiting, and seizures. The victim loses consciousness. Body temperature rises as high as 106. Skin is dry and clammy.

- Action: Get medical help immediately! Lower body temperature by immersing in water, maintain horizontal position of victim. Stop treatment when victim is conscious.

## **G. Hypothermia:**

1. Hypothermia is a condition that occurs when the temperature of the human body is lowered to a dangerous point due to exposure to cold and/or wet conditions. Cold temperatures and wet conditions work together to pull heat away from the body lowering the body's core temperature. Even in mild conditions, the addition of rain or submersion in cold water can sufficiently reduce body warmth to trigger hypothermic conditions in the body. A person's condition can degrade rapidly, impairing breathing and coordination and making it impossible to swim or keep one's head above water. Emergency action needs to be taken no matter what the level of hypothermia.

### **2. Early Hypothermia:**

- Symptoms: rapid shivering, numbness, and loss of strength and coordination, semi-consciousness.

- Action: Maintain open airway. Transfer to a warm environment as soon as possible. Remove wet clothing. Use blankets to help warm individual or if available a warm shower. Warm torso area first. Seek medical attention.

### **3. Profound Hypothermia:**

- Symptoms: Person will be pale, stiff, and cold. Unresponsive to stimuli, and possibly unconscious. Little or no cardiac or respiratory activity will be present.

- Action: Move or manipulate as gently as possible. Prevent further heat loss, but DO NOT attempt to re-warm. Maintain open airway, and activate EMS procedures. Call for emergency help immediately!

## **H. Launch Emergency Procedures**

1. Launches approaching the site where equipment is disabled, or where there may be rowers in the water, should always approach into the wind so that they will not drift down onto, or be blown against, the equipment or persons in the water.

2. Assess the situation. Quickly conduct a head count and establish the condition of the people in the water and the severity of the circumstances.

3. Establish verbal contact with those in the water so they can be talked through the rescue quickly. Those in greatest distress or risk should be rescued first.

4. Distribute life vests or other PFDs carried in the launch. Rowers in the water are required to don PFDs.

5. Do not attempt to bring persons into the coach boat by the stern or anywhere near the engine. Use the boarding ladder, realizing that cold or exhausted rowers will need assistance to enter the launch.

6. Rescue should occur in pairs (buddies). This will prevent an athlete from letting go, until the rescue craft actually rescues the crew.

7. A head count must be conducted on the arrival of the rescue boats at the scene, and must be repeated each time it leaves and returns.

8. Do not overload the launch. Do not exceed its rated capacity; make several trips, if necessary. Proceed to the nearest emergency landing shore and give those placed onshore directions to the nearest possible assistance.

**I. Emergency Landing Areas:** The following areas are suitable landing areas in the event of a water emergency or need to get off the water quickly, such as for an approaching thunderstorm. There are roads nearby for emergency response vehicles.

1. Chickahominy Riverfront Park boat ramp, located approximately 800 meters down Gordon Creek toward the Chickahominy River from the WBC dock.

2. Chickahominy Riverfront Park Fishing Pier, located on the eastern bank of the Chickahominy River approximately 200 meters north of the Route 5 bridge.

3. Bush Neck Road end (Road 633), located on the east side of the Chickahominy River on the north side of Bush Neck, approximately 1000 meters east of the mouth of Nettles Creek and the Chickahominy River.

4. Shields Point boat ramp, located on the east side of the Chickahominy River approximately 1500 meters north of Bush Neck and 500 meters southeast of the tip of Shields Point.

5. Eagles Lodge/Eagle Bottom/Eagles Nest Road end (Road 621), located in Charles City County, on the west side of the Chickahominy River opposite and approximately 500 meters north of Shields Point.

6. Brickyard boat ramp, located at the end of Brickyard Road (Road 610) approximately 6 km north of Shields Point. The James City County Volunteer Fire Department rescue boat puts in at this ramp.

## **J. Emergency Contacts**

1. In the event of an emergency, **call 911** and request immediate assistance from James City County or Charles City County emergency personnel. Request medical assistance for unconscious persons, those with injuries (to include heat stroke or hypothermia), and anytime there is doubt if medical assistance is needed.

2. Chickahominy Riverfront County Park: (757) 258-5020
3. James City County Sheriff: (757) 253-1800
4. Charles City County Sheriff: (804) 829-9204
5. Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (boating incident): 804-367-1258