



WBC 2025 REGATTA SAFETY PLAN
Beak of the Chick July 2025
Head of the Chick September 2025

I. INTRODUCTION

The Williamsburg Boat Club (WBC) recognizes that safety is the joint responsibility of regatta organizers, participants, and officials. Although there are certain risks inherent in any water activity, we are committed to conducting our events with good judgment, common sense while implementing the applicable safety rules.

This written safety plan is designed to perpetuate the policies that have helped to keep past events safe, to improve upon those past safety practices where possible, and to communicate our safety expectations to all regatta participants, volunteers, and officials. This Safety Plan is written specifically for a regatta held at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park (CRP) in James City County.

II. REGATTA SAFETY

The Regatta Director is responsible for implementation and enforcement of this plan. As a general rule, the Regatta Committee leads will be responsible for safety plan implementation within their control.

The Regatta Director will identify physicians and/or emergency medical providers that are on site during the regatta.

The Chief Referee will be responsible for delivering a safety briefing to the coaches, coxswains, and regatta referees prior to the start of the regatta that includes information on the weather plan, rower safety, procedures to deal with on-water and off-water injuries, and general grounds safety concerns. After that meeting, the coaches will report directly to the Chief Referee and provide, by boat and seat number, rowers with medical concerns, such as asthma, that could create a critical medical emergency on the water. All asthmatics are required to keep their inhalers on their person at all times during a race.

The Chief Referee is also responsible for briefing all launch drivers as well as documenting any on-water medical emergencies occurring during the regatta. The Chief Referee will provide all official launches on the water with a course chart, radios and/or cell phones contact names, radio operating manual, emergency instructions and the locations of emergency dock(s) to transport injured persons from the water.

The Launch and Recovery Directors will monitor traffic control to ensure access to ramps is kept clear and boat movement is completed safely in the vicinity of the docks.

Traffic and parking management will be completed by a dedicated group of volunteers.

The Land Director will monitor regatta attendees to ensure appropriate application of JCC fire safety requirements. All team food tents using grills and/or generators will be required to have a charged fire extinguisher on their site and ensure fuels (such as gasoline) are properly contained and stored away from heat sources.



III. COORDINATION WITH RACE OFFICIALS

The Chief Referee is responsible to address on-water safety concerns. This plan is intended to complement Rules of Rowing established by The United States Rowing Association. In the event of a conflict between US Rowing rules and this plan, the Chief Referee and Regatta Director shall act cooperatively to conduct a safe and fair regatta. WBC encourages decision making through consensus where practical. A copy of this safety plan and a map of the course showing mandatory traffic patterns shall be distributed to all regatta participants prior to the Coaches and Coxswains Meeting. WBC will schedule and advertise the time and location and/or video link of the Coaches and Coxswains Meeting as part of regatta registration and sign-in. Regatta volunteers will be instructed that the primary duties of every race official is to provide a safe and fair regatta. Volunteers shall be instructed to follow the directions of race officials for all competitive activity. Racing may be suspended by the Chief Referee in consultation with the Regatta Director at any time due to adverse conditions. If suspended, racing shall not be resumed until authorized by the Chief Referee. Racing will not be recommended sooner than thirty minutes following a weather suspension. A NOAA weather radio is kept on at all times during a regatta to facilitate prompt weather alerts and timely actions by race officials.

IV. COURSE AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In addition to the map in this plan, the Regatta Director shall devise and post in a conspicuous place at the regatta site the course diagram and instructions. The Regatta Director shall also clearly identify the location of the first aid stations, telephones, and methods of summoning emergency assistance. This information shall be provided to regatta coaches as part of the regatta registration package. On-land emergencies shall be immediately reported to the Regatta Secretary. On-water emergencies shall be handled as per this plan. Two landing points are identified for this regatta—the CRP bass boat launch and the launch/recovery dock area: floating docks and/or beaches upstream from the CRP Fishing Pier. All officials on the water will be familiar with these locations to support the most efficient transport of injured rowers. All launch boats will be provided with the cell phone number of the Regatta Director to expedite the emergency care process and coordinate with incoming JCC EMS resources. This emergency plan will also be shared with JCC Fire/EMS to expedite coordination and emergency care.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

WBC will utilize handheld VHF radios and/or cell phones for the following officials and volunteers:

- Chief Referee (VHF and cell)
- Chief Judge
- Starter
- Start-Marshal
- Course Monitors/Referees (VHF and cell)
- Finish Marshal
- Launch Dockmaster
- Water taxi/spare boat operator
- Regatta Director (VHF and cell)

The Chief Referee shall determine that each radio/cell phone is fully charged and is capable of sending and receiving radio communications. All persons issued a radio or cell phone will be supplied with operating instructions. All VHF radios/phones shall remain on during the entire



regatta and shall remain tuned to the regatta operations channel (CH-68) except in the case of the emergency procedure described in the following section. Each person issued a VHF radio shall be responsible for monitoring the regatta operations channel. Persons responding to an emergency or coordinating an emergency response shall switch to the regatta emergency channel (CH 69) when directed by the Chief Referee or Regatta Director. Persons not directly involved in the emergency response or coordination shall continue to monitor the operations channel. In the event of an emergency, the Regatta Director shall be responsible for determining from event primary responders whether additional assistance is required, and if so, for coordinating a timely and efficient response. The Regatta Director and Regatta Secretary shall each maintain an operational cell phone to be used for communicating with land based 911 services. The Regatta Secretary shall post a prominent notice in the Regatta Office clearly stating the 911 call procedure and the address of the regatta grounds.

All WBC VHF radios shall be returned to the Chief Referee at the conclusion of the regatta.

Due to the geography and distance of a Chickahominy River Regatta, cellular phones will be employed for shore-to-water communications. A communications list will be developed to link each device to a particular event official.

VI. SAFETY INSPECTIONS

The Launch Dockmaster shall ensure a pre-launch safety inspection is conducted for every race boat participating in every regatta event.

Each such inspection shall confirm that race boats comply with safety and equipment requirements in effect at the time of the regatta. No race boat shall be permitted on the course without the following minimal equipment: A bowball that complies with USRowing Rule 3-105, Oars that comply with USRowing Rule 3-108, Footgear releases that comply with USRowing Rule 3-109 and if used, a coxswain enclosure that complies with USRowing Rule 3-110.

Additionally, a bow number placard and bib number visible from the rear (except scullers and bow coxed sweep boats) will be required on each boat.

VII. WEATHER PLAN

The Regatta Director and Chief Referee shall monitor both observed and predicted weather for conditions that may present hazards to the safe conduct of regatta operations or competition. Prior to the Coaches and Coxswains Meeting, the Regatta Director and Chief Referee shall review available weather forecasts and confirm weather conditions predicted for the race course on the Chickahominy River are likely to be safe for regatta operations and competition. The Regatta Secretary and Chief Referee shall continue to monitor weather trends and forecasts until the conclusion of the regatta. The Regatta Secretary shall install and monitor a tone alert radio capable of monitoring and receiving automatic weather alerts transmitted via the NOAA Specific Area Message Encoding system. The radio shall be programmed to receive S.A.M.E. messages for James City County, the City of Williamsburg, and surrounding areas. Racing shall not be permitted if, in the opinion of the Chief Referee and the Regatta Director, -course conditions endanger the safety of competitors, officials or volunteers. Once suspended, racing may only be resumed within the discretion of the Chief Referee and Regatta Director. Racing shall not be resumed for until at least thirty minutes after a weather suspension. Racing shall immediately



cease, and the course shall be evacuated if thunder is heard or lightning is observed by any race official or member of the Regatta Committee.

In the event of a course evacuation necessitated by thunder or lightning, regatta participants shall follow the instructions of officials concerning where to exit the course and where to seek shelter. In general, participants should immediately return to the launch and recovery area in the case of thunder unaccompanied by lightning. If lightning is observed, regatta participants should proceed to the nearest shore and seek shelter away from trees and other tall objects.

In the event the course is cleared for weather or other emergency, the Finish Judge shall be primarily responsible for determining, through consultation with coaches, that all crews have cleared the course. The Regatta Director shall require each coach to report to the Finish Judge when their crews have cleared the course. The Chief Referee shall be responsible for determining that all motor launches and occupants have been recovered from the race course.

VIII. FIRST AID AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT

WBC shall provide the following safety equipment at all regattas:

1. James City County EMT will be onsite during the event.
2. An adequate number of motor launches capable, when occupied, of maintaining a speed necessary to follow a race but without unnecessary wake. Each launch shall carry personal flotation devices for each occupant of the launch plus at least five extra PFDs. The Chief Referee shall expend their best efforts to provide launches whose hull design minimizes wake.
3. First aid station adequately stocked with a first aid kit for minor injuries with more serious conditions referred to the on site EMTs.
4. The communication equipment specified in Section V of this Plan.
5. The weather radio specified in Section VII of this Plan.
6. All Course Monitor/Referee launches shall be designated as safety launches. Each launch will carry a first aid kit and at least nine (9) additional PFDs. Each launch will be staffed by an experienced launch boat operator.

IX. WATER EMERGENCIES

All volunteers and officials shall be instructed to observe the following procedures for emergencies occurring at the Regatta: The first official on scene of an incident or emergency is designated as the **event first responder**.

Upon arrival at the emergency site, the first responder shall assume control of the scene, determine the nature of the emergency, and initiate a responsible course of action commencing with a head count of any victims in the water. Other official vessels should proceed immediately to the scene of the emergency but lay off, awaiting instructions from the first responder. Other boats in the area may also respond but remain in the perimeter of the emergency area awaiting instructions from the first responder.

If victims are in the water or if it cannot be determined whether victims are in the water, motor launches responding to the emergency should stop their engines and enter the area only after heads are counted and all crew members are accounted for. If racing crews are in the water, remember to account for the coxswain. Crews are encouraged to stay with the boat and use the



boat and oars as temporary flotation devices as needed. While awaiting recovery, crew members should be instructed to buddy up and monitor each other's safety. As promptly as possible after arriving at the scene of the emergency, the first responder shall notify the Regatta Director of the nature of the emergency via the VHF regatta operations channel or cell phone, request any required first aid supplies not available on the safety launch and, if necessary, request the activation of the EMS system.

If possible, communications should be shifted to the VHF channel designated for emergency communications at the first reasonable opportunity to support ground coordination. Marine channel 69 will be used for emergency communications. At the conclusion of the emergency, the Regatta Director is responsible for coordinating any additional actions required by the event.

X. LAND EMERGENCIES.

All volunteers and officials shall be instructed to observe the following procedures for emergencies occurring on the regatta grounds:

The regatta official nearest the emergency is designated as the first responder. If an official is not available, the nearest member of the WBC Board or Regatta Committee shall be the first responder. Upon arrival at the emergency site, the first responder shall assume control of the scene, determine the nature of the emergency, and initiate a responsible reaction. As promptly as possible after arriving at the scene of the emergency, the first responder shall notify if necessary, 911/EMT assistance and/or any required first aid supplies, and as soon as practical notify the Regatta Director. Once notified of the emergency, the Regatta Director shall be responsible for directing emergency crews to the scene of the emergency. Until emergency crews or medical assistance arrive at the emergency scene, the first responder shall direct efforts to assist and care for the victim. Within his or her discretion, the first responder may cede control of the scene to a person deemed more medically qualified to lend assistance. Nevertheless, it is extremely important that assistance remain under the direction of one person capable of coordinating a controlled operational response. At the conclusion of the emergency, the Regatta Director is responsible for coordinating any additional actions required by the event.

XI. SAFETY SENSITIVE POSITIONS

The following positions are designated as safety sensitive:

- ***Regatta Director***
- ***Regatta Secretary***
- ***Launch and Recovery Dockmasters***
- ***Chief Referee***
- ***Race Course officials assigned to boats***

All volunteers assigned to safety sensitive positions shall receive special instruction concerning specific safety responsibilities for those positions.

XII. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS for the Williamsburg/Chickahominy River Regatta

- The catamaran launches or privately owned official vessels that can hold more people than 3 additional people will plan to return rowers to the CRP boat launch dock (Gordon's Creek). If medical assistance is required, launch drivers should land at the designated emergency landings noted in Section IV and meet James City County EMT that will be onsite. Advise the Regatta Director via VHF where they will dock.



- The Safety launches covering the final 1000 meters of the race will bring injured rowers to the recovery dock (downstream floating dock anchored to beach; see map below).
- A power source will be available to support use of weather monitoring equipment at the Regatta Office.
- The Regatta Director will ensure all required documentation by the management of CRP of injuries and/or accidents related to the Regatta is provided.
- The Regatta Director will ensure all additional safety requirements for the Chickahominy Riverfront Park, as directed by the representatives of James City County, are observed by the participating/registered crew teams and regatta visitors.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Compliance with this plan is mandatory for the Beak of the Chick and the Head of the Chick Regattas. This plan will be made available to all coaches, officials, and volunteers prior to the event.

Regatta Director: Bruce Lifka 305-582-1706 (or future designated official)



COURSE MAP

Williamsburg Boat Club: *Beak of the Chick* 2023



