

Walton & Weybridge Regatta 8th June 2024

SAFETY PLAN

Assessment of risk to health and/or safety to persons:

- On the river; or
- By the river and affected by the conduct of the race on the river.

These persons may be categorised as follows:

1. Persons competing in a race (crews).
2. Event officials supervising the racing.
3. Crews proceeding to and from a race.
4. Others assisting the organisers.
5. Others navigating on the river.
6. Others using the enclosure and banks, towpaths and footpaths.

Related documents:

- Regatta Emergency Response Plan:
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/EmergencyResponsePlan2024-1.pdf>
- Regatta “Instructions to Competitors”:
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/SafetyAndInstructions2023b.pdf>
- Course Map and Circulation Pattern:
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/map2023.pdf>
- Main Regatta Site Plan:
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/siteplan2023a.pdf>
- Regatta “Instructions for Officials”
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/UmpiresInstructions2023.pdf>
- Welfare Statement:
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/WelfareStatement2024-1.pdf>

The Overarching Safety Plan:

All competitors, coaches, officials and all those assisting the organisers shall:

1. Except when the Race Rules state otherwise, **observe the River Thames byelaws**. The key elements for boats involved in Walton & Weybridge Regatta can be summarised as:
 - Keep to starboard (boat/cox’s right).
 - If you think you are at risk of colliding head on with a boat heading towards you, move to starboard (boat/cox’s right).
 - Keep a good look-out at all times.
 - Implement the provisions of the British Rowing’s Rules of Racing and RowSafe – Safety advice for rowers, clubs and competitions (“RowSafe”).
2. **Regatta Jurisdiction:** Walton Bridge and the ‘Regatta Warning’ signs above Sunbury Weir mark the boundaries of Walton and Weybridge Regatta. Within this area umpires, marshals and rescue launch teams will be exercising their skills to minimise risk to all crews and maximise safety. There is sufficient space for adequate warming up and cooling down. Crews that feel they need to paddle above Walton Bridge must clearly understand that they do so entirely at their own risk and that in so doing they are leaving the Regatta Area and the associated safety benefits.
3. **Navigation Channel:** Crews paddling to the start are to keep to the starboard (bow) side of the Navigation Channel, proceeding slowly but without stopping or overtaking. The Environment Agency insist that river traffic using the navigation channel must not be unduly impeded; any crew seen to violate these instructions will be given an official warning.
4. There is a **small weir (Tumbling Bay)** just upstream of Walton Rowing Club and your attention is drawn to it as a potential hazard.

5. **Practice starts** in the navigation channel are STRICTLY FORBIDDEN and may incur an official warning. They are allowed above the start having due regard for other river traffic.
6. **Crews arriving at the Start** must proceed past it, keeping to the Middlesex bank, until they are above the Regatta Warning Sign. Then, after careful scrutiny and when safe to do so, cross the river to the Surrey side and wait by the Walton Marina pontoons until called forward by the Start Marshal.
7. **Be observant** and aware of the risks related to use of the river for the purpose of competitive racing and of the need to prevent accidents at all times.
8. Comply with all requests and instructions issued by the Race Committee and its officials and, or the Environment Agency's officers, designed to prevent accident, injury and or ensure the safety and welfare of those involved with or affected by the conduct of the race.
9. Ensure as best they may that each person taking part has been assessed and trained to the level of competency required – particularly with relation to capsizes – by British Rowing and the race to enable them to safely compete in the race or to undertake the supervision of those taking part in the race.

First aid facilities are provided in the Regatta Enclosure. **Regatta Safety Services** will be in attendance with two fully equipped safety boats provided with radios on the regatta's network.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Because of the changing nature of the river and its environment, the quantification of risk identified in this assessment is to be regarded as dynamic and a direct factor of those conditions prevailing both at the start of the race and during each part of it.

References: A. Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing; B. BS8800 1996

Risk Level Estimator

Likelihood of harm	Severity of Harm		
	Slight harm	Moderate Harm	Extreme harm
Very Unlikely	Very low risk	Low risk	Medium risk
Unlikely	Low risk	Low risk	Medium risk
Likely	Medium risk	Medium risk	High risk
Very likely	Medium risk	High risk	Very high risk

Risk Based Control Plan

Risk Level	Action and Timescale
1. Very low risk	No action required.
2. Low risk	No additional controls are required. Consideration may be given to a more effective solution or improvement.
3. Medium risk	Efforts should be made to reduce the risk. Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period. Where the moderate risk is associated with harmful/serious consequences further assessment may be necessary to establish more precisely the likelihood of harm as a basis for determining the need for improved control measures.
4. High risk	The activity should not be started until the risk has been reduced. Considerable resources may have to be allocated to reduce the risk. Where the risk involves activity already in progress, urgent action should be taken.
5. Very high risk	Activity should not be started or continued until the risk has been reduced. If it is not possible to reduce risk even with unlimited resources, activity has to remain prohibited.

Risks on the Walton Reach

Risk	Probability of harm VU/U/L/VL	Severity SH/MH/E H	Risk Level	<u>Planned Action to Control Risk</u>
Fast river conditions	Likely	Moderate Harm	3. Medium risk	<p>The Safety Adviser will take advice from the Environment Agency during the week before the regatta on their assessment of likely race conditions. The Regatta Race Committee, Chairman and Safety Adviser will review the actual conditions on-site prior to the regatta. Depending on the severity of the river conditions they may decide to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorten the course to reduce marshalling problems at the start caused by the fast and uneven currents; • Cancel any event, e.g. those involving novice and junior crews; • Cancel the Regatta.
Damage and injury resulting from collision between crews and between crews and fixed objects	Likely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	<p>Bow balls, heel restraints and buoyancy compartments will be inspected by Control Commission prior to going afloat to race. Control Commission will visually check buoyancy aids. Competitors and coaches are responsible for ensuring that their boats are safe and are prepared to the required standards at all times.</p>
Capsize during a race	Likely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	<p>Two fully manned safety launches are on duty during the race programme. All Bank Umpires, Starter, Start Marshals and Safety Launches are linked by radio. Umpires are equipped with loud hailers to summon assistance. Control Commission will check cox's life jackets prior to going afloat to race.</p>
Sudden bad weather causing unrowable and/or dangerous conditions	Unlikely	Moderate harm	2. Low risk	<p>The Regatta Race Committee may suspend racing if conditions become dangerous.</p>
Injury or illness to competitor or official on the land, including on the landing stage.	Unlikely	Moderate harm	2. Low risk	<p>Marshal or Control Commission to alert Red Cross crew stationed near the Finishing Umpire's Tent.</p>

Crew being unable to avoid Tumbling Bay weir	Very unlikely	Extreme harm	3. Medium risk	Crews are warned of the danger in their instructions. Two fully manned safety launches are on duty during the race programme. All Bank Umpires and safety launches are linked by radio. Umpires are equipped with loud hailer to summon assistance. Bank Umpire 3 is instructed to keep an eye on crews approaching Tumbling Bay
Collision in boating area, particularly between crews finishing and crews setting off	Likely	Slight harm	3. Medium risk	Marshals positioned in the boating area will advise crews waiting to embark and disembark and the Finish Umpire will keep watch over crews finishing.
Collisions in marshalling area for the start	Likely	Slight harm	3. Medium risk	Start Marshals will control the position of crews waiting at the start.
Collision with river craft, particularly at Shepperton and Walton Marinas	Likely	Slight harm	3. Medium risk	Marshals, umpires, start timekeeper and all other regatta officials are advised to look out for the possibility of collisions and take action as necessary to prevent them. The Safety Plan includes a warning for competitors.
Collision with swans	Unlikely	Slight harm	2. Low risk	Most swans on the stretch are penned during the regatta but may move onto the course. (Secretary to be contacted if a swan has sustained an injury.)
Attack by swans	Unlikely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	Competitors who suffer an attack by a swan are advised not to leave their boat, particularly not to jump overboard, but to paddle away as quickly as possible. They should consider heading for the bank or to where there are people able to offer assistance at chasing it away.
Those manning stakeboats, the Starter and Start Timekeeper, personnel laying or taking in the course and those on maintenance duties could fall in the river	Unlikely	Slight harm	2. Low risk	All regatta personnel in boats to wear buoyancy aids (a suitable number have been purchased by the regatta).
Construction of umpiring tower inadequate leading to collapse	Unlikely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	Person in charge of construction crew to ensure it is securely fixed.
Collision or capsize whilst safety launches are dealing with other incidents	Unlikely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	Co-ordinating Umpire to prioritise the incidents and deploy the safety launches as appropriate.
Accident caused by cyclist on the towpath	Unlikely	Slight harm	2. Low risk	Cyclists will be advised to dismount in the area between Miskin's Wharf and Walton Rowing Club.

Accident caused by trestles constituting a trip hazard	Unlikely	Slight harm	2. Low risk	Control Commission to keep a watchful eye on the boating area and Umpires checking boats to be briefed to do the same.
Accident caused by trailer	Unlikely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	Drivers of trailer towing vehicles must exercise due caution when manoeuvring in the boat park area and onto the road, using a second person to guide them safely when reversing.
Sunburn/heat exhaustion	Likely	Slight harm	3. Medium risk	Competitors are advised to take precautions on sunny days to avoid extremes of temperature. Safety launches and first aid facilities are available throughout the regatta
Water borne diseases	Unlikely	Extreme harm	3. Medium risk	All capsized competitors will be assessed by Medical Cover before recommending further action. Anti-bacterial hand washes and showers will be available for competitors' use.
Accident caused by cars	Unlikely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	Cars and towing vehicles are directed to use the Xcel Sports Hub car park, Waterside Drive, KT12 2JP near Elmbridge Leisure Centre for parking.

Regatta cancellation

The state of the river and its environment will be examined by the Race Committee, together with the Event Rowing Safety Advisor, in the days leading up to the event and on the morning of racing to permit the most immediate assessment of each risk to be determined and make possible the identification of others evident at that time.

Factors which will be assessed include (but are not necessarily limited to):

1. The rate of flow of the river and any forecast change thereof.
2. The weather conditions and forecast, including risks of rain, lightning and fog.
3. The direction and strength of the wind and any forecast change thereof.
4. The condition of the ground in the boating areas.

The decision to proceed with the Event will also take note of the opinions of the Environment Agency with reference to the following criteria used on our stretch of the river:

- If the Environment Agency's River Conditions website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/river-thamescurrent-river-conditions> shows Strong stream warning (RED), the regatta will not take place. If it shows Stream increasing warning (YELLOW INCREASING), it is unlikely to take place, although other factors such as flow rate will be taken into account and warning boards for the stretches higher up the river. If it shows Stream decreasing warning (YELLOW DECREASING), there is a greater chance of the regatta running than on Yellow Increasing, but other factors are still key. It is noted that in general on this stretch, the river goes up to Yellow at a flow rate of 120 m³/s and Red at 150 m³/s, but it can go back down to Yellow at a rate faster than this.
- For flow rate at Walton see: <https://www.gaugemap.co.uk/#!Map/Summary/1224/1352>

The Race Committee Chair will keep a record of all decisions made in relation to the prevailing conditions and any decision to proceed with the event. The examination by the Race Committee should be repeated before the commencement of racing in each subsequent division and take account of any incident that may have occurred previously.

Adverse conditions during the event

In the event of adverse conditions possibly putting competitors at risk once the event has commenced (e.g. strong stream conditions, lightning, high winds, etc.), the Race Committee will take the appropriate action (e.g. shorten or adjust the course, suspend racing and/or cancel the regatta).

In the event of lightning, the Safety Advisor and the Race Committee Chair will measure the length of the period of time which elapses between each successive visible lightning strike and the sound of its associated thunder and, immediately this period is found to be less than 30 seconds, racing will be suspended completely and all persons advised to take cover away from trees and to hold rowing equipment (e.g. blades) in the horizontal position.

The Race Committee may consider resuming the Race once the length of the period of time between a visible lightning strike and the sound of its associated thunder has lengthened to over 30 seconds, and has either maintained at period for at least 30 minutes or has ceased altogether, and all other conditions permit.

Agencies and others affected or potentially affected by the conduct of the Race:

- British Rowing
- Environment Agency
- Borough of Elmbridge
- Surrey Police
- Metropolitan Police
- South East Coast Ambulance Service • London Ambulance Service
- Other River Users.

Further links:

- The British Rowing's "Rules of Racing" and "Row Safe": British Rowing Almanack and <https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/>
- The "Notice to River Users" issued by the Environment Agency giving details of the event, instructions to other river users and providing for the establishment of a buoyed regatta course: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/river-thames-restrictions-and-closures>
- The Environment Agency's River Thames: Navigation, Licensing and General Byelaws 1993 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-navigation-licensing-and-generalbyelaws-1993>
- The Calendar of Events issued by the River User Group for Reach 16: <http://thamesrug8.org.uk/Notices-Documents-Calendars/>