

Mercer Masters' Regatta Safety Plan

Introduction

The following regatta safety plan includes procedures and processes that will be followed in order to eliminate or minimize the physical, fiscal and social hazards to all competitors, club members and officers. The regatta safety plan is designed to meet the safety requirements for regattas and must be read in conjunction with the NZRA and ARA rules of racing and the Safety Code.

The safety plan will be shared with regatta officers and an appropriate safety briefing with the regatta officials and competitors will be given prior to the start of the regatta.

Participation

Clubs affiliated to NZRA whose entries have been accepted by the regatta organizing committee.

Programme

Schedule of standard rowing events as viewable on the rowIT website

Regatta Personnel

Mercer Rowing Club assisted by the Legion of Rowers is the host, with personnel from local clubs, under the direction of

Event Director – Tricia Balle
Chief Umpire –
Safety Officer – Phil Turton
ARA Rep –

Facilities

The Mercer clubhouse is situated on the western side of the Waikato River (across the river from the Mercer Truck-stop). A second clubhouse (Counties Manukau) is situated on the opposite side of the river from the Mercer sheds, behind the truck-stop. A number of rowing clubs can compete from this side of the river and use parking facilities around the truck-stop including adjacent roadside parking. The Mercer clubhouse can be reached on foot across the Mercer Bridge from the eastern side of the river.

The remainder of the clubs will compete from the Mercer clubhouse; boat trailers will be parked near to the clubhouse, and limited parking will be available on site. Parking on the Mercer Ferry Road outside the clubhouse is strongly discouraged due to safety issues.

Mercer Rowing Club clubhouse facilities

There are 3 male and 3 female toilets, and showers, along with one disabled toilet/shower. The large clubroom is capable of sheltering well over 100 people from heavy rain or heat. There is a large kitchen to provide refreshments and lunch for spectators, competitors and officials; facilities include a commercial-grade oven, fridge and freezer, electric water heater, and dishwasher.

Equipment

Skiffs supplied by participating clubs for their own use; will be checked by marshals for compliance prior to use. Damage to equipment will be at the risk of the competing clubs.

Participants

Will be selected by their clubs to participate in this event. It is that club's responsibility to ensure that each athlete is fit to compete, and that the boats they use at the regatta are to the safety standard required by both Rowing NZ and the Auckland Rowing Association, (in particular compliant bow-balls, heel ties, and quick release ties/velcro straps for shoes).

Identified Risks

The following risks associated with the regatta have been identified.

Personal (competitors, officials, spectators)

- Drowning – due to boats overturning, particularly in the event of rough weather
- Over Use Injury
- Broken Limbs
- Exhaustion
- Laceration – collisions on and off water
- Sunburn
- Dehydration
- Hypothermia
- Infections of any open wounds by contact with Waikato River water
- Pedestrian/Traffic accident – much of the movement between the clubhouses and the truck-stop will be by foot, across roads and bridges
- Injury due to windage (tents/umbrellas etc. becoming loose in the wind). All such items must be operated to manufacturer specs and secured appropriately for the weather conditions.

Equipment

- Sinking – collision
- Broken oars – collision
- Fire – collision
- Property damage to clubhouse and rowing equipment

Environment

- Sinking
- Hypothermia
- Car Accidents
- Fire
- Infections

Other/Fiscal

- Equipment Damage of loss
- Theft
- Property damage – clubrooms
- Property damage – visitors' equipment and vehicles
- Property damage – adjacent property
- Loss of reputation or goodwill

Primary Task for the Regatta Planning Committee

- Create a risk management culture among regatta officials, club and visiting club participants and their coaches, support personnel and spectators

Prevention Planning

The following duties have been identified as applying to regatta officials.

Duty to Plan a Safe Regatta

- A planning team is in place with understanding of responsibility and duty to host a safe regatta.

Notification of the host and sanctioning authorities

- Auckland Rowing Association, Rowing NZ

Warn of the inherent risk associated with the activity and the environment

- Rowers
- Coaches
- Officials
- Spectators

Instruct all officials, coaches, participants and spectators

- That this regatta is held on a river, not a lake. Rowers need to be aware of the constant current at all times as it does require extra vigilance, especially when returning to the bank.
- At the *START LINE* remind rowers to keep rowing against the current just to stay stationery. An extra marshal is to assist with this. A line of buoys will be in position at the far (downriver) end of the course, beyond which rowers must not go.
- After crossing the *FINISHING LINE*, continue to row upstream under the bridge until in a safe position to spin around without drifting back through the bridge. A boat marshal will be in position to assist with this.
- Return to the bank slowly downstream, keeping out of the way of racing traffic, then point the bow of the boat into the bank perpendicular to the shore. A boat marshal will grab the bow and allow the stern to swing around downstream so that the boat ends up parallel to the bank. *DO NOT ATTEMPT TO LAND BOW FIRST DOWNSTREAM* due to lack of control.
- Warn spectators/rowers of road traffic as they cross the bridge and when walking between the clubs

Supervision of Participants, Coaches, Officials and Spectators

Designated shore-based Regatta Safety Officer to coordinate with and provide a clear safety briefing for all regatta officials and:

- On-water safety officials (river traffic, water conditions, and weather)
- Equipment safety officer
- Grounds (parking, spectators, tents) safety officer
- Launch ramp safety officer

Provision of Safe Facilities

- Beach checked for protruding/sharp objects
- Sand/metal trucked in and spread to create easy access beaches for launch and landing areas
- Course marked out with buoys

Provision of Safe Equipment

- Minimum of 5 boats and drivers to be provided in order to cover entire course, with one boat at each end of the course to supervise as listed above.
- All safety boats to be at least 3m in length to allow easier rescue from the water if conditions become rough
- Boats equipped with safety equipment as detailed in the Appendix
- 12 walkie-talkies hired to coordinate and issue clear instructions to on-water and with both sides of the river on land key personnel
- ARA safety boat hired for the day
- Boat drivers to have taken safety boat training course at minimum or have good experience operating boats.

Provision of First Aid and Medical Facilities

- First Aid supplies checked and restocked
- Maritime NZ qualified medic present all day, in an ambulance or equivalent, supervising on and off water safety operation.
- Certified First Aiders on site
- Emergency vehicle access to be kept clear of vehicles/boat trailers, as far as the car park outside clubrooms.
- Volunteer fire station is located on the Counties Manukau side of the river.

Prevention Procedures

- Notification will be emailed to all coaches and managers to pass on to rowers several days prior to the regatta.
- Full instructions given on the day to coaches/club captains/managers and on the public address system
- Similar safety meeting held prior to regatta for boat drivers
- Boats checked for heel restraints, bow balls, cox lifejackets at launching
- On-water officials will ensure that rule compliance is upheld and events are safe

Response Planning

The following procedures have been agreed upon to be followed in the case of accident or emergency and will be communicated to competitors and officials before the regatta.

- 1) Minor Injury: The injured party sees his or her club official for assistance or proceeds to the designated first aid provider
- 2) Serious injury:
 - a. Stay calm
 - b. Administer First Aid
 - c. Notify onsite medic (do not move in case of danger)
 - d. Notify club officials/contact relatives
- 3) Serious injury e.g. broken bones or severe lacerations
 - a. Stay calm
 - b. Administer First Aid
 - c. Notify onsite medic immediately
 - d. Clear area and access routes
 - e. Call 111 and request assistance from ambulance (and if necessary police or fire)
 - f. Notify WorkSafe NZ and Police within 24 hours
 - g. Contact insurance

File accident/incident report for all injuries.

On-water Rescue Procedures

The nearest boat shall proceed to the crew in difficulty. The radio is to be used if extra help is needed using the words "rescue, rescue, rescue" and clearly describing the situation as well as the current location. Those boats close by should proceed as quickly as possible to render assistance.

Other rescue/safety boats must be vigilant to fill the gap left by the responding boats, so as not to create a gap in service for the other crews.

Officials to refrain from using RTs until the rescue has been completed. When the crew has been rescued, the person coordinating the rescue is to advise the Chief Umpire: "Rescue complete, course clear"

Appendix

Safety boats shall carry the following safety aids:

- A bailer and, for inflatable rubber dinghies, a suitable inflation pump and a spare inflation valve
- A sound signaling and warning device
- A grab line at least 15m (50ft) long with a large knot tied in one end to assist throwing (ideally a purpose-made rescue/heaving line or throw bag)
- 10 (ten) approved buoyance aids or PFDs
- A basic first aid kit
- A sharp knife in carrying sheath
- A paddle
- Simple handholds fixed to the side of the launch / safety boat to give help to any person being rescued and provide self-help should the driver fall overboard
- Engine cut-out lanyard device, accessible to the driver at all times
- Anchor and line
- Radio

Notes for Boat Drivers

A competent boat driver

- Wears a life jacket and ensures that PFDs are on board.
- Is familiar with regatta traffic rules, course safety procedures and any impending weather conditions.
- Is in complete control of the boat allocated at all times under the instruction of the race umpire.
- Has a basic understanding of the umpire's duties and is a second pair of eyes for the umpire to ensure safety. The umpire may be watching 2 crews that are close together and struggling. The boat driver may notice another situation occurring and point this out to the umpire. The umpire and driver are a team.
- Ensures that crews, whether racing or not, are not unduly disturbed by boat wash. Always travel back to the Start in the centre of the course so the wake is evenly distributed.
- When stopping to move off the course, stops first to allow the wash to flow under the boat evenly, before moving off the course at right angles
- Stays at idle speed when returning to the Start until clear of the spectator bank.
- Does not carry passengers.
- Responds to any emergency on the water if the closest vessel, until a Safety boat arrives and takes over.
- Stays with the wheel at all times while the motor is running
- Turns the motor off immediately if a rower is in the water nearby, or when rowers are being rescued onto the umpire's boat.

During racing, the best way for umpires to get the attention of a crew is to move behind them and then hail them. This is not always possible to be done in time. However, if possible the boat driver should move behind a crew that is out of its lane when the umpire asks. Sometimes just making the move toward the lane of an offending crew is enough and they will self-correct their course.

At what distance should the umpire's boat follow? This does not have a hard and fast answer. Umpires need to be within an appropriate distance to both get the attention of and correct an offending crew. The use of a white flag and a megaphone are used for this. An umpire's boat should never be so close to a crew as to interfere with the crew's steering (i.e., coxless boats, when the stroke of the boat is steering using an object on the bank) or to interfere with a crew's communication (i.e., noise or fumes). The umpire's boat needs to stay within hailing distance of the leading crew. If this means passing a crew, then please be guided by the race umpire.