



Coastal /Open Water Rowing & Safety Considerations

Nov 25, 2023

Rowing BC umpire seminar





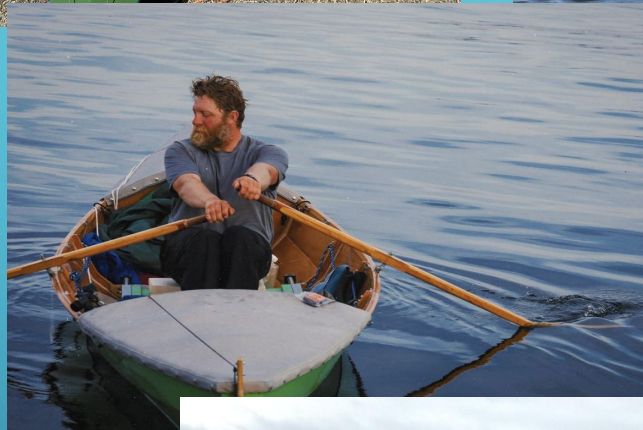
Disclaimer – the following has not been vetted or endorsed by Rowing BC or Rowing Canada Aviron. The information presented is based on my experiences and reflect my opinions as an athlete, parent, volunteer, adventurer, health care professional, rowing umpire and year round ocean swimmer

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- The background is a blue gradient with decorative white circuit-like lines and nodes in the corners.
- **WHAT IS COASTAL ROWING**
 - **SAFETY and SELF-RELIANCE**
 - **THE ROWING EXPERIENCE**

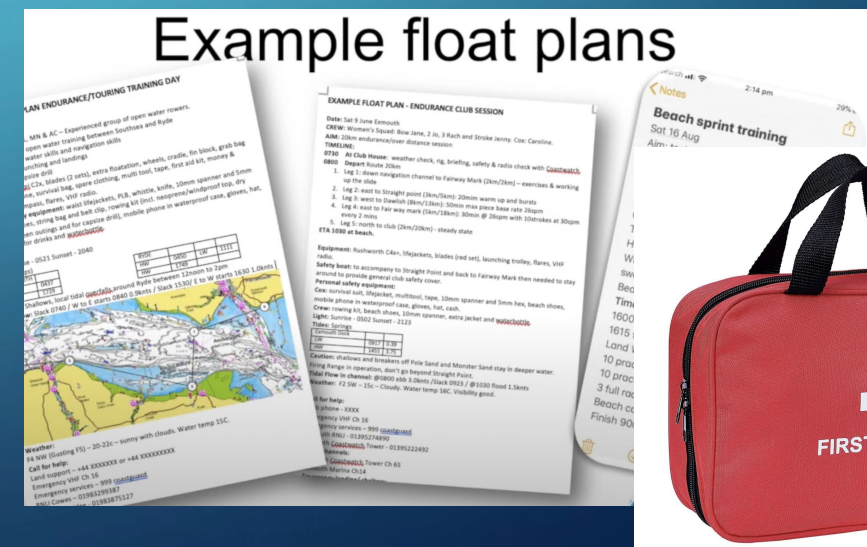
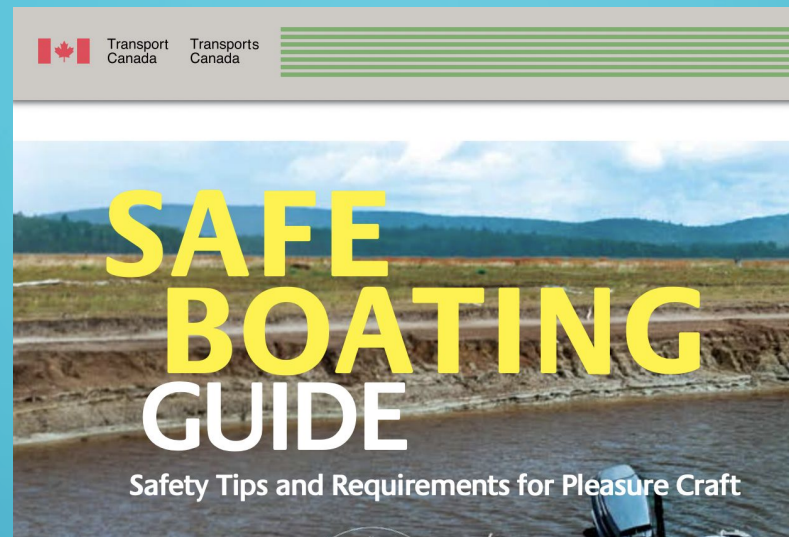
ROWBOATS COASTAL?



WHAT THESE BOATS HAVE IN COMMON



SELF-RELIANCE



WHAT IS SAFETY?



SELF-RELIANCE: PRACTICE



Credit: Full Stroke Photography

HOW COLD IS THE OCEAN? THE LAKE?

VICTORIA: 6 – 13 C

VANCOUVER: 5 – 13 C

HALIFAX: -1 – 20 C



ASSESSING RISK

Hazard	Likelihood	Consequence	RISK	Control Measures
People				
Injury and/or illness	Low	Medium	Low	Physical preparation, pay close attention to health/hygiene.
Team dynamic/conflict	Low	Medium	Low	Regular communication, positive reinforcement.
Other boats (e.g., collision)	Very Low	High	Medium	Promote visibility; give all boats wide berth; use radio.
Fatigue/exhaustion	Medium	Medium	Medium	Physical & mental preparation; eat and drink regularly.
Poor judgment/optimism bias	Low	High	Medium	Knowledge, previous race experience, patience, joint decisions.
Hypothermia	Low	Very High	High	Adequate, layered clothing + dry-suits; regular check-in with team mate.
Slips and falls launching/landing	High	Medium	High	Special caution when landing/launching boat.
Environment				
Grizzly Bear encounter	Low	Low	Low	Site selection and best camping practices; bear repellent.
Heavy surf landing	Low	Medium	Low	Monitor sea-state; choose protected landings where possible.
Logs, rocks or other obstacles	Low	Medium	Low	Maintain vigilance, especially .near shoreline; use charts; watch for boomers
Unmanageable currents	Medium	Medium	Medium	Schedule near slack; avoid with opposing wind.
High winds	Medium	Medium	Medium	Review weather forecasts regularly.
Challenging sea state/capsize	Medium	Medium	Medium	Skill development; route planning; monitor weather forecasts.
Equipment				
Digital chart failure	Low	Low	Low	Back-up paper charts.
VHF Radio failure	Low	Med	Low	Carry second radio; adequate charging capabilities.
Insufficient food/water	Low	Med	Low	Maintain/monitor food inventory and water supplies.
PLB (ResQLink) failure	Low	High	Medium	Fresh batteries; check regularly for damage, moisture intrusion.
Catastrophic hull failure	Very Low	Very High	High	Avoid severe conditions; reinforce and monitor known weaknesses.

Risk
Assessment
courtesy of
Ian Graeme



WHY WE ROW

WHAT NEXT ?

- I ask you to be **curious** about coastal or open water rowing. Yes it can be scary for some, learning about currents, tide, weather and bigger bodies of water. It can also be so inspiring and rewarding.
- Remember the diverse reasons that people row and why we umpire
- Safety is a huge topic. Let's embrace safety with a thoughtful, **creative** and comprehensive approach so that even with longer events we can be safe in a way that makes these events feasible
- Reach out to Janice Mason with questions: jemcity@shaw.ca