



SAFETY AT BEDFORD AMATEUR REGATTA

9th May 2026

The Bedford Amateur Regatta's primary concern is the safety of all competitors, volunteers, and visitors attending the event. This document outlines our comprehensive safety plan to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone involved. We hope you have a successful and memorable day of racing.

Hugh Maltby
Hon. Regatta Secretary



INTRODUCTION

We hope you have an enjoyable and successful day of racing. With your help and cooperation, we can ensure that everyone concerned can have a safe experience at Bedford Amateur Regatta.

The Regatta is held under the rules of British Rowing and the [British Rowing Rules of Racing](#). This Safety Plan incorporates key points from the British Rowing publication **RowSafe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing**, which can be found [HERE](#). The regatta safety plan serves as a local extension, for the duration of the event.

A copy of this Safety Plan is filed with British Rowing, the local council, and our medical professionals. It is also distributed in advance to all umpires, marshals, and helpers participating in the event to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to safety.

This safety plan should also be read in conjunction with the *Regatta map, officials' positions and hazard map* document which highlights the positioning of officials and the main hazards on the river.

REGATTA CONTROL

The regatta is managed throughout the day from the Regatta Control, which is located at the finish line beside the Suspension Bridge in the white tent. Control is in constant communication via the radio network with all umpires, marshals, helpers and safety boats.

FIRST AID

Our medical team, Ambulance Response Services Ltd., will be present throughout the entire Regatta to provide first aid and emergency assistance. Their control vehicle will be located next to the regatta enclosure, and an additional response vehicle will be stationed in the boat trailer area near Longholme Lake.

Safety boats, manned by trained personnel, will patrol the course continuously during the event.

- **Safety Boat 1:** Typically stationed near the start of the course.
- **Safety Boat 2:** Positioned near the finish line.

All umpires will be equipped with loudhailers and essential safety equipment, including throw-bags and emergency blankets.

For effective communication, safety boats, umpires, and other regatta officials will use radios operating on the designated channels.

SAFETY PROCEDURES AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

The **Regatta Notes for Competitors** are distributed to all coaches and club officials via email before the event. They are also accessible on the regatta website. These notes highlight potential hazards and provide guidance on actions to minimise the risk of accidents.

To further reduce the likelihood of collisions, detailed navigation instructions are included in the event regulations. These instructions are communicated to officials and the safety launch crew to ensure consistency and awareness.

Additionally, a comprehensive plan of the course is prominently displayed in the control tent for easy reference by all participants and staff.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Regatta Safety Officer will review and implement the latest guidance from the Government, Public Health England (PHE), and British Rowing leading up to the event. The event's first aiders will also be consulted to ensure that we are fully informed of the latest advice and guidance on health and safety.



COMPETITORS' AND COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

While we strive to provide a safe system for this event, each competitor, coach, and competing club also has a duty of care to themselves and others:

- Ensure their own safety, remembering they have a duty of care to themselves and any third party, both on the water and on land.
- Ensure that any equipment (e.g. boats, blades, buoyancy aids) is safe and complies with the standards set out in the Rules of Racing and RowSafe. Note: Spot checks may be conducted by regatta officials to check bow balls, heel restraints, quick-release mechanisms, and coxswains' life jackets.
- Ensure their boats meet the buoyancy requirements set out in RowSafe.
- Strictly observe any local rules or traffic/circulation patterns, as well as RowSafe provisions.
- Decide whether they are competent to use the watercourse in the prevailing weather conditions, either individually or with their coach/crew.
- Wear appropriate clothing/protection suitable for the conditions on the day.
- Coaches following crews on bikes must use the enclosure side and **must** be considerate of members of the public on the footpaths.

EQUIPMENT

It is the responsibility of each crew to ensure that the equipment they are using is safe and complies with the requirements set out in British Rowing's Rules of Racing (see [HERE](#)). Coxes arriving at the start without lifejackets will be disqualified. Coxes of front-loading boats must ensure their life jackets allow for a quick and easy escape from their boats.

All boats must have secure bow balls, heel restraints, and watertight buoyancy chambers. Coxswains must wear a life jacket or buoyancy

aid correctly and be familiar with its method of operation. In front-loading boats, coxswains must wear manually operated gas inflation life jackets. Inspections will be conducted, and any omissions may lead to disqualification.

CIRCULATION PATTERN

The majority of visiting crews will boat from Longholme island. All boats should stay on the starboard (bowside) side of the river when making their way to the start (that's the cox's right). There is an island between Star Club and County Bridge - all crews moving upstream must stay to the **right** (bowside) of the Island. Be aware that some crews will be boating from Star Club.

BOATING AREA

The majority of boats use the hard in front of the school's boathouse to boat, as a result this area can become heavily congested with competitors, boats and blades. Crews should use the blade racks provided and avoid leaving empty water bottles or shoes on the hard, as these become a trip hazard. Please note that the footpaths are frequently used by members of the public who will not be used to large numbers of boats/rowers moving in the vicinity of the boating area.

RIVER HAZARDS

Crews should be aware of the island downstream of Bedford RC and the two weirs: one south of Bedford RC and the other located below the finish at the Schools' Boathouse. Crews are advised to stay in the middle of the river after passing Bedford RC to avoid the main weir. If the spring has been particularly warm, expect some weed in the water.

A course map is available in the competitor notes and at the Control Tent.

Suspension Bridge

When approaching the bridge going upstream to the start beware of crews racing

downstream and listen at all times to the marshals in this area.

Town Bridge

Only the main arches of the Town Bridge may be used during **rac**ing. See illustration below;



Crews moving upstream to the start must use the far-right hand arch of the Town Bridge. Be aware of crews racing downstream when exiting the arch.

INCIDENTS OF COLLISION AND CAPSIZE

The entire course is clearly visible to both umpires and marshals, who are strategically positioned at key points along the route. Umpires' stations are equipped with throw lines, and safety boats continuously patrol the course to ensure a swift response in case of emergencies.

In the event of a capsize, remain with your boat and follow the instructions of the umpires and safety boat crew without hesitation. **STAY WITH THE BOAT!**

In the navigation channel: Any boat that is damaged and unable to proceed should be moved to the side of the river, out of the stream, and with enough space for other boats to pass.

Above the start / below the finish: Any boat that is damaged and unable to proceed should be moved to the appropriate side of the river, allowing easy exit onto the bank.

On the course: Any boat that is damaged and unable to proceed should be moved to the side of the river. It is important to note that the only normal entry and exit points to the river are from the hard at the schools' boathouse, Bedford Rowing Club, and Star Club.

Umpires and marshals are responsible for paying particular attention to any incidents on the river. If a crew is involved in a collision,

suffers an injury that requires assistance, or if a crew member falls out of the boat, the official should summon a safety launch via radio. If the course becomes blocked, the official will also:

- Notify the start that no further races shall be started.
- Inform upstream umpires that any races already started, but upstream of the emergency, shall be stopped.

Any significant floating debris or "hazard" seen on the water should be reported to any regatta officials immediately. A Safety Boat may be deployed to clear the water and racing shall be suspended.

MARSHALLING

The marshalling rules are clear and straightforward—please refer to the Regatta circulation plan for further details. Umpires have the authority to stop any race if an unsafe situation arises.

Specifically, please ensure that you stay well into the bank as you approach the start area. Remain vigilant for other crews, and always follow the instructions provided by regatta officials.

Allow yourself plenty of time to reach the start line before your scheduled race time. The marshalling area can become congested, and movement may be slower than expected. It is advisable to allow at least 20 minutes to travel from the main boating area at Longholme Island to the start line.

Please listen carefully to the start marshals. They are experienced and familiar with both the event and the river, and their guidance is crucial to maintaining a smooth and safe race.

ACCIDENTS

If you observe an accident or incident, please report it immediately to the nearest official. The official will take appropriate action or alert the regatta safety services via radio, as needed.



Umpires, marshals, and other officials are the primary points of contact for reporting emergencies. Marshals will be easily identifiable by their high-visibility jackets, which they are required to wear at all times.

COMMUNICATIONS

Safety boats are provided with radios operating on the umpires' channel, to maintain contact with umpires when needed.

Radio etiquette shall be maintained at all times and only relevant event information shall be relayed by radio.

For clarity Marshals use channel 1 while Rescue, Control & Umpires are on channel 11.

The PA system shall also be used to make emergency and public announcements if necessary. Back up is provided via megaphones.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

In case of an emergency, the nearest Accident & Emergency (A&E) unit is Bedford Hospital (South Wing), located via Ampthill Road (A6). For precise location guidance, use the "invite.parent.galaxy" address on the what3words app.

***Emergency: Fire, Police, Ambulance: 999
from any telephone.***

Person in charge on the day: Hugh Maltby
Contact via regatta control at the Suspension Bridge or mobile:
07824 308099

Safety Officer: Simon White
Contact via regatta control at the Suspension Bridge or mobile:
07748 335046

Chairman of the Race Committee: Simon White
Contact via regatta control at the Suspension Bridge or mobile: **07748 335046**

Regatta First Aiders: Ambulance Response Services Ltd, contact via regatta control at the Suspension Bridge or via any official.

Ambulance Response Services Ltd, contact via control or via any official or mobile: **07904 040092**

Welfare Officer: Hugh Maltby, contact via regatta control at the Suspension Bridge.

Key Telephone Numbers

Telephones are situated at Bedford Rowing Club, Star Club, Schools' Boat House and at Russell Park, opposite the Schools' boathouse.

All positions are in radio contact with regatta control, Ambulance Response Services and the Chief Umpire.

Contact numbers:

Event Mobile: **07824 308099**

Schools' Boathouse: **01234 359076**

Bedford RC Clubhouse: **01234 353183**

Star Clubhouse: **01234 212070**

Please ensure you give sufficient access for an ambulance to get through along the path by Longholme boating lake.

EXTREME WEATHER OR OTHER THREATS

Approximately 1 hour before the start of the race the Regatta Safety Officer along with the Chairman of the Race Committee will inspect the course and surroundings for any obstructions or likely problems and assess the weather conditions.

The Regatta Safety Officer or Chairman of the Race Committee shall consider the forecast weather conditions.

Start control shall arrange for sun-protection, water and relief stake-boat volunteers in excessively hot or cold weather.

Where extreme weather conditions or other situations that could require the cancellation



or postponement of racing, either for the day or until the conditions change, the decision will be the responsibility of the Chairman of the Race Committee. The Chairman of the Race Committee or the Safety Advisor also reserve the right to amend this plan if weather or competition conditions on the day make this necessary. Amendments, postponement or cancellation will be published at Race Control and announced over the public address system.

In the case of lightning a risk warning will be broadcast on the PA system or via megaphone advising participants already on land to avoid moving boats and oars during the period of the storm. The message shall make clear whether or not racing could be resumed if conditions improve and whether crews already on the water should return immediately or complete their race first. As soon as the decision is made, every effort will be made to get all competitors and Safety boat crews ashore and safe as quickly as possible.

As for determining when things are safe, the Regatta will use the 30-30 rule. After you see lightning flash, count the number of seconds it takes until you can hear thunder crack. If the time is less than 30 seconds, you are still in danger and should stay in a safe place.

NOTE: If a marshal considers that it is unsafe for a crew to race in the prevailing conditions (wind or stream) then that crew may be stopped and withdrawn from the race in the interest of their own safety and the safety of other crews and officials.

PROTECTING CHILDREN

The organisers of the regatta prioritise the welfare and wellbeing of all children. Every junior competitor has the right to safety and protection. Any suspicions, concerns, or allegations of harm will be taken seriously and addressed swiftly and appropriately.

The Regatta Welfare Officer, will be in attendance throughout the event. They will be

available to assist if necessary. Should the need arise, please contact them at the regatta control, located at the finish line.

While the Regatta takes steps to ensure the safety of all competitors, the primary responsibility for the welfare of junior competitors lies with the competing clubs' coaches and officers, or the individual parents accompanying the children.

In the event that a junior competitor is involved in any incident, the responsible adult will be identified from the competitor's entry form. The named person will be called over the public address system, and their contact number, provided on the entry form, will be used to reach them.

It is the responsibility of the coach or parent accompanying the juniors to monitor their whereabouts at all times. Should any junior crew member go missing, the responsible adult must take immediate and appropriate action. In the first instance, a broadcast may be made over the public address system, or Race Control can be contacted. The named adult, or in their absence, the Regatta Chairman, will determine whether local police should be contacted in the case of a serious incident.

No individual, other than authorised Regatta Officials, Teachers, or Coaches who have been DBS-checked, will have access to personal contact details of junior competitors. Contact details will only be shared with those who need them for official purposes, such as coordinating stake boat arrangements or through parent liaison.

REPORTING

If anyone has concerns regarding welfare of children at the event these should, in the first instance be raised with the Welfare Officer. If the concern is considered to be a serious issue then it will be discussed with the Chairman of the Organising Committee, a decision will be made by as to the most appropriate course of action. This may include contacting the British



Rowing Child Welfare Officer, or in extreme cases Bedfordshire Police. If it is a minor issue then the Welfare Officer is able to take the appropriate action and will be reported back to the Chairman at a later date.

The crew contact details entered on the British Rowing Entry will be used to contact the adult responsible for any junior reportedly involved in an incident. It is therefore incumbent upon the person entering the crew to ensure that a usable contact number is included in the entry. No individual contact details for juniors will be held by the committee.

ADULT RESPONSIBILITY

Adults with responsibility for children entered in the event are expected to ensure that boating conditions are suitable. Adults – coaches and parents – are also reminded of the need for suitable clothing for the event, given that there is the possibility of a long wait before the start; crew coaches are further reminded that in rough conditions, it is they who must make the assessment of whether their crew can safely boat and race in the conditions - particularly so where there is a junior cox. Row Safe sections 1.4, 1.7, 1.8 and 3.2 are particularly relevant. The Junior Coaches of local Clubs, in association with parents, will be responsible for the safe arrival and departure of any Junior stake boat volunteers and result runners.

CONDUCT

All coaches, competitors and other participants should abide by British Rowing's Rules of Racing and any byelaws for the Event. Attention should be paid to the British Rowing Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy ([Here](#)) Clubs and schools are expected to have and implement their own child protection and welfare policies.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Given the nature of the event it is not possible to control all photography taking place at the

Event. Volunteers are advised to report any suspicious photography to the Welfare Officer who will take the appropriate action. All official photographers will have to register with the Organizing Committee before attending the event.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Regatta's Emergency Action Plan outlines the mitigation measures and procedures to follow in the event of an emergency that poses a general threat to Regatta participants.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency vehicle access to the Schools boathouse area is via the small white foot bridge close to Longholme Way – "digit.radio.making" using what3words.

Access to the Regatta enclosure is off Cardington Road via Chethams and over Duckmill bridge – "torn.manage.under" via what3words.

Responsibility in the Event of an Emergency

Responsibility for responding to emergencies lies with the Race Committee, who will always carry radios during the event.

Actions in the Event of a Medical Emergency

The nearest radio-equipped Race official at the scene will take initial control and assess the situation. If necessary, they will contact emergency services. Once immediate life-saving measures are in place, Race Control (if not already aware) will be notified. If emergency assistance is required, the official will call **Code-Red** (urgent medical issue) or **Code-Blue** (non-urgent issue) on their radio. All other radio users will observe radio silence and follow instructions from the official in charge. For other situations, such as obstacles or debris, normal radio protocol should be followed.



Initial Incident Report for Code-Red

The initial incident report for a Code-Red should briefly include the following details:

- What is needed (e.g., first aid, higher medical support, or a safety boat)
- The location (e.g., stretch of the river or bankside)
- A description of what has happened
- The number of casualties
- The severity of injuries or illness
- Whether racing needs to be suspended

Radio Protocol

Once an incident is reported, all radio stations are to minimize their communications. Absolute priority should be given to Race Control and those directly responding to the incident.

Emergency Services and Location Details

In the event of an accident or emergency that exceeds the capabilities of the Regatta's first aid and safety facilities, emergency services will be contacted via 999 on mobile phones, or if necessary, through fixed lines at Bedford Rowing Club, Schools Boathouse, or Star Club.

If emergency services are unfamiliar with the location and require detailed information about the incident's location, they can contact Race Control for grid references and postcodes.

FIRE PROCEDURE

If anyone discovers a fire, they should immediately raise the alarm. The person discovering the fire should then assess the situation and attempt to tackle the fire **only** if they are confident in doing so. The person should also initiate a local evacuation.

If the emergency requires the suspension of racing or a general evacuation, the individual will inform the Safety Officer or Regatta Chairman. The Chairman or Safety Officer and

the individual will then agree on the appropriate course of action.

Should the Regatta Chairman, or their designated substitute, order an evacuation, instructions will be given via the PA system. If the PA system is inoperable, instructions will be provided via a hand-held megaphone. Race umpires, who are equipped with megaphones, will be contacted via radio to relay the evacuation message.

The primary evacuation area will be out the back of the enclosure, toward the lower river. If this route is inaccessible due to the nature of the emergency, the secondary evacuation direction will be toward the bandstand/lock. Evacuation instructions will state that participants should leave on foot and not use motor vehicles.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Any serious public disorder or violent behaviour should be reported to regatta control or a regatta official immediately. If necessary, racing shall be suspended and the police shall be called.

TERRORISM THREAT

Any news that could be deemed a serious threat to life should be reported to the Police immediately. Evacuation of any area believed to be in threat shall be organised in the first instance by Regatta officials.

REPORTING INCIDENTS

Any witnessed incidents should be reported to regatta control for recording purposes.

FEEDBACK

If you have any comments that may help us improve the plan for future events, then please let us know via regatta control. Further information that makes up the full Regatta safety plan is contained in separate documents sent to clubs and available on the Regatta website, namely circulation plan, access and parking arrangements.



KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Regatta Secretary

Overall coordination of the regatta.

With regard to this safety plan, ensure that responsibilities have been delegated to specific individuals.

Arrange first aid cover.

Notify the Environment Agency, Bedford Borough Council and Bedford River Users Group.

Arrange for the course to be laid out as identified in the plan.

Arrange for weather protection for regatta officials and umpires.

Ensure a list of regatta officials mobile phone numbers is produced and distributed.

Ensure that the stake boat roster is notified to juniors and their parents, and that its implementation is monitored during the regatta.

Safety Adviser

Prepare the Regatta Safety Plan and present it to the Race Committee / Regatta Committee for endorsement.

Distribute Safety Plan documents, as appropriate, to external agencies.

Oversee the safety management of the racing and related activities during the regatta.

Advise the Race Controller on safety issues that affect the conduct of racing, in particular, the need to suspend racing.

Process BR Safety Incident forms arising during the regatta.

Coordinate, where necessary, with the First Aid team

Welfare Officer

Implement the Regatta Welfare Plan.

Chair of the Race Committee

Take decisions, with advice as appropriate from club and regatta officials and the co-ordinating umpire, on safety issues that affect the conduct of racing, in particular, the need to suspend racing.

Control the disposition and use of safety boats.

Ensure that prior to the regatta, race control assistants are briefed on their responsibilities and the use of radios.

Confirm the serviceability of regatta control equipment (loud hailers, finish horn).

Confirm the availability in Race Control of buoyancy aids, waterproofs, sun cream and gloves (for stake boat juniors).

Control the issue, and return of, radios and loud hailers to regatta officials and umpires (Include issue of radio to First Aid Tent.)

Monitor the radio traffic.

Regulate the flow of crews to the start, taking advice from the Start Marshal and the Boat Marshalling Area.

Take the decision on disqualification of a crew if it is inordinately late for the start (noting that the related safety issue concerns a crew waiting at the start in extreme (hot, cold/wet weather conditions).

Monitor the course for excessive water fowl and for river flotsam.

Monitor the weather condition (particularly for thunderstorms and high winds) and the condition of the river flow, and liaising with the Safety Adviser as necessary.

Implement the Thunderstorm Safety Plan.

Operations Manager

Ensure that there are sufficient stakes and tape, and the appropriate signs to mark out the



Regatta Field in accordance with the risk assessment and site plan for the Regatta Field.

Brief staff on manual handling.

Ensure marquees are set up with: emergency exit signs, no smoking signs, first aid fire appliances, entrance guy-ropes fenced off.

Set up the Regatta Field on the Friday before the regatta.

On each regatta morning, carry out final set up of the regatta field.

On regatta morning, check the location of, and replace as necessary, any notices and other markings that have been displaced.

Ensure Race Control provided with: waterproofs, buoyancy aids (jnr and snr sizes), umbrellas, fluorescent jackets, caps and sunscreen, litter picker-ups.

Registration/Control

Provide any relevant safety information to clubs when registering.

Co-ordinate lost children and lost property.

Acting as initial point of contact for Regatta Welfare Plan issues, and holding the list of visiting clubs' junior welfare points of contact.

Safety Boat Co-ordinator

Ensure that prior to the regatta the safety boat crews are trained / briefed on: the use of safety boats, the safety measures and the use of radios.

Ensure that safety boats are appropriately equipped.

Ensure that safety boat cover is in place 30 minutes prior to the start of racing until 10 minutes after the completion of the final race.

Brief the crew at the finish to warn Race Control of any flotsam in the river.

Start Control

Ensure that prior to the regatta stake boat crews are trained and briefed.

Ensure that stake boat crews have the necessary weather protection, including sun screen.

Start Marshals

Ensure that prior to the regatta, start marshalling assistants are briefed on their responsibilities and the use of radios.

Ensure that Race Control / Boat Marshalling is aware of any congestion at the start so that the flow of competitors to the start can be appropriately regulated.

Ensure that competitors warm up safely on the way to the start and in the marshalling area.

Ensure that motor cruisers are given advice on how to proceed within the start marshalling area and control the flow of motor cruisers. Being aware of the necessity to maintain separation of competitors from motor cruisers and giving necessary instruction to ensure that.

Umpire Co-ordinator

Co-ordinate the staffing of BR registered umpires.

Co-ordinate return of BR Control Commission Report on Equipment Failures forms to RWSA.