

Birmingham Regatta 2025

Sunday 26th April 2025

Event Water Safety Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 Author

C H Llewellyn, Water Safety Adviser.

Issue 02: 16 Apr 2025.

This safety plan complies with British Rowing 'RowSafe: A Guide to Safe Practice in Rowing'. The safety plan explains safety measures that have been introduced as a result of the event risk assessment and specific details linked to BR requirements.

1.2 Event Definition

The event is organised by Birmingham Rowing Club, Reservoir Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 9EE (<http://candy.elaborate.pink>).

The event takes place on Edgbaston Reservoir over a course of approximately 700m depending on the prevailing conditions. The reservoir and the surrounding land are owned partly by Birmingham City Council and partly by the Canal & River Trust.

1.3 Competition

There may be over 400 competitors who are mainly juniors with some seniors (adults). Many will be fairly new rowers, with limited competition experience.

Competition is in fine boats over a two- and 3-lane course.

The individual events are either round robin events, sometimes split into leagues, or side-by-side knockout.

2. Event Organisation

2.1 Committees

Organising Committee

This event is organised by Birmingham Rowing Club. The Regatta Organising Committee includes the following persons:

Helen Gilbody Regatta Secretary,
Chris Llewellyn Regatta Water Safety Advisor,
Rhian Prichard Regatta Welfare Officer,

Mindy Hothi, Christopher Anton, Charlie Kay, Sarah Lanchester-Gregory.

Race Committee

The Race Committee will be: Christopher Anton (Chairman), Chris Llewellyn, Co-ordinating Umpire on duty.

2.2 Communications

Competitors and organisers will be made aware of the safety arrangements before and during the event in order to prevent incidents and to enable incidents to be dealt with efficiently if they do occur. The following actions will be undertaken to ensure effective communication between all parties:

Prior to the event –

- With the Local Authority – Birmingham City Council have been informed of the event and their comments taken into account. Key contacts have been provided to them.
- With Emergency Services – A letter has been sent to Police, Fire and Ambulance Services and Hospital informing them of the event and advising type of event, location, possible numbers and directions to the Reservoir.

Birmingham Regatta 2025

- With participants – Instructions for competitors are sent out to participants and include Course Maps with the circulation pattern and Safety Instructions. This information is available also on the Club website, www.birminghamrowingclub.co.uk.
- Other users of the site have been informed that the Rowing Club has exclusive use of the water on the date of the regatta.
- Weather conditions are monitored in advance of the event in order to determine whether any change needs to be made to the course or the organisation of the regatta. A decision on cancellation will be made in sufficient time to avoid unnecessary travelling by clubs.

At the start of the event –

- Participants will be briefed on the regatta circulation pattern at registration.
- Club members will be briefed on various days before the event.
- Umpires will be briefed on checking in.
- Participants, officials and umpires will be advised if the beach sprint event will take place.

During the event –

- Organisers – Radio communication is provided. Radios will be provided to umpires, marshals, registration and rescue boats. Race Control will have a list of mobile phone numbers of key club members and also coaches responsible for crews on the day. There will be a PA system to inform crews. Umpires and marshals will have loud hailer.
- Organisers – All key positions have briefing notes explaining the purpose of the position and the emergency procedures. The race programme in race order and event order is included.
- The prevailing conditions will continue to be monitored by the Race Committee to allow decisions to be made on the organisation of the regatta as appropriate.

After the event –

- Participants – Competing clubs are asked for feedback after the event.
- Organisers – There will be a post regatta meeting of the regatta committee and club members will be invited to make comments. The event will be reviewed for next year in light of these comments.

2.3 Documentation

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix A.

Emergency Response Plan

An emergency response plan is included in the documentation for key officials. See section 3 for details.

The Course

The course is straight and buoyed throughout every 50–60m. The marshalling area is also buoyed as is the circulation/warm up area. The warm up area is patrolled by water marshals. The course may be configured in one of four ways. See section 4.

Circulation Pattern

The circulation pattern is shown on the maps referenced in section 4. This shows the routes from the landing stages to the marshalling area via the warm-up circuit, to the start and from the finish back to the landing stages.

Key Official Positions including Umpires

Each position has a book containing the operating methods at that position, emergency procedures, race information and an incident reporting sheet. Some race information may be provided digitally to some stations.

Birmingham Regatta 2025

2.4 Safety Monitoring

Umpires

Umpires will be situated along the course (see maps 1, 2, 3 & 4) and at other locations appropriate to their duties. Those on the course will be provided with throw lines.

Control Commission

Crews are responsible for the compliance of their boats with the Rules of Racing and Rowsafe. Crews will be asked to check their boats before being put on the water for their conformance, at the discretion of the Head of Control Commission. Trestles will be provided at the boat checking area for crews to rest and allow small repairs to be made. If the weather is inclement, crews will be checked for sufficient clothing.

Marshals

There will be experienced club rowers on the bank marshalling the crews waiting for the start in the marshalling area. In addition, marshals will ensure that crews beyond the finish return to the landing area or the start on the correct side of the circulation pattern. The marshals will be fully briefed to give clear instructions, particularly regarding the safety of competitors. See Safety Alert: Marshals.

Monitors

Club members will monitor and assist at other areas such as the car park and boating areas,

Safety Monitors

There will be launches on the water at all times in the area of the circulation pattern, crewed by an RYA-trained driver and an experienced club member.

Rescue Boats

Birmingham RC (assisted by Midland Sailing Club and the Midland Boating Station) will be providing rescue boat cover. At any time, there will be two boats on the water crewed by competent drivers and crew. They are equipped with the equipment required for rescue and checked before the regatta. They will be based outside the boathouse near the Registration tent. Any transfer to emergency vehicles will be made there. The drivers are instructed to keep wash to a minimum except in an emergency. See Safety Alerts: Launch Driving and Outboard Motor Safety Checks.

3. Accident and Emergency Procedures

First Aid Cover

Birmingham RC will provide first aid cover. The Club will have qualified first aiders familiar with CPR and a defibrillator. Another defibrillator is available at Midland Sailing Club on the opposite side of the reservoir. There will be first aid kits at the Registration tent, in the launches and at the refreshments tent.

Emergency Procedures

If an incident occurs on the course, the nearest umpire will call for racing to be suspended and inform Race Control. The call will be "Pan-Pan, Pan-Pan" then a description of the incident and location. After this call, radio silence must be maintained by all except those dealing with the incident. Racing will resume only when permitted by Race Control once safety cover is in place. Umpires and the launches will have throw lines.

If the incident includes a casualty requiring medical treatment, Race Control must be advised immediately so that the emergency services can be called. The casualty will be brought ashore at the BRC boathouse (<http://hungry.obey.fans>) (alternatively, if necessary, at Midland Sailing Club (<http://pound.mops.gravel>)) where defibrillators are available. All crews must follow the instructions of the umpires.

Birmingham Regatta 2025

Emergency Services

The nearest hospital with A&E facilities is Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, Grove Lane Smethwick, B66 2QT (///notion.script.bill), which is within 1.7 miles. Access time for an ambulance will be about 10 minutes. Where necessary, an ambulance will be called (999 or 112) to the reservoir entrance (///candy.elaborate.pink) then the boathouse (///hungry.obey.fans) or to Midland Sailing Club (///pound.mops.gravel). See Safety Alert: Calling for Help.

Abandonment Plan

In the event of abandonment, the Race Committee will determine how to clear the water of crews, depending on the reason for abandonment and the prevailing conditions. The resulting instructions will be relayed to the umpires and regatta officials, whose instructions must be followed by all crews. Rescue and marshalling launches will be deployed to ensure that all crews reach the landing stages safely.

In the event of an emergency outside the scope of the regatta (for example, evacuation of the Reservoir), the umpires will be given instructions as to what to tell the crews. All crews must then follow the instructions of the umpires and other Regatta officials both on the water and on land.

Incident Reporting

Any incident or accident must be reported to Event Organiser and the Event Safety Adviser. The Safety Advisor will record any incidents and log them on the BR website. Clubs who are involved in an incident are responsible to report them on the BR website. Incident reporting on the BR website is open to any competitor, official, coach or spectator.

4. Course

Owing to the effect of conditions prevailing on the day, there are four different courses that may be used:

1: MSC Start, Long Course (see Map 1).

This course will be used if the conditions are calm, for any wind direction. If the conditions become rough, one of the other courses will be used depending on where the rough conditions are.

2: Creek Start, Long Course (see Map 2).

This course will be used if the wind is SW (from the creek) to provide shelter for the start, provided that the conditions are reasonable at the finish (MSC tower).

3: MSC Start, Short Course (see Map 3).

This course will be used if the wind is NE (from the dam) and too strong to maintain reasonable conditions in the creek. The finish will be about halfway along the course.

4: Creek Start, Short Course (see Map 4).

This course will be used if the wind is SW (from the creek) and too strong to maintain reasonable conditions towards the dam and MSC. The finish will be about halfway along the course.

Before the regatta, a decision will be taken on the course expected to be used on the day and will be communicated to competing clubs. However, if the conditions at the beginning of the day dictate, the course chosen may be different and will be advised to crews on the day.

Over many years of experience, we have found that conditions can worsen during the day. In this event, we may have to abandon stakeboat starts and use free starts or change the course during the day. In the latter case, racing will be suspended and all coaches consulted and advised of the change of course.

The courses are covered in the instructions for each station and umpire. The position (location around the reservoir) and duties are explained for each version of the course. If the course is changed during the day, wherever possible, people will remain where they are and assume alternative duties. This will make the changeover quicker and more efficient.

Birmingham Regatta 2025

5. Measures for Specific Risks

Provisions against waterborne/infectious diseases (including COVID-19 & Avian Flu)

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic is over, there are still plenty of infection diseases about. Washing and cleaning boats and equipment is a common control against transmission of many of these diseases.

Competitors, volunteers and supporters should be aware of the continuing risks and are encouraged to be cautious and ensure that their own equipment is clean. Clubs are responsible for their own measures, such as cleaning boats and personal hygiene, and should bring their own supplies to facilitate that. Water, hand sanitisers and anti-bacterial wipes will be available at suitable locations around the site.

These measures are suitable for protection against COVID and other diseases such as Weil's Disease and Avian Flu. It is strongly advised not to enter the water with bare feet and to wash footwear after immersion.

Weather and water conditions

There will be some weather and water conditions that may require the event to be changed, suspended or even cancelled to avoid unnecessary risk to competitors and officials. The decision on these actions will be taken as early as possible by the Event Committee with advice from the Safety Advisor and the Chairman of the Race committee. Although it is not possible to set exact rules for these decisions due to the number of variables that exist, a set of guidelines has been set out below:

Conditions and Possible Prevention and Mitigation Measures.

- **Lightning** - Suspend racing and stop boating until storm blows over. Racing to be suspended on order of any official if thunder follows lightning within 30 seconds. All participants to seek safe shelter (in cars or in the boathouse) until 30 minutes after the storm has passed. See Safety Alert: Lightning.
- **Heavy rain** - Ensure competitors wear appropriate clothing; to be checked at boat inspection and control commission.
- **Strong Wind** – Abandon stakeboat starts and use free starts, reduce to two lanes only and/or consider if the course can be reversed/alterd/shortened (see section 4) to mitigate the worst of the wind, and, if necessary, cancel event. Ensure appropriate clothing is worn at boat inspection and control commission. Withdraw events for smaller boats and/or less experienced crews. Rescue boats to be alert for capsizes. See Safety Alerts: Stay with the Boat and Cold Water Immersion.

Failure of safety arrangements

In the event of failure of safety arrangements, measures will be taken to restore the arrangements as soon as possible. If this is not possible the consideration will be given to reduction of the scope of the event, with the assistance of the coaches of the participating crews. Reduction could be a shorter course, suspension of certain events or abandonment, to reduce risks. Measures for specific failures are given below.

Failure or loss of rescue boats

In the event of the loss of one rescue boat, a club launch will be redeployed to assist either temporarily or for the duration of the regatta. If necessary, one water-based umpire will be transferred to land and the launch redeployed with a rescue crew. If insufficient cover can be provided, reduction of the scope or abandonment will be considered.

Loss of first-aid cover

In this event, other club members with first aid training will provide cover. If specific medical attention is required, an ambulance will be called (999 or 112). See Safety Alert: Calling for Help.

Birmingham Regatta 2025

Failure or loss of communications

In the event of loss of radios, mobile phones will be used to maintain communication between key official positions, until the radio network is restored. If this is not possible, the scope of the event will be reduced, since mobile phone communication will inevitably be slower than radios.

Slips, trips and falls

The boating and trailer areas should be kept free from blades, shoes, trestles, etc. that will cause a trip hazard. The marshals working in these areas will monitor this and arrange for equipment to be removed. Crews will be encouraged to keep their blades with their boats or trailers. Blades can be stored on grassed areas. Spectators will not be permitted to sit on the steps when boats are moving around. First Aid will be available (see above).

Car and Trailer Parking

The Reservoir Car Park is closed to the public and will be used for trailers. No vehicles will be allowed past the gate at the end of the car park except the First Aid and rescue vehicles and regatta official vehicles. Marshals will be located in the car park and will help trailers park safely at the Rowing Club end of the car park and direct coaches to park at the remote end of the car park or in Osler Street.

A clear route for emergency vehicles must be maintained through the trailer park up to the boathouse.

Limited car parking will be available at Midland Sailing Club. Regatta official vehicles will be parked at the club or in the Reservoir car park.

Hygiene

Portaloos are provided for all at the Rowing Club. Washing/sanitising facilities are available at Rowing Club. If utilities fail (water, sewerage or electricity) the Event Committee will liaise with the Rowing Club and arrange for an appropriate utility or contractor to rectify the problem.

Litter bags will be available around the site and the trailer area is to be inspected during the event for unnecessary refuse. There are also City Council refuse bins around the site.

Normal hygiene procedures apply and washing/sanitising facilities will be available to people serving food and customers.

6. Welfare

The Event Regatta Committee believes that the welfare and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults is paramount. All children, regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, religion or ability, have equal rights to safety and protection. All suspicions, concerns and allegations of harm will be taken seriously and responded swiftly and in an appropriate manner.

The Event Welfare Officer will be available at Race Control (see map) and can be contacted via mobile (07886 605 643) or radio.

The first point of contact during the event will be the Welfare Officer. If, after due consideration, the Welfare Officer decides that the police should be informed, the matter will be reported to West Midlands Police. The Welfare Officer will then decide whether to report the matter to the British Rowing Child Protection Officer.

The event organisers brief all helpers on the Welfare Plan and ask them to report any inappropriate behaviour to Race Control.

As the event takes place in open public areas, control of photography is not feasible. Competitors and coaches have been informed that this is the case.

Revision History

- | | | |
|---------|-------------|---|
| Issue 1 | 17 Feb 2025 | First issue for 2025 for internal review; as 2024 with minor amendments for clarification and revision of infectious diseases provisions. |
| Issue 2 | 16 Apr 2025 | What 3 Words locations included and co-ordinated with other documents. Welfare number corrected. |