



BSRA's Top Safety Rules:

- Coaches must have an updated CPR/AED certification, US Boating certification for New York State and basic First Aid knowledge.
- Rowers under the age of 18 must be always supervised on the water.
- Coaches should check the weather before launching boats.
- Coaches and/or safety launches must be registered and equipped with PFDs for all rowers, a sound amplifying device, a tow rope, an anker, a bow line, adequate gas, a VHF radio or charged cell phone, a tool kit and first aid kit.
- Everyone on coaches/safety launches must wear a USCG approved PFD; drivers must wear engine kill-switch cords.
- Coaches should be aware of rowers swimming ability and ensure all rowers and coxswains know the emergency protocols if the shell were to take on water or capsize. A swim test is highly recommended for all ages.
- Boats must not launch and should head for shelter immediately in the presence of whitecaps or high winds; fog (visibility to shore or less than 200 meters); electrical storms.
- Coaches should not have too many shells per coach/safety launch. One coach to 2 shells is best (3 at most). Shells of like speed and size per coach/ safety boat is also strongly recommended.
- Coaches should make sure rowers and coxswains are appropriately dressed for the weather before launching.
- Coaches should make sure rowers have eaten sufficiently before exercising and are carrying water with them.
- Rowers over the age of 18 who row without coaches should sign in and out of the log book located on the gray desk. Communicating with a person at the boathouse, a friend or coach is also highly recommended. Rowers should take a cell phone in a waterproof case with them for emergencies.
- Rowers, Coxswains, Coaches and anyone in a safety launch should adhere to the River pattern Right hand rule and also yield to commercial vessels.

Safety Guidelines for Small Boat Users:

although very accurate for larger shells as well.

Dock & Shoreline:

- No persons except coaches, boat-borne athletes and those directly assisting in docking operations are permitted on the dock.
- No children under the age of 12 are permitted on the dock at any time without adult supervision.
- Use of the dock should be expedited from launching and recovery. We encourage the 'get in, row/paddle, get out' approach.'



- Launching from Docks: All shells will launch with their bows pointing down river. All shoes will be placed in totes and removed from the dock before launching.
- Landing on Docks: All shells recovering will approach from upriver. Oars are to be placed out of the way on the docks before the boat is removed from the water.
- The shoreline, ramps and docks will be kept clear of tripping hazards, oars, paddles, and shoes.

Weather:

- Each rower and kayaker be aware of weather, river conditions and forecast before coming down to the boathouse or to the dock.
- No rowing or kayaking is permitted during potentially serious weather conditions. Watersports may resume 30 minutes after last sound of thunder, and 1 hour after sight of lightning.
- Examples of dangerous conditions or severe weather conditions are:
 - i) Darkness,
 - ii) High winds,
 - iii) Extremely cold air and/ or water temperatures, iv) Extremely hot temperatures and/ or humidity;
 - v) Heavy fog or other low-visibility conditions.
- When water temperature plus wind chill is less than 90° F: Everyone must be dressed in proper cold weather attire to limit exposed skin.
- No small boats will be permitted to launch when the water temperature is below 40° F.

Rower Safety:

- Swimming ability: It is strongly recommended that all rowers and kayakers be swim qualified (able to swim 50 yards wearing a T-shirt and tread water for 10 minutes consistently).
- We require that all rowers and kayakers always wear a PFD when the water temperature is below 50° F, and always recommend bringing a PFD in the boat when water is above 50° F.
- Rowers should stay with the shell if the shell capsizes.



Hygiene and Sanitation:

- The water of the Buffalo River and its immediate tributaries have been certified as safe for recreational purposes. This does not include swimming. Therefore, BSRA rowers/kayakers & coaches are not permitted to swim from the BSRA site.
- BSRA rowers and kayakers should ensure their own equipment is cleaned immediately after use. We encourage wiping down of oar handles, wiping down rowing shells and washing athletes hands.

On-the-water Caution and Emergencies:

- Rowers/Kayakers & coaches should avoid all shallow & hazardous areas of the river. Dangerous objects may include low overhanging trees, docks, and underwater abandoned pilings.
- Rowers/Kayakers & Coaches should always yield to the right as far as possible for commercial traffic, boats under sail, and vessels.
- Areas of the river where there is loud background noise where, in an emergency, it would be difficult or impossible to hear another person.
- These areas include:
 - General Mills Plant
 - North of Michigan Street Bridge - constant noise from fans.
 - Metal roadways at Michigan Street & Ohio Street Bridges when cars are driving on the deck.
 - Two railroad bridges that cross the River, when freight trains are passing overhead.
 - PVS Chemical Solutions
- Small boats should not be on the water before sunrise or 30 minutes after sunset.
- Avoid collisions and dangerous situations by anticipating what could go wrong beforehand. Treat the River like a Road- stay to the right, look both ways before crossing. Do not cross where you have blind corners.
- We highly recommend all small boat users learn the map of the Buffalo River and landmarks so in the event of an emergency, one can articulate where the emergency is taking place along the River.
- If you are caught on the water during a thunderstorm, move all boats to the right side of the River and row continuously to the closest dock or safe place to recover.



Emergency Operations

- BSRA contacts are listed below. We encourage all small boat users to save the contacts.
- **Call 911** if there is a dangerous situation. 911 will direct help to Erie County Sheriff's Marine division or US Coast Guard depending on the situation. ▪ BSRA Incident Report to follow.
- **Crime Situations:** It is possible that criminal acts may occur at BSRA. These may include personal theft, assault, firing of a weapon or automobile theft, among others. It is imperative that 911 be called to summon law enforcement, and that everyone remain calm and stay safe.
- **Other Emergency:** For any other emergency, first stabilize the incident if possible. Whenever you feel you cannot stabilize the incident, call 911 and give them the nature of the emergency (fire, entrapment, auto accident, etc.) and the location of the BSRA site.

Reporting:

- All incidents and misconduct should be reported immediately with form attached and submitted immediately to the VP of Rowing. Questions about these Guidelines can also be directed to Joe Krakowiak.

Contacts:

- VP of Rowing: Joe Krakowiak (716) 989-8625
- Safety Committee Chair, BSRA Board Member: Carol Flaherty

Other BSRA Contacts

- VP of Buildings & Grounds: Tom Flaherty – (716) 361-0074
- Staff- Mairead Manke- (716) 908-2358