



**SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL**  
for  
**Huntsville - Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC.**  
Operating from  
**Ditto Landing Marina, Huntsville, AL 35803**

**This Health, Safety and Risk Management Plan has been developed to satisfy OSHA guidelines and it incorporates recommended policies of US Rowing and the established safety and risk management practices of Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC.**

**Document Created 2015 (updated & revised 2020)**

**Implemented and Approved by the Director in 2015 and 2020**

# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

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# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

## Emergency Response & Evacuation Plan

### Purpose

This Emergency Response Plan is intended to provide clear understanding for actions to protect clientele and property in the event of an emergency, to minimize risk to one self and to give guidance to recognize thresholds in the advent of a dangerous situation.

Emergencies can take many forms, some develop quickly and others slowly, but progressively get out of control. Regardless of the type of emergency and the likelihood of occurring be it fire, sudden weather changes, bomb threat, miscellaneous accidents or the need for first aid, the following policies apply.

### Policy

- Assess emergencies in terms of level as described below.
- Involve the Director and Coaches from the beginning of the emergency if at all possible.
- Call 911 for Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies as described below.
- If not already involved, notify the Operations Director immediately after a Level 2 or 3 emergency has been defined.
- Recognize that safety of all people, clients and self, are the priority during any emergency.
- Use only non-aggressive actions and responses to emergencies involving aggression.
- Proactively call 911 if in doubt during any situation.

### Levels of Emergencies

#### Level 1 – Minor

Handle with Resources on hand; be prepared to call 911 if needed. A minor emergency is a manageable event where the adverse effect is low; it is localized to a few people and is manageable by the staff immediately on hand.

#### Level 2 – Mid Level - Call 911

A mid-level emergency either requires assistance from external organizations, or applies to a situation in which more people than are immediately available are required to manage the situation.

#### Level 3 –Major – Call 911

The incident adversely affects everyone at the location.

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## Emergency Response & Evacuation Plan

### Guidelines

- Apply the following guidelines.
- Assess emergencies in terms of *both* real and potential adverse effects.
- Recognize that people are the number one priority; take no personal risks to secure property.
- Apply reasonable judgment to avoid property loss if no adverse human affect is involved.
- Afford cooperation to professional emergency personnel upon arrival.
- Proactively call 911 when in doubt.
- Act the same in a group situation as in a situation where only 1 or 2 people are involved.

### Water Related Guidelines

For on-water emergencies, also assess current speed and wind speed.

- If slow to moderate conditions exist and the parameters of the situation are not changing, manage the situation as a Level 1.
- If moderate to fast currents or high gusting winds exist with the positional situation rapidly changing, this is a Level 2 emergency.

It is important that equal judgment be afforded to the potential of a developing emergency situation as well as active occurrences.

In all cases the avoidance of injury or death to a person is the utmost concern. Insurance covers damage or loss of property. Once all possibility of human injury is resolved, steps to avoid property loss should be taken.

If aggressive activity is a factor in an emergency, use all means to avoid confrontation versus potentially escalating the situation with an aggressive response.

It is important to act in situations that involve groups. Groups often become stunned into not taking action; they freeze and watch, subconsciously abdicating any response to 'someone else' in the crowd, and the result is that no action is taken expediently. Recognize this and take the same action as if there were only one or two people present to handle the situation.

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## Emergency Response & Evacuation Plan

### Emergency Response Team

The “Emergency Response Team” is any and all staff at the facility/venue and on the water. The Director or Coach at the Boathouse is the “Emergency Response Team Lead” and will assess the situation, delegating responsibilities and tasks as needed. This person will normally be the Director, Head Coach, Assistant Coach. The Senior Staff member will assume the leadership role.

When more staff is present than needed to handle the situation, one staff person will assume on-looker control so that rescue efforts are not impeded.

### Emergency Responsibilities

The Director is the team lead in emergencies requiring coordination of activities and participation of several persons or teams.

A “Captain” will be assigned for the Boathouse and property. Any coach or staff member will handle minor emergency situations as they present themselves and will call out for additional help if needed.

Nearby staff will proactively offer assistance unless waved off by the staff currently handling it. All staff will be knowledgeable of the location of all fire extinguishers and how to operate them.

All staff will know how to handle hazardous emergency spills, including location of spill kits, hazardous material sheets, and know how to use the kits.

### Emergency Evacuation of Building

The entire building will be evacuated in case of bomb threat, fire (no matter how small), or any similar threat that would compromise the safety of people inside the structure.

Staff will alert the “Captain” who commences the building evacuation, by sounding an alarm or shouting loudly, and directing people to exit calmly but quickly.

The “Captain” will notify all people in all rooms to evacuate.

The “Captain” will recruit an assistant on the spot to notify people on the docks to move to the parking lot of the building and remain there until the emergency is over.

All people except the “Captain” and designated assistants will proceed to a single point Northeast of the building, in the parking lot, waiting for professional emergency personnel to determine when the building is safe to be reentered.

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## Emergency Response & Evacuation Plan

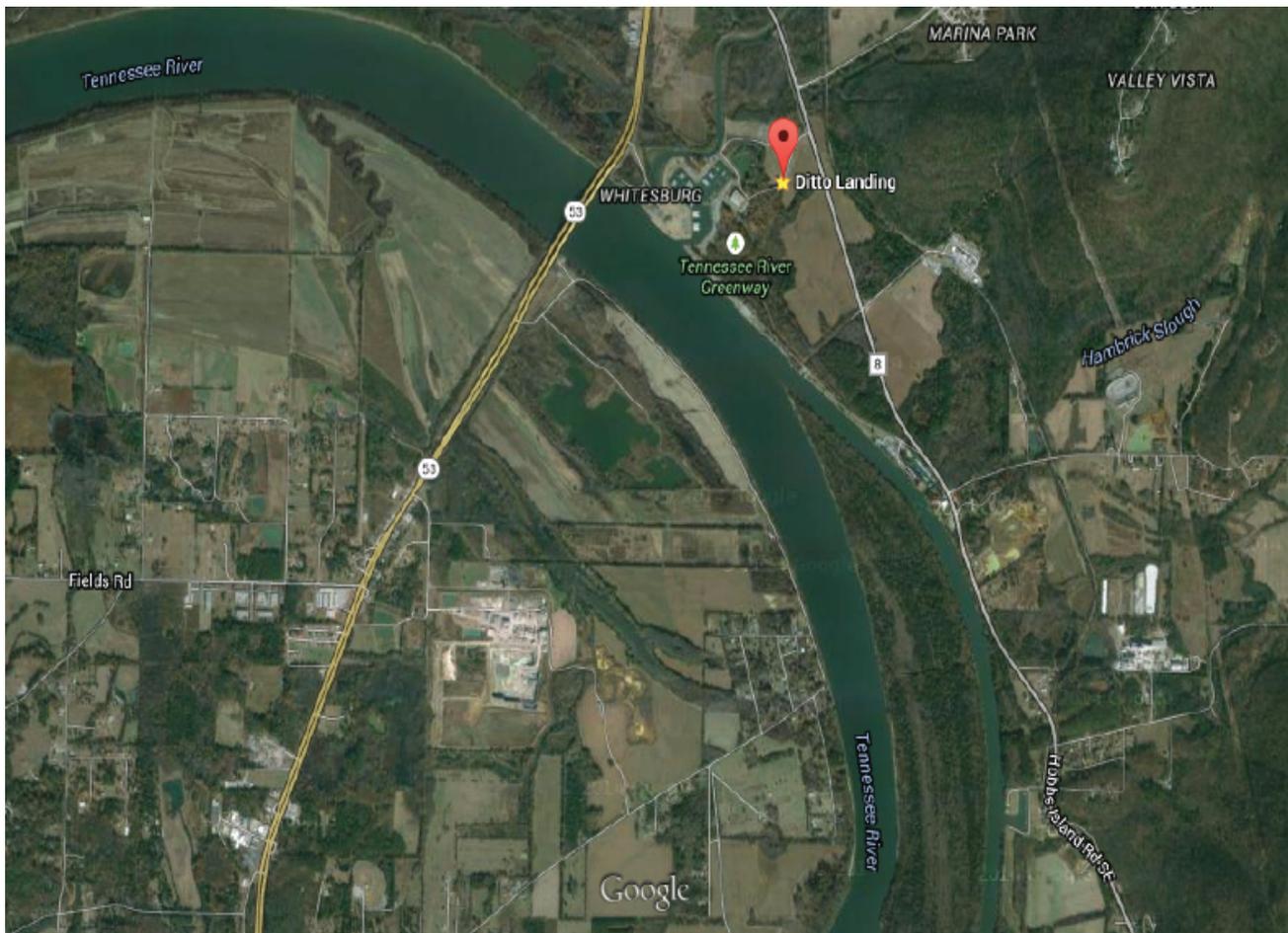
### Water Emergencies Responses

All on-water personnel will follow the procedures of this Safety and Risk Management Manual, including having coaches and launch drivers carrying cell phones or radios.

Because water craft may be anywhere on the TN River, all staff, coaches, and launch drivers will be knowledgeable of all shoreline points that are easily accessible to EMS personnel and be able to state with precision to EMS personal and/or parents, specified meeting points.

### Shore locations:

- Rowing Dock - Location **A**
- Whitesburg Marina - boat ramp - Location **B**
- Redstone Arsenal Dock – Location **C**
- RCRC Dock – Location **D**
- Flint River Inlet – Location **E**
- Hobbs Island Shore – Location **F**



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To assist in effective management and communication of on-water emergencies, all safety launches will have a taped card on the dash listing the phone numbers and address of concessions located along the shoreline.

All staff related to water activities plus the Director must have an in-depth familiarity and be able to describe exact water locations along the lake in order direct EMS or extra personnel to the correct locations. The Coaching staff will be given a description these accessible points and the same information will be kept at the front desk near the telephone.

**At the end of each accident or incident, the staff member or club member with the most knowledge of the incident will complete an Accident/Incident Form. The form will be given to the Executive Director within 24 hours of the incident. A log, as well as all forms, will be kept on file with the Director.**

**\*Forms are located in Section 8 of this document and in the “Safety Files” at Boathouse.**

## Sudden Adverse Weather Conditions Response

A weather alert/lighting monitor will be kept at the Boathouse on the workbench. Additionally coaches are required to check weather prior to each practice. In the event of an adverse weather alert review the sign out logs and contact safety launches by cell phone to inform them of the pending danger.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC. (Referred to as Row Huntsville) is committed to providing and managing a rowing and watersport (human powered - canoe, Kayak, Sup, Dragon Boat) programs that uphold the highest reasonable standard of safety for recreational participants, employees, vendors, and all visitors to the facility. Row Huntsville believes that educating participants about safety on the water and on land, and adhering to consistent safety regulations, makes for a more enjoyable, well- rounded experience of rowing and watersports on the Tennessee River.

This Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC. Health, Safety and Risk Management Plan (HSRMP) applies to operations and activities associated with the owned equipment by Row Huntsville and leased facilities of Ditto Landing Marina in Huntsville, AL.

**A copy of this plan shall be available at all times.**

All employees and volunteers must be familiar with its contents and be aware of its location at the boathouse. The information provided herein is solely for the protection of the health and safety of all participants in any activity at Ditto Landing Marina in Huntsville, AL. and to establish minimum health and safety requirements for all users of the facilities. Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC assumes no liability for, or responsibility to, any other parties for the accuracy or completeness of the information contained herein for any use or reliance upon this HSRMP by any other party.

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## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the HSRMP is to provide information to all employees, volunteers and participants of Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC programs and Ditto Landing Marina property so they can use the facility in a safe and healthful manner. The evaluation of hazards, protection, and procedures specified in this HSRMP are based on the best information available during the writing of this plan. It is recognized that every feasible safety or health hazard faced on site may not be contained in this document and that site conditions change. Therefore it is part of every employee's job to continuously assess site conditions in relation to his/her own knowledge of how to do a task safely. If at any time an employee lacks clarity in how to do a job safely or is unsure of the potential for adverse exposure to a contaminant, that employee shall bring this to the attention of the Director, Coaching supervisor. No employee is expected to do work that he/she does not know how to do properly and safely.

## 1.2 Organization and Compliance

This HSRMP is organized into nine major sections. The PREFACE is the Emergency Response and Evacuation Plan, which can also be posted as a separate document or given to regatta or event organizers in their orientation packet. **Section 1.0** is Introduction and Emergency Preparedness. **Section 2.0** is the safety policy for Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC program participants. **Section 3.0** is the General Health and Safety Plan for the General Public. **Section 4.0** contains the Standard Operating Procedures. **Section 5.0** discusses Common Physical Hazards and Controls. **Section 6** is Loss Control. **Section 7** covers Accident Investigation. **Section 8.0** contains forms to be used for various sections.

## 1.3 Site Location

Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC Boat facility, Dock and property is located at Ditto Landing Marina, 293 Ditto Landing Rd. Huntsville, Al 35803. The facility includes an open equipment enclosure housing boat, oar and misc. equipment storage. There is a dock with 2 ramps, available exterior boat and oar storage included with the facility; as well as outdoor parking. All equipment and facilities are leased to Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC from the Board of Directors of Ditto Landing Marina.

## 1.4 Safety Team

**The Director/Head Coach is the primary OSO (onsite safety director).** Coaching staff supports the safety protocols and plans. An appointed Safety Committee will periodically review this document for additions and deletions. Periodic meetings will be held to discuss new safety issues and to recognize areas for improvement.

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## 2.0 HUNTSVILLE-MADISON COUNTY ROWING & WATERSPORTS, LLC. SAFETY

### 2.1 Program Participants and Guests

Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC has developed a safety orientation program which all members, class participants, and guests are made aware of prior to partaking in rowing activities. This safety orientation program has been developed in cooperation with the United States Olympic committee, United States Rowing Association and the U.S. Coast Guard; as well as, Alabama Safety regulations and is annually reviewed and updated by the Director and appointed Safety Committee.

#### 2.1.1 Waivers and Releases

All participants in Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC programs must sign the following documents prior to partaking in any activity. Minors must have a parent or legal guardian complete the waiver.

- United States Rowing Association (USRA) **Waiver of Liability**: kept on file for five years.
- Consent To Participate: Physical readiness and rating of swimming skills
- Medical History Questionnaire and Authorization to Treat Form
- Pre-participation Physical Evaluation – Youth only
- Parental Consent Release and Waiver of Liability – Youth only
- Swim Test Form – Required once in a Athletes Career
- Media Release
- Carpool Release
- Health, Safety & Risk Manual:
  - Participant Handbook
  - SafeSport – Youth Protection Guidelines
  - Athletes Code of Conduct Form – Youth and Adult

#### 2.1.2 Safety Orientation for New Participants

All participants new to any ongoing program offered by Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC or its subcontractors receive a thorough education on safety practices prior to participation. The rowing safety orientation program includes a review of the USRA Safety Video and discussion of the video with a staff coach. The orientation program also includes a thorough review of safety policies. This includes instruction in proper boat-handling technique, safe use of equipment as it relates to size and skill level, safely making size adjustments to equipment (oar-lock height and foot-stretcher length), a complete review of traffic patterns, and emergency procedures in instances of boat swamping or capsizing. New rowers not only discuss all policies with a coach, but also are pointed to where they can find said policies on an ongoing basis. Safety policies are posted near the “First Aid Station and Coxswain Station” and are hosted on-line as part of the **RowHuntsville Participant Handbook**.

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## 2.1.3 Safety Orientation for Experienced Participants

Program participants, guests, and others who join RowHuntsville programs with prior rowing experience go through the safety orientation in one of two ways:

1. Program participants who wish to row a single rowing shell with the club go through a “checkout” process prior to rowing on their own. The checkout process includes a **review of safety policies and emergency procedures** as listed in the APPENDIX of this document. The “checkout” ensures that the member is aware of all traffic patterns on the TN River, including areas of navigational hazards. Additionally, the coach evaluates the rower's skills in a single scull. This skill evaluation includes boat-handling skills on land, as well as boat maneuvering skills on the water. Upon completion of the “checkout” the rower is certified as a Level I, II, III or IV rower. Each of these levels corresponds with the type of equipment one is allowed to row, when one is allowed to row (for example, Level I rowers may row in daylight hours only) and how far one is allowed to row from the dock (for example, no further than the “Flint River”). To move up a Level, rowers simply schedule to repeat the same checkout process. The descriptors for each Level are outlined in the **RowHuntsville Participant Handbook and this Manual**.
2. Members who begin with a sweep rowing program go through a slightly different process since they begin rowing with a group, and not on their own. Members who row exclusively in sweep crews have their ability rated by a coach, and according to the amount of time they have been rowing with a program. Team boats must be steered by “advanced” rowers. A complete list of the definitions of Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced may be found in the APPENDIX of this manual and are posted in the boathouse.

## 2.1.5 Visiting Crew Policy

Crews that spend time in RowHuntsville training as a team, under the direction of their own coaching staff, must go through a safety orientation with the Director of Rowing prior to rowing on the TN River if utilizing RowHuntsville contracted facilities. All visiting coaches are given a manual outlining RowHuntsville Safety Policies, Safety Launch driving regulations and AL State and Local PFD requirements. Teams that bring their own safety launches are sent a list of AL State and local requirements and regulations. The manual also includes maps of the TN River traffic pattern and navigational hazards.

## 2.1.6 Additional Restrictions for Participants Under the Age of 18

Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC equipment usage policy as it pertains to members under the age of 18 or our Youth Program participants. The full policy is outlined in the **RowHuntsville Participant Handbook and this document**. Youth Program coaches make final decision on all Youth participants activities, but none may be on the water without a Safety Launch with in eyesight or 500 meters.

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## 2.1.7 Weather Policy

The Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC weather policy is outlined in the **RowHuntsville Participant Handbook and this Manual** and is also posted in the Boathouse the Coxswain Station. All participants must “Log in and Out” at prior to going on the water, to confirm assessment and being “In or Out” of the facility. Members must rely on and have access to radar and weather reports online via their own electronic equipment- Smart Phones. The RowHuntsville facility will also have a weather radio at the Coxswain Station for weather notifications, but must be checked by the individual prior to rowing.

## 2.1.8 Sign-Out/In Log Book and Safety Launches

Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC uses this procedure for recording the outings of all rowers and rowing equipment, including the use of Safety Launches. By checking the Logbook, a coach or staff member may see who is on the water at all times. Upon return from rowing, the user must “Log In” and take time describe any damage to the equipment, and if there is damage or if an incident has occurred it should be filed on an “incident report form”. Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC also uses this information to track hours of use by Participants, on Rowing equipment, Safety Launches and their engines (for maintenance purposes).

## 2.1.9 Annual Review and Ongoing Access to Safety Information

All safety information can be accessed on an ongoing basis in the following ways:

1. Safety policies and navigational maps are posted online.
2. Safety Policies and maps are listed in the RowHuntsville Participant Handbook and this manual
  - a. All members are made aware of upon registration, also hosted online.
3. The Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC Safety Committee annually conducts a risk assessment and annually reviews safety policies.

## 2.2 Safety Outreach And Education

Huntsville-Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC understands the importance of safety on the TN River, not just for its program participants, but also for the entire rowing, watersport and boating community that uses the lake.

### 2.2.1 Education for RowHuntsville Participants

RowHuntsville offers several programs on a regular basis to ensure that members are continuing to learn about best safety practices. These include Capsize Recovery Clinics, and regular viewings of the USRA Safety Video.

**Capsize Recovery Clinics:** RowHuntsville offers regular on-the-water clinics for any interested members who wish to learn how to handle single sculls that have capsized, including techniques to safely get back in the boat from the water.

**USRA Safety Video Review:** Although all participants in the Intro to Rowing Program view the Safety Video as part of their class, RowHuntsville understands that some members may miss this viewing for whatever reason. Therefore, we offer regular reviews of the USRA Safety Video for all interested. These reviews are accompanied by discussion with a coach.

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## 2.3 Use and Maintenance of Rowing Equipment and Launches

RowHuntsville has implemented policies and procedures designed to protect the health and safety of its members as well as the community on the lake/river. Fundamental to this approach is the safe and proper use of rowing equipment.

### 2.3.1 Boat Labeling System

RowHuntsville has developed a skill level evaluation system to ensure that all rowers are safely rowing shells that are suitable for their body weight and experience level. Each boat is clearly labeled according to skill level and weight of the rower. RowHuntsville leases a very extensive fleet of rowing shells and manages the inventory to ensure that suitably sized equipment is available for use across a diverse range of skill levels and body weights. A complete description of each skill level is found in the RowHuntsville Participant Handbook posted on the RowHuntsville Website.

### 2.3.2 Rowing Shell Maintenance

RowHuntsville understands that the condition of the equipment one is using is an important variable in safe rowing. RowHuntsville employs a part-time Boatman/Coach who is on call to perform both regular and emergency maintenance on the rowing shells and related equipment. The Sign-Out/Sign-In logbook is designed to ask the user about the condition of the boat upon return from every outing. Any less-than-perfect entries are immediately emailed to both the Director of Rowing and Boatman. The boat may also be immediately marked as “**rowable**” or “**unrowable**”. This enables repairs to be made in a timely fashion, and boats to be put out of service as soon as their safety is in question.

The Rigging of Equipment and Length of Oars has a considerable effect on the load a rower experiences when taking a stroke. Boats that have lost steering or rigger alignment are rigged improperly, have improper pitch on an oarlock, or have oars that are too long can impede the ability to steer or safely row. RowHuntsville takes great pride in maintaining proper rigging on all equipment.

### 2.3.3 Provision of Lights

RowHuntsville provides equipment ensuring that all rowing shells and safety launches are equipped with US Coast Guard approved navigational lights. The use of navigational lights is important because, when properly used, they indicate the direction in which the vessel is traveling in conditions of low light or low-visibility. For example, a red/green light indicates the boat is coming towards you head on, while a white light indicates a boat that is moving away from you.

### 2.3.4 Flotation Requirement of Boats

In the event that a boat should become capsized or flooded, rowing shells, canoes, kayaks, and SUP boards are specially constructed so as not to sink under any circumstances. While the boat itself is not a PFD, it has been specially designated by the US Coast Guard as an Emergency Flotation Device. In section 175.15 of the US Coast Guard Code of Federal Regulations, Personal Flotation Devices are required. However, according to section 175.17 (c), “Racing shells, rowing sculls, racing canoes and racing kayaks are exempted from the requirements for carriage of any Type PFD required under S 175.15.” ETRO provides wearable PFDs for those who wish to use them. All Safety Launches that accompany rowing shells on the water are equipped with PFDs and emergency tools in accordance with US Rowing recommendations. (See below under **Safety Launches** for a list of specific practices)

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## 2.3.5 Safety Launches

All RowHuntsville Safety Launches are equipped AT EVERY OUTING with the necessary safety items and the following information is visibly posted where the launch keys and safety items are kept:

- **All children under 13 years of age** in motorboats under 26 feet in length must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD while underway.
- All vessels, including canoes and kayaks, must be equipped with one Type I, II, III or V **wearable PFD for each person on board.**
- Vessels 16 feet and longer, excluding canoes and kayaks, are required to be equipped with **one Type IV throwable PFD** in addition to the Type I, II, III, or V PFD required for each person on board.
- Any vessel less than 12 meters in length (39.4 ft.) is required to **carry a whistle or horn**, or some other means to make an efficient sound to signal intentions and position in periods of reduced visibility.
- All vessels including motorboats, canoes, kayaks, punts, rowboats, rubber rafts, or other vessels when not at dock must have and exhibit at least **one bright light**, lantern or flashlight visible all around the horizon from sunset to sunrise in all weather and during restricted visibility.
- The operator of any vessel involved in a boating accident must **stop and render whatever assistance is necessary** unless such action would endanger his own vessel, crew or passengers.

Safety Launches are all equipped with working navigational lights and a tool-kit that includes a whistle, fire extinguisher, rope, tools, first aid kit, flashlight, and other accessories. All staff, coaches, and volunteers who operate RowHuntsville Safety Launches go through a safety launch orientation under the direction of the RowHuntsville Director regardless of previous coaching or driving experience.

Proper communication between the Safety Launch driver and the other coaches is important. All RowHuntsville Safety Launch drivers are asked to bring cell phones with them, and a laminated list of emergency phone numbers is posted on each Safety Launch. All safety launches are on a regular maintenance schedule that is tracked through the Boatman and Director.

## 2.4 Coaching

RowHuntsville believes that the greatest rowing clubs are those who invest the most in coaching, and we take great pride in employing the largest, most certified, and educated coaching staff in North Alabama. (For a current list of coaches, see [www.rowhuntsville.com](http://www.rowhuntsville.com)) Giving members access to coaching on a regular basis not only enhances their experience of the sport, but also makes it a safer experience in many ways by preventing injuries and accidents on the water and on land.

RowHuntsville sends coaches annually to USRA clinics hosted in other cities and to the USRA Annual Convention where coaches continually educate themselves on best safety practices. The RowHuntsville Director ensures that all coaches are current with their USRA Certifications and develops a plan to help each coach to reach Level III (the highest) certification over their years of employment at RowHuntsville.

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## 2.4 Coaching (cont.)

RowHuntsville has extensive policies in place to ensure that each member of the coaching staff is well trained in issues of safety and how to best respond in an emergency. The following are just a few examples:

1. New employees go through a safety orientation program which includes the following:
  - a. Background checks in accordance with RowHuntsville, US Rowing and State of AL
  - b. Review of Safety & Risk Manual, Participant Handbook and the SafeSport policy with the Director / Head Coach.
  - c. Review of all RowHuntsville Policies, equipment usage policies, Safety Launches and driving with the Director/ Head Coach.
2. A copy of the safety launch orientation checklist is attached. **(Appendix)**
3. All coaches must maintain current CPR/First Aid/AED certifications and RowHuntsville currently reimburses coaches for attending certifications on an individual basis and host's certification clinics when there are a number of coaches who do not yet have certification.
4. All RowHuntsville staff will be trained in the use of an Automated External Defibrillator.
5. The RowHuntsville Coaching staff meets monthly to ensure ongoing communication, discuss relevant issues, upcoming events, and any special circumstances as they arise.

## 3.0 Insurance & Waivers

RowHuntsville General Liability Insurance for operations through US Rowing group membership affiliation in accordance with the requirements of Alabama and Madison County.

## 3.2 Employees

All employees at the Boathouse will undergo the same level of Safety Orientation, and background checks expected of all RowHuntsville employees and in accordance with Madison County policies.

## 3.3 Education & Water Safety

RowHuntsville believes that a safe, informed experience enhances all equipment rentals and the experience of Fort Loudoun Lake. Participants who are using equipment on the River will be put through a safety checklist prior to allowing them to go out on their own. The Safety Check-list may include the following items:

- Overview of Equipment – how to use, how to steer, and more;
- Overview of Safety Equipment – Personal Flotation Devices or other;
- Discussion of traffic pattern and other boats on the river – hand out small laminated maps, discuss right-of-way and being aware;
- Possible limits to the range – staying within certain areas; and
- What to do in an emergency.

Education - will be a key component to the safe enjoyment of the River. Renters shall be offered laminated maps that include information on water flow, area hazards and shallows.

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## 3.3 Education & Water Safety (cont.)

Programming - as relates to safety by offering clinics and lessons designed to enhance one's skills in handling equipment on the water.

US Rowing Safety Guidelines - RowHuntsville follows all US Rowing guidelines pertaining to safety.

### Before the Row

1. All rowers must be able to pass a swim test, preferably including putting on a life jacket while in the water.
2. Know that your shell has been designed for flotation. Your boat is not a Personal Flotation Device (PFD); it is an emergency flotation device and your oars are neither, a personal or emergency flotation device. The safety committee recommends that all unaccompanied boats carry Coast Guard approved PFDs. A copy of the Coast Guard Regulations concerning PFDs is available upon request from USRowing.
3. Before ever getting into a shell on the water, a rower must understand the following terminology: bow, stern, port, starboard, weigh enough, ready to row?, back, tie-in, untie, stop, the stroke, bow person, seat numbers in between and what number/seat s/he is that day. The term "stop" should be used only when talking to a specific crew in a race. When a coxswain or coach wants a crew to stop immediately, the proper term is "Weigh enough! Hold water!"
4. Each program should post a map of local waterways that includes traffic patterns and any known hazards.
5. Every program should use a logbook. Everyone on the water should sign in and out. If you are rowing without the benefit of a monitored logbook let someone know where you are rowing and what time you should be expected in. Remember, a logbook is only useful if someone checks the book to see if there is still a boat on the water.
6. Each person is 100% responsible for the whole boat and 100% accountable for their own oar, rigging, foot stretchers, seat and slide. Check to make sure that all equipment is functioning properly before leaving the dock. If you aren't sure, ASK! Check the following:
  - That nuts on the rigging are tight, position of your foot stretchers and the smoothness of your slide are acceptable.
  - That the forward end of the slide is blunt and will not gouge your calves.
  - That the persons in front and behind you have sufficient room for their complete stroke.
  - That the heel ties on your shoes are tied and in good condition.
  - That your seat fits your body. Adjust with seat pads or a different seat.
  - That your oar handle is properly sized.
  - That your oarlock height is proper.
  - That your clothing cannot become tangled in your seat or oar handle.
  - That you have proper safety devices on board your rowing shell.
7. Make sure that you are aware of the local traffic patterns and rules on the water.
  - The USCG has developed right of way rules. Vessels with the least maneuverability have the right-of way, but always play it safe and take action to avoid all other types of boats. The maneuverability rule can be confusing. For example, a sailboat without wind has the right-of way, but a sailboat with wind must give right-of way to the shell.

# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

## 3.3 Education & Water Safety (cont.)

### US Rowing Safety Guidelines

- Boats shove off and approach the dock for landing while moving upstream. Familiarize yourself with the local traffic patterns.
  - Familiarize yourself with shallow water, stumps, rocks, seasonal problems and landmarks.
  - Stay clear of bridge abutments and other man-made or natural obstacles. Do not negotiate a turn near such an obstacle.
  - The coxswain or single sculler should make frequent checks on both sides. Listen for oncoming traffic.
  - Be courteous to others on that water. Be aware of powerboats and treat them with respect.
8. The safety or coaching launch provides safety supervision when rowing and support assistance in and emergency. A launch may prove useless unless the following precautions have been taken:
- The driver must be trained in the proper use and operation of the powerboat. Classes are offered through local chapters of the U.S. Power Squadron, or state boating safety departments.
  - A radio or cell phone is recommended to allow a quick direct link with rescue services and other coaches on the water in the event of an emergency.
  - Emergency supplies in the launch should include a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, night-lights and tool kit. The tool kit should contain wrenches, appropriate nuts, tape, washers, and other materials needed to make small repairs. Only minor repairs should be done on the water.
  - Ensure that everyone in the launch is wearing a life jacket and that there is one for each person rowing under the coach's care.
  - Practice man overboard safety drills. Know how to have rowers enter the coaching launch from the water. Approach from the leeward side, keeping the outboard propeller away from any victims. Turn off the engine as soon as contact is made. Avoid overloading.
  - The launch driver must wear the cord that activates the safety/kill switch in accordance with the motor manufactures literature.
9. Consult a physician before starting any form of exercise program.
10. Conditioning should be part of any rowing program. Most people do not have perfectly balanced bodies or sufficient stamina when they begin to row. Take it upon yourself to seek professional training advice.
11. Land warm-up should become part of your training ritual. Before rowing, get your body up to the proper intensity by taking three minutes before you touch the boat to get your body warmed up by jogging, jumping rope, or running in place. Follow that with basic stretching.
12. Water warm-up should be used to gradually build from no pressure up to full intensity. An example would be building from no pressure “hands only, bodies over, ¼ slide, ½ slide, ¾ slide, full slide”, and then adding pressure until proper workout intensity is reached.

# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

## 3.3 Education & Water Safety (cont.)

### US Rowing Safety Guidelines

#### On the Water

1. Proper supervision protocols must be developed and carried out to ensure the safety of the rowers. Under no circumstances should athletes who are minors be allowed or left unsupervised on the water.
2. Rowers in multi-person shells should always be quiet and attentive to the coxswain or coach.
3. Be aware of weather conditions. There are several inexpensive models of weather radios on the market. Use a weather radio or listen to local radio weather reports before going out on the water. Watch for gathering clouds, changes in wind speed and direction, temperature changes and other boats returning home. If on a river or tidal body of water, check the current direction and look for floating objects or kelp.
  - Do not row in whitecaps or winds of 12 knots or higher under any circumstances.
  - If sudden winds come up, return to the boathouse if the trip is safe, or take the boat to the nearest shore and wait for the winds to calm.
  - Try to minimize equipment damage, but remember that you are more valuable than the boat.
  - Do not row in fog unless your visibility to shore is at least 100 yards. Be sure to have land reference points. If fog sets in while you are on the water, move slowly, and be prepared to stop quickly. Use a sound-making device (coxbox, horn, or whistle) to advise other boats of your location as you take your boat to shore, following the shore back to the boathouse.
  - Do not row in an electrical storm. Lightning detectors are inexpensive and can clip on your belt. If you are on the water and see lightning, hear thunder, or notice your hair standing on end with static electricity, head for the nearest shore. If the storm is upon you, take your boat ashore and wait for the storm to pass.
4. Winds, tides, currents, or wakes from passing boats generates waves. Because shells are vulnerable to high waves, specific care is needed with approaching wakes.
  - If approaching wake is higher than the gunwale, the shell should be turned parallel to the wake to avoid having part of the shell unsupported by the water. It is possible to split a shell under these conditions. Rowers should stop rowing and lean away from the approaching wake, with oars on the wake side lifted slightly.
  - If the wakes are lower than the gunwale and widely spaced, continue to row without a course adjustment. Deep and closely spaced wakes that are lower than the gunwale may be taken at a 90-degree angle with the bow directly toward them.
  - Turning in waves is tricky; allow plenty of room, energy and time.

# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

## 3.3 Education & Water Safety (cont.)

### US Rowing Safety Guidelines

#### On the Water

5. Light conditions -- The greatest danger while rowing is a collision caused by limited vision or carelessness. Great care should be taken when rowing in darkness or near-darkness. Take extra care to look and listen. Minimize conversation. Be careful not to get too close to shore or known hazards. Only row in familiar waters while rowing at dusk, dawn, or in the dark.
  - There should be an all round white light on the stern of each rowing shell when rowing between sundown and sunup. It should be visible enough to warn approaching vessels. We recommend a red (port) and green (starboard) light on the bow. Another recommendation is that reflective tape be placed on top of the gunwales and splashboards. Refer to local laws for lighting.
  - Carry a sound-making device.
6. Water temperature should always be monitored.
7. Hyperthermia occurs when there is an increase in body temperature, usually when the air temperature is above 76 degrees, and the victim is exposed to sun and heat in combination with a decrease in fluids. It may occur when a) sweat cannot easily evaporate; b) the body is being heated by the environment; c) water loss from sweat and respiration is not replaced and dehydration occurs. Two serious conditions may result:
  - Heat exhaustion - signs are throbbing headache, nausea, cool skin, chills, sweaty, and pale pulse. Action - drink water, shade from sun, and treat for shock.
  - Heat Stroke is life threatening -- signs are behavior changes, unconsciousness, hot but not sweaty, flushed warm skin and rapid pulse. Action- douse with cool water, shade from sun, fan, ensure the airway is open, always get medical assistance as soon as possible.
  - To avoid these problems in hot and humid weather:
    - Maintain a high fluid level. Drink water before leaving the dock and frequently while on the water. Take an individual plastic water bottle for easy access.
    - Avoid sunburn by using sunscreen, with a sweatband or hat to keep lotion out of eyes.
    - Wear light clothing.
    - Remain in the shade when off the water.
    - Plan activity level consistent with the degree of heat and humidity.

# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

## 3.3 Education & Water Safety (cont.)

### US Rowing Safety Guidelines

#### On the Water

8. Hypothermia occurs when a victim is subject to cold temperatures, cold water, ice or snow. There is potential danger for hypothermia when the water temperature is below 80 degrees and very dangerous when the water temperature is below 50 degrees. Symptoms include feeling cold; turn bluish and shivering, and followed by numbness, apathy, lethargy, disorientation and loss of mental capacity.
  - Action if cold and shivering:
  - Get out of the water quickly, even on top of the capsized boat. Heat loss is 25 times greater when in the water.
  - Huddle with others
  - Drown-proofing (dead man's float) is not an acceptable survival technique. Keep as much of the body out of the water as possible.
  - Move to shelter quickly; remove wet clothing and re-warm body. In mild hypothermia conditions, re-warm in a shower, tub or with warm blankets.
  - Do not give any liquids to drink, treat for shock.
  - Continue to re-warm and always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.
  - Action if cold and shivering has stopped:
  - Treat as above but DO NOT RE-WARM EXTREMITIES! If victim is no longer shivering, the torso must be re-warmed to avoid circulation of cold blood to the heart. This can kill. Wrap the victim in a warm blanket and apply heat to under arms and groin area; wrap again in a separate blanket. Wrap each arm and leg separately to prevent rapid re-circulation of blood to the heart. Hot packs should not be placed directly on the victim; a thin layer should be used to protect the victim from burning. If possible place the victim in a sleeping bag with a warm person.
  - Administer artificial respiration and CPR if necessary. Always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.
  - Cold water immersion -- Be aware that in very cold water people have survived as long as one hour underwater. Recover a victim immediately and even though there may be no sign of life, administer CPR efforts until medical assistance is obtained.

#### Emergency Conditions

1. Under no circumstances should a rower in the water leave his/her shell. Even if a swamped boat is within a swim able distance from the shore, the rower should swim the boat to the shore. So do not leave your flotation even if you consider yourself a strong swimmer.
2. Should someone give the command "weight enough! Hold water," don't ask questions; just respond immediately by stopping all forward body movement. Square the blades in the water and bring the boat to a halt.
3. Use these distress signals to communicate to other boats: wave the arms or a shirt above your head or raise one oar in the air.

# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

## 3.3 Education & Water Safety (cont.)

### US Rowing Safety Guidelines

#### Emergency Conditions

4. Man overboard - Immediate command “weigh enough! Hold water!” If the safety launch can get to the victim first; allow the launch to rescue the victim. If the launch is not in the immediate vicinity, back the shell to the victim and have him/her hang onto the shell until the launch arrives. Another rower may have to enter the water to assist if the victim is injured.
5. Rower injured - Immediate command, “weigh enough! Hold water!” Signal launch if first aid is needed.
6. Shell damaged but afloat and not taking on water - Immediate command “weigh enough! Hold water!” Make adjustments or signal launch for assistance.
7. Shell swamped - Immediate command “weigh enough! Hold water!”. A shell is swamped when the interior water reaches the gunwales. If rowers stay in the boat, the flotation ends may cause the boat to break apart.
8. Coxswain directs rowers to untie, and by seat number rowers should carefully, but quickly, slip overboard.
9. If the boat is taking on excessive water, signal the launch and unload rowers by pairs - starting in the middle of the boat - as soon as possible in order to avoid damage to the boat. Pairs should form “buddies” and keep watch of each other. The cox should buddy with the stern pair.
10. If rescue is not imminent, take the following steps: 1) Remove oars and place them parallel to the shell. All persons should move to the two ends of the shell. It is dangerous to roll a shell when near riggers. 2) Then roll the boat to form a more stable flotation platform so rowers can either lie on top of the hull or buddies can hold onto each other across the hull. 3) Remember that body heat loss occurs 25 times faster in the water. Do not attempt to roll the boat if rescue is on the way.
11. A launch can shuttle rowers to the nearest shore. Be careful not to overload the launch.
12. When the boat has been brought to the shore, remove the oars. If the ends of the shell have filled with water, they must be drained before the boat can be removed from the water. Lift the shell carefully to avoid injury or damage. A boat full of water is very heavy, so try bailing first, then roll the boat slowly and lift it from the water.
13. Singles should be rowed with a buddy boat or launch. Your buddies boat or the launch will help stabilize you for the re-entry. Entering the shell directly from the water may cause splashboard damage. Swim the boat to shore, lying in the stern, using the shell as a paddleboard. In very cold weather you can abandon your shell and lie on the stern deck of your buddy’s boat to be taken to shore. The loss of muscle control can occur very quickly and dramatically in cold water. The stern deck rescue may be your only option.
14. Shell capsized - Immediate command “untie!” This rarely happens except in small boats. Be sure that all rowers and cox are accounted for. Stay with the boat until assistance arrives.

# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

## 3.3 Education & Water Safety (cont.)

### US Rowing Safety Guidelines

#### Emergency Conditions

15. Shell broken and sinking - Immediate command “untie!” Get out of the boat and follow the same procedures as for a swamped shell. Do not leave the floating boat. Swim boat to shore if launch is not immediate.
16. Another boat in distress - If a distress signal is seen and insufficient assistance is near that craft, maneuver your shell to the distressed shell. Assist in any way that does not jeopardize the lives in your shell.
17. Shells should stay within hailing distance of their safety launch. The launch has been outfitted to provide assistance to rowers and/or their shell in the event that it is needed. Most frequently, the toolbox and coach’s expertise is available for small equipment adjustments or breakdowns, which allow the shell to continue rowing after a short stop. If more serious needs arise, the launch is there for rapid transportation.
18. Paddle-down at the end of your workout. It is important to your health that you don’t race up to the dock. Once the boat and oars are stored, it is important to take another few minutes to go through your basic stretching exercises to identify unnoticed sprains or strains that began during your row.

## 4.0 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

RowHuntsville is committed to maintaining a clean, safe facility that allows each participant, guest (hereafter referred to as “site personnel”) to exist in a safe, secure environment, and promotes pride and care of the facility amongst its users.

### **4.1 Security**

RowHuntsville will control access to the facility for the safety of site personnel, in addition to the protection of Huntsville Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC. property.

#### **4.1.1 Access Control**

Access to the facility will be monitored and controlled for all program Participants by Huntsville Madison County Rowing & Watersports, LLC. policies and procedures.

- **Access for Program Participants**

The facility is available for rowing for RowHuntsville participants during the hours of operation 5am - 8:30pm. Participants will have access to the site building through either parking lot gate. A Staff member will only access the Boathouse. No Youth program participants are allowed access to the Boathouse unsupervised without approval of the Director/Head Coach.

# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

## 4.0 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (cont.)

- **Access for Guests or Visitors**

RowHuntsville controls access to the facility by requiring all guests and visitors to be cleared with the Director for a proper introduction to the Facility and programs.

- **Access to Public Restrooms**

Public restrooms are available at the facility for program participants, guests and visitors.

### **4.2 Signage**

The property will be locked after hours with approved signage warning visitors that they may be charged with trespassing if on the property following operation hours. This policy allows for the removal of transients and decreases incidents of vandalism.

All docks will be labeled with approved signage that reminds users that they are using the docks at their own risk.

### **4.3 Alcohol**

The RowHuntsville facility and grounds are “Alcohol free” zones - use of Alcoholic Beverages will not be allowed on the property or programs.

### **4.4 Housekeeping**

The Director/ Head Coach, Coaches and other staff shall remind all site participants that it is their responsibility to ensure that housekeeping is kept up and that the facility is free from trash, debris and cluttered walkways. This includes the following:

- Designate trash receptacles;
- Designate appropriate storage for flammable materials (e.g., solvents, glues, paint, etc.). This includes a flammables cabinet that will be kept in the boat bays near other boat repair and maintenance materials.
- All materials shall be stored such that it is stacked, braced, racked, blocked, interlocked, or otherwise secured to prevent sliding, rolling, falling or collapse.
- Any protruding materials (e.g., nails) will be kept clear from walkways and positioned such that someone will not accidentally lean on them.
- Any combustible scrap (e.g., cardboard boxes) shall be removed at regular intervals.
- Hoses and cords shall be run the minimum distance necessary and if they must pass over walkways, they must be secured or passed overhead.

## 5.0 COMMON PHYSICAL HAZARDS AND CONTROLS

This section provides information concerning common physical hazards associated with boathouse operations and recommended controls to minimize risk to site personnel.

### **5.1 Slip/Trip/Fall**

All site personnel are to be vigilant in providing clear footing, clearly identifying obstructions, holes, or other tripping hazards and maintaining an awareness of uneven terrain and slippery surfaces. Care shall be taken to contain liquids so as not to create a muddy or slippery condition.

# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

## 5.0 COMMON PHYSICAL HAZARDS AND CONTROLS (cont.)

### 5.1 Slip/Trip/Fall

Some rowing shells and watersport equipment are stored at heights above five feet. Part of the advancement to higher level of rowing skill is training and demonstrating that the rower can safely remove and replace rowing shells from their racks. Site personnel on the ground shall serve as 'spotters' to ensure the balance and stability of the personnel on ladders. Both rowers and coxswains are trained to watch for potential collisions with people and equipment when moving boats.

### 5.2 Heavy Lifting

During manual lifting tasks, all personnel will remember to lift with the force of the load suspended on their legs and not their backs. They are to follow these principles of back safety:

- Get help from another member/guest or mechanical device when possible
- Maintain the natural 'S' curve
- Build a bridge when lifting relatively light objects by placing one hand on a leg or other surface
- Lock the stomach muscles
- Hold the object close to the body
- Do not twist and lift try to plan tasks so that you lift from waist height to waist height

### 5.3 Electrical Hazards

Only authorized electricians are permitted to perform electrical work.

- Extension cords must be inspected prior to use any frays or missing ground prongs shall be cause to take the cord out of service.
- Extension cords are to be used for temporary purposes only and are not be used to hoist equipment.
- Extension cords are not permitted in water or in a walkway (if one must cross a walkway it shall be routed overhead).
- Work on electrically energized systems requires lockout/tag out.

### 5.4 Sharp Objects and Pinch Points

In any Rowing & Watersport facility, it is feasible that personnel will encounter sharp objects and pinch points. Sharp objects include boats, riggers, tools (e.g., knives, scissors), equipment, or other objects. When danger of cuts to the hands or other body parts is probable, site personnel will either arrange paths where personnel may walk free of sharp edges or block access completely. Heavy work gloves shall be used in conjunction with any chemical resistant gloves when handling sharp objects is required. Listed below are rules when using sharp tools:

- Use the right tool for the job. Do not use a knife when a more appropriate tool can be used.
  - For example, plastic cable ties must be cut with some form of diagonal cutter or scissors, not with a knife (the box nodule can be cut if it is too difficult to get under the tie).
- Examine every tool for damage prior to use. Do not use knives with dull blades or broken handles.
- When using a knife, apply the appropriate safety practices. Do not point the knife toward others. Make sure you have adequate space. Make sure that other workers are clear from the immediate area. Do not pull the knife toward you. Make sure you have an appropriate cutting surface. Make sure that you are properly balanced and have firm footing.

# SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

## 5.0 COMMON PHYSICAL HAZARDS AND CONTROLS (cont.)

### 5.4 Sharp Objects and Pinch Points

- Consider a protective glove made of Kevlar or similar material. Maintain a pair of protective gloves as standard protective gear in your field bag or toolbox.
- Make sure that new employees working with you are properly trained in the proper use of all of the tools that they are likely to use.
- Think you need a knife? Think again.

Pinch points are places where the hands may be caught between objects or moving parts. If you are unfamiliar with a piece of equipment that has moving parts – stop and become familiar with it, including knowing where the guards are meant to be. Do not operate or work around something you are not familiar with. It is unacceptable to work with any tool that has had its guard removed or altered. In general guards are required over blades, drive trains, pulleys, fly wheels, rotating parts, belts, motors, etc.

### 5.5 Ergonomics

Ergonomic injuries are the result of three factors: awkward postures, forceful motions and repetitive motions. The key to minimizing or even eliminating ergonomic injuries is by keeping the body in a neutral position through as much of the day as possible. A neutral position means that all of the bones are in their natural alignment (e.g., neck straight, back with ‘S’ curve, arms dangle from shoulders, not hunched) when a bend is needed such as when sitting or using a computer the elbows, hips and knees are at right angles and the wrists are straight with feet either flat on the floor or on a foot rest. Try to incorporate these natural and neutral postures into all tasks being done throughout the day. When a job requires force – try to think of another means of accomplishing the task; is there a tool or someone that can help? If you do a repetitive job, seek ways to automate it or build in frequent breaks from that task to give your body some rest. Build in a stretching routine throughout your day to give you back, wrists and neck a break. Ask your Coach or Director for some tips if you are unsure of a good way to stretch.

## 6.0 LOSS CONTROL

RowHuntsville has an inventory system in place that identifies all boats, equipment, electronics and furniture by means of a numbered tag, which corresponds to a number on the master inventory list. At least annually, RowHuntsville will inventory all of the above to determine if any assets are missing. The primary opportunity for loss of assets is in damage to boats. RowHuntsville has adopted a **“Boat Damage Policy”** which requires that individual members or visiting crews assume at least a portion, if not all, of the cost of repairing damage to boats.

## 7.0 INCIDENT/ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

The Director/Head Coach is the individual charged with all incident/accident investigation. Staff or Program participants are required to fill out an Accident/Incident Report form for each incident and provide the form to the Operations Director within 24 hours of any accident or incident occurring in or around the Boathouse. An Accident/Incident Log is kept by the Director/Head Coach with results of any action taken as a result of the incident, and all report forms are kept on file. The Director will determine whether police action, insurance company involvement, corrective measures, re-training or disciplinary action is warranted.