



## Survivors Abreast Water Safety Procedures

- Purpose:** To provide direction regarding water safety matters.
- Definitions:** **All participants** refers to Survivors Abreast team members or prospective members, coaches, boat operators, steerspersons, and drummers.
- Scope:** Applies to all participants.
- Policy:** It is the policy of SA that safety comes first. To meet this goal, this document shall be available to all persons on the [www.survivorsabreast.com](http://www.survivorsabreast.com) website.

All participants shall read and abide by these safety procedures.

It is the responsibility of all such parties to follow the safety procedures as outlined. The team captain shall direct team members to the website where they can read the safety procedures.

### Procedures:

- Everyone is responsible for their own safety at all times while attending or engaging in activities related to Peterborough's Dragon Boat Festival, dragon boat practices, workshops and/or racing.
- A safety boat shall be used for all practices and races and must have a qualified boat operator who has proof of operator competency (i.e. Pleasure Craft Operator Card). In the event of a mechanical failure of the safety boat, Survivors Abreast may practice without a safety boat and will stay near the shoreline of the lake.
- During practice sessions, the safety boat may have a maximum of four (4) people on board. This shall consist of a driver, spotter and possibly a combination of coaches, paddlers or safety boat trainees. Animals are not permitted on the safety boat.
- During SA practices the substitution of additional paddlers may take place from either the T-Wharf or the safety boat. This transfer will be totally at the discretion of coach and/or steersperson, taking into consideration the water conditions and the physical capabilities of those being transferred..
- Under the Small Vessel Regulations most other vessels are required to give way to paddle craft. However, ALL vessels operators, steerspersons, are required to maintain a lookout for other vessels and take all necessary action to maintain a safe distance.
- Weight of the paddlers must be taken into consideration when setting up the boat. Any serious weight distribution problems will adversely affect how the boat tracks for steering. Team captains and coaches must ensure the boat is balanced and not overloaded. If rough water conditions and/or weight of a full crew result in the dragon boat taking on water (i.e. being overloaded for the water conditions) they must reduce the number of paddlers and minimize the risk of swamping and sinking.
- Upon registration, all new members must pass a water test prior to paddling on the lake. The water test consists of entering the water while wearing a life jacket and swimming 50 meters to demonstrate familiarity and comfort in the water. Members wishing to wear their own inflatable PFD must pass a swim test of 200m without a PFD (rolling start from side of pool)
- Properly fitted and fastened Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) must be worn by all participants on the water and everyone on the safety boat.
- Loading and unloading the boat shall be done under the direction of the coach, steersperson or team captain and should only occur at the docks.



- When the boat is being paddled by the crew, all paddlers must remain seated. The only person who can stand in the boat when it is in motion is the steersperson. The coach may need to stand in the boat while instructing only individuals or pairs of paddlers.
- Anyone observed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, will be asked to leave the site by the Team Captain, Acting captain, Coach Steersperson or Team President

#### **Accountability:**

- The steersperson must know the number of people in the boat when the boat leaves the dock and confirms with the coach, team captain or drummer in addition to the safety boat and/or land-based safety person.
- The steersperson shall ensure that the boat is well balanced before leaving the dock. The steersperson shall have a whistle attached to their lifejacket. At least one other paddler will have a pealess whistle on their inherently buoyant PFD.
- Each paddler is responsible for the person they sit beside. "Stroke pair" is responsible for the drummer. "Rear pair" is responsible for the steersperson.

#### **Emergency Incidents, Capsized or Swamped Boat:**

- **Emergency Signal:** 3 long blast on the whistle.
- Safety boat crew (practice days may call 911 requesting an emergency response and provide appropriate details.
- Steersperson shall account for all paddlers by doing a buddy count. If the steersperson becomes incapacitated, the team captain or alternate shall assume responsibility. Upon completion of the count if a person is missing a second count will take place. If a person is still missing that information will be relayed to emergency services personnel.
- People in the water shall remain with the dragon boat until instructed from the safety boat. Rescue operations will involve assessing needs, prioritizing, loading and transporting people to land. Emergency services personnel will assess medical conditions if required.

#### **Medical Emergency in Boat:**

- The dragon boat shall be stopped. Three long whistle blasts shall be sounded and one person in the dragon boat shall use the "international distress signal". The person signaling will stand up and repeatedly move both arms from the side of their body to above their head.
- Safety boat crew (practice days may call 911 requesting an emergency response and provide appropriate details. The paddlers shall follow the directions of the safety boat crew and go directly to the T-wharf or nearest safe landing spot and wait for emergency responders.

#### **Following an Incident**

- Following a major incident as described in the Incident Response and Reporting Procedures, the safety boat operator and/or coach/steersperson must complete a major Incident Report for each person involved.
- In the case of a minor incident as described in the Incident Response and Reporting Procedures, a minor incident form may be filled out.
- The incident report shall be forwarded to the President.
- Incident Reports shall be completed as soon as possible following the incident.
- Please refer to the Incident Response and Reporting Procedures document for additional information.

#### **Other:**

#### **Paddling Area:**

- Boats shall not go upstream past Holiday Inn or downstream past the train swing bridge. These areas have swift currents that can change dramatically without warning.

**Severe weather:**

- In the event of lightning or severe weather observed by the safety crews, all dragon boats will be recalled to the docking area. Participants are encouraged to seek safe cover. A minimum of 30 lightning free minutes must have occurred before participants shall be allowed to return to the water.
- The call to come off the water is made by the Team Captain or acting Team Captain, the Coach and the Steersperson

**Related documents:**

- SA Incident Response and Reporting Procedures.
- SA Incident Report - Major
- SA Incident Report - Minor
- SA Land Incident Flow Chart
- SA Water Incident Flow Chart

This document and related documents will be reviewed at least annually

| History:         | Date:            | Comments:                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Original Policy: | January 6, 2008  |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Amendment:       | January 16, 2018 | Minor amendment to update the SA name and safety commands                                                                                                            |
| Amendment:       | May 8, 2018      | Rename to Water Safety Procedures. Amend to include incident reporting procedures                                                                                    |
| Amendment:       | Feb 2019         | Separate PDBF and SA documents. Include the use of inflatable PFD's                                                                                                  |
| Amendment:       | Sept 2021        | Housekeeping amendment to include the same wording regarding water testing as stated in SA Rules and Regulations document.                                           |
| Amendment:       | Sept 2023        | Added the requirement for at least one member to have a pealess whistle attached to their inherently boyant PFD and that animals are not allowed on the safety boat. |
| Amendment:       | April 2025       | Remove references to specific paddler weight and put emphasize on balancing the boat based on water conditions and overall weight of the crew.                       |