Organization Name	St. Catharines Rowing Club
Document Title	SCRC WARM WATER On-Water Safety Code
Approved by	SCRC Board of Directors
Effective Date	September 1, 2026
Review Date	Annually or as required

Background

Rowing Canada Aviron, in its publication "Rowing Safely RCA Safety Requirements and Safety Guidelines" (April 29, 2022), requires that all member rowing clubs have an on-water "Safety Code" and a designated "Safety Advisor". This is the St. Catharines Rowing Club's (SCRC) On-Water Safety Code for *Warm Water* Rowing. The SCRC Head Coach is the club's Safety Advisor.

Safe enjoyment of the sport is the aim of the St. Catharines Rowing Club and personal safety is of paramount importance. Rowing is an outdoor water sport that carries inherent risks of personal injury either from a collision, or from drowning as a result of falling into the water.

This WARM WATER On-Water Safety Code is in effect when the temperature of the water in Martindale Pond is equal to or greater than 11 degrees Celsius.

All risks are heightened in cold water. The SCRC COLD WATER On-Water Safety Code for when the water temperature is 10 °C or colder can be found in a separate document.

The following are the rules that must be followed to comply with the WARM WATER On-Water Safety Code. The consequences of failing to comply with the rules are outlined at the end of the Code.

Policy Statement

SWIM TEST AND SAFETY TRAINING

1. When Warm Water rules are in effect, *all* participants of the club's on-water activities shall be able to swim. Details of the swimming ability requirements can be found in the SCRC Swim Test and Ability to Swim Attestation Form.
2. Each year all rowers, coxswains, coaches and safety boat drivers are to view the six (6) RCA on-line education modules "Rowing Safety" https://safety.rowingcanada.org/en/#/ as part of the club's membership registration process.

LAUNCHES

1. Coach boats and safety boats, for the purposes of on-water coaching and safety, shall be regarded as the same type of vessel. They are referred to herein as "launches".

2. The drivers of launches are required to carry on board their Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC). The Head Coach shall keep a copy of PCOCs on file.
3. Each launch operator must ensure the launch under their control is in a well maintained, serviceable and safe condition. Operators must report any mechanical/operational issues with a motor or launch immediately to the Head Coach.
4. When in a launch, the first responsibility of the driver is safety for all. Any time there is an emergency with any club, any person, or any equipment, launch drivers are obligated to respond to someone in distress. In an emergency, any coach from any club can use SCRC equipment to assist. In an emergency, safety comes first; the Club colours we wear do not restrict us from assisting a rower from another club who is in danger.
5. There shall be a maximum of two persons on board a launch when being operated as a coach boat or safety boat.
6. All launches must carry the equipment as required in the Transport Canada (TC) Small Vessel Regulations (SVR) at all times. This includes the following:
    i) A Personal Flotation Device (PFD) for each person on board the launch. If a person on board is less than 16 years of age, the PFD shall be worn and be inherently buoyant;
    ii) Nine (9) PFDs for the rowers under the launch driver's supervision;
    iii) Paddle;
    iv) Plastic or metal bailer with an opening of at least 65 cm^2 and a capacity of at least 750 ml;
    v) 15 m buoyant heaving line;
    vi) Watertight flashlight;
    vii) Pealess whistle;
    viii) Reboarding device;
    ix) Navigation lights, if operated before sunrise or after sunset, or in periods of restricted visibility; and
7. Each launch driver shall affix the 'kill switch' to their person when operating the launch.

ROWING SHELLS

1. Prior to launching, rowing shells are to be checked by the user(s) to ensure that the shell meets the RCA Rules of Racing equipment requirements, that the hull and riggers are sound and any steering mechanism is functional, and that equipment required under the TC SVR is carried on board. Crews must report any mechanical/operational issues to their coach or to the Head Coach immediately.
2. The following equipment must be carried on board:
    i) A pealess whistle;
    ii) A white light if the shell is operated before sunrise or after sunset or in periods of restricted visibility. An additional red (port side) and green (starboard side) light on the bow is preferred.

TRAFFIC PATTERN

1. All crews and scullers will follow the traffic pattern as outlined on the traffic pattern map posted in the shellhouse compound.

2. There shall be no rowing upstream of the starting gates.

WARM WATER PROGRAM SPECIFIC RULES

1. All crews must sign out and in using the clothespin rack system on the dock.

2. **Athletes under the age of 19** may only row when accompanied by a supervising launch. The maximum ratio of shells per launch is 6:1. The shells may not be more than 500 m from the supervising launch. It is not enough for rowers to simply be within 500 meters of any launch. Crews need confirmation from the designated launch driver before leaving the dock that their row will be monitored.
3. **Athletes aged 19 years and older** who have displayed competency as a rower (or designated by their program coach as competent) may row without launch supervision. Athletes will not however be given unrestricted access to the boathouse and rowing course and must still row during designated practice times, typically early morning and evenings. When athletes are supervised by a designated launch, and that launch becomes more than 500m from its respective crew(s), an SCRC launch within 500m of the subject crew(s) becomes, by default, the designated safety launch (see **LAUNCHES #4** above).

   If athletes row unsupervised and/or more than 500m distant from a supervising launch, they must comply with the following conditions:
   a. Carry a PFD for each athlete in the shell;
   b. Carry a pealess whistle;
   c. Employ a buddy system by rowing with at least one other shell within hailing distance
4. The launch operator and the crew(s) for which he/she is responsible shall have discussed the training plan and traffic pattern the crew(s) will be using.

TIME ON THE WATER

1. In the morning there shall be no rowing prior to ninety (90) minutes before sunrise.
2. In the evening, all crews shall be off the water by civil twilight.
3. Civil twilight, sunrise and sunset times will be posted on the notice board each month by the Head Coach.

ADVERSE WEATHER

1. Crews should not launch if fog reduces visibility to less than 500 metres.
2. If the density of fog increases when crews are already on the water, and the visibility drops to less than 250 metres, crews shall end their practice and slowly make their way back to the main dock.
3. If at any time crews or launch drivers see lightning, crews are to immediately head back to the dock or the nearest shelter area.

EMERGENCY

In any emergency, call 911 and follow the instructions posted on the Emergency Action Plan.

COMMUNICATION

1. The WARM WATER On-Water Safety Code will be reviewed annually and posted prominently at the rowing club by the Head Coach.
2. The WARM WATER On-Water Safety Code will be required reading by athletes and coaches during the high school and club's membership/registration process.
3. The Head Coach will review the WARM WATER On-Water Safety Code with all coaches prior to the rules taking effect.
4. Coaches will review the WARM WATER On-Water Safety Code with their athletes when the Head Coach declares the WARM WATER On-Water Safety Code to be in effect.

MONITORING AND PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

1. Adherence to the Club's WARM WATER On-Water Safety Code is the duty and responsibility of every SCRC coach and member. Failure to follow the rules outlined in this safety code could result in disciplinary action and/or suspension of club privileges, at the discretion of the Head Coach. Final interpretation and enforcement of the rules is the responsibility of the Head Coach, and if needed, in consultation with the Rowing Committee.
2. The Head Coach shall have the final say in matters related to rowing times, safety, equipment maintenance and usage. If the Head Coach is not present, the most senior coach, or any other individual so designated by the Head Coach will assume this responsibility.
3. The Head Coach shall employ the following progressive disciplinary steps when rowers and coaches are non-compliant with the Warm Water On Water Safety Code:

a. First Offense – Conversation and Reminder – This conversation should seek to determine what the athlete/coach believes the rules to be and the steps they have taken to follow them. If the athlete's/coach's interpretation of the rule(s) is incorrect, the Head Coach will clarify and reinforce the rule(s) to the individual(s).
b. Second Offense – Formal Oral Caution – The Head Coach will investigate the offence, and if warranted, will give the offender(s) a formal oral caution.
c. Third Offense – Formal Written Warning – The Head Coach will investigate the offence, and if warranted, will give the offender(s) a formal written warning.
d. Fourth Offense – Suspension of Club Privileges – The Head Coach will investigate the offence, and if warranted, will suspend the rowing privileges of the offender(s) for a period of time to be determined by the Head Coach.
e. Ongoing Concerns – Termination of Membership – The Head Coach will investigate the ongoing offences, and if warranted, recommend to the SCRC Board of Directors to terminate the membership of the offender(s).

<u>Attachments</u>	N/A

Links to Other Documents	Safe Sport Policy SCRC Cold Water On-Water Safety Code

File name: SCRC Warm Water On-Water Safety Code September 1 2026