



PORT MACQUARIE ROWING CLUB INC. SAFE BOAT HANDLING GUIDELINES

Correct boat handling technique is essential to minimise damage to boats and to prevent injury to crew members. The main phases of boat handling are:

- 1. REMOVAL OF BOAT FROM THE SHED**
- 2. LAUNCHING**
- 3. SAFE ROWING PRACTICE**
- 4. RETURNING TO SHORE AND RETRIEVAL OF BOAT FROM WATER**
- 5. RETURNING BOAT TO THE SHED**

1. REMOVAL OF BOAT FROM THE SHED

- Select suitable trestles for the boat and place them on level ground – not directly in front of the boatshed doors. If there is a strong wind position the trestles so the boat is facing bow into the wind.
- Select oars and place them at the water's edge with the handles facing the water, along with your water bottle (which should be in a sock or other cover) and socks.
- Check you have a clear path from the boat rack to the trestles.
- Position crew correctly around the boat and lift from the rack, taking extreme care not to hit the riggers on boats stored above or below your boat. (Crew positioning for fours is each crew member stands opposite their rigger – Quads is the stroke to the stern of the stroke rigger, three between stroke and three riggers, two between three and two riggers and bow between two and bow riggers. Doubles may be carried by holding onto the front and back decks approximately 1 metre from the open part of the boat).
- Carry the boat to a position parallel to the trestles and on directions from the stroke turn the boat over.
- Then lift the boat to clear the trestles and place carefully on the trestles.
- Check the foot stretchers and adjust, ensure all fittings are tight. Open the gates ready to place the oar.

2. LAUNCHING THE BOAT

- Check the direction of the tide.
- Make sure the launching area is clear of other boats and that no boats are about to row into the launching area.
- If the area is clear carry the boat to the water with all crew members on one side so as to place the boat in the water facing into the current.
- Before lowering the boat into the water ensure the bow and stern are in deep water – make sure there is sufficient water so as the fin does not touch the bottom.
- Half the crew then hold the boat ensuring it does not wash onto the gravel. The other half fetch their oars and socks and place their oars in the gates and secure the gate. They then hold the boat and the other members get their oars etc and place into the gates and secure.
- All crew then face the stern of the boat and hold both oars with their hand closest to the middle of the river. Position your seat and place your foot closest to the boat in the correct boarding position. Push off with your other foot and immediately sit on the seat.
- Under directions from the stroke, immediately commence rowing, usually with the oar closest the shore in order to edge the boat clear of the rocks at the end of the launching area.
- Row a safe distance from the shore and put on socks and adjust foot stretchers if necessary.

3. SAFE ROWING

- When crew members are ready they number off from the bow rower.
- When the crew is ready the bow rower should check that course is clear, the stroke will then give directions to commence rowing.
- Remember to row with your bow oar nearest the bank.
- The bow rower has the responsibility to keep a lookout for any obstacles and that the course is far enough from the bank.
- Do not land the boat other than at the club launching area except in extreme circumstances.

- Do not row in heavy wind, fog or when there is any likelihood of electrical storms.

4. RETURNING TO SHORE AND RETRIEVAL OF BOAT FROM WATER

- When returning to the launching area approach the area in a direction against the tide (or against the wind if the wind is very strong).
- Before entering the launching bay ensure the area is clear and no boats are about to be carried into the water.
- When the area is clear row slowly into the bay at an acute angle and when near the shore check the boat with your outside oar. Generally the boat can be manoeuvred or will drift close enough to the shore to allow the crew to get out into knee deep water.
- If you are experiencing difficulty call for assistance from other members on the bank before you get the boat into a dangerous situation.
- When the boat is in knee deep water then hold both oars together with your outside hand and on directions from the stroke get out of the boat together.
- Half the crew remove their oars and other items while the rest of the crew hold the boat. The crew members holding the boat do not remove their oars until the other members return to hold the boat.
- When placing oars against the boatshed position the handle to the top to reduce the risk of the wind blowing the oar. In very heavy wind oars should be placed on the ground.
- Using the correct carrying positions carry the boat next to the trestles, lift boat higher and place on trestles deck up.
- Wash the boat thoroughly both inside and out, taking particular care to wash all salt water off the riggers and other metal fittings. Lift the boat off the trestles and drain cockpit. Dry the boat inside and out. Then replace. This will involve turning the boat. To do this, lift the boat off the trestles and turn it beside the trestles and then place back.
- Undo all hatches and bungs and ensure all water is drained from the front and rear deck sections. Replace the gate covers.
- Wash and dry oars and replace in the racks.

5. RETURNING BOAT TO THE SHED

- Check that there are no obstacles between the trestles and boat rack and carry the boat into the shed taking special care not to knock the gates and riggers on other boats.
- When level with the rack, doubles can be placed directly on the rack, while quads and fours will need to have one side rested on the rack while two of the crew position themselves on the inner side of the rack to lift the boat over. All Club boats should have a green rectangle placed on the splashboard. This rectangle should be immediately above where the boat rests on the rack.
- Be careful that boats are not positioned on racks with weight on the sneak (the pointed forward section of the gunwale or saxboard).