

Responsibilities of a race marshal

1. Contribute to the safety of all participants by implementing the agreed safety plan
2. Assist with the conduct of the race (by carrying out any of a range of tasks).
3. When assigned, ensure the safety of a particular section of the race course by, for example, ensuring safe overtaking and handling accidents and emergencies.
4. Acting as an ambassador for the club, contributing to the enjoyment of competitors, other club officials and spectators.

Preparing for marshalling duty on the course

Before the day of the race you should:

1. Dial in to the Marshals Briefing on Zoom – details to be sent separately – on Thursday 24th February at 20.00.
2. Obtain the Safety Plan from the Safety Advisor. You should be familiar with its key elements as they apply to your duties as a race marshal. It contains the Emergency Plan, but there is more on handling emergencies below.
3. Obtain the current Marshal Briefing card, read it and also print it out to take to the race. It has important current information (such as telephone numbers and post codes for canal access points).
4. Obtain the “Radio Procedure for Marshals” and read it.
5. Know what duty you have been assigned to and between what times. Be aware of how long it takes to walk from some marshalling positions back to the club house.
6. Report to the Scout Hut ahead of your division at 08.15, 10.30 and 13.00 to Lisa Matthews, to collect your equipment. Equipment should also be returned to Lisa after the division and before the start of the next shift, unless you are on the same position for subsequent division

Radio procedure

Radio procedure is very important: without it an important message may be missed because of misuse of the radio channel.

A simple radio procedure is contained in a separate document. Every marshal will be allocated a radio.

Radio examples, consistent with the radio procedure, are given in the remainder of this document; in all cases they assume that you are marshalling at “The narrows”.

Event Information / Implementation of Contingency Arrangements

Any changes to the arrangements of the event or implementation of contingency arrangements will be communicated by radio from Race Control.

There will be an “All-Station” alert starting with “I shall notify you in 15 seconds of [*Type of Action*]. Please await further details.”

The information will be communicated and instructions on what actions will be required. You may also need to notify any spectators or competitors in the vicinity of your station.

You will also be asked to acknowledge receipt of the message at the end of the call by way of a roll call of all points commencing from Long Course Start.

If you are unclear or uncertain on actions to be taken, please contact Race Control after completion of the Roll Call.

Marshalling a section of the course

If you are assigned a particular section of the course you are responsible for safety and the smooth running

of the race over that section. (Your section will abut onto one or two others and you should be able to see the other marshals).

Prior to the start of each division, Race Control will notify all stations of any crews which have scratched from the event and also undertake a roll call to ensure that marshals are in position.

Managing overtaking

If you see two crews in the distance and it appears that the trailing crew is catching up on the one in front you must make a judgement as to whether you need to tell the leading crew to pull in to allow the other one past (as set down in the safety plan).

On the one hand you need to arrange for this pulling in to be done in a sensible place (if, for example, you're marshalling at the Narrows then it needs to be done either before or after that point). But you mustn't do it too soon because it's possible that the trailing crew will run out of steam and not be able to close the gap.

If you decide that the crew in front must pull in you should move quickly to the place where you want them to pull in and shout loudly, several times along these lines:

Leading crew! Pull in to the towpath! Now!

Or if you can see the crew number, **Crew 26! Pull in to the towpath! Now!**

All crews this year will have an Empacher number visible on their bows as well as a number on the back of the bow person

Or if you know the club colours, **Such-and-such club! Pull in to the towpath! Now!**

The crew will be travelling at some speed, of course, so as soon as you have their attention you must try to get them to slow down. Commands like the following will be helpful:

Hold it up!

Steer in towards me!

Steer parallel to the bank!

Stand ready to take one of the near-side blades. Try to help slow the boat as much as possible, and (to minimise damage) get them to run parallel to the bank while the speed bleeds off.

Once the overtaking crew has passed offer to push the boat out again (as long as there isn't another crew approaching!) so that the crew can continue racing.

If you decide not to pull the leading crew in but believe that the overtake will be necessary soon, you can call the marshal for the next section.

"Railway Bridge this is Narrows"

...

"Crews 45 and 46 are getting pretty close; stand by to manage overtaking. Out."

Managing protests resulting from overtaking (or failing to pull over)

Occasionally a botched overtaking manoeuvre results in bad feeling and the crew that believes they were wronged will raise a protest after finishing. You will be asked by race umpires what you saw. It is therefore important to take careful notice of what happens in anything other than the most straightforward cases. If you believe it is necessary you could even radio ahead about it.

"Race control this is Narrows, over"

"Race control. Go ahead"

"Crew 103 badly impeded crew 104 when overtaking just now. Over"

... etc.

Managing capsizes and other incidents

If you see a crew capsize run immediately towards it. Your **first priority** must be to check that **all** crew members have their heads above water (in other words, that their feet have come out of the shoes). Our water is comparatively safe (assuming competitors can actually swim, as they have certified they can), as

long as the crew is safely out of the boat.

Immediately look to see if there are other boats dangerously close. If there are you must stop them. Shout loudly and repeatedly until they see the situation and slow down. Once they have seen the danger and stopped, members of oncoming crews may be the most immediate source of assistance.

What to do if a rower is stuck under an upturned boat

The situation is extremely serious. As you run towards the scene use your radio to declare an emergency and summon assistance.

“Emergency, emergency. This is Narrows, rower trapped under boat. Marshal assistance to the narrows urgently. Over.”

Race control will stop racing and declare radio silence.

Using your initiative, carry out some or all of the following steps, in order.

1. Instruct the remaining crew members to turn the boat right way up. Get them all on the same side of the boat and then stand on the riggers nearest to them, reach over and pull upwards on the hull. If they succeed then the stuck rower's head will come out of the water.
2. Tell one remaining crew member (only one) to reach under and assist the stuck rower to get free. Keep careful watch and make sure the rower doesn't stay under water for more than a few seconds.
3. Tell the free rower(s) to tow the boat towards the bank and, as soon as you can, help to turn it over.
4. If you feel you must enter the water, as a matter of life and death, do so as long as you are not on your own. Tie one end of your throw line round your chest, under your arms, give the other end to someone (another marshal, or even a member of a following crew that has stopped), and enter the water to give direct assistance. Assume you will be out of your depth, though portions of the canal are no more than waist deep.

Do **not** enter the water without a safety line firmly attached to you, with someone holding the other end.

Try wherever possible **not** to touch the bottom; who knows what sharp or entangling objects lie down there.

Do **not** enter the water unless you have certified that you can swim to British Rowing standards.

Remember to wash your hands carefully with soap and clean water as soon afterwards as you are able.

5. Once the emergency is over ensure that the crew rides home in a car, with suitable protection against the elements. Each marshal position will be provided with foil blankets. Liaise with Race Control to get the boat recovered.

What to do in a “normal” capsized, in which all rowers get free immediately

1. Tell the crew to keep hold of the boat and drag it towards you (i.e. towards the tow path).
2. As soon as you can reach the boat grab hold of it, and instruct the crew to climb out onto the towpath.
3. Check for signs of exposure (possible if it's very cold and windy): see below for a guide to the symptoms.
4. Hand out space blankets if you believe it necessary. A crew that elects to walk home may have a long way to go in wet kit.
5. Having regard for the nature of the crew and the weather, and taking into account their own wishes, decide whether or not to permit the crew to re-enter the boat and row home. For some crews a long way from the club house, it may in fact be the quickest and warmest way to get them there. Any crew J16 or under must be accompanied by someone jogging beside them on the towpath.

If they are not to row home then liaise with Race Control on the radio to get transport (for a large crew road transport may be the most practical) and to recover the boat.

6. If the crew wishes to row on, and you judge them to be able, assist them to empty the boat and get back in. Do not push them out until no oncoming crews are visible.

Notify Race Control that the crew is rowing back.

Giving advice to avoid collisions

Strictly speaking competing crews are totally responsible for their own steering and if they lose time by hitting the bank it's their problem. And if this were a crack race with elite crews we as marshals would

behave accordingly.

But this is a local race and we have lots of novices and juniors and you must exercise your judgement as to what is best. For many of our crews, certainly the lower levels of juniors and crews of adult novices, they will get a better race if you call out things like:

“Watch your course, single!”

“Look ahead, cox!”

“Watch the bend!”

It should be noted that canal is officially closed for the duration of the event. If a canal barge comes from the opposite direction when a boat is rowing to the start, they must give way to let it pass. The rowing boat should Pull in to the towpath (on starboard/bow side when heading towards the start), with blades on the bank, no less than 100 metres away. Should a Marshal encounter a barge during boating times when boats are proceeding to the start alert the barge driver to the risk of oncoming traffic, most of which are unfamiliar to the canal, and request that they please exercise caution, use their horn frequently and reduce speed. During racing periods Marshals at each end of the course shall halt barges before reaching rowing boats or the course.

Other possible events which may need your attention

You must handle other events as you think fit. But always remember this hierarchy:

1. First do whatever is necessary to prevent injury to people.
2. Then do whatever is necessary to prevent significant damage to equipment.
3. Then do whatever is necessary to ensure fair racing.
4. Then do whatever is necessary to maintain the good name of our club.

If you are in doubt, and you have time, call Race Control and ask.

Declaring an emergency

In extreme circumstances, those endangering life, you must declare an emergency. Do this:

1. Decide what assistance you need. Safety launch? Ambulance? Something else?
2. Decide who you need to call. If you require the emergency services then it's Race Control's job to call them. If it's a launch you need and you have a radio you can call direct.
3. Before you do anything yourself to handle the emergency you must make the emergency call, as follows.

Emergency call with a radio

As before, the following examples assume that your callsign is “Narrows”.

“Pan, Pan. This is Narrows. Rower trapped in a boat. Launch to the narrows immediately. I say again, launch to the narrows immediately.”

“Pan, pan. Race Control this is Narrows. Rower collapsed, get an ambulance. I say again, ambulance to the narrows immediately.”

“Pan, pan. All marshals this is Narrows. Stop the race. Cattle in the canal.”

Emergency call by mobile telephone

If you don't have a radio you can summon help by telephone using the number for Control, which is given in your Marshal Briefing Card for the race (they're updated every year). Alternatively, or in addition, you can ask for help from properties adjoining the canal.

Appendix: Signs of Hypothermia

(These may not all be present at any particular stage)

Pre-hypothermic

1. Cold, stiff hands/feet.
2. Muscles tense, shivering starts.
3. Onset of weakness/tiredness.

Mild hypothermia (action required)

1. Vigorous shivering.
2. Numbness, loss of dexterity; grip weakens (harder to hold onto the boat).

3. Co-ordination may deteriorate; speech may slur.
4. Onset of confusion, memory lapses.

Hypothermia (life-threatening)

1. Shivering reduces, then stops.
2. Muscles increasingly rigid; speech slurred, stumbling gait
3. Heart rate slow/erratic; breathing slow; cough reflex impaired.
4. Apathy; possible bizarre dissociated behaviour.