

# Walton & Weybridge Regatta 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025

## SAFETY PLAN

Assessment of risk to health and/or safety to persons:

- On the river; or
- By the river and affected by the conduct of the race on the river.

These persons may be categorised as follows:

1. Persons competing in a race (crews).
2. Event officials supervising the racing.
3. Crews proceeding to and from a race.
4. Others assisting the organisers.
5. Others navigating on the river.
6. Others using the enclosure and banks, towpaths and footpaths.

### **Related documents:**

- Regatta Emergency Response Plan:  
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/EmergencyResponsePlan.pdf>
- Regatta "Instructions to Competitors":  
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/CompetitorsInstructions.pdf>
- Course Map and Circulation Pattern:  
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/map.pdf>
- Main Regatta Site Plan:  
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/siteplan.pdf>
- Regatta "Instructions for Umpires & Marshals"  
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/OfficialsInstructions.pdf>
- Welfare Statement:  
<http://wandwregatta.org.uk/files/WelfareStatement.pdf>

### **The Overarching Safety Plan:**

All competitors, coaches, officials and all those assisting the organisers shall:

1. Except when the Race Rules state otherwise, **observe the River Thames byelaws**. The key elements for boats involved in Walton & Weybridge Regatta can be summarised as:
  - **Keep to starboard** (boat/cox's right).
  - If you think you are at risk of colliding head on with a boat heading towards you, **move to starboard** (boat/cox's right).
  - **Always keep a good look-out.**
  - Implement the provisions of the British Rowing's **Rules of Racing** and **RowSafe**.
2. **Regatta Jurisdiction:** Walton Bridge and the 'Regatta Warning' signs above Sunbury Weir mark the boundaries of Walton and Weybridge Regatta. Within this area umpires, marshals and rescue launch teams will be exercising their skills to minimise risk to all crews and maximise safety. There is sufficient space for adequate warming up and cooling down. Crews that feel they need to paddle above Walton Bridge must clearly understand that they do so entirely at their own risk and that in so doing they are leaving the Regatta Area and the associated safety benefits.
3. **Navigation Channel:** Crews paddling to the start are to keep to the starboard (bow) side of the Navigation Channel, proceeding slowly but without stopping or overtaking. The Environment Agency insist that river traffic using the navigation channel must not be unduly impeded; any crew seen to violate these instructions will be given an official warning.

4. There is a **small weir (Tumbling Bay)** just upstream of Walton Rowing Club and your attention is drawn to it as a potential hazard. We have been informed that the EA is no longer operating the sluices on this weir and that they remain closed, i.e. reduced flow.
5. Downstream of Walton RC on the opposite side of the river is **The Little Weir**. This was designed as a storm weir and would not normally be open in safe navigable conditions. However, regatta officials will monitor its state before the regatta.
6. **Practice starts (and firm/race pace paddling)** in the navigation channel are **STRICTLY FORBIDDEN** but are allowed above the start having due regard to other river traffic.
7. **Crews arriving at the Start** must proceed past it, keeping to the Middlesex bank, until they are above the Regatta Warning Sign. Then, after careful scrutiny and when safe to do so, cross the river to the Surrey side and wait by the Walton Marina pontoons until called forward by the Start Marshal.
8. **Be observant** and aware of the risks related to use of the river for the purpose of competitive racing and of the need to prevent accidents at all times.
9. Comply with all requests and instructions issued by the Race Committee and its officials and, or the Environment Agency's officers, designed to prevent accident, injury and or ensure the safety and welfare of those involved with or affected by the conduct of the race.
10. Ensure as best they may that each person taking part has been assessed and trained to the level of competency required – particularly with relation to capsizes – by British Rowing and the race to enable them to safely compete in the race or to undertake the supervision of those taking part in the race.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

Because of the changing nature of the river and its environment, the quantification of risk identified in this assessment is to be regarded as dynamic and a direct factor of those conditions prevailing both at the start of the race and during each part of it.

References: A. Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing

### **Risk Level Estimator**

Likelihood of harm	Severity of Harm		
	Slight harm	Moderate Harm	Extreme harm
Very Unlikely	Very low risk	Low risk	Medium risk
Unlikely	Low risk	Low risk	Medium risk
Likely	Medium risk	Medium risk	High risk
Very likely	Medium risk	High risk	Very high risk

### **Risk Based Control Plan**

<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Action and Timescale</b>
1. Very low risk	No action required.
2. Low risk	No additional controls are required. Consideration may be given to a more effective solution or improvement.
3. Medium risk	Efforts should be made to reduce the risk. Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period. Where the moderate risk is associated with harmful/serious consequences further assessment may be necessary to establish more precisely the likelihood of harm as a basis for determining the need for improved control measures.
4. High risk	The activity should not be started until the risk has been reduced. Considerable resources may have to be allocated to reduce the risk. Where the risk involves activity already in progress, urgent action should be taken.
5. Very high risk	Activity should not be started or continued until the risk has been reduced. If it is not possible to reduce risk even with unlimited resources, activity has to remain prohibited.

Risks on the Walton Reach

Risk	Probability of harm VU/U/L/VL	Severity SH/MH/EH	Risk Level	Planned Action to Control Risk
Fast river conditions	Likely	Moderate Harm	3. Medium risk	<p>The Safety Adviser will take advice from the Environment Agency during the week before the regatta on their assessment of likely race conditions. The Regatta Race Committee, Chairman and Safety Adviser will review the actual conditions on-site prior to the regatta. Depending on the severity of the river conditions they may decide to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change to a Free Start;</li> <li>• Shorten the course to reduce marshalling problems at the start caused by the fast and uneven currents;</li> <li>• Cancel any event, e.g. those involving novice and junior crews;</li> <li>• Cancel the Regatta.</li> </ul>
Damage and injury resulting from collision between crews	Likely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	<p>Bow balls may be inspected by Control Commission prior to going afloat to race. Competitors and coaches are responsible for ensuring that their boats are safe and are prepared to the required standards at all times.</p> <p>Coaches and competitors to be aware of the Overarching Safety Plan with particular adherence to navigation on the stretch.</p> <p><b>The racing course is buoyed and umpires with loud hailers will warn crews if a collision appears likely.</b></p>
Damage and injury resulting from a collision between crews or with fixed objects causing a capsize	Likely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	<p>Heel restraints and buoyancy compartments may be inspected by Control Commission prior to going afloat to race. Competitors and coaches are responsible for ensuring that their boats are safe and are prepared to the required standards at all times.</p> <p>Competitors are advised of hazards in competitor instructions. <b>Umpires and marshals with loud hailers will call a warning to stop if a collision appears likely.</b></p>
Damage and injury resulting from collisions with non-event related vessels	Likely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	<p>All crews and officials are provided with a detailed circulation plan. The course is buoyed, warning boards are secured at each end of the regatta course and notices are displayed in accordance with EA Regulations to warn other river users. Leaflets are given to the Lock Keepers at Sunbury, Shepperton and Wey Navigation</p>

				Thames locks to hand out to river users alerting them to the regatta taking place.
Capsize during a race	Likely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	Two fully manned safety launches are on duty during the race programme. All Bank Umpires, Starter, Start Marshals and Safety Launches are linked by radio. Umpires are equipped with loud hailer to summon assistance. Control Commission will check cox's life jackets prior to going afloat to race.
Sudden bad weather causing unrowable and/or dangerous conditions	Unlikely	Moderate harm	2. Low risk	The Regatta Race Committee may suspend racing if conditions become dangerous. <b>With a strong head wind or tail wind making it difficult for crews to attach to the stakeboats, the Race Committee will consider moving to Free Starts.</b> <b>The event will be cancelled if wind speeds exceed 25mph (40km/h) with gusts of 40mph (64km/h)</b>
Injury or illness to competitor or official on the land, including on the landing stage.	Likely	Slight harm	3. Medium risk	Official, Umpire or Control Commission to alert First Aid crew stationed in the Regatta Enclosure
Injury or illness to competitor or official on the water	Likely	Slight harm	3. Medium risk	Nearest Umpire or Official to alert Safety Boat over the radio to attend to the injured/ill person. Safety Boat Crew to assess assistance needed, keeping Race Control alerted.
Injury or illness to competitor with a pre-existing medical condition	Very unlikely	Extreme harm	3. Medium risk	Any competitor with a pre-existing medical condition that may affect a response to injury or illness must alert Regatta Registration (this can be in a sealed envelope with name, club and crew clearly written on it) <b>in accordance with RowSafe Guidance 4.2. Information will only be shared on a strict 'need to know' basis.</b>
Crew being unable to avoid Tumbling Bay weir	Very unlikely	Extreme harm	3. Medium risk	Crews are warned of the danger in their instructions. Two fully manned safety launches are on duty during the race programme. All Bank Umpires and safety launches are linked by radio. Umpires are equipped with loud hailer to summon assistance. Bank Umpire 3 is instructed to keep an eye on crews approaching Tumbling Bay
Collision in boating area, particularly between crews finishing and crews setting off	Likely	Slight harm	3. Medium risk	Marshals positioned in the boating area will advise crews waiting to embark and disembark and the Finish Umpire will keep watch over crews finishing. <b>The Finish</b>

				Umpire will instruct crews to stop racing if they fail to do so at the Finish.
Collisions in marshalling area for the start	Likely	Slight harm	3. Medium risk	Start Marshals will control the position of crews waiting at the start.
Collision with river craft, particularly at Shepperton and Walton Marinas	Likely	Slight harm	3. Medium risk	Marshals, umpires, start timekeeper and all other regatta officials are advised to look out for the possibility of collisions and take action as necessary to prevent them. The Safety Plan includes a warning for competitors. Regatta warning signs are positioned upstream of the marshalling area and downstream of the finish.
Collision with swans	Unlikely	Slight harm	2. Low risk	Most swans on the stretch are penned during the regatta but may move onto the course. (Race Control to be contacted if a swan has sustained an injury.) Umpires are advised to stop crews racing if a collision with a swan appears likely.
Attack by swans	Unlikely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	Competitors who suffer an attack by a swan are advised not to leave their boat, particularly not to jump overboard, but to paddle away as quickly as possible. They should consider heading for the bank or to where there are people able to offer assistance at chasing it away.
Those manning stakeboats, the Starter and Start Timekeeper, personnel laying or taking in the course and those on maintenance duties could fall in the river	Unlikely	Slight harm	2. Low risk	All regatta personnel in boats to wear buoyancy aids (a suitable number have been purchased by the regatta). The nearest race official to summon a safety launch in the event of a person in the water.
Collision or capsize whilst safety launches are dealing with other incidents	Unlikely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	Co-ordinating Umpire to prioritise the incidents and deploy the safety launches as appropriate. If both safety launches are dealing with accidents/capsize, racing will be suspended until one safety launch is back on station.
Accident caused by cyclist on the towpath	Unlikely	Slight harm	2. Low risk	Cyclists will be advised to dismount in the area between Miskin's Wharf and Walton Rowing Club. In the event of an accident Land Based First Aider may be summoned by any race official, competitor, or member of the public.
Accident caused by trestles constituting a trip hazard	Unlikely	Slight harm	2. Low risk	Control Commission to keep a watchful eye on the boating area and Umpires checking boats to be briefed to do the same. In the event of an accident Land Based First Aider may be summoned by any

				race official, competitor, or member of the public.
Accident caused by trailer	Unlikely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	Drivers of trailer towing vehicles must exercise due caution when manoeuvring in the boat park areas in the extension road at the end of Sunbury Lane, in the BP compound and on the road, using a second person to guide them safely when reversing. Marshals will be in attendance to assist.
Sunburn/heat exhaustion	Likely	Slight harm	3. Medium risk	Competitors are advised to take precautions on sunny days to avoid extremes of temperature. Safety launches and first aid facilities are available throughout the regatta.
Water borne diseases	Unlikely	Extreme harm	3. Medium risk	All capsized competitors will be assessed by Medical Cover before recommending further action. Anti-bacterial hand washes and showers will be available for competitors' use.
Accident caused by cars	Unlikely	Moderate harm	3. Medium risk	Cars are directed to use the Waterside (Dudley Road) Recreation Ground where marshals will control parking.

**First aid facilities** are provided in the Regatta Enclosure: What-3-words "SHIRTS.SHIP.FIRST.

**Regatta Safety Services** will be in attendance with two fully equipped safety boats provided with radios on the regatta's network, one situated close to the start, "Safety Start", and one closer to the finish, "Safety Finish".

### Regatta cancellation

The state of the river and its environment will be examined by the Race Committee, together with the Event Rowing Safety Advisor, in the days leading up to the event and on the morning of racing to permit the most immediate assessment of each risk to be determined and make possible the identification of others evident at that time.

Factors which will be assessed include (but are not necessarily limited to):

1. The rate of flow of the river and any forecast change thereof.
2. The weather conditions and forecast, including risks of rain, lightning and fog.
3. The direction and strength of the wind and any forecast change thereof.
4. The condition of the ground in the boating areas.

The decision to proceed with the Event will also take note of the opinions of the Environment Agency with reference to the following criteria used on our stretch of the river:

- If the Environment Agency's River Conditions website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/river-thames-current-river-conditions> shows Strong stream warning (RED), usually over 150 m<sup>3</sup>/s, the regatta will not take place.
- If it shows Stream increasing warning (YELLOW INCREASING), usually over 120 m<sup>3</sup>/s, it is unlikely to take place, although other factors such as the state of all weirs and wind speed and direction will be taken into account and warning boards for the stretches higher up the river.
- If it shows Stream decreasing warning (YELLOW DECREASING), there is a greater chance of the regatta running than on Yellow Increasing, but other factors are still key. **The Race Committee may consider cancelling younger junior events in these conditions.**
- It is noted that in general on this stretch, the river goes up to Yellow at a flow rate of 120 m<sup>3</sup>/s and Red at 150 m<sup>3</sup>/s, but it can go back down to Yellow at a rate faster than this.

- For a chart of the rise and fall of flow rates at Walton see:  
<https://www.gaugemap.co.uk/#!Map/Summary/1224/1352>

The Race Committee Chair will keep a record of all decisions made in relation to the prevailing conditions and any decision to proceed with the event. The examination by the Race Committee should be repeated before the commencement of racing in each subsequent division and take account of any incident that may have occurred previously.

### **Adverse conditions during the event**

In the event of adverse conditions possibly putting competitors at risk once the event has commenced (e.g. strong stream conditions, lightning, high winds, etc.), the Race Committee will take the appropriate action (e.g. shorten or adjust the course, move to free starts, see below, suspend racing and/or cancel the regatta).

In the event of lightning, the Safety Advisor and the Race Committee Chair will measure the length of the period of time which elapses between each successive visible lightning strike and the sound of its associated thunder and, immediately this period is found to be less than 30 seconds, racing will be suspended completely and all persons advised to take cover away from trees and to hold rowing equipment (e.g. blades) in the horizontal position.

The Race Committee may consider resuming the Race once the length of the period of time between a visible lightning strike and the sound of its associated thunder has lengthened to over 30 seconds, and has either maintained at period for at least 30 minutes or has ceased altogether, and all other conditions permit.

### **Free starts**

Should the conditions make it necessary to change from stakeboat to free starts, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Crews will be paired off by the start area marshals as for stakeboat starts.
2. The Start Launch Marshal will call crews to proceed to a position just downstream of the stakeboats.
3. An umpire will be assigned as Aligner and will position crews with the same stagger as the stakeboats.
4. When crews are aligned, the Aligner will raise a flag and shout "Aligned".
5. The Starter in the Start Launch will start the race.

### **Agencies and others affected or potentially affected by the conduct of the Race:**

- British Rowing
- Environment Agency
- Borough of Elmbridge
- Surrey Police
- Metropolitan Police
- South East Coast Ambulance Service • London Ambulance Service
- Other River Users.

### **Further links:**

- The British Rowing's "Rules of Racing" and "Row Safe": British Rowing Almanack and <https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/>
- The "Notice to River Users" issued by the Environment Agency giving details of the event, instructions to other river users and providing for the establishment of a buoyed regatta course: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/river-thames-restrictions-and-closures>
- The Environment Agency's River Thames: Navigation, Licensing and General Byelaws 1993 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-navigation-licensing-and-generalbyelaws-1993>
- The Calendar of Events issued by the River User Group for Reach 16: <http://thamesrug8.org.uk/Notices-Documents-Calendars/>