

RowSafe®

where everyone's a winner

The Rowing Victoria Capsize Manual



Capsize occurs more frequently in single sculls than in any other boat class, and can pose as a difficult challenge to recover from. It is important to ensure that shoe heels are tied down properly, correct quick release straps are in place and correct foot plates and foot stretches are fitted to the boat you are using. If inappropriate heel ties and shoe straps are fitted, you are limiting your ability to negotiate successfully from a capsized boat.

This manual provides information on how to negotiate your way from a capsized boat.

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General Information

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

Must be worn or carried as explained:

- Coxswains in a bow coxed boat may like to seriously consider wearing a PFD 3 (Personal Flotation Device). In the event of this type of boat capsizing, a cox in the bow can have great difficulty in getting out safely.
- Speed Boats must carry enough flotation devices for ALL rowers in the boat
- Speed Boats must all meet the Marine Safety Victoria regulations.
- The Coach accompanying their crew along the waters edge may like to carry a flotation device that enables all crew members to utilise.

For information on PFD's, visit the Marine Safety website
www.marinesafety.com.au

Single Sculling

- When rowing in a single scull, it's a good idea that you go with a group of 3 or more.
- Have your coach, or ask a friend, or fellow crew member to accompany your sculling group by bike or boat (if they're licensed).
- If you can't fulfil the above tips, take responsibility for your actions and let someone at the boatshed know what time you are leaving, where you will be rowing and what time to expect you back.

Tip

- Implement a log book in your club to sign boats in and out
- Provide tags to hang off boat racks or slings to indicate that a rower is out

- If the coach is in a speed boat, the speed boat will have sufficient flotation devices on board to help the crew.
- If the boat is sinking, the cox/stroke will instruct the crew to take hold of oars or swim to the water's edge, whichever is more appropriate. The crew will then number off to ensure everyone is present once on the water's edge.
- If two or more boats are involved in a collision, the above procedure can be followed, however each person could identify themselves by calling out their name as well as their seat number, e.g. Sam 1, Jane 2 and so on.

Being Thrown From A Boat

Occasionally, rowers can be pushed from the boat as a result of their oar 'catching a crab', hitting the rower in the ribs. The force of the oar can be enough to throw the rower from the boat, and can sometimes result in injury. In this event, rowers need to execute extreme caution and work together as a team to ensure that their fellow rower returns to the waters edge or the boat safely.

- If a rower is thrown from the boat, 'check the boat' and use the *Buddy System*.
- Locate the position of the rower, and ask if the rower is hurt.
- If the rower is hurt and needs assistance, the coach will help the rower from the water using the flotation device being carried.
- The coach should provide initial first aid and call for help if required.
- The cox/stroke should ensure that the remaining rowers are in seat positions able to return to the landing/staging area.
- If the rower is uninjured and is able to return to the boat, the crew will stabilise the boat allowing the rower to re-enter the boat.

This information is to be used as a guide only.

Use common sense and be responsible for your rowing and your rowers.

Be a Winner – RowSafe!

References

1. Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook, Marine Safety Victoria.
2. Rowing Victoria Policy & Procedures
3. Rowing. The essential guide to equipment and techniques.

Capsize Recovery For Single or Two Rowers Continued

The most secure and stable position for a sculler is to position the oars 90° to the boat while holding the oars firmly resting on slightly raised, flexed knees. A similar position can be used in a sweep oared boat.

If the boat is floating deck side down, you will need to roll the boat over. This can be done by:

1. Push one of the riggers down underneath the surface of the water so that you are able to stand on it with your feet.
2. Lay over the hull of the boat reaching for the opposite rigger.
3. Take hold of the rigger with your hands and pull the rigger toward you lifting the rigger out of the water towards you.
4. At the same time, lift your feet off the rigger you're standing on and allow the boat to flip over.
5. Now that the boat is in the correct position, you can re-enter the boat following the steps outlined above.

Buddy System—Recovery for four or more rowers

This system can be followed in the event that a crew capsizes from a rowing boat:

- Designate every rower with a *Buddy Number*. This can directly correlate to the seat number they are sitting in, (i.e. Bow = 1, 2 seat = 2, Stroke = 4 or 8 depending on which boat you are in).
- The coxswain (for coxed crews) or the stroke (for coxless crews) could be the commander for the *Buddy System*.
- The cox/stroke will call the crew to take hold of the boat and to number off from bow.
- When whole crew is present, the cox/stroke will instruct the crew to re-enter the boat.
- If someone is missing the cox/stroke should stay with the boat and the coach should call for help.
- Coxless crews should have the stroke arrange for help.
- The coach should seek additional assistance & should remain on the water's edge at all times with their crew after getting help.

Capsize

In the event of capsizing, at all times, stay with your boat. The boat is buoyant and can be used as your flotation device.

In the event of a crew boat capsizing, a Buddy System should be followed.

Familiarise yourself and your crew (if coaching) with a system to follow in case of capsizing. It's a serious event and can frighten people into a panic.

Don't be afraid to practice your procedure!

Capsize Recovery For Single or Two Rowers

- Stay with your boat because it is buoyant and can be used as a flotation device.
- If the boat has sunk, an oar can be used instead.
- Hold on to the boat, and regain composure by taking a few deep breaths to prepare yourself to re-enter the boat.
- If you are not far from an accessible bank or landing, it may be possible to swim to the bank with the boat where you could re-enter the boat with the help from your coach.
- To get back into the boat from the water when the boat is upright, follow these instructions:
 1. Move to the stern side of the boat and place the stern oar closest to you, across the boat.
 2. Reach across the boat and retrieve the bow side oar.
 3. Position your body so that your right side is against the stern side rigger and your left side is against the stern side of the boat.
 4. Place your left hand on the bow side gunwale of the boat.
 5. With your right hand, take hold of both oar handles in the centre of the boat.
 6. Push the seat back with your left hand, hoist your torso up onto the deck of the boat swinging around so that you are sitting on the deck with both legs dangling in the water on the stern side of the boat, all the while holding both oar handles with your right hand.
 7. Sling your left leg over the bow deck hanging both feet in the water straddling the boat. (Do not hang your feet inside the riggers).
 8. Find your balance.
 9. Reposition yourself on the seat, place your feet back into your shoes.
 10. Get your breath back, and now you're ready to go!