

Corvallis Rowing Club On-Water Environmental Safety Guidelines for Heat and Cold Conditions

This document is an amendment to Appendix D: Safety Guidelines for Water Practices & Emergencies, Section “Weather” (p. 27) of the 2024 [Corvallis Rowing Club Rules, Policies, and Procedures](#) manual. Amendment approved by the CRC Board on 27 May 2026.

Purpose

To reduce the risk of heat illness, hypothermia, and weather-related incidents during on-water rowing by establishing clear environmental thresholds and operational requirements.

NOTE: With rowing there is personal responsibility. CRC rowers are not required to attend practices. If, as a CRC rower, you think/believe that the weather or other conditions are not conducive to attending practice, then please do not attend for the day(s) of concern.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all club-sponsored on-water rowing activities, including coached practices, captain-led rows, private member rows using club equipment, learn-to-row sessions, beginning rowing classes, and regattas hosted by the club.

Authority

The Coach and/or session leader has authority to modify, delay, or cancel on-water activity when conditions are unsafe.

The Board may apply stricter limits than those defined in these guidelines, with advance notice given to and/or discussion with the Coach or session leader.

Environmental Monitoring

When weather or water conditions are extreme, questionable, or may impact the safety of on-water activities, the responsible leader should review the following conditions (Table 1) before launching.

Table 1. Conditions to review before launching

Conditions	Source for Information
Heat Index	The standard source for weather data is the National Weather Service weather for Corvallis.
Air temperature	The standard source for weather data is the National Weather Service weather for Corvallis.
Wind chill	The standard source for weather data is the National Weather Service weather for Corvallis.
Water temperature	The standard source for water temperature data is the NW River Forecast Center report for Corvallis.
Wind and wave conditions	As observed by the coach or CRC designee.
Lightning and thunderstorms	As observed by the coach or CRC designee.
Visibility (fog, smoke, darkness)	As observed by the coach or CRC designee.
Current, debris, and ice	As observed by the coach or CRC designee.
Safety launch availability	As observed by the coach or CRC designee.
Air quality	As considered by the coach or CRC designee and taking into account that an AQI under 100 (full practice) and an AQI up to 150 (light/drills only).

On-water activity must be canceled or suspended for:

- Lightning or thunderstorms
- Whitecaps or other unsafe wind/wave conditions
- Fog or other poor visibility insufficient for safe navigation
- Dangerous current, debris, flooding, or ice
- Air Quality Index above 150, particularly for smoke. (This also includes CRC-run practices in the barn and tank)
- Absence of required safety launch when launch support is mandated

Heat

Training and racing often occur at the hottest time of the year and thus rowers are at risk for heat-related injuries. Coaches, coxswains and rowers should be prepared to evaluate the potential risks and to take appropriate precautions. The most important prevention strategy is heat acclimatization. Heat acclimatization and heat tolerance are different for individuals. Adequate hydration is critical for heat tolerance and part of a successful acclimatization to warm

climates. The base fluid need of athletes is 32 ounces/day and increases with exercise time (16 ounces/hour) and air temperatures (16 ounces/ per 9 °F temperature increase above 77 °F). Rowers are advised to bring extra water. If a rower does not bring water, and it is under 90°F, the coaches will decide if that person will be allowed to row. UV sunscreen and appropriate clothing (fabrics that minimize heat storage and enhance sweat evaporation) should be used.

Operational Guidance

The club will use the **National Weather Service Heat Index** as the standard measure of heat-related risk, [as reported by the National Weather Service for zip code 97339](#).

Table 2: Operational guidance by heat index level

Heat Index	Operational Guidance
Below 90°F	Normal on-water training
90–94°F	Increase hydration and monitoring
95–99°F	Reduce intensity and duration*
100–104°F	Light technical rowing only; avoid strenuous intervals
105°F and above	No strenuous on-water rowing; postpone, cancel, or move to land-based training

**State of Oregon OSHA rules enacted after the 2021 heat wave require a 10-minute break every 2 hours if the heat index is over 90°.*

Heat Precautions

When the Heat Index is 90°F or higher, the CRC has a strict policy, “No water bottle, no row!”

Other precautions include:

- Encouraging frequent hydration before, during, and after rowing
- Minimizing time standing in direct sun
- Providing shaded recovery areas, when possible
- Reducing high-intensity work
- Monitoring for dizziness, nausea, headache, or confusion

Cold

The combination of high water and low air temperatures in the winter often result in conditions that can result in hypothermia or frostbite for rowers. Immersion in near freezing water can be fatal in less than 5 minutes. Coaches and rowers should exercise caution during the winter and

early spring when the danger of hypothermia and frostbite is highest. This includes keeping boats closer together, carrying the proper safety equipment, and not taking chances. Coaches and rowers are encouraged to learn the effects and warning signs of hypothermia and to practice emergency treatment when necessary.

Operational Guidance

Water temperature is the primary safety factor because of immersion risk.

Table 3: Operational guidance by water temperature

Water Temperature	Operational Guidance
Water temperature is 50°F or higher , and air temperature plus water temperature is 90°F or higher .	On-water rowing is permitted
If water temperature is below 40°F	No on-water rowing permitted
If ice is present on the water	No on-water rowing permitted
<i>Wind chill overlay</i>	
Below 25°F	Extra clothing and close monitoring required
Below 15°F	Sharply curtail duration and exposure
0°F or below	No on-water rowing permitted

Cold Water Precautions

If water temperature is **below 50°F** or the combined air and water temperature is **below 90°F**:

- Boats must have **at least four oars** (no singles or pairs)
- A **safety launch is required** for coached sessions
- A **second safety launch is recommended** for coached sessions if more than 1 practice boat is on the water
- Coxswains and launch occupants should wear **PFDs** (and be appropriately dressed for cold conditions) or **wear flotation suits**.
- Crews must remain within a defined practice area
- Beginners and novices should not row without direct supervision

Safety Equipment Requirements

When environmental restrictions are in effect:

- Safety launch must carry a communication device (phone or radio)

- Safety launch must carry additional PFDs and thermal blankets
- Safety launch must remain within reasonable rescue distance of crews
- Coxswains and launch occupants should wear PFDs (and be appropriately dressed for the weather condition) or wear flotation suits in cold weather conditions

Review

These guidelines will be reviewed periodically by the CRC Board of Directors and updated as needed to reflect best practices and guidance from USRowing and other recognized safety organizations.