

HEAD OF THE SCHUYLKILL REGATTA® SAFETY PLAN FOR ON-THE-WATER EMERGENCIES

Introduction

The Head of the Schuylkill Regatta® is the largest single-day regatta in existence, attracting rowers and spectators from around the nation and the world. With these large numbers, care must be taken to address the risk of injury on the water to regatta participants. This Safety Plan sets forth procedures to follow in the event of an on-the-water emergency arising from equipment failure, collision, or unintended water immersion, in order to prevent or minimize related injuries.

On-the-water emergencies entail the added risk element of immersion. In addition to the obvious risk of accidental drowning, there is the often unappreciated risk of hypothermia. Hypothermia is the lowering of core body temperature to dangerous levels and can occur rapidly in the setting of water immersion. No one who has been immersed can be presumed to be "all right." In addition to the effects of hypothermia on the heart, circulation, and body metabolism, central nervous system function is altered, often in subtle ways, and an immersed or recently immersed individual's judgment and ability to assess his/her own condition accurately may be seriously impaired.

Accordingly, it is of paramount importance that all Regatta participants – rowers, coaches, and others – in the event of an on-the-water emergency, yield absolutely to the authority and direction of official Regatta personnel in matters of safety and rescue. Basic rules for participants are posted on the Regatta website.

The Plan

The Regatta Safety Plan is designed for flexibility and adaptability to particular circumstances of a given mishap. **The ultimate authority for management of any operation rests with the Head Referees. All other Regatta officials/personnel will look to the Head Referees for direction.** The purpose of the Plan is to set out certain basic rules designed to allow for maximum efficiency and control of any emergency operation.

Notification of an Incident:

Upon witnessing or being credibly advised of an on-the-water mishap, any **regatta personnel in possession of a portable communication device should broadcast over the general**

communication channel or report directly to the Regatta Director, Head Referees, or Medical/Safety director the following information:

- The precise location of the mishap;
- The general nature of the mishap;
- The apparent number of participants involved;
- The type/size of boat(s) involved; and
- Whether the party making the notification is an official on the water in the immediate vicinity of the mishap and is initiating emergency operations.

Upon acknowledgement of the receipt of the notification, the Head Referee will designate which regatta officials are to proceed to the site of the mishap and will instruct those officials to turn their communications devices to the designate Emergency Channel. **All other parties will stay off of the Emergency Channel.** The Regatta Director and Medical/Safety Director will also turn their communications devices to the Emergency Channel.

The Head Referee will immediately notify the officials at the starting line to cease starting crews in the Regatta until further notice.

Response to Notification:

The first of the designated respondents to arrive at the mishap scene will

- Briefly announce over the Emergency Channel that he/she is the scene and describe what has occurred;
- Advise whether any of the participants are potentially seriously injured;
- Advise if unmanned equipment constitutes a potential hazard to other crews;
- Advise whether crews approaching the scene of the mishap constitute an immediate hazard; and
- Supply any other relevant information.

The Head Referees will then:

- Decide whether the current Regatta event must be stopped, and, if so, make an announcement to that effect over the general communications channel;
- Decide whether additional personnel are needed at the scene and mobilize them as above;
- Stay in communication over the Emergency Channel.

Designated responders to the scene will work with one another to:

- Rescue immersed individuals;
- Announce whether any potentially serious injuries exist and request the Medical Director to secure the assistance of the Police River Rescue Unit;
- Secure and/or remove unmanned equipment constituting an immediate hazard;
- Halt or divert oncoming crews, according to whether the Head Referees have stopped the event; and
- Provide updates over the Emergency Channel as the circumstances permit.

Treatment of Immersion and Injuries:

Simple immersion and/or minor injuries

Individuals who have been simply immersed and appear to have suffered only minor injuries, if any will be treated as follows:

- Each and every "wet" individual will be wrapped in one of the hypothermia blankets ("space blankets") with which every motor launch will be equipped.
- Each and every "wet" individual will be taken as soon as is practicably possible under the circumstances to a site for rewarming and medical evaluation;
- The default site for treatment of "wet" individuals and individuals with minor injuries will be University Barge Club and all such individuals will be taken there for rewarming and medical evaluation unless otherwise instructed by the Head Referee, Regatta Director, or Medical Safety Director; and
- The Medical Safety Director will communicate with the Emergency Medical Units and designate which unit will proceed directly to the rewarming site to receive recovered individuals.

Serious injuries

Individuals who appear to have sustained more than minor injuries will be treated as follows:

- As soon as a potentially serious injury is perceived, it will be reported over the Emergency Channel to the attention of the Medical/Safety Director;
- The Medical/Safety Director will acknowledge receipt of such reports over the Emergency Channel and issue instructions as appropriate;

- The Medical/Safety Director will secure the assistance of the Police River Rescue Unit; and
- The Medical/Safety Director will designate and mobilize Regatta Emergency Medical Personnel (EMT Unit) to assist the Police River Rescue Unit as needed and receive seriously injured individuals for stabilization and transport to appropriate advanced care facilities.

Disposition of immersed and non-seriously injured individuals

Once delivered to the designated rewarming and treatment location, immersed and non-seriously injured individuals will

- Be rewarmed and have their vital signs determined by Emergency Medical personnel;
- Be evaluated for injuries and central nervous system function;
- Be released when appropriate as determined by the Emergency Medical personnel; and
- Provide a signature on a designated form to indicate with which organization he/she is affiliated and that he/she has disclosed all symptoms/complaints/injuries of which he/she is aware and has had them evaluated and tended to.

The Regatta is not responsible for keeping track of individuals or equipment for participating organizations. That responsibility lies with the organization. The Regatta Director, Head Referees, Medical/Safety Director, and/or other Regatta personnel will, however, make all reasonable efforts to notify the organization of the whereabouts of its crew and equipment and to assist, wherever possible, in facilitating the delivery of dry clothing to immersed crew members.

Disposition of Unmanned Equipment:

The primary purpose of recovery of unmanned equipment by regatta personnel is to eliminate a potential hazard and avoid the risk of secondary injury to regatta participants. The safety and recovery of individuals will always take precedence over preservation of equipment. In the event that crews become separated from their equipment, Regatta personnel will

- Remove the equipment from the course to the most practicable location to avoid a collision hazard;
- Assure the eventual delivery of equipment to a dock location where it can be recovered by the organization to which it belongs; and
- Make every reasonable effort to notify the organization where its equipment may be recovered.

Execution of the Plan

The Regatta Safety Plan will be executed under the direction of the Head Referees, the Regatta Director, The Medical/Safety Director or their designees. The execution of the Plan may be modified as necessary based on individual circumstances in the judgment of the individual or individual directing the execution of the plan.

Decisions concerning whether an event must be stopped and/or cancelled and any changes in the Regatta schedule occasioned by an on-the-water mishap will be made by the Head Referees and the Regatta Director.

Dissemination of the Plan

- Each and every participant or crew will receive a copy of "Safety Rules for al Regatta Participants" attached to this plan in his/her/its individual registration packet.
- Each and every participant or crew will be presumed to have read, understood, and agreed to abide by the Rules as a condition of participation in the Regatta.
- Each and every organization will be provided with a copy of "Safety Rules for al Regatta Participants" at Regatta Registration.
- A copy of the Plan will be provided to each and every Regatta officials in his/her participation confirmation packet.
- The Plan will be reviewed in detail with Regatta officials and the pre-Regatta officials meeting.
- Each and every Regatta official will be provided with a copy of the Plan.
- Each and every Regatta launch will be equipped with a copy of the Plan.

This plan may be updated and amended as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Regatta Committee.

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