



## Major Incident Plan

### Introduction

Rowing is an activity that carries a very low risk of serious incidents and emergencies. However, unique aspects of the sport — high speeds, frigid water, limited access points for emergency assistance, and conflicting leadership hierarchies — mean that although serious incidents are rare, they are potentially dangerous and confusing. The rarity of these events may be, paradoxically, a liability: Unlike participants in ‘extreme’ sports, athletes responding to a rowing emergency are unlikely to have encountered one before.

This plan is designed to provide a straightforward framework for handling major incidents. It draws on the principles of prehospital emergency medicine, water rescue, and incident command, tailored for the specifics of Wolfson rowing. It aims to provide structure and guidance to those most likely to come across an emergency — club leadership, coxes, and coaches — without requiring lengthy training sessions or other undue burden.

### What is a Major Incident?

Although the principles and priorities in this plan apply even in minor blade-on-blade tangles or pulled muscles, full implementation is indicated when a coordinated response is needed to resolve a major incident. An incident is probably ‘major’ if it involves any of:

- Traumatic injury requiring treatment beyond the limits of the boat house first aid kit
- Multiple injuries requiring prioritisation of first aid delivery
- Boat damage affecting rowability (eg loss of rigger) or seaworthiness (eg breach of hull)
- Involvement of non-WCBC persons or property, especially where liability is a concern

As conditions warrant, tailor the response to individual circumstances. In an incident involving sudden severe illness in a boat, for example, an accounting of the response would likely be valuable, while multiple witness statements might not be.

### Incident Plan Structure

The Major Incident Plan consists of four sections. This introduction outlines the plan’s purpose and use. The three-page Major Incident Checklist is meant to be reviewed annually by club leadership, coxes, coaches, and any other interested athletes. It provides a model structure for efficient and effective incident response. The one-page Incident Response Worksheet serves both as an on-the-day refresher of the Checklist and as a guided record of the response. Finally, the one-page Witness Statement Form facilitates structured recording of individual observations of an incident.

### Ongoing Readiness

A copy of this plan, with multiple worksheets, will be available in the boat house alongside the first aid equipment. Each year, at the conclusion of Michaelmas term, it will be emailed to all club members and considered required reading for leadership, coxes, and coaches. This annual distribution will include an invitation to send any questions or concerns regarding the plan to the Safety Officer for further discussion and consideration.

Although major incidents are rare, they do happen. Advance planning and consideration will increase the effectiveness of our response and minimise the risk of serious outcomes.



## Major Incident Checklist

### Phase 1 – Assess

The Assess phase should take only a few seconds. Your goal in this phase is to weigh the severity of the incident against your capability to respond, and quickly summon more help if needed. Of course, you will continue to reassess as the incident develops.

#### 1. Establish the Person In Charge

There should be one person clearly in charge of the incident. This person will evaluate the situation, organise resources, and direct the response.

The Person In Charge may change. Each change must be explicit and verbal, with direct communication between the old and new people in charge.

#### 2. Assess Injuries, Damage, and Ongoing Risk

This step does *not* involve detailed first aid assessment. Instead, take a quick mental tally of people with “major injury” (unable to speak in sentences, unable to walk, severe bleeding, etc.) or “minor injury” (bumps and bruises, minor cuts, etc.)

Account for each potential victim (eg everyone in the boat). If somebody has wandered off, you need to find them.

If boats are damaged, make a mental note of whether they are rowable and whether any are at risk of sinking or capsize.

Pay particular attention to ongoing risks. If a boat has crashed convincingly into the bank, are the rowers at risk of capsizing while trying to extricate themselves? Is another boat going to pile on, causing more injury?

#### 3. Assess Available Helpers and Resources

Quickly survey the helpers you have at hand. Consider our boat club members, other clubs’ rowers and coaches, passers-by, etc. Remember that professional first aiders are available during OURCs events.

Evaluate whether your first aid and rescue skills and equipment are up to the task. Remember that the boathouse contains first aid equipment, changes of clothes, throw ropes, and flotation devices.

#### 4. Call for Help, If Needed

If you are not satisfied that you have the resources to handle the situation, call for help. Call 999 if someone has difficulty breathing, cannot speak in complete sentences, cannot walk unassisted, is bleeding severely, or if you don’t know how to care for them without risking further injury. However, remember that in many cases – even where hospital evaluation is required – an ambulance is not needed.

There is also nothing wrong with calling an ambulance out of an abundance of caution and then, after further evaluation, realising it is not needed. Simply call back to cancel the ambulance if it has not yet arrived.



## Major Incident Checklist

### Phase 2 – Respond

The primary goal in the Respond phase is to evaluate and stabilise all injury. Secondly, in this phase you will secure boat club equipment. In larger incidents, these steps will be delegated by the Person In Charge to competent helpers and may happen simultaneously.

#### 1. Ensure the Safety of Rescuers and Bystanders

The golden rule of incident response is “don’t create more casualties”. Even worse is to turn a potential rescuer into a casualty.

Rescuers should not risk themselves (eg by entering cold water) unless it is the *only* way to save a life or prevent grievous injury. Even then, consider the risk of making the next responders rescue you when they could be helping others.

#### 2. Secure All Victims from Further Injury

Move boats to shore (if applicable) and remove injured people to a warm, dry place. Always move victims cautiously, taking care to avoid further injury. In particular, avoid moving the spine of victims with injuries to the head or neck.

#### 3. Provide First Aid

To the best of your ability, provide first aid to all victims. Prioritise those with more serious injuries. Continue to provide care until each victim feels comfortable assuming his/her own care, or until a higher-level responder arrives to take over.

This is also a good time to re-evaluate the need for an ambulance, and call to arrange or cancel as appropriate.

#### 4. Encourage Follow-Up

Except in the most extreme cases, each victim will be responsible for organising his or her own follow-up medical care. Encourage reasonable choices, and point out that options include visiting the hospital A&E, stopping by an urgent care or minor injuries clinic, or making an appointment with a GP or physio. Further information and advice is available by dialling 111.

#### 5. Secure Boat Club Equipment

As far as possible, secure boat club equipment in the boat house to prevent further damage or theft. Take pictures of damage for insurance purposes. Make sure damaged or faulty equipment is clearly evident or marked, so unaware boat club members do not injure themselves or cause further damage by trying to use it.



## Major Incident Checklist

### Phase 3 – Reflect

The goals in the Reflect phase are to collect information about the incident and response and to come to terms with any safety issues raised. Ideally, if key witnesses are not required in the response effort, this phase can proceed simultaneously with Phase 2.

#### 1. Record Individual Witness Statements

Human memory falters easily, especially in high-stress situations and especially when multiple versions of a story are told, discussed, and repeated. Therefore, it is critical for each person who witnessed the incident to record their recollections separately *before* discussing them with others.

Witnesses statements should represent a wide range of vantage points. Ideally, three rowers per boat, in addition to all coxes and observers from the bank, will record their observations. Encourage witnesses not affiliated with the club to make reports and leave their contact details.

#### 2. Inform the Boat Club Leadership

The boat club executive committee needs to know about any incidents leading to injury or equipment damage. For incidents requiring repair to equipment, inform the Equipment Officer. If injury occurred, the Captain, Safety Officer, and President should be notified. If in doubt, email [list-committee@wolfsonrowing.org](mailto:list-committee@wolfsonrowing.org)

#### 3. De-Brief the Incident and Response

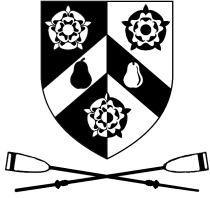
Either immediately after the incident or in the next few days (within 24 hours when injury is involved), members of the boat club leadership will meet with witnesses to solidify a more comprehensive understanding of the incident and response.

This meeting will result in an official WCBC Account of the incident that represents the most likely ‘full picture’, considering all available witness observations. In no case will initially recorded statements be altered. If additional details are recalled or changes are needed, they will be recorded on a new sheet, dated appropriately.

#### 4. Liaise with OURCs, College, and British Rowing

In all cases involving injury or significant damage to equipment, the boat club President will assume responsibility for liaising with OURCs, Wolfson College, and British Rowing. The WCBC Account of the incident will be forwarded to OURCs and provided to British Rowing. OURCs will also be furnished with the list of witnesses. As appropriate, the President will contact representatives of Wolfson College to make a report and resolve insurance and other college considerations.

The President will have broad authority to implement any temporary measures necessary to respond to club, OURCs, or College safety concerns — formal or informal — until definitive action can be taken by the WCBC Committee, OURCs, and/or the College leadership.



# Incident Response Worksheet

*Note: This form may be completed as a guide during the incident, or filled in after the fact as a record of the response.*

Write or circle responses, as appropriate. Leave questions or sections blank if they do not apply or you don't know the answer. Continue details overleaf.

## Phase 1 - Assess

1. Establish the Person In Charge
2. Assess Injuries, Damage, Risk
3. Assess Helpers & Resources
4. Call for Help, if Needed

<b>Person In Charge</b>
Name:
Date/Time:
(Changing Person In Charge)
Name:
Time:
Name:
Time:

<b>Initial Assessment of the Incident</b>
Injuries: ___ Minor and ___ Major
Damage: None - Minor - Major
Ongoing Risk:
Help Available:

<b>Additional Help Needed</b>
No - Yes, 999 - Yes, other:

## Phase 2 - Respond

1. Ensure Rescuers' Safety
2. Prevent Further Injury
3. Provide First Aid
4. Encourage Follow-Up
5. Secure Boat Club Equipment

<b>Rescuers Safe</b>
Yes - No, explain:

<b>Victims to Safety</b>
Easily - Other:

<b>Casualty 1</b>
Name:
Injuries:
First Aid:
Outcome:

<b>Casualty 2</b>
Name:
Injuries:
First Aid:
Outcome:

<b>Casualty 3</b>
Name:
Injuries:
First Aid:
Outcome:

<b>Equipment Secure</b>	Easily - Other:
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## Phase 3 - Reflect

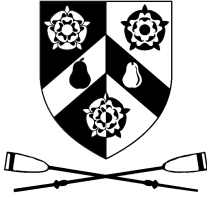
1. Record Witness Statements
2. Inform WCBC Leadership
3. De-Brief Incident & Response
4. Liaise with OURCs, College, and British Rowing

<b>Witnesses</b>
(Ideally, three rowers per boat and all coxes & bank observers.)

<b>Leaders Informed</b>
Captain - President
Equip. Off. - CoCoxes
Deferred, explain:

<b>Incident Debrief</b>
Immediate - Deferred

<b>Attest</b>
<b>Form completed:</b>
During Incident
After, at:
<b>Completed by:</b>
This is a true record of the incident response.
Sign:



# Incident Response - Witness Statement Form

*Note: This form should be completed before comparing notes with others. Its purpose is to record the unadulterated first impressions of a single witness, not to reflect a definitive accounting of events.*

Write or circle responses, as appropriate.

Leave questions or sections blank if they do not apply or you don't know the answer.

### Attest

This is my true recollection and impression of events.

Sign:

Date & Time:

### About You

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Rower - Cox - Coach - Other

Boat A - B - C - Other - None

Club:

### Boat A

Club:

Boat: 8 - 4 - 2 - 1 - Scull - Cox - Coach

Rowers: Men - Women - Novice - Youth

Damage: None - Minor - Major

Injury: \_\_\_ Minor and \_\_\_ Major

Notes:

### Boat B

Club:

Boat: 8 - 4 - 2 - 1 - Scull - Cox - Coach

Rowers: Men - Women - Novice - Youth

Damage: None - Minor - Major

Injury: \_\_\_ Minor and \_\_\_ Major

Notes:

### Boat C

Club:

Boat: 8 - 4 - 2 - 1 - Scull - Cox - Coach

Rowers: Men - Women - Novice - Youth

Damage: None - Minor - Major

Injury: \_\_\_ Minor and \_\_\_ Major

Notes:

**What Happened,** from your own observation and in your own words:

### Further Incident Details

Date / Time:

Location:

Weather:

River Condition:

Injuries not tallied above:

\_\_\_ Minor and \_\_\_ Major

First Aid: No - Yes - Ambulance

Damage not listed above:

### Draw a Picture of the incident

Upstream (Head of the River)

County Side (Towpath, Univ, Longbridges)

City Side (Boathouse Island, Green Bank)

Downstream (Haystacks)

Continue overleaf if necessary.