

Dark Water Dragons

Safety Procedures



2022



Safety Policy and Procedures

This safety policy and related procedures have been established to ensure the safety and protection of paddling members and guests. The onus is on the individual paddler to ensure they have read, understood and adhere to these safety practices. These procedures will be reviewed at the beginning of each season with paddling members.

Safety Policy

- Prior to going on the water, all paddlers must sign-in on the practice roster sheet.
- All paddling members and guests must accept and sign a Dark Water Dragons liability waiver.
- All paddlers must wear a CSA approved Personal Floatation Device (PFD) of the appropriate size for the individual while on board the dragon boat. Paddlers shall ensure that their PFD has an attached personal whistle.
- In the event that there are less than 16 paddlers present for a paddle, all paddlers must agree to proceed with a reduced dragon crew. In all cases, a Coach and a Sweep must be on board for all paddles. A Sweep may also paddle.
- All paddlers must learn and understand the basic commands of dragon boating.
- All regular paddles shall be conducted within sight of the shoreline. Any special event or non-recreational paddle shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis and additional safety measures deployed as appropriate.
- In the event of inclement weather and/or a change in water conditions, before or during the practice, the Coach and the Sweep shall determine the appropriate course of action to ensure everyone's safety.
- If lightning is spotted on the lake and presents a threat to the boat, the Sweep shall move directly to shore.
- The DWDS Board of Directors shall be responsible for reviewing, updating and informing paddlers of any additions or changes to the Safety Policy and Emergency Procedures.



Safety Procedures

At the Dock:

- The Coach is responsible to ensure the boat is properly loaded and seating partners have been assigned. Paddlers must remember their row number.
- All paddlers shall know or introduce themselves to their seating partner. They will assist their paddling partner whenever loading or disembarking from the boat.
- Any non-swimmer (or any paddler with a physical restriction on their ability to swim) must identify themselves to the coach. The onus is on the paddler to inform the coach and their paddling partner of any medical conditions they should be made aware of.



Personal Safety:

- Keep hydrated, plastic water containers are permitted on board.
- Dress appropriately for the weather. For cooler, wet weather water repellent or waterproof clothing is best.
- Supportive footwear with good treads that will grip when you are on the wet dock and for getting in and out of the boat are essential. These can be old running shoes or water shoes. Remember they will get wet.
- Baseball-type caps are permitted but not wide-brimmed hats as they restrict the visibility for paddling members seated behind them.
- Paddling or rubber gloves are recommended to prevent slippage on the paddle and prevent minor hand injuries.
- Sun protection is advisable on hot summer days.

Cold Water Survival:

- Do not swim unless you can reach a nearby boat, the shore, fellow survivor or floating object. Swimming lowers your body temperature.
- If a nearby floating object is large, pull yourself up on it. The more your body is out of the water, the warmer you will be.
- Keep your head out of water to lessen heat loss. Use the help position (e.g. fetal position with legs curled up) to conserve heat.
- Always wear your PFD. If there are others in the water, huddle together for warmth. Keep a positive outlook and use your personal whistle to let others know where you are.



Safety Equipment on Board:

- Sound signaling device (compressed gas horn)
- Bailing vessel
- Life ring and throw ropes
- First Aid Kit
- Thermal Blanket



Emergency Procedures

In the event that the Dragon Boat has a collision or capsizes, the following measures shall be taken:

- **Stay calm** - Listen to your Sweep for direction.
- **Paddler Roll Call and Buddy System**
 - ◆ Paddlers confirm and locate their seat partner.
 - ◆ First & last seat positions check for Coach & Sweep.
- **If the Boat Rolls Over**
 - ◆ Since the boat does not stop once it starts to roll, paddlers on the higher side of the boat should try to jump clear of your seat partner to avoid injury.
 - ◆ If a paddler comes up inside a capsized boat, there will be an air pocket. Get your bearings, feel your way to the side of the boat, dunk under and come up on the open side. Let your seat partner know that you are okay.
- **Stay with the Boat**
 - ◆ The dragon boat has capacity to support a full crew even when fully submerged.
 - ◆ If other paddlers are injured or having difficulty reaching the boat, give them assistance getting to the boat.
 - ◆ If the boat is upright, spread out evenly around the boat holding on to the gunwale (top edge). Await instructions from the Sweep for re-entry (if feasible) or wait for the Rescue boat.
 - ◆ If the boat is upside down, spread out evenly around the outside of the capsized boat. Attempt to gently roll it over. If not successful, await the Rescue boat.
- **If a Rescue boat is required**
 - ◆ Listen to instructions from Rescue boat – critical to stay with the Dragon boat until instructed otherwise.
 - ◆ The Rescue boat can help right the boat and assist with bailing enough to get the boat to shore.
 - ◆ If the boat needs to be towed, listen to the instructions from the Rescue boat on how to proceed.