



Safety Guidelines for Small Boat Users

Site:

- **Terrain** at the 405 Ohio Street is **rough and difficult to walk upon**. In addition, as the permanent facility is nearing completion, construction creates additional walking hazards.
- **No running** is permitted on the site.
- All persons are expected to **exhibit controlled behavior** and follow BSRA Code of Conduct and USRowing SafeSport Policies.
- Each member is **responsible for their own equipment** and **locking the shared spaces up after use**.
- Minor children may not be left alone at the facility without a responsible adult present.
- **No entry in permanent boathouse** during the construction phase.

Dock & Shoreline:

- No persons except coaches, boat-borne athletes and those directly assisting in docking operations are permitted on the dock.
- No children under the age of 12 are permitted on the dock at any time without adult supervision.
- Use of the dock should be expedited from launching and recovery. We encourage the **'get in, row/paddle, get out' approach.**
- Launching from Docks: All shells will launch with their bows pointing down river. All shoes will be placed in totes and removed from the dock before launching.
- Landing on Docks: All shells recovering will approach from upriver. Oars are to be placed out of the way on the docks before the boat is removed from the water.
- The shoreline, ramps and docks will be kept clear of tripping hazards, oars, paddles, and shoes.

Weather

- Each rower and kayaker be aware of weather, river conditions and forecast before coming down to the boathouse.
- No rowing or kayaking is permitted during potentially serious weather conditions. Watersports may resume 30 minutes after last sound of thunder, and 1 hour after sight of lightning.
- Examples of dangerous conditions or severe weather conditions are:
 - i) Darkness,
 - ii) High winds,
 - iii) Extremely cold air and/ or water temperatures,
 - iv) Extremely hot temperatures and/ or humidity; and
 - v) Heavy fog or other low-visibility conditions.
- When water temperature **plus** wind chill is less than 90° F: Everyone must be dressed in proper cold weather attire to limit exposed skin.
- No small boats will be permitted to launch when the water temperature is below 40° F.

Member Safety

- **Swimming ability:** It is strongly recommended that all rowers and kayakers be swim qualified (able to swim 50 yards wearing a T-shirt and tread water for 10 minutes consistently).
- We require that all rowers and kayakers always wear a PFD when the water temperature is below 50° F, and always recommend bringing a PFD in the boat when water is above 50° F.



Hygiene and Sanitation:

- The water of the Buffalo River and its immediate tributaries have been certified as safe for recreational purposes. This does not include swimming. Therefore, **BSRA Members are not permitted to swim from the BSRA site.**
- To assure that nominal rowing associated contaminants, such as personal bacteria, are controlled, BSRA has provided exterior hand sanitizing and washing stations. **Due to COVID-19, we require anyone on our site to use these stations on arrival and departure, as well as after rowing or kayaking.**
- BSRA rowers and kayakers should ensure their own **equipment is cleaned immediately after use.** We require wiping down of oar handles and paddles with the provided disinfecting wipes or spray and frequent use of hand washing station and hand sanitizer.

On-the-water Caution and Emergencies:

- Rowers (and Kayakers) **should avoid all shallow & hazardous areas of the river.** Dangerous objects may include low overhanging trees, docks, and underwater abandoned pilings.
- Rowers and Kayakers should always **yield to the right** as far as possible for commercial traffic, boats under sail, and government vessels.
- Areas of the river where there is loud background noise where, in an emergency, it would be difficult or impossible to hear another person.
 - These areas include:
 - General Mills Plant, north of Michigan Street Bridge - constant noise from fans.
 - Metal roadways at Michigan Street & Ohio Street Bridges - when cars are driving on the deck, and
 - Two railroad bridges that cross the River, when freight trains are passing overhead.
 - PVS Chemical Solutions
- Small boats should not be on the water before sunrise or 30 minutes after sunset.
- Avoid collisions and dangerous situations by anticipating what could go wrong beforehand. Treat the River like a Road- stay to the right, look both ways before crossing. Do not cross where you have blind corners.
- We highly recommend all small boat users **learn the map of the Buffalo River and landmarks** so in the event of an emergency, one can articulate where the emergency is taking place along the River.
- If you are caught on the water during a **thunderstorm, move all boats to the right side of the River** and row continuously to the closest dock or safe place to recover.

Emergency Operations

- BSRA contacts are listed below. We encourage all small boat users to save the contacts.
- **Call 911** if there is a dangerous situation. 911 will direct help to Erie County Sheriffs Marine division or US Coast Guard depending on the situation.
 - BSRA Incident Report to follow.



- **Crime Situations:** It is possible that criminal acts may occur at BSRA. These may include personal theft, assault, firing of a weapon or automobile theft, among others. It is imperative that 911 be called to summon law enforcement, and that everyone remain calm and stay safe.
- **Other Emergency:** For any other emergency, **first stabilize the incident** if possible. Whenever you feel you cannot stabilize the incident **call 911** and give them the nature of the emergency (fire, entrapment, auto accident, etc.) and the location of the BSRA site.

Reporting

- All incidents and misconduct should be reported immediately with form attached and submitted immediately to Chair of BSRA Safety Committee. Questions about these Guidelines can also be directed to Safety Committee.
 - Chair: Paul Rodgers- Rodgers.p.183@gmail.com

BSRA Contacts

- 1st VP – Rowing Operations, Bob Becht – (716)949-1320
- Executive Director, Hilary Epes-Oballim - (716) 982-4067
- Director of Outreach and Marketing, Mairead Manke- (716) 908-2358
- Boathouse Manager, Tom Boyer – (716)880-7929