

Wildwood Dragon Boat Challenge - Safety Plan

Purpose of the Plan – Is to ensure all parties involved in the challenge have a consistent set of guidelines to ensure appropriate action is taken quickly in the event of an emergency.

Responsibility for the plan – The *Race Officials* of the challenge will be responsible for implementing the plan and communicating it to team captains who will in turn discuss it with their team. The *Race Officials* will be responsible for ensuring that the event will only operate under safe weather conditions. We will not practice or race in low visibility (500m or less) high winds or lightning. The well-being and safety of participants is of primary importance.

Race Officials (in ranking order)

1. Chief Official – ensure overall safety & punctuality. Time races & format race schedules.
2. Chief Referee – ensure on water safety. Inform sterns of danger, manage emergencies.
3. Marshal – coordinate loading of boats & ensure participants are registered.
4. Safety Coordinator – ensure general safety, and that safety practices are followed.
5. Starter – align teams & start races. Additional eyes on the water.

Supporting Members (in no particular order)

Referee Boat Driver	Safety Boat Driver	On-Water First-Aid	Land First-Aid
Marshalling Assistant	Sterns	Team Captains	Equipment Tech
Registration Leader		Volunteer Coordinator	

Communication – All teams will have a safety review lesson before their first practice. The *Safety Coordinator* will ensure each team receives the lesson. Lesson requirements will be supplied to the sterns and team captains before event day. All participants will have completed a consent form which includes emergency contact information.

A review of the rules and safety plan will be discussed at a *Race Official*, stern & team captain meeting before the races. Team captains are required to tell their steersperson of any special conditions that may apply to an individual paddler. The stern is responsible for knowing how many people are in the boat before leaving the dock.

Two-way radios and cell phones will be used to communicate between *Race Officials*, including safety boats, marshalling, starting & finish line. All will have access to communicate with each other at any time. **Note:** Three short bursts of the air horn indicate adverse weather conditions and for teams to return to the dock and seek shelter.

Equipment – All equipment will be checked to determine that it is safe for use: Paddles and boats will be checked by the *Race Officials* to ensure the boat isn't leaking and there are bailers in it. The steering oar and drum will be fitted properly, and the buoyancy compartments will be sealed.

Safety Equipment – All participants and volunteers on the water are required to wear a Canadian Coast Guard approved PFD. Adults are permitted to wear an Inflatable PFD. It is

recommended that participants wear footwear while in the boat and have a dry change of clothes on shore. Jewellery should be removed or secured while on water except for medical or religious reasons then they should be taped. Prescription glasses & sunglasses should have safety straps so that they do not fall into the water. TRPC and Wildwood are not responsible for lost or damaged articles.

Each dragon boat will be provided with a Marine Safety Kit, complete with safety rope and whistle. Sterns are encouraged to provide and wear their own whistle in case of an emergency.

A safety boat will be on the water at all times during the races. The boat will be equipped with a first aid kit, a cell phone, 2 throw ropes with floats, an air horn, a megaphone and 2 additional PFD's. A secondary safety boat, with equipment, will also be available with designated personnel to operate it in the event of an emergency.

Personal Safety Considerations – Team captains are responsible for any of their participants medications, including but not limited to EpiPens or Inhalers. Team captains should have medications ready and inform the stern of their paddlers condition.

Certified Emergency Personnel – A person with current First Aid Certification will be in the safety boat at all times, which will be operated by a licensed driver. A second person with current First Aid Certification will be on shore, ready to assist if needed.

Emergency Procedures

Boat swamping or capsizing – In the event of this happening the buddy system should be employed to ensure that all paddlers can account for their seat-mate. Paddlers at the front and rear, buddy with their respective drummer or steersperson. Team members must stay with the dragon boat, follow steersperson instructions, refrain from unnecessary talking, inform the steersperson if their partner is missing, and a head count should be performed. The steersperson will maintain control until emergency personnel arrive. The drummer and/or team captain will be the second in command if the steersperson is unable to perform such duty. The approach of the safety boat must not endanger any participants in the water.

The safety boat will radio the *Chief Official* and *Marshal* and inform them that a capsize or swamp has occurred, and the second safety boat will be dispatched to assist. The *Marshal* will alert the first aid personnel and make general announcements to spectators and participants on shore to ensure calmness.

The *Race Official* in the first safety boat to arrive will assume control of the situation. If there are no individual emergency situations the emergency personnel may direct the paddlers to stay with the boat as it is pulled to shore. Or a decision may be made by the person in charge to have the dragon boat abandoned and the paddlers taken to shore in the motor boat.

In the event of an individual emergency situation the on-water safety personnel will assess the best method of getting the paddler to shore for medical attention. They will contact the *Chief*

Official to make aware if any additional emergency personnel are required. The *Chief Official* will contact the first aid personnel on scene and/or call 911 if necessary.

Paddlers will be taken to a specified location on shore where a secondary roster check will be done to ensure all are accounted for. The announcer/*Marshal* will ensure spectators and other participants do not crowd the roster check area and provide updates to ensure calmness.

Space will be made available in the pavilion, washrooms and/or registration tent to allow those participants who capsized an opportunity to change and warm themselves up as needed.

In the event this occurs the order of importance is; personal health and safety, equipment damage and loss, followed by the continuity of the event races. Only once it is established the health and safety and equipment of those involved is in good condition, the *Race Officials* will discuss the options of how the event will proceed. They hold the right to cancel any races, and/or modify the race programme as required.

In the event of a participant overboard – The steersperson or drummer shall immediately direct the team to hold the boat. The steersperson or drummer will gain the attention of the safety boat with the use of their whistle and waving their arms above their head. The participant overboard will be assessed to see if they are calm enough for the team to assist. If so, the paddlers can hold the person close to the boat until the safety boat arrives. The safety boat will toss a floating rope to the paddler overboard and tow them to shore or board the safety boat if possible. No attempt should be made to get them back in the dragon boat from the water. The team should not be directed to yell for help or wave their arms as this may cause the boat to become unstable.

In the event of an on water medical emergency – The steersperson or drummer will immediately direct the team to hold the boat so that a proper assessment can be made. The steersperson or drummer will gain the attention of the safety boat with the use of their whistle and waving their arms above their head. The safety boat will arrive and if possible, the paddler in distress will be transferred to the safety boat. The safety boat will notify additional first aid personnel to coordinate a transfer location. Alternatively, the steersperson could direct the team to paddle the boat to the nearest accessible shoreline; they should not, however, cross the path of another boat. First aid personnel will assess the situation and take proper action. If necessary, first aid personnel will contact, or direct a specific individual to contact, emergency services.

In the event of hazardous weather – In the event of severe rain, lightning, thunder or hail, any one of the *Race Officials* can recommend the implementation of the '**weather emergency plan**' to the *Chief Official*, who will make the decision. If lightning or thunder is seen or heard any *Race Official* may start the weather emergency plan. The following lightning safety slogan will be applied: 'IF YOU SEE IT, FLEE IT; IF YOU HEAR IT, CLEAR IT'.

In the event of a tornado, funnel cloud, and/or waterspout – any one of the *Race Officials* can implement the 'tornado emergency plan'. Once the threat has been evaluated, an announcement will be made to participants to seek shelter via megaphones and/or repeated

bursts of the air horn. Participants will be directed to the safest location depending on the conditions. Participants should stay away from trees, vehicles and windows. Lay flat on the floor or ground and protect your head with your hands or an object (such as your lifejacket). In the event of a tornado or waterspout while on the water, each stern is responsible for their team. Teams should attempt to reach shore by travelling at a right angle to the tornado's / waterspout's path.

Weather Emergency Plan – once the decision has been made it must be passed along via the two-way radio system to all other *Race Officials* and event personnel. Then they will announce participants to return to the dock and seek shelter in the team area or vehicles via the megaphone and/or 3 short bursts of the air horn.

Resumption of activity – *Race Officials* will determine when a minimum of 30 minutes from the last visual observation of lightning or sound of thunder before resuming activities.

In the event of a fire – *Race Officials* and event personnel will direct an immediate evacuation of the affected area. Announcements to participants will be made via the megaphones and/or sound system. The *Chief Official* will decide appropriate action and pass it along to event staff via two-way radio. Once safe, teams should perform a head count, and avoid blocking the path of emergency personnel. If necessary, the *Chief Official* will contact emergency services.

Adverse water level – in the event that the water level becomes too high or low to safely run the event, the *Chief Official* will cancel the event by 6:00PM the night prior. *Race Officials* will contact team captains by phone to inform them. Team captains will be responsible for calling their team members to inform of the cancellation. The *Chief Official* will distribute an email to all registered teams by 6:30PM the night prior. The UTRCA will be informed about the cancellation. Participants are not entitled to refunds due to weather & environmental cancellations.

Emergency Number

Police, Fire, Ambulance.....911

Non-Emergency

St. Marys Fire.....(519) 284-1752
Police (non-emergencies, but police assistance is required).....(519) 271-4141
Police (general inquiries).....(519) 271-4147
Huron Perth Public Health.....1-800-431-2054
Telehealth Ontario.....(866) 797-0000
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.....(519) 284-2292 ext. 0
St. Marys Central Cab.....(519) 284-4994
Radio Cab Stratford.....(519) 271-4242

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