

Table Mountain Rowing Club



Safety Policy

Version 2025

Table Mountain Rowing Club



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Table Mountain Rowing Club



Program Safety Policy Administration

Purpose:

This portion of the **Table Mountain Rowing Club Safety Policy** refers to how the policy shall be administered and distributed.

Participation in **TABLE MOUNTAIN ROWING CLUB (TMRC)** activities and programs carries potential risk for injury or even death. Because of this, TMRC has created this comprehensive Safety Policy to help guide safe participation behaviors and ensure best practices are effectively communicated, acknowledged, and adhered to.

Rowing is a safe sport when conducted with due consideration for the risks inherently associated with any outdoor water sport. There is the risk of personal injury from collision and the risk of drowning when rowing participants find themselves in the water. All risks are heightened in cold water. While contending with difficult weather conditions is part of the sport, safe enjoyment of the sport is the aim. Concern for personal safety must be paramount. TMRC has assessed the risks unique to the club and the area of operation and has prepared the safety procedures in this Program Safety Policy to minimize those risks. Nothing in this document in any way limits an individual's responsibility for assessing his or her personal skills and for the outcome of his or her decisions and actions.

These policies are binding to all activities undertaken by the Table Mountain Rowing Club, a program of the Feather River Center (FRC).

Policy Statement:

All TMRC members, program participants, and all guests and visitors are required to be familiar with and adhere to this Safety Policy at all times. Failure to do so may result in loss of rowing privileges.

Review and Revision:

The TMRC Safety Policy will be reviewed annually by the TMRC Safety Committee in November of each year, with draft revisions being submitted for approval of the Board of Directors at the January Board meeting so they can be included in the New Member Participation packet and reviewed by all TMRC current members.

Procedures:

The TMRC Safety Committee shall:

- Consist of at least three TMRC members with input from all TMRC members.
- Annually review and suggest revisions to strengthen TMRC Safety Policies and ensure they are relevant to risks associated with the club's activities.
- Ensure that this Safety Policy is conspicuously communicated and that all members, participants, their guests, and all visitors have access to this policy through the medium appropriate to their reason for access. This will include, but not be limited to, the TMRC website, printed documents, and posters placed in conspicuous areas, and anecdotally through verbal means between program leadership and participants as our culture of safety is communicated via the spoken word.
- Ensure that all TMRC members and program participants provide written acknowledgement of the

receipt, understanding, and adherence to these Safety Policies once each year.

- Formalize and communicate a verbal and written procedure to communicate safety incidents and/or concerns and a response/remedy protocol visible and transparent to TMRC members. Provide for a storage plan for documentation of these issues. Communicate all issues to the TMRC Board of Directors.
- Oversee the safety requirements of USRowing Organizational membership.
 - ✓ Ensure that each member watches the USRowing Safety Video each year and signs that they have done this.
 - ✓ Ensure that all TMRC coaches pass a background check available through the USRowing website. This background check would be paid by TMRC.
 - ✓ Designate a head coach who will work closely with the TMRC Board and is jointly responsible for approving the skill levels of rowers.
 - ✓ Ensure that each new TMRC Board Member, coach and volunteers that have direct access to Junior rowers over the course of several days takes the **SafeSport** training provided free of charge on the USRowing website.
 - ✓ Ensure that all TMRC Board Members and coaches take the **SafeSport** refresher course annually.
 - ✓ Ensure that all TMRC coaches have current CPR/AED and First Aid certificates within 30 days of providing coaching services and maintain these certifications as required. TMRC will pay for these certifications if pre-approval is given by the TMRC Board in advance of a course being taken.
 - ✓ Ensure that all coaches receive the California Safe Boating Certificate offered by the Department of Boating and Waterways.
 - ✓ Ensure that all TMRC participants complete a medical consent form identifying any medical conditions that they may have including allergies and medications that may be important to emergency response personnel should they require treatment. Coaches or activity supervisors must have these forms accessible during practice sessions or while traveling for TMRC races or events.

Additional resource to explore for rowing safety include the following:

<http://www.usrowing.org/safety/safetyguidelines>

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Rowing is a safe sport when conducted with due consideration for the risks inherently associated with any outdoor water sport. There is the risk of personal injury from collision and the risk of drowning when rowing participants find themselves in the water. All risks are heightened in cold water. While contending with difficult weather conditions is part of the sport, safe enjoyment of the sport is the aim. Concern for personal safety must be paramount. TMRC has assessed the risks unique to the club and the area of operation and has prepared the safety procedures in this Program Safety Policy to minimize those risks. Nothing in this document in any way limits an individual's responsibility for assessing his or her personal skills and for the outcome of his or her decisions and actions.

These policies are binding to all activities undertaken by the Table Mountain Rowing Club, a program of the Feather River Center (FRC).

Policy Statement:

All TMRC members, program participants, and all guests and visitors are required to be familiar with and adhere to this Safety Policy at all times. Failure to do so may result in loss of rowing privileges.

Safety Rules for All TMRC Members and Participants:

1. SAFETY is the highest priority.
2. Each TMRC member must watch the USRowing Safety video each year and sign off that they have done this. (30 minute video - US Rowing>Member Services>Resources>Safety> Safety Video)
3. All TMRC rowers must be current members of US Rowing for insurance purposes.
4. Each TMRC member must review the TMRC Safety Policy each year.
5. Each person is 100% responsible for the whole boat and 100% accountable for his/her own oar, rigging, foot-stretchers, seat, slides, bolts and rigger. Each person checks to make sure that all equipment is functioning properly before leaving the dock.
6. All TMRC rowers must be familiar with wearing and deploying a PFD and how the specific ones work including ensuring it is functioning properly. PFD's are of little benefit if they are not sized appropriately for the user or adjusted to fit correctly. Although TMRC has ample PFD's to choose from, participants who do not feel they have a good fit with a TMRC PFD should choose not to participate or provide their own PFD and be responsible for its correct use.
7. All TMRC members must provide a Swim Test certificate provided by a Red Cross certified Lifeguard or a WSI (Water Safety Instructor) which includes:
 - a. Demonstrating the ability to tread water for 10 minutes,
 - b. Donning a PFD (Personal Flotation Device) that is thrown while treading water, and
 - c. Swimming a distance of 100 yards.Swim test forms are available for download on the TMRC website at tablemountainrowing.org.
8. All TMRC members must complete a Medical Consent Form identifying any medical conditions that they may have including allergies and medications that may be important to emergency response

personnel should they require treatment. Coaches or activity supervisors must have these records accessible during practice sessions or while traveling for TMRC races or events.

9. All TMRC members, guests and Learn-to-Row participants must sign the Voluntary Activities Participation form (liability waiver) for TMRC.
10. TMRC guests or those participating in a Learn-to-Row activity are not required to have a Swim Test certificate, but must sign certifying that they can swim, meeting the above requirements of a swim test. A guest rower or Learn-to-Row participant must wear a PFD while in a boat.
11. Due to weather conditions in the winter, only experienced rowers would be considered for new membership in TMRC during these months.
12. Membership in TMRC needs both board and coach approval so that the needs of all rowers are met.
13. If a TMRC member is renewing their membership after a lapse of 12-months or more and does not participate in coached practices, they may be required to take a refresher course (minimum of 2 hours) with a TMRC coach prior to being allowed to row TMRC-owned singles. This would be at the discretion of the coach and the TMRC Board to ensure the safety of the rower and the equipment. This course would be at the expense of the member.
14. TMRC guest rowers may be included at Team practices to row in four's, quad's or eight's, but may not use TMRC equipment such as singles or doubles without prior approval of the Board and coach. Guests may only participate during regularly scheduled practice hours.
15. No minors are allowed to be on the water unsupervised.
16. Reporting of any adverse boat issues should be made to a TMRC Board Member and a TMRC coach along with recording the issue in the Logbook. All equipment that is known to have an issue should be flagged so that it is not used.
17. A First Aid locker or station will be identified and will contain basic supplies. An AED will be maintained in the boat house.

Boat Specific Safety Rules for TMRC Members:

1. All rowers who venture more than 300 meters away from a safety launch during a supervised practice session are considered "rowing unsupervised" with all requirements intact.
2. All TMRC members must have a PFD available at all times when rowing in a single, double or pair boat. The PFD may be stored by the foot-stretchers if conditions permit.
3. All rowers must wear a PFD while rowing in the dark, extreme cold or other extreme conditions whether or not they are accompanied by a safety launch.
4. If a safety launch is not available, single, double and pair rowers cannot be on the water until it is light enough to clearly see the peninsula, unless they have been given permission by the TMRC Board and the coach. Rowers making this request should feel comfortable and be competent steering and navigating from the bow position in the dark with lights on the boat. Prior to approval, consideration should also be given to the weather conditions along with the skill of the rowers.
5. Rowers given permission to row a single shell in the dark must be accompanied by at least another single and the rowers must remain in close proximity.
6. Single scullers may only row to the Nelson Avenue bridge from the boathouse dock prior to 1/2 hour before sunrise.
7. When lights are necessary, all boats should consider only rowing to the Nelson Avenue bridge unless accompanied closely by the safety launch.
8. If unattended by a safety launch, rowers in singles, doubles and pairs must annually pass an open water boat re-entry test or Flip Test as described below in this policy.
9. All single, double and pair rowers who fit the description of "rowing unsupervised" must carry a cell phone. Rowers in fours, quads and eights must have one or two cell phones available when "rowing unsupervised." Waterproof cases are available in the lockers.
10. A safety whistle should also to be carried while on the water, particularly when it is dark.
11. Rowers in singles, doubles and pairs should wear a high vis shirt or jacket.

Safety Launch:

1. All coached practices will have a safety launch present on the water.
2. If there is a safety launch present on the water, the following safety equipment must be maintained in a safety launch:

- Enough PFD's for each occupant in the largest boat the coach is following (9 for an 8-oared shell), and that each occupant of the safety launch is wearing a PFD.
 - A paddle, a bailer, a first aid kit, a small tool kit, a flashlight, a whistle, an emergency space blanket to match the number of PFDs, and a throw bag.
 - Running lights for up to 30 minutes before and after sunrise/sunset.
3. Launch drivers will carry a charged cell phone to call for other coaches or emergency numbers, if needed.
 4. Each launch driver is responsible for the safety of all occupants and serves legally in California as the "Captain".

Traffic Pattern on the Thermalito North Forebay:

1. Following the correct traffic pattern is one of the most important things our members and program participants can do to reduce risk while on the water. This waterway has a counter-clockwise or left hand traffic pattern, which means vessels underway should divide the waterway in half and the boat proceeds on the right half side of the waterway.

Weather Restrictions and Precautions:

1. All TMRC members must acknowledge, and understand special circumstances for high winds, very cold or very hot weather conditions or limited visibility.
2. Boats cannot be launched or must return to dock immediately in the following conditions:
 - a. Fog reduces visibility such that the peninsula cannot be seen from the rowing dock.
 - b. Lightning is visible. If thunder can be heard, lightning is close and boats cannot launch during this time. Boats must wait at least 30 minutes after the last time thunder was heard or lightning was seen.
 - c. Winds above 12 knots or 13 mph or there are white caps on the water.
 - d. Ice or other surface conditions on the ground or docks make carrying a shell dangerous from boathouse to the launch area.
 - e. Cold Weather:
 - i. Small boats (1x, 2-) may only launch when the combined air and water temperature is 90F+.
 - ii. Bigger boats (2x, 4x, 4+, 8+) may launch when the combined air and water temperature is 80F +.
3. When rowing 30 minutes or more before sunrise and 30 minutes or more after sunset, all boats including rowing shells are required to have lights.
4. Weather restrictions must be reasonably reduced when rowing in the dark without a launch. Use extra caution and do not launch under questionable conditions.
5. When multiple boats are rowing in the dark, they should remain in close enough proximity to track each other's lights.

Potential Hazards and Risks:

1. Although rowing is a relatively safe sport, there is, due to its nature, the potential for accidents, injury and even death. It is essential for all TMRC members to be aware of the hazards and risks associated with the sport of rowing, in order that the risks can be minimized. Hazards and risks include the following:
2. Weather and Meteorological Hazards
 - a. Heat/cold
 - b. Darkness
 - c. Fog
 - d. Wind
 - e. Lightning
 - f. Hail
3. Hazards on the Water
 - a. Waves, wakes, swells
 - b. Rafts, buoys, moored boats
 - c. Other boats, paddle boards, swimmers

- d. Logs, deadheads, water vegetation and other floating debris
 - e. The shore or docks
 - f. Other rowing shells and their oars
- 4. Hazards on Shore
 - a. Objects in and around the boathouse, including boats on racks
 - b. Pedestrians
 - c. Slippery or icy surfaces (e.g. grass, dock)
 - d. Potential for snakes, spiders, etc.
- 5. Risks
 - a. Drowning (without doubt, this is the most serious risk of all)
 - b. Collisions with objects on the water (especially other rowing shells-a very serious risk)
 - c. Being in a shell that capsizes or is swamped
 - d. Hypothermia
 - e. Collisions off the water (in the boathouse, on land, on the dock), causing knocks, scrapes, and cuts
 - f. Dehydration, cramps
 - g. Heat-related conditions (e.g. sunburn, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke)
 - h. Soft tissue injuries (e.g. muscle pulls, strains, tears)

Self-Rescue:

1. All TMRC members who wish to row singles, doubles, or pairs unsupervised must be certified by the TMRC Board of Directors or their designee to demonstrate additional skills in order to undertake this special circumstance safely, including acknowledgement, understanding, and adherence to special circumstances for high winds, very cold or very hot weather conditions.
2. These members must:
 - a. Demonstrate the ability to get back into a flipped hull that he/she/they intend(s) to row (Flip Test).
 - b. Demonstrate adequate skills in maneuvering a single, double or pair.
 - c. Have coach's approval.
3. The Flip Test will be conducted annually for all TMRC members wishing to row singles, doubles, or pairs unsupervised.
4. Flip Test forms are available on the TMRC website at tablemountainrowing.org.

Safety Rules for TMRC Members Rowing Any Shells Outside of Regularly Scheduled Practices (TMRC Board and Coach Approval Required):

1. SAFETY is the highest priority.
2. Independent rowing outside of scheduled TMRC practice times using TMRC equipment must be approved by the TMRC Board and coach for each event. This is only available to TMRC members.
3. Independent rowers must demonstrate additional skills in order to undertake this special circumstance safely, including acknowledgement, understanding and adherence to special conditions for high winds, very cold or very hot weather, and low visibility. All safety measures/requirements must be adhered to.
4. Each rower is 100% responsible for the whole boat and 100% accountable for his own oar, rigging, foot-stretchers, seat, slides, bolts and rigger. Each person checks to make sure that all equipment is functioning properly before leaving the dock.
5. Each Rower is responsible for independent launching and landing. At times, there may be no one around to assist.
6. All rowers must pass a swim test, including putting on a PFD while in the water.
7. Rowers must wear a PFD or have one stowed by the foot stretchers at all times when rowing any boat that is unsupervised by a safety launch or rowing in a single or other small boat. The boat is only considered an emergency flotation device.
8. Rowers must be aware of all boat safety rules (traffic patterns, hazards, environmental awareness), weather restrictions for safe boating (whitecaps or winds above 12 knots or 13 mph,

- water temperature, and daylight, etc.), and contact phone numbers for emergency assistance (911, supervising person at dock/boathouse).
9. If a TMRC Member privately owns a boat, they may use their boat at any time during hours that the park is open but must abide by the Logbook and Monitor System below.
 10. Independent rowers or at least one rower in a shell must carry a cell phone in a waterproof pouch.
 11. Rower's Logbook and Monitor System:
 - a. All rowers/boat that are not accompanied by a safety launch will sign in and out of a Logbook located in the TMRC table area. Rower's Logbook will require the following information:
 - i. Name, Boat Taken, Anticipated Time of Return, Actual Time of Return (sign-out), Monitor's Name and Phone Number.
 - b. If a rower is rowing without the benefit of a monitored Logbook, they must let someone know where they are rowing and what time they should be expected in. Their contact information must be in the Logbook and the monitor must be aware of the rower's anticipated time of return and to alert the proper person/agency if they are unable to make contact with the rower. Remember, a Logbook is only useful if someone checks the book to see if there is still a boat on the water.
 - c. During FAC hours, rowers must check in and out with attendant and Logbook.

Standard Whistle Signal Patterns:

Emergency whistles can be extremely loud, producing sounds that carry over long distances. This makes them invaluable signaling devices in survival situations. There are some standard whistle signal patterns that are internationally recognized:

- **Three short blasts** - This is the standard signal indicating a distress call or request for help. Repeat the sequence of three short blasts with pauses in between to conserve oxygen.
- **One long blast** - A single long blast lasting 3-5 seconds is used as a location signal. For example, a lost person can blow a loud long blast so rescuers can follow the sound.
- **Two short blasts** - Two short blasts is the signal to acknowledge a distress call or to indicate "message received". Rescuers would use this to respond after hearing a distress signal.

It's critical to learn these basic emergency whistle signals and respond to them appropriately.

Consistently using the standard patterns improves communication and could save lives in a crisis.



