

# **EVSRA SAFETY PLAN**

## **Oyster Reef Regatta**

**September 27, 2015**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Regatta Commission of the Eastern Virginia Scholastic Rowing Association recognizes that safety is the joint responsibility of regatta organizers, participants and officials. Although there are certain risks inherent in any water activity, we are committed to conducting our events with good judgment and common sense. EVSRA has run regattas for a number of years without injury or serious incident. This written safety plan is an attempt to perpetuate the policies that have made this record possible, to improve upon past safety practices, and to communicate our safety expectations to all regatta participants, volunteers, and officials. This abbreviated September 27, 2015 Safety Plan meets or exceeds all EVSRA requirements of a Safety Plan developed for traditional EVSRA regattas at Lake Whitehurst.

### **REGATTA COMMISSION SAFETY OFFICERS**

The Regatta Director is responsible for implementation and enforcement of this plan for all EVSRA events. Unless otherwise specified, the Regatta Director shall serve as Safety Officer. The appointment of multiple Safety Officers at events may be necessary due to logistics, course set-up and other factors. The Regatta Director and/or Safety Officer will identify physicians and emergency medical providers that are on site during each regatta. The Safety Officer or Regatta Director will be responsible for delivering a safety briefing to the coaches prior to the start of each regatta that includes information on the weather plan, rower safety, injuries, and general grounds safety concerns. The Safety Officer is also responsible for providing a briefing to all launch drivers as well as documentation of any medical emergency occurring during the regatta. The Safety Officer will provide all launches on the water with a course map, radios and/or cell phones, radio/cell phone instructions, emergency instructions and locations of emergency docks to transport injured rowers.

### **CO-ORDINATION WITH RACE OFFICIALS**

The Regatta Commission shall coordinate implementation of this safety plan with the Chief Referee. The plan is intended to complement Rules of Rowing established by The United States Rowing Association. In the event of a conflict between USRowing rules and this plan, the Rules of Rowing control. Commission representatives and race officials shall act cooperatively to conduct an efficient and safe regatta. The Commission encourages decision making through consensus where practical. The Regatta Commission will provide all equipment, information and notices required by current Rules of Rowing. A copy of this safety plan and a map of the course showing mandatory traffic patterns shall be distributed to all regatta participants prior to the Pre-Regatta Meeting required by USRowing Rule 2-202. The Commission will schedule and advertise the time and location of the Pre-Regatta Meeting as part of regatta registration and sign-in. In accordance with USRowing Rule 2-101, regatta volunteers will be instructed that the primary duty of every race official is to provide for the safety of competitors and officials. Volunteers shall be instructed to follow the directions of race officials for all competitive activity. Under Section Five of this plan, racing may be suspended by the Chief Referee, the Regatta Director, or the Safety Officer at any time due to adverse weather conditions. If

suspended, racing shall not be resumed until authorized by the Chief Referee. Racing will not be recommenced sooner than thirty minutes following a weather suspension.

## **COURSE AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

In addition to the map required by Section 3.4 of this plan, the Regatta Commission shall devise and post in a conspicuous place at the regatta site the course diagram and instructions required by USRowing Rule 2-203(a). The Commission shall also clearly identify the location of the first aid stations, telephones and methods of summoning emergency assistance as required by USRowing Rule 2-203(b). This information shall be provided to regatta coaches as part of the regatta registration package. On land emergencies shall be immediately reported to the Regatta Office. On water emergencies shall be handled as per this plan. Two private sites on shore have been identified as “911” sites that are located mid-way on each half of the race course. In addition, the finish area at Robinson Rowing Center is considered a “911” sites to coordinate local ambulance service. Referees or safety boats on the course should use their cell phones to access “911” and identify the closest access point on land to join with Norfolk EMS. The civilian locations mid-way on each half of the course have agreed to provide dock access to EVSRA boats and Norfolk EMS and will be available to coordinate access if needed. EVSRA launch boats will be provided with the cell phone numbers of these sites to advise them of incoming injured rowers.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Regatta Commission will provide hand held VHF radios and /or cell phones for the following officials and volunteers:

- ***Chief Referee***
- ***Chief Judge or other finish line official***
- ***Starter (if different from Chief Referee)***
- ***Starting Area Marshal Mid-Course Marshal***
- ***Launch Operators for each on-water Referee***
- ***Launch Master***
- ***Regatta Assembly/Spectator Area Supervisor***
- ***Safety Officer and designated course safety boats***
- ***Regatta Director***

Prior to each regatta, the Commission shall determine that each radio/cell phone is fully charged and is capable of sending and receiving radio communications. All persons issued a radio or cell phone will be supplied with operating instructions. All VHF radios/phones shall remain on during the entire regatta and shall remain tuned to the regatta operations channel except in the

case of the emergency procedure described in the following section. Each person issued a VHF radio/cell phone shall be responsible for monitoring the regatta operations channel. Persons responding to an emergency or coordinating an emergency response shall immediately switch to the regatta emergency channel. Persons not directly involved the emergency response or coordination shall continue to monitor the operations channel. In the event of an emergency, the Safety Officer or, in the case of his or her unavailability, the Regatta Director, shall be responsible for determining from primary responders whether additional assistance is required, and if so, for coordinating a timely and efficient response. The Regatta Director, Regatta Office Manager and Safety Officer shall each maintain an operational cell phone to be used for communicating with land based 911 services. The Regatta Commission shall post a prominent notice in the Regatta Office clearly stating the 911 call procedure and the address of the regatta grounds listed above.

All VHF radios/cell phones shall be returned to the Safety Officer at the conclusion of the regatta. The Regatta Safety Officer shall be responsible for collecting and securing all radios/cell phones.

In addition, due to the geography and distance of the Oyster Reef Regatta, cellular phones with push-to-talk technology will be employed for shore to water communications. A communications list will be developed to assign each device to a particular event official. Specific instructions for operation will be provided.

## **SAFETY INSPECTIONS**

In cooperation with the Chief Referee, members of the Regatta Commission shall conduct or confirm that a race official will conduct, a pre-launch safety inspection of all race boats participating in each regatta event.

- 1. Each such inspection shall confirm that race boats comply with safety and equipment requirements specified in Article Three of the Rules of Rowing in effect at the time of the regatta. No race boat shall be permitted on the course without the following minimal equipment. A bowball that complies with USRowing Rule 3-105. Oars that comply with USRowing Rule 3-108. Footgear releases that comply with USRowing Rule 3-109.***
- 2. If used, a coxswain enclosure that complies with USRowing Rule 3-110.***

## **WEATHER PLAN**

The Regatta Commission shall monitor both observed and predicted weather for conditions that may present hazards to the safe conduct of regatta operations or competition. A reasonable time prior to the first scheduled launch, the Regatta Director and Safety Officer shall review available weather forecasts, including NOAA weather broadcasts, and confirm that weather conditions predicted for the race course of the Oyster Reef Regatta are likely to be safe for regatta operations and competition. The Safety Officer shall continue to monitor NOAA weather broadcasts each hour until the conclusion of the regatta. *Not more than one hour prior to the first scheduled launch, the Safety Officer, Regatta Director and/or Chief Referee shall confirm the course and starting area conditions are safe for regatta operations and competition.* The Commission shall install and monitor a tone alert radio capable of monitoring and receiving automatic weather alerts transmitted via the NOAA Specific Area Message Encoding system. The radio shall be programmed to receive S.A.M.E. messages for the Cities of Norfolk, Virginia

Beach, and Chesapeake and surrounding localities. Racing shall not be permitted if, in the opinion of the Chief Referee, the Regatta Director or the Safety Officer, course conditions endanger the safety of competitors, officials or volunteers. Once suspended, racing may only be resumed within the discretion of the Chief Referee. Racing shall not be resumed for until at least thirty minutes after a weather suspension. Racing shall immediately cease and the course shall be evacuated if thunder is heard or lightning is observed by any race official or member of the Regatta Commission. In the event of course evacuation necessitated by thunder or lightning, regatta participants shall follow the instructions of officials concerning where to exit the course and where to seek shelter. In general, participants should return to the launch and recovery area in the case of thunder unaccompanied by lightning. If lightning is observed, regatta participants should proceed to the nearest shore and seek shelter away from trees and other tall objects. In the event the course is cleared for weather conditions or other emergency, the Dock Master and Safety Officer shall be primarily responsible for determining through consultation with coaches that all crews have cleared the course. The Dock Master and Safety Officer shall require each coach to report when his or her crews have cleared the course. The Motor Launch Administrator shall be responsible for determining that all motor launches and occupants have been recovered from the race course in the event the course is cleared for weather conditions or other emergency.

## **FIRST AID AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

The Regatta Commission shall provide the following safety equipment at all regattas:

1. An adequate number of motor launches capable, when occupied, of maintaining a speed necessary to follow a race but without unnecessary wake. Each launch shall carry personal flotation devices for each occupant of the launch plus two extra PFDs. The Commission shall expend its best efforts to provide launches whose hull design minimizes wake, all as contemplated by USRowing Rule 2-207.
2. An adequately stocked EVSRA first aid kit will be located in the Regatta Office.
3. The communication equipment specified in Section Five of this Plan.
4. The weather radio specified in Section Seven of this Plan.
5. For the Oyster Reef Regatta, two (2) mid-course launches shall be designated as safety launches. Each vessel will carry a standard EVSRA first aid kit and nine+ (9) additional PFDs.

## **WATER EMERGENCIES**

All volunteers and officials shall be instructed to observe the following procedures for emergencies occurring at the Oyster Reef Regatta:

The official nearest the emergency is designated as the first responder. If an official is not available, the nearest member of the Regatta Commission shall be the first responder until an official arrives on scene.

Upon arrival at the emergency site, the first responder shall assume control of scene, determine the nature of the emergency and initiate a responsible reaction commencing with a head count of any victims in the water. The safety launch should proceed immediately to the scene of the emergency but lay off awaiting instructions from the first responder. Other boats in the area should also respond but remain in the perimeter of the emergency area awaiting instructions from the first responder. If victims are in the water or if it cannot be determined whether victims are in

the water, motor launches responding to the emergency should stop their engines and enter the area only after heads are counted and all crew members are accounted for. If racing crews are in the water, remember to account for the coxswain. Crews should be encouraged to stay with the boat and use oars as flotation devices. While awaiting recovery, crew members should be instructed to buddy up and monitor each other's safety. As promptly as possible after arriving at the scene of the emergency, the first responder shall notify the Safety Officer and Regatta Director of the nature of the emergency via the VHF regatta operations channel, request any required first aid supplies not available on the safety launch and, if necessary request 911 assistance.

The closest identified "911" site should be identified by the first responder and communicated to the local 911 dispatcher via the cell phone. The first responder should then call the safety officer to advice of the address given to the dispatcher so the safety officer can insure someone will be available to coordinate connection between the ambulance and the incoming launch boat. If possible, communications should be shifted to the VHF channel designated for emergency communications at the first reasonable opportunity. In general, marine channel 72 will be used for emergency communications. Once notified of the emergency, the Safety Officer shall be responsible for coordinating any necessary support for the emergency. At the conclusion of the emergency, the Regatta Director is responsible for coordinating any additional actions required by the event.

#### **LAND EMERGENCIES.**

All volunteers and officials shall be instructed to observe the following procedures for emergencies occurring on the regatta grounds:

The official nearest the emergency is designated as the first responder. If an official is not available, the nearest member of the Regatta Commission shall be the first responder. Upon arrival at the emergency site, the first responder shall assume control of scene, determine the nature of the emergency and initiate a responsible reaction. As promptly as possible after arriving at the scene of the emergency, the first responder shall notify the Safety Officer and Regatta Director of the nature of the emergency via the VHF regatta operations channel, request any required first aid supplies and, if necessary request 911 assistance. Radio communications should be shifted to the VHF channel designated for emergency communications at the first reasonable opportunity. In general, marine channel 72 will be used for emergency communications. Once notified of the emergency, the Safety Officer shall be responsible for requesting the assistance of the onsite regatta physician or emergency medical technician. Once notified of the emergency, the Safety Officer shall proceed to the scene and lend additional assistance to the victim. If 911 help has been requested, the Safety Officer shall be responsible for dispatching a guide to the regatta entry road who can direct emergency crews to the scene of the emergency. Until emergency crews or medical assistance arrive at the emergency scene, the first responder shall direct efforts to assist and care for the victim. Within his or her discretion, the first responder may cede control of the scene to a person deemed more medically qualified to lend assistance. Nevertheless, it is extremely important that assistance remain under the direction of one person capable of coordinating a common sense response. At the conclusion of the emergency, the Regatta Director is responsible for coordinating any additional actions required by the event.

## **SAFETY SENSITIVE POSITIONS**

**The following volunteer positions are designated as safety sensitive:**

- *Regatta Safety Director*
- *Regatta Director*
- *Regatta Office Manager*
- *Dockmaster*
- *Race Course Marshal(s) assigned to the safety boats*

All volunteers assigned to safety sensitive positions shall receive special instruction concerning specific safety responsibilities for those positions.

Launch Operators will be provided with a copy of the race course and emergency procedures. A safety briefing will be conducted for all launch crews prior to departing the launch dock.

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR the Oyster Reef Regatta on September 27, 2015:**

- Two launches will be equipped with EVSRA safety bags and additional PFDs and be on the water at all times, each responsible for one half of the course.
- The safety launches covering the start half of the race will return rowers that are injured to Carraway residence located at 7218 Shirland Ave.
- The Safety launches covering the final half of the race will bring injured rowers to the Sacks residence at 247 S. Blake Road or to the Robinson Rowing Center.
- A Safety Officer/Launch Master will be positioned at the Robinson Rowing Center to ensure all safety equipment on launches is provided, distribute and check radios, collect a secondary means of communication (cell phone) from at least one person in each launch boat, and to maintain communication at all times with the Regatta Director and Safety Officer.
- A power source will be available to support use of weather monitoring equipment at the Oyster Reef Regatta Office.
- The Safety Officer at the race assembly area will ensure all required documentation by the management of the site of injuries and/or accidents related to the Regatta is provided.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Compliance with this plan is mandatory for the September 27 Oyster Reef Regatta. This Plan will be made available to all coaches, officials and volunteers prior to the event.

### Oyster Reef Organization for September 27, 2015:

<b>Boats / Referees / Volunteers</b>	
Finish Line	
Chief Judge.Asst. Chief/Timers	Neighbor's Dock designated as a rescue station
	Finish line - Stationary Boat
Launch Boat/Driver	Finish, Outbound
	Ensure outbound and inbound traffic does not collide at bottleneck of creek; ensure outbound traffic knows to stay on right side of river the whole way out.
Launch Boat/Driver/Referee	#6 Buoy, Outbound
	At buoy #6, west side, keep outbound and inbound traffic separated; verify inbound passes buoy correctly.
Launch Boat/Driver/Referee	Willow Wood Bridge, Outbound
	At race course buoy #4, verify crews correctly pass buoy; ensure crews don't go into oyster reef on far side of corner.
Launch Boat/Driver/Referee	Buoy 2S Multi-color
	Between day marker 2S (multi-color) and race course buoy #5, make sure crews pass correctly around both of these and crews pass safely.
Launch Boat/Driver	Between Bridges - Outbound
	Primarily close to the northern end of Granby St. bridge, between outbound traffic and the shore; guide crews through bridges safely; keep them away from racing crews.
	Safety Boat
	Course Marshal
Launch Boat/Driver	Delaware Ave Ramp
	Ensure boat traffic is aware of race; warn crews approaching bridge to pick an arch early and not collide.
Launch Boat/Driver	Between Day Markers 20 & 22
	At osprey nest, ensure outbound crews know the way to the start.
Launch Boat/Driver/Referee	#2 Buoy (at first turn)
	At Race course buoy #2, verify crews pass around correctly, ensure crews turn well and don't hit the oyster reef.
Launch Boat/Driver/Referee	Between Start and Day Marker 20 - north east of the starting line close to northern shore, get boats up to the start
	Safety Boat
	Course Marshal
Launch Boat/Driver	Start Marshall - ensure crews circle around correctly and enter the course in a straight line; ensure crews are in racing order, if on time for event.
Start	Neighbor's Dock designated as a rescue station
Starter, Asst Starter, Timers	Start - Stationary boat

