

Rowing

SECONDARY - INTERSCHOOL 2025

- This activity includes additional safety standards specific to Qualifications and First Aid (previously designated High Risk).
- Consult [Risk Management](#).
- The safety standards for this activity must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed in the safety standards. For more information on planning trips using outside providers, consult [Outside Activity Providers](#).
- Consult [Swimming - Instructional](#) if any associated activity (for example, swimming or the In-Water Swim Assessment) is to take place in a pool.
- Consult [Outdoor Education\(Swimming - Instructional\)](#) if any associated activity (for example, swimming or the In-Water Swim Assessment) is to take place at a Designated Swim Area at a waterfront in a lake/pond/river

Equipment

- Determine that all equipment is safe (for example, no sharp corners, cracks, or splinters) and all assistive devices (e.g., a walker) are in good working condition and properly adjusted for the height and mobility needs of the student prior to participation.
- Protective equipment must not be altered (for example, cutting a portion off the back of mouth guards, adding padding to a protective helmet).
- Students who do not successfully complete the In-Water Swim Assessment (Refer to In-Water Swim Assessment section) or do not have a Bronze Star certification or higher, must wear a Canadian

approved inflatable vest style P.F.D or inflatable life jacket, with whistle/ signaling device attached, at all times near the water (where the depth of the water poses a risk) in and on the water.

- The Coach/Coach Liaison and all individuals who assist with the watercraft activity (e.g., Qualified Instructors/Volunteers) are required to wear a correctly fitting, properly secured/fastened and Canadian approved personal flotation device (P.F.D.) or lifejacket, with whistle/ signaling device attached, at all times near the water (where the depth of the water poses a risk) in and on the water.

Watercraft

- Shell inspected before each outing (for example, check for holes, cracks, loose hardware).
- Shell must have bow-ball in good repair.
- Bow and stern buoyancy compartments must be securely closed with water-tight hatches.
- In practice sessions, each shell must be equipped with a signaling device and a watertight flashlight.
- In all shells the foot stretchers, shoes or other devices holding the feet will remain in the shell, each shoe or device shall be independently restrained to limit heel lift to a maximum of 7 cm for each shoe or type of foot gear fitted to the shell. In addition, where laces, velcro or similar materials must be opened before the rower can remove their feet from the shoes or other device, all such materials must be able to be released immediately by the rower with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap. Where shoes or other devices holding the feet will not remain in the shell, each shoe or device must be able to be released by the rower without using their hands or with a single quick hand action of pulling on one easily accessible strap or release device.
- Must have navigation lights attached if used after sunset or before sunrise or in periods of restricted visibility, as specified in the Transport Canada Safe Boating Guide.
- Oars must be checked for splinters and cracks.
- Riggers and oar-locks must be secure and operate freely.
- Steering lines must be secure and operating correctly.
- Regattas are required to be sanctioned by Rowing Canada Aviron and meet all sanction requirements, as governed by the provincial Sanctions Officer.

Safety Craft

- A safety craft is a designated craft that is rescue-capable, taking into consideration necessary factors (for example, distance from shore, weather, water and wind conditions), and contains at least one Coach/Coach Liaison/Qualified Instructor who meets the first aid certification.
- The safety craft must be motorized and equipped as per Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide requirements.
- The safety craft must carry one Canadian approved personal flotation device (P.F.D.) or lifejacket for every crew member (including those students wearing inflatable vest style P.F.D.s or inflatable life jackets) for which the safety craft occupants are supervising/ monitoring.
- The operator of the motorized safety craft must have a Pleasure Craft Operator Card, experience in navigating the craft and knowledge of the waterway in which the activity takes place (e.g. hazards, rocks, shoals).
- The motorized safety craft must not pose a risk to the safety of the participants (e.g., maintain a safe distance from the watercraft, operate at a speed that minimizes boat wake unless responding to an emergency).
- The motorized safety craft must be the first craft in the water with occupants aboard and the engine running before students leave the beach, dock or mooring and while students are on the water.
- Coach/Qualified Instructor in motorized safety craft must be within 500m of crew during all on-water practice sessions.
- A reboarding device is required where the vertical height that a person must climb to reboard the boat from the water (freeboard) is over 0.5m (1'8").

Refer to the [**First Aid**](#) section for first aid equipment requirements.

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Appropriate clothing and footwear must be worn.

- A dry change of clothes must be available on shore.
- Coach Boat occupants are required to wear personal flotation devices (P.F.D.) while on the water at all times.
- The wearing of jewellery during practices and competitions must meet the rules of the governing body of the sport/activity, [OFSAA](#), and local athletic association. Consult the [General Safety Standards for Clothing, Footwear, and Jewellery](#) when jewellery is not addressed by the governing body of the sport/activity, OFSAA or the local athletic association.
- Long hair must be secured. Devices (for example, hair pins, elastics and barrettes) used to tie back long hair must not present a safety concern.
- Students must not participate when the length of fingernails poses a safety risk to themselves or others.

Facilities

- Determine that all facilities are safe and accessible for the students participating. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the coach.
- When using an indoor rowing facility or a rowing club, the rules and Codes of Conduct of that facility or club must be followed.

Designated Swim Area

- When using a Designated Swim Area at a Waterfront (lake/ pond river) to conduct the In-Water Swim Assessment (refer to the In-Water Swim Assessment section) the Designated Swim Area must:
 - Be clearly designated with defined physical boundaries (for example, at camps buoyed, or enclosed dock areas);
 - Have boundaries that are clearly visible to watercraft users (for example, buoy line is visible to users of personal watercraft and motorboats occupying the same body of water);

- Be free from hazards;
- Be of suitable water temperature; and
- Have stationed water rescue equipment

Dockside/Boathouse

- Must have posted walking traffic pattern with hazards identified (for example, keep to right, dock slippery when wet).
- Coach must be aware of the site's Emergency Action Plan (EAP), including the site specific rescue plan, and share with all Monitors and participants.
- Keep spectators out of boat launch area and high boat-traffic areas.

On the Water

- Constantly evaluate the practice/competition area addressing issues as they arise (for example, pulling out deadheads or alerting crews to avoid areas if there is debris).
- Coach must inform students of debris.
- Be aware of water currents, especially those created by rapids and waterfalls.
- All practice and competition sites must not include rapids and waterfalls.

Environmental Considerations

- When environmental conditions may pose a risk to student safety (for example, thunderstorms [lightning] or student(s) with asthma, triggered by air quality), Coaches must take into consideration their school board/school's protocols and procedures related to:
 - environmental conditions (consult [Weather](#)); and

- insects (for example, mosquitoes and ticks [consult the school/school board's protocols and/or regional Public Health Department's website]).
- Students must receive instruction on safety procedures related to environmental conditions and be made aware of ways to protect themselves (for example, sun burn, heat stroke).
- At all times the school board's weather and insect procedures are the minimum standards. In situations where a higher standard of care is presented (for example, outside activity providers, facility/program coordinators), the higher standard of care must be followed.
- Before involving students in outdoor activity, Coaches must take into consideration:
 - water conditions (for example, temperature, currents, tides and wave conditions).
 - visibility of 500m (1640') is required
- Follow cold water rules specific to the rowing facility.
- Coaches/Monitors must be aware of weather forecasts, especially wind conditions, temperature of the day, potential for thunder/lightning and fog conditions.
- Rowing must be cancelled in adverse conditions (for example, first sign of white caps).
- If stormy weather approaches suddenly, seek appropriate shelter immediately.
- Daylight rowing only.

Special Rules/Instructions

Student Medical Information

- Coach/Community Coach Liaison must be aware of Students whose medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes, epilepsy) may affect participation. Consult [Medical Conditions](#).

- Coach/Community Coach Liaison must be aware of Students participating with orthopedic device(s) and/or assistive devices and establish safety rules and procedures to ensure Students can participate safely in activities.
- Coach/Community Coach Liaison is required to inform all individuals who assist with the activity (for example Qualified Instructors, Aquatic Instructor, Lifeguard, Volunteers) of Students who have needs, orthopedic/assistive devices and/or medical conditions that may influence participation.

School Board Policies and Procedures

- Prior to participation Students must receive concussion information through the appropriate Ministry of Education's Concussion Awareness Resource or the school board approved concussion resources. Students must also receive information on:
 - the Concussion Code of Conduct;
 - concussion prevention strategies specific to the activity and inherent risks of the activity (that is, outline possible risks and ways to minimize the risks);
 - procedures and rules for safe play; and
 - the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- Students must confirm their review of the concussion awareness resource and Concussion Code of Conduct prior to participation.
- Refer to school board policies and procedures (i.e., transportation, excursion/field trip) for parents/guardian communication and permission (for example, the location of an off-site activity, description of the activity and physical environment, means of transportation, inherent risks of the activity, supervision).
- Parents/guardians must be informed of the additional P.F.D./ Life jacket requirements if their child does not successfully complete the In-Water Swim Assessment, and additional precautions in place.
- Parents/guardians must be informed of the school board's policy related to initiation/hazing activities.

Coach/Coach Liaison Awareness/Preparation

- Previous training, fitness level, and the length of time and intensity of physical activity must be taken into consideration.
- Activities must be based on skills that are taught.
- Skills must be taught in proper progression.
- A warm-up and cool-down must be included.
- Fair play and rules of the sport must be taught and strictly enforced.
- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.
- Students must be informed that they are not to share water bottles.
- The presence and location of spectators must not present a safety concern. A school is responsible for supervising its own spectators. The ratio of supervisor to spectators must address safety concerns.
- Prior to participation an In-Water Swim Assessment of students' swimming ability must be completed at a pool or Designated Swim Area at a waterfront.
- Coaches/Coach Liaison/Qualified Instructors must be aware of students who do not successfully complete the In-Water Swim Assessment.

In-Water Swim Assessment

- Students must successfully complete the following in its entirety, in sequence and without any aids or stops:
 - rolling entry (backwards or forward) into deep water at 2.75m (9') minimum depth
 - tread water for 1 minute
 - swim 50m (164') continuously any stroke
 - demonstrate the ability to put on a personal flotation device (P.F.D.) or lifejacket while in the water
- In lieu of completing the In-Water Swim Assessment, students must provide proof of Bronze Star certification or higher.

- If the facility has a Swimming competency test (i.e. an alternative to the In-Water Swim Assessment) schools must adhere to that standard.
- The In-Water Swim Assessment must be administered by a certified aquatic instructor or a certified lifeguard. If the aquatic instructor does not hold a lifeguard certificate or an assistant lifeguard certificate, a certified lifeguard must also be on deck during the In-Water Swim Assessment.
- The In-Water Swim Assessment must be completed within the school year in which the activity is taking place.
- Results of the In-Water Swim Assessment must be documented and communicated as per school board policy (for example, to the student, Coach/Coach Liaison, principal, parents/guardians, Trip Guide(s), Lifeguards, Aquatic Instructor, and Outside Provider [if applicable]).
- Students who do not successfully complete the In-Water Swim Assessment or do not have a Bronze Cross certification or higher, must be identified and wear a Canadian approved inflatable vest style P.F.D or inflatable life jacket, with whistle/ signaling device attached, at all times near the water (when the the depth of the water poses a risk) in and on the water.

Safety Rules and Emergency Procedures

- All Coaches/Coach Liaisons/Instructors must be knowledgeable of the established safety rules and emergency procedures (e.g., capsize/ swamp procedures).
- Prior to participation, students must be familiar with safety rules and emergency procedures specific to the watercraft activity in which they will participate (for example, P.F.D./lifejacket requirements, buddy responsibilities, capsize/swamp procedures, staying with the boat to use it as a life raft).
- Students must be informed of the location of available safety equipment and how to use it.
- After initial instruction, students who must wear an inflatable vest style P.F.D/inflatable Life Jacket must demonstrate the ability to select a correctly fitting inflatable vest style P.F.D/inflatable Life Jacket and to properly secure/fasten it.
- Students must be aware of cold water immersion physiological responses (e.g., gasp reflex, hyperventilation, increased heart rate, muscle spasm, loss of sensation and effective muscle control).

- Before the start of each session, the coach must inform appropriate personnel (for example, facility's staff member) of the beginning and ending time on water.
- Coach/Coach Liaison must be aware of the site's Emergency Action Plan (EAP), including the site specific rescue plan, and share with all supervisors monitors and participants.
- Students must be instructed to remain with rowing shell and oars for flotation and visibility purposes if an accident occurs.
- Should a shell swamp (take on water), rowers are not to attempt to swim to shore but stay with the shell using it as a flotation device and follow these steps:
 - Crew numbers off and removes feet from shoes. Remain in place if possible.
 - Make distress signal.
 - If necessary, crew enters water in pairs from middle of shell, buddy up across shell.
 - Coxswain buddies with stern pair in a stern-loaded coxed shell or bow-pair in a bow-loaded coxed shell.
 - Swing oars parallel to shell to increase flotation.
 - Unless rescue is imminent, move crew to bow and stern and roll shell over (fin up) with the wind. Crew should lie across hull, as far out of the water as possible, in pairs, holding on to the other person.
 - Safety craft distributes P.F.D.'s on arrival and conducts headcount.
 - Safety craft shuttles rowers to nearest shore. DO NOT overload Coach Boat.
 - Conduct headcount on returning.
 - Recover shell.
- In case of an emergency, a pre-determined return route must be established.
- Procedures must be in place to ensure accountability for all shells and Coaches and students on the water at any given time, in case of an emergency.

Supervision

- All activities must be supervised.
- The type of supervision must be commensurate with the inherent risk of the activity. The level of risk is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, and environmental conditions.
- On-Site Supervision is required during the safety and initial skill instruction.
- On-Site Supervision is required when students are moving and handling equipment (e.g., lifting, portaging carries, launching and removing watercraft(s) to and from the water).
- On-Site Supervision is required for the duration of all other components of the activity (e.g., equipment setup and take down, warm-ups/cool downs, application of the skills and games).
- The Community Coach Liaison must be accessible to the Community Coach and students (at practices and competitions). The level of support will be commensurate with the expertise and qualifications of the Community Coach as determined by the Principal/Designate.
- As a minimum the Community Coach Liaison will provide In-the-Area supervision for all practices and competitions. Direct Supervision is required if a Community Coach is under the age of 18.
- When students are competing outside their school district (e.g., travel tournaments, regional/ provincial competitions):
 - a Community Coach Liaison from the same school board must be accessible to the Community Coach; and
 - consult school board and local athletic association rules and regulations with regard to Coach, Community Coach, and Community Coach Liaison duties and adhere to the higher standard of care.
- Where a Qualified Instructor is used, the Qualified Instructor must provide safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring for the safe application of skills and student behaviour for the duration of the activity.
- A Volunteer, under the direction of a Coach, can monitor students during practices and competitions. Refer to your school board's policy on volunteers assisting with students' physical activities.

- Responsibilities must be clearly outlined for additional Coaches and Volunteers who are monitoring the activity.

Supervision Ratios

- Beginner rowers: 1 Coach per 9 students
- Experienced rowers: 1 Coach per 18 students

Qualifications

- Operator of the Coach Boat must have a Pleasure Craft Operator Card.

Coaching Qualifications

- Game/match official(s) must be certified and/or experienced in officiating the sport.
- The Head Coach must demonstrate knowledge of the sport, skills, and strategies to the Principal or Designate.
- All Coaches must meet with the head Coach of the rowing club (if applicable) prior to the start of the season and be in communication throughout the season.
- All Coaches must be familiar with and implement, where applicable, the criteria outlined in [Coaches Expectations](#).
- At least one Coach must possess one of the following coaching qualifications:
 - NCCP Competition Coach – RCA Coach Course
 - Accreditation as a NCCP Rowing Learning Facilitator
 - Completion of rowing NCCP level 1 and/or level 2 certification in the past

- Attendance at a clinic or workshop within the last three years provided by an instructor who is knowledgeable of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions), and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education
 - Past experience within the last 3 years as a coach in rowing, having knowledge of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and current safety practices as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
- For more information on sport-specific NCCP training please visit coach.ca.

First Aid

- A fully stocked first aid kit must be readily accessible. (Consult [Sample First Aid Kit](#))
- A working communication device (for example, cell phone) must be accessible.
- A Coach/Monitor who takes responsibility for providing first aid to injured students through the entirety of a practice and/or competition and must follow the school board's concussion protocol and the school's First Aid Emergency Response (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)).
- The designated individual who takes responsibility for providing first aid to injured students must:
 - as a minimum, have a current first aid certification from a recognized first aid provider (for example, St. John Ambulance, Red Cross) that includes CPR B or C and training in head, neck and spinal injury management;
 - be in the area and readily accessible during the entire practice/competition;
 - be aware of the school's first aid emergency action plan and follow their first aid emergency response (consult First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response) including specific direction for participants with accessibility needs, and use of assistive devices or medications;

- follow their school board's concussion protocol for a suspected concussion;
- and not be a participant in the activity.☒

Definitions

- **Coach** (i.e. Teacher Coach/Community Coach):

- An individual who volunteers to coach a school team and is approved by the Principal/Designate.

- **Community Coach:**

- An individual approved by the principal who volunteers to coach a school team. An individual acting in the role of a Community Coach must be assigned a Community Coach Liaison.

- Examples of a Community Coach are:

- teachers not under contract by the board;
- retired teachers;
- early childhood educators, teacher candidates, educational assistants;
- co-op students, other secondary students;
- parent/guardian;
- individuals/coaches from the community.

- **Community Coach Liaison:**

- A Teacher, Principal, or Vice Principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school board who is responsible for carrying out all the duties required of a Teacher pursuant to the Education Act and the safety standards. The level of support will be commensurate with the expertise and qualifications of the Community Coach and will be determined by the Principal or Designate.

- **Instructional Time:**

- Time during which there is formal instruction and/or instructor led activities. Examples of instructional time are lessons, events, practice, and games.

- **Lifejacket:**

- Canadian-approved lifejackets are designed to turn an unconscious or incapacitated person face-up in the water. Lifejackets are available with varying amounts of flotation and turning ability. Canadian approved Lifejackets are stamped or labelled indicating that they are approved by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- **Monitor:**

- A Volunteer and/or Qualified Instructor who assists the Teacher Coach with a group of students and has a responsibility to monitor student behaviors for the duration of the activity.
- A Community Coach who has a responsibility to coach and monitor student behaviors for the duration of the athletic season and/or a Qualified Instructor(s)/Volunteer(s) who assists the Community Coach during practices and competitions.

- **Monitoring:**

- The role of monitoring is to observe, identify, act, and report:
 - Observe: Observe with attention to detail the actions of the students.
 - Identify: Identify the student and the unsafe behaviour.
 - Act: Take appropriate actions to safeguard students and others (e.g., stop the activity).
 - Report: Provide the name of the student and the unsafe behaviour to the Coach for management and direction.

- **Personal Flotation Device (P.F.D.):**

- Canadian-approved P.F.D.'s are designed for use in recreational boating and are generally smaller, less bulky and more comfortable than lifejackets. They may have less flotation than lifejackets and may have no or little self-turning ability (the ability to turn an unconscious or incapacitated person face-up in the water). Canadian approved P.F.D.'s are stamped or labelled

indicating that they are approved by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- **Qualified Instructor:**

- An individual who provides safety and skill instruction, and monitoring for an activity, and possesses the required qualifications (e.g., experience, certifications). This role could be fulfilled by a teacher, volunteer, or an employee of an outside provider. An instructor does not have the authority to supervise.

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of an activity for management or direction. Activities, facilities, and equipment have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.
- The Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education includes three Types of supervision, Direct Supervision, On-Site Supervision, and In-the-Area Supervision. These types of supervision take into consideration the level of risk, which is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, the environmental conditions, the age, and developmental stage.
- The three types of supervision described are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that activities require and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.
- Some activities in OPASSE transition from one type of supervision to another type of supervision (e.g., Direct Supervision to On-Site Supervision OR On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision).

- **Teacher Coach:**

- A Teacher Coach is a teacher, principal, or vice principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school board.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Direct Supervision:**

- Direct Supervision requires that the Coach is physically present at the activity, providing visual and verbal oversight for management and direction of both the activity and student safety.

- **Provisos:**

- No other activity can occur when part of the activity or the entire activity is under Direct Supervision when there is only one Coach supervising.
- The Supervision section of the relevant activity safety standards page in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education describes when parts of an activity are under Direct Supervision.
- Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.

- **An activity may be under Direct Supervision:**

- During the entire duration of the activity;
- During the set up and take down of equipment;
- During the safety and initial skill instruction;
- During the performance/practice of the activity skill; and
- When the activities transition from Direct Supervision to On-Site Supervision.

- **In-the-Area Supervision:**

- The Coach is located in proximity to a combination of locations where the student activities take place, is circulating, and is accessible for providing management and direction of the physical activity and student safety.

- **Provisos:**

- The Coach is circulating between the activities, occurring at separate locations, and is readily accessible, or the location of the coach is communicated to the student.
- Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and is monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.
- Students may be out of sight for periods of time.
- An activity or a component of the activity is under In-the-Area Supervision:
 - Where the same activity is located in separate locations. (e.g., Track and Field, Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine));
 - Where two or more activities under In-the-Area Supervision occur in separate locations (e.g., Badminton, Table Tennis, Handball (Wall));
 - Where the skill application of the activity takes place at a different location from the Coach (e.g., Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine), Cycling);
 - Where activities occur in double or triple gymnasiums; and
 - Where more than one Qualified Instructor is providing activities at a combination of locations.
- **On-Site Supervision:**
 - The Coach is present at one location where the student activity takes place (e.g., gymnasium, sports field, tennis courts at an Outside Activity Provider's facility) and is accessible for providing management and direction of the physical activity and student safety.
 - **Provisos:**
 - Where more than one activity occurs in one location, the Coach is circulating between the activities and is accessible for management and direction.

- Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (e.g., equipment room, outside storage shed, boathouse) is considered to be On-Site Supervision.
- Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.
- An activity may be under On-Site Supervision:
 - During the entire duration of the activity;
 - During the safety and initial skill instruction;
 - With activities using multiple stations while the Coach is circulating;
 - When combining two or more activities at one location while the Coach is circulating; and
 - When activities transition from On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision.

- **Volunteer:**

- A responsible adult (e.g., Educational Assistants, Retired Teachers, Co-op Students, Parents/Guardians, Teacher Candidates) approved by the Principal/Designate who is under the direction of a Coach and has been instructed on their monitoring responsibilities. Refer to your school board's policy on volunteers assisting with students' physical activities.

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