

Rowing NZ Recommended Operating Procedure (ROPs): Unsupported Rowers

Rowing New Zealand is committed to water safety by offering clubs recommended procedures for operation. Clubs should take these recommendations as guidance and consider the risk of their own training waterways when making decisions on their club procedures. The following list of ROPs is non-exclusive but aimed at assisting clubs in considering their risks depending on the relevant hazards.

Unsupported rowers are those who are rowing without the direct supervision of an on-water safety boat in unsheltered waterways. This includes crews that are further than 500m away from their safety boat. By following these operating procedures, unsupported rowers can enjoy a safe and fulfilling rowing experience while contributing to the overall safety and professionalism of the rowing club.

Approval of rowers

It is recommended that potential rowers prove to an appointed person deemed competent by the authority of club management that they can demonstrate the following skills:

- Complete an equipment check before leaving the boatshed, for example, checking the heel restraints, seat, bow ball, and flotation belt.
- Safely launch/land the skiff.
- Perform a safe capsize and re-entry to the craft.
- Can swim 50m unsupported.
- Know the waterway and relevant hazards including weather.
- Bring and use a communication device on water.

Clubs should also consider the rower's age, general experience, and prior knowledge of rowing safety and club policy.

It is unlikely that novice crews will be capable of rowing unsupported.

Boat log

All clubs should provide a boat log for their rowers. This log should show the date & time, and rowing craft movements in and out of the shed, including an expected return time. Unsupported rowers should be expected to fill this out.

On water equipment

It is vital that all unsupported skiffs in unsheltered waterways carry onboard an easily accessible Rowing NZ-approved flotation belt for each person in the crew. Coxswains must wear a lifejacket at all times.

If rowing further than 500m from the shore, rowers must also carry a form of communication equipment onboard.

Emergency Response Plan

Each club should have an emergency response plan that can be used if the unsupported rowers have safety concerns on water.