

8. OTHER RISK CONTROL MEASURES: RECOMMENDED CHANGES.

Other changes that are recommended for the PLA to introduce and to discuss with the other river users:

8.1 Recommendations to the PLA

- Increase simplification and promulgation of whichever rules are in place; discussed below in section 9.
- Reinvigorate the Teddington/Tower River User Group with a more effective fixed agenda to concentrate on matters of safety as a high priority. Encourage greater interaction between users and with the PLA.
- Communication and transfer of information between PLA and ARA can be improved; variance in accident statistics highlights gaps in knowledge transfer. This may be partly attributed to possible use of data:
 - Clarification of the use may be required – safety improvement or enforcement purpose?
 - Consider measures to improve formal and informal data transfer:
 - § Anonymous reports / identity masking for safety improvement use from TRRC/ARA to PLA.
 - § Better communication at un-minuted meetings
 - § Arrange Regular Quarterly or Four-monthly meetings with TRRC safety adviser.
- Identification of all boats used on the Tideway as required under Byelaws with standard sized and formatted name plus alpha/numeric code recommended.
- Enforcement of ID can be placed to rowing authorities / Clubs – require periodic reports of boats held, compliance with applicable rowing Code for construction and marking / identification. In parallel, enforce this and wider requirement at present under Byelaws for clear identification:
 - A level of control is possible by noting boats at entry points from enclosed waterways e.g. upper Thames, canals, marinas.
 - Maintain a log of transgressors from rules as noted on the river by PLA launch service personnel & promulgate list at these entry points. Waterway remains open but higher level of control within PLA powers.
- Inspection and licensing of all coach boats to be implemented as per Byelaws
- Marking limits on the banks of any agreed crossing points

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- Marking of channel is possible but would introduce hazards; consider signage along the bank at strategic locations such as entry points, approaching bridges with diagram of channel and river width.
- Other signage to be considered:
 - Speed limit
 - Simple notice of areas where rowing is anticipated
 - Depth gauges at all bridges
- Lighting for boats to be better applied. Guidance required on acceptability/standards as well as use.
- Observation cameras on bridges for trial period with regular scheduled meetings between PLA and ARA / TRRC to review evidence
- Speed limit – greater enforcement with speed guns and/or speed boards on bridges
- Markers/ colouring at some physical hazards to increase visibility
- No overtaking approaching bridges (within a distance to be further assessed, e.g. 200m)
- Consider monitoring wash levels particularly during any required certification but also in general use – more difficult on a tideway but Environment Agency prosecute (if they do at all) under wash and damage caused rather than speed. (They monitor using simple stick gauge at bank).
- Increased enforcement. At least for a period of introduction of any new Rules or Code. To be tied in with promulgation, enforce the rules with regards positioning, overtaking and manoeuvring. (This should have support from the rowing governing bodies; representatives expressed a degree of toothlessness internally and would welcome examples be made of the worse offenders.).
- Input to the PLA navigation Safety Management System to be improved. Include specific problems of:
 - Collision risks at Kew Bridge and Chiswick Bridge
 - Collision risk due to confusion and conflict when the stream is changing direction

8.2 Recommendations for ARA/TRRC consideration

- Identification of novice cox / steers person; day-glo vests for a probationary period (particularly if tied in with certification)
- Alternately or by differing colours all coxes / bow / steer persons to have day glo vests – seen used to good effect on the river. Improves visibility and conspicuousness.

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- Certification of cox / steersperson should be compulsory: syllabus recommended to include a minimum time on the water in training capacity.
- Certification of coach boat drivers should become compulsory e.g. RYA Level II with ARA specific modules
- Increased education and effective training amongst the rowing community – discussed as Attachment.
- Personal Buoyancy Aids – ARA to continue investigation/research/design for a suitable aid for rowers
- Increased internal enforcement. At least for a period of introduction of any new Rules or Code. To be tied in with promulgation, enforce the rules with regards positioning, overtaking and manoeuvring.
- Review of accident statistics and action on trends to be visibly improved. Include in discussions with PLA at periodic meetings. e.g. the ARA statistics contain several comments querying the use of 4's on the tideway, particularly for inexperienced crews. Incidents with rowers caught out by stream on bridges and fixed marks continue, including 2005 during heads meetings.

The ARA has also introduced a number of initiatives in this area see Attachment H.

- 8.2.1 By ensuring rowers proceeding against the stream remain adjacent to the bank, they will be outside the position of PDVS for a substantial section of the area reviewed. Elsewhere, at pinch points say, the other measures above should further reduce the incident rate. Where risk of collision does exist action of both vessels in accordance with the COLREGS (and specified in the amended Rowing Rules) would resolve the head on issue in most cases. Better education amongst all parties is the key to this issue, supported by enforcement. Risks of crossing points may be mitigated by better promulgation regarding the location of these areas and advanced warning notices, including marking the actual crossing points on the adjacent banks.
- 8.2.2 Some issues relating to buoyancy are considered in the sections Wash and Rowing Craft relating to the possibility of swamping as a result of too much wash and as a result of excessive wave height due to adverse weather. Swamping also carries the additional risk of hypothermia during most of the main rowing season. In view of the relative frequency with which incidences of swamping or capsize and resultant sinking occur, we believe that it is imperative that all boats are sufficiently buoyant.

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- 8.2.3 Lights - Current guidelines published by the ARA are for two lights to be displayed giving 360° coverage to conform with COLREGS requirements. Two lights normally achieve this, one aft of the cockpit and shining towards the stern and one forward of the cockpit and shining towards the bow. Although custom designed lights are available and cost around £20 per pair, often various types of cycle lights are used which generally focus directly in one direction only with little sideways spill. The advantage of the custom lights is that they are fitted with rubber suction cups to enable adherence to the flat surface of the deck, but also the light is visible from both the sides. This has the added advantage of showing when a boat is turning around in the river as both lights can then be seen when the boat is sideways on. Generally boats are constructed without any means of attaching lights so, unless a suction light is used, various “Heath Robinson” methods of attachment are utilised such as sticky tape, duck tape etc. Suction lights are not entirely ideal as they can be lost overboard due to being knocked or as a result of loss of suction. We believe that all boats that may be used at night should have a standardised bracket fitted fore and aft to take an approved type of standard light. Such a recommendation was made by Peter Coni in 1992 but has not yet come to fruition.
- 8.2.4 One excellent suggestion received during interviews was for the forward light to be a fixed light with pulsating white light to indicate that a boat was approaching rather than receding. The pulsating light would also be visible and more noticeable at a greater distance. The light showing towards the stern should continue to be a fixed white light. We would certainly endorse that the practicalities of such a forward light should be fully investigated. We would also endorse the recommendation that coach boats accompanying rowers at night time or in restricted visibility should display red / green side lights in addition to the white light. We also recommend that rowers, particularly single scull craft, operating at night or poor visibility should always be accompanied by a coach boat or safety number.