

10. THE ARA WATER SAFETY CODE

- 10.1 A revised and updated Water Safety Code was published by The Amateur Rowing Association (ARA) during 2003. The Code and integral Guidance Notes set out many parameters relating to the safety of rowing and emphasise that all rowing activities should be governed by risk assessments performed by individual Club members, Clubs, Regatta and Event Organisers and Regional Rowing Councils.
- 10.2 The Water Safety Code provides little direct input relating to navigation. It requires Clubs to display a plan of the local waterway and draw attention to the applicable navigation rules and any local interpretation, as well as procedures to combat tidal currents, stream, wind etc particular to the local area. It sets out the lights required to be shown in poor visibility. There is also a requirement for Steersmen to understand and observe local navigation rules. Appendix 5 headed “Navigation, Sounds and Signals” deals with sound signals laid down by the COLREGS but unfortunately does not touch on navigation or collision avoidance.
- 10.3 There is, however, on the ARA website an excellent paper “Tideway Steering and Navigation” which although focussed on rowing on the Thames has much in it relating to general navigation and collision avoidance.
- 10.4 The ARA Water Safety Code appears to be quite widely promulgated amongst and is being taught to Rowers. Safety Advisors were generally aware and familiar with the contents. The cascading down of its information and requirements is an ongoing process and kept under review by the ARA. The ARA and rowing community have introduced and continue to initiate measures to ensure promulgation and compliance. A number of these are noted in attachment H.
- 10.5 Whilst education appears to be improving amongst the majority of the rowing population, the momentum apparently established over the last two or three years needs to continue. Suggestions and recommendations have been received in several areas. One example is making the certification of each cox/steersperson compulsory, with a syllabus to include a minimum of practical water time. Making an adapted rowing /tidal version of RYA2 a requirement for all coach boat drivers was another. However, a balance has to be maintained between desired outcome and availability, particularly due to shortage of coxes. Whilst it is not felt a significant majority are abusing the code or failing to fully comply, there are recommendations that can be put forward.

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- 10.6 During the period of our study, it has been seen that not all the ARA Water Safety Code requirements and recommendations are uniformly observed. However, it does not appear that any significant majority of rowers are failing to observe the overall requirements.