



Calgary Dragon Boat Society

Member Handbook & Safety Guidelines

1.0 PREAMBLE

- 1.1 Safety of all participants is the number one priority.
- 1.2 This manual is to be used primarily by the Drummers, Steerspersons, Coaches, and Team Captains to educate all participants about the safety rules & regulations.
- 1.3 A Drummer, Steersperson, Coach, and Team Captain:
 - 1.3.1 Ensures the safety of a team on the reservoir during practice and the Calgary Dragon Boat Festival by following the established procedures, as stated in this manual.
 - 1.3.2 Ensures a team does not jeopardize the safety of other vessels on the water during training and races.
 - 1.3.3 Teaches the team to be responsible in meeting the above two (2) goals. Everyone has a responsibility to “SAFETY”.
- 1.4 The Drummer and Steersperson are in control of the dragon boat and are in the best position to make decisions involving safety (i.e. determining whether the boat and crew remain on the water, or return to dock, or head for calmer water, etc). This responsibility is also shared with the Coach and Team Captains.

2.0 DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

- 2.1 Boat Patrol – Rescue and patrol boat on the Glenmore Reservoir operated by the City of Calgary
- 2.2 Bow – Front of the dragon boat
- 2.3 Buoy – Floating marker that is anchored to the bottom of the reservoir; mooring buoys are attached to a boat when it is not being used for a practice or race, or used to mark lanes/areas
- 2.4 Gunnel – Upper side edge of the dragon boat.
- 2.5 Mooring Rope – Rope that is located at the bow and stern of the boat to tie the boat to the docks, or to a mooring buoy in the Reservoir
- 2.6 PFD – Personal Floatation Device; must be Coast Guard Approved
- 2.7 Reservoir – Glenmore Reservoir
- 2.8 Stern – Back of the dragon boat

3.0 GLENMORE RESERVOIR RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 3.1 Swimming in the Glenmore Reservoir is strictly prohibited. This infraction could result in a fine of up to \$5000.
- 3.2 Dogs are not allowed to swim in the Reservoir or be on the beach or dock areas. This infraction could result in a fine.

- 3.3 Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) must be worn at ALL times in the boat, including on the docks. (Glenmore Park Bylaw 9018)

4.0 MEMBER PERSONAL SAFETY

- 4.1 PFDs are provided to all participants and must be worn in the proper manner at all times while in the dragon boat and on the dock.
- 4.2 Each member should be able to swim and be comfortable in water. If not, it is each participant's responsibility to notify his or her Team Captain and Coach.
- 4.3 Each crew member is solely responsible for his or her own safety at any time while engaging in activities related to practicing and racing in the dragon boat.
- 4.4 Any injuries occurring as a result of participating in the practices or races must be reported immediately to the Team Captain or Coach.
- 4.5 These safety rules and regulations must be observed at all times during practices and where applicable, during races.
- 4.6 All paddlers should know the rules and regulations of the Reservoir.
- 4.7 All paddlers should know the standard emergency rules.
- 4.8 Appropriate clothing should be worn.
- 4.9 All paddlers should have change of clothing and towels with them at every practice.

5.0 GLENMORE RESERVOIR COMMUNITY

- 5.1 All dragon boat teams must give right-of-way to ALL vessels on the reservoir.
- 5.2 QUIET VESSELS
The vessels listed below are naturally powered (i.e. no engine). You may not hear them approaching, so it is important to be aware and understand their characteristics (stability, speed and hazards).

SAILBOATS

- Decreased visibility around the sail and mast.
- Steering control decreases in high winds.
- Various "learn-to-sail programs" are conducted throughout the season. Do not assume skilled sailors.
- Sailboats are not allowed to enter the laned area of the reservoir.

ROWING BOATS (SHELLS)

- Shells are very light and unstable boats. Rowers must constantly adjust their course according to water and wind conditions. Do not assume that shells always travel in straight lines.
- Rowers look the opposite way they are traveling. Their backs are facing the direction of travel.

- Even if there is a Cox (person who steers the shell or calls out rowing rhythm), they are situated very close to the water level so the individual cannot always see clearly.
- Rowers often do interval training, so expect various speeds. Remember, shells can accelerate to high speeds very quickly.
- Various “learn-to-row programs” are conducted throughout the season. Do not expect a novice rower to move out of your way.

RECREATIONAL CANOES

- Assume novice users who are allowed to launch on the Reservoir.
- There is no rule or regulation constraining the direction or use of a canoe vessel.

RECREATIONAL KAYAKS

- Kayaks can change direction very quickly and for the most part are stable vessels.
- A large majority of kayak users on the Reservoir are high school or university students and novice kayakers with “learn-to-kayak programs”.

RACING CANOES AND KAYAKS

- Extremely unstable.
- Paddlers choose their course based on water and wind conditions.
- Novice to intermediate paddlers can be capsized by a dragon boat’s wash (surge or eddy of water caused by oars/paddles).
- Be considerate! Drummers and Steerspersons should check behind the dragon boat to make sure vessels have not been capsized.

5.3 MOTORIZED VESSELS (with Engines)

COACH BOATS AND BOAT PATROL

- Coach boats may be seen following racing canoes and kayaks, and shells.
- Boat Patrol is the main safety boat operated by the City of Calgary and will respond to all emergencies on the Reservoir, and is responsible for educating the Glenmore Reservoir rules and regulations.

SS MOYIE

- A big paddle wheel boat operated by Heritage Park.
- The captain and co-captain who reside in the captain’s booth navigate the SS Moyie, which is located at the highest point of the vessel.
- There are two predefined routes that the SS Moyie can follow, but this is up to the discretion of the captain/co-captain.
- It is not allowed into the laned area of the Reservoir.
- The SS Moyie is not a responsive boat; therefore it changes speed and direction very slowly.

- The wake behind the SS Moyie is considerable. Try to avoid getting caught behind the wash. If you do end up in the wash, meet the wash head on, NOT parallel to the side of the dragon boat.

6.0 PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICE (PFD): USE AND CARE

- 6.1 Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) must be worn at ALL times while on the docks, in the canoe or dragon boat. There are absolutely NO exceptions to this rule.
- 6.2 All participants are supplied with a PFD to use during practice and race weekends. If personal PFDs are used, they must meet specification 2.6 in this manual.
- 6.3 To ensure safety for yourself and your team, please select the proper size of PFD based on your body size and type. If unsure, please check with your Team Captain, Coach or Equipment Manager.
- 6.4 DO NOT sit or rest on PFDs. The added compression to the PFDs will decrease the PFDs' buoyancy and life span.

7.0 RETRIEVING AND RETURNING THE DRAGON BOAT

- 7.1 RETRIEVING THE DRAGON BOAT
 - 7.1.1 Individuals designated to retrieve the dragon boat must be at practice 30-45 min. prior to published practice time.
 - 7.1.2 Three (3) members are required with a minimum of one (1) member being experienced in steering. Absolutely NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule.
 - 7.1.3 Carry the canoe to the dock area. Once again, three (3) members are required.
 - 7.1.4 Load the canoe from the middle, then rear, and lastly front (most stable procedure). Then launch the canoe from the docks and paddle out to the dragon boat.
 - 7.1.5 Load the dragon boat with two (2) persons in either row 3 or 4 (main paddlers) and one person in row 10 or at the very back to steer. Paddle the dragon boat back to dock.
 - 7.1.6 USE CAUTION when docking, as the dragon boat will move around a lot, since the boat is not full of paddlers to hold the boat.
 - 7.1.7 Two (2) people (herein refer to as "dock persons") shall always be on the dock watching the canoe and help guide the dragon boat into dock via the mooring rope.
 - 7.1.8 Rear person will exit the dragon boat and tie the rear of the boat to the dock. The dock person will tie the front of the boat to the dock.
 - 7.1.9 DO NOT tie the boat tightly to the dock as this makes it unstable to board if the water conditions are choppy.

- 7.2 RETURNING THE DRAGON BOAT

- 7.2.1 Three (3) members are required with a minimum of one (1) member being experienced in steering. Absolutely NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule.
- 7.2.2 Load the dragon boat with two (2) persons in either row 3 or 4 (main paddlers) and one person in row 10 or at the very back to steer. Paddle the dragon boat from the dock back to the buoy.
- 7.2.3 Enter the canoe by starting in the middle, then rear, and lastly front. This is the most stable process of loading the canoe. Paddle the canoe back to dock.
- 7.2.4 Paddle the canoe to the side of the dock. Unload the canoe from the front, back and then middle (most stable process).
- 7.2.5 Carry the canoe from the dock to the canoe rack.
- 7.2.6 Place the canoe, upside down, on the canoe rack and lock up the canoe.

8.0 PROCEDURE FOR LOADING AND UNLOADING A DRAGON BOAT

- 8.1 LOADING AND UNLOADING A DRAGON BOAT (TEAM CAPTAIN TO COORDINATE AND EXECUTE)
 - 8.1.1 Roster team on shore in the order of rows prior to walking down to the dock.
 - 8.1.2 Have team walk down to the dock, maintaining this line up.
 - 8.1.3 Prior to loading or unloading, ensure the dragon boat is tied at both the bow and stern.
 - 8.1.4 Maintain this line up on the dock next to the boat.
 - 8.1.5 Load the boat from middle rows then work outwards while alternating (starting with row 6, then 5 and 7, then 4 and 8, etc.) Drummer or steersperson may assist in calling in rows. Paddlers shall load as follows:
 - The outside paddler should step in the middle of the seat with their hands on the gunnel or seat and their weight low and balanced.
 - They should sit in the middle until their partner is ready to load.
 - The inside paddler gets in using the same technique, or by holding onto their partner's shoulder to help with balance.
 - Once both paddlers are in the boat, they can slide over to their respective gunnel.
 - Paddles should be kept out of the way of other paddlers getting in and out of the boat. If possible, they should be held over the water in order to brace the boat.
 - 8.1.6 Unload the boat from outer rows (alternating between front and back, starting with row 1) working towards the middle of the boat.

9.0 CHAIN OF COMMAND

- 9.1 Always obey the CHAIN of COMMAND. Yes, we mean ALWAYS, even if you hear “Check the Boat” during the middle of a race!!!
- 9.2 1st in Command – Steersperson/Drummer
- 9.3 2nd in Command – Drummer/Steersperson
- 9.4 3rd in Command – Coach
- 9.5 4th in Command – Team Captain
- 9.6 5th in Command – Team Co-Captain

10.0 CHECKING BOAT BALANCE

- 10.1 DRUMMER AND STEERSPERSON WILL COORDINATE AND EXECUTE THE FOLLOWING:
 - 10.1.1 After members have boarded the boat, the mooring ropes are untied.
 - 10.1.2 Request paddlers to push off from dock using their hands. DO NOT use the blade end of the paddle. Let the dragon boat come to rest.
 - 10.1.3 Ensure everyone is next to the gunnel and sitting straight up.
 - 10.1.4 Check the balance.
 - 10.1.5 Have paddlers move positions as required to balance boat. (Refer to Section 11.0).
 - 10.1.6 Once the dragon boat is balanced as best as possible, commence with the practice.

11.0 SEAT CHANGES WITHIN A DRAGON BOAT

- 11.1 DRUMMER AND STEERSPERSON WILL COORDINATE AND EXECUTE THE FOLLOWING:
 - 11.1.1 The Captain and the Coach will try to balance the boat prior to boarding. Drummer and Steersperson will make required changes to seating arrangement, if there is an imbalance, after the boat has been loaded.
 - 11.1.2 If paddlers need to move to another seat, “check” (stop) the dragon boat.
 - 11.1.3 All paddlers must “feather the water,” “brace,” or “hold” boat while the dragon boat is at a complete stop. This keeps the dragon boat stable from side to side (left to right). Continue to “feather the water” until the Drummer or Steersperson instructs the paddlers to stop.
 - 11.1.4 One paddler at a time, as instructed by the Drummer or Steersperson, shall be moved within the dragon boat.
 - 11.1.5 Once all the seat changes are made, Drummer or Steersperson instructs the paddlers to release “let it ride” and practice continues.

12.0 DRAGON BOAT RESCUE PROCEDURE

- 12.1 SWAMPED OR CAPSIZED DRAGON BOAT DURING A RACE OR PRACTICE.
- 12.1.1 Once a dragon boat begins to capsize, it is very difficult to stop it. If you are on the higher side of the boat when it begins to go over, try to jump clear of your seat partner to avoid injury to him/her.
 - 12.1.2 If you come up under the boat, it will be dark, but there will be an air pocket available for you to catch your breath and get your bearings.
 - 12.1.3 Feel your way to the side of the boat and then surface on the outside. All individuals MUST stay with the dragon boat. Hold the dragon boat gunnels to help remain with the dragon boat.
 - 12.1.4 The “Buddy System” (see 12.2) will be utilized – all paddlers must ensure their seat partner is present. The coaching pod will be “buddied” up with each other. The Drummer, Coach, Steersperson or Captain will initiate a head count (i.e. roll call of the paddlers in their seated rows). The total number of paddlers in the capsized dragon boat must equate to the number of paddlers at the start of each practice. If a member is missing, refer to Section 12.3.
 - 12.1.5 Next in Command (see 9.0 for chain of command) to determine if any person(s) is injured or requires immediate assistance.
 - 12.1.6 Once all paddlers are accounted for, stay calm and stay with the boat. Next in Command to use whistle to attract attention from individuals on shore or in other vessels. A dragon boat in distress is easily recognizable. A call will be made to the Boat Patrol as soon as possible.
 - 12.1.7 Once the Boat Patrol arrives, follow the directions given. Boat Patrol is in control of the situation now and the only contact between the team and the patrol is the Next in Command.
 - 12.1.8 Next in Command will notify the Boat Patrol if any person(s) requires immediate assistance. Help those in need to the patrol boat first.
 - 12.1.9 Boat Patrol will remove the paddlers from the water as soon as possible. They may shuttle groups to the nearest shore or to the dock depending on the distance.
 - 12.1.10 Boat Patrol will tow the dragon boat to the dock. Any able bodies should be available to assist in removing water from the dragon boat.
- 12.2 THE “BUDDY SYSTEM”
- 12.2.1 Know the person paddling in the seat next to you. In the event of an incident, you are responsible for ensuring that your partner is present and assess whether they are injured.
 - 12.2.2 Each person is also assigned a row number from 1 to X before loading onto the dragon boat. The Next in Command can initiate a roll call to account for everyone in the dragon boat.
 - 12.2.3 The coaching pod (drummer, coach, steersperson) will be “buddied” up with each other - responsible for ensuring the pod is accounted for, and assess for injuries.
- 12.3 MISSING INDIVIDUAL “FIND AND RESCUE PROCEDURE”

- 12.3.1 Have paddlers look and feel around for the missing paddler(s) in their immediate vicinity without leaving the dragon boat.
- 12.3.2 Each paddler to feel under the boat, within their immediate proximity, to see if the missing paddler is under the boat.
- 12.3.3 If necessary, one individual ONLY, should check under the boat to ensure the missing person is not trapped underneath. This one individual will be assigned by the Next in Command.
- 12.3.4 Notify Boat Patrol as soon as they arrive, of missing person(s), if person(s) is/are not found by then.
- 12.3.5 Once Boat Patrol arrives, the Boat Patrol is in control of the situation now and the only contact between the team and the patrol is the Next in Command.

12.4 SWIMMING TO SHORE IN THE EVENT OF A CAPSIZE OR SWAMPED DRAGON BOAT

- 12.4.1 This option can ONLY be exercised if the dragon boat is located approximately 50 meters away from shore.
- 12.4.2 Once the entire team is accounted for, a TEAM decision can be made on whether to stay with the dragon boat and wait for Boat Patrol, or swim to shore.
- 12.4.3 If ANY individual on the team is not comfortable swimming to shore, the entire TEAM shall remain together with the dragon boat.
- 12.4.4 If the decision is to swim to shore, a head count is required on shore to ensure the entire team is accounted for.

13.0 WEATHER, WAVE AND WIND PATTERNS

13.1 ALWAYS SEEK ADVICE FROM BOAT PATROL WHENEVER IN DOUBT. IF LIGHTNING IS PRESENT, BOAT PATROL WILL NOT ALLOW ANY VESSELS IN THE WATER. BOAT PATROL HAS THE FINAL DECISION.

13.2 If the coaching pod does not have the experience/skill necessary to ensure a safe practice, the team does not go out onto the reservoir. The Coach, Captain, Drummer and Steersperson can decide not to proceed with practice based on weather and the following considerations:

- Steersperson's level of experience and confidence
- Paddlers' level of experience and confidence

13.3 WAVE AND WIND PATTERNS

- 13.3.1 Direct side waves are most dangerous for swamping/sinking the boat. As water goes over the side/gunnel, the respective side of the boat begins to sink, letting in even more water.
- 13.3.2 Be aware of heavy crews in waves, as they are already sitting low in the water.
- 13.3.3 Head winds are less likely to sink the boat but will make it difficult getting back to the dock. If you are paddling with a novice crew, it may take a long

- time. Do not panic and force the crew to get back to dock faster. Remain calm and encourage the crew with a steady paddle.
- 13.3.4 When the boat becomes unstable, some paddlers will panic and stop paddling. This will cause even more instability to the boat. Encourage paddlers to continue paddling to minimize the chance of swamping/capsizing.
 - 13.3.5 Steersperson should be familiar with how to compensate for the wind/waves. It is best to orientate the dragon boat with or against the direction of the wave, to avoid the waves hitting the dragon boat on the sides.
 - 13.3.6 The wind generally blows across from Glenmore Landing in a SE – NW direction.
 - 13.3.7 The roughest section of the reservoir is the last 250m of the laned section and the sailing boat section.
- 13.4 WEATHER PATTERNS ON THE RESERVOIR
- 13.4.1 High winds or storms often come up around 3:30 or 4:00 pm and calm down around 6:00 pm. 1st practice on weeknights begins at 6:30 pm, so practices will only be cancelled on-site and not beforehand.
 - 13.4.2 During the weekends, added caution is required. Historically, mornings and early afternoon are calm and worry free. Late afternoon and early evening are when the weather pattern usually changes quickly. Check with Boat Patrol for guidance.
 - 13.4.3 If a storm is approaching with high winds, it is recommended that you follow the shoreline back to dock. The hills surrounding the reservoir will lessen the effects of the wind and in case of an incident; the shoreline can be more easily reached.

14.0 MANDATORY DRAGON BOAT EQUIPMENT REQUIRED ON BOARD DURING PRACTICE

- 14.1 THE DRAGON BOAT MUST CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT AT ALL TIMES DURING A PRACTICE OR RACE:
- 14.1.1 One (1) bailer located underneath the last row.
 - 14.1.2 Two (2) whistles, one with the Drummer and one with the Steersperson. The whistles will be attached to the lifejackets.

15.0 REFERENCE MATERIAL

- 15.1 City of Calgary Bylaw 9018, Glenmore Park
- 15.2 City of Calgary Bylaw 20M2003, Parks & Pathways
- 15.3 Canadian Community Dragon Boat Association (see website, www.PaddlesUp.ca)
- 15.4 Canadian Coast Guard <http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/>