



**Doc no. SD1: Shannon Dragons Safety Statement**

**Date: November 2019**

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## **1 Statement Purpose, Scope and Responsibility**

**1.1 Purpose.** This Shannon Dragons Safety Statement (the **Safety Statement**) has been updated to reflect the outcome of the latest qualitative safety risk assessment conducted on Shannon Dragon (**SD**)'s activities in Castleconnell and O'Briensbridge. The scope of the risk assessment was to identify all known hazards to members of the club partaking in SD dragon boating, training and regatta activities and to identify the appropriate controls to reduce the risk of harm to people and the environment from those hazards.

**1.2 Scope.** This Safety Statement applies to all SD members, activity participants, guests and members of the public who have been permitted by Shannon Dragons to use the club's facilities and/or paddle in SD club dragon boats whether as part of training or regatta events (hereafter collectively called **participants** and/or **crew**).

**1.3 Responsibility.** According to the International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) dragon boating is an *"Assumed Risk Water Contact Sport" that may carry attendant risks. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks; be responsible for their own actions and involvement; and fully understand that they have a duty of care towards other participants in the sport"*. IDBF Safety Procedures Document, 2004.

**1.4** Managing these risks is the responsibility of everyone associated with SD. This includes but not limited to coaches, helms, paddlers, drummers, volunteers, service providers and SD committee members. Managing these risks is a collective effort and the responsibility of all to ensure dragon boating activities are safely conducted. Safety, therefore, is a personal responsibility as well as collective responsibility.

**1.5 Every participant associated with SD is required to read this Safety Statement and by participating in SD activities, each person confirms that they will comply with its instructions.**

**1.6** It is the responsibility of the SD Safety Officer to ensure this Safety Statement is up to date and reflects best international practice as applicable to SD's particular paddling circumstances. The Safety Officer may amend the Safety Statement at any time, with reference to the SD Committee, and will endeavour to review it on at least an annual basis. Members are responsible to ensure they regularly review the Safety Statement in addition to participating in SD safety exercises, to ensure they are familiar with updates and any changes to safety procedures.

**1.7** SD roles and responsibilities are outlined in **Appendix B** to this Safety Statement.

## **2. Fitness to Paddle**

**2.1** Dragonboat training at any level involves physical effort which may be more challenging than an average person is used to. Before each training session each member should consider and decide if they are fit to engage in paddling activities. Each crew member should be fit to paddle. If they suffer from any medical

or health condition it is required that they inform the coach/helm before training. If there are any doubts these should be discussed with their doctor before undergoing any form of exercise.

For each training session each crew member must personally sign in to verify that they are fit to engage in paddling activities for that session. They are also verifying that they are not under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs.

## 2.2 Swimming Ability and PFAs

Each member taking part in dragon boat activities should be confident floating in cold water and wearing a personal floatation aid (PFA). Each member should personally ensure that they are able to swim 50 metres unaided (but with a PFA) and dressed in weather appropriate or light clothing. Members should also be able to tread water for at least 3 minutes.

It is required of all SD members to wear a PFA when on or near the water. This includes during the launch and recovery of the dragon boat. Buoyancy aids must be worn correctly and size appropriate.

## 2.3 Clothing and Accessories

Each crew member should be dressed suitably for the weather/water and training/race conditions and/or as directed by Helm/Coach. In race conditions the crew should be wearing matching kit with the identifying club colours.

### 2.3.1 In warm weather, suitable clothing could include:

Shorts, T-shirt, PFA and suitable foot protection and light removable layers if required. Hats, sunglasses and sunscreen are all recommended. Participants should note that too much clothing in warm weather can lead to overheating and it is recommended that each participant bring enough water to remain hydrated during training.

### 2.3.2 In colder weather, suitable clothing could include:

Wetsuit/Drysuit, Thermal tops and leggings, spray cag, waterproof trousers without feet, warm hat, suitable foot protection (for example waterproof socks under river shoes or old runners), PFA and gloves.

Participants in SD dragon boat activities should **NOT** wear any personal accessories, equipment or jewellery when partaking which may impede their ability to escape from a capsized boat, cause injury to fellow paddlers or impede their ability to swim unaided once in the water. For example, long nails and rings should be removed or gloved during participation.

Participants should bring a full change of dry clothes to change into after training/racing in case of capsize or excessive splashing or rain.

## 2.4 Beginners and First-Time Paddlers

### 2.4.1 First time and beginner paddlers should ensure they are aware of and apply the following **before their first time paddling** in a dragon boat with SD:

- How to paddle - basic techniques to handle their paddle whilst on the water;
- Appropriate clothing and shoes to be worn;
- Ability to understand and apply basic commands used by the helm;
- The Buddy System;
- That their level of swimming ability with PFA/buoyancy aid complies with the requirements in this Safety Statement;
- Appropriate use of PFA/buoyancy aids in general;
- Identity of the helm in their boat;

- Their own level of ability and fitness to participate in the activities described in SD documentation and during training;
- That they have read and understood the “first timer’s email” and that they have assessed they are fit to paddle in accordance with its contents.
- SD members are allowed to bring a guest, who is over 18 years old, to participate in a training session if there is space and the helm gives permission in advance. The SD host member is responsible for ensuring that their guest is fit to paddle and for familiarizing the guest with the safety matters and procedures and their responsibilities described in this Safety Statement. Guests should enter their name into the SD training log and sign themselves in.

### 3 Manual Handling of Boat and Related Equipment

- 3.1** Dragon boat activities include movement of the dragon boat from its storage facility and lifting of the boat onto the water. Where a participant has deemed themselves to be fit to engage in paddling activities, this necessarily includes an assessment that they are fit to participate in boat lifting. Requests for an exception should be made known to the helm/coach and agreed before the session begins. If this is agreed by the helm/coach, it is expected that the member will assist in other ways as directed by the helm/coach.
- 3.2** Transporting the boat from its storage facility onto the river has the potential to cause minor injuries and is subject to manual handling procedures. All participants should ensure they are familiar with the **Manual Handling procedures in Appendix C** to this Safety Statements and may also consult the **training video** of the 2019 Manual Handling course.

### 4 Weather Conditions

- 4.1** Before each training session the helm is responsible for reviewing the weather conditions/forecast for excessive wind or flooding and has the authority to cancel the session without notice. In wintertime if there is any significant wind or if there are strong gusts, the boat should not be taken out. In cold-water conditions (less than 10 degrees), Appendix D for Winter Paddling Protocol applies. If considered advisable, the Helm should consult the SD Safety officer and/or other helms present on the day. The decision to continue a training session should err on the side of caution at all times, and the helm should cancel the session in the event of any doubt as to the safety of the conditions.

### 5 Water-borne Infections

- 5.1 Weil’s disease.** Weil’s disease is a bacterial infection carried in rodents such as rats. Their urine is infected and can contaminate water and riverbanks. The infection enters through broken, grazed or cut skin especially on the hands and feet and sometimes through the lining of the mouth, nose and eyes. It can also be picked up while wading or swimming in infected water.

To endeavour to prevent infection, water sport participants must adhere to a rigid hygiene policy in the above context. In particular, in advance of and during dragon boat activities, participants should:

- Consider avoiding contact with the water if there is risk of infection, e.g., a large cut on the hand that it’s not possible to cover.
- Cover all cuts, scratches and abrasions with a waterproof dressing.

- Avoid touching mouth and nose.
- Food should not be consumed near the water.
- Ensure you wash and shower after each training session.

**5.2 Cyanobacteria/Blue-Green Algae.** Cyanobacteria are commonly found in fresh and brackish water during mid to late summer. In favourable, stable conditions, blooms may form. Algal scums accumulate downwind on the surface of lakes and slow-moving water. Toxins produced by large blooms have caused the death of sheep and dogs and skin and other disorders in humans, although no particular illness has been identified that can be linked with Blue-Green Algae.

- Avoid immersion or contact with water affected by algal scum.
- Minimise contact with water by wearing close fitting clothing.
- After any contact hose down all equipment to avoid contact with residual scum.
- All clothing should be washed and thoroughly dried on returning home.
- Shower after contact with the water.

## 6 Dragon Boat and Related Training Equipment

**6.1 Dragon Boat.** Before every training session the boat helm should check that their boat is in fit condition. The following should be checked:

- That the head, tail, drum, drummer's seat and steering oar are securely fitted.
- That there are no loose ropes tangled on the boat.
- That the boat is not leaking and there are adequate bailers on board.
- That the bow and stern mooring lines are securely fastened.
- That the buoyancy compartments will function as intended.
- There is a spare paddle on board in case of breakages.
- There are bailers/buckets and or pump on board in case of capsizes.
- There is a method of contacting assistance e.g. a mobile phone with relevant phone numbers.

**6.2 Powerboats.** Powerboats can be used in dragonboating for coaching, rescue and umpiring races:

- All drivers must have appropriate training in the handling of powerboats
- All powerboat engines should be suitably maintained and have a 'kill cord'
- All powerboats should have the following: bailers, exposure blankets, first aid kit, tow rope, a sharp knife and a paddle.
- Fuel must be stored safely.

## 7 Capsize Drill

It is possible that injury may occur during this exercise so a full briefing of what to expect during the drill must be made along with the standard safety briefing.

Due to the size and design of the Dragon Boat, and the water conditions in which racing takes place, dragon boating is inherently safe and a capsizes is rare in most conditions unless the crew is at fault. However, in adverse weather conditions and in particular in strong winds, a risk exists that a dragon boat may be swamped with water and may capsize, especially when turning sideways on to the prevailing wind or wave pattern. The inexperience of the crew in such circumstances can be a major factor in a boat capsizing. It is therefore critical that all crew observe the capsizes drill set out in this Safety Statement and follow all instructions of the helm during a boat capsizes or a capsizes drill.

**7.1 Boat Balance.** Before leaving the embarking area, the Helm should ensure that the boat is well balanced. That is, that each pair of racers are of similar weight or height and that, generally, the heavier pairs are seated in the boat's middle section. The Helm must know the number of people in the boat, when the crew is embarked.

**7.2 The Buddy System.** The crew should be 'numbered off' from the front of the boat and made aware that they are each responsible for the person they are paired with (across the boat) and that in the event of a capsize or the boat being swamped, their first responsibility is to ensure that their partner is safe and well. This is called the 'buddy system' and it gives each person in the boat a specific responsibility for another. The 'Stroke Pair' (first pair – No.2 left and 3 right) in the boat are responsible for the Drummer (1) and the 'rear pair' (last pair) for the Helm (22).

### **7.3 In the Event of a Boat Capsizing:**

**7.3.1** Crew should let themselves go with the roll of the boat and try to throw themselves clear of the boat as it capsizes. Once clear of the boat, and once it is fully capsized, paddlers should immediately hold on to the gunwale of the boat and retain a paddle that is within reach but it is important crew do not swim away from the boat.

**7.3.2** Crew must remain holding on to the gunwale of the boat, using it as a floating platform. Crew should avoid climbing on top of the boat unless instructed to do so as it may start to roll and possibly injure other paddlers.

**7.3.3** A Crew Member who is underneath the overturned boat should remain calm; they can breathe in the air pocket. They should then normally grasp the gunwale of the boat with one hand and push back down into the water until they are clear of the boat and can surface.

**7.3.4** If the helm instructs, turn the boat into the upright position. All crew should stay holding on to the gunwale of the boat calmly awaiting instructions from the Helm.

**7.3.5** The helm should immediately ensure that all crew is accounted for by calling for a crew numbering off and noting the response. This should be accomplished as quickly as possible, without interruption and should not stop if a number is missing, but should continue to the end.

**7.3.6** Once the boat is upright, the crew should calmly move to space themselves evenly around the overturned boat holding onto the gunwales as they move around the boat.

**7.3.7** Crew should **REMAIN CALM AND SILENT. There should be absolute silence so that the helm's instructions can be heard.**

**7.3.8** Each crew member should check to see that their boat buddy is safe and each pair should account for their buddy or immediately alert the helm if their buddy is unaccounted for/in serious difficulty. Paddles or equipment (bailers) should only be retrieved if within arm's reach without letting go of the boat. The Helm may request an individual who is a good swimmer to gather paddles or equipment which are within a safe distance.

**7.3.9** Individual paddlers should not try to get the Helm's attention at this time, except in an emergency which cannot wait, such as an unconscious paddler who is face down in the water or not breathing, as this interrupts and may impede the rescue process of the whole crew. Paddlers who wish to get the helm's attention should otherwise only do so by raising their hand and should wait to speak until directed by the Helm.

**7.3.10** Once all the crew is accounted for the Helm should call out to check if everyone is okay. 'Buddies' check each other for injury and report any serious injuries to the Helm when called to do so.

If a 'buddy' is injured to the extent that they need assistance, the uninjured buddy should grasp the gunwale of the boat with one hand and, if necessary, the collar of the PFD (or clothing) of the injured buddy with the other. It is important for the uninjured buddy to maintain verbal contact with their buddy.

- 7.3.11** If the water is cold or paddlers feel cold, they should pull their knees to their chest and wrap their arms around their legs. This is often referred to as the HELP position – Heat Escape Lessening Position.
- 7.3.12** If a person is unconscious or their head is underwater, either their buddy or another paddler should take immediate action and with extreme care keep the victim's head above the water and call out to attract the attention of the Helm. As with all aspects of paddling, common sense applies here and if a paddler sees that someone's life is at risk, do act, but please remain calm. Check for CAS - Basic breathing and signs of circulation by watching for the chest to rise, listening for breathing sounds if possible and feeling with a hand over the mouth and nose for air coming out. A lack of breathing or circulation should be brought to the immediate attention of the Helm who may seek assistance from any first-aider among the crew.
- 7.3.13** If the capsize is an exercise drill, the person running the drill if other than the Helm will not normally intervene but may intervene and instruct the crew as support to the Helm if they judge that there is a safety issue which needs to be addressed. For example, if the Helm's instructions are not being followed.
- 7.3.14** The Helm will decide a) if some or all of the paddlers should re-enter the boat, or b) if the boat should be left and rescued later by other means, or c) if crew should swim with the boat towards the bank.
- 7.3.15** Enter the boat only if and when instructed, and start bailing out the boat with a bailer, pump or paddles. The Helm will pay close attention to ensure that the gunwale of the boat is a couple of inches above the water as it is being bailed, (but not more, so as to make re-entry as easy as possible for swimmers). The Helm directs other swimmers to re-enter the boat who can assist in the bailing process using paddles.
- 7.3.16** Some crew may be directed by the Helm to swim in pairs to the nearest bank exit point to get out of the water as quickly as possible, for example in cold water and adverse weather conditions. This should be done in pairs using the buddy system. If a buddy is already in the boat, then the remaining buddy should make a threesome with another pair, to swim together to the nearest bank exit point. All swimmers should go to the same exit point.
- 7.3.17** As soon as the boat is stationed alongside a landing station, all crew members must again be accounted for. Any member who has sustained an injury requiring first aid or attention must report it to the Helm who will ensure they receive whatever first aid or attention is required immediately. Again, common sense applies. In the event that a crew member is unable to report an injury that the Helm is not aware of, their buddy should do so. No injured crew member should take part in boat recovery. In cold weather, once the boat is upturned, crew must get into dry clothes before boat recovery is attempted.
- 7.3.18** In the event of the helm being injured or incapacitated either the drummer/stroker or a nominated paddler/other Helm should take over Helm responsibilities.
- 7.3.19** Last but not least all equipment should be accounted for i.e. paddles, head, tail, drum, drum seat, steering oar.

**The Helm must remain in control of the group at all times making sure everyone is accounted for.**

**Crew members must obey the Helm at all times with one voice in the boat, in the water and on land. Act in a calm safe manner.**

## **8 Recovery of Boat**

Once crew are safe and not suffering from hypothermia boat recovery and bailing out may commence. The boat SHOULD NOT be dragged out of the water unless there is only a small amount of water left in it, as this puts a considerable strain on the hull of the boat. Once the boat is almost empty of water it may be lifted on to the bank and checked for damage and all the boat's equipment accounted for.

## **9 Safety/Capsize Drills**

It is recommended that crews training regularly together should be introduced to at least one controlled capsize and an unescorted recovery exercise, at an early stage in their training and then annually. This practice drill should be set up carefully taking into account the time of year and the weather and water conditions. During such drills all crew members must wear PFAs, irrespective of their competitive experience, general physical fitness or swimming ability and a safety boat should be on standby. It is the club member's own personal responsibility to ensure that they are included in a club capsize at least annually.

## **10 Reporting**

Incidents, near misses and accidents will be reported to the helm and safety officer as soon as possible after they occur and will be reviewed at the next committee meeting or sooner as appropriate.

## **11 Concerns**

If any paddler has immediate concerns about safety at a training session or a regatta, they should inform the Helm as soon as possible so it can be addressed straight away. Any suggestions that would lead to improvements in safety should be directed towards the Safety Officer.

## **12 Conclusion**

Safety when dragon boating is a matter of PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY and COMMON SENSE.

## Appendix A: Training in a O1/Singlecraft

As of November 2019, existing O1 singlecraft are currently privately owned

### Training in a O1/Singlecraft

1. **Designation.** Outriggers are purpose-built boats associated with Dragon Boat training and used for individual performance testing. The boats are designated as outriggers and are therefore called O1's for the single seat boat and O2's for the double seat boat.
2. **Design.** The Boats are of a single hull design with one or two cockpits, with an arm or (or float) on one side, held by two support bars. The boats are steered by a rudder operated by the feet.
3. **Use.** The foot rudder system allows the boat to be paddled with a single blade on one side only, using a dragon boat stroke. Thus, they can easily be used for individual training sessions or for individual time trials. The time trials can be used to monitor the progress of individual performance or for the selection of paddlers for a squad.
4. Outriggers are designed for use on placid inland waters such as small lakes, docks, calm rivers etc. They should only be used under these conditions. Outriggers should not be used in rough weather, particularly in strong winds where they may become hard to handle.
7. Outriggers should not be used on their own, the minimum number should be two or an outrigger should be accompanied by another craft such as a canoe or kayak.
8. Buoyancy aids of an approved standard should be worn at all times when paddling an outrigger.
9. Outriggers should only be used under the guidance of an attending qualified dragon boat Helm, Instructor or Coach. Paddlers competency in using the O1 should be assessed.



## **Appendix B: Safety Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Committee**

The Shannon Dragons committee has overall responsibility for approving the Safety Statement. Each committee meeting will have Safety included on the agenda. The committee fully supports the Safety Officer and Helms in their roles.

### **Safety Officer**

The club Safety Officer has an essential leadership and co-ordinating role in promoting best practice and the safety of members, pre members and guests who participate in Shannon Dragon activities both on and off the water. The Safety Officer models, promotes and requires a culture of safety within the club. This includes but is not limited to:

- 1) Ensuring that safety documentation is up to date, available to all participants and reflects national and international Dragon Boat Safety best practice.
- 2) Work with the helms to do the following:
  - identifying potential hazards during training and regattas and taking appropriate preventative action
  - Make a judgement call with regard to weather conditions for any event to decide if event should be cancelled due to wind, floods, water temperature or any other safety consideration.
  - Perform recorded equipment checks, to ensure that SD boats, paddles, trolleys, PFAs are safe to use.
  - Documenting

### **Helm**

A Helm has responsibility for the following:

- 1) The safety of the crew in the boat that they are helming by:
  - Giving a safety briefing appropriate to the crew on any given day.
  - Ensuring the boat and all equipment is safe to use on the day. Advice can be sought from the Safety Officer. Having access to mobile phone and relevant numbers should help be needed.
  - Ensuring that weather conditions, considering wind strength and water levels, are safe to paddle in. Advice can be sought from the Safety Officer.
  - Ensuring crew members, including new paddlers, are aware of safety procedures, buddy system etc.
  - Ensuring safe transport of the boat from storage to the water to minimise manual handling risk.
  - Assigning positions in the boat so that it is balanced.
  - Giving clear instructions and feedback on paddling (as per Code of Conduct).
  - Managing emergency situations such as capsizes as per section 13.0 of this document

- 2) Provide feedback on safety issues as they arise to the Safety Officer, helm team and if relevant to the crew, post training.
- 3) Keep Helm certification current and keep up to date with national and international Dragon Boat Safety best practice.

### **Members**

If any paddler has immediate concerns about safety at a training session or a regatta, they should inform the Helm as soon as possible so it can be addressed straight away. Any suggestions that would lead to improvements in safety should be directed towards the Safety Officer.

Safety when dragon boating is a matter of PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY and COMMON SENSE. Every member has a responsibility to report a potential safety issue or hazard to the safety officer through the club email, shannondragons58@gmail.com

**MANUAL HANDLING PROCEDURE FOR TRANSPORTING BOAT FROM CONTAINER TO RIVER**

**IN CASTLECONNELL BOAT CLUB**

1. Ensure you have suitable footwear for walking down to the river from the container.
2. Ensure ramp is in position at container door.
3. All paddlers will assume position at each side of the boat and await further instruction.
4. A separate person will be present to give clear instruction on how to move the boat out of the container (Helm or person designated by Helm).
5. Boat to be moved slowly out of container and across the back of the sheds, down to the river.
6. Personnel to gently hold the boat at the handle provided and walk beside it to ensure control.
7. No person should walk immediately in front of or behind the trolley wheels on both sides as the boat is being moved.
8. Ensure other persons attending at the boat club are kept clear of the boat as it moves towards the river.
9. Park the boat on level ground and complete short warm up exercises before taking the boat into the water.
10. Arrange buddy up system and commence to move the boat down the ramp
11. Two people required on the trolley at each side (4 in total) to control the wheels down the ramp.
12. The Helm will call all the instructions and stand separately away to ensure they have a complete view of the process.
13. As the front of the boat enters the water, the personnel holding the boat at the front will stand clear and allow the boat to enter the water.
14. Caution needs to be observed so as to ensure that the front of the boat does not nosedive into the water.
15. This process will continue until the trolley reaches the rubber on the slope
16. At this point the boat needs to be lifted to allow the trolley be pulled back along to the end of the boat.
17. This process requires that all the people involved are standing towards the boat with both hands placed in the grips provided.
18. As the instruction is given to lift the people will lift only with the legs and keep the back as straight as possible. Only the back of the boat is being lifted at this stage.
19. At each lift, the trolley will be pulled back towards the rear of the boat with the person lifting stepping back as the trailer reaches them.
20. At the last lift the trailer should be moved out completely from under the boat and the boat should be allowed to completely enter the river.
21. Care to be taken with pinch points between the boat and the bars of the trolley
22. The points above should be completed in reverse for moving the boat out of the river and back into the container.

**MANUAL HANDLING PROCEDURE FOR TRANSPORTING BOAT FROM CONTAINER TO  
RIVER**  
**IN OBRIEN'S BRIDGE**

1. Ensure you have suitable footwear for walking down to the river from the storage location.
2. All participants will assume position at each side of the boat with one person at the front and another at the back to ensure safe navigation through the gates and await instructions.
3. The helm will assign two participants to wheel the boat glider down to the river's edge.
4. Boat to be moved slowly out of gateway. Care should be taken if it is necessary to bring the boat out onto the road, the person at the front to ensure no cars are coming while this is taking place.
5. Personnel to gently hold the boat at the handle provided and walk beside it to ensure control.
6. No person should walk immediately in front of or behind the wheels on both sides as the boat is being moved.
7. On reaching the river's edge, align the boat to the boat glider.
8. Ensure that the side rollers of the boat glider are facing INWARDS to cradle the boat.
9. Two people are required on the trolley at each side (4 in total).
10. The Helm will call all the instructions and stand separately away to ensure they have a complete view of the process
11. As the front of the boat enters the water, the participants holding the boat at the front will stand clear and allow the boat to glide and enter the water
12. Caution needs to be observed so as to ensure that the front of the boat does not nosedive into the water
13. At this point the boat should not need to be lifted but may need to be gently pushed forward on the glider to allow the trolley be pulled back along to the end of the boat
14. In the event the boat needs a slight lift this requires that all the people involved are standing towards the boat behind the trolley with both hands placed in the grips provided.
15. As the instruction is given to lift the people will lift only with the legs and keep the back as straight as possible. Only the back of the boat is being lifted at this stage.
16. At the last lift the trailer should be moved out completely from under the boat and the boat should be allowed to completely enter the river
17. Care to be taken with pinch points between the boat and the bars of the trolley.
18. The points above should be completed in reverse for moving the boat out of the river and back into the container.

## **Appendix D Winter Paddling Protocol**

The SD Club encourages members to continue winter training both on and off the water. However, winter paddling may pose particular safety concerns and participants must be aware of and accept the risks of participating in winter paddling.

Dragon boating is, generally speaking, a low-risk activity, and the possibility of an unexpected capsizing is extremely low. However, in the event of an unexpected capsizing in cold water, the risks are increased very significantly. Safety must be the first priority of the club. Specific cold-water immersion risks include but are not limited to:

1. Cold water shock, which can cause hyperventilation and therefore ingestion of water which could lead to drowning.
2. Hypothermia. Prolonged immersion in cold water (5 - 10 minutes) impairs functioning and may inhibit rescue/swimming.

For our purposes, 'cold water' is defined as below 10 degrees C. Typically, we can expect our water to reach this level around November 1st. The SD Club will make every effort to adhere to best practice safety guidelines, including cancelling a session if weather conditions are unsuitable.

However, those members wishing to participate in winter paddling must satisfy themselves and the people with responsibility for safety that they are able to manage safely and competently in a capsizing situation in cold water, such that they are able to contribute to their own safety and the safety of their buddy.

This also includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Members should only attend winter sessions wearing suitable clothing such as a wetsuit, or layers of thermals with outer wind/water resistant layer, or a drysuit with layers underneath, suitable headwear, gloves, suitable footwear – whatever an individual member deems necessary for them to sufficiently mitigate the effects of sudden immersion in cold water in the event of a capsizing and also wind chill in the event of wet weather while paddling or drumming.
2. Members must demonstrate that they can swim 50 metres wearing a buoyancy aid in cold water conditions.
3. Members must demonstrate that they can tread water for 3 minutes in cold water.
4. Members must satisfy themselves and the people with responsibility for safety that they can remain calm, so as to be able to hear and follow the instructions of the Helm.

Members are reminded that dragon boating is a water sport which carries associated risks and that they participate at their own risk. If a member is not satisfied that they are able to manage themselves safely and competently in the event of an unexpected capsizing and sudden immersion in cold water, then they must not attend winter paddling sessions.

**Signed:**

**Shannon Dragons Committee and Helms**