



Sequim Bay Yacht Club

**ROWING GUIDELINES**



DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
**JOHN HALBERG**

## **Mission Statement**

The Sequim Bay Yacht Club (SBYC) offers a rowing experience for adults. SBYC provides and maintains rowing shells for the use of its members in a safe and supportive environment, offers opportunities for credentialed coaching and features some of the most beautiful and calm waters in the region. The focus is on developing fundamentally sound rowers who are able to participate in a variety of rowing activities, ranging from recreational rowing to competition.

## **Dedication**

The Sequim Bay Rowing program was made possible, in large part, by the generosity, encouragement, and assistance of the late John Halberg. John loaned us two Odyssey quads that gave us the opportunity to conduct a Learn-to-Row program and establish a Masters Rowing program on Sequim Bay through the Sequim Bay Yacht Club. It was John's vision to have rowing opportunities available all across the Olympic Peninsula for both youth and masters rowers. John was essentially responsible for the success of both the Olympic Peninsula Rowing Association in Port Angeles, and our rowing program on Sequim Bay. Our program is a part of his legacy.

## **Purpose of these Guidelines**

To clearly communicate the protocols and procedures that promote safety and appropriate rowing etiquette on and off the water.

## **Key Contact Information**

Boathouse Location:

Sequim Bay Yacht Club  
John Wayne Marina  
2577 W. Sequim Bay Road, Sequim WA 983882

Mailing Address:

Sequim Bay Yacht Club  
P.O. Box 1261  
Sequim WA 98382

Website: [www.sequimbayyacht.club](http://www.sequimbayyacht.club)

Please watch the website for updates.

Email address: [sequimbayrowing@gmail.com](mailto:sequimbayrowing@gmail.com)

Harbormaster: Ron Amundsen  
360-417-3440

## **Availability of Guidelines**

A complete version of these guidelines shall be available on the SBYC website. All official documents, including waivers and emergency contact information, shall be kept in a safe location known to the rowing captain and Board of Directors.

## **Membership and Fees**

To be a rowing club member, one must be a member of SBYC and demonstrate rowing competency.

## **Guest Policy**

Guests shall:

1. Be accompanied by an SBYC member.
2. Have previous rowing experience.
3. Sign the SBYC Consent and Release of Liability form prior to any on-water activities. Forms shall be available on the website.

The SBYC member is responsible to ensure that the guest has signed the forms, and that the guest follows club procedures.

Guests are limited to 3 rows per calendar year.

## **Equipment Policy**

Use of Sequim Bay Yacht Club rowing equipment is limited to SBYC members, SBYC classes, or guests. Sequim Bay Yacht Club rowing shells are to be used for SBYC sponsored events. Yacht Club members may launch their own boats from the SBYC dock, although they do so at their own risk.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Rowing Captain:** The rowing captain is appointed by the SBYC Commodore and oversees the rowing program, including:

- Designate committee chairs as appropriate.
- Designate a member to post the weekly rowing schedule.
- Ensure all members have acknowledged reading the Rowing Guidelines.

### **Maintenance Chair**

Ensure all rowing equipment is maintained with both safety and protection of the club's investment in mind. Unsafe equipment should be promptly repaired or removed from use.

## Safety Chair

- Conduct an annual safety meeting with viewing of the US Rowing Safety Video.
- Share appropriate weather sites and apps
- Check and restock the first aid kit regularly, at least annually or after an incident.
- Ensure that the safety launch contains the following:
  1. VHF radio
  2. USCG approved flares (3)
  3. Watertight flashlight and batteries
  4. Fire Extinguisher
  5. Paddle
  6. Ladder
  7. First aid kit in waterproof box
  8. Hand bilge pump or bailer
  9. Air horn
  10. Emergency Mylar blankets
  11. Megaphone
  12. Extra USCG approved Type II PFDs (adult size) (5)
  13. Buoyant heaving line with life ring attached, not less than 50 ft. long
  14. Tow bridle

## Launch Driver

- Shall obtain a Washington State Boater Education Card (unless grandfathered in) and adhere to USCG Regulations.
- Shall be responsible for knowing the number of boats and people on the water during a rowing session and that all boats and people have safely returned to the dock before ending the session.
- Shall ensure safe conduct of operations during a rowing session. S/he is responsible for clearly defining the row plan, when two or more shells are on the water.
- Is the person with the authority to cancel rowing activities any time s/he deems unsafe conditions exist.
- Has the responsibility to adhere to the checklist on the launch for securing and cleaning the boat after each row. Launch drivers are responsible for ensuring there is adequate fuel in the launch prior to leaving.
- USRowing strongly recommends that everyone in the launch wear a properly fitted PFD, including the coach, year round.
- **Passed into law by Congress beginning in April 2021, individuals operating boats under 26 feet long will be required to use an engine kill switch.**

### **Coxswains**

- Shall be responsible for the safety of the crew and the shell for the duration of the row.
- Ensure that a bailing device, air horn and radio is in the boat when it leaves the dock.
- Shall be responsible for avoiding obstacles and marine traffic.
- Ensure that the shell is clean and secure prior to leaving the dock area.

### **Crew**

- No rower will be required to row against his/her better judgment.
- Are responsible for checking the safety of their shell and PFD before going on the water.
- Shall follow instructions from the coxswain and launch driver.
- All rowers will be aware of other bay users, respect their rights, and remain courteous at all times.

### **All Participants**

- Are responsible for following the guidelines.
- Are responsible for their own medical clearance. Should consult a physician before engaging in any form of strenuous exercise, including rowing.
- Shall successfully complete the swim test certification prior to participating in any on-water activity.
- Shall wear functional personal flotation devices when they are on the water.
- Shall follow the instructions of the coxswains and launch drivers.
- Should inform the launch driver or coxswain of any unsafe condition or equipment they observe.
- Should view the US Rowing safety video annually.

### **Signing up to Row**

- An online sign up sheet is available to members. If you have signed up to row and are unable to make it, remove your name.
- If you must remove your name after 8 pm on the evening prior to the row, it is your responsibility to find a replacement rower, or notify the launch driver, coxswain and other rowers if the absence will result in a shell with too few rowers.
- A coxed quad should have a minimum of 3 rowers and a cox. A bow-coxed quad should have a minimum of 3 rowers.
- A launch driver is required for all rows.
- SBYC Rowing is an all-volunteer organization, and as such does not function without full participation of all members. All rowers are expected to participate as coxswains or launch drivers. Training is provided prior to assuming these duties.

**SBYC adheres to the below US Rowing safety guidelines, available on their website, USRowing.org, excerpted here.**

- Carry a marine VHF radio on each launch. Use Channel 16 in the event of an emergency. Channel 68 is used for normal communication between launch and shells.
- All participants should be familiar with the proper operation of [radios and proper communication protocol](#).
- Be familiar with emergency landing sites and protocols.

### **Practice Man-Overboard Safety Drills.**

Know how to have rowers enter the coaching launch from the water. Approach from the leeward side, keeping the outboard propeller away from any victims. Turn off the engine as soon as contact is made. Avoid overloading. For more information and demonstrations see the [USRowing Safety Video](#).

### **In and On the Boat:**

The shell is not a Personal Flotation Device (PFD); it is an Emergency flotation device. Newer shells have been designed for flotation and have flotation compartments under the rower's bench. Older boats may not have sealed compartments under the rower's bench but the bow and stern compartments will keep the boat afloat. For more information and demonstrations see the [USRowing Safety Video](#).

- USRowing recommends that all unaccompanied shells carry Coast Guard approved PFDs. A copy of the Coast Guard Regulations concerning PFDs is available upon request from USRowing. SBYC asks all rowers to wear a PFD.
- **Oars are not a PFD, nor an emergency flotation device.**

Modern oars will fill with water in a matter of minutes and lose any expected flotation.

### **Educate the rowers:**

Each person is 100% responsible for the whole boat and 100% accountable for their own oar, rigging, foot stretchers, seat and slide. USRowing recommends before leaving land to place the boat in slings and check the following:

- That nuts on the rigging are tight, position of foot stretchers and the smoothness of slide are acceptable.
- That the forward end of the slide is blunt and will not gouge calves.
- That your clothing cannot become tangled in your seat or oar handle.
- That you have proper safety devices on board the shell, such as lights, PFD.
- **Check bow ball to make sure that it is securely fastened.**

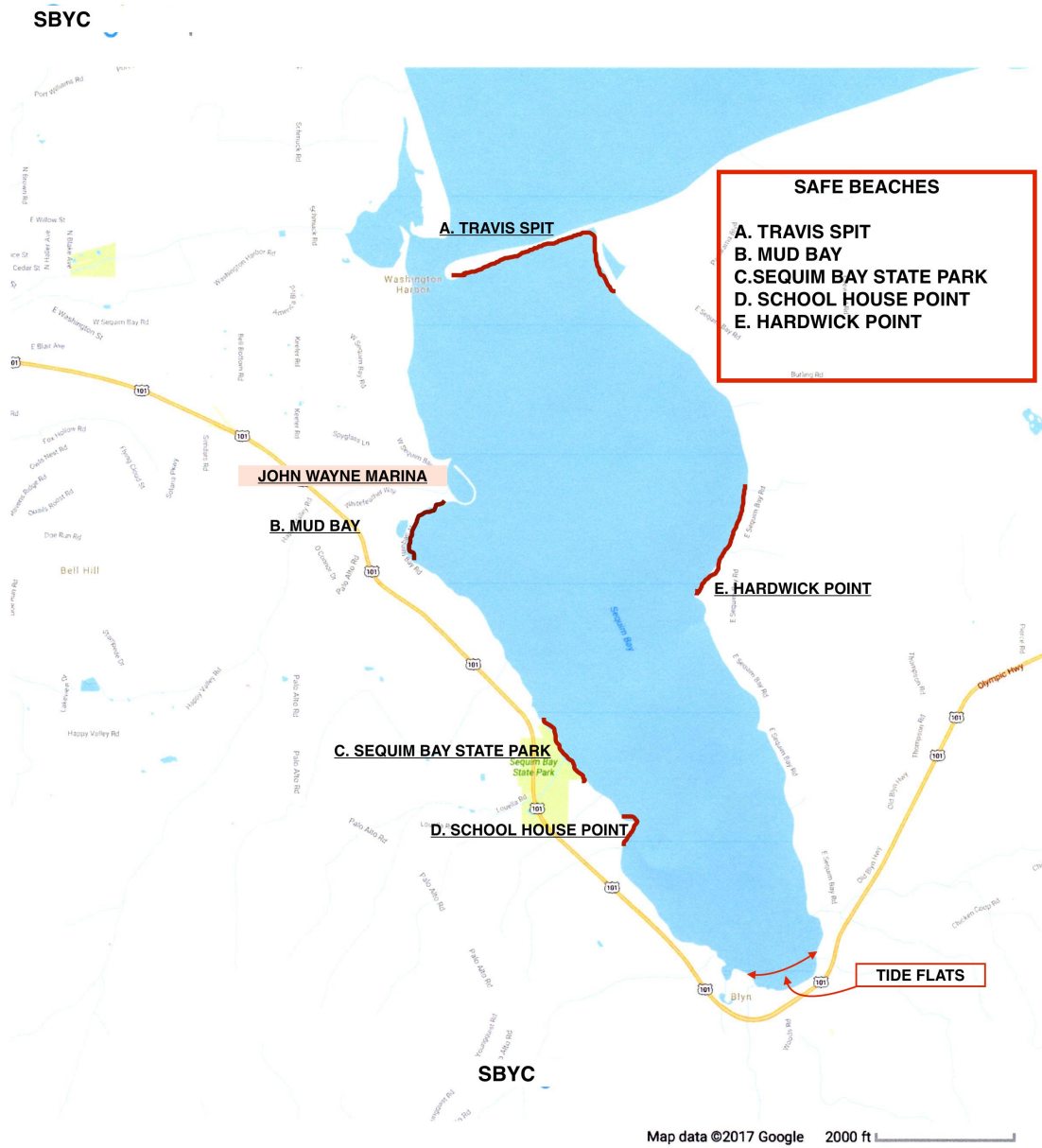
**Know the Venue:**

Make sure that you are aware of the local traffic patterns and rules on the water.

- Take precautions around other types of vessels to avoid collisions and be courteous with boats that have less maneuverability or ability to stop quickly.
- Familiarize yourself with the local traffic patterns, including launching and return patterns at the dock.
- Familiarize yourself with shallow water, stumps, rocks, seasonal problems and landmarks.
- Stay clear of man-made or natural obstacles. Do not negotiate a turn near such an obstacle.
- The coxswain or single sculler should make frequent checks on both sides. Listen for oncoming traffic.
- Be courteous to others on the water. Be aware of powerboats and treat them with respect.

**Safe Beaches:**

- Mud Bay
- Schoolhouse Point
- Washington (Sequim Bay) State Park
- Hardwick Point
- Travis Spit





### **Watch the Weather:**

Be aware of weather conditions and how your venue is impacted by those conditions.

There are several inexpensive models of weather radios on the market. Check the weather on a computer, phone app, weather radio or other device before going out on the water. Watch for gathering clouds, changes in wind speed and direction, temperature changes and other boats returning home. If on a river or tidal body of water, check the current direction and look for floating objects or kelp.

### WIND:

**It is recommended that extreme caution is used rowing in high winds.**

If sudden winds come up, return to the boathouse if the trip is safe, or take the boat to the nearest shore and wait for the winds to calm.

Try to minimize equipment damage, but remember that you are more valuable than the boat.

### FOG:

**Do not row in fog** unless your visibility to shore is at least 100 yards. Be sure to have land reference points. On Sequim Bay, it is recommended that the other side of the bay is visible. If fog sets in while you are on the water, move slowly, and be prepared to stop quickly. Use a sound making device (cox box, horn, or whistle) to advise other boats of your location as you take your boat to shore, following the shore back to the boathouse.

### LIGHTNING:

**Do not row in an electrical storm.** Lightning detectors are inexpensive and can clip on your belt. If you are on the water and see lightning, hear thunder, or notice your hair standing on end with static electricity, head for the nearest shore. If the storm is upon you, take your boat ashore and wait for the storm to pass.

*NOTE: If you are about to launch and hear thunder or see lightning, or quickly darkening skies, do not launch.*

### WAKES AND WAVES:

**Pay attention to rough water.** Waves are generated by winds, tides, currents, or wakes from passing boats. Because shells are vulnerable to high waves, specific care is needed with approaching wakes.

- Deep and closely spaced wakes that are lower than the gunwale may be taken at a 45-90 degree angle with the bow directly toward them.
- Turning in waves can be tricky; allow plenty of room, energy and time.
- For more information see the [USRowing Safety Video](#).

### LIGHTS AND DARKNESS:

**Know the times for sunrise and sunset.** The greatest and most frequent danger while rowing is a collision caused by limited vision or carelessness. Great care should be taken when rowing in darkness or near-darkness. **SBYC does not allow rowing with club boats in darkness.**

## HEAT AND COLD:

### In hot and cold weather

**Hyperthermia** occurs when there is an increase in body temperature, usually when the air temperature is above 76 degrees, and the victim is exposed to sun and heat in combination with a decrease in fluids. It may occur when sweat cannot easily evaporate; the body is being heated by the environment; or water loss from sweat and respiration is not replaced and dehydration occurs. Two serious conditions may result:

- Heat exhaustion; signs are throbbing headache, nausea, cool skin, chills, sweaty, and pale pulse. Action: drink water, shade from sun, and treat for shock.
- Heat Stroke is life threatening; signs are behavior changes, unconsciousness, hot but not sweaty, flushed warm skin and rapid pulse. Action: douse with cool water, shade from sun, fan, ensure the airway is open, get medical assistance as soon as possible.

To avoid these problems in hot and humid weather:

- Maintain a high fluid level. Drink water before leaving the dock and frequently while on the water. Take an individual water bottle for easy access.
- Avoid sunburn by using sunscreen and wear a hat or visor to keep the sun off the face and out of the eyes.
- Wear light clothing.
- Remain in the shade when off the water.
- Plan activity level consistent with the degree of heat and humidity.

**Hypothermia** occurs when a victim is subject to cold temperatures, cold water, ice or snow. There is potential danger for hypothermia when the water temperature is below 80 degrees and very dangerous when the water temperature is below 50 degrees. The average water temperature in Sequim Bay is 46 degrees in winter, and 53 degrees in summer.

Hypothermia can occur without the victim being in the water; rowing in extremely cold weather can cause symptoms. Symptoms include feeling cold, turning bluish and shivering, and followed by numbness, apathy, lethargy, disorientation and loss of mental capacity.

NOTE: Because the coxswain is not moving, make sure they are warm but safe. Many layers are not safe, if the boat flips they can drown. Flotation jackets are a good option.

What to do if cold and shivering:

- Get out of the water quickly, even on top of the capsized boat. Heat loss is 25 times greater when in the water.
- If unable to get out of the water, huddle with others. Keep as much of the body out of the water as possible.
- Move to shelter quickly, remove wet clothing and re-warm body. In mild hypothermia conditions, re-warm in a shower, tub or with warm blankets.
- Do not give any liquids to drink, treat for shock.

- Continue to re-warm and always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.

What to do if shivering has stopped:

- Call or assign someone to call for EMS.
- Treat as above but **DO NOT RE-WARM EXTREMITIES!**

If victim is no longer shivering, the torso must be re-warmed to avoid circulation of cold blood to the heart. This can kill. Wrap the victim in a warm blanket and apply heat to the underarms and groin area; wrap again in a separate blanket. Wrap each arm and leg separately to prevent rapid re-circulation of blood to the heart. Hot packs should not be placed directly on the victim, a thin layer should be used to protect the victim from burning. If possible place the victim in a sleeping bag with a warm person.

- Administer artificial respiration and CPR if necessary. Always obtain medical assistance as soon as possible.

In a situation of cold water immersion; be aware that in very cold water people have survived as long as one hour underwater. Recover a victim immediately and even though there may be no sign of life, administer CPR efforts until medical assistance is obtained.

For more information and demonstrations of hot and cold weather care, see the [USRowing Safety Video](#).

### **Emergency Conditions**

Rowers should not leave his/her shell unless being rescued. If a swamped boat is within a swim-able distance from the shore, the rower should swim the boat to the shore. So do not leave your flotation even if you consider yourself a strong swimmer.

- If in distress wave your arms or a shirt above your head or raise one oar in the air, a whistle, bullhorn or other means of making noise can help attract rapid assistance.
- In the event of a man overboard the immediate command should be "weigh enough! Hold water!". If the safety launch can get to the victim first, allow the launch to rescue the victim. If the launch is not in the immediate vicinity, back the shell to the victim and have him/her hang onto the shell until the launch arrives. Another rower may have to enter the water to assist if the victim is injured.
- If a rower is injured the immediate command should be "weigh enough! Hold water!". Signal launch if first aid is needed.
- If the shell is damaged but afloat and not taking on water; Immediate command "weigh enough! Hold water!". Make adjustments or signal launch for assistance.

If your shell swamps the immediate command should be "weigh enough! Hold water!". A shell is swamped when the interior water reaches the gunwales. If your shell has sealed compartments under each rower's bench it will stay afloat and the rowers should stay in the shell. If the rowers are in a boat without sealed

compartments (older boats) the flotation ends may cause the boat to break apart, in that case the rowers should follow the procedures listed below.

- Coxswain directs rowers to untie, and by seat number rowers should carefully slip overboard.
- If the boat is taking on excessive water, signal the launch and unload rowers by pairs; starting in the middle of the boat; as soon as possible in order to avoid damage to the boat. Pairs should form buddies and keep watch of each other. The cox should buddy with the stern pair.
- If rescue is not imminent, take the following steps: Remove oars and place them parallel to the shell. All persons should move to the two ends of the shell. It is dangerous to roll a shell when near riggers. Then roll the boat so the hull is up, to form a more stable flotation platform so rowers can either lie on top of the hull or buddies can hold onto each other across the hull. Remember that body heat loss occurs 25 times faster in the water. Do not roll the boat if rescue is on the way.
- A launch can shuttle rowers to the nearest shore. Be careful not to overload the launch.
- When the boat has been brought to the shore, remove the oars. If the ends of the shell have filled with water, they must be drained before the boat can be removed from the water. Lift the shell carefully to avoid injury or damage. A boat full of water is very heavy, so try bailing first, then roll the boat slowly and lift it from the water.
- If the shell breaks apart and begins sinking, the immediate command should be "untie!" Get out of the boat and follow the same procedures as for a swamped shell. Do not leave the floating boat. Swim boat to shore if launch is not immediately available.
- If the shell is capsized the immediate command should be "untie!" This rarely happens except in small boats. Be sure that all rowers and cox are accounted for. Stay with the boat until assistance arrives.

If another boat is in distress near your craft, maneuver your shell to the distressed shell. Assist in any way that does not jeopardize the lives in your shell.

Please note: All determinations of whether a particular act or practice complies with these safety expectations will be made at the sole discretion of *USRowing*. *USRowing reserves the right to require additional measures in any given situation based on USRowing's assessment of overall circumstances.*

For more information and demonstrations see the [USRowing Safety Video](#).

**Please defer to the local governmental bodies overseeing your body of water.**

**Row Safe!**