



## 2026 National Return to Rowing Day Safety Guidelines

Participant safety should always be the top priority to ensure a safe and positive Return to Rowing Day experience for everyone.

### **Safety Recommendations:**

#### **Insurance**

Each member organization hosting a Return to Rowing Day event must have active general liability insurance coverage. Host organizations are responsible for ensuring that their insurance policies are current, meet USRowing requirements, and cover all planned activities associated with the event.

#### **Waiver**

Each Return to Rowing Day participant must sign a USRowing waiver before the day begins. Please use the [USRowing Digital Waiver](#) or paper waiver. Organizations should keep the waivers on file for the remainder of the year.

#### **Swimming**

All participants must certify that they can swim and tread water unaided. If not, they **MUST** wear a flotation device.

#### **Before Return to Rowing Day**

You may get rowers of all levels of experience. However, let all participants know:

- What type of clothes to wear
- What to bring, including a water bottle, socks, sunscreen, hat, etc.
- Instruction to not wear baggy clothes which could get caught in tracks.



- Wear layers of clothing to prepare for any temperatures and conditions.

## Orientation

Some returning rowers may be very experienced however, refresher instructions are always helpful.

Follow your organization's plan for Return to Rowing day activities giving instruction on the following:

- Demonstration of proper movement (start on the erg)
- Review basic emergency commands, (weigh enough, hold water, check it down) where to step in the boat, how to set a shell when not rowing, etc.
- All basic safety knowledge should be reviewed on land, before rowers push off the dock.

## Emergency Plan

Always assess conditions before you launch. Discuss the risks of being on the water with all participants. Brief the participants on procedures in case of an emergency. Advise participants to wear suitable clothing and to bring water. First Aid facilities and trained medical personnel should be available.

## Crew Organization

Make sure experienced rowers accompany Return to Rowing Day participants in the boat, no matter how experienced returning athletes are. The coxswain and the rowers in bow and stern (at least) should be experienced members of your organization. **Crews should not be composed of only Return to Rowing participants.**

## On the Water Safety

Life jackets must be readily available to all Return to Rowing Day participants.

There should be as many life jackets in the launch as there are rowers being coached. The launch itself should have the capacity to rescue the



number of rowers. **Everyone in the launch should wear a flotation device.**

Have one launch to one coached boat ratio.

Each organizer must list each participant as a member of your program for the day. You may define membership in whatever terms or conditions you see fit. **To be covered under the USRowing insurance plan, the participant must be considered a member of the club.**

**ALWAYS use caution as you assess the rowing conditions and weather. Do not launch if conditions are uncertain or dangerous.**

USRowing Safety Committee

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