

**WBC SAFETY PLAN**  
**Head of the Chick Regatta**  
**November 10, 2018**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Williamsburg Boat Club (WBC) recognizes that safety is the joint responsibility of regatta organizers, participants, and officials. Although there are certain risks inherent in any water activity, we are committed to conducting our events with good judgment, common sense while implementing the applicable safety rules.

This written safety plan is designed to perpetuate the policies that have helped to keep past events safe, to improve upon those past safety practices where possible, and to communicate our safety expectations to all regatta participants, volunteers, and officials. This Safety Plan is written specifically for a regatta held at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park (CRP) in James City County.

**II. REGATTA SAFETY OFFICERS**

The Regatta Director is responsible for implementation and enforcement of this plan for all WBC events. At this event, a primary and secondary Safety Officer will be designated and will remain on-site for the entire event. The Regatta Director and/or Safety Officer will identify physicians and emergency medical providers that are on site during the regatta. The Safety Officer will be responsible for delivering a safety briefing to the coaches and regatta referees prior to the start of the regatta that includes information on the weather plan, rower safety, procedures to deal with on-water and off-water injuries, and general grounds safety concerns. At the coaches' meeting, the coaches also report, by boat and seat number, rowers with medical concerns, such as asthma, that could create a critical medical emergency on the water. All asthmatics are required to keep their inhalers on their person at all times during a race. The Safety Officer is also responsible for providing a briefing to all launch drivers as well as documentation of any medical emergencies occurring during the regatta. The Safety Officer will provide all launches on the water with a course map, radios and/or cell phones listing, radio/cell phone instructions, emergency instructions and locations of emergency dock(s) to transport injured persons from the water. Two on-water launches will be designated as safety boats and staffed with two experienced volunteers, additional personal flotation devices and first aid kits.

The safety officers will monitor traffic control to ensure access to ramps is kept clear and boat movement is completed safely. Traffic and parking management will be completed by a dedicated group of volunteers. The safety officers will also monitor regatta attendees to ensure appropriate application of JCC fire safety requirements. All team food tents using grilles and/or generators will be required to have a charged fire extinguisher on their site and ensure fuels (such as gasoline) are properly contained and stored away from heat sources.

**III. COORDINATION WITH RACE OFFICIALS**

The Regatta Safety Officer will coordinate implementation of this safety plan with the Chief Referee. The plan is intended to complement Rules of Rowing established by The United States Rowing Association. In the event of a conflict between USRowing rules and this plan, the WBC Safety Officer and race officials shall act cooperatively to conduct an efficient and safe regatta. WBC encourages decision making through consensus where practical. A copy of this safety plan and a map of the course showing mandatory traffic patterns shall be distributed to all regatta participants prior to the Pre-Regatta Meeting. WBC will schedule and advertise the time and location of the Pre-Regatta Meeting as part of regatta registration and sign-in. Regatta volunteers will be instructed that the primary duty of every race official is to provide for the safety of competitors and officials. Volunteers shall be instructed to follow the directions of race officials for all competitive activity. Racing may be suspended by the Chief Referee, the Regatta Director, or the Safety Officer at any time due to adverse weather conditions. If suspended, racing shall not be resumed until authorized by the Chief Referee. Racing will not be recommenced sooner than thirty minutes following a weather suspension. A NOAA weather radio is kept on at all times during a regatta to facilitate prompt weather notifications and timely actions by race officials.

#### **IV. COURSE AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

In addition to the map in this plan, the Regatta Commission shall devise and post in a conspicuous place at the regatta site the course diagram and instructions. The Commission shall also clearly identify the location of the first aid stations, telephones, and methods of summoning emergency assistance. This information shall be provided to regatta coaches as part of the regatta registration package. On-land emergencies shall be immediately reported to the Regatta Office or nearest safety officer. On water emergencies shall be handled as per this plan. Referees or safety boats on the course should use their cell phones to access “911” in the event of a severe emergency to pre-emptively begin the response of local EMS resources. Two landing points are identified for this regatta—the launch dock (CRP boat launch area) and the recovery dock area (CRP Fishing Pier). All launch boats on the water will be provided with GPS and Google data earth printouts of these locations to support the most efficient transport of injured rowers. ALL launch boats will be provided with the cell phone numbers of the safety officers to expedite the emergency care process and coordinate with incoming JCC EMS resources. This emergency plan will also be shared with James City County Fire/EMS to expedite coordination and emergency care.

#### **V. COMMUNICATIONS**

WBC will utilize hand held VHF radios and/or cell phones for the following officials and volunteers:

- Chief Referee
- Chief Judge or other finish line official
- Starter (if different from Chief Referee)

- Starting Area Marshal
- Chase referees
- Mid-Course Marshal
- Launch Master
- Safety Officers
- Designated course safety boats
- Regatta Director

Prior to the regatta, WBC shall determine that each radio/cell phone is fully charged and is capable of sending and receiving radio communications. All persons issued a radio or cell phone will be supplied with operating instructions. All VHF radios/phones shall remain on during the entire regatta and shall remain tuned to the regatta operations channel except in the case of the emergency procedure described in the following section. Each person issued a VHF radio/cell phone shall be responsible for monitoring the regatta operations channel. Persons responding to an emergency or coordinating an emergency response shall immediately switch to the regatta emergency channel. Persons not directly involved the emergency response or coordination shall continue to monitor the operations channel. In the event of an emergency, the Safety Officer or, in the case of his or her unavailability, the Regatta Director, shall be responsible for determining from primary responders whether additional assistance is required, and if so, for coordinating a timely and efficient response. The Regatta Director, Regatta Secretary, and Safety Officers shall each maintain an operational cell phone to be used for communicating with land based 911 services. WBC shall post a prominent notice in the Regatta Office clearly stating the 911 call procedure and the address of the regatta grounds.

All WBC VHF radios/cell phones shall be returned to the Safety Officer at the conclusion of the regatta. The Regatta Safety Officer shall be responsible for collecting and securing all radios/cell phones.

In addition, due to the geography and distance of the Williamsburg/Chickahominy River Regatta, cellular phones will be employed for shore to water communications. A communications list will be developed to link each device to a particular event official.

## **VI. SAFETY INSPECTIONS**

In cooperation with the Chief Referee, the Safety Officer shall conduct or confirm that a race official will conduct a pre-launch safety inspection of all race boats participating in each regatta event.

1. Each such inspection shall confirm that race boats comply with safety and equipment requirements in effect at the time of the regatta. No race boat shall be permitted on the course without the following minimal equipment: A bowball that complies with USRowing Rule 3-105, Oars that comply with USRowing Rule 3-108, Footgear releases that comply with USRowing Rule 3-109.

2. If used, a coxswain enclosure that complies with USRowing Rule 3-110.

## **VII. WEATHER PLAN**

WBC shall monitor both observed and predicted weather for conditions that may present hazards to the safe conduct of regatta operations or competition. A reasonable time prior to the first scheduled launch, the Regatta Director and Safety Officer shall review available weather forecasts, including NOAA weather broadcasts, and confirm that weather conditions predicted for the race course on the Chickahominy River are likely to be safe for regatta operations and competition. The Regatta Office shall continue to monitor NOAA weather broadcasts until the conclusion of the regatta. *Not more than one hour prior to the first scheduled launch, the Safety Officer, Regatta Director, and/or Chief Referee shall confirm the course and starting area conditions are safe for regatta operations and competition.* WBC shall install and monitor a tone alert radio capable of monitoring and receiving automatic weather alerts transmitted via the NOAA Specific Area Message Encoding system. The radio shall be programmed to receive S.A.M.E. messages for James City County, the City of Williamsburg, and surrounding areas. Racing shall not be permitted if, in the opinion of the Chief Referee, the Regatta Director, and/or the Safety Officer, course conditions endanger the safety of competitors, officials, or volunteers. Once suspended, racing may only be resumed within the discretion of the Chief Referee. Racing shall not be resumed for until at least thirty minutes after a weather suspension. Racing shall immediately cease and the course shall be evacuated if thunder is heard or lightning is observed by any race official or member of the Regatta Commission. In the event of course evacuation necessitated by thunder or lightning, regatta participants shall follow the instructions of officials concerning where to exit the course and where to seek shelter. In general, participants should immediately return to the launch and recovery area in the case of thunder unaccompanied by lightning. If lightning is observed, regatta participants should proceed to the nearest shore and seek shelter away from trees and other tall objects. In the event the course is cleared for weather conditions or other emergency, the Dock Master and Safety Officer shall be primarily responsible for determining through consultation with coaches that all crews have cleared the course. The Dock Master and Safety Officer shall require each coach to report when his or her crews have cleared the course. The Motor Launch Master shall be responsible for determining that all motor launches and occupants have been recovered from the race course in the event the course is cleared for weather conditions or other emergency.

## **VIII. FIRST AID AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

WBC shall provide the following safety equipment at all regattas:

1. An adequate number of motor launches capable, when occupied, of maintaining a speed necessary to follow a race but without unnecessary wake. Each launch shall carry personal flotation devices for each occupant of the launch plus two extra PFDs. The Commission shall expend its best efforts to provide launches whose hull design minimizes wake.

2. An adequately stocked first aid kit will be located in the first-aid tent located in the middle of the park.
3. The communication equipment specified in Section V of this Plan.
4. The weather radio specified in Section VII of this Plan.
5. Two (2) mid-course launches shall be designated as safety launches. Each vessel will carry a standard first aid kit and nine+ (9) additional PFDs. Each launch will be staffed by two experienced launch boat operators. The largest launches will be designated for this purpose to support rapid emergency evacuation of rowers.

## **IX. WATER EMERGENCIES**

All volunteers and officials shall be instructed to observe the following procedures for emergencies occurring at the Head of the Chickahominy Regatta: The official nearest the emergency is designated as the first responder. If an official is not available, the nearest member of the Regatta Commission shall be the first responder until an official arrives on scene.

Upon arrival at the emergency site, the first responder shall assume control of scene, determine the nature of the emergency, and initiate a responsible reaction commencing with a head count of any victims in the water. The safety launch should proceed immediately to the scene of the emergency but lay off awaiting instructions from the first responder. Other boats in the area should also respond but remain in the perimeter of the emergency area awaiting instructions from the first responder. If victims are in the water or if it cannot be determined whether victims are in the water, motor launches responding to the emergency should stop their engines and enter the area only after heads are counted and all crew members are accounted for. If racing crews are in the water, remember to account for the coxswain. Crews should be encouraged to stay with the boat and use oars as flotation devices. While awaiting recovery, crew members should be instructed to buddy up and monitor each other's safety. As promptly as possible after arriving at the scene of the emergency, the first responder shall notify the Safety Officer and Regatta Director of the nature of the emergency via the VHF regatta operations channel or cell phone, request any required first aid supplies not available on the safety launch and, if necessary request 911 assistance.

The first responder shall communicate with local 911 dispatchers via the cell phone to expedite the EMS response. The first responder should then call the safety officer to advise of the notification so the safety officer(s) can insure someone will be available to coordinate connection between the local EMS providers and the incoming launch boat. If possible, communications should be shifted to the VHF channel designated for emergency communications at the first reasonable opportunity to support ground coordination. Marine channel 72 will be used for emergency communications. Once notified of the emergency, the Safety Officers shall be responsible for coordinating any necessary ground support for the emergency. At the conclusion of the emergency, the Regatta Director is responsible for coordinating any additional actions required by the event.

## **X. LAND EMERGENCIES.**

All volunteers and officials shall be instructed to observe the following procedures for emergencies occurring on the regatta grounds:

The official nearest the emergency is designated as the first responder. If an official is not available, the nearest member of the WBC Board or Commission shall be the first responder. Upon arrival at the emergency site, the first responder shall assume control of scene, determine the nature of the emergency, and initiate a responsible reaction. As promptly as possible after arriving at the scene of the emergency, the first responder shall notify the Safety Officer and Regatta Director of the nature of the emergency via the VHF regatta operations channel, request any required first aid supplies and, if necessary request 911 assistance. Radio communications should be shifted to the VHF channel 72 for emergency communications. Once notified of the emergency, the Safety Officer shall be responsible for requesting the assistance of an onsite regatta physician or emergency medical technician. Once notified of the emergency, the Safety Officer shall proceed to the scene and lend additional assistance to the victim. If 911 help has been requested, the Safety Officer shall be responsible for dispatching a guide to the regatta entry road who can direct emergency crews to the scene of the emergency. Until emergency crews or medical assistance arrive at the emergency scene, the first responder shall direct efforts to assist and care for the victim. Within his or her discretion, the first responder may cede control of the scene to a person deemed more medically qualified to lend assistance. Nevertheless, it is extremely important that assistance remain under the direction of one person capable of coordinating a controlled operational response. At the conclusion of the emergency, the Regatta Director is responsible for coordinating any additional actions required by the event.

## **XI. SAFETY SENSITIVE POSITIONS**

The following positions are designated as safety sensitive:

- ***Regatta Safety Directors (Principal Crowd Managers)***
- ***Regatta Director***
- ***Regatta Secretary***
- ***Dockmaster***
- ***Race Course Marshal(s) assigned to the safety boats***

All volunteers assigned to safety sensitive positions shall receive special instruction concerning specific safety responsibilities for those positions. Launch Operators will be provided with a copy of the race course and emergency procedures. A safety briefing will be conducted for all launch crews prior to departing the launch dock.

## **XII. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS for the Williamsburg/Chickahominy River Regatta on November 10, 2018:**

- Two launches will be equipped with safety bags and additional PFDs and be on the water at all times, each responsible for one half of the course.
- The safety launches covering the start half of the race will return rowers that are injured to the launch dock by the CRP boat launch area.
- The Safety launches covering the final half of the race will bring injured rowers to the recovery dock (CRP fishing pier) at the base of the bridge over the Chickahominy River.
- Safety Officers will be positioned at both the launch and recovery areas.
- A power source will be available to support use of weather monitoring equipment at the Regatta Office.
- The Safety Officer at the race assembly area will ensure all required documentation by the management of the site of injuries and/or accidents related to the Regatta is provided.
- The Safety Officer will ensure all additional safety requirements for the Chickahominy Riverfront Park, as directed by the representatives of James City County, are observed by the participating/registered crew teams and regatta visitors.
- Dedicated regatta personnel will be responsible for managing parking.
- Dedicated regatta personnel will be positioned along the main park road to monitor the safe return of teams/boats from the recovery dock back to the team trailer parking area.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

Compliance with this plan is mandatory for the WBC Head of the Chickahominy Regatta. This plan will be made available to all coaches, officials, and volunteers prior to the event.

### **Boats / Referees / Volunteers**

Chief Referee at Control Commission

Finish Line at the Rt. 5/ Chickahominy River bridge within the park (“sighting” is from the end of the fishing pier to a red post across the river)

Chief Judge/Asst. Chief/Timers At the end of the Fishing Pier

Launch Boat/Driver/Referee Chase Boat

Launch Boat/Driver/Referee Chase Boat

Launch Boat/Driver/Referee Chase Boat

Launch Boat/Driver/Referee Chase Boat

Safety Boat-2 Experienced Vol’s Mid—Course to Finish (emergency drop off at Recovery Dock)

Safety Boat -1 Experienced Vol’s Start to Mid-course (emergency drop off at launch Dock)

Launch Boat/Driver/Referee Mid-course marshal

Launch Boat/Driver/Referee Start Referee

Starter, Asst. Starter, Timers Start - Stationary boat (Floating Start format), as needed. May also need someone at an “assembly area” to reduce race interference, etc.

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