

# CENTRAL COAST DRAGON BOAT ASSOCIATION SAFETY GUIDELINES

## *Safety Program Introduction*

The Central Coast Dragon Boat Association (CCDBA) is committed to the safety of its paddlers and participants and demonstrates this commitment by preventing any major accidents from occurring at its practice site located at the dock at Sub Sea Tours, 699 # 9 Embarcadero, Morro Bay, California 93442 (phone # 805-772-9463), and at race sites through the following defined safety guidelines.

## *Safety Rules and Procedures*

CCDBA endeavors to provide a safe experience for all paddlers. However, weather conditions, skill levels, etc., vary from one situation to another. Paddlers are to understand that there are inherent risks in this sport, and must strive to protect themselves and their equipment at all times. The paddler is ultimately responsible for her/his own safety. It is the paddler's responsibility to make sure that she/he learns to paddle safely. Paddlers should acquaint themselves with weather patterns and tides, and learn how dragon boats respond to changing conditions.

## General Safety Rules

- **Waivers and Medical Release:** a waiver must be completed prior to boarding the dragon boat for the first time. "Release of Medical Liability" forms must be completed each year. Any medical conditions should be brought to the attention of the coach, caller or captain.
- **New Paddlers:** never get into a dragon boat without first receiving instructions from an experienced dragon boat coach or experienced paddler.
- **Captain, Coach and Steersperson:** are responsible for the safety of the crew and enforcing the rules of safety at all times. This includes ensuring that paddlers are trained in, understand, and actively implement good safety practices.
- **Steersperson:** a trained and experienced Steersperson must be in the boat at all times, either steering or training a steersperson.
- **Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's):** always, (including when on the dock and cleaning the boat) wear a type III U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD properly. A PFD must fit snugly. To check for a good fit, try to pick up the paddler by the shoulders of the PFD. If the PFD fits right, the paddler's chin and ears will not slip through. A PFD must be worn with all straps and zippers fastened. Clothing shall not be worn over the PFD, to ensure should a paddler fall overboard, that they are able to be assisted by grabbing on to shoulder straps for stability.

- Per **Central Coast SurviveOars GUIDELINES**, No person shall be permitted to be on the boat who is under the influence of any substance including, but not limited to, alcohol, that alters the ability to remain safe and support the safety of others. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on the boat at any time. The coach, caller, captain or steersperson shall have, at their discretion, the ability to discern whether a paddler is not in condition to participate and the authority to prevent or remove that person from participating.
- **Safety Information Cards:** to be filled out by each paddler and kept watertight in the pocket of the PDF.
- **Marine Radios and Cell Phones:** there should always be either the marine radio or a cell phone on board and a person designated to be responsible for it. In the event of an emergency: **Dial 911**
- **Harbor Patrol:** VHF 12 on Marine Radio
  - Hours of operation are 6 am-7pm
  - Office hours are 8 am to 5:30 pm, Monday-Friday: Someone will always answer the phone during these hours
  - If calling for assistance to help get a person out of the water:
    - State who you are and the location of the boat
- **US Coast Guard:** Channel 16 on Marine Radio aka MAYDAY, 6 am to 7pm, 7 days a week
- **Safety and Maintenance Equipment:**
  - On the Boat
    - Throw Line
      - Stored in the paddle locker
      - Should be attached to seat 10 before leaving dock
    - Bailers
      - Kept in the middle of the boat when paddling
      - Also stored in the front and rear compartments
  - In the Locker
    - First Aid Kit
    - Blanket (recommended)
    - Towel (recommended)

### General Water Safety

- **Off Water**
  - Before every practice paddlers will be guided in warm-up stretches for injury prevention
  - Paddlers shall be responsible for their hydration, i.e., providing their own water supply

- Paddlers will line up according to the instruction of the designated, coach, caller or captain
- Paddlers will load the boat quietly, loading from the back to the front as directed by the coach/caller/captain
- **On Water**
  - The designated coach, caller or captain is responsible for seating the boat and designating a person to hold the boat while loading
    - The person holding the boat should sit on the dock near the center of the boat with their feet in the boat
    - As paddlers step into the boat, they usually place all of their weight near the outside of the boat closest to the dock, causing the dockside of the boat to go down. The holder should resist the rock.
    - As the paddler steps to the other side of the boat, the boat rocks the other direction. Again, the holder should resist the rock
    - Paddlers with medical issues and/or over the age of 70 will be permitted to step on the seat to safely enter the boat
  - The person designated to carry the Marine Radio/Cell phone will be announced, and that should the boat capsize or a person fall overboard, the designated person will dial 911
  - Each paddler is responsible for knowing their seat number and the name of their seat mate
  - Each person on the boat will count off - or shortly after pushing off the dock
  - The coach/caller/captain will announce the steersperson has ultimate call on safety for the boat
  - The coach/caller/captain will name the other coaches on the boat, who may provide instruction/correction, as needed.
    - There will be no “bench coaching” by paddlers other than those named as above.
  - The steersperson will direct the crew to untie the boat and push off in front, and direct the crew, remaining in control of the boat until she/he deems the boat is a safe distance from the dock and safe in the channel
  - Paddlers will understand the following commands:
    - Sit ready: Paddlers hinge forward with 5 degrees of flexion, paddles laying across the thighs, head and eyes forward

- Paddles Up: Paddlers lean forward rotating from the lower back paddles extended forward up over the water in the catch position
- Hold the boat: Bury the paddle into the water, with the wide surface of the blade perpendicular to the boat. This makes the boat quickly lose speed.
- Brace the boat: Hold the paddle out horizontally with the wide surface of the blade parallel to and just under the water's surface. This prevents the boat from rocking side-to-side
- Right/left side draw: Hold the paddle with the wide surface of the blade parallel to the boat then pull the paddle towards the boat. This will move the water under the boat., and move the boat closer to the dock, for example
- Right/left side pry: Hold the paddle with the wide surface of the blade parallel to the boat, push the paddle away from the boat. This will move the boat away from the dock, for example.
- Back Paddle: Put the paddle into the water behind the hips and drive it down and pull the blade forward through thru the water
- Let it Ride: Stop paddling and let the boat glide
- On the water stretching and cool down
  - The coach/caller/captain will determine whether stretches are to be added to on-the water practices
  - The coach/caller/captain will also determine whether a cool down period will be added to the practices
- Unloading the boat
  - When returning to the dock from practice, the steersperson has control and command of the boat
  - Conversation should stop with all paddlers' attention on the commands of the steersperson
  - The coach/caller/captain will direct paddlers once the boat is tied off to the dock, and the boat will unload from front to back
  - A person will be designated to hold the boat, as when loading
  - The coach/caller/captain will select a paddler to take the boat over to the other side of the dock, where it is moored
- **Emergency Procedures**
  - Should the steersperson fall overboard:
    - Coach/caller/captain yells "Person Overboard. Hold the boat." Dials 911

- Paddler in the seat 9 or 10 takes over the oar
- If needed, the throw rope will be tossed to person overboard
- Steersperson will be brought to the side of the boat to grab on to gunwale.
- Coach/caller will call “Paddles Up, take it away, and the boat will be paddled to the sand spit or vacant dock, whichever is closer
- Should the boat capsize:
  - Designated carrier of the Marine Radio/cell phone calls 911
  - Paddlers count off
  - Alert coach/caller/captain if anyone is missing
  - Extract anyone trapped under the boat
  - Turn any person who is unconscious face up so their airway can access air and not water
  - Unconscious paddlers should be supported on their backs, face-up in the water
  - Reassure crew
  - All paddlers to stay with the boat and wait until help arrives
- Should the boat swamp:
  - If the boat begins taking in water, paddlers in the middle of the boat should immediately start bailing
  - All other paddlers should continue to paddle, as directed by the coach/caller/captain
- **Winter Practice**
  - For practices after dark taking place during daylight savings time running lights shall be visible throughout paddling practice

### **Environmental Conditions**

- CCDBA paddlers are not to be on the water when:
  - The wind speed exceeds 20 MPH or when at the discretion of the steers/coach/captain
  - Lightening is present
  - Morro Bay surface waves create whitecaps

### **Boat Maintenance**

- Boats will be cleaned, if possible prior to practice
- Crew will take turns cleaning the boats: seats, gunwales, at a minimum
- Boats will be scheduled regularly for oiling the seats and gunwales
- The work will be completed by volunteer paddlers