

Rowing in the dark

Rowing in the dark is defined as any outing that takes place wholly or partly before sunrise or after sunset.

British Rowing does not promote the practice of rowing in the dark, which obviously has additional dangers to daytime outings. However, the Cygnet committee acknowledges that training crews need water time and are prepared to sanction rowing in the dark provided that crews strictly adhere to the following guidelines in order to reduce the risks to an acceptable level.



GENERAL

- **No outings in the dark should proceed above UL boathouse or below The Mile Post.**
- All outings in the dark must be with the knowledge and permission of the captain.
- A thorough risk assessment must be carried out before each outing, paying particular attention to the weather and stream conditions.
- Casual, 'scratch' and novice outings will not be approved; rowing in the dark is only permissible for training crews of intermediate level and above. **Level 1 steers may not steer in the dark.**
- Boats must comply with the PLA rules of a white light, visible through 360°; in practice a white light bow and stern. Lights must be fixed to the boat and not the oarsmen. The bow light *must* be a flashing white light to indicate direction of travel. Batteries must be checked before going afloat and a spare white light should be carried.
- All oarsmen should wear light-coloured clothing to improve visibility. White is the best for this purpose. Reflective stripes on clothing and/or blades are desirable
- Cox'ns and steers must be familiar with the Tideway and must have passed the club's steering and navigation test. **The steers must be Level 2 approved for supervised rowing in the dark.**
- All outings must be accompanied by a launch (see exceptions below). The purpose of the launch is primarily to provide additional look out for the steers/cox – coaching from that launch is a secondary consideration.
- If coaching from the launch in the dark then the launch should be driven by a second person, whose responsibility it is to concentrate on launch driving and look out.
- The coach/launch driver must carry a mobile phone (in a waterproof case) and spare light in case of emergency.
- It is accepted that light conditions may change during the outing. Crew should anticipate this before going afloat and make decisions accordingly (e.g. as taking lights, anticipating sunset before the end of the outing)

UNSUPERVISED OUTINGS - Outings unsupervised by a launch are subject to the following guidelines, in addition to those set out above:

- Only senior, very experienced crews may row in the dark without a supervising launch. **In such cases the steers must be Level 3 approved for unsupervised rowing in the dark**
- Such outings are also restricted to between UL and The Mile Post
- Having assessed conditions, every member of the crew must be comfortable with the proposition of rowing in the dark without a launch and should not be coerced into an outing against their better judgement or by peer pressure.
- If there is more than one crew out then they must not consider doing pieces against each other without a supervising launch to provide additional lookout.
- Single scullers must not boat in the dark without at least one other Level 3 sculler or, more preferably, a supervising launch.
- One of the crew and all singled scullers should carry a mobile phone (in a waterproof case) and spare light in case of emergency. A whistle is also desirable.

In the event of any incident, all night rowing will be suspended until the captain and committee have reviewed the situation and are satisfied that it is safe to resume outings in the dark.

The captain's say is final and reserves the right to veto any outings in the dark at any time.