



# 1863 Club: Night Rowing/Cold Water

This document outlines the 1863 Club's supplementary policy specific to night rowing and cold water, addressing the implications of the clock shift from British Summer Time (BST) to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) on weekday water sessions scheduled between 4:30 PM and 7:00 PM, which subsequently occur primarily after sunset. This policy complements, rather than replaces, the existing [1863 Club Risk Assessment of 2022](#). The requirement for an assessment of river and weather conditions before the start of every training session on the water, remains in effect.

The 1863 Club policy for rowing at night is based upon the noted guidance within the Tideway Code, along with the club's own assessment for rowing in the dark, carried out in November 2022. Due to the additional risks associated with rowing in the dark, the 1863 Club stipulates the need to adhere to the following:

- Selecting only rowers who demonstrate experience, ability, commitment to the sport and discipline
- Visibility of rowers and boats follows the guidelines as noted within the Tideway Code
- Rowing shall only take place within a predesignated stretch of the river

**Who gets to row?** Selection is made by the Head Coach and members of the coaching team.

1. Experience on the water
2. Ability to demonstrate knowledge and experience of the Tideway Code
3. Regular (85-90%) attendance at all land-training and water sessions. Evidence of their general fitness and commitment to the sport ensuring only the more competent rowers will qualify
4. Confident in the water having passed the Swim and Capsize Test. We will not select any borderline swimmers
5. No issues regarding discipline on and off the water. This includes any rowdy and foolish behavior when handling boats and launches off the water.
  - i. All our rowers are expected to adhere to the agreed codes of conduct
  - ii. Discipline is a critical element within the club ethos and members shall be reminded of it's impact on Safety of others in the water

## Visibility

1. All rowers are recommended to wear a an item of light-colored clothing
2. All boats, launches and shells, are to be outfitted with proper lighting according to the Tideway Code

## Route



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1. The route for night rowing will be pre-determined each season by the head of rowing and captains

## Cold Water

The British Rowing policy for safety against sudden and or prolonged immersion in cold water is set out in RowSafe, the governing body's safety guidance for all participants in the sport.

The policy highlights the following key points:

- Cold water kills, even in the summer. The UK's waters remain cold year-round, and even a short period of immersion can lead to hypothermia, which can be fatal.
- Everyone is at risk. No matter how good a swimmer you are, sudden immersion in cold water can cause a shock response that can make it difficult to swim or even float.
- It is important to be prepared. This includes knowing the risks, assessing the conditions before you go out on the water, and taking appropriate precautions, such as dressing appropriately.
- If you do fall into the water, stay calm and try to get out as quickly as possible. If you are unable to get out, try to stay afloat and conserve your energy. Seek help as soon as possible.

Specific measures to reduce the risk of cold water immersion include:

- Carrying out a risk assessment before going out on the water. This should consider factors such as the water temperature, the weather conditions, the experience of the rowers, and the type of boat being used.
- Dressing appropriately. Rowers should wear layers of clothing that they can remove if they do fall into the water. They should also avoid wearing cotton clothing, as it absorbs water and can make it difficult to stay warm.
- Having a plan in place for what to do if someone falls into the water. This should include having a way to rescue the person and to get them to medical help quickly.

British Rowing also offers a number of training courses and resources on cold water safety, including a free online module on the RowHow website.

If you do fall into the water, British Rowing recommends that you follow these steps:

- Stay calm. It is important to remain calm and to try not to panic.
- Get your head above water. This is essential to avoid inhaling water.
- Float on your back. This is the most efficient way to float and conserve energy.
- Try to get out of the water as quickly as possible. If you can't get out yourself, try to signal for help.
- Once you are out of the water, get warm as quickly as possible. This can be done by removing any wet clothing and wrapping yourself in a blanket or towel. You can also drink warm drinks.



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## Hypothermia

The symptoms of hypothermia depend on how cold the environment is and how long you are exposed for. Severe hypothermia needs urgent medical treatment in hospital. Shivering is a good guide to how severe the condition is. If the person can stop shivering on their own, the hypothermia is mild, but if they cannot stop shivering, it is moderate to severe.

**Mild cases:** in mild cases, symptoms include:

- shivering,
- feeling cold,
- low energy,
- discomfort at higher temperatures than normal, or
- cold, pale skin

**Moderate cases:** the symptoms of moderate hypothermia include:

- violent, uncontrollable shivering,
- being unable to think or pay attention,
- confusion (some people don't realise they are affected),
- loss of judgement and reasoning,
- difficulty moving around or stumbling (weakness),
- feeling afraid,
- memory loss,
- fumbling hands and loss of coordination,
- drowsiness,
- slurred speech,
- listlessness and indifference, or
- slow, shallow breathing and a weak pulse.

**Severe cases:** the symptoms of severe hypothermia include:

- loss of control of hands, feet, and limbs,
- uncontrollable shivering that suddenly stops,
- unconsciousness,
- shallow or no breathing,
- weak, irregular or no pulse,
- stiff muscles, and
- dilated pupils.

Although hypothermia is defined as occurring when the body temperature drops below 35°C (95°F), mild hypothermia can start at higher body temperatures.

As the body temperature decreases further, shivering will stop completely. The heart rate will slow and a person will gradually lose consciousness. When unconscious, a person will not appear to have a



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pulse or be breathing. Emergency assistance should be sought immediately and CPR provided while the person is warmed. CPR is an emergency procedure, consisting of 30 chest compression followed by 2 rescue breaths.

## How to treat hypothermia

As hypothermia can be a life-threatening condition, seek medical attention as soon as possible. Hypothermia is treated by preventing further heat being lost and by gently warming the patient. If you are treating someone with mild hypothermia, or waiting for medical treatment to arrive, follow the advice

below to prevent further loss of heat. Things to do for hypothermia:

- Move the person indoors, or somewhere warm, as soon as possible.
- Once sheltered, gently remove any wet clothing and dry the person
- Wrap them in blankets, towels, coats (whatever you have), protecting the head and torso first
- Your own body heat can help someone with hypothermia. Hug them gently
- Increase activity if possible, but not to the point where sweating occurs, as that cools the skin down again
- If possible, give the person warm drinks (but not alcohol) or high energy foods, such as chocolate, to help warm them up
- Once body temperature has increased, keep the person warm and dry

It is important to handle anyone that has hypothermia very gently and carefully.

Things you should NOT do:

- Don't warm up an elderly person using a bath, as this may send cold blood from the body's surfaces to the heart or brain too suddenly, causing a stroke or heart attack;
- Don't apply direct heat (hot water or a heating pad, for example) to the arms and legs, as this forces cold blood back to the major organs, making the condition worse
- Don't take a hot shower to try to warm up quickly, as this will also make the condition worse
- Don't give the person alcohol to drink, as this will decrease the body's ability to retain heat
- Don't rub or massage the person's skin, as this can cause the blood vessels to widen and decrease the body's ability to retain heat. In severe cases of hypothermia there is also a risk of heart attack.

If you are concerned about the risks of cold water immersion, or if you want to learn more about how to stay safe on the water, please visit the British Rowing website or contact your local rowing club for advice. Links to source material:

- [British Rowing policy for safety against sudden and or prolonged immersion in cold water](#)
- [How cold is too cold for rowing?](#) (see below)
- [How do you deal with cold water immersion?](#)