



Rotary
Club of Peachtree City



2021 DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

PEACHTREE CITY GA

SAFETY PLAN



13. USDBF Guide to Paddling in Hot Weather

Prevention of Hyperthermia/Heat illness

Background:

Hyperthermia, commonly known as heatstroke, is a life threatening condition which demands immediate emergency treatment. Heat exhaustion is a less severe form of heat illness that must be recognized before it progresses to heat stroke. Heat cramps are painful contractions of large muscles caused by exercise in hot weather.

There are two main factors causing your body to warm up. One is simply heat produced by your body's metabolism and that is increased by physical work like sports or exercise. The second one is heat exposure due to the environment you are in. The body has temperature regulating mechanisms, which can deal to a certain extent with those factors, but if they are overwhelmed it will lead to heat illness.

The evaporation of sweat is the main way in which we cool off in high temperatures. Other ways of heat loss are by radiation and convection but these are a less effective way of cooling and basically involve heat transfer to the air or what your skin is in contact with (water, other surface). Jumping in cool water is an example of this.

High humidity represents an added danger as it compromises our ability to evaporate the sweat. That is why it is factored into the "heat index" you may here weather people talk about. High humidity causes you to sweat, but it simply won't evaporate and cool you. Therefore you will sweat even more compounding the situation by increasing liquid loss.

Prevention:

The risks for heat related problems are increased with a higher temperature and anything that interferes with sweating since evaporation of sweat is the main way we cool off. The following factors increase the risk of heat problems:

- a) High humidity because sweat cannot easily evaporate



b) Any medications that lower sweat production, a common type would be antihistamines for allergies. The simple rule is that if a medicine makes someone's mouth dry it also decreases sweating.

c) Dehydration from the water loss of a hot weather practice or race

d) Any heart or circulation problems

To avoid problems you need to maintain a high fluid level. Drink water before leaving the dock and frequently while on the water. Take an individual plastic water bottle for easy access. Do not wait until you are thirsty to drink, take fluid frequently.

How much liquid is enough? As a rule of thumb drink a cup every 15 minutes.

Remember: You have to drink, even you don't feel thirsty!

Wear lightweight clothing. Plan an activity level consistent with the degree of heat and humidity. Do not exercise in hot weather if you have serious medical problems or are on a medication that reduces sweating.

Protect your head and neck from sun exposure with a wide-brimmed, bright colored hat.

Stay out of the sun and rest during the breaks between the races. If possible look for a cool place with good ventilation.

Avoid alcohol and caffeinated drinks as they will contribute to dehydration.

Know the signs of Heat Illness and Heat Stroke and monitor yourself as well as your teammates for the following symptoms.



Symptoms and actions to take:

Heat related illness involves two serious conditions:

HEAT EXHAUSTION

- Symptoms—Are flu like with throbbing headache, nausea, cool skin, chills, sweaty, pale, weak pulse.
- Actions—Stop all exercise immediately and do not resume it that day, drink water or Gatorade like fluids, cool off. Do not return to sports until completely well.

HEAT STROKE—this is life threatening

- Symptoms—Confusion or behavior changes is the hallmark of heat stroke along with the other signs of heat exhaustion. The athlete may still be sweating when this occurs! This can rapidly progress to convulsions and loss of consciousness.
- Actions—this is a medical emergency, call for an ambulance or rush the victim to a hospital ER. If unconscious lay the person on their side in case they vomit. Remove excess clothing, place them in a cool, shaded area, douse with cool water and use a fan or fanning actions to evaporate the water. Ice packs or cold compresses can be placed in the armpits, neck and groin. Wrapping the victim in wet towels is not a good idea as this will impair evaporation. Use those towels to fan the victim instead. Do not use alcohol rubs.



A less serious condition is **heat cramps** where the large muscle groups cramp up due to a salt imbalance; this is treated by using electrolyte solutions like Gatorade and avoiding further exercise. If severe, sometimes intravenous salt-containing fluid is needed at the hospital.

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14. WATER SAFETY POLICY

The number of rescue boats that an Event Organise provides will vary according to the number of boats in each race. The chances of more than one boat capsizing *or being swamped* in a race are extremely low and therefore, unless the weather conditions are extreme. This festival provides four rescue boat and one jetski chase boat.

At least one rescue boat should be on the water for each race. The rescue boats should have a low freeboard and hand ropes on it, to allow a person to enter the boat from the water unaided. A throw line, kept on the boat, is also advised. *Water Bailers should also be carried in the boat for use as necessary.*

CAPSIZED or SWAMPED DRAGON BOAT

What to Do. In the event of a Dragon Boat capsizing or being swamped, each pair of paddlers should account for their buddies. The Boat Captain should immediately ensure that all the crew are accounted for by calling out their numbers and noting the response. The crew must initially stay with the boat. When a boat has over-turned (capsized) never swim underneath it but leave it in the capsized position.



Provided the crew space themselves evenly around a capsized boat, it can be used as a floating platform. Even a fully swamped boat will float and remain stable if the crew space themselves evenly around the gunnels of the boat.

The Boat Captain must remain in control of the crew at all times and first ensure that all the crew members are accounted for as described above.

In a race situation, await the arrival of the rescue boats. The crew should if their paddles are within easy reach, attempt to retrieve them. On the arrival of the rescue boats, the crew should move as directed by the operators of the boats, with the Boat Captain remaining *with the boat* until all members of the crew have been rescued.

If there are insufficient boats to rescue all the crew in one go and the water conditions are kind, or it is shallow, then if the boat is capsized, up to six crew members can remain with the boat and start to 'swim it' to the nearest shore.

*This should only be done under the Boat Captain's control and when the swimmers are capable **and not at risk**). After the crew is safe a rescue boat may be used to recover the Dragon Boat. (In cold water conditions, whilst awaiting rescue, crew members should, when holding onto the boat, try to conserve body heat by curling their legs up towards their chests and remaining as still and as calm as possible).*

Unescorted Crews. *Should a rescue boat NOT be available then in calm conditions, the crew may attempt to 'swim' a capsized boat to the nearest safe landing point, as directed by the Boat Captain. If conditions are not suitable for easily 'swimming' the boat, over a short distance, then under the instructions of the Boat Captain it is recommended that the boat be*



rolled back to the upright position, which will result in the boat becoming swamped.

Swamped Boat. *A swamped boat can be used to support the crew, with the crew members evenly spaced around the boat's gunnels, whilst the boat is partially bailed out using paddles (and any other suitable implements available, e.g. boat bailers) until the crew can regain entry to the Boat, complete the bailing out process, and paddle the boat to the nearest shore.*

If self recovery of the boat is not possible, then as a last resort, the crew may leave the boat and swim to shore in pairs, using the 'buddy' system, again under the control of the Boat Captain. As with other methods, the crew must be accounted for at all times during any attempts to swim the boat or as pairs under the buddy system.

However, In a training situation crew members are advised not attempt to swim to shore unless they are wearing PFD. *Should there be no alternative but to swim for the shore then any crew member who is not wearing a PFD should join a 'buddy pair' with PFD, or make up a group (groups) of three, to provide mutual support and assistance during the swim.*

Recovery of Craft. *As soon as the boat is alongside the water's edge, the crew must again be accounted for on the land and any injuries dealt with immediately. If upturned, the boat may then be turned the right way up (in the water) and bailing out commenced. The boat SHOULD NOT be dragged out of the water unless there is only a small amount of water left in it, as this puts a considerable strain on the hull of the boat. Once the boat is almost empty of water it may be lifted on to the bank and checked for damage and all the boat's equipment accounted for.*



IN CONCLUSION. Safety is the concern of every crew member and is largely a matter of COMMON SENSE - USE IT! The overall responsibility for the crew off the water is the Crew Manager's and on the water is the Boat Captain's.

It is every competitor and official's responsibility to ensure that Dragon Boat Racing is conducted as SAFELY AS POSSIBLE.