

Star Club Water-Safety Guidance Table

Hazard	High flow	High winds	Poor visibility	Electrical storm	Low water temperature
Details of hazard	Risk of being swept onto weirs, bridges or floating debris. Difficulty in steering a safe course	Difficulty in steering a safe course. Increased risk of capsise.	Difficulty in steering a safe course, avoiding obstacles and other craft.	Risk of being struck by lightening	Risk of hypothermia in event of capsise; risk of collision with ice.
Red status	>0.75 m above crest of weir ¹	Wind gusts >50 mph (80 kmh)	Failure of bank lighting after dark, or fog/precipitation/s moke at any time reducing visibility to <100 m	Thunder audible	Significant Ice cover or substantial chunks of ice moving on the current.
Amber status	0.50 – 0.75 m above crest of weir	Wind gusts >44 mph (70 kmh)	Visibility limited to <300 m	Electric storms forecast	Water < 4°C
Green status	<0.50 m above crest of weir	Any gusts <44 mph (70 kmh)	Visibility >300 m	No sign or forecast of thunder	Water >4°C

¹ Bedford Weir near the lock. It is from this location that the Environment Agency present data on their website: <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/station/6169>.

Interpretation

1. If any hazard is deemed to be at Red status, then the river is closed and no boat should be launched. Boats on the water should return to the club immediately if conditions deteriorate during an outing such that red status is reached for any hazard. Only in the most exceptional circumstances may the club captain, supported by another squad leader, deem it acceptable for a boat to be launched.
2. If any three hazards are simultaneously deemed to be at Amber status, then the river is closed as for the Red status situation above.
3. If any two hazards are simultaneously deemed to be at Amber status, then outings may only proceed with the express sanction of the relevant squad leader or their nominee, who should refer to the club captain and/or club safety advisor when in doubt. Only coxes/steers-people deemed to be sufficiently experienced and competent would be permitted to take a boat out.
4. If any single hazard is deemed to be at Amber status, then members should consult their squad leader about an outing before taking to the water. It is expected that no inexperienced rowers or coxes would boat in these conditions and lone sculling would be strongly discouraged.
5. All members should refer to the Club Safety plan for guidance on the barriers and controls recommended to mitigate the risk for each of the hazards identified.

Additional guidance for squad leaders/decision makers

1. When the river is at amber status and you are consulted by members of your squad about whether conditions are suitable for an outing, in addition to the nature of the hazard(s), you should take into account the size of boat, the experience of the crew, the competence of the steersperson/cox and any contextual information, such as the prevalence of weed or debris in the river.
2. If you are not in Bedford and are unable to judge local conditions for yourself, you may nominate another experienced, responsible member of your squad to take the decision or refer it to the captain/vice-captain/safety-committee member, who is on site.
3. If you feel the nature of the hazards is outside your experience and you feel unable to make a confident decision, then you should refer the matter to the captain/vice-captain/safety-committee member on site.
4. Experienced members may assure you that they are safe to row in very cold conditions, but even competent single scullers occasionally capsize, so if the water is very cold, sculling alone should be discouraged irrespective of experience.
5. Even when the river is Green status, only single scullers or steers-people deemed competent by the captain should boat in the dark.
6. Finally, if you feel the decision is too difficult or too finely balanced, and there is no-one on site to consult, then you should err on the side of postponing the outing.