



**AusDBF Australian Dragon Boat
Sweeps (steerers/helms) Guidelines and
Sweep Accreditation Scheme (SAS)**

Version 2

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To all the AusDBF members who contributed towards the update of Version 2.

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FORWARD

NOTE: Where the term ‘sweep’ is used to describe or refer to a person who controls the steering apparatus of a dragon boat, and/or the movement of the steering apparatus (oar/paddle) taken by the person on control, references to the alternative titles of “Steerer” or “Helm” are intended to refer to the same position, role and /or action undertaken.

While the term “sweep” is used within Australia, alternative terms may be used internationally and/or by the International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) in its documentation and those descriptions may therefore be substituted for “sweep” within the document, with the understanding that all the terms refer to the same position and/or action undertaken.

Statement from “ the International Waters Rules and Regulations”

“The person who is in charge of a recreational boat that is used for sport in competition and/or training and has a tiller action (an apparatus that can determine boat direction) and has cast away from any fixed land structure (nothing attached to the sporting boat whatsoever) and is moving on water in any direction, then this person is deemed the “captain of the boat” and they have ultimate responsibility to the safety of their boat, boats around them and safety of all of its crew, being one person or more, then this person is deemed in charge of the boat”. This would mean in Dragon Boating that the Sweep is in charge of the boat whilst on the water with a number of crew members.

1.1 THE SWEEP ACCREDITATION SCHEME (SAS)

Purpose

The purpose of the AusDBF Sweep Accreditation Scheme (SAS) and associated Sweep Guidelines is to ensure that:

- Participants in AusDBF events are afforded the safety benefits of a trained Sweep (steerer/helm)

Overview

All sweeps (steerers or helms) who participate in AusDBF Australian Championships or other sanctioned events must hold at minimum a Level 3 accreditation issued by their AusDBF Member. This will ensure that participating sweeps at AusDBF events have undertaken sweep training, have demonstrated a level of capability and have passed as being able to competently steer crews (Club and/or Corporate/Novice/Social)

The AusDBF Sweep Accreditation Scheme consists of two parts:

- (a) Accreditation
- (b) Registration

Accreditation consists of:

- (a) Education
- (b) Training with an experienced sweep (minimum Level 3)
- (c) A written exam
- (d) An initial practical test
- (e) Issuing of Provisional Accreditation
- (f) Sweeping sports crews in four races at a minimum of two (2) events
- (g) Issuing of Level Three (3) Full Accreditation

Registration consists of the sweep having their accreditation details and personal details entered into a State Sweep Accreditation register which is subsequently consolidated into a National Sweep Accreditation Register.

1.2 Introduction

Dragon Boat racing is a water sport and as has an element of risk associated with it. Safety is of prime importance for AusDBF and experienced sweeps are viewed as a major factor in reducing the risks in dragon boat racing.

These guidelines provide AusDBF members with an outline of the sweep accreditation system and safety procedures in what you should do (or not do) both on and off the water. These guidelines cover sweep responsibilities and it is recommended that members adopt and follow the general advice in the guide.

The following guidelines are an update of the existing AusDBF Sweep Accreditation Scheme and Guidelines; with contributions received from AusDBF Member Associations.

1.3 Structure

As from January 2005 all sweeps (steerers/helms) wishing to participate in AusDBF Australian Championships or sanctioned events will need to hold a minimum of a Level 3 (Full) sweep accreditation issued by their AusDBF Member. To receive accreditation sweeps will be required to undergo both written and practical testing where their knowledge and sweeping skills will be assessed. If successful at this stage, sweeps (steerers/helms) will be given 'Provisional' Level 2) Accreditation Status. This will then allow them to sweep Sports crews in races (to be completed over 2 sanctioned events by their state member), they will then be granted Full Accreditation (level 3) Status. Once a sweep (steerer/helm) has been granted full accreditation (Level 3), only then will they be allowed to sweep Corporate, Community and novice crews at Australian event sanctioned by AusDBF members.

1.4 Pre-requisite to becoming a sweep (steerer/helm)

The purpose of the Sweep Accreditation Scheme is not to train sweeps. This remains the responsibility of individual clubs. **Note:** Clubs should keep a log of their own sweeps that are requesting accreditation.

Prior to attending Sweep Accreditation Testing, each sweep should have:

- Trained with a current, fully accredited sweep (minimum level 3);
- Trained in a variety of conditions such as morning and evening, windy and calm conditions, and with full and half crews etc;
- Have had control of a dragon boat on at least 20 different occasions with a minimum of 30 minutes per session (minimum of 10 hours training); and
- Hold a senior first aid certificate
- Recommend also a current marine boat license for state

1.5 Sweep Accreditation Coordinator

Each AusDBF Member will appoint a Sweep Coordinator (or team of) to manage the Sweep Accreditation Scheme in their region. It is expected that the Sweep Coordinators Australia wide form a subcommittee and meet regularly either by teleconference and/or during the Australian Championships so they can regularly update and improve the Accreditation Scheme. (State members may also wish to include their Technical or Development Directors as seen fit).

The Sweep Coordinator in each State will keep an updated register of the sweeps in their care and regularly update it, and bi-monthly send any updates through to the AusDBF Technical Director to update the National Register.

1.6 Accreditation Testing

Examiners approved by the AusDBF member will conduct Sweep Accreditation Testing.

The written test will consist of 20 questions of which the person being tested must attain an 80% pass rate. (ie minimum of 16 correct answers)

The practical test will consist of each sweep candidate steering a dragon boat (with a minimum of 16 paddlers) and must be able to demonstrate certain skills such as:

- ensuring the dragon boat is balanced
- performing a head count
- using the standard set of calls
- reversing a dragon boat safely
- maintaining a dragon boat on a start line
- steering a straight line for a reasonable distance;
- stopping a dragon boat quickly
- reversing the dragon boat into a start pontoon and setting up for a race start
- cornering around set markers – buoys as in a 2000m turn race
- completing a turn with another boat along side

Following the practical test the examiner will complete a Practical Test and Sweep Skills document which will be forwarded to the Sweep Coordinator in their State (if it is not one and the same).

If both the above elements are completed satisfactorily the candidate for sweep accreditation will be issued with Provisional Sweep Accreditation (Level 2) and their name will be entered onto the AusDBF Members (State or Territory) Sweep Register.

To receive Full Sweep Accreditation (Level 3) a Provisional Sweep must successfully sweep a sports crew, under the observation of Sweep Coordinators approved by the AusDBF Member, in at least four (4) races over two (2) or more regattas. (OR suggestion 3 races over 3 regatta's) ?

Once completed the Provisional Sweep will be issued Full Sweep Accreditation (Level 3) and their details will be updated on their State Sweeps Register and can be included in the AusDBF National Register. Must be completed in the current competitive season ? (e.g 2009/2010)

1.7 Ongoing Accreditation

A review of the re-accreditation process has been introduced for Level 3 Sweeps accredited by their State member. Under the new system of re-accreditation, when it is known that fully accredited active sweeps (Level 3, or higher) have been sweeping regularly within the preceding three (3) year accreditation period, they can 'automatically' be re-accredited.

- When sweep history records indicate significant seasonal incident-free sweep activity,

- Following observation by one or more Sweep Coordinators at an AusDBF member sanctioned event,
- After satisfying the AusDBF State Sweep Coordinators of individual competency via written and/or practical means (if sweeping occurred interstate &/or overseas), and if appropriate records are not available.
- Following receipt of a written club submission (eg from club president / head coach / administrator), stating a sweep has been active in training, even though records indicate limited or no race activity.

At the Sweep Coordinators discretion, a Level 3+ sweep may retain their accreditation as long as they successfully sweep a reasonable number of races per season over several regatta's.

The sweeps name & status will be (re)entered in to the AusDBF members Sweeps Registrar as being (re)accredited from the date set by the sweep coordinator overseeing the process. As guidelines, policies or rules are implemented or updated; sweeps may also be required to acknowledge their awareness of rule changes, updated procedures and/or guidelines that have been put in place since their previous accreditation period.

1.8 Cancellation of Accreditation

At any time, the AusDBF member (through its appointed Sweep coordinators) can rescind the accreditation of any sweep (steerer/helm). However, before doing so the AusDBF member must advise the sweep in writing as to why their accreditation is being rescinded. The sweep then has 28 days to apply to the AusDBF member to have their accreditation retained. If the AusDBF member does not retain the accreditation, it is then necessary for the sweep to undergo re-accreditation.

A sweeps accreditation status (level) may be reviewed and/or revoked for:

- Not performing their role in a safe and respectful manner
- Who is found to be incompetent
- Displaying poor race skills
- Displaying poor sweeping ethics
- Displaying a lack of respect to crews or equipment
- Not complying with the sweep levels as detailed; or
- Displaying sufficient reason for them to be de-registered

1.9 Register of Accredited Sweeps (steerers/helms)

A register of accredited sweeps will be maintained by the AusDBF member. The register will be updated regularly to reflect changes in accreditation of sweeps in their region. The register will contain the following information:

- Name
- Club
- Contact details
- Races remaining to achieve Full Accreditation Status (Level 3)
- Number of races swept each regatta and throughout each season
- Date tested or date full accreditation granted
- Retest date / Anniversary / Expiry date

- First Aid qualifications

The AusDBF member will provide a copy of the Register to AusDBF bi-monthly with the latest update prior to the Australian Championships or as requested by the AusDBF SAS administrator.

Suggestion: Accreditation expiry dates be set to the first day of the closest quarterly or monthly period, so as to simplify the date keeping process.

Examples:

- A sweep tested on 24th September 2009 would have an anniversary date of 01/10/2012.
- Likewise a sweep tested on 12th November would also have an anniversary on 01/10/2012
- Using quarterly model, designated periods would be based upon a financial membership calendar. Q1 = July to September, Q2 = October to December, Q3 – January to March, Q4 = April to June. Quarterly anniversary dates would be the first day of the period (ie 01st July)

1.10 Sweep Level Classifications

Recommendation: Minimum age for sweeps should be 15 years to ensure they are capable and responsible for controlling a dragon boat.

Age requirement for sweeps:

	Open/Mixed category	Women's Category
Juniors	Either gender Can be adult Minimum 15 years	Female only Can be adult Minimum 15 years
Youth	Either gender Can be adult Minimum 17 years	Female only Can be adult Minimum 17 years
Premier	Either gender Minimum 15 years	Female only Minimum 15 years
Masters	Either gender Minimum 40+	Female only Minimum 40+
Grand Masters	Either gender Minimum 50+	Female only Minimum 50+
Great Grand Masters	Either gender Minimum 60+	Female only Minimum 60+

CLUB SWEEPS

Level 0 (L0) - NOVICE Sweep:

- Refers to a novice sweep 'in training'.
- Refers to a sweep not yet observed or tested.
- Restricted to 'Club' Training sessions only (ie own Sports / DA crew).
- Must be under direct supervision of a Fully Accredited (L3) Sweep at all times. (see note D)

Level 1 (L1) - RESTRICTED Accreditation:

- Primarily for Regional Sweeps and newly formed groups.
 - Interim Accreditation Only. L1 Sweeps are recommended to test for L2.
 - Sweeps must be observed by an AusDBF Member sweep coordinator (an L3 Sweep).
 - Sweeps are to be given training prior to the commencement of crew sessions.
 - Sweeps are restricted to steering 'club' paddlers at regular training sessions only.
 - Sweeps are restricted to steering within the boundaries of their (approved) training location.
 - NOT allowed to sweep at night
 - NOT allowed to sweep School &/or Junior Crews at anytime unless authorized by the AusDBF State member in writing, and should refer to period / duration allowed
 - NOT allowed to sweep Corporate, Community or Social Crews in training, or events; even if supervised.
- (A) - Refers also to sweeps requiring more water-time before (re)testing for Provisional (L2) Accreditation. Level may be shown as L1.5 or L1T) to indicate the sweep has been tested
- (B) - Within established clubs , L1 (or L1.5) sweeps still require an L2-L5 sweep to be on board.

Note: An established club is:

Level 2 (L2) - PROVISIONAL Accreditation:

- Allowed to sweep Sports Crews during club training sessions unsupervised.
 - Allowed to sweep Sports Crews at regattas in conditions appropriate to experience*.
 - Allowed to sweep Corporate & Social Crew training sessions ONLY when supervised by an L3 Sweep. (Note: the L3 sweep MUST be on board the same boat at all times).
 - NOT allowed to sweep School &/or Junior Crews at anytime unless authorized by AusDBF Member.
 - NOT allowed to provide unsupervised training or instruction to L0, L1 or other L2 sweeps**.
 - NOT allowed to sweep Corporate, Community or Social Crews at AusDBF Member sanctioned events.
 - NOT allowed to sweep at night
- (C) - A sweeps individual experience should be considered when racing in difficult conditions (eg strong winds).
- (D) - AusDBF Member Only L3 sweeps are allowed to instruct novice sweeps,

(E) – *Where possible, one or more Sweep mentors should be assigned to new groups to assist with initial sweep and paddler training. Mentoring may remain until a group has L2-3 sweeps.*

Level 3 (L3) - FULL SWEEP Accreditation:

- Allowed to sweep Sports Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep Corporate Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep Community Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep Social / Novice Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep School &/or Junior Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to instruct & assist with sweep training & development of Sweep Levels L1-L3.

Recognition of experience and development of sweeps that demonstrate advanced ability.

Preamble: Sweeps (Steerers/Helms) who have held AusDBF Member Level 3 (Full) Sweep Accreditation for a significant period of time – a minimum of at least one (1) three year accreditation period, at least – have generally developed their practical skills and knowledge of dragon boat sweeping, thereby having a greater awareness and understanding of race rules and the responsibilities required of an ‘advanced’ sweep. As recognition of this development, such sweeps may be considered for advanced standing.

Level 4 (L4) - ADVANCED (Experienced) Sweep Recognition:

Awarded to Level 3 Sweeps at the discretion of the AusDBF Member Sweep Coordinators.

L4 classification may be awarded to Level 3 (L3) Sweeps who:

- Have completed a minimum of one (1) accreditation period of three years.
- Have shown consistent and continual development as a sweep during the initial accreditation period.
- Have consistently demonstrated confident boat maneuvering and crew management in difficult weather conditions.
- Have demonstrated advanced ability in race environments in a variety of locations and water conditions.
- Have demonstrated the ability to steer various styles of boat and familiar with various sweep rigging systems (ie rowlec, pin, u-bolt)
- Must hold a current boat license for that State or at least hold a current boat license

As per L3 allowances:

- Allowed to sweep Sports Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep Corporate Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep Community Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep Social / Novice Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep School &/or Junior Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to instruct & assist with sweep training & development of Sweep Levels L1-L3.

Note: At the discretion of the AusDBF member, and/or appointed State Squad Coaches, it may be a requirement for sweeps applying for a position as a State Representative Squad sweep to have attained Level 4 (L4) status.

Level 5 (L5) - SWEEP MASTER (MENTOR)

Awarded to Level 4 Sweeps at the discretion of the AusDBF Member Sweep Coordinators.

L5 classification may be awarded to Level 4 (L4) Sweeps who:

- Have completed a minimum of one (1) accreditation period of three years.
- Have shown consistent and continual development as a sweep since initial accreditation.
- Have demonstrated confident boat maneuvering and crew management in difficult weather conditions.
- Have demonstrated advanced ability in race environments in a variety of locations and water conditions.
- Have steered AusDBF and/or State Member Representative Crews (at State, National and/or International regattas) See note F)
- Must hold a current boat license for that State or at least hold a current boat license

As per L3 & L4 allowances:

- Allowed to sweep Sports Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep Corporate Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep Community Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep Social / Novice Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to sweep School &/or Junior Crews during training sessions and at regattas.
- Allowed to instruct & assist with sweep training & development of Sweep Levels L1-L3.

Note: (F) – International race experience may be taken into account when reviewing a candidates application request for Level 5 (L5) Accreditation, though it does not automatically qualify a sweep for L5 status. Experience steering Club Crews at overseas races may also be considered.

How to regain Full sweep accreditation once an accredited sweep has been absent from the sport for several years.

To reinstate sweeps to Full Accredited Sweep after time out of the game, a fair system that allows past sweeps to simply do an Observation Ability Test can be used. Any Accreditor who has been given written proof the person wishing to be reinstated had been tested to Full Accreditation by their governing body previously goes through an on water ability test to be sure sweep skills have not been lost. Sweeps who had the skills in the past will not have lost their steering ability and should not need to go through the full process of having to do the same as novice trainee sweeps.

An Observation Ability Test (Comprises of our normal Accreditation sweep skills test and the 20 Question again). Eliminate the qualifying period regatta bit and sign them off as either a pass or a fail. A FAIL would mean they will then have to re do the whole Accreditation Scheme from scratch. And a PASS is an instant reinstatement to Full Accreditation.

Race Reporting Sheet - Accredited Sweeps

Instructions to Sweeps & Volunteers (Chief Marshall, Water Umpires, Race Officials, etc)

AusDBF and its Sweep Coordinators have initiated a program whereby they now attempt to record accredited sweep activity at endorsed AusDBF member sanctioned events. AusDBF and its members aim to have a 'complete' event record listing all the sweeps who participated at each event, along with any notations & reports where sweeping related incidents occur.

ALL SWEEPS: Have your Name and/or AusDBF Member ID Number recorded by the Chief Marshall / Lane Marshall.

A successful race is recorded when the entire race you have swept is completed 'without incident'.

Races are considered 'without incident' if there are no reports or observations of race infringements received by race day officials, or noted by coordinators observing races. *Sweep coordinators may not individually see each & every race, but other officials are observing sweeps throughout events.*

Note: The 'entire race' period begins when you take control of the boat & crew at the loading point. It involves the approach to the start line, the actual race time, and the return to the unloading point, until you disembark.

Provisional (Level 2) Sweeps MUST wear the fluorescent orange (or similar) jackets for all races they steer until they've completed their four (4) probationary races - 2 races, over at least 2 events. A maximum of two races are counted towards full accreditation at any single regatta, therefore you are required to wear the vest for ALL races at the event ... *unless excused by a co-ordinator (only if the 4th probationary race is verified).*

Provisional Sweeps must have their L2 status recorded on the Reporting Sheet, indicated by a letter "P", circled. Only successful probationary races will be credited towards attaining L3 accreditation.

Wearing an orange/yellow vest helps officials to recognise the Level 2 sweeps and will attract observation of their probationary races. It also indicates L2 status to higher grade sweeps. More experienced Level 3 sweeps tend to be more forgiving and helpful when they are aware a sweep is new to racing.

MARSHALLS:

- Record the Name &/or ID Number of **EACH Sweep, for EACH Crew, for EACH Race.**
- Please indicate the Level 2 (Provisional) Sweeps with the letter "P" circled, next to their name.
- Provisional Sweeps **MUST** wear an Orange Safety Vest to signify their status. *Please write legibly.*

WATER UMPIRES & OTHER RACE OFFICIALS: Whether or not you are supplied with an “Accredited Sweeps Race Reporting Sheet”, please record any sweeping related incidents you may observe. Incidents may also be reported to the chief official for noting down. Infringements can occur when leaving or returning to the loading point, infringing on other lanes, collisions, veering off course, failure to stop the boat appropriately, etc. Incident Reports should include the Race Number, Lane Number, and Incident Details, and can be noted on a race draw, or other paperwork, with the Race Officials identity noted and signed. **Please write legibly.**

All Sweep Reporting Sheets should be returned to the AusDBF Member Sweep Coordinator onsite, or chief official at the end of an event. *Do Not Discard !*

Race no	Time	Category	Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Lane 4
1	9:00	Prem Mixed	Green	Yellow	Red	Blue
		<i>Sweep name</i>				

2.0 SAFETY PROCEDURES GUIDELINES

The following safety procedures are guidelines for AusDBF members and may be amended and/or added to, to account for the local conditions.

2.1 Land Procedures

There are a number of procedures to be undertaken on the land to ensure the safety of a crew before heading onto the water. The following sections provide a guideline as to what should occur on land. They are not extensive, but provide an outline on what can assist in preventing accidents.

2.2 Initial Safety Procedures

Accidents can occur at the most unlikely times. As a sweep, you must provide the necessary precautions both on and off the water. The following are some guidelines from the time paddlers have stretched prior to training and getting into a dragon boat:

- Paddlers must always ensure when lifting and carrying a dragon boat they use safe techniques, such as bending at the knees when lifting and not bending their back.
- Always ensure there are enough paddlers to lift and carry a dragon boat (suggested of a minimum of 10 paddlers) are required to lift and carry a dragon boat). If there are not the minimum required number, ask other crews (when available) for help.
- When lowering a dragon boat ensure it is put down slowly with paddlers bending at the knees.
- Decide the seating positions of paddlers before entering the dragon boat. Have paddlers of similar weight seated with one another.
- A dragon boat must not be pushed into the water whilst paddlers are standing. If a dragon boat is to be moved advise those standing to be seated and only then move the dragon boat.
- Paddlers should wear suitable footwear in a dragon boat.
- Paddlers unable to swim 50m fully clothed must be advised to wear a life jacket (PFD).

Note: In the State of Victoria, as past by Government Law that any water sports, all personnel regardless of competition or under training must wear a PFD. Any Teams who come to Victoria for training and/or competition must have their own PFD.

2.3 The Conditions

As with any water sport, and because of the environment itself, there is always an element of danger. Because of the size and design of the dragon boat and the water conditions in which training and racing takes place (that is placid water) dragon boating is generally safe and a capsized, especially in such conditions and unless the crew is at fault, is a rarity. However, people are people and the possibility an accident may occur remains. Dragon Boat Racing is no exception to the rule and it is the duty of all who participate in the sport – competitors, race organisers, coaches and officials alike – to be aware of the potential dangers inherent in the sport. Be safety conscious – not safety extreme – and ensure that dragon boat racing is conducted in a responsible manner. In addition, keep to waters within the capabilities of your sweeping ability. Be aware of weather forecasts – you must NEVER be on the water during a thunder or electrical storm. If training before sunrise or after sunset, it is the sweeps responsibility to ensure the dragon boat does not go on the water without lights. The local Waterways or Maritime Authorities can fine you. Some instructions for sweeping at night:

- Lights must be on both the front and back of the dragon boat (or what your State Regulation is), clearly visible (not obscured by paddlers). Please make sure you are familiar with the relevant requirements within your state.)
- Torches should be carried at night.
- Ensure you use a loud voice – with clear instructions
- Be extra observant!

2.4 The Buddy System

The crew should number off from the front of the dragon boat and be made aware that they are responsible for the person they are paired with (seated next to in the dragon boat) and that, in the event of a capsized, their first responsibility is to ensure that their partner (buddy) is accounted for and safe. This called the “buddy system” and it gives each person in the dragon boat a specific responsibility for another.

Buddy System and Head Count as per the IDBF protocols ... as copied from “international Dragon boat Federation Members Handbook – Edition 4 – IDBF Water Safety Policy:.

The Buddy System. The crew should be ‘numbered off’ from the front of the boat and made aware they are each responsible for the person they are paired with (across the boat) and that in the event of a capsized or the boat being swamped, their first responsibility is to ensure that their partner is safe and well.

This is called the ‘buddy system’ and it gives each person in the boat a specific responsibility for another. The ‘Stroke Pair’ (first pair – no 2 left and no 3 right) in the boat are responsible for the Drummer (1) and the ‘rear pair’ (last pair) for the Sweep (22)

Remember: while on the water the sweep is regarded as the Captain of the boat in control of the dragon boat and has the ultimate responsibility for the safety of the crew. Everyone associated with a crew should ensure that dragon boating is conducted as SAFELY AS POSSIBLE

2.6 On the Water

In all water conditions, good or bad, the key to safety is the application of good COMMON SENSE by all those taking part in the activity. Playing around in a dragon boat and deliberately capsizing it, even in warm sunny conditions, can be dangerous to both the crew on the water and other users alike. In certain circumstances it could be lethal; a dragon boat moving at speed through the water cannot easily be stopped and a crew in the water from a capsized dragon boat cannot easily be seen!

2.7 Water Safety Precautions

The most likely time a capsize will occur is when paddlers are loading into or getting out of a dragon boat and the following guidelines should be observed:

- If loading from a beach or ramp, make sure you load from the rear of the boat first (i.e. paddlers should walk down the boat with seat ten (10) loading first, then seat nine (9) and so on.
- If loading from a pontoon / jetty paddlers should load in the middle of the boat first, then rows one (10) and ten (10) alternatively back to the middle of the boat. Paddlers on the water side should be helping to stabilise the boat or sitting in the centre of the seat until their buddy boards.
- The back of the dragon boat should be in the water
- Two paddlers hold the front of the dragon boat steady
- Paddlers load and unload from the front of the dragon boat
- When loading and unloading, the paddlers should avoid erratic movements
- Paddlers should keep their weight low when moving through the dragon boat.
- Once seated, a paddler must sit on the seat in the middle of the dragon boat. Only when their paddling partner is about to sit down should they move to their paddling side.
- The strokes (front row) and the drummer should be the last to enter and the first to leave the dragon boat. **Note** : The sweep is always first on board and last to leave.
- All paddlers should know their buddy seated next to them. The drummer is looked after by row 1 (or the front row) and the sweep by row 10 (or the last row) . Remember that your safety and that of your buddy's safety is dependent on each other.
- When paddlers are seated, they should have their paddles in the "Paddles Flat Position" (or brace position).
- Once all paddlers are seated, the sweep must complete a head count. As mentioned previously, number 1 is the drummer followed by number 2 left, number 3 right, number 4 left number 5 right and so on till the sweep is counted (ie number 22 in a full boat) .
- Finally, the sweep must ensure the dragon boat is balanced before leaving the shore. If after leaving the shore the dragon boat is still unbalanced, stop the dragon boat and make adjustments i.e swap the paddlers from left to right and vice versa.
- When loading or unloading from a pontoon, the dragon boat must be held securely, with the side of the dragon boat butted against the side of the pontoon. The sweep

should embark first to hold the boat steady, the drummer last to embark. The boat should be loaded and unloaded from the middle rows first. Paddlers should sit in the centre of their seat until their seat buddy joins them. It is also recommended to only have 2 or 3 rows loading or unloading at anyone time to help stabilise the boat as much as possible.

2.8 After a Capsize

As mentioned previously, because of the size and design of the dragon boat, and the water conditions in which training and racing takes place, (that is placid water), dragon boating is generally safe and a capsize, in such conditions is a rarity unless the crew is at fault.

2.9 What to do in a Capsize

In the event of a dragon boat capsizing:

- Each paddler should immediately account for their buddy
- The sweep should immediately ensure that all the crew are accounted for by calling out their numbers and noting the response or if this is not possible by a head count.
- The crew must initially stay with the dragon boat and leave it in the capsized position or of water logged, in the upturned position
- When a dragon boat has over-turned no one should swim underneath it, but in such circumstances, it can be used as a floating platform, provided the crew space themselves evenly around the dragon boat.
- Alternatively, under the instructions of the sweep the dragon boat may be rolled back to the upturned position and used to support the paddlers by individuals holding onto the gunwales.
- In all situations the sweep should remain in control of the crew and, 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. If there are rescue boats then the crews should not attempt to retrieve their paddles. Paddlers should ensure they stay with the boat. Main concern should be paddlers welfare, paddles can be replaced, drowned paddlers cannot. Let rescue crews collect paddles once crews are accounted for and ashore.
- On the arrival of the rescue boats, the crew should move as directed by the operators of the rescue boats, with the sweep remaining in the water until all the members of the crew have been rescued.
- If there are insufficient rescue boats to rescue all the crew in one go and the water conditions are kind, or it is shallow, then the crew members can remain with the dragon boat and start to swim it to the nearest shore. This should only be done under the control of the sweep and when the swimmers are capable and not at risk.
- Once the crew is safe. A rescue boat may be used to recover the dragon boat.

2.10 Where there are no rescue boats

If in a competitive situation, there is no rescue boat available then in calm conditions, the whole crew may attempt to swim the dragon boat to the nearest safe landing point, as directed by the sweep. If conditions are not suitable for swimming the dragon boat, then as a last resort, the crew may leave the dragon boat and swim to shore in pairs, using the buddy, again under the control of the sweep. As with other methods, the crew must be

accounted for at all times during any attempts to swim the dragon boat or as pairs under the buddy system. However, in a training situation crew members are advised not to attempt to swim to shore unless they are wearing PFDs. 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 PFDs or make up a group (or groups) of three, to provide mutual support and assistance during the swim.

2.11 Recovery of a Dragon Boat

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

2.12 Balancing a Dragon Boat

Before leaving the embarking area, the sweep should ensure that the dragon boat is well balanced. That is each pair of paddlers is similar weight or height and that generally, the heavier pairs are seated in the middle section of the dragon boat. The sweep should ALWAYS know the number of people in the dragon boat, both at training and on regatta days.

2.13 Reversing a Dragon Boat

All sweeps should be comfortable reversing a dragon boat. Sweeps should practise reversing a dragon boat regularly. Always reverse towards your new line and not away from it. Point the back of the dragon boat towards the direction you intend to go before reversing. Never have the sweep oar in the water when reversing. This is a sure way of losing control and falling off the back of the dragon boat. Only dip the sweep oar in the water as and when required. There are two things to remember when reversing a dragon boat namely:

- Always look behind to ensure there are no craft (especially another dragon boat) behind; and
- Reverse slowly as this is one of the more difficult aspects of sweeping.

2.14 Steadying a Dragon Boat

A dragon boat will feel “tippy” if the crew is out of balance or moving about in an uncoordinated manner. To steady the dragon boat in such circumstances (and when sideways on to the wind or a wave pattern) the crew should be instructed by the sweep to lean gently over the side of the dragon boat and place their paddles flat on the water at arms length. With all of the paddles on the water in this manner (10 either side) the dragon boat is effectively stabilised. This is called “paddles flat”.

2.15 Stopping a Dragon Boat

When manoeuvring, turning or racing a dragon boat it may be necessary to stop the dragon boat suddenly to avoid a collision with another vessel, a dragon boat or even a fixed object.. It is important that the crew reacts quickly but safely. An unbalanced crew over-reacting can capsize their own dragon boat ! The initial command should be “Stop the boat”, “Brake the Boat”, followed immediately by “paddles flat” if the dragon boat is unstable and there is no immediate danger of collision. If there is a danger of a collision the command “stop the boat” should be given and the crew instructed by the sweep to do a reverse paddle stroke; that is all paddlers take a backward stroke with their paddle instead of a forward stroke. In a race situation when a collision is imminent, the sweep must immediately tell the crew to “Stop the boat”. Failure by the crew to stop the dragon boat in such circumstances can result in disqualification. Practise stopping a dragon boat during training. Crew should know what to expect when a sweep calls “Stop the boat” , “Brake the Boat”,

Note: The intensity , or urgency, of ‘braking’ required to reduce a boats momentum can be conveyed via the words used and the emphasis, or tone placed upon them. For example Loudly calling “STOP STOP STOP”, or “Stop Hard” (or similar) would indicate a more aggressive stopping motion that a softer call of “Take the Run Off” to indicate slight blade pressure on the water surface to slowly reduce forward motion.

2.16 Safety Equipment

All clubs should have a First Aid Kit available during the training sessions. As a minimum, the kit should have, in a waterproof container:

- 50mm bandage
- Adhesive tape
- Adhesive bandages
- Tweezers
- Scissors or knife
- Exposure bag or emergency blanket; and
- 10m of rope (6mm diameter minimum)

Note: Local and or State Regulations may require a longer length of (tow) rope to be taken onboard the dragon boat. (e.g NSW Maritime rules stipulate 25 metres, along with a flare and/or mobile phone after dark). Additional safety equipment may also be required on board, such as bailers, or whistles (to attract attention). Check local regulations and adhere to them!

2.17 Racing at a Regatta

AusDBF holds regattas at venues throughout Australia. Not all courses have lanes marked down the course such as the Sydney International Regatta Centre. At venues where there are no markings all sweeps should talk to one another and let each other know the landmark they are heading for at the other end of the course. At a regatta, safety comes before results. If you lose control of the dragon boat that you are sweeping and look likely to hit another dragon boat then you must stop the dragon boat under your control. If you don't stop the dragon boat, your crew can be disqualified. SAFETY FIRST in all instances. Some pointers for racing:

- Before sweeping at a regatta always check the race rules and ask question at the briefing for sweeps.
- Move to the start line promptly. Crew can be left behind !
- When lining up at the start line, talk to the sweeps around you if necessary to ensure all take the correct line down the course.
- If at the start line you are not ready or experience a problem, ensure your drummer and you hold up your hands. This ensures the Starter / Water Judge are aware of your difficulty.
- Brace yourself for the surge at the start of a race. Sweeps have been known to fall off the back of a dragon boat.
- If during a race a collision is about to occur, instruct your crew to stop the dragon boat. Race controllers may have more sympathy if you stop your dragon boat, than if you continue and have a collision.
- Keep your crew calm and balanced once the race has finished. This is when capsizes can and often do occur.

Suggestion: If a collision is imminent, the call may be “Collision ... STOP STOP STOP” to emphasize the need to stop immediately. Supported by the drummer, the strokes should be empowered to stop paddling and dig their paddle in, so the rest of the crew behind them follow.

2.18 The Paddler

The following are some quick tips about paddlers, they must:

- Be a minimum of 12 years old
- Be able to swim, confidently 50m in clothing (with a shirt, shorts, sandals as a minimum)
- Be honest about his/her ability
- Be aware of hypothermia and other dangers, and take the appropriate precautions
- Apply first aid if required) , and be able to use all equipment in all likely conditions
- Practise capsizes drills are not recommended as they can be dangerous and cause injury to paddlers.

2.19 Clothing

All paddlers should dress for the conditions. In the summer months – a paddlers wardrobe should include:

- Race shirt or singlet top
- Shorts or paddling shorts
- Boat shoes or the like
- Hat, sun glasses, sunscreen
- Water bottle

In the winter months, paddlers should dress for the conditions remembering that hypothermia can kill. As such a paddlers wardrobe should include:

- Wetsuit (without sleeves) , spring suit
- Woollen or thermals leggings and top
- Windproof jacket
- Wetsuit booties (socks etc)

- Woollen beanie
- If boat capsizes, will you be able to swim with extra or heavier clothing on, wear a PFD if not confident.

Note: Cotton should not be worn when dragon boating in cool conditions. Jeans should never be worn on the water.

2.20 Swimming

Ideally, all members in a dragon boat crew should be able to swim 50m, but as a minimum they must be water competent in cold and moving water and when dressed in light clothing, that is, racing dress (shorts and race top) plus a waterproof top and trousers and light footwear (trainers, crocs, thongs, water shoes or similar)

2.21 Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

In a formal competitive event and on placid water course, in normal summer conditions, and providing that the individual can swim, the AusDBF Competition Regulations and Rules of Racing do not require an experienced competitor to wear a PFD, such a buoyancy Aid.

When to wear them. All paddlers who are unable to swim at least 50m or who are not water competent MUST wear a PFD when both training and competing. Where local regulations at a race site require water users to wear PFDs, the whole crew will wear them, irrespective of their experience in the sport. In such cases it is the Event Organiser responsibility to notify crews whether or not the water operator provides PFDs and if NOT, it is the Crews Managers responsibility to ensure that the crew has sufficient of their own to cater for any conditions that they may encounter.

2.22 Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol and water do not mix. This is especially applicable to dragon boating. At no time should a sweep be in control of a dragon boat while under the influence of alcohol, either at training or during a regatta. Nor should a sweep take a crew onto the water when any member of the crew are under the influence of alcohol. Some Corporate crews like to consume alcohol during a regatta. If you are a sweep at a Corporate Regatta and you feel that one or more of the crew members are affected by alcohol, report to the Chief Race Official prior to leaving the shore. The Chief Race Official will then make a call as to whether the crew should be allowed to race.

2.22 Steerer's Calls and the Command Voice

A call is an oral instruction from a steerer. The steerer will need to deliver calls correctly so that the dragon boat crew will maintain optimal performance and discipline during training and racing. The precision and timing with which a movement is executed by the crew, is affected by the manner in which a call is given. Calls must be pronounced clearly and distinctly, and delivered with confidence and determination.

The Command Voice

A correctly delivered call will be understood by everyone in the crew and have characteristics that demand willing, correct, and immediate response. Calls are best heard and understood when given by a person who has developed a command voice. This voice is characterised by **DLIPS**: **D**istinctness, **L**oudness, **I**nflection, **P**rojection, and **S**nap.

Distinctness

Distinctness of voice is dependent on the correct use of the tongue, lips, and teeth to form the separate sounds that make up a word. Indistinct calls cause confusion whereas distinct calls are effective. All calls should emphasize correct enunciation so that each word is distinct and can be understood.

Loudness

Loudness is the volume used to give a call. It should be adjusted to the environmental conditions and the distance and position of individuals in the crew. The voice must have carrying power, without excessive exertion. Speak loudly enough for all to hear, but do not strain the vocal cords. A typical result of trying too hard is the almost unconscious tightening of the neck muscles to force sound out, causing damage to the vocal cords.

Inflection

Inflection is the rise and fall of pitch or variation of tone in the voice. When delivering two part calls, the preparatory part that announces the movement, should commence with a pitch close to the level of the natural speaking voice and have a rising inflection near or at the end, usually the last syllable. A properly delivered executive part, or combined call, has no inflection and is given at a higher pitch than the preparatory part.

Projection

Projection is the ability of your voice to reach whatever distance is desired without undue strain. To project a call, focus your voice on the person farthest away, using a distinct loud voice with inflection.

Snap

Snap is the conciseness of the command. It should be delivered with sharp emphasis, ending like the crack of a whip.

How to...

To develop your ability to give clear, distinct calls, practice, practice, practice. This is the only way to develop your command voice and deliver calls clearly.

- adopt an erect posture
- focus on proper breathing
- warm up your vocal chords. As with all exercise, warm up and avoid injury

- take a deep breath, hold it, open the mouth, relax the throat muscles, and snap out a series of “hats” or “huts”
- use a full, firm voice, and make the calls slowly and carefully
- the vowel sounds (a, e, i, o, u) should be prolonged. Consonants (letters other than vowels) and word endings should be curt and sharply cut off
- enunciate each syllable distinctly, making full use of the lips, tongue, and lower jaw
- keep your tongue down. Unless you're using your tongue to articulate a certain sound, keep it 'glued' to the inside edge of your lower front teeth. This lets more sound escape your mouth
- lift up your soft palate. That's the soft part at the back of the roof of your throat. You will create more volume for less effort
- practice “tongue twisters” and try to articulate them clearly
- gradually increase the rate of delivery until a uniform cadence is achieved.

Steerer's Calls

Instructions from the steerer are made up of calls. So that these calls and instructions can be defined, explained and delivered with maximum clarity, they will be considered as either two-part or combined calls. It is vitally important when proceeding, manoeuvring or stopping that the crew of a dragon boat knows **what** to do and **when** to do it. The dragon boat will perform optimally when all paddlers respond as directed, in unison.

Two-Part calls

Two-part calls, as the name suggests, have two parts: a preparatory part and the executive part. Neither part is a call by itself, but the parts will be termed calls to simplify instruction. The steerer's instructions are given in this form:

An optional “**identifier**” indicates **who** will perform the movement

The “**preparatory**” part(s) communicates **what** is to be done

The “**executive**” part commands **when** to do it

The **preparatory** call communicates the movement to be carried out and mentally prepares the crew for its execution. It *cautions* the crew that a movement is to be made and may also indicate a direction.

To identify **preparatory** calls in this manual they are shown beginning with a capital letter followed by lower case letters. The comma indicates a pause between the preparatory call and the executive call. In the call *Paddles, OUT*, the preparatory call is **Paddles**.

The **executive** call commands **when** the movement is to be done. The **executive** call is usually a word of one syllable, or two syllables shortened to one for a snappy delivery. In two-part calls, each discrete instruction requiring an action should end with an executive call which commands **when** to do it.

To identify **executive** calls in this manual they are shown in CAPITAL LETTERS. In the call *Paddles, OUT*, the executive call is **OUT**.

More than one preparatory call may be given, each usually separated by a standard pause of one second, for a stroke rate of 60 strokes a minute. (See “Cadence” for correct timing) For example, the call **Draw, Left, DRAW**, is also considered to be a two-part call even though it contains two preparatory commands.

Combined calls

In some calls, the preparatory call and the executive call are combined. BRAKE and GO are examples of combined calls. These calls are given without inflection and at a uniformly high pitch and loudness comparable to that for a normal **executive** call. To identify **combined** calls in this manual they are shown in UNDERLINED CAPITAL LETTERS. An example is BRAKE.

The call, “AS YOU WERE,” cancels a call started but not completed. The response to this call is for the crew to resume their former position.

Cadence

Cadence, in calls, means a uniform and rhythmic flow of words. The cadence of the calls should match the cadence of the paddling. This is the stroke rate. The interval between calls is uniform in length for any given stroke rate. This is necessary so that everyone in the crew will be able to understand the preparatory call and will know when to expect the executive call. To change the action, rate or effort level of a *paddling* crew, the preparatory call and executive call are given with an interval of one stroke or count. The same interval is used for calls given while the boat is stationary.

Longer calls, such as **Five, Four, Three, Paddles, OUT** must be started so that the call will end at the proper point or phase of the stroke. A full stroke or count should be left between each preparatory call and the executive call.

2.24 Calls from the Sweep

Call	Action
Back 2/3/4 rows	Only the paddlers in the designated rows paddle under the sweeps instruction. Other paddlers have their paddles out of the water. This can be use to manoeuvre to the start position.
Squad	This refers to all paddlers in the boat. This call should be used after instructions have been given to part of the crew for manoeuvring.
Numbering from the front (Head Count)	At the beginning before leaving the bank, beach or pontoon, the crew will call their number commencing with the drummer as 1 then, proceeding from the front left side , right side (seat 1 left is 2 , seat 1 right is 3) through the boat to the steerer (on a full boat the steerer will be 22) . If there is no drummer then numbering commences from the first occupied seat left 1 , right 2 continuing through the boat to the steerer.
Change Sides (from the front)	The paddlers change sides as instructed by the steerer. The paddlers should avoid sudden movements and transfer their weight uniformly to maintain the boat balance. This should be executed one row at a time. The row behind shouldn't start changing until the row in front has completely finished swapping.
Draw front left or right (specific seat numbers may be called to draw)	Is used by the nominated seats to pull the front of the dragon boat in line. The opposite side should hold their paddles flat. Some seats may be directed to hold water to minimise drift.
Draw back left or right (specific seat numbers may be called to draw)	Is used by the nominated seats to pull the back of the dragon boat in line. The opposite side should hold their paddles flat. Some seats may be directed to hold water to minimise drift.
Paddles behind, or Paddles back	Paddles are placed in a backward position for paddling backwards, awaiting the sweeps call "GO" to initiate reversing by pushing the blade forward in time with crew mates.
Paddles Up	Move paddle to the start position (paddles up). Paddles can be placed in the water (not moving) ready to take the first stroke.
Paddles Flat	Paddlers press the blade of the paddle flat on the water to stabilise the dragon boat (also known as "Bracing" the boat)
Paddles Out	Paddles come out of the water and the Dragon boat glide to a stop (same as "let it Run"
Hold Water	This is when paddlers hold their paddles still in the water to halt the dragon boat motion and to keep the boat stationary.
Dig it in / Stop the boat / Brake the boat	Paddlers stop the dragon boat quickly by holding the paddle vertically in the water
Set Yourselfs	Crew members lean forward with arms straight, resting on the gunwales and with the paddle at a 90 degree angle, nearly touching the paddler in front of them.
GO	Start paddling
Let it Run	Paddles come out of the water and allow the dragon boat to glides to a stop

Rest/Relax	Crew members must remain seated where they are but can relax, drink, re-apply wax to paddle shafts and chat with others around them.
As you were	This cancels a call started but not completed. The response from the crew is to resume their former position.

2.25 Calls from the Starter

Call	Action
All boats hold	The paddlers hold their paddles still in the water to halt the boats motion and to keep the dragon boat stationary
Are you ready	The crew moves their paddles to the start position with the paddle fully immersed. If the crew is not ready the drummer must immediately raise a hand above head height. The drummer is forbidden to take such action prior to this call. All movement of paddles to align the boat must stop.
Attention	The command to GO or the starting signal is imminent, and in any case shall not exceed 5 seconds. The crew should ready themselves to take the first stroke.
'GO' Alternatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gun shot • Electronic start signal • Other distinct sound as specified. 	Commence Racing.
STOP STOP STOP Alternatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating the start signal • Using the alternative start signal as specified. 	There has been a false start. Boats are to return to the start line.

AusDBF Sweep Assessment

Test Date:	Test Location:	Sweep Coordinator:

Sweep Name:	
Dragon Boat Club:	
Written Test Result	

	n/a	Poor	Ok/Pass	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Test notes	Test Result
	0	1	2	3	4	5	Comments	Advice
Head Count								
Boat Balance								
Vocal Projection								
Commands Used								
Standard Language								
Crew Control								
Turn Left								
Turn Right								
Stopping Boat								
Start Line Approach								
Drift Management								
Reversing Boat (general)								
Reversing Boat (start pontoon)								
Straight Line								
Wake Control								
360 Awareness								
X-factor (confidence)								

Notes:

OVERALL RESULT	
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Test Conditions:	
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Novice Sweep (L0) – Club Training Checklist

Sweep name:	
Club:	
Instructor/s	
Training Hours	
Minimum Required:	

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Ready to test
Basic Skills											
Head Count											
Boat Balance											
Vocal Projection											
Commands Used											
Standard Language											
Crew Control											
Turn Left											
Turn Right											
Stationary Pivot turn											
Stopping Boat											
Wake Control											
Approach Loading Area											
Area Awareness											
Race Ready Skills											
Start Line Approach											
Drift Management											
Reversing Boat (general)											
Reversing Boat (pontoon)											
Straight line											
X-Factor (confidence)											

Training Notes:
