

Thames Ditton Regatta: Saturday, 16 May 2026

SAFETY PLAN

Assessment of risk to health and/or safety to those persons:

- On the river; or
- By the river and affected by the conduct of the race on the river.

These persons may be categorised as follows:

1. Persons competing in a race (crews).
2. Event officials supervising the racing.
3. Crews proceeding to and from a race.
4. Others assisting the organisers.
5. Others navigating on the river.
6. Others using the enclosure and banks, towpaths and footpaths.

The Overarching Safety Plan:

All competitors, coaches, officials and all those assisting the organisers shall:

1. Except when the Race Rules state otherwise, observe the River Thames byelaws. The key elements for boats involved in Thames Ditton Regatta can be summarised as:
 - Keep to starboard (boat/cox's right).
 - If you think you are at risk of colliding head on with a boat heading towards you, move to starboard.
 - Keep a good look-out at all times.
2. Implement the provisions of the British Rowing's Rules of Racing and RowSafe – Safety advice for rowers, clubs and competitions ("RowSafe").
3. Be observant and aware of the risks related to use of the river for the purpose of competitive racing and of the need to prevent accidents at all times.
4. Comply with all requests and instructions issued by the Race Committee and its officials and/or the Environment Agency's officers, designed to prevent accident, injury and or ensure the safety and welfare of those involved with or affected by the conduct of the race.
5. Ensure that each person taking part has been assessed and trained to the level of competency required by British Rowing to enable them to safely compete in the race. This is particularly important in relation to capsizes.

First aid facilities are provided by **Tactical Medical**. **Regatta Safety Services** will be in attendance with two fully equipped safety boats provided with radios on the regatta's network.

RISK ASSESSMENT

This assessment forms part of the safety management of the event and is submitted by the Competition Rowing Safety Advisor (CoRSA) appointed by the Organising Committee to assist them to plan the event and to conduct it safely, in accordance with British Rowing’s “Row Safe”.

Because of the changing nature of the river and its environment, the quantification of risk identified in this assessment is to be regarded as dynamic and a direct factor of those conditions prevailing both at the start of the race and during each part of it.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Overall risk	Mitigation
Failure to navigate safely or to keep a proper lookout				
Collisions with other vessels by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crews on the water • Officials and Umpires • Other vessels on the River 	Moderate to high: Damage/injury to people and equipment, capsize	Low	Low	All crews and officials are provided with a detailed circulation plan. The course is buoyed and notices are displayed in accordance with EA Regulations to warn other river users. There are three designated Casualty Landing sites.
Collisions with the land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cigarette Island • Palace Gardens • Riverbank/towpath (Barge Walk) • Thames Ditton Island • Hire Boat Moorings at Ferry Road, Thames Ditton 	Low: Damage to racing boats	Low	Low	All crews and officials are provided with a detailed circulation plan. Local Rule allows umpires to help racing crews avoid TD Island.
Collisions with fixed structures in the river <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hampton Court Bridge • Steamer Landing – Hampton Court (Middx) • Hire Boat Moorings – Hampton Court (Middx) • Stages at KGS boathouse (Surrey) • Thames Ditton Island, various moorings • Moorings at Ferry Road, Thames Ditton (Surrey) 	Low: Damage to racing boats and moored boats	Moderate	Low	All crews and officials are provided with a detailed circulation plan. Local rules allow for the steering of racing crews likely to hit moored boats adjacent to the course.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Overall risk	Mitigation
Failure to warn boats on the water of risk or danger	Moderate: Collision	Low	Low	All officials are alerted to the need to be vigilant at all times in managing the environment of the course (see TDR Instructions to Officials).
Collisions with water fowl or other animals	Low: Injury to fowl	Low	Low	All officials are alert to the need to be vigilant at all times in managing the environment of the course including water fowl and other animals (see TDR Instructions to Officials).
Other factors affecting the boat				
Adverse environmental conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced visibility e.g. fog, glare, haze, mist, snow, rainfall, darkness. • Localised extreme weather e.g. lightning strikes • Wind conditions e.g. squalls, affecting steering, boat stability • Water or stream conditions affecting steering, boat stability • Flooding, of banks and stages • Temperature, inducing rapid hypothermic conditions 	High/Moderate: Collision, capsize, swamping	Low (as racing would not take place in these conditions)	Moderate/ Low	The Race Committee and Event Rowing Safety Advisor will assess conditions before and during racing. See Regatta Cancellation and Adverse Conditions During the Event sections of this document.
Failure of boat's equipment e.g. steering, shoes, oars, riggers, slides, bow balls	Moderate: Inability to proceed safely or to race	Low	Moderate/ Low	Officials will conduct random checks on boats intending to race and prevent those which fail from going afloat unless the defects are remedied. However it remains the responsibility of the crew to ensure that their equipment complies with British Rowing's Row Safe regulations.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Overall risk	Mitigation
<p>Collisions on land with boats, vehicles, persons or cycles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles traversing site Barge Walk (officials and others on bank) 	<p>Moderate: Injury to persons or boats</p>	Moderate	Moderate	Marshals are positioned to manage the movement of trailers into and around the main regatta site. The boating areas are marked using safety netting. Trailer parking is managed to keep public footpaths clear.
Capsize	<p>High/Moderate: Hypothermia, drowning</p>	Low	Moderate	<p>Two safety boats on water to assist persons in the water. RowSafe recommends all competitors can swim 50m in kit.</p>
Other risks directly or indirectly affecting personal safety				
<p>Medical conditions associated with accidents/activities on or by rivers</p>	<p>High/Moderate: Drowning, hyperthermia, cardiac arrest, concussion, infection - Leptospirosis (Weil's Disease), infection – pathogens, Injury from trip or fall, lacerations, abrasions, skeletal/spinal injury, muscular Strain, burning or scalding (resulting from use of outdoor cooking equipment), a predisposition or medical condition adverse to athletic exercise</p>	Low	Moderate	<p>There is a Combined Casualty and Accident Plan and a Welfare Plan in place, and emergency medical cover on the water and on the land. The Welfare Officer patrols the site on the day.</p>
<p>Medical conditions related to environmental conditions</p>	<p>Low: Sunburn, dehydration, heat stroke or exhaustion, cold or chill due to low ambient temperature, rain or wind, lightning strikes, asthma, hay fever</p>	Moderate	Low	<p>There is a Welfare Plan in place to deal with these possibilities. The Welfare Officer patrols the site on the day. There is first aid cover on the water and on the land. Water bottles can be refilled at the KGS boathouse.</p>

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Overall risk	Mitigation
Movement of vehicles on site	Moderate: Damage to boats or people	Moderate	Moderate	No car parking on site apart from essential vehicles (including trailer towing vehicles, paramedic and safety vehicles). All vehicles to employ a banksman when manoeuvring.
Ground conditions. The site has uneven ground and can be slippery when wet.	Moderate: risk of minor injury	Moderate	Moderate	Regatta staff to keep footpaths clear of vehicles and boats. Instructions to competitors to include warnings about slippery conditions and the importance of appropriate footwear.

Regatta cancellation

The state of the river and its environment will be examined by the Race Committee, together with the Event Rowing Safety Advisor, in the days leading up to the event and on the morning of racing to permit the most immediate assessment of each risk to be determined and make possible the identification of others evident at that time. The Regatta Secretary and Regatta Chair will also be consulted.

Factors which will be assessed include (but are not necessarily limited to):

1. The rate of flow of the river and any forecast change thereof.
2. The weather conditions and forecast, including risks of rain, lightning and fog.
3. The direction and strength of the wind and any forecast change thereof.
4. The condition of the ground in the boating areas.

Any parameter that meets column 3 criteria would mean the event is cancelled. Other columns represent perceived risk to the event. Any decision to cancel the race will be taken by the Race Committee based on these factors.

Criteria	3	2	1	0
River boards on the Teddington stretch	Red	Yellow Increasing	Yellow Decreasing	Green
Stick test KGSBC landing stage	<45 seconds	45-50 seconds	50-60 seconds	>60 seconds
Visibility	Can't see the downstream end of Hampton Court moorings (<200m)		Can't see Hampton Court Palace (<400m)	
Wind	Force 6-7	Force 4-5	Force 2-3	
Ground condition in boating areas	Thick mud			Dry

The decision to proceed with the Event will also take note of the opinions of Elmbridge Borough Council, and the Molesey Lock Keeper.

- It is noted that in general on this stretch, the river goes up to Yellow at a Kingston flow rate of approximately 100 m³/s and Red at 150 m³/s, but it can go back down to Yellow at a rate faster than this.

- Stick tests conducted at KGSBC (on the regatta reach). If a stick dropped in the river at the upstream end of the Kingston Grammar School BC landing stage takes less than 45 seconds to float to the downstream end, the regatta will not take place.
- See [River Thames Flow at Kingston Bridge RCC](#) for flow rate at Kingston. Note that the stream at this location slows significantly for an hour or two approaching high water at Teddington Lock, and greatly increases for up an hour immediately after high water. This is most evident at spring tides. At very high spring tides, the weir at Teddington is overtopped and the flow reading is negative, as the stretch effectively becomes tidal.

The Race Committee Chair will keep a record of all decisions made in relation to the prevailing conditions and any decision to proceed with the event.

The examination by the Race Committee should be repeated before the commencement of racing in each subsequent division and take account of any incident that may have occurred previously.

Adverse conditions during the event

In the event of adverse conditions possibly putting competitors at risk once the Event has commenced (e.g. Strong Stream Conditions, lightning, high winds, etc.), the Race Committee will take the appropriate action (e.g. shorten or adjust the course, suspend racing and/or cancel the regatta).

The Regatta **Lightning Safety Plan** details action to take in the event of lightning (see below).

Agencies and others affected or potentially affected by the conduct of the Race

- British Rowing
- Environment Agency
- London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
- Borough of Elmbridge
- Hampton Court Palace
- Surrey Police
- Metropolitan Police
- South East Coast Ambulance Service
- London Ambulance Service
- Other River Users.

Related documents

- Thames Ditton Regatta Combined Accident and Casualty Plan: <https://thamesdittonregatta.co.uk/information-for-competitors/>
- Thames Ditton Regatta “Instructions for Crews”: <https://thamesdittonregatta.co.uk/information-for-competitors/>
- The Map of the Course identifying hazards, circulating patterns etc: <https://thamesdittonregatta.co.uk/information-for-competitors/>
- Thames Ditton Regatta “Instructions for Officials”
- British Rowing “Rules of Racing” [British Rowing Rules of Racing 2025](#)
- British Rowing “Row Safe” <https://www.britishrowing.org/about-us/policies-guidance/rowsafe/>
- The “Notice to River Users” issued by the Environment Agency giving details of the event, instructions to other river users and providing for the establishment of a buoyed regatta course: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/river-thames-restrictions-and-closures>
- The Environment Agency’s River Thames: Navigation, Licensing and General Byelaws 1993 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-navigation-licensing-and-general-byelaws-1993>
- The Calendar of Events issued by the River User Group for Reach 16: <http://thamesrug8.org.uk/Notices-Documents-Calendar/>

Lightning Safety Plan

This section sets out guidelines on what to do in the event of lightning strikes during the event. The Regatta Chair, Race Committee Chair, Regatta Secretary & Safety Adviser are responsible for the operation of this procedure.

Flash Seen

Start counting. Consider suspend boating depending on the number of seconds and keep a close watching brief.

Another Flash within three minutes

Suspend boating.

Flash/Bang Combo under 30 seconds

Start to clear the river and surroundings.

Clearing the river and surroundings

Umpires at the Start should race crews down the course as it is the quickest way back. After the race, they herd both crews to the boating area (regardless of whether a crew might otherwise have rowed home). This also has the merit of controlling the flow of boats arriving to get out at the beaches.

Meanwhile, & once we have run out of umpires already at Start, Safety Start & Sheepdog herd the remaining crews to the boating areas.

All persons advised to take cover away from trees and to hold rowing equipment (e.g. blades) in the horizontal position.

Those on Albany Reach should be advised to seek shelter either in their vehicles or at the KGS boat house. This is done across the PA & by umpires with megaphones.

The core regatta team will head for cars and try to stay in close proximity to facilitate decision making.

Everyone else will head to the KGS boathouse - including Control Commission umpires who have radios. If the radio network goes down then telephones will be used.

Umpires on the far bank will head for the ticket office at Hampton Court Palace.

If 30 minutes of no bangs has been met

If all other conditions have been met and the Race Committee decides there is enough time left to resume the regatta in some form, Race officials & Safety start to boat. New timetable to be issued. Let crews return to boating.

Further considerations

Remember to check if competitors and/or the regatta team got particularly wet or cold.