

The Ottawa New Edinburgh Club's Guidelines for Touring

Touring on the Ottawa River requires abiding by many of the same rules and guidelines that other ONEC boats must adhere to. The following are a few points to be aware of whenever touring along the section of ONEC's rowing course on the Ottawa River.

Touring Leader

Each touring crew should have a leader who performs the following tasks:

- Checks weather report to ensure tour can go ahead without lightning, white caps, or high winds.
- Informs ONEC Touring Program Coordinator of issues related to the crew that they may need assistance with.
- Schedules rows and communicates with crew and club.
- Performs emergency scheduling in the event of a last minute cancellation to find substitute rowers.
- Notifies club of damaged equipment.
- May choose a Tour Boat Captain if they don't act in this role.
- Ensures that tours have regular washroom and stretching breaks every one to 1.5 hours.

Captain:

Each Touring Leader or crew should designate a captain who takes responsibility for the safety of the crew:

On short and long tours:

- Informs the club manager where they will be going and expected time back, if they are venturing away from the regular club course.
- Brings adequate safety gear: signaling device (whistle, horn, mirror), bailing can/pump, horn, long rope, lifejackets, and paddle or boathook.
- Informs crew beforehand to stay with the boat in the event of capsizing, though touring boats are very stable and this is highly unlikely.
- Ensures that there is a bow and stern line to tie up the boat.
- Monitors of weather reports before setting out and making the decision whether to go out or not.
- Brings back the boat when storms threaten and before the sun is about to set.
- Watches out for other rowers health situations, in case someone is not feeling well, it may be best to return to the club or to shore.
- Ensures that tours have regular breaks to stretch and use washrooms every one to 1.5 hours.
- Makes sure the boat is in good condition (not leaking or badly damaged).
- Notifies club of damaged equipment to ensure ONEC can fix it well enough before the next row and so that other rowers may not be put at risk if they mistakenly take out a damaged boat.
- Makes sure the boat is put away properly and not damaged in the process.
- May bring a cell phone for communication with the club, if you run into delays and need to inform them.
- Always looks out for health and safety of crew, recognizing that not all crew members may have equal endurance and stamina.

On longer tours:

- Ensures first aid box is on-board that contains disinfectant, bandages, sunscreen, insect repellent, antihistamine cream, etc.
- Everyone is adequately dressed and has suntan lotion.
- Maps and any other navigational devices deemed necessary.

Cox's Responsibilities:

Each crew will have a cox who can switch positions with other crew members after breaks. Their responsibility is to steer the boat according to the directions of the Touring Captain and to ensure the health and safety needs of the crew are met. If a rower is in distress, they must ensure that the rower's physical needs are met, such as stopping for washroom or stretching breaks and asking how the crew is feeling from time to time to monitor their level of comfort. They must avoid obstacles including deadheads, other boats, and rocks. They must avoid other boats in compliance with the following Coast Guard safety regulations:

Safety Regulations (Coast Guard)

Under the Canadian Coast Guard regulations, **a rowing boat is considered to be unpowered and treated in the same way as a sailing craft.** The rules state:

- i. power boats give way to unpowered boats
- ii. **both** power and unpowered boats must give way to large craft which can only operate in a shipping channel
- iii. unpowered boats give way to other unpowered boats on their starboard quarter
- iv. when approaching head on, two boats should steer so as to pass each other to port

NOTE: The above is a condensed summary of the *Coast Guard Regulations* as given in the "Safe Boating Guide", which change from time to time. It is the responsibility of the Tour Leader and the Boat Captains to ensure that all vessels under their command comply with Coast Guard Regulations.

No licencing exists for unpowered craft in Canadian waters. However, every cox should understand how motorboats and sailboats operate, and to steer the rowing boat so as to give other boats "sea room". In particular, the cox must understand that:

- (a) the sails of a sailing boat often restrict the view of the helmsman, and
- (b) the course of a sailing boat are largely dictated by the wind – leave them room to tack!
- (c) the course of a personal watercraft **is totally unpredictable – give them lots of room!**
- (d) large motorboats (cruisers, etc) tend to keep a straight course (manoeuvring might upset their gin & tonic)
- (e) large motorboats & sailboats require deep water and may not be able to avoid you if doing so would send them out of the main channel

While the Boat Captain retains responsibility for the boat, the Cox is responsible for maintaining the course of his/her boat and for issuing rowing commands to the crew. The Cox must operate under the general guidance of the Boat Captain.

Crew:

The crew also has responsibilities that include:

- Finding a substitute rower in the event they cannot row and inform the Touring Leader or Captain.
- Informing the captain beforehand of any physical or other limitations that may affect their abilities to row safely.

- Informing the captain or crew when they may be feeling ill, need a washroom break, need food or water, or are in need of a stretching break. (if you are feeling a need for a break, likely someone else is too and your informing the cox or captain is welcome.)
- Informing the captain beforehand as to when they have to return, if they cannot go out for a full tour.
- Bringing adequate clothing for changing weather conditions.
- Bringing adequate food or money for longer tours.
- Asking for help or assistance when they need it.
- Having a good time, all the time.

Rowing

Launching Touring Boats

Since touring boats are often heavier than racing shells, they are never lifted overhead, but are carried at the waste by the inner thwarts or by the riggers, closest to the hull (if you carry them too far from the hull, they may snap). It is never a bad idea to ask others to help out, since these boats can be weighty.

The boats have neither a fin keel nor a rudder protruding below the hull. So they can be laid directly on the ground (***never on rocks please***). This also allows them to be launched by sliding the hull directly into the water off a dock, but never from a rocky shore. From a rocky shore, the crew carries the boat right side up by its gunwales and walks into the water carrying the boat. Under these conditions, it is preferable to have at 6 or more people on each boat in case someone loses their footing.

Getting In and Setting Off

As in a racing shell, before you embark, ***all of the blades must be installed and baggage stowed.***

- ***Occasionally, you may have to embark from a rocky shore, or from a very high dock. Both situations are quite difficult and must only be attempted under the direct guidance of an experienced person.***
- If the dock is suitably low, the entire crew can board simultaneously. Otherwise, board one at a time.
- ***Make sure that the riggers never support the boat's weight.*** You may have to protect the riggers by moving the boat away from the dock to complete loading/embarkation.
- If boarding is from a beach, board one at a time with the rest of the crew steadying the boat. Once each rower has boarded, they must hold the boat steady with their blades for the next crew member.
- Check that the course is clear before starting to row.
- ***In currents, try to adjust footstops before pushing off from the dock.*** Launch quickly and don't allow the boat to drift into rocks. If you need further adjustments, row to a safe back eddy first, so that the boat doesn't drift out of control. Keep all oars level on the water, so that they don't get pulled under the boat and cause it to flip or get stuck.

Docking or Landing

You dock in the same way other club boats do at the ONEC. At the Rockcliffe Marina, ensure you dock away from the fueling station and at a place that is ok with their dockmaster. The best spots are usually to the west where there are visitor berths. This is a good place to switch coxes and go for refreshments. Other places include the Rest O'Bord restaurant on the Gatineau side. Make sure the boats have been tied up well and that lifejackets are slipped around the riggers to act as bumpers to protect the boat when large waves run up against them.

For other landings, it is come to land/dock facing into the wind and/or the current to allow the boat to stop gently. If the current is against the wind, come to land against the current and with the wind so that the boat can be steered (making way through the water) when not actually moving.

a. Beach Landing

Approaching a beach, watch for rocks or deadheads which might damage the boat.

- Do not run the boat up the beach!
- Have one or two crew disembark **before the boat grounds**. Let them guide the boat in to the beach.
- If there are waves, ***never allow the boat to pound the shore!*** Put it “high & dry”.

b. Locks

When landing at locks where the dock is higher than the boat, fold oars to the side, while leaning away from the dock. Moor the boat away from the lock doors, where the current can be highest when water is allowed to flow out. If caught in a current near the doors, ensure all crew members keep their blades flat on the water to avoid oars getting pulled under the boat and flipping it.