

Check List – Steering Accreditation

(used in 2008 Lethbridge Dragon Boat Practices for dryland and on water-training of steerspeople)

(reviewed March 2009)

Steersperson:

- Sets the path the boat is to take
- Responsible for the safe operation of the dragon boat
- Knows the correct boat crew commands to call out
- Ensures safety equipment is on the boat
- Is the person, ultimately, in control of the boat
- Once away from the dock, the steersperson will hand over the control of the boat to the drummer who will then lead the practice or call the race

At any time the steersperson can take over the boat for safety reasons

Steersperson needs to ensure that:

- That each member of their crew has a personal floatation device (PFD) or lifejacket of appropriate size for each member of the crew, the Festival requires that each crew member wear their PFD or lifejacket at all times while on the water & on the dock
- Two bailers are in the boat
- Sounding device (whistle) with the drummer or steersperson
- Toss bag is in the boat
- Steering oar is securely tied into the bracket

Weather Conditions

- Review the weather report prior to the practice
- Prior to going onto the water pay attention to wind direction, currents, waves, and areas of clouds.
- Be aware of changing weather patterns and avoid gusting conditions
- Plan ahead prior to docking; e.g. dock coming into a strong wind

Body Position and Attire

- Establish a comfortable position and steady steering position ,
- Well balanced with knees bent
- Make your stance wider than shoulder width
- Remain standing while steering
- Wear footwear with good grip
- Cap and/or Sunglass, especially during late afternoon practices

Steering

- While you are practicing, learn instinctively how your boat turns:
 - pull the steering oar right to turn left, and
 - push the steering oar left to turn right.
- Learn that the boat reacts at differently to the steering oar at different speeds

- The angle of the steering oar and depth of the oar also effect steering. Practice and get used to these differences.
- It is a good practice to hold your headings (course, direction) constant and make gradual course changes
- Practice back paddling the boat, know the turn circle and how to steer a straight course backwards
- Once confident, learn/practice how the steering oar reacts once the boat turns off course

Clear Voice & Commands (See Paddling Boat Commands)

- The steersperson needs to communicate in a loud clear voice. The steersperson is responsible for the safe operation of the dragon boat, therefore your instructions take priority over the drummer, coach, or captain.

Safety Count (See Dragon Boat Safety Count)

- A safety count is done before getting in the boat.
- After lining up on shore, steersperson will call "Safety Count"
- The count will begin with the drummer and continue with the paddlers left to right and end with the steersperson.
- Steersperson will call "Good Count" (steersperson needs to hear everyone in the boat)
- Another safety count is done before exiting the boat or on the dock before returning to shore.

Loading/Unloading

- Coordinated by the drummer, steersperson, and dock master. Dock master has control of the boats at the dock, until it leaves the dock, and when it is coming in to dock.

Have your team adopt good skills in getting in and out of the boat at the dock:

- The drummer and steersperson getting in first and out last
- **load and unload from the centre of the boat out (preferred)**
- **ultimately as instructed by the Dock Master.**

To make loading and unloading efficient and a team effort paddlers need to assist each other:

- Paddlers hold the boat next to the dock (**fingers and thumbs on the inside of the boat**)
- Dockside paddlers hold on to the dock (watch your fingers!!!) to help stabilize the boat.
- Waterside paddlers, 'Brace the Boat' with your paddles.
- When docking, the dock lines should be ready to hand to the people on the dock.

Balance the Boat

- Have the paddlers dock side push away from the dock with their hands
- Check the boat for balance. This will involve a command of 'Lean Out'
- Make changes as needed
- Bring the boat back to the dock; shift people right/left and forward/back.

Paddlers responding to Commands (See Paddling Boat Commands)

- Paddlers need to follow all instructions quickly.
- For the safety of the team, the paddlers need to follow the commands.

Be Aware of Your Proximity to Objects

- Other boats, moored boats, the dock, shore, etc.
- Watch for boats moving in and out of the dock and give them ample clearance
- Give small boats the clearance they need
- Always shoulder check before changing course; e.g. turning
- Stay to the right when passing oncoming boats
- Yield to any boat approaching you from the right hand side – it has the right-of-way
- When overtaking another boat stay well clear of the boat being overtaken
- If there is any risk of collision with another boat or object and **take all action necessary to avoid such a collision.**