

**TOPMADE DRAGON BOAT CLUB**  
**SAFETY RULES AND REGULATIONS**  
TOPMADE DRAGON BOAT CLUB, TDBC, CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA

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**1.0 PREAMBLE**

- 1.1 Safety of all club members is the number one priority in helping all members paddle/steer/drum in a rewarding and secure environment.
- 1.2 This manual is to be used primarily by the Drummers, Steerspersons, Coaches, and Team Captains, as a guide, in conjunction with the Steersperson/Drummers Manual, to *train all members of the Topmade Dragon Boat Club ("TDBC") about "Dragon Boat Safety Guidelines."*
- 1.3 A Drummer, Steersperson, Coach, and Team Captain:
  - 1.3.1 Ensures the safety of a team on the reservoir during practice and the Calgary Dragon Boat Festival by following the established procedures, as laid out in this manual.
  - 1.3.2 Ensures a team does not jeopardize the safety of other vessels on the water during training and races;
  - 1.3.3 Teaches the team to be responsible in meeting the above two (2) goals. Everyone has a responsibility to "SAFETY".
- 1.4 The Drummer and Steersperson are in control of the dragon boat and are in the best position to make decisions involving safety (i.e. determining whether the boat and crew remain on the water, or return to dock, or head for calmer water). This responsibility is also shared with the Coach and Team Captain.

**2.0 DEFINITIONS AND TERMS**

- 2.1 Boat Patrol – Rescue and patrol boat on the Glenmore Reservoir operated by the City of Calgary
- 2.2 Bow – front of the dragon boat.
- 2.3 Buoy – a floating marker that is anchored to the bottom of the reservoir; mooring buoys are attached to a boat when it is not being used for a practice or race, or is used to mark lanes/areas
- 2.4 Gunnel – upper side edge of the dragon boat.
- 2.5 Mooring Rope – rope that is located at the bow and stern of the boat to tie the boat to the docks, or to a mooring buoy in the reservoir.
- 2.6 PFD – Personal Floatation Device; coast guard approved life jackets
- 2.7 Reservoir – Glenmore Reservoir
- 2.8 Stern – back of the dragon boat

**3.0 GLENMORE RESERVOIR RULES AND REGULATIONS**

- 3.1 Swimming is strictly prohibited. There is a fine of up to \$2,500 for anyone who swims in the Reservoir. Boat Patrol strictly enforces this rule.
- 3.2 Dogs are not allowed to swim in the Reservoir or be on the beach or dock areas. This infraction will result in a fine.
- 3.3 Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) must be worn at ALL times (Glenmore Park Bylaw 9018).

**4.0 MEMBER PERSONAL SAFETY**

- 4.1 PFDs are provided to all members and must be worn in the proper manner at all times while in the dragon boat and on the dock.
- 4.2 Each member is required to be able to swim 50 meters while wearing a PFD.
- 4.3 Each crew member is solely responsible for his or her own safety at any time while engaging in activities related to practicing and racing in the dragon boat.
- 4.4 Any injuries occurring as a result of participating in the practices or races must be reported immediately to the Team Captain or Coach.
- 4.5 The Topmade Dragon Boat Club Safety Rules and Regulations must be observed at all times during practices and where applicable during the race.

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**5.0 THE COMMUNITY WE SHARE THE RESERVOIR WITH**

5.1 QUIET VESSELS

The vessels listed below are naturally powered (i.e. no engine). You will not hear them approaching, so it is important to understand their behavior (stability, speed and hazards).

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|---|--|
| SAILBOATS                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems with visibility around the sail and mast.</li> <li>• Steering control decreases in high winds.</li> <li>• Various "learn-to-sail programs" are conducted throughout the season. Do not assume skilled sailors.</li> <li>• Sailboats are not allowed to enter the laned area of the reservoir.</li> </ul>   |
| ROWING BOATS (SHELLS)<br>\$5k- \$12k per boat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shells are very light and unstable boats. Rowers must constantly adjust their course according to water and wind conditions. Do not assume that shells always travel in straight lines.</li> <li>• Rowers look the opposite way they are traveling. Their backs are facing the direction of travel.</li> <li>• Even if there is a Cox (person who steers the shell or calls out rowing rhythm. The Cox is situated very close to the water level so the individual cannot always see where they are going.</li> <li>• Rowers often do interval training, so you cannot depend on constant speed. Remember, shells can accelerate to high speeds very quickly.</li> <li>• The degree of injury in the event of a collision with another vessel increases as the shell's velocity increases.</li> <li>• Various "learn-to-row programs" are conducted throughout the season. Do not expect a novice rower to move out of your way.</li> </ul> |
| RECREATIONAL CANOES                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume novice users who are allowed to launch on the Reservoir.</li> <li>• There is no rule or regulation constraining the direction or use of a canoe vessel.</li> </ul>   |
| RECREATIONAL KAYAKS                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kayaks can change direction very quickly and for the most part are stable vessels.</li> <li>• A large majority of kayak users on the Reservoir are high school or university students and novice kayakers with "learn-to-kayak programs."</li> </ul>  |
| RACING CANOES AND KAYAKS                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremely unstable</li> <li>• Paddlers choose their course based on water and wind conditions.</li> <li>• Novice to intermediate paddlers can be capsized by a dragon boat's wash (surge or eddy of water caused by oars/paddles).</li> <li>• Be considerate! Drummers and Steerspersons should check behind the dragon boat to make sure vessels have not been capsized.</li> </ul>  |

5.2 MOTORIZED VESSELS

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|----------------------------|--|
| COACH AND BOAT PATROL BOAT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach boats may be seen following racing canoes and kayaks, and shells.</li> <li>• Boat Patrol is the main safety boat operated by the City of Calgary and will respond to all emergencies on the Reservoir, and is responsible for enforcing the Glenmore Reservoir rules and regulations.</li> </ul>  |
| SS MOYIE                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a big paddle wheel boat operated by Heritage Park.</li> <li>• The captain and co-captain who reside in the captain's booth navigate the SS Moyie, which is located at the highest point of the vessel.</li> <li>• There are two predefined routes that the SS Moyie follows, but do not have to follow.</li> <li>• It is not allowed into the laned area of the Reservoir.</li> <li>• The SS Moyie is not a responsive boat; therefore it changes speed and direction very slowly.</li> <li>• The wake behind the SS Moyie is considerable. Try to avoid getting caught behind the wash. If you do end up in the wash, meet the wash head on, NOT parallel to the side of the dragon boat.</li> </ul> |

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**6.0 PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICE (PFD): USE AND CARE**

- 6.1 Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) *must be worn at ALL times while on the docks, in the canoe or dragon boat.* There are absolutely NO exceptions to this rule.
- 6.2 All members are supplied with a Club PFD to use during practice and race weekends. No personal PFDs will be authorized for use.
- 6.3 To ensure safety for yourself and your team, please select the proper size of PFD based on your body size and type. If unsure, please check with your Team Captain, Coach or Equipment Manager.
- 6.4 DO NOT sit or rest on PFDs. The added compression to the PFDs will decrease the PFDs' buoyancy.

**7.0 RETRIEVING AND RETURNING THE DRAGON BOAT**

- 7.1 RETRIEVING THE DRAGON BOAT
  - 7.1.1 Individuals designated to retrieve the dragon boat must be at practice 30-45 min. prior to published practice time.
  - 7.1.2 Three (3) members are required with a minimum of one (1) member being experienced in steering. Absolutely NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule.
  - 7.1.3 Retrieve canoe from the canoe rack. Remember to obtain the canoe lock key to unlock the canoe from the rack. The canoe key is stored in the Sea Container in the key box mounted against the sidewall.
  - 7.1.4 Carry the canoe to the dock area. Once again, three (3) members are required.
  - 7.1.5 Load and launch the canoe from the docks and paddle out to the dragon boat. Load the canoe from the middle outwards. This will be the most stable process of loading and unloading the canoe.
  - 7.1.6 Unlock the dragon boat from its buoy and lock the canoe to the same buoy. The lock key is on the same key chain as the canoe key.
  - 7.1.7 Load the dragon boat with two (2) persons in either row 3 or 4 (main paddlers) and one person in row 10 to steer and direct the boat. Paddle the dragon boat back to dock for practice.
  - 7.1.8 At dock, USE CAUTION when docking, as the dragon boat will move around a lot, since the boat is not full of paddlers to hold the boat.
  - 7.1.9 One (1) person (herein refer to as "dock person") shall always be on the dock to help guide the dragon boat into dock via the mooring rope.
  - 7.1.10 Rear person will exit the dragon boat and tie the rear of the boat to the dock. The dock person will tie the front of the boat to the dock.
  - 7.1.11 DO NOT tie the boat tightly to the dock as this makes it unstable to board if the water conditions are choppy.
- 7.2 RETURNING THE DRAGON BOAT
  - 7.2.1 Three (3) members are required with a minimum of one (1) member being experienced in steering. Absolutely NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule.
  - 7.2.2 Load the dragon boat with two (2) persons in either row 3 or 4 (main paddlers) and one person in row 10 to steer and direct the boat. Paddle the dragon boat from the dock back to the buoy.
  - 7.2.4 Unlock the canoe from the buoy and lock the dragon boat to the same buoy. The lock key is on the same key chain as the canoe key.
  - 7.2.5 Enter the canoe by starting in the middle, then rear, and lastly front. This is the most stable process of loading the canoe.
  - 7.2.6 Paddle the canoe back to dock.
  - 7.2.7 At dock, paddle the canoe to the side of the dock. Unload the canoe from the outside in. Start with the front, then rear and lastly, middle. This is the most stable process of unloading the canoe.
  - 7.2.8 Carry the canoe from the dock to the canoe rack.
  - 7.2.9 Place the canoe, upside down, on the canoe rack and lock up the canoe.

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**8.0 LOADING AND UNLOADING DRAGON BOAT PROCEDURE**

- 8.1 LOADING AND UNLOADING A DRAGON BOAT PROCEDURE (TEAM CAPTAIN TO COORDINATE AND EXECUTE)
- 8.1.1 Roster team on shore in the order of rows prior to walking down to the dock.
  - 8.1.2 Have team walk down to the dock, maintaining this line up.
  - 8.1.3 Prior to loading or unloading, ensure the dragon boat is tied at both the bow and stern.
  - 8.1.4 Maintain this line up on the dock next to the boat.
  - 8.1.5 Load the boat from middle rows then work towards each end, alternating (starting with row 6, then 5 and 7, then 4 and 8, etc.) Drummer or steersperson may assist in calling in rows.
  - 8.1.6 Unload the boat from outer rows (alternating between front and back, starting with row 1) working towards the middle of the boat.
- 8.2 BOAT PATROL RADIO LOCATION
- 8.2.1 The Boat Patrol Radio is enclosed in a white rectangular enclosure, mounted on the flagpole to the right of the docks, when facing the water.
  - 8.2.2 If a GREEN flag is flown, Boat Patrol is patrolling the reservoir.
  - 8.2.3 Procedures 8.3 and 8.4 are to be completed by the Team Captain at each practice.
- 8.3 RADIO PROCEDURE PRIOR TO LOADING THE DRAGON BOAT FOR DEPARTURE
- 8.3.1 Power microphone and wait for "Beep."
  - 8.3.2 Speak: Topmade Dragon Boat to Glenmore Boat Patrol.
  - 8.3.3 Wait for Response (i.e. Glenmore Boat Patrol Send).
  - 8.3.4 Speak: Topmade Dragon Boat Departing Heritage Docks, Over.
  - 8.3.5 Wait for Response (i.e. Confirmed Out or 10-4 Out).
  - 8.3.6 Speak: Topmade Dragon Boat, Out.
  - 8.3.7 Power off microphone.
- 8.4 RADIO PROCEDURE AFTER DRAGON BOAT HAS RETURNED AND IS UNLOADED
- 8.4.1 Power microphone and wait for "Beep."
  - 8.4.2 Speak: Topmade Dragon Boat to Glenmore Boat Patrol.
  - 8.4.3 Wait for Response (i.e. Glenmore Boat Patrol Send).
  - 8.4.4 Speak: Topmade Dragon Boat has Returned to Heritage Dock, Over.
  - 8.4.5 Wait for Response (i.e. Confirmed Out or 10-4 Out).
  - 8.4.6 Speak: Topmade Dragon Boat, Out.
  - 8.4.7 Power off microphone.

**9.0 CHAIN OF COMMAND**

- 9.1 Always obey the CHAIN of COMMAND. Yes, we mean ALWAYS, even if you hear "Check the Boat" during the middle of a race!!!
- 9.2 1<sup>st</sup> in Command – Steersperson/Drummer
  - 9.3 2<sup>nd</sup> in Command – Drummer/Steersperson
  - 9.4 3<sup>rd</sup> in Command – Coach
  - 9.5 4<sup>th</sup> in Command – Team Captain
  - 9.6 5<sup>th</sup> in Command – Team Co-Captain

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**10.0 CHECKING BOAT BALANCE**

- 10.1 DRUMMER AND STEERSPERSON WILL COORDINATE AND EXECUTE THE FOLLOWING:
- 10.1.1 After members have boarded the boat, the mooring ropes are untied.
  - 10.1.2 Request paddlers to push off from dock using their hands. DO NOT use the blade end of the paddle. Let the dragon boat come to rest.
  - 10.1.3 Ensure everyone is next to the gunnel and sitting straight up.
  - 10.1.4 Check the balance.
  - 10.1.5 Call all paddlers to come back into the boat.
  - 10.1.6 Have paddlers move as required to balance boat. (refer to Section 11.0).
  - 10.1.7 Once the dragon boat is balanced as best as possible, commence with the practice.

**11.0 SEAT CHANGES WITHIN A DRAGON BOAT**

- 11.1 DRUMMER AND STEERSPERSON WILL COORDINATE AND EXECUTE THE FOLLOWING:
- 11.1.1 The Captain and the Coach will try to balance the boat prior to boarding. Drummer and Steersperson will make required changes to seating arrangement, if there is an imbalance, after the boat has been loaded.
  - 11.1.2 If paddlers need to move to another seat, "check" (stop) the dragon boat.
  - 11.1.3 All paddlers must "hold" the dragon boat. This keeps the dragon boat stable from side to side (left to right). Continue to "hold" the dragon boat until the Drummer or Steersperson instructs the paddlers to stop.
  - 11.1.4 One paddler at a time, as instructed by the Drummer or Steersperson, shall be moved within the dragon boat.
  - 11.1.5 Drummer or Steersperson instructs the paddlers to release the dragon boat "hold".
  - 11.1.6 Practice continues.

**12.0 DRAGON BOAT RESCUE PROCEDURE**

- 12.1 SWAMPED OR CAPSIZED DRAGON BOAT DURING A RACE OR PRACTICE.
- 12.1.1 Once a dragon boat begins to capsize, it is very difficult to stop it. If you are on the higher side of the boat when it begins to go over, try to jump clear of your seat partner to avoid injury to him/her.
  - 12.1.2 If you come up under the boat, there will be an air pocket available for you to catch your breath and get your bearings.
  - 12.1.3 Feel your way to the side of the boat and then surface on the outside. All individuals MUST stay with the dragon boat. Grab the dragon boat gunnels to help remain with the dragon boat.
  - 12.1.4 The "Buddy System" (see 12.2) will be utilized – all paddlers must ensure their seat partner is present. The Drummer, Coach, Steersperson or Captain will initiate a head count (i.e. roll call of the paddlers in their seated rows). The total number of paddlers in the capsized dragon boat must equate to the number of paddlers before the start of each practice. If a member is missing, refer to Section 12.3.
  - 12.1.5 Next in command to determine if any person(s) is injured or requires immediate assistance.
  - 12.1.6 Once all paddlers are accounted for, stay calm and stay with the boat. Next in command to use whistle to attract attention from individuals on shore or in other vessels. A dragon boat in distress is easily recognizable. A call will be made to the Boat Patrol as soon as possible.
  - 12.1.7 Once the Boat Patrol arrives, follow the directions given. **The Boat Patrol is in control of the situation now and the only contact between the team and the patrol is the next in command.**
  - 12.1.8 Next in command will notify the Boat Patrol if any person(s) requires immediate assistance. Help those in need to the patrol boat first.
  - 12.1.9 Boat Patrol will remove the paddlers from the water as soon as possible. They may shuttle groups to the nearest shore or to the dock depending on the distance.
  - 12.1.10 Boat Patrol will tow the dragon boat to the dock. Any able bodies should be available to assist in removing water from the dragon boat.

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- 12.2 THE "BUDDY SYSTEM"
- 12.2.1 Know the person paddling in the seat next to you. In the event of an incident, you are responsible for ensuring that your partner is present and access whether they are injured.
  - 12.2.2 Each person is also assigned a number from 1 to X before loading onto the dragon boat. The 1<sup>st</sup> Command can initiate a roll call to account for everyone in the dragon boat.
  - 12.2.3 The first and last rows are responsible for the Drummer and Steersperson, respectively and the Drummer and Steersperson are responsible for the Coach.
- 12.3 MISSING INDIVIDUAL "FIND AND RESCUE PROCEDURE"
- 12.3.1 Have paddlers look around for the missing paddlers in their immediate vicinity without leaving the dragon boat.
  - 12.3.2 Each paddler to feel under the boat, within their immediate proximity, to see if the missing paddler is under the boat.
  - 12.3.3 If necessary, one individual ONLY, should check under the boat to ensure the missing person is not trapped underneath. This one individual will be assigned by the next in command.
  - 12.3.4 Notify Boat Patrol as soon as they arrive, of missing person(s), if person(s) is/are not found by then.
  - 12.3.5 Once Boat Patrol arrives, the Boat Patrol is in control of the situation now and the only contact between the team and the patrol is the next in command.
- 12.4 SWIMMING TO SHORE IN THE EVENT OF A CAPSIZE OR SWAMPED DRAGON BOAT
- 12.4.1 This option can ONLY be exercised if the dragon boat is located approximately 50 meters away from shore.
  - 12.4.2 Once the entire team is accounted for, a TEAM decision can be made on whether to stay with the dragon boat and wait for Boat Patrol, or swim to shore.
  - 12.4.3 If ANY individual on the team is not comfortable swimming to shore, the TEAM shall remain together with the dragon boat.
  - 12.4.4 If the decision is to swim to shore, a head count is required on shore to ensure the entire team is accounted for.

**13.0 WEATHER, WAVE AND WIND PATTERNS**

- 13.1 ALWAYS SEEK ADVICE FROM BOAT PATROL WHENEVER IN DOUBT. IF LIGHTNING IS PRESENT, BOAT PATROL WILL NOT ALLOW ANY VESSELS IN THE WATER. BOAT PATROL HAS THE FINAL DECISION.
- 13.2 WAVE AND WIND PATTERNS
- 13.2.1 Direct side waves are most dangerous for sinking the boat. As water goes over the side, the respective side of the boat begins to sink, letting in even more water.
  - 13.2.2 Be aware of heavy crews in waves, as they are the most likely to sink.
  - 13.2.3 Head winds are less likely to sink the boat but will make it difficult getting back to the dock. If you are paddling with a novice crew, it may take a long time. Do not panic and force the crew to get back to dock faster. Remain calm and encourage the crew with a steady paddle."
  - 13.2.4 Steersperson should be familiar with how to compensate for the wind. It is best to orientate the dragon boat length with or against the direction of the wave, to avoid the waves hitting the dragon boat on the sides.
  - 13.2.5 The wind generally blows across from Glenmore Landing in a SE – NW direction.
  - 13.2.6 The roughest section of the reservoir is the last 250m of the laned section and the sailing boat section.
- 13.3 WEATHER PATTERNS ON THE RESERVOIR
- 13.3.1 High winds or storms often come up around 3:30 or 4:00 pm and calm down around 6:00 pm. 1<sup>st</sup> practice on weeknights begins at 6:30 pm.
  - 13.3.2 During the weekends, added caution is required. Historically, mornings and early afternoon are calm and worry free. Late afternoon and early evening are when the weather pattern usually changes quickly. Check with Boat Patrol for guidance.
  - 13.3.3 If a storm is approaching with high winds, it is recommended that you follow the shoreline back to dock. The hills surrounding the reservoir will lessen the effects of the wind and in case of an incident; the shoreline can be more easily reached.
  - 13.3.4 The Coach, Captain, Drummer and Steersperson can also decide not to proceed

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with practice based on weather and the following considerations:

- Steersperson's level of experience and confidence
- Paddlers' level of experience and confidence

**14.0 MANDATORY DRAGON BOAT EQUIPMENT REQUIRED ON BOARD DURING PRACTICE**

14.1 THE DRAGON BOAT MUST CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT AT ALL TIMES DURING A PRACTICE OR RACE:

- 14.1.1 One (1) bailer located underneath the last row.
- 14.1.2 Two (2) whistles, one with the Drummer and one with the Steersperson. The whistles will be attached to the lifejackets.
- 14.1.3 Basic First Aid Kit

**15.0 REFERENCE MATERIAL**

- 15.1 City of Calgary Bylaw 9018, Glenmore Park
- 15.2 City of Calgary Bylaw 20M2003, Parks & Pathways
- 15.3 Canadian Community Dragon Boat Association (see website, [www.PaddlesUp.ca](http://www.PaddlesUp.ca))
- 15.4 Canadian Coast Guard <http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/>