



WHATCOM ROWING  
ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP  
HANDBOOK



## Whatcom Rowing Association Member Handbook

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## **WHO WE ARE**

The Whatcom Rowing Association is a nonprofit, community-based rowing club that is both a recreational and competitive rowing club that has served the Bellingham and surrounding areas since 2011. We are dedicated to offering individuals of all ages the opportunity to learn the sport of rowing in a safe, fun and beautiful environment. Our Association consists of both male and female rowers, whose experience ranges from beginner to advanced, and ages 13-80. We offer programs for a variety of age groups and experience levels. Whether you have never rowed before, training to be a collegiate athlete, looking for a recreational sport, or looking to be competitive, our Learn-to-Row, Junior and Masters programs offer something for all.

## **WRA AND USROWING**

The United States Rowing Association is the governing body for the sport of rowing. Members of USRowing include clubs, universities, high schools and other rowing organizations and individuals. Whatcom Rowing Association is an organizational member of USRowing in the Northwest Region. All of our rowers are required to be basic members of USRowing and sign an annual online waiver before participating. Members that choose to race in USRowing hosted regattas (Junior Regionals, Masters Nationals, etc.) are required to purchase the “Regatta Add-On” package in order to be eligible to participate in those races.

Please visit <https://membership.usrowing.org/> to sign your online USRowing waiver and complete your USRowing Membership

**CLUB CODE: APFSD**

## **VOLUNTEERS**

WRA is a community rowing program that relies heavily on its volunteer support. All WRA members are encouraged to pitch in when volunteer activities arise. We require 10 hours of service to the WRA from each member per year. We offer many ways to contribute to WRA, including but not limited to:

- Work Parties
- Regatta Support
- Serving on a Committee
- Volunteering with Learn to Row
- Boathouse Chores and More

Record your service hours by sending an email to [volunteer@whatcomrowing.org](mailto:volunteer@whatcomrowing.org) with your hours and tasks before December 15. Your involvement keeps our club running the way we like it to run, and it is a great way to meet other rowers! Suggestions are always welcome, and members are encouraged to volunteer with activities whenever feasible.

## **PROGRAMS AND MEMBERSHIP**

The Whatcom Rowing Association was established to provide rowing opportunities for all members of our community, from novices to racers and offers a variety of programs for adults and youth that provide

an opportunity to row regardless of your experience. Whether you are new to the sport of rowing or want to jump back in a boat. Specific programs are offered for beginners, recreational rowers and experienced rowers under the guidance of our coaches. We also offer opportunities for rowers of all levels to compete in regattas throughout the year.

WRA programs fall into three general categories:

- **Classes** – A class is open to anyone with the expertise required by that class; WRA membership is required for all classes except Learn to Row and Row for a Day.
- **Teams** – Teams are longer-term groups organized around a set of classes. Team members typically take these classes on an ongoing basis. WRA membership is required for all teams.
  - Examples – 5am Team, 8am Team, Evening Team, Junior Team.
- **Independent Rowing** – Adult Boat Use Cards allow rowers 18+ to access WRA’s small boats outside of regularly scheduled classes and to arrange private boat storage. WRA membership is required for all independent rowing activities. The Boat Use Card is included in the annual membership for adult rowers.. This fee is only prorated for new members or newly approved independent rowers.
  - Please see Safety Check out Independent Boat Use requirements on page 6.

## PROGRAMS

**Learn to Row (LTR)** – This co-ed, coached program is designed for adults who are new to the sport of rowing. Starting in the spring each year the Learn to Row program aims to teach you the basics of rowing and training with a team. Instruction is both on and off the water and focuses on building fitness, developing rowing technique along with water safety, flexibility, strength training and injury prevention.

LTR is a two step beginner program for people **with no prior** rowing experience. Practices are two-hours long, and are held twice a week for four weeks. Participants who successfully complete LTR I will be eligible to **sign up** for LTR II the following session. After successful completion of LTR I and II, rowers will have the **option** to choose to be on a team, try independent rowing, or both.

**Adult Teams** – These co-ed, coached programs are for members who have the desire to improve physically and technically in a team setting. Refining and improving technical skill development is the focus at this level with an increasing focus on fitness and strength along with focused race training when appropriate. Adult programs are available at a variety of times throughout the day and are based by season:

**Spring** - February thru mid-June

**Summer** – End of June thru August

**Fall** – September thru early November

**Junior Rowing** - The Whatcom Rowing Junior program consists of middle and high schools students grades 8-12 (7<sup>th</sup> with permission from Director) from the Whatcom County area. No rowing experience is necessary and new rowers can **join** at any time. Our focus is on learning proper rowing techniques, teamwork and having fun!

Whether your primary interest is competition, fitness, or fun, we have a place for you! Juniors will row in singles, doubles, quads and eights. They will be encouraged to develop confidence through teamwork and leadership, as well as individual goals. The team will also be participating in regional regattas throughout the year.

#### **Spring** - February thru mid-May

- Practices are held Monday - Friday 4:00-6:00 PM

#### **Summer** – End of June thru August

- Summer rowing consists of three 3-week sessions. Take one, two, or all three throughout the summer
- Summer practices are held Monday thru Thursday at 7:30 – 9:30 AM

#### **Fall** – September thru early November

- Practices are held Monday - Friday 4:00-6:00 PM

### **MEMBERSHIP**

WRA Membership is required for all adult rowers and is priced on an annual basis from January 1 – December 31.

#### **Membership Benefits**

- Access to WRA's indoor equipment
- Vote on club business that is presented at the annual meeting
- Adult members may be approved for "Adult Boat Use Cards" for checking out small boats and oars by completing a sculling checkout with the Director or approved coach.
- Guest rowing passes

#### **Becoming a Member**

To be a member you must complete the following:

1. Register for membership online and pay by credit card or via check to WRA
2. Read the WRA Rower's Handbook and watch the US Rowing Safety Video.
3. Sign the online US Rowing Liability Waiver. Enter **APFSD** under "Athletes" for the club code.
  - Note: Our liability insurance is through US Rowing, so to be covered under our insurance, All of our rowers are required to be basic members of US Rowing and sign and annual waiver before participating
4. Complete and turn in a signed float test if you have not already done so. The float test is valid for 5 years.
5. Complete a safety checkout (in person your first time/online if you are renewing)

## **Guest Policy**

As a club actively engaged in both rowing and community, we welcome visiting rowers as part of our programs. All guest rowers must fill out an individual US Rowing waiver to cover liability.. If you are a current US Rowing member with another organization, that covers your liability.

Prospective members and out-of-town visitors can contact to the club director [director@whatcomrowing.org](mailto:director@whatcomrowing.org) to arrange a row with us. In your note, please indicate your rowing experience, how long it has been since you rowed, and whether you are interested in sweep rowing, sculling, or both.

## **Visiting / Traveling Rowers**

Experienced, currently active rowers *who are not prospective members* are welcome to join us for a guest row during their travels. We ask guests to please register and pay our guest rowing fee via our website. The guest fee is \$25/day.

## **Prospective Members**

If you have rowing experience and are interested in getting back in a boat with us as a member, join us for a practice with one of our programs to try out the club before joining. We offer up to three rows to prospective members before asking for some form of a membership commitment.

## **Member Guests**

Members with an Independent Boat Use Card (IBC) will be provided with three (single use) guest passes each year which must be turned in along with the printed US Rowing waiver for each guest. No other guest passes will be available for purchase.

## **Guests of WRA are subject to the following rules:**

1. The guest is expected to follow all WRA procedures, rules, and safety guidelines laid out in the WRA Rower's Handbook.
2. The guest is required to sign a USRowing Liability Waiver prior to using WRA facilities or boats.
3. The guest is permitted to use the workout facilities with the supervision of the WRA Member
4. The guest is permitted to use club boats only while rowing with a WRA Member with a current Individual Boat Use approval).
5. The guest is permitted to use a private 2-/2x only while rowing with the owner of the boat.
6. The guest is permitted to use a private 1x only if the owner of the boat is present and rowing at the same time.
7. The guest is not permitted to reserve club boats on the reservation calendar. The WRA Member and guest must comply with all WRA safety guidelines as laid out in the WRA Member Handbook and IBC Safety Checkout.

## **Independent Boat Use Safety Checkout**

All new members must be checked out by the Director, Head Coach, or other authorized staff member.

The safety checkout consists of a review of all safety policies, skills test, flip test, a tour of the facility and details on the type and location of all equipment. Returning members must read the handbook and

Safety Talking Points and then successfully pass the online quiz. All rowers must acknowledge and sign that they have read the rules and that failure to follow these rules will result in the removal of membership from WRA.

Teams and classes will go through the safety talking points and watch the US Rowing Safety Video annually.

## **SAFETY GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS**

Safety on the water and in the boathouse is our number one priority. The Safety Committee of the WRA has enacted a number of policies and procedures to help keep our junior and adult members safe. These policies cover many areas of safety; however, the Safety Committee expects all employees and users of the WRA to use Common Sense in applying existing safety procedures and policies to situations that are not covered.

### **Lighting And Visibility**

All boats rowing out of the WRA must have a properly functioning bow and stern light when operating in the dusk or dark (1 hour before sunrise or 1 hour before sunset). Rowers are strongly encouraged to wear high visibility or reflective clothing (high-viz) to increase their visibility.

- All lights should meet Coast Guard minimum standards with no less than one nautical mile of visibility for bow lights and stern lights.
- A 360°/all-around white light on the stern of each rowing shell when rowing between sundown and sunrise. It should be visible enough to warn approaching vessels.
- The bow of every boat should have a red light on port side and green light on starboard side.

### **Weather**

Always use common sense and know what you can comfortably handle. Rowing in heavy waves is structurally hard on our boats and requires better than average technique. Rowing is prohibited under the following conditions:

- Whitecaps. If there are whitecaps on the lake when you exit the dock/swimming area turn around. If whitecaps develop while you are rowing, head for shore and find calm water or a beach.
- Thunder and lightning. Never row when there is the possibility of lightning. Do not start a row if you hear thunder; wait at least 30 minutes. If you hear thunder when you are out on the water, immediately head for shore.
- Fog. Do not row in fog. If you cannot see at least 100 yards, then you shouldn't start a row.
- Freezing temperatures. Do not row if there is ice at the edges of the water, or ice on the dock, or the potential of ice forming on the dock while rowing.

### **4 Oar Rule**

During particularly cold weather (air or air+wind = 32 degrees or colder), the Program Director, member of the Safety Committee, or Board Member may invoke the "4 Oar Rule" without warning. This rule is

enacted for member safety. When the 4 Oar Rule is in effect, no WRA club 1x or 2- is allowed to launch from the WRA without a safety launch.

### **Independent Boat Use**

All rowers selecting to go out on the water without a coaching launch must adhere to the rules listed in the WRA Safety Guidelines and Expectations Handbook as well as meet the following requirements:

- All members of the crew must hold a current boat-use card and be checked out by an approved coach to go out on the water without a coaching launch.
- One USCG approved personal floatation device (PFD) for each person on board
- One sound signaling device per boat
- One phone per boat
- Leave a record: Always sign in and out of the logbook and make an entry on the WRA Boat Reservation Calendar. Be sure that someone on shore knows you are out on the water and when to expect you back.
- Dress for hi-visibility. It is VERY difficult for boaters to see rowers when shells are so close to the water. Wear light-colored, hi-vis tops and/or hats to improve visibility.

### **Youth and Junior Use of the WRA**

Individuals under the age of 18, including members of the WRA Youth programs or the WRA Junior Team, may only use the WRA facility during scheduled, coached practices or when with a coach or parent-member.

### **Coaches' Safety Certifications And Training**

All WRA coaches are required to have: current CPR, current First Aid, Washington State Boater ID, certificate of USA SafeSport training, and complete the WRA staff training.

### **Safe Sport**

The Whatcom Rowing Association is a SafeSport boathouse. SafeSport aims to eliminate any form of sexual misconduct, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, bullying, harassment and hazing in our sport. Working with the United States Olympic Committee, the SafeSport program was developed based on education and training for coaches, as well as reporting and enforcement policies that include criminal background checks of all Whatcom Rowing Association staff. Learn more.

### **Health And Safety**

Clean hands and equipment make for healthy members! We provide antibacterial wipe dispensers throughout the facility to sanitize oar handles before and/or after use, and to clean the indoor exercise equipment. We strongly recommend all members use these supplies and wash their hands thoroughly after training.



## **Boathouse Emergency Response**

- First Aid - All first aid supplies are located in the cabinet under the TV. All launches and coxswain fanny packs are equipped with basic first aid supplies.
- AED - Our coaches are WRA first responders but should it be necessary to use the AED without a first responder present, call 9-1-1 for instructions. WA State has a “Good Samaritan Law” that protects responders unless there is gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct. Note the posters and protocols by AED, which is currently located on the back wall by the TV. We encourage all rowers to take CPR AED training.

## **Incident Report Form**

The Incident Report Form must be completed in the event of any on-water or off-water incident whereby any persons, rower, coach, staff, volunteer, or visitor to the Whatcom Rowing Association is injured during a training session and/or competition; during volunteer, regular, or special event duties while on Whatcom Rowing Association grounds or in the boathouse, or off the premises while traveling or using Whatcom Rowing Association equipment or participating in a Whatcom Rowing Association program. All reports are submitted directly to the Director and will be reviewed by the Safety Committee.