

Capsize Procedures

PERSONAL ACTION

1. Boats are fiberglass and won't sink. They float just below the surface of the water and can be used as a life preserver to support panicking or injured paddlers (using bailers can lessen the load and help raise the boats).
2. Let your body go with the boat's roll. If you are on the high side try to throw yourself clear of your partner, and let your paddle go. If you come up under the boat, rise until you can catch a breath in the air pocket. Then duck down and come back up beside the boat.
3. As soon as you surface, check your buddy is present (i.e. the person sitting next to you in the boat. The closest pair to the drummer and sweep forms a trio, also for the steersperson too).
4. Stay with the boat.
5. Avoid scrambling at the sides of the boat as this will keep it spinning. Spread evenly around both sides of the boat and hold onto the gunnel (top edge). Don't swim over the top as this may cause it to roll. If the boat is upside down, gently roll it to an upright position.

CREW ACTION

6. Steers takes control (if not in a position to do so the Crew Captain takes command). Call for silence, and 'number off', starting with drummer (NO.1) to sweep (No.22).
7. "Buddies" advise the steers of injured/distressed/poor swimmer or missing paddler by raising their hand. Place any distressed paddlers in the middle of the boat (with their buddy as support if necessary).
8. If a person is missing the steers directs a confident swimmer to search while two paddlers watch the searcher.
9. It is the Crews responsibility to bring the boat back in. Hold onto the gunnels and swim the boat back in.
10. After the crew is on land, it is their responsibility to bail out the water from the boat immediately after it is brought into shore.
11. Crew reassembles at the boatshed for a head count (remember to include the members guiding the boat into the lagoon). Sweep advises the Water Training Supervisor (WTS) that all are present (or of any missing/injured).

12. If time and conditions permit the Crew may reload the dragon boat and finish their training session.
13. Team Manager and Sweep are to debrief Crew, and complete the capsize report, returning this to the WTS or Festival Office.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT PADDLES

14. Let go of your paddle when capsizing so you don't knock anyone on the head. After surfacing, grab paddles before they float away. **DO NOT SWIM FOR YOUR PADDLES.** Paddles can be secured by hooking them under the seats of the submerged dragon boat, or by clumping them together in a pile, to slow their drift. The oar should be kept in the rowlock if possible or hooked under a seat.

PROCEDURES TO AVOID CAPSIZE

If in doubt don't go out!

15. Load you boat with care, considering the right/left and forward/aft balance.
16. The stable command applies to all paddlers in the boat. Paddlers push their body/hip against the wall of the boat, leaning out with paddle blades resting in the water.
17. Keep the swells at 90 degrees to the bow of the boat.
18. If the boat rocks from side to side **DO NOT TRY TO ADJUST** (your Sweep will be doing this and you may make matters worse). **KEEP PADDLING** with a steady, strong stroke rate, leaning hard out against the side.
19. If you feel the boat start to tip, **KEEP PADDLING**, paddlers on the high side should lean out further - it is possible to stop a tip out, but if you jump out the whole boat will go with you.
20. In rough conditions shift the weight in the boat back by leaving the drummer's and stroke's seats empty. Most foul weather capsizes occur when water is taken over the bow, as the weight of the drummer causes the front of the boat to go into the waves and/or wake, rather than over them. It may be necessary to take out four paddlers for this session.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ANY OF THESE RULES MAY RESULT IN LOST TRAINING TIMES OR DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE FESTIVAL.