



2024 Water Safety and Emergency Evacuation Plan

Weather Related Concerns:

The Sydenham Challenge Dragon Boat Festival will take place rain or shine. There is no “rain date.” The on-water dragon boat races cannot occur, however, if either or both of two conditions prevail:

- Lightning
- Dangerously High Waves.
- High winds

All dragon boat teams and steerspersons will be advised on-water safety protocols prior to the Festival Date. Each team will be trained in on-water safety and boat capsize protocols at the pre-Festival practice.

The safety of the spectators and Festival participants that are not engaged in on-water activity is also a vital concern to the festival managers. This document will address the procedure to be utilized if a weather emergency arises during the day.

Severe Weather/Lightning/Evacuation Plan

Forecast Consistently Monitored

Race officials (primarily the Race Director and the Race Management Team) will monitor the weather forecasts and satellite radar readings in advance of the festival to be advised of the possibility of storm activity. In addition, the weather forecast will be monitored throughout the day.

Suspension of Race Schedule

Should lightning occur that is within a 20–30-minute range of the Festival site, all racing will be suspended until the lightning/storm activity has passed.

Evacuation of Festival Site - Weather

If severe inclement weather is observed and such severe weather is approaching within 20 to 30 minutes of the festival site or if the severe weather pattern is clearly discernible, then all spectators, participants and volunteers will be evacuated from the event site. The decision to evacuate will be made by the Race Director in consultation with the Race Management Team, and an onsite local authority.

Evacuation of Festival Site - Emergency Issue

If an emergency or dangerous incident is observed and such emergency or incident is determined to cause potential harm to participants, volunteers, and spectators then the Festival Site will be evacuated. The decision to evacuate will be made by the Race Director in consultation with the Race Management Team, and any onsite local authority.



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Police Department/Traffic Flow

Once the decision to evacuate the festival Site has been made, the Police Department (if not already cognizant of the decision) must be immediately notified so that police officers will be able to facilitate traffic moving from the area.

Notice to Participants/Spectators

The decision to evacuate the festival site will be communicated as follows:

Loudspeaker announcements (Festival announcers and entertainment tent announcers)

- Festival personnel/volunteers will visit each site in the athlete's tent village to advise the participants of the evacuation order and direct individuals to the evacuation sites.
- Festival personnel/volunteers will canvas the spectators' area to advise of the evacuation order and direct spectators to the evacuation sites.
- This Water Safety and Evacuation Plan will be provided, in advance of the festival, to each team captain.
- This Water Safety and Evacuation Plan will be posted at the Registration Tent and a copy provided to each team participating in the festival on request.

Evacuation Sites

- Personal vehicles parked within the immediate area
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 18.
- Local businesses

Water Safety

Should high winds or other circumstance result in high waves within the race area, then the decision to suspend racing will be made by the Race Director in consultation with the Race Management

In the event of moderate wave activity that, in the view of the Race Director and Race Management team, may substantially increase the likelihood of a capsizing event, interim solution(s) will be to

- (a) remove drummers from the dragon boats; and/or
- (b) reduce the number of paddlers per boat to 16.

The decision on whether to implement this interim solution will be made by the Race Director in consultation with the Race Management Team. If this modification in the race rules is implemented, the decision will be communicated as follows:

- Loudspeaker notification
- Volunteers will visit each team site in the athlete's tent village area



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- Staging area managers, on deck managers and dock managers will check to ascertain that only 16 paddlers board the boat.

Capsize Protocol

- All teams will be advised on capsize protocol at their training session.
- Should a team capsize, the steersperson will implement the capsize protocol.
- The safety boats/race marshals will immediately move to the area where the dragon boat has capsized and assist paddlers in the water.

Once all paddlers that are in the water have been moved to safety, one of the safety boats will tow the capsized boat back to the dock area where it will be fully bailed out, checked for damage and either returned to service or removed from service.

- In the event a dragon boat capsizes, experience has demonstrated that several paddlers will likely swim to shore and climb up the shore. In this event, a pre-selected volunteers (“Safety Officer”) will immediately move to the area where paddlers have elected to swim to and aid the “swimmers.”
- All “swimmers” will then be escorted to a first aid area to obtain to ensure that there are no injuries.

Festival Water Patrols/On-Water Emergency Response

The festival will have a marshal/safety boat in the water during each race.

Modification of Race Schedule Due to Wave or Storm Activity

Every effort will be made to adhere to the established race schedule should a delay occur due to wave, wind or storm activity, and the delay is so lengthy as to render adherence to the original race schedule impossible, then the Race Director, in consultation with the Race Management Team, will modify the schedule.

- Every effort will be made to adhere to the established race schedule should a delay occur due to wave, wind inclement weather or other issue out side the Sydenham Challenges control and the delay is so lengthy as to render adherence to the original race schedule impossible, then the Race Director, in consultation with the Race Management Team, will modify the schedule.

- Should the wave, wind, inclement weather or other issues out side the Sydenham Challenges control occur during the first heat, the recommended modification will be to finish the first heat when conditions allow, and use all fist round times to seat team in their division for the final



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medal around. The second round will be cancelled, and teams will move to the final medal round.

- Should the wave, wind, inclement weather or other issues out side the Sydenham Challenges control occur during the second heat, the recommended modification will be to cancel the second round if less than half the races have been completed in this round, and use all first round time to seat team in their division for the final medal around. If more than half the races have been completed, the remaining will be completed after the delay. In the event that the remaining race can not be completed, the medals will be awarded based on round one times only.

- Should the wave, wind, inclement weather or other issues out side the Sydenham Challenges occur during the final medal round, the recommended modification will be to award medals for final round races for each division that have been completed. All divisions that did not complete the final round racing, medals will be awarded on their round 1 and round 2 combined times.

Contact	Department	Contact Number
Police/Fire/Ambulance	Chatham Kent EMS	911
Michael Powell	Sydenham Challenge Director	226 268 8968
Lisa Powell	Past President, Raging Dragons of Chatham Kent	519 354 5990
Lisa Clyde	President, Raging Dragons of Chatham Kent	519 360 6701