

Safety Alert - What to do if a rower collapses in a boat

There has recently been an incident where a rower collapsed in a boat and the crew tried strenuously and succeeded in getting him ashore and delivering lifesaving care. This advice is based on the lessons that were learned in that incident.

Action in the event of a collapse

If someone collapses in the boat and are not responding to gently shaking or shouting and are not breathing normally or appear to be gasping:-

- Get the boat to the bank and get the casualty ashore as quickly as possible:-
 - in most cases this will involve moving the boat to the nearest bank, and
 - carefully lift the casualty out of the boat and onto the bank (help may be needed).
- Lie them on their back on the ground, if unresponsive, and not breathing normally (at least two breaths every 10 seconds), then open the airway, and
- Start chest compressions at 100 compressions per minute see the [Safety Alert on Staying Alive](#)
- Use the mobile phone to call 999 for an ambulance – identify landmarks and tell the control room
- Phone for, or fetch, a defibrillator (an AED) if available and follow its instructions
- If necessary meet the ambulance and guide its crew to the casualty

Do not try to do CPR in the boat, it will not be effective. Do not try to feel for a pulse. There is more information on recognising cardiac arrest [here](#) and on agonal breathing [here](#) and [here](#).

Be Prepared

Each crew member can be prepared by:-

- ensuring that everyone understands the basics of CPR (see <http://life-saver.org.uk>)
- carrying at least one mobile phone in a waterproof case in each boat
- knowing if there are any areas with poor mobile signal (999 will use any service provider)
- knowing the nearest safe landing points
- knowing where publicly available AED defibrillators are in the vicinity, if there is one, and then being familiar with their use
- carrying information, including road names, in the boat about:-
 - places where the ambulance can access the waterway, and
 - recognisable fixed rendezvous points for the ambulance

Stay Alert, Save a Life.

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February 2019

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