



CAPSIZING PROCEDURE

Policy Name:	Capsizing Procedure
Policy Number:	1.2.12
Primary Policy Holder:	Dragon Boats NSW
Applies to:	DBNSW and all Members of DBNSW
Issued:	September 2022
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Approved by:	DBNSW Advisory Committee

APPLICATION OF THIS PROCEDURE

This Procedure provides Dragon Boats NSW (DBNSW) and its members and officials with authority to act upon or advise on matters for the safe participation in the sport of dragon boating of all member clubs and their membership.

DBNSW shall use its best endeavours to comply with its moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for all participants. Safety and the prevention of injury to participants are of paramount importance to DBNSW.

This Procedure applies to members and clubs registered with DBNSW undertaking any activities related to the sport of dragon boating. Individual Clubs will retain the responsibility for all applicable membership, training and locally organised events.

DBNSW will retain at all times the right to direct clubs to cease any activities it deems unsafe or contrary to this Procedure.

CAPSIZING PROCEDURE

As the legal Captain of a dragon boat, the **Sweep** is to remain in control of the boat in the event of a capsizing and ensure participants' welfare.

If the Sweep is incapacitated;

1. the most senior Sweep on board will assume control or;
2. The most experienced drummer or Paddler from Row 1 will take control if there are no other Sweeps on board.

For the sake of this document, this person will be referred to as the Sweep.

The Sweep should discuss who is the 2nd in charge while completing the pre-training safety review in the Safe365 App and alert the crew.

Immediately after a capsizing

When a capsizing has occurred, the Sweep should immediately:

1. Ensure that the crew is accounted for by requesting a head count as per the current Sweep Accreditation and Safety Regulations (head count procedures included in appendix 2)
2. Ensure the crew's welfare and that they remain calm.
3. If anyone is missing, have a crew member check under the boat for that person/s
4. If anyone remains missing or injured contact emergency services or nearest rescue boat if safe to do so.
5. Ensure the crew stay with the dragon boat where possible.



If a rescue boat becomes available, the Sweep will allow the crew of the rescue boat to take control. The Sweep will advise them of the crew number on board, any known injuries and any missing individuals and announce to the crew the rescue boat is now in charge.

Missing or Injured crew

Missing crew members could be located within the air pocket under the boat. Have a crew member check under the boat and surrounding areas. If anyone remains missing or injured contact emergency services or, the nearest rescue boat as soon as possible.

Any injured crew member should be loaded onto a rescue boat as a priority and given first aid. If there are no rescue boats, contact emergency services and if possible, lay the injured crew member on the top of the overturned Dragon boat, or provide support to the person so they remain buoyant in the water.

Recovery

The welfare of all crew members is the most important part of the recovery process. Water and weather conditions need to be considered when deciding which is the best way to recover the crew and the Dragon Boat. The crew should not be in the water longer than is necessary, as hypothermia, submersion or death could be a risk.

Participants may recover their paddles if they are within easy reach and safe to do so.

If a rescue boat is available, it is recommended under the guidance of the rescue boat that the Dragon Boat is towed to the shore with the crew holding onto the Dragon Boat.

An overturned Dragon Boat can be used as a floating platform, provided the crew space themselves evenly around the dragon boat and hold onto it.

If there is no rescue boat available:

- The dragon boat should be turned right side up and bailed. Some or all of the crew should safely paddle the boat back to the nearest shore. Crew members who cannot re-enter the boat, should hold onto the side.
- If the dragon boat is unable to be turned over, the crew should swim the boat back to the nearest shore.
- If the dragon boat is missing or the crew is unable to swim the boat to the nearest shore, the crew is to leave the boat and swim back to the nearest shore in groups of 3. The Sweep should be in the final group, and if safe to do, a head count should be performed every 100-200 meters.

On Land

- The Sweep will perform another head count to ensure all crew have been accounted for.
- If anyone is missing or injured emergency services should be contacted as soon as possible.
- Once all participants are safe and back on land, the dragon boat can then be recovered.

Post Capsize

Both the physical and mental health of crew members can be impacted by a capsize event and it is recommended that clubs check in with the crew the days following the event and:

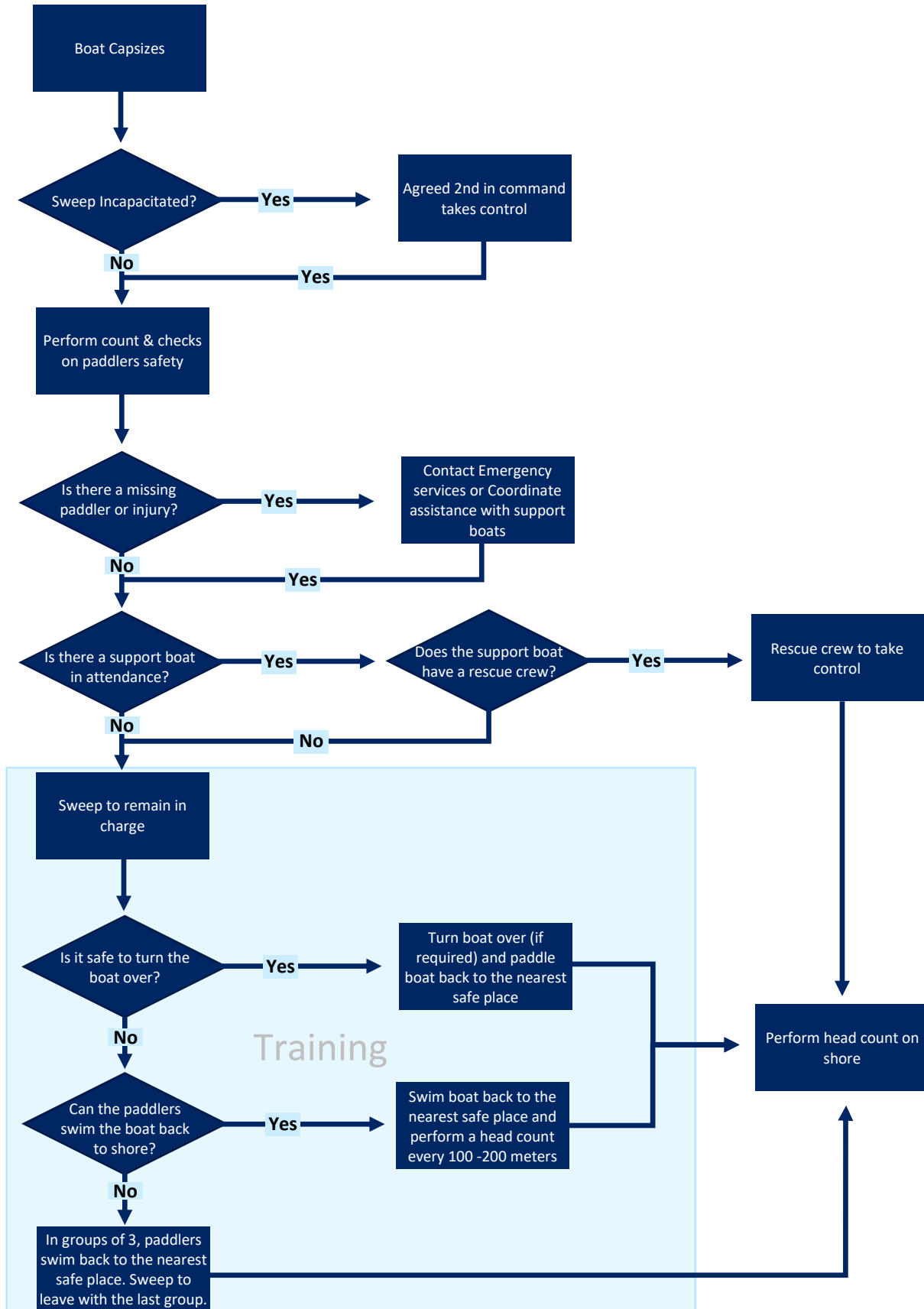
- Ensure no follow-up physical injuries or ailments have occurred by those involved in the capsize



- Arrange a post-capsize briefing with the club so that members have an opportunity to express how they are feeling about the event, ask questions and offer support to the other crew members.
- If required arrange a qualified counsellor to discuss the capsized with the crew.

The welfare of all crew members post capsized is just as important as the care taken on the water during the event.

APPENDIX 1 – CAPSIZE FLOW CHART





APPENDIX 2 – HEAD COUNT PROCEDURES (SWEEP ACCREDITATION AND SAFETY REGULATIONS v5)

3.11 Capsize Head Count Procedure

The size, shape and length of a capsized (overturned) dragon boat acts as a visual and acoustic barrier, thereby preventing or limiting clear communications between paddlers floating in the water. Direct sight and sound lines between paddlers can be reduced or completely obstructed, making effective communication between paddlers difficult.

For example, a paddler in the water located at a front right position may not see or hear paddlers on the left (opposite) side or towards the back of the boat, resulting in a breakdown in communication and errors when a head count or other instructions are issued (by the sweep).

The following is thought to be a simpler, more realistic and practical (post-capsize) head count procedure that most people will be more likely to understand and follow instinctively ('automatically'), even without much training, as the sequence of progression is more natural and consequently more effective.

1. The sweep should move to a position at the centre stern of the boat where they can view paddlers on both sides of the vessel.
2. The sweep will call calmly and loudly for quiet and initiate the head count as soon as possible.
3. START WITH THE PERSON CLOSEST TO THE SWEEP being #1. The sweep may indicate (point) or touch the person chosen (tap on shoulder) to start the count to avoid confusion.
4. CONTINUE the head count from person #1 to the next ADJACENT person (and so on) along one side of the boat from the back to the front (Stern to Bow); until all on the first side (A) is counted.
5. CONTINUE THE NUMBER SEQUENCE after CROSSING to the other side at the front of the boat, then continue along the second side (B) from front to back (Bow to Stern), until all persons have numbered off in succession, with the Sweep being the LAST PERSON to count off. (Figure 4)
6. If needed, each paddler should account for their buddy/s. Call out to the opposite side of the boat if necessary. When your buddy check is complete (buddy found and acknowledged), remain quiet and await further instructions from the sweep.

For general consistency, it is suggested that counting proceed in a CLOCKWISE direction (left side first, then right side), though counting in a counter-clockwise direction would be equally appropriate.

If required (and safe to do so), a paddler may tap the next person in sequence after they have counted off, to let the next person know that they should number off. This may help to prevent a breakdown or interruption of the count if a paddler is unresponsive or confused.

Counting in sequence allows paddlers ADJACENT to each other to hear the count better and continue from one person to the next in a CIRCULAR pattern around the boat, so nobody is missed.

This procedure is to be REPEATED up to three (3) times (but at least once) to CONFIRM paddler responses (and total number accounted for), so the sweep can relay the number to rescue boat(s) and confirm with confidence that all crew members are accounted for ASAP.

If any paddler is missing &/or injured, advise rescue or emergency personnel of the situation ASAP.
<https://www.dbnsw.org.au/resources/sweep-development/>