

The Rower's Guide To Safe, Pleasurable Touring

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Responsibilities of Pleasure Rowers on FISA Tours

Official FISA regulations are few, but require that a participant in Pleasure Rowing Tours must:

- Be skilled and able to row both single and double oars (sweep and sculls).
- Be able to swim 300 meters unassisted and take care of him/herself in critical situations.
- Bring an approved life vest and carry it at all times in the boat.
- Provide his/her own insurances.

In addition to the official regulations, there are other responsibilities expected from a pleasure rower when attending a tour. Pleasure rowers need to operate as a team. Common sense, basic initiative and general courtesy are fundamental to a successful tour. The cohesiveness of crew and tour depends on these elements.

Do your share of work on a tour. Help to carry boats to and from the water. Often, due to currents or weather conditions, it is necessary to get boats in and out of the water quickly. At these times all rowers (barring injuries) must pitch in to help launch and dock all boats.

Since everyone will cox a boat sooner or later, you must know how to steer a boat and to understand the water buoy marking system. Steering is not difficult, but be sure to ask how to do it before you get into the coxswains seat.

Courtesies you can extend to fellow rowers:

- Take oars down to the water or unlock oars from oarlocks and place them together on land.
- Help steady a boat while rowers get in and out.
- Take a wrench and help to rig and unrig boats when needed.
- Take water bottles and gear out of a boat and place items together so crews can find their belongings.
- And finally, don't ask, do.

Responsibilities of Captains

The rowing federation hosting a tour is responsible for providing seaworthy boats for the tour. All boats on a rowing tour must have a captain who is in charge of boat and crew.

Crews assigned to a particular boat must obey the captain of their boat and follow his or her instructions.

If you have been selected to captain a boat during a tour, you can accept or decline the responsibility. The following are the responsibilities of the captain:

- The captain of a boat is responsible for maintaining the condition of the boat as well as the safety of the crew. Some countries require a captain to be tested and licensed. Before rowing in another country, check to see what the qualifications are.
- Captains are responsible for knowing the day's plan, familiarizing themselves with the route of the tour and attending all captains' meetings. The captain is also responsible for the boat's navigation and is expected to observe common boating regulations.
- Captains must check the conditions of their boat and be supplied with a tool kit and a first aid kit by the organisers, giving them the possibilities to handle most emergencies. We strongly recommend bringing a mobile phone on the tour along with a list of emergency numbers of local authorities.
- The captain should also make sure there is enough food and water to supply the crew. It is important for the crew to have enough energy and hydration to safely complete the day's route.
- Under no circumstances should captains take chances with their crews or boat. If bad weather conditions or weather forecasts imply possible danger while you are on the water, the captain and crew should find a safe place to dock and take shelter immediately.

The members of the FISA Rowing for All Commission - Touring will have the final authority on all safety matters.

What to take on Tour

- FISA tour regulations require that you bring a life jacket with you on tours. You do not have to wear the jacket while you row, but it must fit in the boat with you. Do not bring a scuba diving B.C. (buoyancy compensating device) or airline life jacket. They can only be used once due to the use of air cartridges.
- Raingear. If it rains we will keep rowing. Even if you don't mind getting wet, try to bring at least a rain jacket to prevent a chill.
- All your medications.
- If you prefer, a good pair of biking or weight-lifting gloves to prevent blisters. Waterproof boot shoes. (Aqua socks are good and so are waterproof sandals). A seat pad to prevent a sore bottom.
- A durable, waterproof bag to carry a change of clothes and other items (cameras etc.).
- An adjustable wrench, tool kit and first aid kit. A pocket knife with a corkscrew.
- A hat for protection from the sun, sunglasses, suntan lotion and a swimsuit.
- Enough rowing clothes for the tour.

Getting into Shape for a Tour

Pleasure rowers are responsible for arriving at a tour in top physical condition. Rowing tours are demanding endurance events that require stamina and proper aerobic fitness. Since FISA rowing tours are gruelling multi-day events - the equivalent of running five marathons in six days - there is little recovery time for sore muscles.

As a courtesy to fellow rowers it is important for rowers to show up in the proper physical condition necessary to get in and out of boats on their own and to pull their own weight for some 200 km.

Pleasure row tours are also vacations and when the day's workout is over there is often entertainment and sight-seeing excursions for the participants. To fully enjoy a tour and take advantage of the full range of activities offered, it helps to be fit.

Ways to get in shape for a tour:

- If you have not had one recently, get a thorough physical examination.
- During the winter, rowers should try to work out at least three times a week.
- Try to alternate your workouts between aerobic and anaerobic activities.
- Aerobic activity includes any physical activity, which sustained for 30-40 minutes, raises the heartbeat to the specific target rate for a rower's age group. Activities include: cross country skiing, ice skating, indoor track, swimming, using ergo meters, aerobic dancing and treadmills.
- Anaerobic activity builds muscles, bone mass and endurance. The most common anaerobic activity is weight lifting. Strong muscles give endurance for long rows and make it easier to carry boats.
- When rowing season arrives try to row 10 kilometers, three to four times a week. Try to cross-train with cycling, rollerblading, running, tennis or swimming once or twice a week.
- About a month before a tour, try to do longer rows - about 20 - 25 kilometres. To simulate a tour, break up the rows into the morning and afternoon: row 10-12 kilometres in the morning. Eat lunch, and then, row the next 10-12 kilometers. The day-to-day distance on a tour varies from 20-40 kilometers. This exercise, however, will give some idea of a tour's requirements.

Have a nice tour - FISAs Rowing for All Commission