

## 1 INTENT AND SCOPE

The University at Albany Grounds Department has a fourteen-foot rowboat for tasks such as cleaning the overflow outlet and moving animals or debris in the Uptown Campus pond.



The procedures in this document provide the minimum standards and best practices for rowboat operations to ensure the personal safety of boat users and support staff.

## 2 RESPONSIBILITIES

### 2.1 Employees

Only authorized employees may use the rowboat or serve as support staff for rowboat operations. Authorized employees must protect themselves when working on or near water bodies by being alert during work operations and following the safety procedures outlined in this document. Authorized employees must notify their supervisor of any safety concerns or incidents related to their work on or near water bodies. Authorized employees must also maintain and inspect safety equipment such as personal flotation devices (PFDs).

### 2.2 Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for the implementation of this program. Supervisors assigning tasks using the rowboat are responsible for assuring compliance with these procedures and immediately suspending boating operations that are unsafe.

### 2.3 Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S)

EH&S is responsible for the development of this program and is available as requested to provide guidance with its implementation. EH&S will also coordinate the relevant training for employees that require it.

### 3 ROWBOAT OPERATION REQUIREMENTS

#### 3.1 Staffing

During rowboat operations, at least two authorized employees must be onboard the boat at all times. These employees are hereinafter referred to as “authorized crewmembers.”

At least one authorized employee must also be on the shore for support during rowboat operations. These employees are hereinafter referred to as “authorized support staff.” Authorized support staff will stay on shore at all times and continuously monitor the rowboat from land. In the event of an emergency, authorized support staff will facilitate rescue by throwing a rope bag to the person(s) in need and summoning emergency services if needed.

#### 3.2 Safety training

Before participating in rowboat operations, authorized crewmembers and authorized support staff must complete a safety training with EH&S covering the procedures outlined in this document.

#### 3.3 CPR training

Before participating in rowboat operations, authorized crewmembers and authorized support staff must complete CPR training, which will be coordinated by EH&S.

#### 3.4 Personal flotation devices and other personal protective equipment

Authorized crewmembers and authorized support staff must wear a US Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) during the entire rowboat operation.

The PFD must fit the wearer properly and be “comfortably snug.” Authorized employees will test the fit of their PFD before each use as follows:

*With all straps/zippers securely fastened, raise your arms over your head. The PFD should stay in place. Next, have someone lift your PFD straight up at the shoulders. Again, the PFD should stay in place.*



Authorized employees must maintain, store, and test their PFD according to the manufacturer’s instructions. PFDs should be stored in a cool, dry place away from the elements and sunlight exposure.

Before each use, authorized employees must check all components of their PFD for damage. There should be no rips, tears, excessive abrasion, or holes in the PFD. All seams should be securely sewn and all hardware securely in place. Damaged PFDs must be immediately removed from service.

Authorized employees and their supervisors must identify other required PPE for each work task based on existing work hazards. Such PPE may include (but is not limited to) the following: eye protection, body contact protection, gloves, and sun protection. As necessary, supervisors should consult with EH&S to assess and select control methods to protect employees from the identified hazards.

When preparing to use the rowboat, authorized employees should dress properly for the weather and be prepared for an unintended water entry.

### 3.5 Sound-producing devices to signal for assistance

Authorized crewmembers and authorized support staff must each have a pealess whistle secured to their PFD with a lanyard.

Authorized crewmembers in the rowboat must also have an airhorn in the boat to call for assistance if needed.



### 3.6 Safety equipment in support area

Authorized support staff must have at least one 50-foot polypropylene rope bag with them on shore to throw to the authorized crewmembers if needed.

Authorized support staff must also know where the nearest automated external defibrillator (AED) is available. Depending on the work location in the pond, this will likely be Liberty Terrace, University Police Department, or Grounds building.



### 3.7 Communications

Communication methods (e.g., radio, cellphone, vocal, hand signals) between authorized crewmembers and authorized support staff shall be established prior to departure based on the location and characteristics of the rowboat operation.

### 3.8 Weather monitoring

The rowboat must not be used during thunderstorms or strong wind. The authorized support staff is responsible for monitoring weather conditions and calling the rowboat back to shore if needed.

The real-time weather forecast can be obtained from the National Weather Service's local forecast for Albany, NY: <http://www.weather.gov/aly/>

### 3.9 Inspection and maintenance of the rowboat

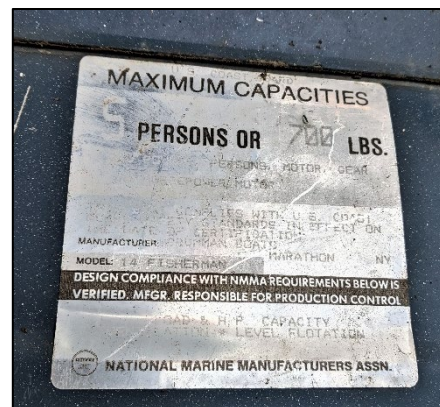
Before putting the rowboat into service, authorized crewmembers must inspect the rowboat to verify that all components are in good working order. If the rowboat does not pass inspection, it will be immediately taken out of service until it can be repaired or replaced.

A general pre-departure checklist is included in Appendix A below.

### 3.10 Weight capacity and balance

Never exceed the maximum person or weight capacity of the rowboat. Grounds' *Grumman 14 Fisherman* boat has a maximum capacity of 5 people or 700 pounds.

Authorized crewmembers should distribute weight evenly in the boat and tie down equipment. They should also avoid standing up, moving around, or leaning over the edge of the boat.



## 4 PROCEDURE FOR OVERBOARD PERSON

If a crewmember falls overboard, the authorized employees will follow this procedure:

1. If able, the overboard crewmember should attempt to self-rescue, climbing back into the boat with the assistance of the other authorized crewmember(s) or getting to the shore.
2. If the overboard crewmember is conscious but cannot get back into the boat or to the shore, the authorized support staff will throw the rope bag to the overboard crewmember. The overboard crewmember will grab the rope and be pulled back to shore by the authorized support staff.
3. If the overboard crewmember is unconscious or unable to grab onto a rope, the authorized support staff should immediately summon medical attention. The other authorized crewmember(s) in the rowboat will make sure the overboard crewmember is floating on their back (with their face out of the water), hold them by the back of their PFD, and row to shore if possible. If needed, the authorized support staff can throw the rope bag to the onboard crewmember(s) and help pull the rowboat to shore.
4. Once the overboard crewmember is on land, assess the need for CPR or other medical attention.

**EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS:** In an emergency, immediately call the University Police Department by dialing 911 on a campus phone or 518-442-3131 on a cell phone.

## 5 REFERENCES

Boating Safety Education

<https://www.boat-ed.com/newyork/>

New York State Boater's Guide

<https://parks.ny.gov/documents/recreation/boating/2017NYSBoatersGuide.pdf>

## APPENDIX A: Rowboat Pre-Departure Checklist

- Verify that all employees involved in the rowboat operation have completed the required trainings:
  - EH&S rowboat safety training
  - CPR
  
- Prepare and inspect the rowboat:
  - Clean any visible mud, plants, or debris from the boat
  - Drain all water holding compartments
  - Check that the boat has no visible signs of damage (e.g., cracks or breaks)
  - Check that all hardware is secure
  - Check oars for breaks, dents, or weak points
  - Verify that the boat's capacity will not be exceeded
    - The *Grumman 14 Fisherman* model (Serial Number GBM46522G788) has a maximum capacity of 5 persons or 700 pounds
  
- Inspect and don Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)
  - All authorized crewmembers and authorized support staff must wear a US Coast Guard approved PFD for the entire rowboat operation
  - Each authorized employee must check all components of their PFD and removed damaged PFDs from service
  - Verify that each authorized employee's PFD fits appropriately
  - Each PFD must have a whistle attached to it with a lanyard
  
- Check that an airhorn is in the boat to call for assistance if needed
  
- Set up the support area on the shore
  - The location should have a good vantage point to continuously monitor the rowboat from the shore and throw the rope bag if needed
  - Have at least one 90-foot polypropylene rope bag immediately available
  - Know the location of the nearest automated external defibrillator (AED)
  
- Establish a communication plan between authorized crewmembers and authorized support staff (e.g., radio, cellphone, vocal, hand signals)
  
- Check the weather forecast
  - Check the weather forecast prior to commencement of rowboat operations and do not operate the rowboat during thunderstorms or strong wind
  - Authorized support staff must continuously monitor weather conditions and end the rowboat operation if necessary