

Code Of Conduct for Rowing and Sculling Shells

Code Of Conduct Outlining Additional Light Requirements for Rowing and Sculling Shells over Four Metres in Length

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to prescribe guidelines to enhance marine safety and navigation by increasing the current minimum light/torch/lantern requirements in relation to rowing/sculling/paddle craft over four metres in length being operated on New South Wales navigable waterways between sunset and sunrise.

1.2 Compliance with this Code signifies a commitment by rowers and paddlers to reduce the level of risk associated with operating a rowing/sculling/paddle craft in restricted visibility and between sunset and sunrise.

2. Current Requirements in Relation to Lights

2.1 Rule 25 of the International Regulations For Preventing Collisions At Sea, which are adopted in NSW through the Navigation (Collision) Regulations –NSW, sets out the minimum lights required to be displayed and/or carried on all rowing/sculling/paddle craft used on navigable waters between sunset and sunrise.

2.2 Rule 25 is reproduced here for convenience and immediate reference.
Rule 25 Sailing vessels underway and vessels under oars.

(a) A sailing vessel underway shall exhibit:

- (i) sidelights
- (ii) a sternlight

(b)

In a sailing vessel of less than 20 metres in length the lights prescribed in paragraph (a) of this Rule may be combined in one lantern carried at or near the top of the mast where it can best be seen.

(c) A sailing vessel underway may, in addition to the lights prescribed in paragraph (a) of this Rule, exhibit at or near the top of the mast, where they can best be seen, two all-round lights in a vertical line, the upper being red and the lower green, but these lights shall not be exhibited in conjunction with the combined lantern permitted by paragraph (b) of this Rule.

(d) (i) A sailing vessel of less than 7 metres in length shall, if practicable, exhibit the lights prescribed in paragraph (a) or (b) of this Rule, but if she does not, she shall have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision.

(ii) A vessel under oars may exhibit the lights prescribed in this Rule for sailing vessels, but if she does not, she shall have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision.

(e) A vessel proceeding under sail when also being propelled by machinery shall exhibit forward where it can best be seen a conical shape, apex downwards.

3. Higher Standard of Lighting Requirements for Rowing/Sculling Shells over Four Metres in Length

3.1 Despite the minimal lighting requirements set out in Rule 25 of the International Regulations For Preventing Collisions At Sea in relation to vessels under oars NSW Maritime is of the view that for safety reasons any such vessels that are greater than 4 metres in length should, in restricted visibility and between sunset and sunrise, exhibit;

(a) Two all-round white lights, one attached to the vessel at or near the forward end, and one attached to the vessel at or near the aft end.

(b) A continuous white light is considered acceptable if it is visible in clear conditions from a distance of 1 kilometre.

(c) A flashing white light is considered acceptable if it flashes at least once per second and is visible in clear conditions from a distance of 1 kilometre.

(d) Notwithstanding 3.1(a), it is considered acceptable for a light to be masked so as not to interfere with the vision of the vessel's occupants, provided at least one light is visible from any direction.

4. Compliance with this Code

4.1 NSW Maritime notes that although there is no specific legislative provision requiring rowers and paddlers to display the lights specified in Clause 3.1 above failure to comply with this Code may be viewed by the Courts as evidence of poor seamanship or negligence.

5. Responsibility of Rowers

5.1 NSW Maritime takes this opportunity to remind rowers and paddlers that although they must at all times comply, as a minimum, with the requirements set out in the Navigation (Collision) Regulations - NSW and all other provisions contained in the Marine Legislation, there is a general common law obligation upon them to do more than the minimum should the minimum not be sufficient to eliminate the risk of injury or damage.

6. Amendments

6.1 Any suggested amendments or variations to this code should be submitted to the General Manager Recreational Boating of NSW Maritime in the first instance. They will be adopted if deemed appropriate after consultation with users.

This Code becomes effective on 19th day of February, 2008.