
Traffic and Safety

1. **Safety:** The safety of club members and others using the boathouse and lagoon is of primary importance. The safe handling of boats and other equipment is also very important. Nothing in this list or on this website should be interpreted in such a way as to take precedence over caution and good sense in the protection of people and preservation of equipment.
2. **Safety equipment:** Every club member must know where the AED (automated external defibrillator) and first aid kit are in the boathouse. If you or a guest cannot swim, you or your guest must use a PFD (personal flotation device). State law requires all children under the age of 13 to wear a PFD. Adult and child-sized life vests are located in the rear of the boathouse. If possible, you should carry a cell phone with you when you row or paddle so that you can call for help for yourself or others if the need arises.
3. **Traffic Pattern:** Rowers travel counter-clockwise and paddlers travel clockwise. The line of buoys in the center of the lagoon divides the north-bound and south-bound travel lanes. When two boats are close, the boater who can most easily see the other boat has the primary responsibility to avoid collisions: that is, paddlers should maneuver to avoid rowers and slower paddlers, and rowers should maneuver to avoid faster rowers.
4. **Passing:** Rowers being overtaken should move out of the way of the faster boat and, if necessary, shout out to the faster boat to indicate where they are. In general, rowers should not make sudden changes of course; it's important that paddlers and any rower being overtaken can predict the course of the faster boat. When passing a rower, paddlers should try to maintain at least ten feet between their boat and the rower's oars. Paddlers should keep in mind that rowers might not know they are there, so call out (and say hello) as you get close. When passing another paddler, the faster paddler should call out to let the slower boat know they are approaching.
5. **Darkness:** Berkeley Aquatic Park is open from 6 AM to 10 PM. If you are on the lagoon before light or after dark, as a safety precaution you should have lights on the bow of your boat.
6. **Turning Buoys:** There are 2 buoys at each end of the lagoon (which mark the start and end of a 1500 meter piece), after which you must turn. You must go past the buoys (south of them in the south end and north of them in the north end), and pass both buoys before beginning your next length of the lagoon. Both paddlers and rowers should come and go from the north end in single file as there is not enough room for more than two boats to pass each other safely. If you have slowed to turn, be mindful of approaching boats and call out if necessary.
7. **Turning Early:** Although there is no rule that says boats have to go the entire length of the lagoon, other users expect that you will. So, if you turn "early", you should make sure that you do not cut in front of another boat who is not expecting you to be there. Everyone making a turn should always look first to make certain the path is clear.

8. **Launching:** Before leaving the dock, rowers should check to see whether any rowers are approaching from the north or returning to the dock to make sure they don't cut in front of an approaching boat. Rowers should leave the dock, head south past the buoys, and travel east across the lagoon past both buoys before heading north. Once past the second buoy, rowers can turn and head to the north. Paddlers leave the dock and head directly north. See figure below.
9. **Approaching the Dock:** Because there are often boats launching or docking, slow down and use extra caution when approaching the dock. Rowers who are not backing into the dock should look carefully over their shoulders for other boats. Paddlers should continue south past the turning buoys and cross the lagoon between the buoys and the south shore, checking for other traffic, before approaching the dock.
10. **Docking Skills:** Docking can be done bow first or stern first, and on either side of the dock, whichever feels more comfortable (unless you're paddling an outrigger). Wind can help or hinder, so choose the appropriate side. Practice and master maneuvering skills—backing and turning and river-turns—to have control when docking. If there is no room at the dock because other boaters are arriving or preparing to leave, wait out of the traffic lanes until a spot opens.
11. **Stopping:** If you need to stop on the course for any reason (a discussion, stretcher or footplate adjustment, coaching, etc.) you should pull over to the shore side of the traffic pattern. When other boats are nearby, call out to let them know you are there.
12. **Coaching Areas:** Attached is a map to help identify areas that are best suited for slow or stationary technique work or coaching. They include the southeast and southwest “pockets”, the cove between the south buoys and the viewing platform, the bay between the flagpole and island, and the area just west of the waterski buoys. The top northeast corner should not be used for coaching as this is often congested, as well as being a sensitive area for birds. (You can pause there for a water break or to catch your breath.)
13. **Shallows:** You need to be aware of where the shallows and rocks are. This is especially important when using the water on the west of the waterski buoys, as well as the far northeast pocket, by the turning buoys. The shallow areas are highlighted on the map. Note that the lagoon is tidal: at low tide, the shallows extend farther from the shore; at high tide, some dangerous rocks may not be visible. The most dangerous rocks are those on the east and west sides about 200 meters from the south end.
14. **Other Lagoon Users:** Please remember that we share the lagoon with several other organizations, and that not all boats will be aware of BPRC rules and customs. Also, not all boats launch from the BPRC dock—other boats might enter the water from many spots around the lagoon. From May 1 to September 30, the Berkeley Waterski Club also uses the lagoon. Protocol for sharing the lagoon with motor boats is explained here: [Water Allocation Schedule](#). As always: Be Aware, Be Courteous, Be Safe.

Boathouse



This drawing shows the safe way for a rowing boat to begin an outing. Leaving the dock, head towards the (south) bank. Before turning stop and take a look. Then turn east (to port) and proceed around the two buoys before turning north (another turn to port).

Dock

Stop here and look for possible approaching boats

