



# Arizona Dragon Boat Association Steering Certification

To be certified as a Steersperson in the AZDBA a member must have completed the following activities:

- Have been instructed in the basics of dragon boat steering by a certified AZDBA steersperson.
- Have been instructed in equipment usage and water safety policy of the AZDBA.
- Have at least 10 hours on-water practice steering sessions.

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- Demonstrated knowledge and proficiency with common dragon boat commands
- Demonstrated knowledge of Tempe Town Lake navigational rules including:
  - Direction of travel around lake
  - Required minimum distance between the dragon boat in motion and any anchored or drifting boats
  - Requirement to yield way to commercial, public safety, and emergency watercraft
- Successfully completed CPR Certification training within the past two years
  - AZDBA requires steerspersons to be re-certified at a minimum of every two years at steerspersons own expense
- Have taken and passed an on-the-water steering test which includes:
  1. Being able to do a figure eight maneuver.
  2. Being able to hold the boat in a straight line at race speed for a five hundred meter course.
  3. Be able to back the boat for fifty yards.
  4. Be able to safely dock the boat including using commands to move the boat sideways.

I certify that I have accomplished all of these goals and will adhere to all the rules and regulations set down by the city of Tempe and the AZDBA while acting as a steersperson.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steerspersons Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Certified Steersperson Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

- To be submitted to any board member upon completion.
- After certification, the new steersperson needs to complete a first aid CPR class within 60 Days

AZDBA Board Approved 10-2023  
Modified 10-2023

## **Training Overview**

The purpose of this clinic is to give at one time in one place all the information and instruction necessary to become a qualified steer person. After today all that will be needed is more hands on practice to be proficient. How quickly that is accomplished is up to the individual with the one requirement that you need at least 10 hours on the boat steering to be certified.

There are three main elements to becoming a steer person.

1. That you have the physical ability to stand in the back of the boat, balance yourself and hold and control the steering oar.
2. That you have the technical instruction to know how to hold the oar and maneuver the boat in all conditions and situations.
3. Have the confidence to command and control the boat.

You will receive the instruction necessary to succeed, how well you can apply it and your own personality will judge how successful you will be as a steering member of your team.



# Arizona Dragon Boat Association Equipment Usage, and Water Safety Policy

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AZDBA Board: Approved June 2023



# Arizona Dragon Boat Association Equipment Usage, and Water Safety Policy

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### Purpose

The Arizona Dragon Boat Association (AZDBA) is committed to minimizing the risks of anyone involved in the sport of Dragon Boating. The AZDBA considers that it is the duty of everyone involved in the sport to follow the advice and guidance contained within this Policy. The AZDBA supports that a pervasive principle for Dragon Boating be instilled of **'prevention reduces risks and injuries and saves lives'**.

### Rules and Regulations

Rules and regulations of the AZDBA include those listed in this document, in addition to those signed by each member in their membership application and club waiver.

AZDBA or the watercourse management due to special events or circumstances, can change, modify, or request specific requirements, and Dragon Boat users will comply as instructed.

New rules or regulations can be added, changed, or amended at any time by the appropriate representative of the AZDBA. Boat Captains and Steers are required to stay current on such rules, and are required to see that their boats comply. Updates to rules and policies can be found posted on the AZDBA website ([www.azdba.org](http://www.azdba.org)) and when updates are made to this policy they will be forwarded by email of record, to AZDBA authorized steers and boat captains.

### Responsibility

Dragon Boats and Dragon Boat equipment usage is determined by the governing rules of the Arizona Dragon Boat Association. Dragon Boats and Dragon Boat equipment usage is primarily intended for use of AZDBA members, but can be used upon the discretion of the AZDBA for other events such as outreach, training, fund raising, or community events.

When a Dragon Boat is owned, leased, or operated by the AZDBA and is on the water, the Boat Captain, who will normally be the Helm (Steerer) will take responsibility for the safety of the crew and equipment.

For use of AZDBA boats both the Boat Captain and/or Steerer will acknowledge in writing to the AZDBA that they understand and will comply with the regulations, rules and safety requirements of both the AZDBA and any watercourse they are utilizing equipment of the AZDBA on.

Because AZDBA equipment is stationed at Tempe Town Lake, the AZDBA safety requirement will stress the City of Tempe Lake users rules. However, if AZDBA equipment is utilized on other watercourses the rules of this course would pertain and need to be followed.

While AZDBA equipment is in use on Tempe Town Lake, the Boat Captain will abide by the City of Tempe (COT) Boating Regulations.



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[www.tempe.gov/lake/government/community-services/classes-leagues/boating/boating-permits-regulation](http://www.tempe.gov/lake/government/community-services/classes-leagues/boating/boating-permits-regulation)

### Steerer

For an AZDBA boat to be used upon a watercourse, a trained steerer must be present in the boat at the helm at all times.

A trained steerer is recognized by the AZDBA as someone who is familiar with the type of boat being used and has demonstrated a knowledge and expertise on how to steer the boat on the watercourse the boat is to navigate. Additionally a trained steerer has agreed in writing to abide by both the equipment and safety rules and regulations of the AZDBA, and in addition to abide by the rules and regulations of the watercourse being navigated.

The AZDBA recognizes that periodically, additional people will be trained as steerers. Until a trainee has completed steerer training, and been accepted by the AZDBA as a trained steerer, a trained steerer must be present in the boat while a trainee has the boat on a watercourse.

Training and testing will include demonstrated knowledge of AZDBA equipment, safety rules, and regulations and that of the watercourse. The trainee will demonstrate the ability to maneuver the boat as required in a safe and prudent manner before being recognized by the AZDBA as a steerer.

Steerspersons must carry a whistle with them and ensure that someone in the boat is carrying a working cell phone to contact authorities if emergency assistance is required.

### Personal Floatation Device (PFD)

Each person who is in the boat on an open watercourse must wear a vest type Life Vest or Personal Floatation Device (PFD). This PFD will be a United States Coast Guard approved Type I, II, or III PFD vest in good condition. Type IV and inflatable PFD's do not meet the AZDBA standards. The PFD vest must be the proper size for that person's weight and build, and be form-fitting and comfortable.

Individuals may use their own PFD vest upon inspection by the steerer or Boat Captain, and their approval that it meets the above stated requirements.

### Paddlers

The Boat Captain and steerer will assure that the standard (20 person) boat has an adequate number of paddlers to allow emergency commands to be quickly carried out. For an experienced crew this is recommended to be at least eight paddlers, but more than eight paddlers are normally required for less experienced crews. Even for an experienced crew, more than eight paddlers would be required if a watercourse is substantially restricted or is



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experiencing inclement conditions such as rough winds or waves.

For the small (10 person) boats a minimum of 6 paddlers are required to take a boat on the water.

The steersperson always has final say on whether more than the AZDBA minimum required paddlers necessary to safely operate the boat based on the crew and water conditions.

AZDBA Board officers may waive the minimum paddler requirement for unique circumstances such as individual time trials etc. These special activities will normally have people monitoring the activities from the shoreline in case an emergency arises.

### Lightning, Wind and Evacuation

At Tempe Town Lake, lights and sirens have been mounted on tall poles on the north side of the lake. The Boat Captain and/or Steerer will be familiar with location of these poles and monitor while on the lake for increment conditions requiring the following actions.

**WHITE** light flashing start flashing anytime the wind observed at the location reaches 15 miles per hour. The frequency of the light flashes will increase as the velocity of the wind increases. A weak boat (novice or a boat with minimal number of paddlers) is to return to the Marina when wind reaches 15 miles per hour. A strong boat will return to marina If wind velocity continues to increase, or if maintaining course becomes difficult, or if waves are threatening to go over gunnels.

**RED** light flashing and **SIREN** means that you must return to Marina and secure the boat as quickly as possible.

If AZDBA boating equipment is in use on another watercourse, unless that governing authority rules conflict, the same criteria listed above for weather conditions and evacuation are to be followed.

### Watercourse Requirements

Boat captain and Steerer are responsible for having thorough knowledge of the rules of the watercourse, and making sure that the crew are aware of and follow these rules (i.e. paddling direction of the lake, right of way, lake closures, special events, facility restrictions, after dark rules and the required bow and stern lighting etc...).

Public boating navigational rules specific to the Tempe Town Lake include, but are not limited to, the following:



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*Lake traffic shall be counter clockwise. Watercraft leaving the shoreline shall yield right-of-way to watercraft approaching the shoreline.*

*Public watercraft should give way to commercial watercraft, public safety watercraft and emergency watercraft.*

*All watercraft operators shall maintain a proper lookout and proceed at a safe speed when underway.*

*Watercraft underway shall stay at least 30 feet from drifting or anchored boats. If approaching or coming alongside another boat, the operator shall use caution and approach at a safe, controlled speed.*

*If there is a possibility that the boat will be out at dusk or at night then navigation lights need to be affixed. Lights should be affixed so that they can be seen by lake traffic. Navigation lighting includes a red (or Red/Green) light affixed to the bow, and a white clear light affixed to the stern. The stern light should be reachable by one person in the boat, and would be waived in case of an emergency. If lights are not able to be displayed at dusk or night, the boat will immediately return to the marina. If navigation lights are not displayed as specified above, this could result in a citation to the Boat Captain and/or Steerer.*

### **Boat Occupants**

Boat Captain and steerer will ensure that all participants in the boat are:

1. Members in good standing with the AZDBA. Members in good standing with the AZDBA will have met all required criteria of membership, including age, health, current in membership dues, and have a signed waiver on file with the AZDBA. A complete membership roster of all AZDBA members will be supplied upon request to Boat Captain or steerer.
2. All participants are suitably dressed and prepared for the weather and water conditions and that they are not wearing anything (such as personal accessories or jewelry) which would impede their ability to escape from a capsized boat or swim unaided once in the water, for example, wrist weights.
3. Cognizant of the paddling procedures required to meet AZDBA and venue safety requirements, for example, commands such as "stop the boat".
4. Appropriate equipment is utilized by each boat occupant, such as PFD's, and paddles.

### **Team Usage of Equipment**

Team usage of the boats is not a right but a privilege, and can at any time be preempted,





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changed or cancelled at the behest of the AZDBA or the watercourse authorities. A change in practice schedule could include any AZDBA approved event, or a watercourse venue conflict such as:

- Classes
- Clinics
- Special Events
- AZDBA contractual obligations
- Road, Lake, Boat or Equipment maintenance requirements
- Open Paddle

### **Calendar of Boat Usage**

To aid teams, a quarterly calendar will be published on the AZDBA ([www.azdba.org](http://www.azdba.org)) web site listing team practice schedules 30 days prior to the start of the quarter. The AZDBA will attempt to notify interested parties in advance if changes in availability of boats or facilities occur, but due to special events, equipment issues, and other happenstances advanced notice might not always occur. Teams should email requests for practice dates and times at least sixty days in advance of each quarter to the AZDBA.

### **Equipment Care**

Equipment supplied by the AZDBA is to be treated with respect, and should be returned to the appropriate storage area, in a manner that is consistent with maintaining the equipment in good condition.

It is a crew's responsibility to ensure that the dragon boat and its equipment are fully functional and water-worthy. Boats and equipment must be carefully checked before use. If issues are noted with equipment of the AZDBA or with facilities that are being used for this equipment by the AZDBA, it needs to be reported to the AZDBA authority in a timely manner. If appropriate required equipment in good condition is not available, the boat will not be available for use and the AZDBA should be notified.

### **Facilities**

Facilities where the boats and equipment are stored and moored are not the property of the AZDBA, and are shared by multiple groups. All crew need to be courteous of other users. Unless a designated agent of the AZDBA is present, locked areas are to be kept locked at all times.

Access to storage, boat, and marina areas are shared with many users. Members of the AZDBA will not block or hinder access and usage of other lake users. If any issues occur, they should be reported immediately to the AZDBA authority.



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## Violations

Violations to rules and regulations are to be reported to a board member of the AZDBA immediately.

The Boat Captain and/or Steerer are subject to all regulations of watercourse (Tempe Town Lake etc.) and are responsible for any and all citations received from the Local Police and other authorities.

Upon notification of rule violations, the president of the AZDBA or their agent can institute boat usage suspension while the reported occurrence of a violation is being investigated. The AZDBA has the right to suspend membership and privileges, including use of boats, to any person or persons who do not comply with the rules and regulations, or who in the judgment of the AZDBA does not follow prudent safety practices.

After a restriction ruling has been made by the AZDBA, an individual(s) cited has fifteen days to contest a restriction ruling by the AZDBA. After the AZDBA has considered the individual's request, the AZDBA will confirm and/or amend and/or rescind the restriction ruling, and this will be deemed to be the final ruling of the AZDBA.

## Source Information

Arizona Boating Regulations: [www.azqfd.com/boating](http://www.azqfd.com/boating)  
<https://azleg.gov/arsDetail/?title=5>

Arizona Dragon Boat Association web site: [www.azdba.org](http://www.azdba.org)

AZDBA Membership and Waiver Form: Membership Form:  
<http://www.azdba.org/membership.htm>

City of Tempe Boating Regulations: [www.tempe.gov/government/community=services/classes-leagues/boating/boating-permits-regulations](http://www.tempe.gov/government/community=services/classes-leagues/boating/boating-permits-regulations)

International Dragon Boat Federation "Documents": [www.idbf.org](http://www.idbf.org)

US Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety: [www.uscqbating.org](http://www.uscqbating.org)

## Notes

\* Any reference to AZDBA includes all AZDBA board members, individually or as a whole, or a designee or agent of the AZDBA board as they may designate from time to time. The listing of board members can be found at [www.azdba.org](http://www.azdba.org) Email questions or suggestions regarding rules to the AZDBA Secretary.



# Arizona Dragon Boat Association

## Steers Tips

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### Dragon Boat

**Boat Characteristics** – The boats used by the Arizona Dragon Boat Association (AZDBA) are 45 feet in length with head and tail affixed, 3.8 feet in width, weigh approximately 600 pounds empty and between 3,800 and 4,200 pounds fully loaded. They have a pointed bow (where drummer sits) and stern (where steer person stands), and sloping sides leading to a slightly concave bottom.

The 1224 Buck boats are specifically designed for racing. They have no skeg or keel, and the hull design makes them easy to steer. These boats are highly directional with little tendency for sideways slippage. The boat requires a 150' circle to complete a 180-degree turn. Steers should watch for boats' tendency to continue turning once a turn has been initiated.

A full crew is comprised of 20 paddlers (10 on each side), a steer person, and drummer. Paddlers sit on benches and the drummer sits on a raised chair at the bow of the boat.

### Steers Person Responsibility

**Safety** – The steer person of the Dragon Boat has ultimate responsibility for the 22 lives in the boat, and must assure that the boat is handled in a safe and prudent manner. The steer person is responsible that the AZDBA rules and regulations are adhered to by the paddlers. AZDBA rules and regulations require that the steer person knows, and assures that the boat crew adheres to the rules and regulations of the waterway the boat is being operated on. In the Dragon Boat, the steer person's command overrides all other in-the-boat voices or commands.

**Boat Control** – The steer person has control of the boat and must maintain this control. The steer directions must be able to be heard by all lives on board, and this is especially critical during maneuvers. A boat full of chatter and with paddlers not attuned and "at-the-ready" cannot respond effectively.

**Steering** – The steer person stands at the stern and steers with a 10 foot steering sweep oar that is 2 inches in diameter, with a two foot blade at one end and a T-handle at the other. The steering oar is lashed to a stainless steel U-bolt surrounded by hemp rope to cushion, which is affixed to the aft (left side) of the steering deck. Steering and boat control is accomplished by movement of the steering oar as well as directing commands to the paddlers, such as to go/start, stop, hold water, pull to the left/right, reverse, and other variations.

Steering on a dragon boat is the same as steering a sailboat with a tiller, or a small outboard motor boat that uses the motor control handle. To control a Dragon Boat the steer person pushes the steer oar in the opposite direction of intended travel. To turn to port (left) you push the steering oar to starboard (right).



# Arizona Dragon Boat Association

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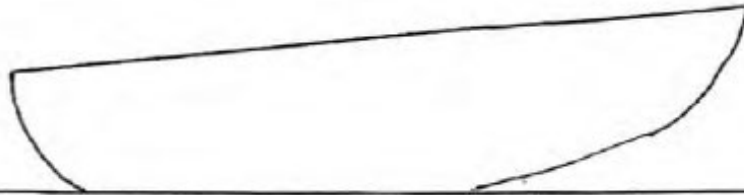
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**Steering by the “Inch”** – Most of the boat’s solid steering characteristics can be maximized with the approach of “steering by the inch.” Make turns and minor course corrections slowly, incrementally. When underway and at speed, pick a point to steer toward that is ¼ mile or more ahead of the boat. On Town Lake, this could be one of the bridge columns, or other affixed landmarks. Line up the bow with the selected point and do not let the bow veer off that point by more than six inches to either side.

Ideally, under racing conditions, the steering oar should be held above water and only “dipped” in occasionally when making minor steering corrections. Each contact of the steer oar with the water, or corrections while in the water creates drag. Drag reduces boat speed, and a good steer seeks to minimize drag during race competitions.

### BOAT BALANCING

**BOW**



**PLOWING**



**EVEN WEIGHT**



**DRAGGING**



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**Close-Quarter Maneuvering** – Because of the boat’s design and method of propulsion (paddlers) special attention should be made when maneuvering in close quarters or during docking. Use slower boat speed during maneuvers in close quarter conditions. Maintain minimal forward or backward movement through the water needed for steer control. Point the bow where you want it to be and then use the steering oar to “row” the stern in the direction required. Short, quick “rowing” strokes work best in tight quarters.

**Propulsion (Paddler) Control** – When moving the boat either forward or backward, direct the paddlers to apply appropriate power to the boat. The paddlers can help move the boat forward, back and sideways. You can control strength of the propulsion, by type of direction to paddlers, by directing the power of their strokes (strong strokes), by number of strokes (take two strokes), or by number of paddlers (first two rows take four strokes).

Dragon boats are powered by paddlers. When they begin paddling in close quarters and slow speeds they are actually pulling the boat through the water. The steer person’s command to begin paddling should only be made when the boat is clear of obstacles and safe from any oncoming or nearby boat traffic.

**Turning** – During turns the steer person should pay equal attention to both turning and limiting the turning action by exerting steering oar force in the opposite direction. Most beginning steer persons tend to only think about steering the boat into a turn. Controlling the turn is equally important.

**Other Factors** – The steer person must be aware of the factors of wind, waves and current, and know how to react to them. Wind will require close attention to steering to maintain course. Waves and boat wakes must be anticipated and taken “on angle” (no less than 45 degrees). Allowing the boat to wallow can cause it to take on water or capsize in a trough. Facing sideways to a series of oncoming waves is a situation the steer person must avoid. This is important, since these 1224 Buck boats have low freeboard and can swamp easily.

The worst rough-water situation for a steer person is dealing with large, following swells or wakes when turning and underway. The closer to 90 degrees that these waves meet the stern the more stable the boat will be. In addition, keeping the paddlers positioned, so that their body weight is against the gunnel, and continuing to paddle, allows the boat maximum stability when meeting waves or swells.

If the propulsion (paddlers) stops when meeting swells, and the paddlers lean it can easily destabilize the boat, and allow it to swamp. If taken on a wide angle, the boat will tend to slough-off the wave crests and slip sideways into the troughs. The steer person must be vigilant of oncoming as well as following wakes and waves, and plan in advance for taking appropriate steering actions. Other factors to watch for include current, rip tides, and dead or live water



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conditions...all require appropriate steering responses to maintain course and the safety of the boat.

**Right of Way** – Dragon boats can have up to 22 lives aboard. It is the steer person's responsibility to be aware of and anticipate ALL nearby vessel traffic and movement. A steer person should ensure that your dragon boat is safely operated and maneuvered. Always assume that the "other guy" does not see you. If another boat is overtaking you, maintain your course until passed.

When engaged with boat traffic, where possible avoid small boat course/direction adjustments in favor of obvious turns and course adjustments. This helps other helmsmen know your intentions. Stay a safe distance from outlets and moorage areas to avoid quick corrections due to surprise entries onto the waterway.

When overtaking other boats, pass to either side but be aware that no boat has the right-of-way when overtaking another.

**Tempe Town Lake** – At Tempe Town Lake a steer person should pay close attention when close to the bridges, especially the Mill Avenue Bridge. Tempe Boat Rental Inc. rents boats to the public, and they often congregate around the Mill Avenue Bridge. These public paddlers do not always adhere to lake rules. Public paddlers can be inexperienced in handling their craft, and often have no knowledge of the time it takes to correct direction or stop a Dragon Boat. At Tempe Town Lake, traffic moves in a counter clockwise direction. And if the Dragon Boat is not being propelled (paddled) then it should be moved to the middle of the lake, so as not to impede other traffic.

## Commands

**Voice Commands** – Voice commands are used by the steer person the same way one would use the throttle and transmission controls on a sail or powerboat...only with dragon boats, the "engine" is comprised of 20 paddlers, all of whom are facing in the opposite direction and cannot see the steers' person. Voice commands, therefore, need to be issued loudly and clearly so the stroke pair (at the front of the boat) who set the boat pace, can clearly hear and understand.

Following are commands used commonly:

**Attention in the boat** – Used to get paddlers' undivided attention. When paddlers hear this command ALL chatter stops, paddlers have their paddles across their laps and are ready for the next command.

**Paddles Up** – The signal for paddlers to instantly assume the paddling position (paddles raised above the water, bodies in position to paddle). They will hold this position until the



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next command is issued.

**Go or Take it away** – In races often a sound device is used, like an air horn – This is the signal, to commence paddling.

**Let it Ride, Rest Easy or Easy Off** – The command to stop paddling.

**Left or Right side pull, push, or draw** – Paddlers holding their paddles horizontal to the boat, on the designated side of the boat, as commanded either pull or push the water toward or away from the boat. When properly performed this moves the boat toward the side pulled, or away from the side pushed.

**Back paddle** – Paddlers stroke in reverse motion to move the boat backwards.  
**Stop the boat or Hold water** – Paddlers thrust blades vertically into water and dig in to bringing boat to a halt. MOST IMPORTANT COMMAND!

**Flare the Boat** – Paddles horizontal, with flat blades resting on top of the water to stabilize the boat.

### AZDBA Club Responsibilities

The steer is responsible for documenting any equipment deficiencies, and reporting these to the AZDBA equipment coordinators in a timely manner. The steer should note on the whiteboard at the club locker equipment deficiencies. In addition, the steer should email both the boat maintenance coordinator and the equipment scheduling coordinator the equipment deficiencies.

The steer is responsible for document, in the notebook in the club locker, the number of lives that were in the boat during each practice they steer for. This information is used both for Insurance, and City of Tempe Lake Users fee calculations.

The steer is responsible for reporting any violations by club membership to the rules and regulations of the AZDBA.

The steer is responsible for notifying an AZDBA board officer immediately if there are issues with other AZDBA teams, lake users, or employees of the City of Tempe.

### AZDBA Dragon Boat Operation Source Information

Arizona Boating Regulations:

- [www.azqfd.com/boating](http://www.azqfd.com/boating)
- <https://azleg.gov/arsDetail/?title=5>



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AZDBA Equipment Usage & Safety Policy:

[http://www.azdba.com/Downloads/Water\\_Safety\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.azdba.com/Downloads/Water_Safety_Policy.pdf)

AZDBA Membership and Waiver Form: Membership Form:

<http://www.azdba.com/membership.htm>

City of Tempe Boating Regulations: [www.tempe.gov/government/community=services/classes-leagues/boating/boating-permits-regulations](http://www.tempe.gov/government/community=services/classes-leagues/boating/boating-permits-regulations)

International Dragon Boat Federation "Documents": [www.idbf.org](http://www.idbf.org)

US Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety: [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)

AZDBA Steers are responsible for overseeing that the crew in the boats they steer for, adhere and follow to both the AZDBA Boat Usage and Safety Policy, and The City of Tempe Boating Regulations.

All AZDBA board members, steers, managers, captains, coaches, and coordinators should be familiar, and when prudent refer to the above source materials to determine actions when using AZDBA equipment.



## The Mechanics of Steering

Make sure you have good footing. I like to brace myself with my right foot in front. The steering oar is on the left. Standing this way you can use your body weight to push or pull the oar in heavy weather or in turns. Also, this position allows you to more easily grip the end of the oar so you can adjust the blade of the oar for more control on turns. Sitting while steering on a long slow practice can be okay but as a rule you have less control of the boat when sitting and less of a view of the traffic ahead.

Be aware of differences in the size and shape of oars. Different venues have different oars and sometimes you may have two different size oars on the same day.

Use as little oar in the water as possible when racing. The more oar in the water the more drag. However, it is also true that more oar in the water also gives more control for turns and rough water.

You can accentuate a turn and make it sharper by twisting the blade at an angle.

Control your turns especially in rough water or high wind. When learning to steer, try to make large sweeping turns. If you feel the turn is too sharp, straighten it out for a few yards. Some like to adjust the angle of the turn depending on going into the wind or with the wind. There is a difference. New steer persons have a tendency to 'over steer' the boat in turns. Come out of the turn early. Circles and figure eights can be very frustrating. When in doubt, stop the boat.

Make "small" adjustments all times, especially in turns and at high speed. If you lose control with a large adjustment you may not get the boat back under control or, at the least, lose valuable time in the race.

Do not pull the oar to far forward or too hard since it may get stuck in the oar lock. This happens when starting at a dock, so beware.

Do as little side to side gazing as possible. Taking your eyes away while steering, even for a few seconds, can change the direction of the boat by several degrees. Looking backwards can cause a really dramatic shift in the course of the boat.

Stand straight with the wind at your back and crouch with a head wind. You should practice the crouch before racing since crouching changes your stance, your grip, and the angle the blade goes in the water.

The exception to the rule for looking back is when backing the boat. It is easier to control the boat that way and see where you are heading. Use short dips in the water to adjust the direction of the boat but remember going backwards for long distances is not easy even for pros.

If you cannot see the finish line because of the background, like Portland, or the lanes, like Lake

Gregory, then do a search ahead of time from the point of view of the finish and pick out a landmark to guide on. Even in practice on Tempe Lake it is a good habit to pick a spot and aim at it.

Be aware of the fact that there are hidden currents especially around bridges and after heavy rains. They can be sneaky and cause the boat to make a sudden shift in course.

**Take command of the boat.** Give strong verbal commands that avoid confusion. Do not be afraid to override a coach or captain during practice if the situation arises. i.e. More paddlers for a tum, another boat in the way, someone moving in the boat. Etc. The paddlers in the boat rely on you for direction. If you fill them with confidence in your ability, then they can relax and concentrate on their individual jobs of paddling.

When bringing the boat in to the dock, error on the side of caution on how much room you need and what speed you need, especially at night or in rough weather. You can always do side paddling or make other corrections in the dock area to bring the boat up to the dock. Never cut straight across when docking. Go slightly up stream, tum, and come in from the east.

If you assume that everyone else on the lake is unfamiliar with lake rules, you will not be disappointed. Watch out for everyone. When the boat is at rest, take a peek back to see what is out there.

## RACE DAY TACTICS

Remember that no matter how much practice you have with a coach in the boat leading up to a race, or what the race strategy has been decided on, once the boat is filled and heading out to the starting line, you are the decision maker and must adjust to changes as they occur. This is why it is best to have as much experience steering in practice to prepare for race day.

Also, remember that there is some gamesmanship at the start of a race by some boats who try to psyche out other steersmen.

Here are some tips:

- Always attend the captains meeting even if not required to do so. Issues may be discussed that will affect the race or even the start and the Captain may forget to tell you or maybe they even miss the meeting. Do not be afraid to ask questions.
- Be sure of the procedure needed to stop the race countdown if your boat is not prepared. Is it the steersperson who signals, the drummer, or both? What type of signal, one hand or two?
- Make sure you have your communication with your drummer down.
- Sometimes last minute replacements are put in for drummer so be proactive in talking to them before the race. You have to decide ahead of time when powers and final charges are to be called. This is usually decided by the coach.
- Doing a practice start on the way to the start line is good policy, but not necessary on your way to every heat. Unless the general consensus is that the start needs work.
- Bring your boat around and face the start line as you were directed by the race officials but do not move up to quickly. You do not want to be the first up to the line and have to wait or make many adjustments while others are coming up.
- If you can make an adjustment from the back row of paddlers do so.
- The worst case scenario is getting into position on a windy day. Try to maneuver the boat on an angle into the wind. Maybe cheat to one side of the lane or the other to compensate. In these conditions the start is more important than ever.
- Hold your lane. Only move out of your lane to avoid a catastrophe. The safety of others is more important than winning.
- Remember to race through the finish line before stopping.

The talent for steering especially in races is unique and not everyone has the gift. So do not feel let down if you do not pick it up quickly. Practice as much as you can.

## **Small (10 PERSON) BOAT STEERING TIPS**

- Never train a new steer person on a small (10 person) boat till they are proficient at handling a standard (20 person) boat
- Small boats are more sensitive than standard boats so the need to focus on maintaining course is more critical. The slightest movement by a steering oar can quickly change course.
- It is more critical to have a balanced boat. There is less room for error. Weight from front to back and side to side should be as even as possible. Even during practice.
- As mentioned before, all acts on a small boat are more acute. If timing is off, it will show quickly in how the boat performs and how it steers.
- If there is more power on one side of the boat, the boat will turn and the steersman will have a tough time correcting. Try to even out that part of the paddler placement as well.

## **What to Do in the Event of a Capsize?**

- Know your bench buddy and how many people are on the boat.
- (Paddlers) Immediately after surfacing, check to see if your partner is present and okay.
- Front pair checks on the drummer, back pair checks on the steersman.
- Count off from the front to back to ensure all occupants are accounted for.
- Wait for assistance from other boats on the lake.
- Remember the commands come from the steersman only (or if incapacitated, the drummer).

## **In the Absence of a Safety Boat or Other Boats to Assist**

- Move the weaker swimmers to the nose and tail.
- Pull the steering oar fully aft so the handle is at the steering oar arm (and therefore out of the way)
- Don't worry about rescuing anything floating away, unless it is a bailer. Anything else can be gathered up later.
- If it is windy, use the wind to help you turn the boat.
- As the boat comes over everyone must be careful to keep clear as it rolls.
- Once the boat is the right way up and floating at the surface, get two or three light paddlers into the boat and start bailing water.
- As the boat rises more paddlers can climb in (in pairs as the rest of the crew hold the boat stable).
- The boat should be clear and floating in 11 to 15 minutes.
- The last paddlers in the water may need to be helped in by paddlers already on board.
- If you are unable to turn the boat over, or cannot bail out enough water to get all of the crew in the boat, you may try to swim the boat ashore (although this will be difficult). Line up paddlers next to the boat (as if they were paddling), have them hold on the gunnels, and pull the boat to the nearest and safest shore. If there is not enough room for everyone to remain as one group, divide into two groups. The steersperson should stay with the boat and the captain stays with the remaining swimmers. Count off again when you reach shore.
- If you are unable to right the boat and are too far away from shore, try to signal for help. If no one is around, remember to conserve energy and only signal for help when someone is nearby.

# AZDBA Accident Report

<b>Event</b>	Date: _____ Time: _____ Daylight: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Person Reporting</b>	Name: _____ Team: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____
<b>Location</b>	On the water: <input type="checkbox"/> North lake <input type="checkbox"/> South lake <input type="checkbox"/> East of dock <input type="checkbox"/> West of dock <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ On land: <input type="checkbox"/> Launch pad <input type="checkbox"/> Floating dock <input type="checkbox"/> Parking lot <input type="checkbox"/> Boat storage <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>Description</b>	What happened? _____ _____ _____ How did it happen? _____ _____ _____ Persons involved? _____ _____ _____
<b>Injuries</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If "Yes", please specify: _____ _____ _____ Action(s) taken: _____ _____ _____ Who was notified? _____ Time of notification: _____ <b>In case of emergency ONLY, please contact [INSERT COT CONTACT INFO]</b>
<b>Equipment Damage</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If "Yes", please specify: _____ _____ _____ <b>Please report equipment damage to: [INSERT EQUIP MGR CONTACT INFO]</b>

Please notify AZDBA President of this event: [INSERT CONTACT INFO]

**[CITY OF TEMPE KEY CARD AT CITY BOAT STORAGE FACILITIES ACCESS CONTRACT]**