



# SAFETY CONTROL NO. 1



## The Steersperson

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, dated September 2019

**SAFETY CONTROL (SC) NO. 1****SC 1.1 Description of Steersperson**

- 1.1.1 According the IDBF Bye-Law 3.6.3, the Steersperson is the crew member whose specific task is to steer a dragon boat with the aid of a steering oar or paddle.
- 1.1.2 The Steersperson is also internationally known as 'The Helm' or 'The Sweep'. In Singapore, the most common term used is 'The Coxswain' or just 'The Cox' in short.
- 1.1.3 Physical characteristic of a Steersperson:
  - a. can either be male or female
  - b. minimum 18 years old
  - c. must be able to swim reasonably well (without pause) up to a minimum distance of 50m, with and without the wearing of a personal floatation device (PFD)
  - d. possess reasonable level of fitness (able to perform SC.1.1.3.b above without any physical or medical contra-indications)

**SC1. 2 General Requirement**

*To be practiced and observed at all times, for all aspect of the sport of dragon boating – from recreational to competitive paddling.*

- 1.2.1 All Steersperson **MUST** be SDBA-certified before they are allowed to steer for a dragon boat crew.
- 1.2.2 SC.1.2.1 above shall apply to all aspect of the sport of dragon boat – from basic recreational paddling leading up to competitive paddling.
- 1.2.3 If in doubt, Team Managers may contact SDBA to find out whether a particular person is an SDBA-certified Steersperson or not.
- 1.2.4 The Steersperson must know all the weak or non-swimmers in the crew. The Steersperson must know where these weak / non-swimmers are seated at all times.
- 1.2.5 The Steersperson is responsible to maintain the dragon boat's stability and to prevent collision and capsizing by controlling the dragon boat steerage as well as the crew's movements inside the dragon boat.

1.2.6 In an emergency or dangerous situation that may lead to a collision, capsizing or swamping, the Steersperson must initiate emergency measures to stabilize the dragon boat by:-

a. Command “Hold Water Hard!”

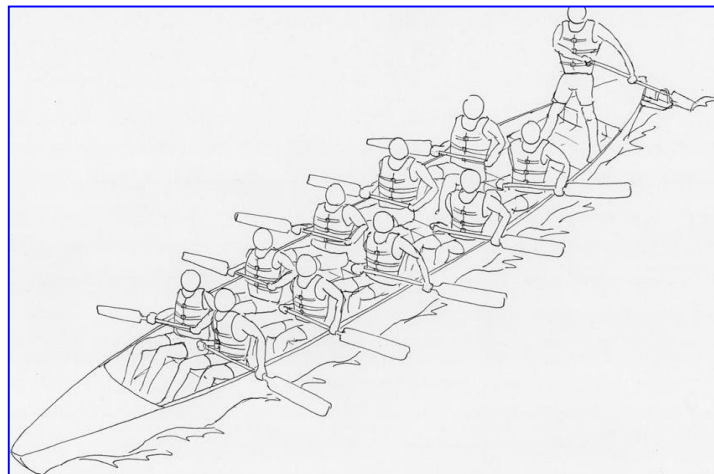
All paddlers are required to plunge their paddle-blade vertically into the water and hold the paddle as hard as they can. This will stop the forward momentum of the dragon boat.



Photo 1:  
Hold Water Hard !

b. Command “Brace! Brace ! Brace!”

All paddlers are required to sit-up straight, body jammed against the gunwale and all paddles extended out, touching the surface of the water with the flat side of the paddle blade.



Drawing 1:  
Brace! Brace! Brace!

1.2.7 If the danger persisted, The Steersperson **MUST** steer the dragon boat away from the dangerous area.

- 1.2.8 If there is still no improvement to the dangerous situation (i.e. sudden onset of inclement weather, etc), The Steersperson **MUST** steer the dragon boat to return to the nearest shore immediately to seek shelter and wait out the danger or to seek help.

### **SC1.3 Legislation**

- 1.3.1 SDBA-certified Steersperson will be issued the Basic Helm Course certificate (see Annex A for an example of this certificate)
- 1.3.2 The award of the Basic Helm Course certificate certifies the particular person's proficiency to steer the dragon boat in all aspect of the sport of dragon boat – from basic recreational paddling leading up to competitive paddling.
- 1.3.3 The SDBA-certified Steersperson would have undergone the required safety training to steer the dragon boat and therefore has been trained on what to do in the advent of an emergency.
- 1.3.4 Besides the SDBA-certified Steersperson, the following SDBA-certified personnel are also permitted to steer the dragon boat in all aspect of the sport of dragon boat – from basic recreational paddling leading up to competitive paddling:-
- a. SDBA Recreational Dragon Boat Trainer
  - b. SDBA Level 1 Technical Coach
  - c. SDBA Level 2 Technical Coach
- 1.3.5 Person(s) who have acquired the Steersperson certification from other countries, are required to submit their certification to SDBA for verification.

### **SC1.4 The Steersperson's Responsibilities**

- 1.4.1 Crew and Equipment
- i. The safety of the crew. Always know how many persons are inside the dragon boat.
  - ii. The safety of the boat.
  - iii. The safety of other users on the water.
  - iv. The condition of the boat and its equipment.
  - v. Ensuring crew is wearing personal floatation devices (PFD).

- vi. All team members understands the buddy system and how to use it.
- vii. Knowing any special conditions that may apply to an individual paddler (i.e. weak or non swimmers, etc)

#### 1.4.2 Boat Handling

- i. Assessing the water and the weather conditions, being aware of any currents and wind, and pointing the boat into the wind when not moving.
- ii. Knowing approved safety procedures and what to do in the event of capsize or emergency.
- iii. The Steersperson must be aware of other vessels around his boat. He/She should also practice periodic looking behind the dragon boat to be aware of any other approaching vessels.
- iv. We share the water with other vessels. Steerspersons should take into account that varying degrees of vessels cannot change course quickly. It is therefore incumbent upon the Steersperson to give the appropriate command to safely stop or navigate the dragon boat.
- v. When encountering choppy water, the Steersperson should endeavour to face the boat into or away from the waves (bow-on or stern-on) and not with the side onto the waves. Employ the 'Brace!' command to stabilize the dragon boat. The Steersperson should only move the dragon boat after stability has been restored and the water flat.
- vi. During races, safety MUST always come first before results. Collisions must be avoided at all costs, even stopping the boat if necessary.

#### 1.4.3 Commands

- i. That all crew members know the command calls and the expected response. Paddlers must be disciplined to listen and obey the steersperson's commands.
- ii. The Steersperson is the only person that can issue paddling commands that control the boat. The coach can give commands to the paddlers, but when it comes to controlling the boat, the steersperson is the one in the best position to make these calls.
- iii. The Steersperson must issue commands in a loud and clear voice.

## iv. Typical commands:

Command	Crew's Response
Let it Run or Easy	Stop paddling and let the dragon boat glide on the water without paddling inputs.
Hold the boat or Hold Water	Drive your paddle down vertically into the water and hold it firm. This will stop the dragon boat from drifting, stopping it dead in the water.
Hold the Boat Hard or Hold Water Hard	Drive your paddle down into the water, do a sudden back stroke and hold the paddle firmly and vertically in the water. To be used when in need to stop the boat in an emergency, i.e. avoiding a collision, etc.
Back paddle	Put your paddle into the water behind your hips and drive it forward (opposite to a normal paddling stroke). To move the dragon boat backwards.
Paddles Up	Paddlers to get into the "catch position" or ready to start paddling.
Take it away or Go!	Paddlers start paddling at a gentle pace and effort level
Draw	Paddlers reach out at right angles to the boat plunging the paddle into the water and pulling the boat to the paddle. To move the dragon boat sideways. Opposite of Pry.
Front Left / Right Draw	Applicable to the Front Left/Right three(3) paddlers only. To keep the dragon boat bow pointing to the right or left.
Back Left / Right Draw	Applicable to the Back Left/Right three(3) paddlers only. To keep the dragon boat stern on the right or left.
Left / Right Side Draw	All paddlers on Left/Right side (full crew) to draw in the specified direction.
Pry	Paddlers insert their paddles into the water close to the boat and push or pry the paddle away from the boat. Opposite of Draw.
Brace the boat or Brace! Brace! Brace!	The paddlers put their paddles on the water surface at right angles to the boat moving them back and forth with a slight downward pressure to stabilize the boat. This should be used at times when not paddling. This is especially necessary when people are moving within the boat and when the water is choppy.
Power	This is a call for more power, effort.
Back it Down	Paddlers in the boat paddle backwards in unison. Call is often used when moving the boat away from the dock or at a race start to move your boat back into position
Stroke	Steersperson will call give me "one stroke" The number of strokes in the call can vary. This call is used when positioning the boat.

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